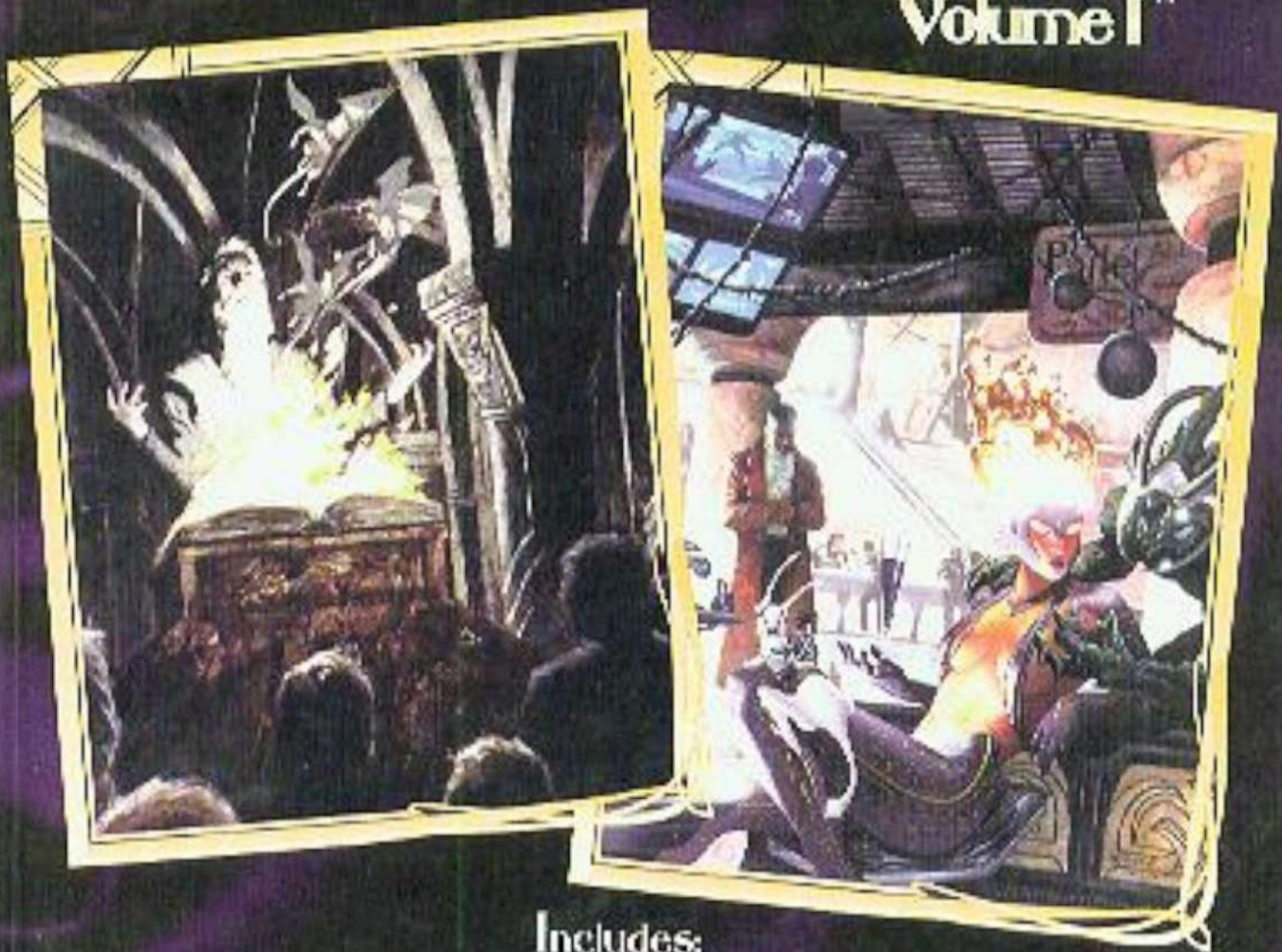
Mage Chronicles

Volume I™



Includes:

The Book of Chantries™

Digital Web™

A Setting and Chronicle Supplement for Mage: The Ascension™

THE BOOK OF CHANTRIES



by Steven C. Brown, Phil Brucato and Robert Hatch

with additional material by James A. Moore and Kathleen Ryan

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Word from the White Wolf Game Studio

First of all, the good news; **Mage** is a hit. The overall reception has been enthusiastic, and we're really pleased, to say the least, that the game has gone over as well as it has. We thank you all for your continued support.

Now the bad news; we goofed a bit on that first printing. Despite our efforts, a few mistakes were made, and we are heartily ashamed.

As we wipe the egg from our faces, allow us to direct you to the **Mage** errata in the back of this book and the tables in the **Mage Storytellers Screen**. Again, we apologize to our fans, and we will avoid such mistakes in the future.

THE BOOK OF CHANTRIES

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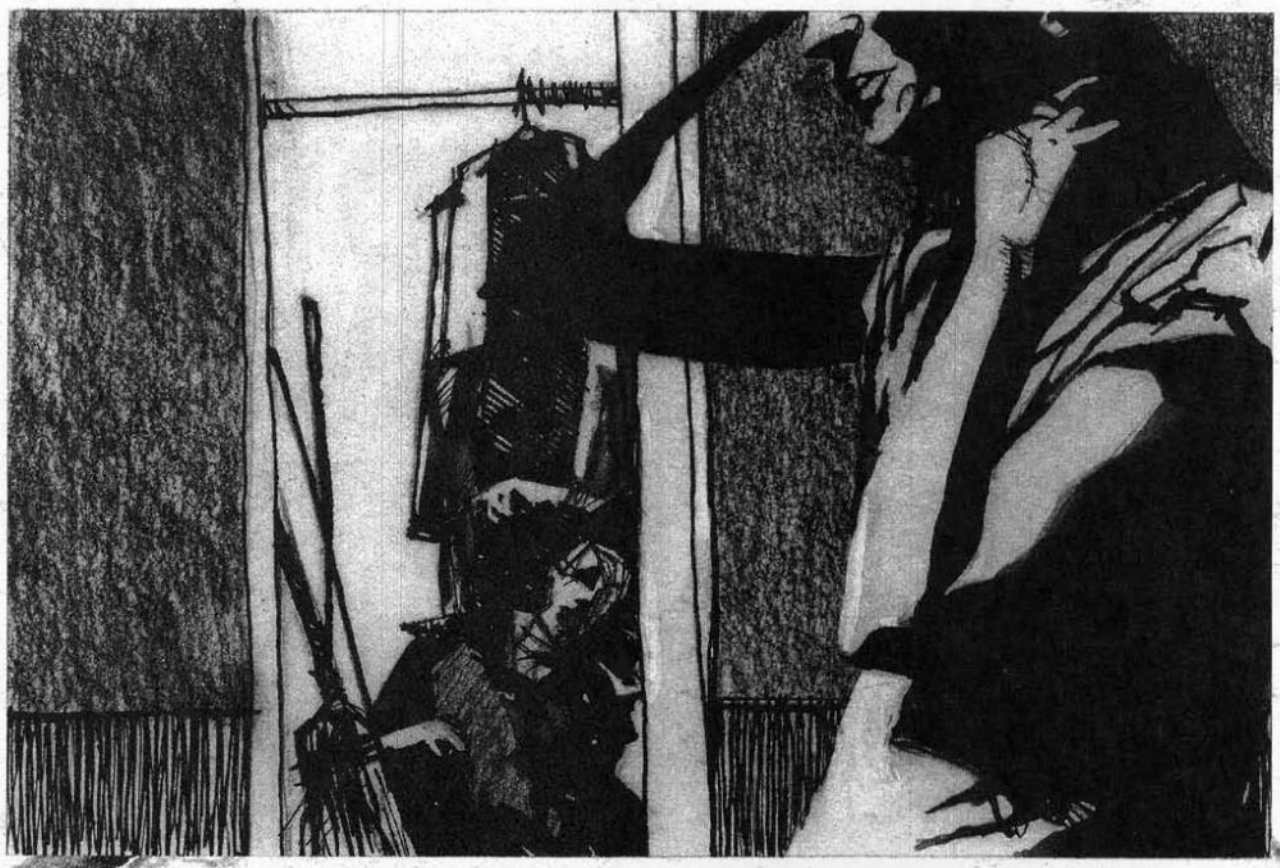
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Prelude: Beyond the Tapestry

By Kathleen Ryan



Amanda awakens inside a kaleidoscope. Green light eats her eyes like acid, and dancing, electric neon signs rebound from every surface of the ancient car. Her white dress is patchwork; the dashboard is stained; her mouth is as dry as ashes. She looks up. "Where are we?"

"Vegas." The Old Man turns to her as he speaks, his voice deep and calm. "We're making good time. How did you sleep?" His eyes glow red as the traffic light changes.

"I dreamed that I was dead again."

"I know," he says, his voice so soft for an assassin. "The nightmares will stop once we reach my home."

ABC trial 4

"Home?" Amanda, black widow, magickal killer, feels a nervous flutter as she flexes stiff muscles. The car is so tiny and so old. Shards of the death she so recently survived still burn in her veins, pulsing with her heartbeat. Like a diver who ascends too quickly, she feels light-headed, out of breath. The knowing eyes of her Avatar angel still linger in the waking world. For 15 hours he has driven them, neither stopping nor explaining their destination. Her empty stomach grumbles. She waits for an answer, but the Old Man says nothing.

They drive on in silence, and it begins to rain.

* * *

"We are going to my Chantry."

"What's a Chantry?" It has been 10 hours since his last words, and Amanda is peevish, hungry, stiff and sore.

"We can only speak for a few moments. The Garou — werewolves — do not take kindly to telephone wires around these parts, so we may speak freely. The enemy has no way to hear us out here. If my car were bugged, I would know it. In a few minutes, we will join another highway. We might be heard then. You had questions?"

"A Chantry?" she repeats.

"A stronghold for our kind, for the Awakened." His dark, deep-lined face looks like stone in the early dawn light. "A place free from Paradox."

"How can that be?"

"It exists outside this form of reality, woven from a tapestry of our own choosing."

"Right," she says, "whatever. So where is it?"

"One of its forms is in Phoenix, Arizona. I cannot explain the other to you right now. When you see it, you will understand."

"We haven't stopped?"

"We haven't needed to," he says, and she realizes that the gas gauge still reads "full."

"Speak for yourself," she snaps, "I'm hungry as hell, and thirsty too!"

"My apologies," he replies, taking out a box of wooden matches. "It has been so long since I have needed to worry about such things." He shakes the box, produces a match seemingly from nowhere, and lights it. As sulfur smoke curls in the dim light, she feels the hunger and thirst recede. In moments, she is no longer hungry.

"Nice trick," she says, and he smiles, "We will stop when we arrive. Now hush."

* * *

The sign over the door says "Rare Books," but the first thing she sees is a corpse. The old man steps over it lightly, shutting the door quickly against the harsh Arizona sunlight. The dead man's hands circle his own throat, and Amanda is surprised at how little the sight moves her. *Have I gone so far so fast?* she wonders. She remembers her Avatar and its bloody hands.

"Check his teeth," says the Old Man. She does so. "Am I looking for anything in particular?" she queries.

"Pointed incisors."

"Right. Whatever." She checks. "Nope."

"Good," he replies. In the distance, she hears a train whistle. "Please put him in that closet over there, behind that door." So saying, he moves to a shelf and begins to gather odd gimcracks and a few small books. Amanda shoulders the dead body — a boy, she notes, not quite twenty — and carries him to the closet. His feet topple a stack of paperbacks; one hand drags open a red, leather-bound volume. She props the boy between two brooms and a hanging raincoat, whispers a brief prayer for the dead — her own stab at redemption — and closes the door.

As she moves away, she hears a faint chewing sound, and hopes that it's only rats....

The smell of old books hangs heavy in the room as she rejoins the Old Man. "Come," he says as he walks through the tumble-down, box-and-crate aisle, though a door smaller than the closet's, and into a tiny but elegant room. Books and other things rest under glass in neat display cases. A low table stands before a chrysanthemum-colored damask couch, but the Old Man passes through the room to one wall. He snaps his fingers, and a door opens in the bone-colored wall. He glances to his apprentice, and the two pass through the door.

The hallway is low and poorly lit, though by what she cannot say. The wooden floor creaks softly, and a low whine, like sirens, begins as they mount an ebony staircase that spirals into darkness....

She has no name for him, nothing she can call out. Pitch blackness shrouds her vision and the sirens rise to a deafening pitch. Before she can panic he takes her arm, lightly, and pulls her into a tiny room....

As she crosses the threshold, the sirens die and the little room fades away. For an instant, there is nothing; swirling vertigo steals her breath, stops her heart. She falls...

...and lands painfully, on one arm, in cool white dirt that resembles bone shards. The plain stretches out to the horizon, where it meets a strange night sky. The desert vista is only occasionally broken by reedy patches of grass and bent, wizened trees. A herd of black gazelles stampedes across her line of sight, raising a cloud of bone-colored dust. On a small rise, a mansion of blood-colored stone shimmers in triple moonlight. The Old Man reaches down to help Amanda to her feet, smiling slightly. "Welcome home."

ABC trial 4



Introduction

Reality is subjective, flexible, malleable. Anyone has the power to reshape it; we Awakened simply know how. Ascension is guided by how we choose to apply this gift: for the common good, or for personal gain.

It is for our intentions that we will eventually be judged; by our peers, by ourselves, by the gods, by reality itself.

— Heasha Morningshade, Verbena Adept

Oh, gimme a break!

— Dr. Volcano, Virtual Adept

What Are Chantries?



Mages often use the word "Chantry" to denote one of two things. In its most literal meaning, "Chantry" simply refers to some building in which mages live, study, and generally get away from it all. The word's larger overall meaning includes the physical structure itself, the members, Nodes, Horizon Realms, covenant, heritage, goals, and activities of the place as a whole. Throughout this sourcebook, unless noted otherwise, the word "Chantry" refers to the larger meaning.

As places where mages can be themselves, these strongholds are more often than not hotbeds of intrigue. Even while gathered together for a common cause, Chantry cabals whisper behind closed doors. The specter of hubris, the fatal pride in one's own power, surfaces in the Horizon Realms. Visiting mages and brand-new Disciples alike must stay on guard in strange Chantries. A body falling in a Horizon Realm makes very little noise at all....

How to Use This Book

Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
— William Wordsworth, "Personal Talk"



Chantries provide mages with protection, power, companionship and knowledge. If you have played **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, you will find that while Chantries are in many ways similar to caerns, they are even more important in many respects. While Garou can individually survive without their precious caerns, mages need Chantries desperately if they are to gain real power.

This sourcebook provides a Storyteller with the rules necessary to build and run Chantries of her own creation. This book also includes information about all aspects of Chantries, including cabals, Nodes, Horizon Realms, politics and many other things. Story ideas herein allow Storytellers to use Chantries to their fullest. These rules cover not only Tradition Chantries, but Technocracy and Nephandi Chantries as well. This sourcebook also contains 10 detailed, preestablished Chantries usable immediately in your **Mage** game. These Chantry entries include descriptions of the places' physical structures, their important characters, Horizon Realms, Nodes, goals, struggles, enemies and allies.

Elements of the Chantry



Cabals

Hold a true friend with both hands.
— Nigerian proverb

Mages often gather into small groups based on friendship, mutual goals, or similar motivations. These groups are called "cabals" by Tradition mages and "amalgams" by Convention mages. These groups are the nuclear social units of mage society. While Traditions and Conventions still represent the basic political units, cabals and amalgams have the more practical function of carrying out day-to-day activities.

Cabals may be formal or informal in structure, and membership within cabals varies based on the purpose of the cabal and the mages available. New mages often gather together to form cabals. Spies, magickal terrorists, tutors, and other groups also form cabals of their own. Despite philosophical differences, mages often cross Tradition lines when forming cabals, spurred on, perhaps, by the success of the multi-Convention Technocracy amalgams.

For the most part, members of Tradition cabals join by choice. Amalgams among the Technocracy take a slightly different path. While some amalgams are formed by their members' personal choice, the members of most amalgams are chosen by their superiors in the Construct (Technocracy Chantry).

It is unknown whether Marauders form cabals, but Nephandi often do. The minions of the Nephandi often pretend to be mages of the Traditions or the Conventions, and form cabals and amalgams to conceal their true nature. These Nephandi cabals infiltrate the Traditions and the Conventions alike.

Cabals often gather into larger collectives, thus forming Chantries. However, in some cases a single cabal may own an entire Chantry, though this is rare unless the mages are exceedingly powerful or the Chantry is very weak. Generally, Chantries are made up of between two and six cabals (most often three). In many cases, each cabal within the Chantry is assigned a specific set of duties.

Most Chantry occupants are non-mages: servants, Acolytes, and other hangers-on who keep the places running smoothly. Truly Awakened individuals are rare, especially in the media-saturated Western world.

Types of Chantries

Home is the place where, when you go there,
They have to take you in.
— Robert Frost, "Home Burial"

Most mages have a place they call home — a place to study, recuperate, plan missions, and meet other mages. For Tradition mages, this is the Chantry. Convention mages call their sanctum the Construct. For all practical purposes, both are identical. Chantries are usually home to at least one cabal; three or more groups together are not unusual.

Chantries are vital parts of mage existence. Indeed, the differences among the various mage societies are reflected in the Chantries themselves. Old Chantries founded centuries ago now echo hollowly, their halls empty. Vital new Chantries resemble armed refugee camps, where mages raised in the shadow of the Technocracy plot their strategies of Ascension. In the steel halls of Technocracy

Constructs, ice-souled Technomancers mold the Awakened into the mages of the future.

While all Chantries have physical representations on Earth, many have permanent forms in the Umbra as well. Most exist in Realms unto themselves; these Realms are called Horizon Realms. They are located between the Near Umbra and the Deep Umbra, in the Membrane that separates the two.

Different kinds of Chantries serve various purposes. The Technocracy has similar counterparts. These are described in detail in the "Life in the Traditions" section (pgs. 55-58) in the **Mage** rulebook. Nephandi maintain false Chantries called Labyrinths. Marauders are not known to build Chantries in the usual sense; they sometimes work together, but such unions tend to be temporary.

Nodes

Nodes are Quintessence reservoirs supplying the lifeblood of magick. Nodes manifest at sites where the planet's inherent magickal energies are strong. Chantries on Earth are frequently built atop Nodes, while Chantries with Realms of their own must draw energy from Nodes to fuel the Realms' existence. Many Nodes are required to fuel large or powerful Realms. The value of such places is great, and covert wars have been fought for their possession.

Mages, however, are not alone in their quest for Quintessence wellsprings. Other supernatural entities — werewolves, faeries, even wraiths — have uses for Nodes. Faerie mounds, caerns and haunts also store Quintessence. Battles have been fought for these sites.

Chantries, and even powerful individual mages, have been known to settle disputes or unite with one another by trading or sharing Nodes. The first Chantries were established through such practices. In some cases, Nodes are leased to Chantries or even single cabals within the Chantry. However, because of the value of these sites, the price is extremely high, even by mages' standards. Such bargains are often called Devil's Deeds.

Horizon Realms

Here glimmer strange suns and strange planets
And strange is the crescent Banapis
That sets 'yond the ivy-grown ramparts
Where thicken the dusk of the evening.
— H.P. Lovecraft, "Nathicana"

Mages with steady supplies of Quintessence often use it to create and support Umbral Realms. These Realms, located along the Membrane separating the Near and Deep Umbra, are referred to as Horizon Realms. Mages may control the very physical laws of these Realms. Horizon Realms thus provide mages with safe locations to practice magick without fear of Paradox. Because Horizon Realms are hidden from view, only those who know how to find and enter them may do so. Entrance is gained through special Portals in the fabric of perceived reality.

No two Horizon Realms are the same. Each has its own unique environment, flora and fauna (if any at all), weather, ambience, and magickal qualities. Horizon Realms are in many ways larger and more awe-inspiring than the Chantries that support them, but without the supply of Quintessence provided to them through Nodes, they would cease to exist.

A Note to the Storyteller

It's a shame the way we dance along the edge.
— Concrete Blonde, "Dance Along the Edge"

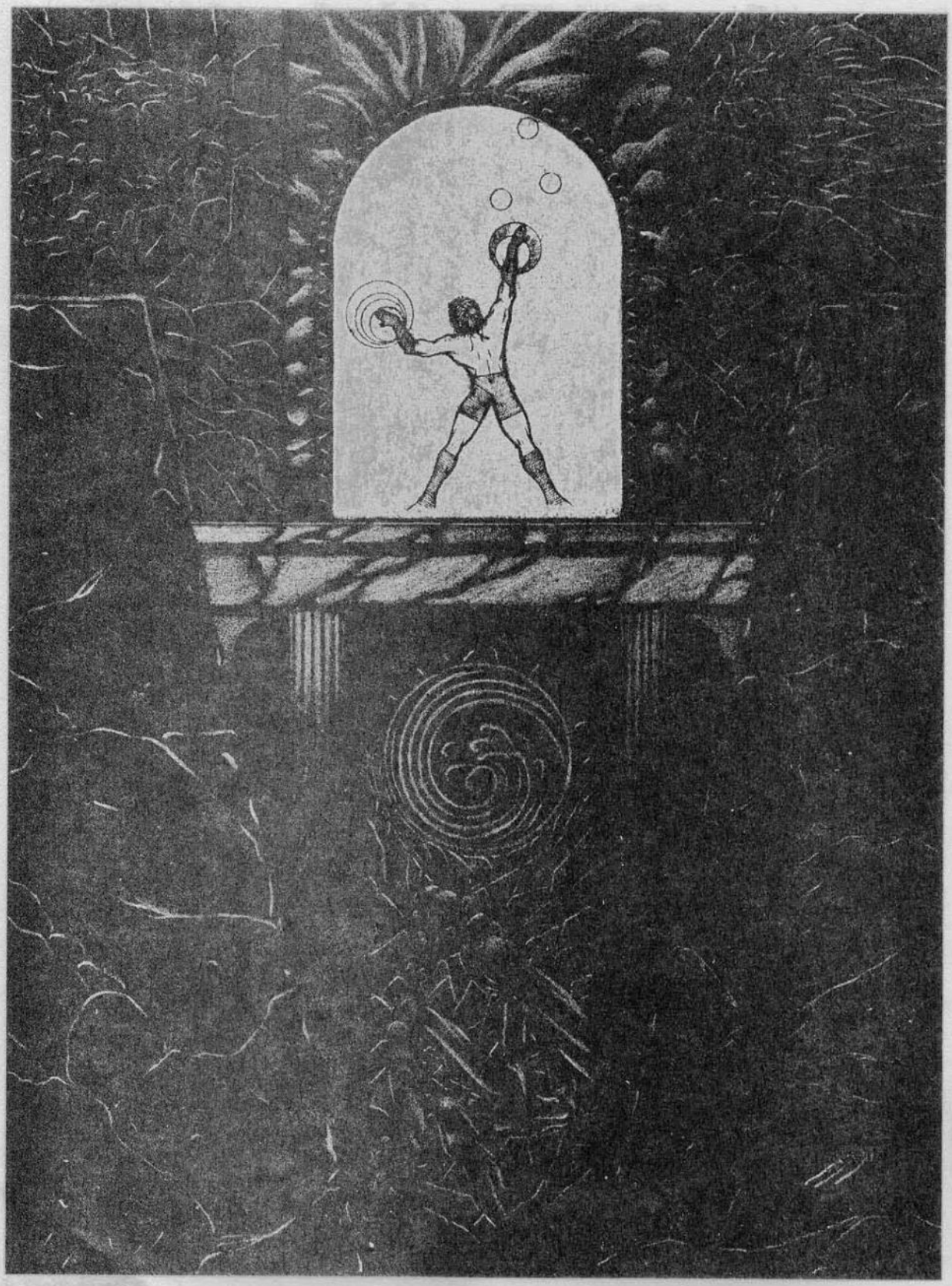
While **Chantries** provides background, standard rules, and information, we've left plenty of room for the Storyteller to play around. As usual, the tale is the thing; all rules presented here are guidelines only. Appendix Two allows personalized Chantry-building, but should not be considered hard gospel.

For clarity, all terminology used throughout this sourcebook derives from the parlance of the Traditions unless otherwise noted. These ancient institutions are the foundation of magickal practices. Furthermore, common terminology is also much easier to understand.

A Warning to Players

Trust not him with your secrets, who, when left alone in your room, turns over your papers.
— Johann Kaspar Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man*

For maximum enjoyment, players should not read the sections detailing either the Chantry write-ups or the enclosed scenario. Mysteries are best unveiled gradually. Knowing the best surprises of a book before play is no fun at all, but the choice, of course, is yours....



Chapter One: Tradition Chantries

The central importance of entering worlds other than our own lies in the fact that the experience leads us to understand that our own world is also a cultural construct. By experiencing other worlds, then, we see our own for what it is and are thereby enabled also to see fleetingly what the real world, the one between our own cultural construct and those other worlds, must in fact be like.

— Walter Goldscmidt, Foreword to *The Teachings of Don Juan*

The following descriptions of various types of Chantries are meant to serve as guidelines for creating new Chantries. Even these listed are only some of the possibilities. While each Chantry is unique, these stereotypes may help a Storyteller develop her own vision.

Tradition Chantries



In the last 300 years, multi-Tradition Chantries have become the dominant force among Tradition mages. They are very diverse, and many of them have gained great power through their ability to meet any threat head-on. Even in the Mythic Age, mages of different Traditions (or Hermetic houses) realized the value of working together toward a common goal. As the Technocracy expanded, cooperation became the norm.

Many Tradition mages feel that multi-Tradition cabals are essential adaptations for survival, a dynamic evolution away from the restrictions of rigid Traditions. Other, more conservative factions embrace the rivalry between the Traditions, though some feel that this rivalry feeds stasis rather than the growth which is so sorely needed. With the Technocracy dominating the Tapestry as it stands, more dissension is the last thing that Tradition mages need.

ABC trial 4

The Ages



Chantries are not static; they grow and change like the people who inhabit them. The ages of a Chantry have been compared to the seasons in a year, from Spring to Winter, with an attendant rise and fall of fortunes. Chantry status and this "change of seasons" are further explored in Chapter Four.

Like mages themselves, Chantries gather power and influence with age, but eventually lose the vitality that led them to these heights in the first place. Eventually, the torch passes from the old to the new, even if that torch must be pried from the elder's fingers!

Newly Established Chantry

Status: 0-2

Chantries established in the last few decades have had trouble finding enough Nodes to support the creation of Horizon Realms. For this reason, Realms are fairly unusual among the newer, weaker Chantries. Some older Chantries have also lost their Realms when the Nodes supplying them were captured or drained.

Most newly established Chantries have between two and four cabals. Members range from Disciples to Masters, though Disciples are obviously in the majority. These cabals are united by common enemies, and their diversity serves them well. However, they lack focus and guidance by their elders, and value their independence more than they value good advice.

A new Chantry is most likely located in a city or a town. It is probably either an estate or a small apartment building, though it might be a large house, a penthouse suite, a loft, or one floor in a building. The Chantry houses the mages, provides a place of study, and probably has more than enough money to support itself.

Most Chantries of this sort have loose internal structures, though this is not always the case. The cabals there tend to be rather independent and prefer a democratic structure. Most have at least a rough sort of covenant, which is usually pretty straightforward and functional. Unlike older covenants, these newer covenants deal with newer issues head-on, while older laws require consistent reinterpretation.

These new Chantries are seldom in direct communication with older Chantries, but the elders tend to watch them from the shadows. Older groups have been known to



use younger Chantries as pawns, though they protect them from the Technocracy when necessary. Most younger Chantries try to establish a name for themselves, but find it difficult. Many have lasting enemies, usually other supernatural creatures (vampires, werewolves, etc.). Young Chantries targeted by established Constructs don't survive for long.

These Chantries' research capacities are very limited, but they often have state-of-the-art information systems, because many Virtual Adepts belong to these newer Chantries. They usually have numerous contacts, but few have spies of any sort.

Respected Chantry

Status: 2-4

Most multi-Tradition Chantries fall into this category. These Chantries have succeeded while many of their peers fell; the war with the Technocracy has taken its toll on the mages, but they have become finely honed as a result. They have gathered many spoils, especially from their fallen comrades, and are strong enough to survive if they keep their wits about them.

These Chantries comprise three to five cabals. Each cabal has a certain place in the collective workings of the group, but follows its own path for the most part. These mages have learned the value of respect, wisdom and secrecy. While the leaders have lost much of their naive vigor, they have replaced it with hard-won experience. There are usually plenty of petty rivalries, but seldom anything serious. These Chantries are far more cautious than either the large or small Chantries.

Most Chantries of this size control three or four Nodes of varying power. These Nodes each produce around 15 to 20 Quintessence per day. Their Nodes are well protected by guardians and other means.

Despite their considerable reserves of power, only a few of these middle-aged Chantries maintain Horizon Realms. The cost is simply too prohibitive. Those that do maintain Horizon Realms seldom create them on a massive scale. While most Realms differ from Earth, few are larger than 25 miles across.

Most Chantry buildings are located in discreet areas such as suburbs. The mages keep their Chantries hidden, using them more as meeting places than as homes. The buildings are usually stockpiled with weapons, equipment, and sizable money reserves.

These Chantries' internal structures vary; most prefer the leadership of a panel of Deacons. Their covenants are usually detailed but outdated, lacking provisions for mass-media and information-system access, high-tech monitors, and the treatment of Rogues. Most of the resident mages have developed "unofficial" policies to deal with these matters, although the specifics are rarely in writing.





The swift rise of computer technology has led to numerous changes in "Summer" Chantries. Some have offered places to the distrusted Virtual Adepts, taking advantage of their expertise to link magicked computers into their information resources. Chantry computer systems are usually protected by elaborate tech-wards. The Cult of Ecstasy has adapted particularly well to high technology; many Cultists enjoy BBSing, faxing stuff all over creation, or hooking into virtual reality for new kinds of sensual stimulation.

Almost all of these Chantries have at least some Status, but its score is seldom above 3. They frequently have Reputations among their peers, but as a rule are not widely known among Sleepers. Numerous contacts allow them to double-check information they receive, but most do not have spies as such. Middle-aged Chantries usually have excellent libraries and laboratories, a number of enemies, a rival or two, and a few allies.

Old and Revered

Status: 5

Doissetep is a prime example of one of these old and revered Chantries, the survivors of the Mythic Age. Less than 15 of these are known to exist, although others may yet remain, sealed up in Realms or fantastically obscure parts of the world.

Most of these Chantries have four to seven cabals. Doissetep, with 10, is exceptionally large, and the internal strife among its cabals would destroy a younger Chantry. Many of the older Chantries limit their membership in some way, with strict initiation tests and outright discrimination. Nor is the lot of new recruits particularly good. "Tenured" members hold high rank and many privileges, while apprentices do the scut work. Orphans, renegades and refugees are frowned upon at most ancient Chantries.

Although outright hostility is rare, resident cabals often secretly work against each other, and individual members carry on rivalries ranging from the petty to the deadly serious. The cabals seldom do more to aid one another than is required of them. Although such Chantries present powerful, unified fronts, constant bickering is the norm, especially among the older members. Some say that decades of magick use has a corrupting influence on mages, ranging from extended Quiet to raging hubris. Others speculate on the resonating effect that Realms seem to have upon long-time residents. Whatever the reason, old Chantries seethe with intrigue and strangeness.

It is believed that most of these Chantries control 10 or more Nodes apiece, each providing from 15 to 40 Quintessence per day. With this much power, they seldom have a problem maintaining Horizon Realms. Many of the residents never leave these Realms, thus prolonging their lifetimes but possibly eroding their sanity.

And what Realms these Chantries have wrought! Few are smaller than 200 miles in diameter, and most have self-contained ecosystems and unique inhabitants. Such Realms are subject to the powers of their magickal founders, and, some say, their moods as well. Old mages do not tolerate upheavals in their Realms, and they police them with iron hands.

Their Chantry buildings are likewise massive in scale. Appearances vary, but all bear the marks of power and leadership. Most employ far more Acolytes than they need, allowing the mages to retreat from worldly interests into their studies or "hobbies." The earthly aspects of these Chantries are often huge, elaborate affairs, and most have one or more outposts in addition to the Earth Chantry itself.

Covenants for these places tend to be dry, lengthy and tedious, painstakingly scribed on rich parchment. Many an apprentice has honed her handwriting copying these endless documents. Any new circumstance must be drafted into the covenants, many of which are thick enough to be bound into books. Leadership often falls to a panel of Deacons, usually one from each cabal or Tradition represented in the Chantry. Absolute dictatorship is not unknown. Politics between council members involves intricate alliances, deceit, trickery and debts. For all of their powers, mages are as prone to human pettiness as any Sleeper.

Few mages have the power to establish a Chantry of such might. Accordingly, these old Chantries are very powerful and command respect. All have high Status and widely known Reputations (good or bad, usually bad...). Though they make and break alliances with alarming regularity, most do so with at least an attempt at honor. Alliances with younger Chantries are backed up with more force these days than in the past, out of concern for Tradition survival. Orphans are not usually welcome at such places.

Magickal tutelage is fairly good, with a good deal of real-world political experience and hands-on sparring to supplement the academic studies. Libraries are massive in scale; it is common practice in these Chantries for all privately owned texts to be bequeathed to the Chantry upon the death of the owning members. The mundane library is usually very large, but somewhat outdated — often by 15 or 20 years, and in some cases by 100 or more! Information systems are on par with those of the middle-aged Chantries, but seldom any better. These Chantries have several dependable contacts and spies in key positions within the Technocracy and other Tradition Chantries. Laboratories are usually quite good, but lower-ranking members get poorer research space.

Types of Chantries



A Chantry is often shaped by its purpose; there are as many different types of Chantries as there are mages to form them. Below are a few of the types most significant to an ongoing chronicle.

War Chantry

Down in the depths of my fiery home
The summons bell will chime
Tempting you and all the earth
To join our sinful kind
There is a job to be done and I'm the one
You people make me do it
Now is the time for your fate and I won't hesitate
To pull you down into this pit.
— Metallica, "Jump in the Fire"

Certain small Chantries devote themselves entirely to one particular purpose. One or two cabals, usually Rogues from other Chantries, unite under a common title and common goal. Membership in such groups is by invitation only, with stringent tests for acceptance. Single-purpose Chantries have short life expectancies; most either disband or go out in style (and often in flames) within the first five years of existence.

War Chantries are perfect examples of such single-minded groups. These Chantries specialize in leading attacks against any one of a variety of enemies. Some are splinter groups from a larger Chantry, but most are free agents pledged to avenge fallen friends. War Chantries are not recent creations. Groups of this type have been around for centuries, but the war with the Technocracy has recently given them far more enemies to battle. Many of these Chantries contain some of the best warriors in existence, but often need not engage in open combat to achieve their aims.

War Chantries consolidate a lot of power, both mystical and otherwise. They have heavily fortified buildings, compact but secure Realms, powerful guardians, and as many Nodes as they can grab and hold. The obsessive nature of War Chantry cabals leads to debts and chances that no rational Chantry would risk, but the sheer fervor of the cabals often triumphs over the odds, at least in the short run. Such places usually burn out after five years or fewer; if their enemies don't get them, exhaustion does.

Internal politics in such a place are simple and to the point. Traitors die, but loyalty is fierce. Squabbles are often resolved in short order for the common good. Research capacities are often limited but intense, and hands-on training is excellent. Outsiders are suspect in War Chantries, and new candidates face harsh tests. Any visitor allowed to stay will be watched at all times.

The intense nature of these Chantries lends itself well to storytelling. Perhaps a player must deliver an important message to a Chantry hostile to her Tradition (i.e. a Virtual Adept visiting a Dreamspeaker Lodge). An obsessive warrior may get some sort of fixation on a player character and drag his whole Chantry into the affair. Given the nature of player characters, the players themselves might set up a War Chantry of their own or join an existing one, in which case enemies, trauma, and other frictions of total war will take their toll on the cabal.

Exploration Chantry

For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart. On any path that may have heart, there I travel, and the only worthwhile challenge is to traverse its full length. And there I travel, looking, looking, breathlessly.

— Don Juan, from Carlos Castaneda's *The Teachings of Don Juan*

Exploration Chantries exist to define reality, much as do the Void Engineers of the Technocracy. Instead of imposing their own reality upon the cosmos, however, they simply record what they find, allowing others to interpret it as they will. Today, most mages consider the members of the few remaining Exploration Chantries to be dreamers without dreams, mucking about on the fringes of Ascension.

While Exploration Chantries investigate the limits of static reality and the Technocracy's stranglehold on human thought, such places are not well regarded by more warlike or practical mages. Some even hint of connections to the Void Engineers or Nephandi, as the explorers seek out secrets in the Deep Umbra.

Exploration Chantries usually house more than two cabals, and these mages spend most of their time in research and experimentation. Most specialize in astral travel, spirit walking, and consciousness alteration through virtual reality, drugs, fasting and other means. Dreamspeakers, Virtual Adepts and Ecstasy Cultists usually found Exploration Chantries, which doesn't help their image among more conservative Traditions. At least one Son of Ether Chantry orbits the moon, decked out in Victorian splendor and blissfully unconcerned that its existence violates scientific reality (these mad scientists are rumored to have a pact with the faeries to protect them from the Void Engineers).

Exploration Chantries tap into Nodes that few others even notice. Most have small Horizon Realms, but the Chantries' true focus is outside of those Realms. Why explore what you know you can create? Exploration Chantries often nestle in remote and inaccessible places, such as mountaintops, ocean depths and deserts. Research facilities tend to be extensive, as most research cabals tend to be concerned with academics of one sort or another. Internal morale is usually good, with lots of debate but few major problems.

Explorer mages are an inquisitive lot, much like player characters. Stories involving Exploration Chantries might include a possible breach in the barriers of perceived reality, an assault by strange and unknown forces, or a visit from another group bent on proving a pet theory at the expense of the Chantry's own.

Ancestral Chantries

They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

— Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Letter to Mallet du Pan

Many of the earliest Chantries were Ancestral, or controlled by one certain Tradition. Though sorcerers of all types have banded together since the Mythic Age, many still felt most comfortable among their own kind. Ancestral Chantries now seem to be a thing of the past, replaced by newer ways of life. Still, some Tradition mages strive for their return.

Some Ancestral Chantries have survived along the outer fringes of the Horizon, powerful but inflexible. Steeped in the ways of their ancient heritage, they lack diversity and find it hard to survive outside their own Realms. Inside the Chantry walls, it is hard to tell the 20th century from the fifth century. This embrace of stasis has led most such Chantries to long, bitter Winters.

Hereditary Chantries

A number of smaller Chantries are actually extended family groups. The Crombey Farm in Chapter Five is one such Chantry. Hereditary Chantries are common among Verbena, Dreamspeakers, Euthanatos and Celestial Chorus mages, who often raise their children to shrug aside consensual reality. Among the Euthanatos, there are family Chantries composed solely of the first son of each generation. All-female Chantries are common among the Verbena, while some member of the Order of Hermes keep the old ways alive within their family groups.

Hereditary Chantries tend to form stronger bonds than other types, but can fall victim to familial trust, hubris or isolation.

ABC trial 4

Magickal Tutelage

Wouldn't you believe it,
It's just my luck.
No recess!
No recess!
— Nirvana, "School"

Training at a college of magick is far more detailed and diverse than simple apprenticeship. Students are trained not only in the philosophies of magick, but in Continuum Lore, a general overview of other Traditions and the Conventions. Continuum Lore may be purchased as a Knowledge and is generally only available through college training.

Most colleges have at least one tutor from each Tradition, but this is not always the case. Virtual Adepts have found it hard to gain acceptance as either students or teachers in these Chantries. The Order of Hermes and the Sons of Ether show the most interest in College Chantries, where they often take advantage of Chantry resources to conduct experiments in their spare time.

Admissions Policies

Students may come from either the dwindling ranks of apprentices or talented Sleepers whose Avatars show promise. The former must pass though a board of sponsorship and review, while the latter are usually recruited off the street or from another Chantry's Acolytes. The dedication, character and talent of the "applicant" are weighed heavily before admission is granted.

Tuition

Knowledge is not without its price. In most cases, students are required to perform a number of services for their tutors, ranging from cleaning windows to capturing or killing enemies. Students are often put into situations that require them to think things through and make a sacrifice of some sort. This tests both knowledge and character.

Even after graduation, students remain in debt to their school (and you thought student loans were bad!). Such debts can be repaid with service or with arcane books and Talismans. Generous alumni receive additional assistance from the Chantry, while "defaulters" suffer damage to their reputations, and perhaps worse.

Fellowships

Some colleges boast fellowships, small organizations comprising both male and female mages. These fellowships, sometimes called fraternities, compete with each other in debates and special competitions. Fellowships stress honor, achievement and excellence through skill and hard work.

Grading

As in any other school, magick students are tested and graded, rated by degrees as they face certain challenges. Test scores may be provided to whatever Chantry the mage joins upon leaving the college, and may count for or against a new candidate.

Disciplinary Codes

While each Tradition has its own distinctive views of acceptable behavior, each college has a set of codes of conduct. Specifics vary; a Celestial Chorus-sponsored college will have strong restrictions upon sexual relationships, while schools backed by the Cult of Ecstasy might actually encourage such "contact."

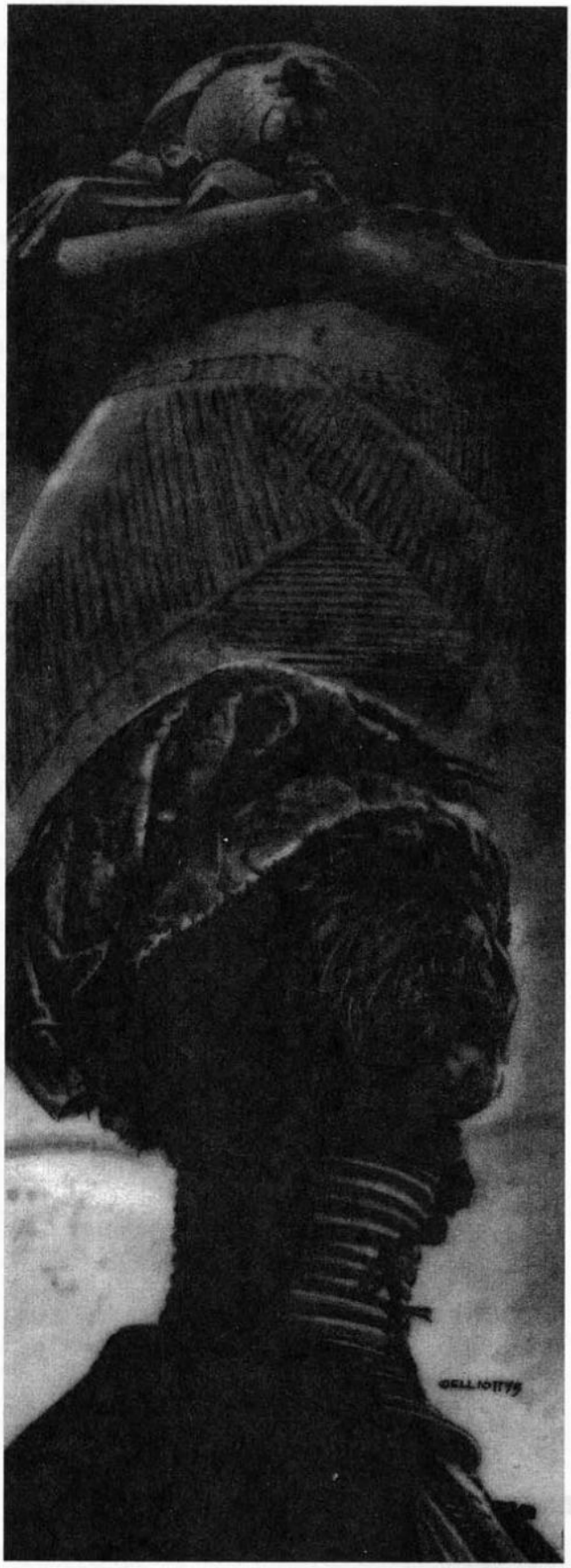
Honor and responsibility are the keystones of disciplinary codes. A mage without either quality is a danger to everything around him. Student who constantly violate these ethics might even be punished with Gilgul, for the greater good. Most punishments, however, are far less severe, ranging from revocation of privileges to expulsion.

Graduation

Students must display a certain level of competence in the Spheres before graduating. Other skills usually play some part in magickal "degree requirements." Knowledges like Cosmology, Culture or Occult; Skills like Leadership, Meditation or Technology; or Talents like Athletics, Brawl (Martial Arts) or Expression may be required to graduate.

The Alumni

Graduates of a sorcerer's college form strong bonds with their classmates. These bonds can lead to any number of story possibilities. Rivalries, partnerships, love affairs, and master-student interplay ("We meet again... but this time I am the master!") all provide hooks for the Storyteller to draw players into adventure. Characters may well take Backgrounds like Mentor, Allies or Destiny through their association with a magick college.



College Chantries

I will give you truth and understanding
I will give you wit and wisdom fair,
Precious gifts beyond compare.
We can build a world of wonder,
I will make you all Aware...
— Rush, "Cygnus X1, Book II, Hemispheres"

All Chantries are centers of learning, but certain Chantries, known as College Chantries, devote the entirety of their resources to the education of the newly Awakened. College Chantries provide neophyte mages with the most well-rounded and intense magickal tutelage in the Tellurian. Through these Chantries' efforts, those destined for greatness are honed for the tasks ahead of them.

These holdovers from the Mythic Age experienced a resurgence during the Victorian Era, before the lid of scientific reality was slammed in place and locked. Today, there are few of them left. Still, these few serve a valuable purpose for those lucky enough to attend.

Magick colleges are very rare; classes are small, usually comprising three to eight pupils. In the Mythic Age, when many such colleges were founded, students filled expansive halls and jockeyed for their tutors' attention. Nowadays, the halls stand all but empty, marvelous monuments to bygone prosperity. Acolytes and servants make up the majority of the Chantry population. Despite this, getting into a sorcerer's college remains difficult, and the work is even more demanding than in times past.

Most of the remaining colleges were founded in the 1800s, although a number of smaller ones have arisen during the heat of the Ascension War. Only three of the ancient schools of the Mythic Age are still known to exist: Nerentus University in the Cloud Realm, Yulen Academy of Internal Mythology in the Dream World of Orthos, and The School of Ghenrojok in the Kingdom of Styrkar.

An entire chronicle could be built around a group of students at a magick college. Students face all kinds of challenges, including peer rivalries, Quiet-ridden instructors, and literally hellish final exams.

Squatter Chantries

There have always been what are referred to as Squatter Chantries, Chantries with no Nodes to sustain them. Such places have bad reputations from their habit of raiding other Nodes, carrying away the Quintessence for their own use. Although much like other small Chantries in most respects, Squatter Chantries have no Realms, few magickal protections, and perennially low Status.

Squatter Chantries are common among the Hollow Ones and other Orphans, as they receive no assistance from

other mages. There are, however, plenty of younger multi-Tradition and single-Tradition cabals and Chantries without permanent Quintessence supplies. These places are targeted hard by the Technocracy, for they have low resistance and few resources. Squatter Chantries often base themselves out of abandoned buildings, large apartments, or out-of-the-way houses. Others remain completely mobile.

As Squatter Chantries have so little to lose, more powerful cabals use them as pawns in their own battles, offering help or Quintessence in return for "just a little favor."

Such Chantries need not be ragtag collections of outlaws, although this is the popular image. Some merely function as temporary headquarters for established mages on the run, while others are heavily fortified strongholds cut off from a permanent supply of Prime energy. Squatter Chantries usually house between one and three small cabals, sharing a sparse covenant and meager research facilities. Internal relations tend to involve a lot of bickering but tight friendships in the face of adversity. Strong internal rifts might be deadly not only to the Chantry, but to everyone in it as well.

Players will probably form a Squatter Chantry of their own at some point; story possibilities include a search for Quintessence reserves, hiding out from a powerful enemy, facing off with a second party over turf, or internal dissension that threatens to bring the whole thing crumbling down.

The Chantries



Each of the following Chantries includes a list of the resident mages and detailed write-ups for members of potential interest. The background, Nodes, Realms, denizens and residents, internal and external relations, history, and research capabilities are outlined. Possible stories usable with each Chantry are also included. The Convention and Labyrinth descriptions in Chapters Two and Three follow the same format. Rules pertaining to Chantry construction are given in Chapter Five, while Appendix Two features an optional point-based system of construction. The "Harvest Time" scenario in Chapter Five reintroduces Samuel "The Skinner" Haight in a short adventure set within a fully detailed Chantry.

Chantry Listings

The 10 Chantries detailed in Chapters One through Three follow a similar format. The specific aspects are detailed in Chapter Four.

The name of the Chantry, Construct, or Labyrinth.

A brief introduction to the Chantry.

Cabals

A listing of the cabals who call the Chantry home, including their history, purpose and general nature. Many cabal listings include a character of note, to represent the tone of the cabal, to offer a template for other characters of the Realm, and to give the players someone with whom to interact. Each sample character suggests many story possibilities and adds to the atmosphere of the Chantry as a whole. Because of the scope of this book, many cabals cannot be represented by a pregenerated character, but those included here may serve as inspiration for others.

Nodes

A brief listing of the various Quintessence supplies for the Chantry.

The Horizon Realm

A description of the Chantry's Realm (if one exists), including its environment, inhabitants, Sphere ratings, and the resonance and "season" of the Realm.

The Chantry

The Chantry itself, along with its earthly manifestations, history, purpose, and internal relations.

External Relations

The way the Chantry is viewed by others, including its allies and enemies, status, visitor policies, and research capacity.

Stories

The theme and mood of the Chantry in general, with five story suggestions.

Doissetep: Chantry of Cal Ladeim, The Lands of Thunder and Twilight

There is strong shadow where there is much light.
— Johann von Goethe, *Götz von Berlichingen*



It stands alone, the greatest of the Tradition Chantries: Doissetep. Its cyclopean towers, black, ominous walls, and gargoyle-encrusted stonework exude power, much like the Realm around it. Located in the Shard Realm of Forces, Doissetep crackles with power and intrigue. If a case is to be made for the resonance effect, Doissetep is a prime example.

Doissetep is nigh invulnerable to external assault. However, it rots from within: intrigue abounds, and the sorcerers of the Chantry are at odds with one another over who shall rule it next.

Cabals

This Chantry is the largest known; 10 mage cabals call Doissetep their home. Each is dedicated to its own agenda, and all wish to dominate the Chantry. Only a few hold real power, and Ascension is largely forgotten amid the hubris-fueled quest for dominance. Doissetep is a dangerous place for visitors and residents alike. No one is safe from the turbulent Winter of this mighty place.

The Drua'shi – Seekers of Truth

Members: Porthos (Order of Hermes - Master), Alonius (Order of Hermes - Master), Hue de Frome (Verbena - Master), Lillian Weihl (Verbena - Master), Kwon Hsu (Akashic Brotherhood - Master)

Background: The cabal has existed for centuries, though its present members joined long after its initial foundation. Still, these mages form the eldest cabal of the Chantry. They hold tremendous power, but are no longer able to stem the tide of usurpers. They are quickly losing power, falling victim to the same tactics they once used: lies, deceit, conspiracy, blackmail, murder and worse. They cling to their power and place too much confidence in their servants, many of whom secretly serve the three contenders for power: the Janissaries, the Followers of Bonisagus, and the Followers of Tytalus.

While the Drua'shi are not the recognized leaders of the Chantry, their collective voice still carries tremendous weight in the council, and three of their own (Porthos, Lillian Weihl, and Kwon Hsu) sit as members of the Panel of Deacons. These mages continue to do things the old way, by custom and strict adherence to Doissetep's covenant. In this respect, they have succeeded. The Chantry is known for its adherence to the ancient practices of loyalty, honor and politics. Yet, this has never quelled greed, lust, hatred and secret disrespect.

The cabal meets once per week to discuss the situation of the Chantry and decide the best course of action. Its members fear the other cabals and know they will be quietly assassinated if they appear to be a threat. Two of the Drua'shi's members have already made that mistake. To keep themselves alive, they distract their rivals by keeping Doissetep fully entrenched in the Ascension War.

The Drua'shi has many loyal servants and maintains eyes and ears nearly everywhere. Despite this, the cabal's rivals have maintained a great deal of secrecy. Accordingly, the cabal takes an interest in all new members of the Chantry, hoping to utilize them as pawns. The Drua'shi especially desires field agents, because the cabal no longer leaves Doissetep for any reason. Its members fear they would be ambushed and assassinated; the murders could then be attributed to the Technocracy.

Porthos

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Caregiver

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 7, Wits 4

Abilities: Alchemy 5, Alertness 2, Awareness 7, Cosmology 7, Culture 2, Dodge 2, Enigmas 7, Etiquette 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Intuition 5, Leadership 6, Linguistics 5, Medicine 2, Meditation 5, Melee 2, Occult 5, Research 6, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 5, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Destiny 3, Dream 5, Library 15

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 5, Forces 6, Life 4, Mind 5, Matter 3, Prime 5, Spirit 4, Time 3

Willpower: 10

Arete: 9

Quintessence: 16

Paradox: 10

Background: Porthos was born to an urban craft family in Breslau, Germany in 1403. Porthos became an alchemist and was renowned for his magickal elixirs, which could cure everything from the common cold to the Black Death. A mage of Doissetep realized Porthos was an Orphan of tremendous potential and took him in.

Porthos' wife and children died at the hands of Hermetic mages of another Chantry. He sought revenge, but in the end he could not take the lives of his family's murderers. This has haunted his soul ever since, and he has never forgiven himself for what he believes was his betrayal of his family.

Porthos has dedicated his life to the acquisition of magickal knowledge, hoping to regain self-confidence and atonement, but has achieved neither. While immensely powerful and for the most part a loving, fatherly figure, he considers himself weak and unworthy. Porthos shows particular interest in those who remind him of his children. He occasionally suffers from the delusion that certain individuals are actually his children. He cares for them, watches over them, and scolds them as any near-Oracle father-figure would. In many cases, his "fatherly punishments" lead to the deaths and/or insanity of his wards, which of course only reinforces his guilt.

Porthos does not like being a Deacon of Doissetep, but he fears betrayal and trickery from all. Porthos has never killed anyone intentionally, though many are in their graves because of his occasional lack of self-control. For the most part, he keeps his own political clout through sheer respect and power. Everyone fears Porthos not because he is devious and evil, but because he is near-omnipotent and insane.

Image: Porthos is a gaunt man of average height. He has greasy, straight, black hair, which he seldom combs or washes. He wears antique bifocals most of the time, and generally dresses in a gray pinstriped suit with a vest. He also wears a gold watch that tells the time at whatever place a person visualizes while looking at the watch. He wears a platinum ring with a large ruby in it, which belonged to his own long-dead Mentor. Occasionally, he can be found dancing nude about the hallways and singing old folk songs, wandering about in a pink bathrobe, or dressed in armor and claiming he is going off to fight some sort of mythical creature in another Realm (and he often returns with strange Tass).



Roleplaying Notes: Porthos is friendly, fatherly, honorable, gentle and utterly insane. Power radiates from him in a tangible aura; when he gets angry, the static electricity is so great it causes everyone's hair (including his own) to stand on end. He protects and assists those who remind him of his children. He avoids those he dislikes. He will protect himself, but he prefers not to kill. However, his sleepwalking raids are often quite deadly for those who happen to be wandering the halls for a midnight snack.

Sanctum: Porthos maintains a series of large, octagonal chambers made entirely of mahogany and gold. They vary in size, though the central chamber is over 100 feet across and 30 feet high. The chambers are filled with countless magickal devices, Talismans, fetishes, animal trophies, Tass in various forms, antiques, junk and several cats, along with countless vials, beakers and books.

The Janissaries

Members: Caeron Mustai (Order of Hermes - Master), Robin Herod (Verbena - Master), Geneva Bye (Order of Hermes - Master), Tokiko Anzue (Akashic Brotherhood - Master)

Background: The Janissaries have a history dating to the early 1700s. The cabal became a highly respected addition to Doissetep shortly after its formation in Turkey, and it has a history of great success in the war against the Technocracy.

Many would say the Janissaries are the real leaders of Doissetep, and that Caeron Mustai is the real leader of the Janissaries. The cabal wields great power and commands tremendous respect because of its past successes against the Technocracy.

The Janissaries await the proper time to make their move for the seats held by the Drua'shi. They know the old mages' schemes and are playing along for now, hoping some other rival cabal will do their job for them. This cabal acts with precision and unity; that's how Caeron wants it, and he gets what he wants.

In the last few years, Caeron has claimed a seat on the Panel of Deacons and has become its most outspoken member. He is especially loved by many of the younger mages, who have yet to tire of blood and battle. He has fully backed the plans of the Drua'shi, pretending to support

them. However, his own cabal actually implements the plans and accordingly gets the most credit for their success.

The cabal has spies everywhere; many of the household servants, especially those who serve the Drua'shi and Followers of Tytalus, are Janissary spies. Caeron has begun using Rogue mages to carry out assassinations for him; in this manner, he has already removed one member of the Drua'shi.

The Janissaries are the bitter enemies of the New World Order, and this Convention is the cabal's first target in any conflict. Perhaps the Janissaries have missed the similarities between the two groups.

Caeron Mustai

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Visionary

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Brawl 5, Computer 3, Cosmology 3, Culture 3, Dodge 3, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 5, Expression 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 2, Intuition 3, Law (Chantry covenant) 4, Leadership 5, Linguistics 5, Medicine 4, Meditation 4, Melee 5, Occult 5, Research 4, Science 1, Subterfuge 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 3, Avatar 5, Dream 2, Influence 2, Library 5

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 3, Forces 5, Life 4, Matter 2, Mind 2, Prime 4, Spirit 3

Willpower: 9

Arete: 7

Quintessence: 14

Paradox: 6

Background: Caeron Mustai was born the son of a Bedouin leader in Syria. He was kidnapped by a mage of Doissetep 200 years ago, when he was 12. He was taken to the Chantry and instructed in the ways of the Order of Hermes. He has since become one of the most powerful and ambitious mages in the Chantry.

Over the last 200 years, Mustai has been a soldier, a traveler, a sheik and a spy. He has served Doissetep well, and now the relatively young mage wishes for Doissetep to reward him by making him the undisputed leader of the Chantry, either as a Pedagogue or, preferably, as the Deacon with the most influence. He has made many enemies, but his allies are secretive and numerous.

Caeron Mustai has deluded himself, falling victim to his own hubris as he seeks the destruction of the New World Order. Given the chance, he would turn Doissetep into a vast war machine. Mustai may soon set wheels into motion that cannot be stopped.



He has few interests other than political power; his other pastimes include killing Technomancers, discovering rare and perverse pleasures of the mind, body, and spirit, and forming alliances and pacts with supernatural creatures. He always uses others, especially younger mages, as pawns in performing missions and acquiring objects for him.

Image: Caeron is a broad-shouldered, handsome, athletic-looking man apparently in his mid-30s. His skin is tanned, he has blue-black, straight, medium-length hair, and he sports a goatee. He dresses in stylish, custom-fitted suits for business and can be seen wandering about in jogging suits or jeans and T-shirts when relaxing. He always walks at a quick pace, and he always speaks confidently in a deep, accented voice.

Roleplaying Notes: Caeron is a highly adept political shark. He is friendly to the right people and never openly declares his hatred of anyone. He prefers to do his dirty work himself, but does so from the shadows. He never reveals secrets unless he gains greater knowledge in return, and he picks at others through feigned friendship or sharp and confusing conversation. In Caeron's mind, there are two categories of people: enemies and potential enemies.

Sanctum: Caeron maintains a 10-room complex in one of Doissetep's ells. His sanctum is decorated with antiques, though it has many modern conveniences looted from the Technomancers. However, Caeron spends much of his time in the Barcelona aspect of the Chantry. There, free from the threat of enemies' telepathic probes, he plots his strategies for continual accumulation of power.

The Fraternal Society of Bonisagus

Members: John Visballi (Order of Hermes - Master), Avis Malone (Order of Hermes - Master), Ronald Veatch (Order of Hermes - Master), Georgina Milono (Order of Hermes - Master)

Background: The Fraternal Society of Bonisagus was founded shortly after the collapse of the Mythic Age. Many of the Hermetic mages who belonged to House Bonisagus wished to keep their House alive and so transformed it into a fraternity. Over the centuries the fraternity dwindled; now only this one cabal bears the legacy of the once-glorious House Bonisagus.

The members of the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus are ruthless conspirators and merciless fighters against the Technocracy. They are very powerful and deal harshly with those who openly oppose them. However, they are greatly challenged by the Janissaries, whose methods are equally cunning and deadly. The cabal has no idea of the threat posed to their plans by the Glass Eye.

The Bonasagi have as their purpose the destruction of Metropolis2, a powerful Technomancer stronghold. They constantly strive toward this goal, providing freedom fighters in the Realm with as much food and equipment as they can smuggle in. The cabal has many spies in the Realm, but one of its own spies is a double agent for the Technocracy.

The cabal also has spies in Doissetep and in several other Tradition Chantries. Its members seldom spend any time in political debates, preferring open action or covert favors. Avis Malone suspects that there are Nephandi in Doissetep, and she's attempting to find out where.

Avis Malone

Nature: Rebel

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Astrology 4, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Computer 3, Culture 2, Dodge 2, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 2, Expression 1, Firearms 4, Intimidation 3, Intuition 5, Law (Chantry's covenant) 3, Leadership 2, Linguistics 5, Occult 5, Photography 4, Research 5, Science 4, Stealth 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3, Technology 4

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 4, Avatar 4, Destiny 3, Dream 5, Influence 2, Library 5

Spheres: Entropy 2, Forces 5, Life 3, Mind 4, Matter 4, Prime 3, Spirit 3

Willpower: 10

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 18

Paradox: 2

Background: Avis was born in San Francisco; she was the illegitimate daughter of an opium dealer and a prostitute. She ran away from her mother and became a prostitute herself. She soon learned she had the power to make others do as she pleased. By accessing her johns' thoughts, she could give them pleasure or pain, or simply kill them.

Avis left San Francisco and traveled until she reached New York. One night a strange man came to her and offered her a great deal of money to spend the weekend on his estate. She found herself unable to refuse him and was taken to Doissetep, where she became an apprentice.

Avis is a strong-willed woman who refuses to be bullied or controlled. She supports the status quo politically, but she is cunning and ruthless. She constantly strives for both magickal and political power.

She is a true rebel at heart. Rather than turn against Technomancer magick, she has studied it and knows how to use it to her advantage. Her ability to counter it, and her ability to work around Paradox, are most amazing, and most certainly result from knowledge of her enemies' ways.

Avis enjoys photography in her spare time, traveling the world to take her pictures. She is quite skilled; some of her photos have appeared in best-selling magazines. She is also known to practice sadomasochism. She takes great pleasure in conquering all the new apprentices who are attractive, bold or charismatic, though her interest in them fades rapidly.

Image: Avis is a lithe, athletic woman in her early 40s. She has long, curly auburn hair. She dresses in jeans, T-shirts, and a black leather jacket bearing the symbol of House Bonisagus of the Order of Hermes. When acting in



an official capacity as a mage of the Chantry, she dresses in attractive dresses of the latest fashion. She speaks with a soft, deep voice that commands attention, though she seldom speaks among crowds. She wears a nosering and shades, and usually carries a handgun and a camera when traveling abroad.

Roleplaying Notes: Avis is rough and tough when she needs to be (or when it is fun). However, she is usually reserved, allowing John Visballi to lead the Bonasagi and represent the cabal to the Chantry. She enjoys manipulating people to ascertain their attraction for her.

Sanctum: Avis maintains a large abode covering one entire floor of the main castle keep. She keeps her technology here, though many of the mages do not like it. However, only one large room serves as her laboratory; the others are very personal and cozy. She has a dog named Ambrose and a large, enclosed aquarium of bizarre sea creatures from Earth and other Realms. She also has an S&M room filled with various torture/pleasure devices.

The Followers of Tytalus

Members: Klaus Hortemone (Order of Hermes - Master), Juanita Quave (Order of Hermes - Master), Leontine Overmyer (Order of Hermes - Master), Beatrice Rentschler (Order of Hermes - Master), Winifred Tiagonce (Order of Hermes - Master)

Background: The Followers of Tytalus are a fraternal order much like the Bonisagi. The fraternity was established shortly after the Mythic Age came to a close. It has since dwindled in size, but there are three other known Followers of Tytalus cabals that do not hold membership in Doissetep.

The Followers of Tytalus are also in the running for control of the Chantry. They consider the Janissaries their biggest rivals, and see the Bonisagi as a threat as well. They are considering assassinating Caeron, but have not yet decided when or even how they should do it. It seems Caeron is good at staying alive.

The Tytali have other goals as well. There was a house within the Order of Hermes known as the Tremere. The Tremere turned their backs on humanity, became vampires, and are now voluntary outcasts from the Order of Hermes. The Tytali would like to see many of their former brethren reaccepted into the Order of Hermes. In fact, many Hermetic mages believe that the Tytali are in league with many Tremere, maybe even the entire clan. If so, who knows what they have planned?

The Followers of Tytalus have long supported the Drua'shi, because the cabal supported their efforts concerning the Tremere. Nonetheless, with the aging cabal's dwindling health and the inevitability of its collapse, the Tytali are now forced into the fray for control of the Chantry. They fear the Janissaries will use the Chantry as a personal weapon, preventing the Followers from accomplishing their own goals concerning the Tremere. The Followers of Tytalus have a long-running feud with the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus, but do not despise that group as much as they do the Janissaries. They do fear that certain Bonisagi may be in league with the Nephandi.

The Followers of Tytalus enjoy competing among themselves and against other cabals. They are quick to call for duels against those they can defeat, thus proving themselves magickally superior to them, but prefer to conspire against those of superior power. Still, they are considered very aggressive and violent in comparison to the other leading cabals.

Klaus Hortemone

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Director

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: (note that Physical Attributes are greater than normally possible because of the vampiric blood in his veins) Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Cosmology 4, Culture 3, Dodge 4, Drive 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 4, Expression 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Intuition 3, Investigation 3, Law (Chantry law, Austrian law and United States federal) 4, Leadership 5, Linguistics 5, Melee 6, Occult 5, Research 3, Stealth 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 4, Avatar 5, Destiny 5, Influence 4, Library 5, Mentor 2

Spheres: Entropy 4, Forces 5, Life 4, Mind 4, Prime 4, Spirit 3, Time 2

Ghoulish Powers: In addition to his enhanced Physical Attributes, Hortemone has the natural power to see in



pitch darkness (Forces 1). He can grow claws and fangs at will (Life 3). He also possesses two levels of vampiric Thaumaturgy (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**), which is a mutated form of Hermetic magick.

Willpower: 10

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 9

Background: Klaus Hortemone was born into a Swiss noble house. He was formerly a manorial lord, abbot of three abbeys, and bishop of two bishoprics in France. Hortemone was selected by the Order of Hermes to become an apprentice late in life, at the age of 40, because of the wealth and influence he could bring to the declining Chantry.

Hortemone enjoys testing himself, and he strives to develop his mind, body, soul and Arete beyond those of his fellow mages, in hopes of becoming as great and powerful as he can. Hortemone is an expert swordsman and fencing master who trains and spars with many of the inhabitants of the Chantry. He is very interested in the stage magic of earthly prestidigitators, and often uses this form of "conjuring" as a shield against Paradox.

Hortemone spends a great deal of time on Earth and has strong connections to the Tremere. He is, in fact, an independent ghoul, having acquired a tremendous amount of powerful Kindred blood through his work. He hopes one day to reunite the Tremere with the Order of Hermes, and most of his efforts are directed toward this. While his loyalties lie with the Chantry, he is not above entangling young mages in missions for the Tremere and against other vampire clans. He pays generously for these services, but they are often very dangerous.

Image: Hortemone is a man of 50. He has a very stocky, athletic build. He has short, silvery-gray hair and is always clean-shaven. His eyes are a bright emerald green, and his face bears a scar from an old sword wound. He never displays emotion of any sort and is always a well-composed gentleman. He speaks with a mixed French and German accent; when speaking of magick he lapses into Latin with ease.

Roleplaying Notes: Hortemone is always in control. He never loses his cool and never displays open hatred, love or fear. In fact, the only time he laughs and smiles is while fencing; the sport is his true love. He is a manipulator and a killer, but he has never wavered from the path of Ascension.

Sanctum: Hortemone resides in a labyrinthine complex below the Chantry, and he is believed to be one of the few mages who knows all the secret passages and tunnels and where they lead. Hortemone's sanctum is much like a modern home, though there are a great many antiques. His study is filled with books, televisions that can pick up earthly broadcasts, and various magickal Talismans of great power. He has his own live-in manservant named Clive, who assists him in many ways.

The Glass Eye

Members: Walter Thrun (Euthanatos - Master), Julianno Galbrese (Order of Hermes - Master), Christophe Fenaes (Verbena - Master), Marina Rampullo (Cult of Ecstasy - Master), Aida-Wedo Mangum (Verbena - Master)

Background: The cabal known as the Glass Eye formed over 150 years ago. It served as a leading cabal of Sentinels. Its members proved so dedicated and skillful that the cabal was honored with a permanent position as head of Chantry security. The Glass Eye is almost like an external police force; its authority is second only to the Drua'shi. In addition, these mages are now the overseers of the Horizon Realm and its inhabitants. They guard the Portals and serve as the liaisons to many other Chantries.

The cabal secretly wishes to control Doissetep. It has kept its position very secret, and no one knows its members are responsible for the death of one of the Drua'shi. The cabal is not above murder, extortion and bribery, though most is done in the name of the Chantry. The cabal members are very loyal to one another and are slowly ingratiating themselves with the members of the other leading cabals.

The Glass Eye has spies everywhere. In addition, it is in league with two Nephandi and three Technomancers. These mages are not loyal to their causes, and they thus barter with the Glass Eye, providing information concerning the Technocracy's and Nephandi's activities. The Glass Eye is the best informed of all the cabals. It shares much of its knowledge with the Drua'shi and some with the rival cabals, thus putting all sides in debt to it. Though the Glass Eye feigns loyalty to each of the rival cabals, it refuses to display any loyalties openly. It wants the rival powers to eliminate one another, thereby allowing the cabal to take over with ease.

Aida-Wedo Mangum

Nature: Caregiver

Demeanor: Caregiver

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Verbena

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Awareness 5, Cosmology 4, Culture 3, Dodge 1, Enigmas 5, Etiquette 4, Expression 5, Herbalism 5, Intimidation 4, Intuition 5, Leadership 3, Linguistics 5, Meditation 4, Melee 1, Occult 5, Research 5, Stealth 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 6, Destiny 5, Dream 5, Influence 4, Library 5

Spheres: Entropy 4, Forces 3, Life 5, Mind 4, Prime 4, Spirit 5, Time 5

Willpower: 9

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 15

Paradox: 5

Background: Aida-Wedo Mangum was a priestess of the Ibo tribe in Africa before she was captured by the greedy allies of the whites and traded to them for rum. She lived a difficult life as a slave, for work on the Saint Domingue sugar cane farms was far tougher than work on other plantations. Her ability to provide her fellow slaves with a sense of hope and self-respect made her a threat. She was one of the founders of Voodun; through her efforts, the slaves of formerly enemy tribes united under common spiritual beliefs.

Aida-Weno's role in Voodun's creation drew notice, and she was purchased, freed and apprenticed by a Verbena mage. Aida-Wedo learned well the arts he taught her; they meshed perfectly with what she had already learned as a tribal priestess and mambo. She was an excellent student and later applied what she had learned by assisting Toussant L'Overture, Henri Cristophe and others in the uprising that freed Haiti from the domination of the French planter class. To this day, she takes an interest in Haiti and the rest of the West Indies. She has not yet managed to restore Aristide to power, but she is trying.

Aida-Wedo spent much of her time living and socializing among the free black and Creole society of New Orleans in the early 1800s. She assisted the Underground Railroad in the 1850s and provided protection and assistance to many freed slaves before and after the Civil War. Today she fights for the rights of the downtrodden; her particular area of focus is equality among the races and the sexes. She also provides money and assistance to help abused and runaway children.



Aida-Wedo has not given up her goal of Ascension, and in the long run it has rewarded her more than hubris ever could. She attempts to befriend all mages of the Chantry and assists young mages as long as they do not become dependent upon her or use her for their own personal gain. Still, she has made many personal enemies among the mages of Doissetep, for despite her good nature, she is unafraid of doing what has to be done. She understands intrigue and uses it when necessary. While she has never taken a life without good reason, she has ruined many schemes and brought down more than one powerful wizard.

Image: Aida-Wedo is a short, elderly black woman in her mid-60s. She is slightly overweight and has white hair worn in a bun. She dresses in plain dresses and occasionally in robes of traditional African design. She almost always has a smile on her face, and she speaks with a slight French accent. One strange aspect of Aida-Wedo's appearance is that, while no one has said anything about it, she is in fact getting younger and her health is improving. This is the result of an elixir she has developed, a potion that ages a person to the age she feels in her heart. With this potion, it may be possible for Aida-Weno to return to her mid-20s, a time when she was an attractive and vibrant woman of influence and power.

Roleplaying Notes: Aida-Wedo seems like a caring, maternal figure, but there is more to her than that. She knows how to have a good time, and she continues to attend various social functions on Earth. She also maintains close relations with her descendants on Earth. (In fact, she is planning to take one as an apprentice.) Aida-Wedo will trust a character so long as the character deserves that trust. She will assist when presented with a problem contrary to the interests of her view of Ascension. Those foolish enough to make an enemy of Aida-Wedo will see their personal schemes for power backfire with distressing regularity until they make amends for their ways and prove their sincerity to her satisfaction.

Sanctum: A single large wood-paneled room with low tables, Japanese screens, and dozens of live plants nurtured by sunlight that comes from an unknown source. Aida-Wedo's room has a pleasant cinnamon aroma and colorful, hand-woven carpets everywhere.

The Eye of the Storm

Members: Vingenza Garcia (Order of Hermes - Master), Syed Pinckney (Sons of Ether - Master), Eve Haisten (Verbena - Master), Suzanna Quintana (Order of Hermes - Master), Ohren Brune (Order of Hermes - Master), Chon Won (Akashic Brotherhood - Master)

Background: The cabal called the Eye of the Storm was established in the 1400s. Its current members aggressively take the fight to the Technocracy. All the members of the cabal have lost a great deal in the war; they are now

dedicated to the destruction of the Technocracy. The Eye of the Storm is loyal to the Chantry, and while it does not wish to control Doissetep, neither has it chosen to support another cabal's bid for leadership.

The Eye of the Storm is a very militant cabal. It spends much of its time in the field and has brought down more than one Technocracy outpost on its own. The cabal members are true warriors with hearts of steel. They have little use for spies, but they have many contacts. The cabal spends almost no time at Doissetep. Its members are very mysterious individuals, though their reputation for veracity and ferocity precedes them.

The Eye of the Storm concentrates its efforts on Iteration X and the New World Order. They have also made long-term enemies out of an amalgam of Progenitors; these genetic masters have proved especially difficult to kill permanently.

Syed Pinckney

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Fanatic

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Sons of Ether

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Computer 3, Cosmology 3, Culture 4, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 4, Intimidation 1, Intuition 2, Investigation 4, Law (Chantry law) 3, Linguistics 5, Medicine 5, Meditation 2, Melee 2, Occult 4, Research 4, Science 5, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 3, Technology 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 2, Avatar 4, Destiny 4, Dream 1, Library 10

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 2, Forces 4, Life 4, Mind 5, Matter 5, Prime 4, Spirit 5

Willpower: 6

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 10

Background: Dr. Pinckney was a surgeon and barber in the mid-1800s. Dr. Pinckney's "experiments" attracted the attention of a Son of Ether of Doissetep, who took the young doctor under his wing and trained him in the ways of the Tradition. Syed Pinckney learned the "alternate science" of the Sons of Ether and began applying this knowledge to his work. Eventually he gave up his practice and dedicated himself solely to the study of his Tradition's magick. He has acquired both great acclaim through his research and great power through his efforts at Doissetep.

Dr. Pinckney's experiments often utilize unsuspecting Sleepers recruited by his assistants. His labs have been places of death, discovery and far worse. Dr. Pinckney's latest field of study is that of psyche-reshaping. He is developing devices that will allow him to reprogram the



beliefs and personality of his test subjects. He has already been partially successful. He hopes to develop new emotions never before experienced and then to use this technology against the Technomancers. However, some who know a little about these experiments fear Pinckney will use his devices on Tradition mages. Even if he does not, who is to say the Sons of Ether or Doissetep will not use it against other Tradition mages? Worse yet, what if the technology falls into the hands of the Technocracy or some other enemy faction?

In addition to Pinckney's current research, he has also taken a keen interest in the cavernous complexes that riddle the Earth's crust. His rock-collecting hobby has led to several encounters with Wyrm-things living below the Earth, and Pinckney fanatically researches the nature of the Wyrm. He often uses young mages to handle some of these fact-finding missions into the Wyrm-tunnels for him.

Image: Dr. Pinckney has a scarecrow-like build. He has short, straight black hair and brown eyes. He always wears thick, black-framed glasses, as he has myopia. He normally dresses in old-fashioned suits, but he tends to dress in a button-up shirt, tie, slacks, and (often blood-splattered) white lab coat while working. He moves around a great deal when talking and has a nervous demeanor.

Hobgoblins: Dr. Pinckney's Hobgoblin is a 14-year-old version of himself. The lusty little brat is going through puberty and pesters every woman in the Chantry. Worse yet, the Hobgoblin, which the staff has affectionately begun to call "Woody," runs around the Chantry in the nude (just like old Porthos). It constantly plays practical jokes on people. Dr. Pinckney naturally feels very uncomfortable about "Woody," but he has thus far been unable to get rid of it.

Roleplaying Notes: Dr. Pinckney is the stereotypical mad scientist. He rants endlessly about his experiments. He

spends days on end without food or sleep while working on his projects, and he takes failure miserably. While he maintains his gentlemanly composure most of the time, he is almost always excited and obsessed over some new research or experiment.

Sanctum: Dr. Pinckney maintains a large abode on one of the upper floors of the Chantry's main keep. The place is almost always a mess, despite the efforts of brave staff members who attempt to pick up after him. The place is filled with countless gadgets, beakers, tubes, wires, nameless appliances and tools. Half-eaten, days-old food lies on the floor, and the only place even halfway organized and clean is his bedroom, as he seldom uses it except for crash space. There are three large containment machines built into the sanctum, complete with large antennae protruding from the side of the keep. These antennae occasionally collect electricity elementals, which Dr. Pinckney uses to fuel his experiments.

The Society of the Esoteric Answer

Members: Virgil Endrina (Order of Hermes - Master), Yu-Chian Chou (Akashic Brotherhood - Master), Katsuhiro Kawamoto (Akashic Brotherhood - Master)

Backgrounds: The Society of the Esoteric Answer was founded 20 years ago. Its purpose is to seek Ascension. It does so through study and contemplation. In addition, the cabal spends a great deal of time traveling everywhere it can possibly go. Its members have survived many conflicts with supernatural threats ranging from zombies and demons to wraiths and werewolves.

The cabal controls many supernatural creatures and uses them in its quest. The Society of the Esoteric Answer does not desire power for power's own sake, but it does have some influence among certain small groups of supernatural creatures on Earth. The cabal primarily studies these other beings and analyzes their magickal natures. The Esoteric Answer is believed to be closely aligned with the Arcanum and is said to share information with many of the latter's leading members.

The cabal occasionally carries out missions for Doissetep against the Nephandi and other creatures, but it confronts the Technocracy only when it stands in the way of the quest for Ascension.

Virgil Endrina

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Avant-Garde

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Animal Training 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Cosmology 3, Dodge 3, Enigmas 5, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Faerie Lore 4, History 4, Horsemanship 5, Intimidation 2, Intuition 3, Investigation 1, Leadership 4, Linguistics 5, Meditation 4, Melee 5, Occult 2, Research 2, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3, Swordsmithing 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Destiny 4, Dream 3, Influence 2, Library 9

Spheres: Forces 5, Life 3, Mind 2, Matter 4, Prime 3, Spirit 5, Time 5

Willpower: 8

Arete: 7

Quintessence: 16

Paradox: 4

Background: Virgil Endrina was a knight of the Order of Calatrava who, though he fought valiantly against the Saracens, was accused of worshipping the Devil. Endrina was innocent of the charges, but was tried by the Inquisition nonetheless. One of his fellow knights was a companion to mages of Doissetep. In a daring attempt to rescue their companion, the mages assaulted the trial and rescued their friend, Endrina and three others.

The mages discovered that Endrina's potential for magick was strong. They offered him an opportunity to serve as a companion, which he accepted. He eventually took it upon himself to learn the ways of magick from mages who offered him their knowledge freely. He became a masterless, self-trained Hermetic mage after 30 years of study. One of his early successes was the development of a longevity elixir, as he knew his research would take a long time.

Endrina has remained a loyal member of Doissetep since those days. He has a great deal of influence. This may be because he has never become power-hungry like many



of the older mages. His interests include swordsmithing, gleaned from his 100-year studies in Toledo and Kyoto. He will make Talismans and even fetishes for those who perform services for him. He keeps a number of horses and enjoys training them. He is especially interested in studying the fey and the Marauders. In fact, he is the unofficial ambassador to both. For centuries he has sought a truce with a certain group of Marauders, but has been unsuccessful so far. He has, however, succeeded in using these potential allies as pawns against enemies of the Chantry, and has thereby won a place of respect and power in the Chantry.

Image: Endrina is a man of brawny, large-chested build with bronze skin. He has long, shiny black hair and he wears one golden earring of the patriarchal cross (to represent his continued belief in Catholicism despite his Arete and experiences). He keeps his hair tied back with a red ribbon, and commonly wears jeans, work boots, and a button-up shirt. He looks more like a ranch hand than a wizard and former knight. His powerful fetish sword, Latarigus, is always with him, but it remains invisible in a pocket Realm until he calls for it.

Roleplaying Notes: Endrina is a friendly, down-to-earth fellow who would rather discuss horses than magick. He is very masculine in a coarse way. He is friendly, but he has learned to be suspicious of all newcomers until he knows more about them. He is very moral and continues to live by his knightly code of honor.

Sanctum: Endrina lives in a two-story stone building attached to the main castle keep. The lower level serves as his stables; the second floor is his home. He has magickally prevented the stables' smells from penetrating his abode. His sanctum includes a sword foundry, a laboratory, a large bedroom, a private library, a den and a dining room. He spends much of his time in his own sanctum or abroad.

The Crucible of Thig – The Ruby Children

Members: David Kavannagh (Akashic Brotherhood - Master), Sharad Osei (Order of Hermes - Master), Sarah Rao (Order of Hermes - Adept), Ulice Scott (Dreamspeakers - Master), Vanessa Rosser (Order of Hermes - Adept), Malcom Sebaugh (Orphan - Adept), Altimeas Cowing (Order of Hermes - Adept), Beulah Frith (Order of Hermes - Adept), Teodora Maldonado (Verbena - Disciple), Marvin Thigpin (Order of Hermes - Disciple)

Backgrounds: The Crucible of Thig was a mystery sect founded in the early 1700s. The "C.o.T" grew into a large society and still has its own Sleeper mystery sect. The Crucible is based in Manchester, England, but has a few chapters in the United States. Doissetep's cabal is one of the three cabals composing the Crucible of Thig.

Doissetep's branch, the Ruby Children, maintains several occult customs and practices. The cabal readily *accepts* new members, though leaving the cabal is problematic.... The cabal seeks Ascension through occult means, though others feel they may be missing the point. Its members seldom unite for any cause, and the cabal has its own internal cliques and intrigue. Two of its members made plans for gaining power, but they were quickly put down by the Followers of Tytalus.

The members of the Ruby Children place loyalty to their cabal over loyalty to the Chantry, but they have always been willing servants of Doissetep. They have served faithfully in many missions against the Technocracy. Most of the members spend all their free time in study. The cabal meets once per week. Once per full moon, they hold mysterious ceremonies on Earth at one of the Nodes.

Altimeas Cowing

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Deviant

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Animal Ken 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Computer 4, Cosmology 1, Dodge 3, Enigmas 5, Expression (Poetry) 1, Intuition 5, Investigation 3, Linguistics 4, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Occult 4, Research 4, Science 2, Security 4, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 5, Technology 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar (variable: 4 when totally sane to 9 (!) when totally insane), Destiny 3, Dream 3

Spheres: (Variable based on sanity. The more insane, the more powerful.) Entropy 2-4, Forces 3-4, Life 2-4, Mind 3-4, Prime 2, Spirit 2-4



Willpower: Variable (Insane — 8, Sane — 3)
Arete: Variable (Insane — 5, Sane — 3)
Quintessence: 14
Paradox: 6

Background: Poor Altimeas was never liked by the other kids at school because he was so "different." Even his teachers and parents knew something was wrong after they discovered he had brought the remains of his dog, Snoodles, to school with him to explain how he had tortured it to death. The family began taking him to a psychiatrist, but it did little good. After another year of morbid games and psychotic episodes, he was put into a sanitarium to get the help he really needed.

Altimeas' Avatar was accidentally awakened through Technomancer shock treatments. Over the course of the next three years he gained great control over his Avatar, which was immensely powerful. His increasing control over his magick was somehow linked to his sanity. As he grew more sane, his power over his Avatar decreased. After tiring of the asylum, he forced the doctors to release him. His mother, father and baby brother had been killed in a car wreck a year earlier (a result of one of Altimeas' more unusual experiments in controlling spirits). Thus, with no one to oppose his release, he walked out into an unsuspecting world and began having a good time.

While traveling through Detroit, Altimeas rescued one of Doissetep's mages, who had been captured by a New World Order outpost that Altimeas had in turn been terrorizing. Altimeas performed this seemingly altruistic act out of curiosity about the Hermetic mage. After the rescue, the mage offered Altimeas the chance to return to Doissetep and become an apprentice. Altimeas agreed and has remained there ever since.

Altimeas' insanity proved incurable, but somewhat treatable. He is now in much greater control. However, he has taken to raising rats and now believes himself to be an agent of a being he calls the "Rat God." His orders are supposedly relayed to him through his hundreds of pets. Altimeas has never revealed this secret mission to anyone, fearing he would be cast out of the Chantry or worse. He spends much of his time in his room reading and studying magick.

Image: Altimeas is a thin fellow in his teens. He is very plain-looking, with short, medium-brown hair and brown eyes. He dresses in jeans and a collared shirt. He is very soft-spoken and shy. He is a recluse but he acts very normal. In fact, few mages even notice his presence.

Roleplaying Notes: Altimeas is usually sane, though still bizarre. He no longer reverts to his cruel and twisted ways. He avoids most people, but those who attempt to befriend him find him unswervingly loyal. Aside from his belief that he is a minion of a rat deity, he is perfectly sane.

Sanctum: Altimeas lives in a small apartment in the castle keep. It is very neat and organized, with most of the conveniences of Earth. He also keeps his hundreds of pet rats here in cages. He allows no one into his sanctum, regardless of how well he likes them or who they are.

The Golden Dragons

Members: Tomoyuki Hashimoto (Dreamspeakers - Master), Kunio Ashida (Akashic Brotherhood - Master), Shih Feng (Dreamspeakers - Adept), Karoe Hashiba (Celestial Chorus - Adept), Risaburo Kawamoto (Akashic Brotherhood - Disciple), Tsun-Hsiung Kao (Virtual Adept - Master)

Background: The cabal calling itself the Golden Dragons was established nearly 200 years ago. The cabal was originally based in Japan, but its members immigrated into the United States in the 1870s. The cabal established its own Squatter Chantry in New Jersey, but soon was offered membership at Doissetep. The cabal accepted and now has as its duty the protection of Sleepers from the Nephandi and the Technocracy.

The mages of the Golden Dragon cabal decided to use wealth as a means of accomplishing their task, and they now control a number of major corporations in Japan and a few in the United States. Several Syndicate-run companies, two Yakuza clans, and a mysterious company called Pentex have crossed swords with this cabal. How the Dragons have lived to tell of it remains a mystery.

The Golden Dragons are not interested in the politics of Doissetep, but in their own success and the accomplishment of their missions. The cabal is very loyal, though competitive. Each cabal member is owner of a different company. The members meet almost every morning at Doissetep to discuss their agendas. They have recently met with stiff resistance on the part of Pentex, which has apparently infiltrated some of the Dragons' companies and learned of the mages' involvement in them. The Golden Dragons have discerned the supernatural nature of their rival, and fear they may have already jeopardized the security of Doissetep. They keep this *very* quiet.

Kunio Ashida

Nature: Architect
Demeanor: Director
Essence: Dynamic
Tradition: Akashic Brotherhood

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Computer 3, Cosmology 2, Culture 4, Dodge 5, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 5, Expression (flower arranging and tea ceremony) 5, Finance 5, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Intuition 5, Investigation 3, Law 4, Leadership 4, Linguistics 5, Meditation 5, Melee 5, Occult 3, Research 3, Science 2, Stealth 5, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Technology 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Destiny 5, Influence 5, Library 6

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 3, Forces 4, Life 4, Mind 5, Matter 2, Prime 4, Spirit 1, Time 2

Willpower: 10

Arete: 7

Quintessence: 18

Paradox: 2

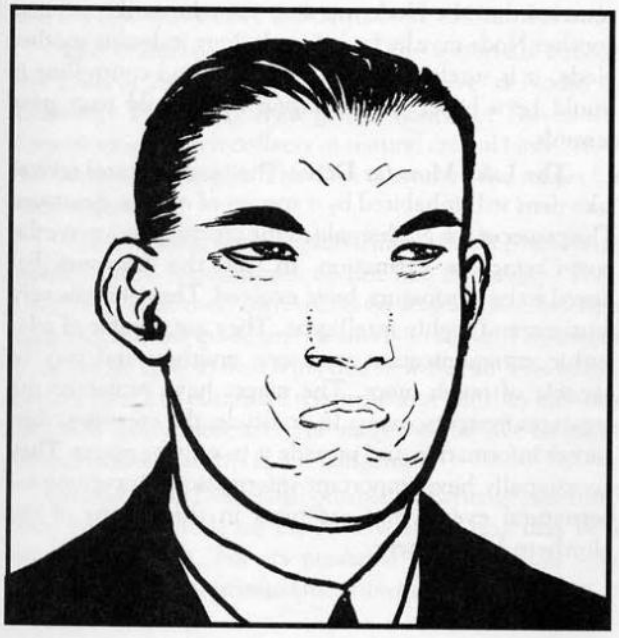
Background: Ashida is a former Zen Buddhist monk. He was taken in the mid-1600s by mages of Doissetep and trained in the ways of the Akashic Brotherhood. Since that time, he has been a Japanese warlord, a vice-president and spy within a Pentex-owned company, and a cult leader. Ashida also represents the Chantry when it must deal with the Yakuza and Gaki. Currently, Ashida is CEO of a megacorporation dedicated to crushing the Syndicate and annihilating Pentex.

Kunio Ashida is a powerful man with a keen understanding of both practical and spiritual matters. He spends much of his time overseeing the operations of his company, but he also makes time to study magick, Do, military strategy, history, comparative religion and philosophy, and criminal science.

Ashida has many allies and enemies among the Gaki and Glass Walkers of Japan. He also controls his own cult ring of Acolyte terrorists who carry out his every order and prey on unsuspecting Pentex subsidiaries.

Image: Ashida is a slight, athletically built man in his late 40s. He has black hair and amber eyes. He generally dresses in expensive, custom-fitted suits. He moves with grace and precision.

Roleplaying Notes: Ashida has an imposing presence despite his size. He appears to be a very self-confident and wise individual with a head for business. He is kind to all, but he hates to be bothered and he has little time to waste on trivialities.



Sanctum: Ashida maintains a small set of chambers within the keep. It is decorated in a plain but elegant traditional Japanese style. He does have an office set apart from the apartment. This office is where he meets with other members of the Chantry, particularly those of his own cabal. The office is very Western and modern, filled with fax machines, computers, and televisions broadcasting 24-hour news channels at all hours of the day and night.

The Society of the Case-Hardened Soul

Members: Mack Freeman (Order of Hermes - Adept), Misako Hatanaka (Akashic Brotherhood - Adept), Felicia Thomas (Sons of Ether - Disciple), Leroy Alderman (Verbena - Adept), Jeffrey Jackson (Celestial Chorus - Adept)

Background: This cabal formed five years ago. All its members have suffered personally at the hands of Iteration X, and they now seek the Convention's destruction. Its members are magickal terrorists and loose cannons, but they get the job done. The cabal is very cohesive and efficient, and most of its missions have been successful.

The cabal does not seek to control Doissetep, for its members know they have no chance. They have considered starting their own Chantry, fearing that Doissetep's masters are growing weary of their inability to follow orders properly. This is ironic, for the cabal is more respected than its members know; success reaps great rewards in Doissetep's halls. Various rival factions seek the cabal's support. The cabal currently leans toward the Bonasagi; the two groups' goals are similar, and they have worked together on several missions.

Mack Freeman

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Rebel

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Order of Hermes

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Computer 2, Cosmology 3, Dodge 3, Drive 4, Enigmas 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 3, Intuition 2, Investigation 5, Leadership 4, Meditation 2, Melee 4, Occult 2, Research 3, Science 3, Stealth 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 1, Technology 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 3, Destiny 3, Library 4

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 3, Forces 4, Life 4, Mind 2, Matter 3, Prime 2

Willpower: 9

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 14

Paradox: 6

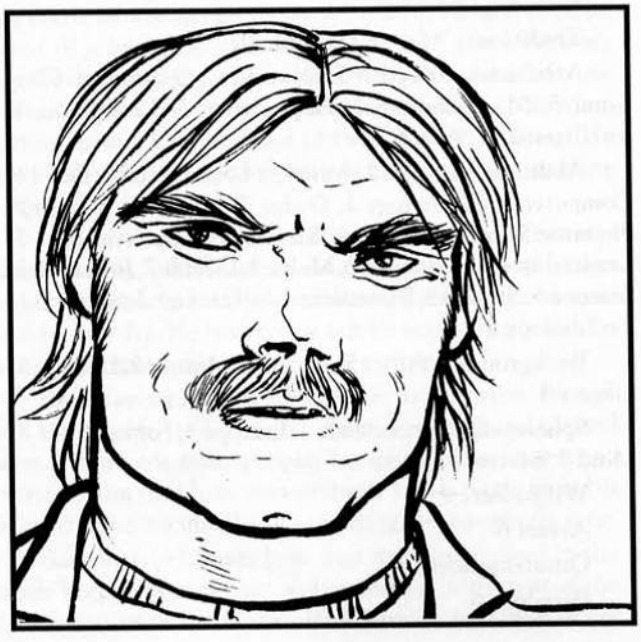
Background: Mack Freeman is a former insurance salesman from Mason City, Illinois. He was taken in at the age of 29 by a Hermetic mage of the Chantry. At that point, Freeman was already Awakened and was being pursued by the New World Order, which had kidnapped and murdered his parents and sister. Freeman proved to be a good student. He directed his anger into his studies, dreaming of the day he could avenge the deaths of his loved ones.

Freeman belonged to the Crucible of Thig, but left it to create the Case-Hardened Soul after discovering other Orphans whose lives had been destroyed by the Technocracy. He has since become a contact to the freedom-fighter Sons of Ether in Metropolis2. He implacably destroys any Technomancer activities he uncovers.

His personal interests include: becoming as magickally powerful as he can, as fast as he can, in order to increase his destructive capabilities; finding the secret of immortality; accumulating worldly wealth; bodybuilding; and creating reanimated servants to act as his own unthinking, unfeeling shock troops. While Freeman has heretofore taken little interest in the politics of Doissetep, eventually he will. When he does, he will prove as ruthless as the other power-seekers.

Image: Freeman is a burly man in his mid-30s. He has medium-length, dark-brown hair and dark blue eyes. He resembles a lumberjack more than a mage. He has a strong voice and he visibly shows his emotions almost all the time. When angry, he suffers from a permanent Paradox effect—his eyes tend to glow and blue flashes of electricity jump back and forth between his teeth. When wounded in this state, bursts of energy blast forth from his wound and injure whoever is closest to him.

Roleplaying Notes: Freeman chews tobacco and has a habit of spitting it on things he does not like, including people's feet (just like that famous outlaw). He is very rough, but he is generally very friendly to new mages, especially those who share his hatred of the Technocracy. He is a very emotional individual, but he is also very tenacious and dedicated, letting nothing stand in his way for long.



Sanctum: He lives on the Furgeson Estate in upstate New York, but he also maintains a sanctum at Doissetep. The sanctum is very comfortable but lacks any real sense of decor. He really does not have the ability to decorate properly. His two well-trained Rotweillers, Sodom and Gomorrah, serve as his friends, pets and guards. Gomorrah is expecting puppies, and Freeman is looking for anybody who would be interested in one.

Nodes of Doissetep

The following Nodes are not the only ones controlled by Doissetep. However, each of these stands out because of its great potency, and each requires special attention. The Chantry controls at least 10 other Nodes, though they are not described herein. The Storyteller can bring these into the game as needed.

The Tain Burial Site: A special burial site near Tain, Scotland not only serves as the crypt of several chieftains, but also acts as a Node, providing Doissetep with a massive amount of Quintessence used to help fuel its existence in the Shade Realm.

The burial site is located near a Black Spiral Dancer (Wyrm-serving werewolf) labyrinth, which often causes problems. The mages are often summoned by their guardian spirit to help protect the Node from raiding Banes. The guardian spirit is of power level five, but when the Banes raid the Node, they do so quickly and in great numbers.

The mages wish to explore the Black Spiral Dancer tunnel system, for they believe its depths contain other beings besides Black Spirals. Some believe the ley lines connected to the Node run deep into the earth, and that another Node may lie far below. If there indeed is another Node, it is surely powerful. Taking it and controlling it would be a bitter task, but one that would reap great rewards.

The Lake Monster Dens: The mages control several lake dens still inhabited by a species of marine dinosaurs. The power of the Node enabled the creatures to survive the post-Cretaceous extinction. In fact, the dinosaurs, believed to be plesiosaurs, have evolved. They are now very sentient and highly intelligent. They are capable of telepathic communication with one another, and may be capable of much more. The mages have protected the creatures from discovery. In gratitude, the creatures often gather information and provide it to visiting mages. They occasionally have important information concerning supernatural events and creatures in the oceans of the Northern Hemisphere.

ABC trial 4

The Arms of Var: These monuments are very well hidden in the Balkans. They are protected by three spirit guardians (power level four). The monoliths are alien in design, but one has a power usable by the mages; it can be used to travel directly into the Deep Umbra, to any point the user wishes. However, the power is one-way only, and once in the Deep Umbra, it is often hard to get back home.

The monoliths are made of an unusual stone, which is mottled with deep-green and red-brown swirling patterns. The monuments resemble three large stone forearms attached to the ground; their seven-fingered hands are raised in the air as if about to clutch something. In fact, use of the Umbral teleportation power requires the mage to sit in the palm of one of the hands and concentrate. The other two palms likely have similar powers, but no mage has ever been brave enough to experiment.

The current conflict in the Balkans has threatened the security of the Node, requiring the mages to station Sleeper guards around it. However, the guards always disappear or go insane. No one has been able to determine why. Some mages suspect the Tremere, while others fear the work of entities from the Deep Umbra.

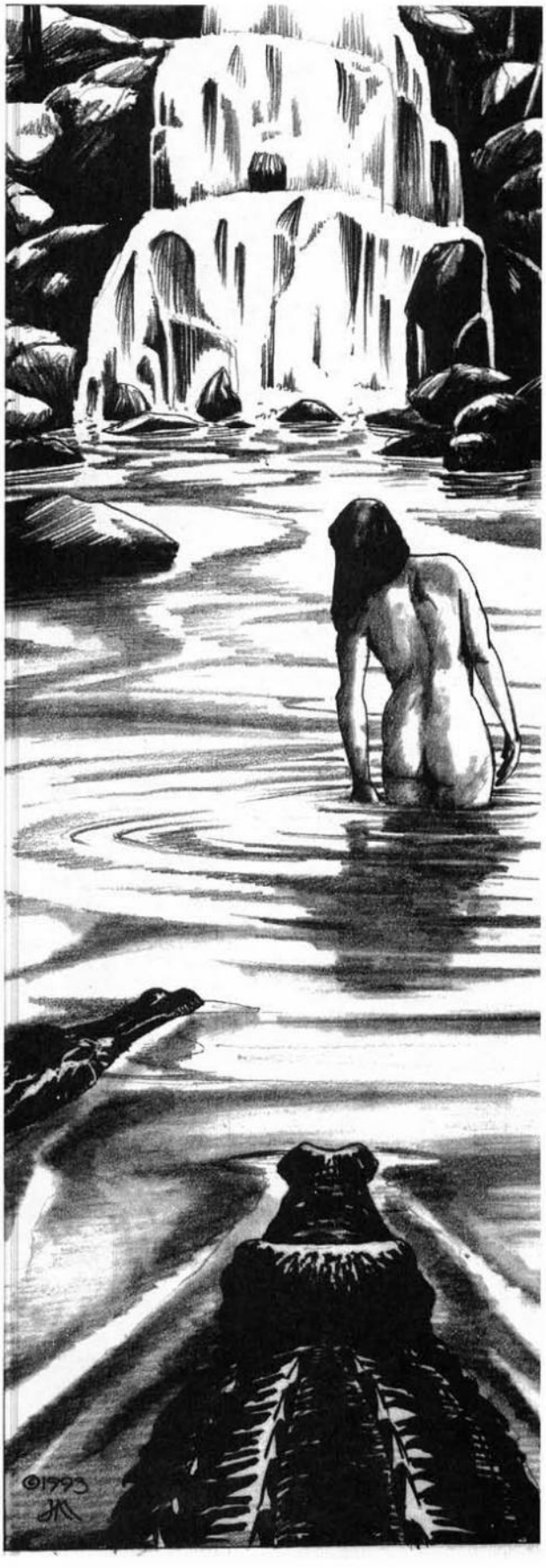
The Manchester House: This haunted house outside Manchester, England serves as a powerful Node site, but not as an aspect of the Chantry. It was once haunted by countless spirits, but all save the most ancient and powerful of the ghosts have been exorcised from the place. Still, even mages dislike staying here for long periods of time, and the spirit guardian, Vasiglias, has begun disappearing for short periods of time. The mages fear the spirit may be in league with the ghosts of the Node, but they do not know why.

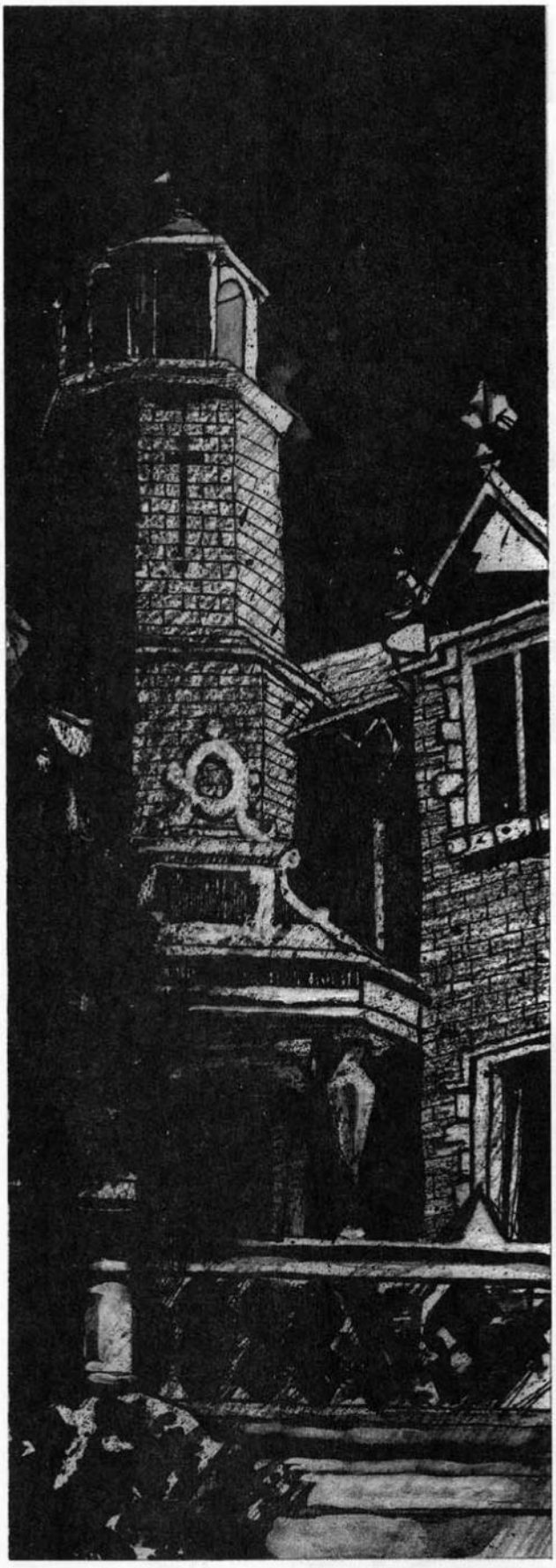
In addition, the house has been raided a number of times. The mages have no idea who or what is behind the raids. The spirit guardian recently had a struggle with a small group of crazed vampires from the Malkavian clan. Many mages believe that this Node is dedicated to insanity, and the aforementioned incidents seem to bear this out.

The Waterfalls of Acajutla: The waterfalls outside the town of Acajutla in El Salvador serve as Nodes to Doissetep. The falls provide great amounts of Tass in the form of water, which collects in natural crystal basins near the bottom of the falls. The Tass is used by the mages for their research.

Many Mokolé, werealligators, have taken up residence nearby. These lycanthropes do not like the mages. They have often sent their own spirits to attack the Chantry's guardian, but the guardian has survived so far. The mages must decide how to deal with this new threat. The mages could attempt to eliminate the creatures, but they have no idea how many there are. The mages would like to enlist them as allies, but this too is dangerous.

Stonehenge: Doissetep controls Stonehenge, the third most powerful Node on Earth. The stone ring may be a tourist attraction, but its power is very real and very necessary for the continued functioning of the Chantry. It





is protected by the Chantry's most powerful spirit guardian, the Kurajal, an eccentric but loyal guardian (power level eight). The Technocracy would like to usurp this Node or at least use it to lead them to Doissetep, but they have yet to succeed.

Stonehenge is closely tied to Luna and her children, the fey. The Node is one means of entry into Arcadia, but it has fallen into disuse, for the mages fear the Paradox involved in such travel. Many faeries have a keen interest in Stonehenge, and while they allow Doissetep to use it, they still consider it their own.

The Caern of Black Clouds: This caern, located somewhere in the mountains of Tennessee, belonged to the Uktena tribe of the Garou. It was taken by Black Spiral Dancers, who were in turn defeated by the mages of Doissetep. The caern is now under the control of Doissetep, and has been for the last 200 years. The mages have maintained a low profile at the caern, but a Garou pack of the Red Talon tribe wishes the caern's return. The caern is made of large granite blocks that form a pattern of two intersecting arrows. Around this are several unusually large hardwoods.

In addition, many strange magickal creatures lurk in the mountains. These range from bone-eating monsters to Unseelie faeries to Sabbat vampires. The mages also believe a cabal or possibly even a Chantry of Progenitors operates out of a nearby small town.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

Doissetep resides in the Shade Realm of Forces, a powerful Realm indeed. The Shade Realm is connected to the Shard Realm of Forces, but the Portal connecting the two never remains in the same spot for long periods of time.

The mages of Doissetep have shaped the Shade Realm to resemble Earth in some ways. At the center of the Realm, surrounded by mountains of only slightly lesser majesty, lies the largest mountain, which resembles Earth's Mount Celidar. Doissetep sits atop Mount Celidar, dominating the Realm.

The Shade Realm of Forces is a very valuable key to ultimate understanding of the Forces Sphere. Were it to be lost to the Technocracy or some other faction, most of the Traditions' Forces magick would likely be rendered inert.

The Oracles of Forces are known to traverse the Realm, through which they pass into the Shard Realm of Forces. However, they are not known to visit Doissetep.

Doissetep is certainly in its Winter stage. Though it retains great power, the Chantry is so rotten with intrigue that it cannot last as it does for much longer. Sadly, the Chantry's mages are blind to this fact.

ABC trial 4

Environment

All who enter the Realm feel like ants in the eye of a storm. The power inherent to everything — rocks, dust, trees, inhabitants — is overwhelming. Newcomers to the Realm are certainly intimidated.

The land is superficially similar to Earth, with the emphasis on superficially. The reddish-purple sky crackles with sparks, meteors and particle-beam blasts. Impossibly symmetrical mountains stretch across the entire Realm; between are many forest-filled vales. Many of the plants and animals resemble fractal structures of energy. Firepits, active volcanoes and energy vortices puncture the land at scattered intervals. The Realm is very rocky, and the soil in most places is reddish-brown; it will occasionally surge from the ground in a shower of exploding dirt. The forests and other plant life often burn down, only to regrow at a tremendous rate of speed. In some regions, vast plateaus of dried, cracked earth loom against the sky. Huge, purplish-black storm clouds frown overhead, and there is always a thunderstorm (though usually without rain) somewhere in the Realm. During thunderstorms, the celestial display grows particularly fierce, and the ground is splintered by lightning bolts, gravitic surges and magnetic pulses (all electronic gear in the Chantry is tempest-hardened!). The mages keep a close eye on the weather, and nobody goes out when a storm comes near Doissetep.

Denizens of the Realm

Despite the hostile environment, the Realm contains a number of indigenous lifeforms. Ballums (or "Sturm Giants" as the mages call them), huge humanoids with grayish-blue skin, glowing golden eyes, and long white beards and hair, dwell at the tops of most mountains. They are very territorial, and have tremendous control over electricity and storms.

Other creatures include the Hirgujaks (or "Trolls" as the mages refer to them). The Hirgujaks live deep in the earth and control magnetic energies in metals. By such processes, the Trolls fashion their own underground cities of steel. These creatures are very powerful and very xenophobic. Hirgujaks resemble large, stocky humans, but their skin is black and they have no hair. Their eyes are ovoid, they have large tusks, long black hair and tremendous amounts of body hair. They wear beautiful silver armor of great strength; this is mystically woven from monomolecular metal threads. They have a few outcasts, called the Kalu, who live in stone huts and caves. The Kalu occasionally indulge in cannibalism.

There are also the Vaskha (or "Forest-people," as some mages refer to them), who live in stone and wooden buildings of their own construction. They are ugly humanoid creatures with pale skin and chubby human facial features. They have their own language and cultures, and there are many clans of them across the Realm. They hunt the Realm's beasts and serve as slave labor for some Hirgujaks. A small number serve the Chantry as Realm guides. They are especially proficient with bows and wide-bladed scimitars.

The Realms contains several small animals, including deer, rabbits, squirrels, porcupines and bears. These animals have learned to live in caves in order to avoid elementals. Certain beasts have mastered the Forces magick of the Realm; these creatures include small snake-like beings that fly by reversing the gravitic field, and spiders that generate protective electrical fields to guard themselves from outside energies.

In addition to the living creatures of the Realm, energy elemental spirits are prevalent. Almost all energy elementals pass through this Realm from the Shard Realm of Forces. The Shade Realm is filled with swarms of energy elementals. Fire elementals tend to gather in the volcanic region of the Realm, while the electricity elementals gather on the huge, barren plains. Kinetic elementals, resembling collections of glowing black particles, often gather in valleys among themselves; these cause occasional earthquakes, which can be felt over the entire Realm. Gravity spirits flutter about, generally staying high in the air. These elementals resemble swirling vortices of dust and debris (which are attracted to the invisible spirit). They usually have small objects orbiting about them. Electromagnetic spirits often go unnoticed, as they tend to play in the upper reaches of the Realm's atmosphere. Those that are visible usually resemble balls of light.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence -2, Forces +4, Life +2, Matter -1, Mind +1, Prime +2

Chantry Description

Doissetep has four earthly manifestations of itself, though none resembles its appearance in the Shade Realm. The four locations provide Doissetep with nearly instantaneous access to many parts of the world.

Doissetep Castle: Doissetep proper resembles a Herculean fortress of black stone seated upon the top of the highest mountain in the Realm. Additional levels, wings, etc. have been constructed over time; Doissetep is now an architectural potpourri ranging from ancient, thick, squat buildings to lofty Gothic flying buttresses. The castle is a mile in diameter at its widest point, and towers 30 stories high.

The castle is very formidable and always under guard by the Chantry's well-trained army. In addition, the castle has a number of special weapons. The area outside the castle is filled with huge lightning rods to attract the dangerous amounts of lightning generated by the terrible storms of the Realm.

The castle's interior is darkly lit by small electromagnetic elementals bound into round wire cages with mystical seals on them. These cages and the elementals vary in size

based on the size of the room. The stone hallways are lit by a breadbox-sized elemental cage every 40 feet, while some of the largest chambers are lit by elemental cages nearly as large as a human. The elementals may be commanded to vary their level of illumination from none to that of full daylight. They have been rendered incapable of communication, to protect the privacy of the Chantry's inhabitants.

The castle is filled with countless catacombs and chambers, not to mention innumerable secret passageways. The buildings all connect; inhabitants may reach any point in the Chantry without ever seeing the light of "day." The private chambers vary, though most public areas have a strong medieval ambience to them, even the computer rooms and meteorological tracking rooms.

The Chantry has its own indoor garden, which is filled with many exotic plants and creatures. It is tended by some of the Verbena mages. The garden serves not only as a source for magickal accouterments, but as a place for relaxation. Nearby is an indoor hangar for the cloudships of the Chantry.

Below the castle and inside the mountain are hundreds of twisting, turning tunnels that lead to various chambers and, at their lowest point, to the Gateway. The Gateway is a large, well-lit, dome-shaped chamber of purest gold. The chamber has 60 doors along the walls, none of which are labeled. The doors lead to various Realms, earthly sites, the Chimerae and the Umbræ. However, the special Portals leading to the various Chantry manifestations on Earth are not located in the Gateway; these are instead located in the upper portion of the castle.

The Delono House: This manifestation of the Chantry is located in Boston. It is a large, two-story mansion of wood, surrounded by a low stone wall. It is located in one of the wealthier neighborhoods, but the neighbors know very little about the mages or all their strange guests. The place serves as the home of the Jhonisett (see below), and as an outpost for the Chantry. It is an old house, but it is well kept and has all the modern conveniences. The Chantry has a huge garage in which 10 automobiles are kept, including the Jhonisett's six, two expensive sports cars, a van and a jeep. The underground area features laboratories and a hidden armory. There is even a holding cell in the basement.

Fulroony Manor: This large, three-story manor house is located on the outskirts of Manchester, England. The estate is serves as the earthly home to the Crucible of Thig. Several smaller individual homes are located on the property. The manor house is stockpiled with all sorts of weapons. There are usually 15 or more cars on the estate, in addition to a private helicopter.

Castigao's: In Toledo, Spain there is an entire building serving as an earthly Chantry for Doissetep. An antique store in the front serves as a facade (figuratively and literally). The building is located in downtown Toledo; it is three stories high, very large and very old. The Followers of Tytalus call this Chantry manifestation their home. It also has a large amount of weapons and all necessary equipment, though there are only two cars.

Purpose

Do not meddle in the affairs of wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger.

—Gandalf, from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

Doissetep has many purposes, for each cabal now seeks to use the Chantry for its own personal goals. However, the true goal established by the rewritten covenant of Doissetep is: to provide all Traditions and all mages of the Traditions with a bastion of safety from the Technocracy, and to lead the fight against the Technocracy in an attempt to bring about the Ascension of humankind. However, no details of Ascension are given, so even if Doissetep were to succeed against the Technocracy, the various cabals would no doubt come to blows thereafter.

History

Doissetep was founded before recorded history. Some claim the Pure Ones founded the Chantry, but most consider this wishful thinking or outright lying. The Chantry originated in Southeast Asia, in what would today be Thailand. The Chantry was home to a sorcerer-king called Kwa Hu, and some say this king still exists as an Oracle of Forces.

The Chantry survived war, plagues and peasant uprisings. By the fourth century it was a center for magickal learning. By the eighth century, however, it had succumbed to internal dissension. It was taken over by usurper mages. The Chantry was then magickally moved to Turkey. By the ninth century, it was overtaken by mages from what would become the Order of Hermes. It was again moved, this time to Spain.

During the Mythic Age, the Chantry served as a strong center of power for the order. However, with the rise of the Technomancers, Doissetep became a primary target. Eventually, its earthly manifestation was destroyed, and the mages vowed to keep its remnants well hidden in the Shade Realm of Forces, where it would be safe.

The war with the Technocracy eventually required the Order of Hermes to end its xenophobic practices and embrace the Verbena and Akashic Brotherhood as members. Soon, the mages established earthly manifestations for Doissetep, though these aspects continually change as the Pogrom finds and destroys them.

Now the Chantry stands on the edge of a new millennium, and the old leaders are dying. Doissetep's mages must make the right choices (and survive them) if they are to reach Ascension. However, corruption and intrigue eat at the very heart of the Chantry. Power, not Ascension, is what most seek.



Chantry Inhabitants

Doissetep proper retains over 400 servants, though the earthly manifestations have only a few servants each. Most of the servants are descendants of former mages, Acolytes and servants. The servants know the Chantry like the backs of their own hands. Most know far more than they reveal, and usually more than the mages themselves know about the place.

Each servant has his own personal duties. There are shifts, holidays, days off, etc., much like any other job. The servants are well provided for, and they may have any material items they wish, as long as their requests are not too greedy, ridiculous or detrimental to security. The mages treat the servants with great respect, and the servants are in turn humble and very respectful of the mages. They fear the Jhonisett, the Chantry's secret police, and avoid them whenever possible. Few of the people of the Chantry ever go to Earth, and even fewer actually travel the Realm save via cloudship.

Many of the servants have aligned themselves to various cabals. They provide secrets to the cabals in exchange for special services or gifts. Loyalties aside, most of the servants retain a few select bits of data in case of emergency.

The Chantry has two sets of special servants: the Vantikor, the Doissetep stormtroopers; and the Jhonisett, the Doissetep internal police and special agents. The Vantikor serve the mages by defending the Chantry, dealing with all unwelcome visitors and acting as shock troops during attacks on Constructs or Technomancer units. They number 200 men and women, subdivided into divisions of 50 and units of 10. They man the cloudships and patrol the Realm.

The Jhonisett are far more insidious. The secret police numbers around 50. The Jhonisett have the power to arrest anyone in the Chantry, even the mages, and to bring them before the Chantry judges for trial. The Jhonisett perform reconnaissance, advanced scouting and espionage missions. They are also used for kidnapping individuals and for assassinations.

It has been pointed out more than once that these groups seem uncomfortably similar to the Technomancer organizations that Doissetep so despises. While many in the Chantry agree, the Bonisagus, Tytalus and Glass Eye cabals argue that such measures are necessary for the Chantry's security. Retorts that similar arguments have been used to justify the Technocracy's own methods have fallen on deaf ears.

Internal Structure and Relations

Doissetep is filled to the brim with deceit and trickery, as already stated. However, on the surface, the Chantry appears to be a most congenial place. The Doissetep Panel

of Deacons wields all the power, and most of the Deacons are members of the Drua'shi. These mages could provide even better leadership if not for their fear of the other cabals. As it is, they lead the Chantry into unnecessary conflicts just to keep the other mages occupied. Still, they have been very successful overall.

The Chantry's covenant was rewritten 200 years ago, but it is still filled with volumes of precedents and bylaws. There are even a few servants who do nothing but study Chantry law. They serve as barristers and judges for all cases, most of which concern other servants. However, they do hear cases against mages, and they are protected by the Jhonisett from retribution.

External Relations

Doissetep serves as the preeminent Chantry of the Traditions. The Chantry has led the way in maintaining relations among the various Traditions, proving how effective their combined efforts may be. The Chantry serves as a symbol of the Traditions' united efforts against the Technocracy, and while other Tradition Chantries may not like or even trust the mages of Doissetep, they still take pride in the power the Chantry represents.

Status and Reputation

Doissetep's internal plotting has not gone unnoticed. While the mages are very subtle in their efforts, rumors concerning the various cabals abound. This has led to mistrust and fear of Doissetep by other Tradition mages, who fear Doissetep uses everyone and everything. Still, Doissetep must be called upon in times of dire need, and it serves as the symbol of the Traditions' efforts in the Ascension War.

Status: 5

Reputation: 2

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Panel of Deacons has ruled that no one is to be brought to the Shade Realm from the outside. All outsiders must be dealt with somewhere else. Even those seeking initiation into the Chantry must complete everything on Earth save their initiation rituals. The Chantry fears the Technocracy will learn the location of the Realm and attempt to besiege it.

Rogue cabals are never openly used, though some are covertly used by various mages for carrying out personal missions. Orphans are not allowed into the Realm unless they prove themselves loyal and undergo the initiation just like everyone else. Those who would serve as good Acolytes are put through their own initiation; successful "pledges" become members of the Order of Questari, which is similar to a cabal. It has its own rites, secrets, initiations, rights and duties. Only those who have proved themselves loyal are allowed to join. This usually involves a deep telepathic probe by the mages.



Allies and Enemies

Cataloguing Doissetep's multitude of friends and foes would be an insurmountable task. Each of the cabals has ties, both good and ill, to Sleeper agencies, supernatural beings, Umbrood powers, and other mages of all factions, and each uses those ties with a liberal hand.

The Technocracy, Marauders and Nephandi would love to see the Chantry obliterated, but lack the power to do it themselves. Each group, however, has agents within Doissetep, hoping one day to see the Chantry fall under the weight of its own intrigue. Many independent supernatural agencies strive to manipulate this stronghold for their own purposes. Nearly everyone who knows of Doissetep's existence wants a stake in its future (or ensure that it has none...).

Research Capacities

Doissetep is a center of magickal learning. It has no known rivals, though there may be some as yet unknown. The Chantry prides itself on the freedom it allows its members in their research. The mages are allowed to do as they please in the Realm, as they are incapable of doing any permanent harm to the Realm. Particularly dangerous experiments, however, are handled at distant locations in temporary laboratory bases constructed by the Vantikor and certain servants.

Most of the mages at Doissetep have apprentices. Despite the great amount of time and secrets a mage and his apprentice share, Mentors seldom encourage their apprentices to join their cabal. Apprentices go to school 10 hours a day and perform certain chores each day for the Chantry and for their masters. The apprenticeship program at Doissetep is very tough and those who do not "pass" either have their memories erased and are turned loose on Earth, or become servants of the Chantry. The students must survive many trials put to them, especially by the Followers of Tytalus.

The arcane library of Doissetep is possibly the largest in existence (though some claim the Ancestral Chantries and some College Chantries have larger ones), and the Chantry takes pride in it. There are actually several libraries, one for each Sphere and two others covering various unclassified magick. Access to each Sphere's library is limited to the rank the mage has demonstrated himself capable of using. Thus, a mage must know a Sphere before he can study it, and he must already know it at the level he wishes to study. Centuries ago, one mage accidentally burned down half the Chantry's library because he was studying something he did not comprehend (this is also why there are now separate libraries).

In addition to the arcane library, the Chantry has one massive mundane library filling an entire three-story building. All Chantry inhabitants have free access to this library.



Doissetep stepped into the computer age shortly after it accepted the Virtual Adepts as members. The Virtual Adepts of the Chantry have built a tremendously powerful computer linked to a great number of networks. The Adepts have also built slightly less powerful versions for each of the Chantry's earthly aspects.

Stories

The only thing worse than a senile old mage is a Chantry full of senile old mages!

— Dr. Volcano, Virtual Adepts

The theme of Doissetep stories is corruption. Many of the mages there are centuries old, riddled with hubris, and nearly insane. The resonance between the Shard Realm and the mages' own power lust has eroded lofty aspirations into a mad quest for power.

Doissetep's general mood is one of foreboding. The very air crackles with power and menace. The Chantry is a big gun in the Ascension War, but this gun is a loose cannon that could crush anyone in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Story Ideas for Doissetep

1. A war for control erupts among the various cabals. The player characters must choose a side or all will turn against them. In addition, both Marauders and Nephandi choose this moment to attack. Could it be that some of Doissetep's mages have allies among these two enemy factions?

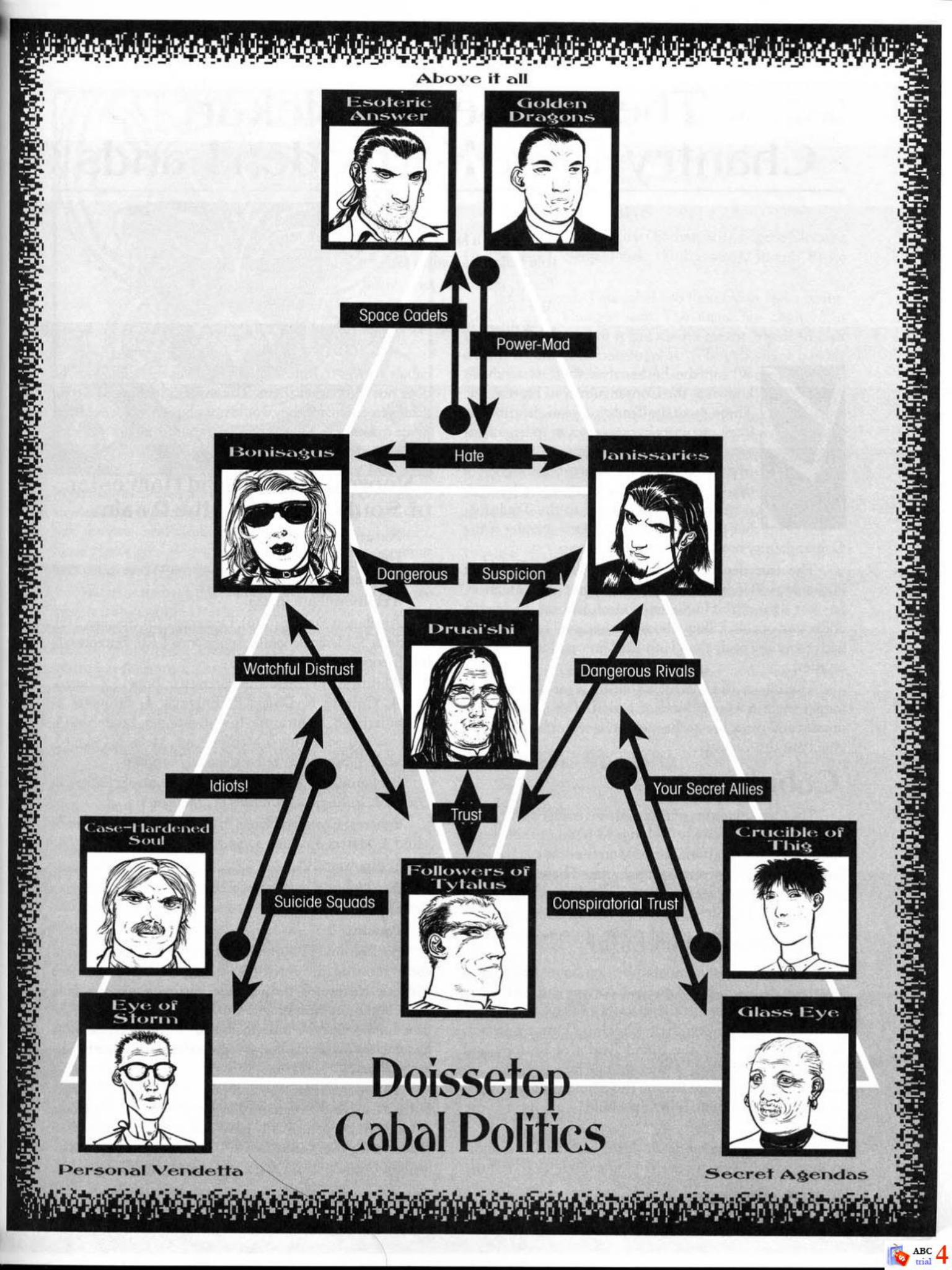
2. Terrible energy storms and powerful, insane elementals force the mages to move Doissetep to a safer location, but where? The trouble is being caused by a powerful, Celestine-like being, which was accidentally summoned from the Shard Realm of Forces.

3. The Crucible of Thig is suspected of sacrificing innocent Sleepers to increase its power. Is this true? If not, from where is the cabal's newfound power coming? Will the player characters join the Crucible in order to acquire the "free" magickal power, or will they become the next victims?

4. The remaining Drua'shi Deacons die. Caeron Mustai or others of influence back the player characters as new Deacons. How will the characters handle their newfound political power? Are they really in control? What do their masters want? How must they repay their supporters for this great honor? Will the characters survive the assassination attempts? Worse yet, how will they prove their innocence when it is learned that the Drua'shi Deacons were murdered?

5. The player characters discover a spy in the Chantry. The traitor is a mage of great power and has planted an energy elemental "bomb" in a heavily populated area. If the characters do not assist him in his schemes, he threatens, he will "detonate" the device and hundreds of innocents will die. Do the characters betray the Chantry to save innocent lives, or is their loyalty to the Chantry more important?




Above it all
Esoteric Answer
Golden Dragons
Space Cadets
Power-Mad
Bonisagus
Hate
Janissaries
Dangerous
Suspicion
Druai'shi
Watchful Distrust
Dangerous Rivals
Idiots!
Your Secret Allies
Trust
Case-Hardened Soul
Crucible of Thig
Followers of Tytalus
Suicide Squads
Conspiratorial Trust
Eye of Storm
Glass Eye
Doissetep Cabal Politics
Personal Vendetta
Secret Agendas

The House of Helekar: Chantry of the Forbidden Lands

Cruelty has a human heart,
And Jealousy a human face;
Terror, the human form divine,
And Secrecy, the human dress.
— William Blake, "A Divine Image"



Within the Euthanatos, there is a subcult known as the Consanguinity of Eternal Joy. Throughout the Tradition's long history, the Consanguinity has served as an independent sect of assassins, killing anyone who posed what the cabal saw as a threat to the good of the Euthanatos. These Euthanatos have always proved totally loyal to the Tradition, but they are secretive. Many wonder if the Consanguinity has ulterior plans of its own.

The true depths of this subcult would make most Euthanatos shudder. Voormas, the Master of this faction, has lost sight of the Euthanatos ideal. Instead, he leads a collection of cold killers whose "Ascension" has less to do with recycling souls than with the "Eternal Joy" of simple murder.

The House of Helekar, for all its great age, has sustained itself in a long Summer period. The popularity of murder and genocide in the modern world encourages the cruelty of the Chantry.

Cabals

The Consanguinity of Eternal Joy is composed of three cabals and a dictator who belongs to none of the cabals. While the names, nationalities and methods have changed, the cabals' motives remain the same. These mages are penultimate fanatics ready to die and kill at a single word from their leader's lips.

The Grand Harvester

The Chantry is dominated by one figure, the Grand Harvester of Souls. His name is Voormas and he is very, very wicked. Voormas is the dictator of the Chantry and claims to be in contact with the Oracles of Entropy. In fact, he does venture into the Shard Realm of Entropy and returns bearing "orders." Other strange human figures are seen entering the Shard Realm, though none of the mages have approached them, fearing it would be an insult to the Oracles.

Voormas is a master death-dealer and the sole authority among the 13 mages of the House of Helekar. All the cabals answer to him. Though he gives them missions, he does not stand over them. The mages are allowed a great deal of freedom, for they would not abuse it, nor would they make mistakes. They know the punishments for such stupidity are swift and merciless.

Voormas, the Grand Harvester of Souls, Master of the Realm

Nature: Curmudgeon

Demeanor: Fanatic/Deviant

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Euthanatos

Attributes: Strength 1 (6), Dexterity 1 (5), Stamina 2 (5), Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 1 (0), Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 6, Brawl 5, Cosmology 4, Culture 6, Dodge 2, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 1, Intimidation 6, Intuition 5, Investigation 5, Leadership 5, Linguistics 6, Medicine 6, Meditation 6, Melee 6, Occult 6, Research 4, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 4, Torture 6

Backgrounds: Allies 10, Arcane 7, Avatar 8, Destiny 6, Dream 3, Influence 3, Library 17, Mentor 5

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 6, Forces 4, Life 5, Mind 4, Matter 3, Prime 3, Spirit 5, Time 5

Willpower: 10

Arete: 7

Quintessence: 19

Paradox: 0

Background: Voormas was once a Thuggee priest and spent most of his early life killing for his Euthanatos masters. He passed through the various ranks, learning more and more Euthanatos truths along the way. By the time he reached the innermost body of the sect, he was a Euthanatos mage. He had given up the ways of life for the ways of death.

The young Thuggee's acceptance into the ranks of the Euthanatos was accompanied by membership in the House of Helekar. He continually provided more and more of the chosen with the "Good Death" and over the centuries he acquired fear, respect, trust and power. Finally, in 1709,

ABC trial 4



Voormas was named the next Grand Harvester of Souls. In an elaborate ceremony, Voormas slew the old mage who held the title, and assumed the mantle of his own accord. Since that time, Voormas' name has been synonymous with death and fanaticism.

Voormas is now a Postulate hoping to gain acceptance into the ranks of the Oracles of Entropy. However, unbeknownst to him, the beings he believes to be the Oracles of Entropy are not the Oracles. They are indeed mighty spirits, but they are aligned to the Wyrm, though they are not Nephandi.

Voormas has few personal interests save morbidity. He spends a great deal of time meditating, studying magick, traveling about the Shard Realm "testing himself," scrying on potential threats to the Euthanatos, and directing the mages of the Chantry. Occasionally he handles an assassination himself if the target is worthy or powerful.

Image: Voormas looks like a bony, dark-skinned man of at least 100. He is nearly bald. He dresses in black, dark brown, or white robes, and he hobbles along on a sturdy cane made of solidly joined human vertebrae with a child's skull at the top. He shows an evil, near-toothless smile whenever plotting something.

When he engages in physical combat, Voormas uses a Life effect to assume the form of a giant, black-skinned, multi-armed demon — an aspect of the goddess Kali. When he assumes this form, his Physical Attributes increase to the levels in parentheses, though his Appearance drops to zero.

Roleplaying Notes: To most, Voormas would seem to be totally insane. This may or may not be true, but it is undeniable that he is brilliant, paranoid and evil. Voormas hopes more than anything else to be accepted into the ranks of the Oracles of Entropy before it comes time for his own "Good Death." No one knows it, and it is doubtful he knows it consciously, but Voormas fears his own death.

Sanctum: Voormas' sanctum comprises one entire "arm" of the Chantry, which appears to be a tower. The tower is dark, gloomy and filled with implements of death and destruction. Anyone who enters the place feels an overwhelming sense of impending doom.

The Abyssians

Members: Ulku Baydar (Euthanatos), Eugene Clemens (Euthanatos), Serge Pajak (Euthanatos), Joseph Russo (Euthanatos)

Background: This cabal was founded in India centuries ago as a Thuggee sect. The name has changed as language evolved, but it has always meant "those who sit over the vast pit of nothingness." The Abyssians quickly climbed the Chantry's ranks and soon became the top cabal.

The Abyssians are the brains behind the Chantry and carry out all the extortion and spying. They collect and examine information, and determine what needs to be done and who needs to be killed next. They report their findings to the Grand Harvester, who has final say. While the cabal members are trained assassins, they do not usually perform the actual physical slayings.

Friends of the Soul

Members: Jorge Salbon (Euthanatos), Fleta Natrajan (Euthanatos), Richard Somnitz (Euthanatos), Rosa Zlonstreth (Euthanatos)

Background: The Friends of the Soul are the mages who seek out those who deserve the Good Death. They have more leeway in how they conduct their missions than does the Freedom Razor (below). These mages perform most of the long-term missions for the Chantry.

Richard Somnitz

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Judge

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Euthanatos

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Computer 1, Cosmology 2, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 5, Firearms 2, Intuition 4, Investigation 4, Law (U.S. criminal) 5, Medicine 1, Meditation 2, Melee 5, Occult 1, Research 2, Stealth 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 2, Destiny 3, Dream 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 3, Forces 1, Life 3, Mind 3, Matter 2

Willpower: 10

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 14

Paradox: 6

Background: Richard Somnitz was an all-American boy. He was not an abused child and his home life was the best any middle-class suburban white kid could hope for. He was a star quarterback and king of the homecoming dance. He went to an Ivy League university and made better-than-average grades. He seems kind, gentle, level-headed, and honest, which makes one wonder: why is Richard Somnitz a serial killer?

Somnitz took up what he affectionately calls "the hobby" when he was a senior in high school. He had a knack for choosing the right girl to butcher and the intelligence and luck to do so without getting caught. Richard found murder to be a thrill larger than anything mundane life could give him. He felt as if he were a cold and merciless god who could destroy anyone without reason. It made him feel good.

He murdered twice while in college, but after graduating and taking a job as a lawyer he began killing far more often. In all, he claims to have murdered over 90 people, and to have done so without any sense of remorse or pleasure, only cold satisfaction. He generally preyed on widows and young girls, but old men, boys and babies were also chosen.

His affinity with murder drew the attention of Ulku Baydar, a member of the House of Helekar. He tested Somnitz and, after finding him worthy, offered him an apprenticeship, which he readily accepted. Somnitz had never believed in the supernatural, but he did believe in death, and this man offered him the chance to take far more lives than he could through his current *modus operandi*.

Somnitz is now a fanatical killer who obeys the will of the Grand Harvester without question. His only interests, other than killing people, are raising exotic birds and meeting other mages.



Image: Somnitz is an attractive man of average height and build. He has short black hair and brown eyes. He dresses to fit the occasion, but he has two basic looks. The first is that of a nerdy recluse. He dresses in plain, drab clothing, and his attire usually include glasses and a pocket protector. His other look is that of a Blood Doll, and this is his more comfortable and common attire. He carries no guns except when absolutely necessary, relying instead on a large hunting knife honed to a razor's edge.

Roleplaying Notes: Somnitz is totally insane, but his charm and apparent innocence can be very deceptive. He has no real friends and he does not care to have any. He respects those who "understand" what it is to take human life. He is very brave, but he is cautious and never kills rashly or allows his trail to be known. He is a cold, rational killer.

Sanctum: Somnitz has a small, three-room sanctum filled with lots of items he has collected over the years. He is meticulously neat and clean, and he lets few people inside the sanctum. He keeps a number of exotic birds. One very unusual feature is that he keeps one fingerbone from each of his kills. He has mounted them on a number of large boards; the date and place are written below each bone, as are the name, age and occupation of the victim, if known.

The Freedom Razor

Members: Ayman Loutfi (Euthanatos), Virginia Adams (Euthanatos), Shelton Bruntee (Euthanatos), Theora Hetirck (Euthanatos)

Background: The Freedom Razor is charged with the task of handling most standard assassinations for the Chantry. The cabal is made up of the youngest of the Consanguinity's members. What they lack in experience they more than make up for in fanaticism. The cabal was originally founded in Persia in the 800s as a Euthanatos assassins' cult. The cult joined the Consanguinity shortly after the latter's formation. While the names and faces have changed, the cabal still upholds many of its old customs and ceremonies, vile though they may be.

Theora Hetirck

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Conformist

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Euthanatos

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Cosmology 2, Dodge 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 2, Intuition 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 2, Meditation 4, Melee 5, Occult 1, Research 3, Stealth 5, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3



Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 4, Destiny 5, Dream 1

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 3, Forces 1, Life 3, Mind 2, Prime 2

Willpower: 5

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 17

Paradox: 3

Background: Theora Hetirck was born into a family of morticians, and appeared to be an otherwise "normal" child. However, she was not. Her Avatar was Awakened at an early age by a mage who had died. While working on the mage's body, Theora somehow "reanimated" the mage, though he was in a delusional state. The talking and walking corpse awoke the Avatar in the girl. The corpse also gave her a ring that allowed her to see the spirits of the dead. Then it stumbled out of the mortuary and was smashed to pieces while trying to cross the busy highway in front.

Theora never told a soul about the experience. It proved to be the start of her journey into the world of death. She developed enough power to animate the corpses in the mortuary, with whom she would dance, sing and play all sorts of perverse and childish games when no other living soul was around. One day her father caught her and thought her possessed by a demon. He dragged Theora into the back room and tried to beat her. In a fit of terror for her very life, she picked up a scalpel and slit his throat. She could not believe what she had done. She left the mortuary and never returned home.

She wandered aimlessly for over a year before her presence was sensed by Voormas. She has served Voormas faithfully ever since, though she dreams of escaping. Her interests include studying vampires, playing the flute, and performing assassinations for Voormas.

Image: Hetirck is an attractive woman in her mid-20s. She has a slender build, medium-length, dark-brown hair, and bright brown eyes. She dresses mostly in black, as that is what is most commonly worn in the Chantry. On Earth, however, she tends to dress in colorful dresses.

Roleplaying Notes: Hetirck is a frightened, innocent and slightly crazy young lady in a no-win situation. She would do anything to be free of her responsibilities to the Chantry and live a "normal" life. She is jovial and friendly, but she performs her work with solemnity and the precision of a seasoned assassin.

Sanctum: Hetirck spends as much time as she can on Earth at the Miami house of the Chantry. She has a nice, cozy, five-room sanctum filled with the comforts of modern life. Her tastes are not as morbid as one might think; the place is filled with comfortable, modern furniture, and there are even pictures of her family.

Nodes of the House of Helekar

Dachau Death Camp: This despicable place of human atrocity now serves the Chantry as a place of magickal power. The disgusting energy of the death camp is very great, and no other Tradition (or Convention) would employ such a place as a Node.

Rothchild's Wax Museum: The Euthanatos built this wax museum in Winchester, England over the Node site where an ancient temple once stood. The wax museum is used to embalm and coat in wax the bodies of those who have been given the Good Death. The bodies are altered to look like famous historical figures. Some actually *are* famous historical figures.

The Obelisk to Thanatos: This Node is located in Jordan and kept well hidden by faithful members of the cult. It is a large, bluish-black, rectangular marble column standing 30 feet high. It is adorned with carvings and has a stone door. Anyone who steps into the small black chamber behind the door and closes it will receive a vision. The vision is that of someone's death. Often it is the person's own death; at other times it is that of someone whom the person must kill to accomplish his personal goals. The death scene is enacted before the mage's eyes, as if it were an illusion. In fact, if the mage actually commits the murder, he often feels as if he is being watched (possibly by himself from another time and place).

The Necropolis of Burjhi: This Node is located in India below the streets of Old Delhi. The necropolis is accessible only through a special entrance located under an old building. The entrance tunnel leads into a maze filled with all sorts of deadly traps.

The Necropolis of Burjhi is a huge underground city filled with strange creatures who feast on the ancient bones of a former civilization. The creatures also hunt and eat one another. These creatures, called Crypt-fiends, are

gargoylelike humanoids with skin ranging from moldy gray-green to dusty-brown to greasy black. The creatures' glowing red eyes allow them to see in absolute darkness.

Besides the Crypt-fiends, the necropolis is filled with countless streets, buildings and bridges. There is a dark lake of brackish water near the middle of the necropolis; who knows what lives in it?

The Monkey's Heart: This Node is a gigantic red rock in the shape of a monkey's heart. The Node is located in present-day Cameroon, Africa. The Node holds great powers for those who know how to use them. If the correct ritual is known, a body placed at the foot of the Monkey's Heart may be brought back to life. The victim will suffer any ailments he had at the time of death, and will most likely have rigor mortis, which must be cured through magick. If the body has been embalmed, the victim becomes an animated, zombielike corpse.

The Nameless Pit: This former Black Spiral Dancer caern was captured by the Euthanatos nearly 40 years ago. It is located in northern Kentucky. Its upper levels resemble a huge cave complex, but once the lower levels are reached, the tunnels become more uniform. A ward put in place by the mages protects the place from the minions of the Wyrm. This alone prevents it from being overrun by Wyrm-things from the lower depths, or from being haunted by the slain Black Spirals, whose spirits are now trapped in caverns below the actual Pit.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

The Horizon Realm, known as the Forbidden Lands, is one giant graveyard — a maze of mausoleums, catacombs, wrought-iron fences, monuments, vaults, barrows and crypts. The place is very spooky and very dangerous. Strange undead creatures and scavengers prowl the cemetery, eating whatever they find.

The Realm has taken on the warped demeanor of Voormas himself, possibly fed by the evil energies of its foul Nodes. This in turn aids the corruption of visitors to the Realm. Although supposedly serving the Euthanatos Tradition, the Realm of Voormas would put some Nephandi to shame.

Environment

Anyone who enters the Realm receives a horrible, all-pervading feeling of death. Human remains, in various stages of decomposition, litter the ground and trees. The sky is always lit by three moons: one bone-white, one blood-red, and one bile-green. During thunderstorms, wooden coffins in the open graves float to the surface, as do the rotting corpses that fill the land's basins and sinkholes.

There are no living plants, though there are plenty of dead ones. Nor are there animals save insects, mollusks,



rats, and a few mangy black cats. Still, other things dwell among the crypts.

Denizens of the Realm

Zombies haunt the Realm, as do creatures called Skull Pigs. These creatures eat bones and rotting flesh. It is impossible to communicate with either species. The Skull Pigs will attack any lone individual, but will hesitate to attack groups unless the Pigs outnumber the prey by at least three to one. The Pigs stalk their victims for a period of time to frighten them before moving in for the kill. The zombies have no strategy and attack whenever they get a chance.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence -3, Entropy +5, Forces +1, Life +2, Mind -1, Prime -2

Chantry Description

The House of Helekar: The Chantry stands at the center of the field of graves. It is a massive, gray-walled, Gothic-looking castle with a definite Byzantine influence in its design. The castle bears a carving of a huge demonic face over its entranceway. The mouth forms the doors to the castle. The castle is surrounded by a moat of green, bubbling acid and a fence of human bones.

The interior of the castle is very dark and gloomy. Torchlight refracts from the dark-gray stone walls, floor and ceiling. The place is filled with pleasant aromas to hide the nastier smells exuding from the depths of its dungeons. The occasional maddening shriek or pitiful moan can be heard rising from the chambers below.

The dungeon has several holding cells filled with straw — and rats to nibble at the prisoners' toes, and nearly every torture device known to man (and some unknown to Sleepers). The castle chambers are large and drafty. They are filled with countless antiques, especially implements of war. The personal chambers of the mages vary, but all are made of gray stone, and the accommodations are sparse and limited (which is why most of the mages prefer to live in the Earth Chantries).

The oddest feature of the castle is its power to animate, becoming a giant stone golem-creature. The demon head at the entrance becomes the actual head of the fortress, complete with glowing eyes. The fortress lumbers about the Realm, its powerful arms and legs crushing anything in sight. All damage inflicted upon the Realm by the fortress repairs itself within a couple of hours. The mages have not animated the castle in the last 200 years.

Helekar House of Miami: This three-story house is the newest earthly aspect of the Chantry. It was created five years ago and has served the Chantry well as its base in the United States. The house is located in the suburbs outside Miami. Stone walls surround the place, and it has a large, well-kept garden. The Chantry has a large basement; here, prisoners are kept and all necessary equipment is stored.



Each mage has his own car, and there is a car for each of the two household servants. The Chantry is home to the Freedom Razor.

Helekar House of Baghdad: This aspect of the Chantry is a four-story building located in downtown Baghdad, Iraq. The Abyssians dwell here; even these mighty mages have their work cut out for them repairing all the damage inflicted by U.S. air raids. All valuables of the Chantry are now kept in the catacombs below. Only servants and other expendable items remain on the surface. The Chantry has two cars, which are kept in an underground garage area attached to the building to prevent them from being stolen or commandeered.

Helekar House of Cape Town: This Chantry houses the Friends of the Soul. It is located in Cape Town, South Africa, in a rich white section of the city. The two-story house has a walled-in courtyard. The Chantry has almost everything the mages could want, including a huge weapons cache and five automobiles.

Purpose

The Consanguinity of Eternal Joy is charged with the duty of protecting the Shade Realm of Entropy from all others. The Chantry has also taken it upon itself to assassinate all who would pose a threat to the security of the Shade Realm, to the mages, to the Euthanatos, and to the Traditions. This has certainly increased the mages' opportunities for murder.

History

The House of Helekar was founded in the Shade Realm of Entropy in A.D. 412 by a group of Persian Euthanatos. It took several centuries for the Ancestral Chantry in Calcutta to learn that members of its own Tradition had taken control of the Shade Realm. Once it learned, the Chantry could do nothing about it. The Consanguinity of Eternal Joy, which controlled the Realm, had proved loyal and had never used the powers of the Realm against the Tradition.

So, instead of condemning the mages, the leaders of the Euthanatos made the Consanguinity a special subcult within the Tradition, the purpose of which was to protect the Shade Realm and the Tradition.

Since that time, the Consanguinity has served more or less faithfully, though it has secretly assassinated other Euthanatos whom the subcult believed to be traitors (and they did confess their treachery once they were placed on the torture racks and chopping blocks).

The House of Helekar was completed in A.D. 939 under the direction of Grand Harvester Helekar. Helekar was power-hungry, but he used his power in the best interests of the Tradition. The Chantry took nearly a century to build. Since that time, its special power of animation, which took so long to enchant, has only been used on a handful of occasions, but each time it has served to overpower the invaders of the Realm.

Chantry Inhabitants

I only kill to know I'm alive.

— Ministry, "So What"

The Chantry's servants are members of its human cult. They too are skilled murderers, but they seldom put those skills to use. They perform the day-to-day functions of the household. They tend to dress in blue, white, or yellow robes bearing the symbol of the House of Helekar.

Internal Structure and Relations

Grand Harvester Voormas controls the Chantry. He keeps the mages of the various cabals hard at work protecting the Realm and the Chantry. He also claims to be in personal communication with the Oracles of Entropy. No mage disputes Voormas' orders; they are carried out fully regardless of whether or not the mage agrees with them. The cabals are highly organized and efficient, and they often cooperate.

The covenant of the Chantry is written in the blood of Helekar himself. It covers all necessary issues, as the Chantry has not much changed over the centuries.

External Relations

The mages of the Consanguinity are very secretive and xenophobic. They do not even share their information with other Euthanatos. Most Euthanatos fear members of this subcult, but most other mages do not recognize them as anything other than typical Euthanatos.

These mages wage the Ascension War in their own way, often handling the assassination of Technocracy leaders. However, the mages do not work well with outsiders. They almost never engage an opponent in direct combat, considering it too vulgar, too costly and too stupid a method. Because of this, the mages seem to be disinterested, half-hearted supporters of the Traditions, which is how they wish to be seen.

Status and Reputation

The House of Helekar has only slightly better than mediocre Status because so little is known about it. The mages are known among other Euthanatos as evil and dangerous.

Status: 3

Reputation: 0

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Consanguinity takes its job very seriously. All who enter the Realm uninvited are captured, tortured for days, and eventually flayed alive after all information of value has been gained. It is said that nothing alive can resist

the cult's tortures. Its members never accept outsiders as trainees or members, except those who already belong to their human cult or who are already Euthanatos mages. They never use Rogues, but kill many of them.

Allies and Enemies

The House of Helekar is allied to the Ancestral Chantry in Calcutta. It is also allied to two other Euthanatos Ancestral Chantries, but these are merely formal links. The Consanguinity will not aid either of the allied Chantries unless it is to the subcult's advantage.

The Chantry is also allied to a Black Spiral Hive and a Sabbat Cardinal. In addition, the Chantry controls human cults in Miami, South Africa and Baghdad. The cults are called the Brotherhoods of Consanguinity.

The enemies of the Chantry include Autochthonia, MECHA, one Progenitor construct, two New World Order Regional Headquarters, and one multi-Convention Construct. Other enemies include Galtharak the Gnasher of Bloodied-Souls (a Nephandus of great power) and its cabal of corrupted mages, Amen Khal (a mummy, whom the Consanguinity views as an abomination against death), and Chih Sung-tzu (an Umbrood Lord).

Research Capacities

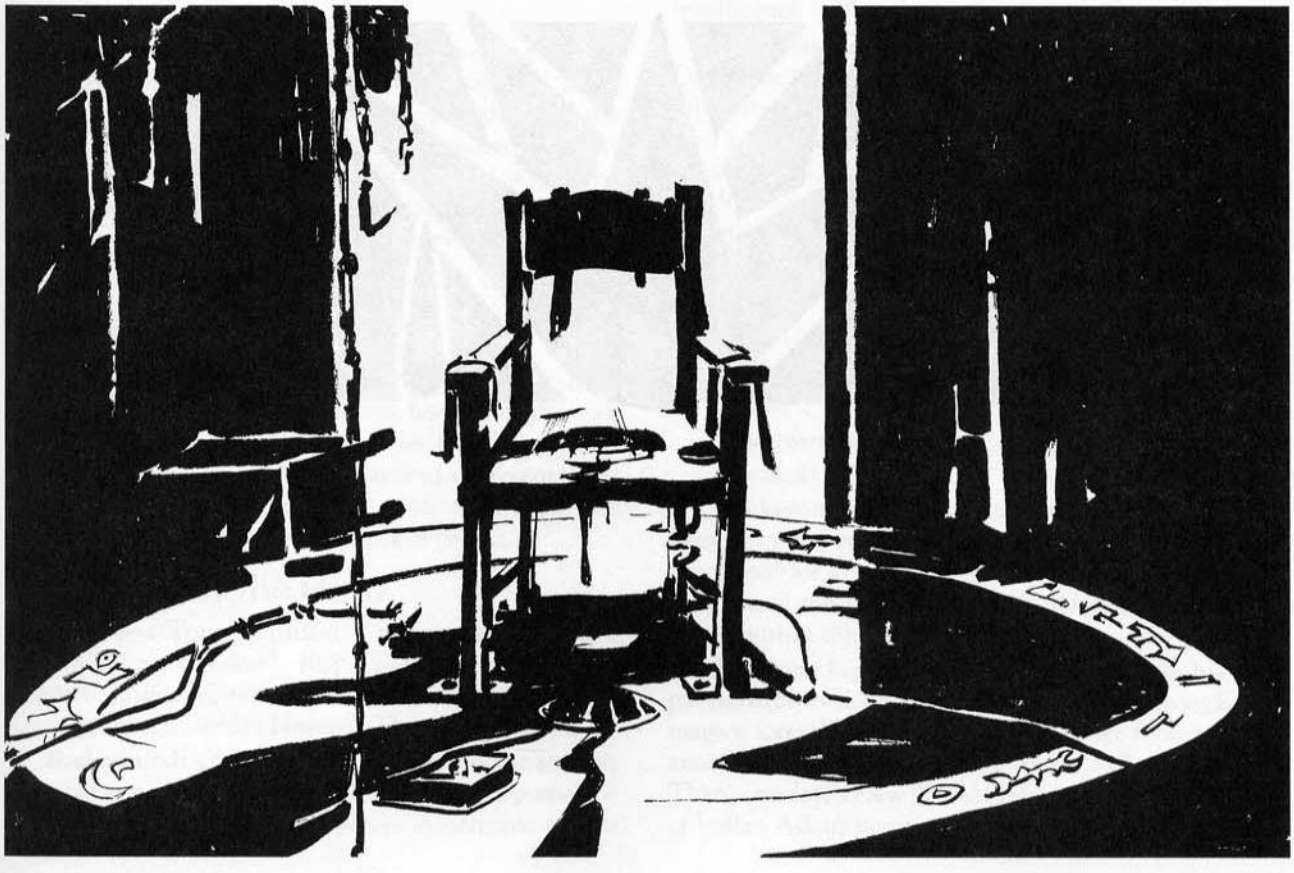
The House of Helekar was not intended to be a place of learning, and it is not. The mages receive their training elsewhere, though they sometimes hone their skills by sparring with one another. Still, the Chantry does have some resources.

The Abyssians occasionally provide some training to the other mages. However, most go to other Euthanatos Chantries for training. They even study with members of other Traditions and with Sleepers who have perfected the arts of murder. It is rumored that the members of the Consanguinity occasionally study with Assamite vampires, but this is hearsay at best.

The Chantry's entire collection of arcane tomes is geared toward its purpose. Few tomes deal with areas of magick not directly useful in the mages' duties. The mages must go elsewhere to study such matters. The Chantry has a relatively small mundane library, and this too is geared toward the studies or death, murder, medicine, toxicology, torture and interrogation.

The Chantry has no computers, nor does it need any. Its human cults do much of the legwork and report their findings back to the mages. The Consanguinity's additional contacts include a powerful psychic, a Ferectoi (a creature of the Wyrm), and a traitor within the New World Order. None of the contacts is trusted, and any or all would be eliminated if necessary, but so far the information provided has been correct.

The Chantry has as much Quintessence as it needs, because of its powerful Nodes and its access to the Shard



Realm of Entropy. However, mages are not allowed to waste the Quintessence or hoard it for personal use.

Stories

The theme of this Chantry is horror, the hideous possibilities of mages dedicated to cold-blooded killing. There is no "Good Death" here, only cruelty and suffering.

Revulsion is the dominant mood of Helekar's House. The endless charnel landscape and the foulness of the cabals should make even Euthanatos cringe. The House of Helekar is a perversion of all the "Good Death" stands for.

Story Ideas for the House of Helekar

1. One of the player characters is mistaken for another mage who has been selected by the Euthanatos of Helekar to receive the "Good Death." Will the player characters convince their would-be assassins of the truth before it is too late? Will they care?

2. The characters are in battle with a particularly disgusting Marauder, but their foe creates a magickal portal and escapes through it. When the player characters step through, they find themselves in the graveyard Realm of the House of Helekar. Will they get out without being discovered? Will they survive the experience? The Marauder left them another gateway out — will they find it before it is too late?

3. The mages of Helekar must find a particular Avatar and sacrifice it every three years. The Avatar belonged to a former Grand Harvester of Souls, who was honored with the promise of a "Good Death" every three years. Thus, every three years the Euthanatos of the Chantry hunt down and ritually slay whatever infant possesses the Avatar of the former mage. This time, the mages must stop them. Either they are chosen to do so by their superiors, or they have some special relation with the infant (i.e., father, mother, uncle, cousin). What will it take to save the child's life?

4. The player characters learn of a hoard of powerful magickal Tass, but it is located in the Shade Realm of Entropy. Can they recover the artifact from the graveyard without being discovered?

5. The player characters are sent to the House of Helekar as diplomats. Will they achieve the business they are there to accomplish, will they meddle in the affairs of the mages, or will they become the next victims?



The Lodge of the Gray Squirrel: Chantry of the Second World of the Dine'

These lands are ours. No one has the right to remove us, because we were the first owners. The Great Spirit above has appointed this place for us, on which to light our fires, and here we will remain.

—Tecumseh, to Joseph Barron, messenger of President James Madison



The lands and ways of the Native Americans have not yet disappeared beneath the dust of the ages. In the Second World of the Diné, Indian mages and their allies have preserved a Realm that reflects the best aspects of their various cultures.

The Realm is protected by the Circle of the Gray Squirrel, a Chantry of Dreamspeakers who are primarily of Native American origins. The Second World provides sanctuary to a host of werecreatures, Kinfolk, endangered species, and Native Americans who have left the Earth in hopes of finding a more peaceful place to live.

The Chantry is not only the protector of the Realm, but also the protector of the Native American ways. It has ties to many werecreature tribes, not just those of the Garou. The mages see their job as a mission of peace, though blood must be shed to see that eventual peace. The Chantry is highly involved in political matters ranging from the rights of the oppressed to the protection of the environment.

Cabals

Four cabals compose the Circle of the Gray Squirrel. Each cabal is a totally autonomous body, but all work together in a noncompetitive manner to achieve their goals. At one time, each cabal represented a different tribal background. However, since that time, each cabal has accepted new members from all types of people.

The Cult of the Bear

Members: Tom Smithson (Dreamspeaker), Joseph Edelson (Dreamspeaker), Roy Long (Dreamspeaker), Augusto Lopez (Dreamspeaker), Jasper Merchant (Dreamspeaker), Deedee Navarre (Dreamspeaker)

Background: Originally a Sioux shamanistic society, this cabal joined the Circle in 1848. The cabal's purpose is to ensure the survival of the Native Americans and to protect their rights. The mages have many werecreatures as allies. Their totem spirit is the Bear.

Tom Smithson a.k.a. "Laughing Eagle"

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Dreamspeaker

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Cosmology 4, Culture 4, Dodge 3, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 2, Expression (Storytelling) 3, Firearms 5, Intuition 5, Investigation 3, Leadership 5, Linguistics 5, Medicine 4, Meditation 5, Melee 4, Occult 3, Research 2, Science 2, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 1, Survival 5, Technology 3

Backgrounds: Allies 7, Arcane 5, Avatar 4, Destiny 4, Dream 4, Influence 3, Library 5

Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 2, Life 4, Mind 2, Matter 1, Prime 3, Spirit 5, Time 4

Willpower: 9

Arete: 8

Quintessence: 17

Paradox: 3

Background: Tom Smithson is a former Apache shaman who has maintained his secret identity as "Tom Smithson" for over 100 years. He is currently the leader of the Cult of the Bear and, unofficially, the most powerful leader within the Chantry.

Laughing Eagle, as Smithson was called by his tribe, proved to be a valuable asset to his people. Laughing Eagle's magick foretold the coming of the savage foreigners and enabled his people to stay one step ahead of the enemy. Then, one day, a New World Order mage from the Bureau of Indian Affairs began working with the cavalry.



Tricked by the Technomancer, Laughing Eagle led his people into an ambush in a deep ravine. The tribe was picked apart by the cavalry, and Laughing Eagle was forced to surrender. His people were put into a stockade, but were later moved onto a reservation. Laughing Eagle was taken to Null-B, where he was cast into slavery. Here, he met four other Dreamspeaker mages. They planned their escape and successfully implemented it. However, by the time they returned to Earth, the Indian resistance had long been crushed and "America the Beautiful" was now home to European descendants.

Disillusioned, homeless, and without motivation or family, Laughing Eagle changed his name to Tom Smithson and traveled about aimlessly for nearly a decade before being found by mages of the Circle of the Gray Squirrel. They recruited him and made him one of their own. Since that time, his power and wisdom have earned him great respect.

Smithson's interests include: investigating Technomancer Horizon Realms; spending time with the Cat People; breeding, training and riding horses; and tutoring young mages. He is not power-hungry, but knows how to manipulate people and use his power and influence when necessary.

Image: Smithson is a Native American in his late 50s. He has shoulder-length, wavy black hair with touches of gray in it. His brown eyes seem ancient to those who look into them. He usually wears plain clothing — slacks, a collared shirt of some sort, and boots are fairly typical.

Roleplaying Notes: Smithson may be a Curmudgeon on the surface, but he is not sarcastic. He actually likes people. It just takes a while for people to get to know him. He is very honorable, generous, gallant and loving. Those who earn his true friendship are able to call upon him without a moment's hesitation. His cynical facade hides his grief and sense of failure. This depression is why he refuses to serve as the actual leader of the Chantry.

Sanctum: Laughing Eagle maintains a spacious, eight-room apartment in the Chantry. It is decorated in a rustic style, but he has incorporated art and styles of many primitive cultures into his own unique blend.

The Great Spirit's Agents

Members: Dave Murphy (Dreamspeaker), Mae Roberts (Dreamspeaker)

Background: This cabal was originally a Blackfoot shamanistic society. It came into the Circle in 1830, after having problems with Andrew Jackson. The cabal is involved in exposing Pentex as an agent of the Wyrm. The cabal presently has only two mages; the other three members were recently killed by a Pentex First Team.

Mae Roberts

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Caregiver (currently Loner)

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Dreamspeaker

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 5, Brawl 4, Computer 3, Cosmology 3, Culture 5, Dodge 1, Drive 2, Enigmas 5, Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Intimidation 2, Intuition 5, Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 5, Medicine 4, Meditation 3, Melee 3, Occult 2, Performance (Piano) 3, Research 2, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 2, Avatar 3, Destiny 4, Dream 5, Library 7



Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 2, Life 4, Matter 2, Prime 4, Spirit 4

Willpower: 6

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 8

Background: Mae Roberts is a former housewife who began dabbling in ancient mysticism after her husband died and her children moved away. Roberts, an amateur genealogist, realized that there were many shamans in her family.

Shortly after she began collecting material on her family, she was visited by a man named Jacob Clearwater, who told her he could take her to meet some of her relatives — relatives she had believed were dead. She agreed to go with him after he told her he was a genealogist himself and that he had discovered a connection between their two families. He even told her details about her family that she had only recently discovered herself.

Clearwater led her back to the Lodge of the Gray Squirrel. After crossing into the Horizon Realm, he awoke her Avatar and introduced her to several of her "long-dead" relatives, who were themselves servants and mages. She apprenticed under Clearwater, who was in fact her great-uncle, and joined his cabal. Clearwater and many of her other friends recently died in a clash with some Pentex First Teams.

Roberts must now once again come to grips with loss. She has become a recluse since the tragedy, and her only surviving cabalist, Dave Murphy, has been unable to drag her from her depression. Normally, her interests include: traveling about the Horizon Realm using her healing powers to assist those in need; monkeywrenching Pentex; cooking; and making traditional, handcrafted Native American art and jewelry.

Image: Roberts is a Native American in her early 40s. She is attractive, with waist-length black hair and black-brown eyes. She is in good physical shape. She dresses in a very rustic fashion and she always carries a .357 magnum in a belt holster.

Roleplaying Notes: Mae is usually a friendly and cheerful woman. She elegantly combines her former roles of mother and housewife with her current role of terrorist. Now, however, she has become something of a recluse. It is doubtful she will be driven by revenge once she has overcome her depression, but that does not mean she will be afraid to continue her fight against the enemy.

Sanctum: Her private chambers consist of an eight-room house furnished in modern fashion. She has a huge private library, and many antiques and heirlooms. She has two guest rooms, so her children and their families have places to stay when they come and visit.

The Sun Dancers

Members: Mahala Vamm (Dreamspeaker), Stanley Wuber (Dreamspeaker), Nenita Towns (Dreamspeaker), Wayne Jones (Dreamspeaker)

Background: The Sun Dancer Cabal is of Cheyenne origins. The cabal joined the Circle in the 1890s. The cabal is primarily concerned with the protection of the environment all over the world. It has some ties to the Green Knights in Europe, as well as with other ecoguerrilla organizations all over the world.

The Fools' Society

Members: Louise Patterson (Dreamspeaker), Martha Kelley (Verbena), Gail Holsombake (Verbena), Samuel Holt (Dreamspeaker), Irving Pellegrino (Verbena), Albert Cima (Dreamspeaker)

Background: The Fools' Society was originally a shamanistic society of the Assinibones. The cabal joined the Circle in 1844. In the last 10 years or so, the cabal has been trying something new. The cabal began accepting Verbena mages as members. The effort has proved successful, as the Verbena bring a deep understanding of nature to the union. The cabal is interested in the creation of other Verbena-Dreamspeaker cabals, but it has not decided whether the other cabals would approve of it. The Fools' Society is involved in its own battles against the Progenitors and the Nephandi.

Gail Holsombake

Nature: Avant-Garde

Demeanor: Judge

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Verbena



Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Archaeology 5, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Computer 2, Cosmology 1, Culture 5, Dodge 1, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, Intimidation 2, Intuition 3, Investigation 3, Leadership 2, Linguistics 5, Medicine 1, Meditation 3, Melee 2, Occult 4, Research 5, Science 3, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 2, Avatar 4, Destiny 2, Dream 5, Influence 2, Library 6

Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 3, Life 4, Matter 4, Prime 2, Time 3

Willpower: 7

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 15

Paradox: 5

Gail Holsombake is a former archaeologist who has always been interested in both ancient Celtic culture and Native American culture. She became a Wiccan while in college and eventually met a Wiccan who was a Verbena mage. She apprenticed under the mage and, after finishing her apprenticeship, put her new abilities to use in exploring the past through magick and archaeology. While studying the Wheels of the Heavens, she was discovered by Louise Patterson, a Dreamspeaker, who invited her into the Realm. Eventually they formed the "Fools' Society" a cabal of Dreamspeakers and Verbena.

Holsombake is still a hard-working archaeologist. She is on the trail of what she believes to be an ancient Tradition that spawned the Dreamspeakers, Verbena, Cult of Ecstasy and Progenitors. Whether or not this "missing link" really exists is unknown, but she is working hard to prove that it does.

Aside from her personal archaeological studies, Holsombake also works with nonprofit organizations to find good homes for abandoned domesticated animals. She is also one of the few mages who spends time in the cloud cities of the Swallow People.

Image: Holsombake is an athletic woman of German-Scottish descent, and is in her mid-20s. She has long, golden-blond hair and bright hazel eyes. She usually dresses in jeans and T-shirts. She prefers darker colors, but dresses in white for almost all religious ceremonies.

Roleplaying Notes: Gail is curious, friendly, humorous, mysterious, and occasionally sarcastic and rude. She is kind-hearted and has a deep fondness for animals.

Sanctum: Gail maintains a 10-room sanctum within one of the larger buildings. Her sanctum is decorated in a comfortable, but quaint, antique fashion. She keeps many of her archaeological treasures on display, as well as a number of photographs of her parents and two sisters, whom she had to leave behind.



Nodes of the Lodge of the Gray Squirrel

Wheels of the Heavens: There are nine Wheels of the Heavens; only two are known to the outside world. They are all located on reservations, protecting them from encroachment by the Sleeper authorities. In addition, they are guarded by ancient spirits of the land, protecting them from all supernatural threats.

The Wheels are composed of stones laid out in wheel-shaped patterns atop Nodes. The Wheels are all linked to one another through ley lines, which form a powerful pattern to help support the Realm. The Wheels are occasionally raided by Garou. The mages will soon be forced to take action against the Garou, and will most likely call upon their own werecreature and vampiric allies in doing so.

The Vision Cave: This large cave is located on a reservation and set into the wall of a huge cliff. The cave requires the individual to climb up to it (use the climbing rules provided in **Mage**, pg. 256), as no special Portal reaches it. The cave houses thousands upon thousands of bats. They do not harm any who enter, as long as the person does not bring fire or scare them in some other way. A mage who stays in the cave and fasts for at least three days will have a powerful vision if the spirits deem her worthy. The vision is a moment of spiritual revelation that will forever affect the individual's life.

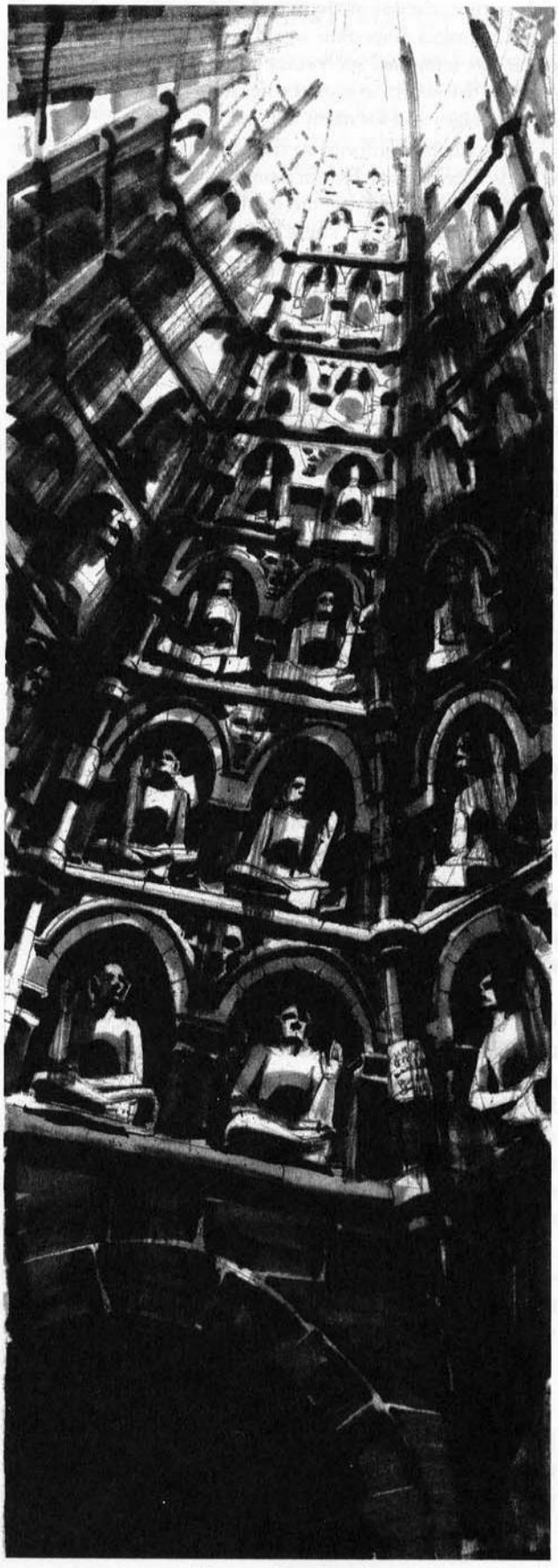
The Laughing Rock: This Node is a large rock in the Black Hills. The place echoes any sounds made. Anyone who tells a sufficiently funny joke (Manipulation + Expression; difficulty 8) will not hear her own voice echoed as usual, but will instead hear a tremendous, hyenalike burst of laughter. The individual will also gain between one and three Quintessence for her efforts. The individual may make the Node laugh as often as she wishes, but she can only gain Quintessence once per day through this method. This Node was once a Nuwisha (werecoyote) caern.

The Valley of Animal Dreams: Hidden in the Rocky Mountains is a strange valley that is somehow connected to both the Second World of the Diné and one of the Chimerae Realms. The valley is lush, green and balmy all year round. The dreams of unusually sentient or psychically strong animals physically manifest themselves here. The dreams are variable and innumerable, ranging from fierce hunts, to a pet playing with its master, to animals taking on a humanoid form to kill or interact with humans.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

The Second World of the Diné was created millennia ago by Dreamspeakers who desired a world away from the cares of mortal existence. Though they lived in harmony



with nature, the lot of the native people was not an easy one. The mages shaped the world in the image they desired, and it has remained such since that time. Shamans once spoke of this world as an afterlife; now it serves as a home for the mages and for many others.

The Realm conforms to the Navajo myth of the Four Worlds. The Horizon Realm is supposedly the second of the Four Worlds, a world that did not belong to humans, but to cat- and bird-people. These hybrid races, enshrined in Indian legends, still control large portions of the Realm, and visitors must offer respect or pay the price.

The Second World is a Realm at the height of Summer. In contrast with the fallen fortunes of Doissetep or the corruption of the House of Helekar, the Second World reflects the compassion, balance and harmony of its inhabitants.

The Second World is no pastoral, idyllic paradise. Life is harsh and death is not always kind. But life and death both have places here; the devastating spiritual decline that plagues the Gothic-Punk world has not yet ravaged this world.

Environment

The Second World of the Diné is similar to the American West as it was before the Europeans came. However, there are many differences.

The sky is a bright and deep blue. The sun is glowing yellow and impossibly bright. There is also a moon, but it is nearly twice as large as Earth's. The clouds are a perfect white; there dwell the Swallow People, who have built entire cities in the clouds.

The soil bears its earthly hue, but most of the plants are blue, not green. The seasons still change, and leaves go through a purple stage before becoming red, then orange, then yellow.

There is an abundance of life in the Realm. Most is indigenous to the American Southwest, but the Circle of the Gray Squirrel has introduced a number of endangered species into the Realm, saving them from extinction. Buffalo are especially plentiful, including a very few mysterious white buffalo, which possess special powers. Though not native to the West, large packs of wild mustangs roam the land. Some are captured for use by the people. Deer and antelope are likewise plentiful.

There are plenty of rivers and lakes, and even an ocean. Needless to say, the Realm is clean. There are no soft-drink cans, beer bottles, Twinkie wrappers, or toxic waste sites eroding its beauty and life.

Denizens of the Realm

Scattered bands of humans inhabit the Realm. They live in small communities, most of which are permanent. A few nomadic tribes still wander the plains. Those with permanent homes have learned more advanced styles of architecture, and some even have multistoried stone buildings. Metals are worked, but they are not widely used.

The people vary in culture and appearance, though almost all are Native American. They speak many different languages and dress in many different ways. They occasionally have disputes among themselves, but by and large they are far more peaceful than humans on Earth. All the nations support the mages and owe them their allegiance.

In addition to its human inhabitants, the Second World houses the Cat People and the Swallow People, hybrid races with a history of animosity toward each other. The Cat People live in their own communities separate from humans, but they trade with one another and get along well. The Swallow People live in the clouds and have little to do with humans.

A number of werecreatures of all sorts may be found here. Here they have found refuge from the troubles of the world. They aid in protecting the Realm and generally get along with the people. However, the mages do not tolerate them preying on their fellow humans.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence +1, Forces -1, Life +1, Matter-2, Mind +1, Prime +1, Spirit +3

Chantry Description

The Lodge in the World of the Diné: A number of adobe hogans compose the area loosely called the "Lodge." These hogans, eight-sided buildings of free-standing clay, vary in size from small huts to large houses. Though built in traditional fashion, many hogans boast modern accommodations. A huge, silo-like sweat lodge stands near the center of the Lodge area.

Acolytes, mages, and their respective families all live as equals under common law. Property has no value here, and accommodations are of equal size and value.

The Lodge on Earth: The earthly aspect of the lodge can be best described as humble. It appears to be an old building made from rotting timber. The lodge's one small room can barely hold five people, but there is another doorway in the lodge through which people can enter the Chantry in the Horizon Realm.

Two spirits guard the lodge entrance, allowing in only those who have been given spirit names within the lodge. All others are not allowed, and the spirits have the power to teleport unwanted guests half a continent away if necessary. In addition, the Chantry is indestructible. If it were destroyed, it would simply rebuild itself again while no one was looking.

Purpose

The Chantry exists as a means of uniting Dreamspeakers to protect Native Americans and the environment. The Chantry serves to unite the various Amerind nations for

the causes of peace and prosperity. The Chantry fulfills its duties by guarding the Second World of the Diné and by combating the Wyrm. To a lesser degree, the Chantry also combats the Technocracy, the Nephandi and the Marauders.

History

The Second World of the Diné was a Horizon Realm controlled by a large shamanistic society of the Navajo. The society suffered great losses, and the wisest of its members began calling for a united peace.

When the Shawnee leader Tecumseh called for a uniting of the tribes, the shamans of this society united and traveled to Tippecanoe to join the effort. However, Tenskwatawa, who was chief in Tecumseh's absence, was a major reason for the Indian defeat at the hands of General Anthony Wayne and his army.

The shamans who survived the defeat united and decided to form their own society, the Shadow of the Gray Squirrel. This they took from the name of a friendly totem spirit. The Navajo revealed to the other shamans the secret of the Second World of the Diné, and the assembled shamans decided it would serve as their new home and base of operations.

The Shadow of the Gray Squirrel divided into the Eyes of the Sun, the Path Finders, and the Circle of the Gray Squirrel. All three still maintain access to the Horizon Realm, but the three Chantries are located far from one another and only occasionally work together. All three Chantries are roughly equal in power and prestige, and they all uphold the peace.

Chantry Inhabitants

In addition to housing the mages themselves, the Chantry houses their families and other relatives. The Chantry itself is large enough to house any and all. These "Sleepers" often maintain normal homes on reservations. Loyalty is very strong, and there are no traitors within the Chantry.

Internal Structure and Relations

The mages have a Chiefs' Council, composed of the most experienced members of the Chantry. Many wise Sleepers also sit on the council. All members of the Chantry, including non-mages, are allowed to have their say in all matters concerning them.

There is no written covenant, but the covenant has been passed down orally, and all the members of the Chantry know it. The mages seldom compete with one another, and instead go out of their way to help one another.

External Relations

The Chantry maintains good relations with a number of other Chantries. It is not xenophobic, though it does conceal the location of its Horizon Realm. The cabals of the Second World maintain good relations with many werecreatures, particularly the Corax wereravens, the Pumonca and Qualmi Bastet, and the Wendigo and Uktena Garou. The mages and shapeshifters share a common goal, and know it.

Status and Reputation

The Circle has provided help to many Chantries when they most needed it, and has a long history of honor at all costs. It does not, however, suffer those who disrespect the Great Mother or any of her children, animal or otherwise. Members of the Chantry occasionally ask other Chantries for the whereabouts of individuals known to have committed truly heinous crimes; those individuals subsequently disappear.

Status: 3

Reputation: 5

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Chantry neither welcomes nor likes outsiders in its Realm, but it does help outsiders as much as possible. It occasionally "adopts" Orphans to prevent the Technocracy from getting them. However, it does not accept apprentices of dead masters, unless they are Dreamspeakers.

Allies and Enemies

The Chantry is formally allied with the Eyes of the Sun, the Path Finders, and one other Chantry. However, it has aided many Chantries in the past. The Chantry has a great number of additional allies (and a few enemies) as a result of its intense dedication.

Research Capacities

The Circle of the Gray Squirrel is highly active and has little time for research except studies directly relating to the Chantry's purpose.

Almost all of the mages have apprentices. The mages allow their apprentices a great degree of independence, but they also expect much from them. Apprentices are often thrown into dangerous situations before they are ready, in order to toughen them and give them a better appreciation of the value of their training.

Dreamspeakers do not record most of their magickal knowledge. Instead, they pass it through word of mouth. This allows the Mentor to teach the student what he needs to know and to explain it in a way the apprentice will understand. The Circle does have a small library consisting of the works of a few mages who decided it was better to put their knowledge into a written form. Many of these books are written in Cherokee, making abuse difficult and learn-

ing essential. The Chantry also has a relatively small mundane library, which mainly serves as a resource for educating the children.

The Chantry recently bowed to modern necessity and "installed" computers capable of tapping into Earth's information net. Unknown to the Circle mages, an enterprising group of Virtual Adepts has already hacked into the system and knows more about the Realm than the Circle would like.

In addition to the computers, the Chantry has five spirit contacts, which are privy to a great deal of highly secretive information. One of these spirits captures and eats trespassing Banes, torturing them first to find out what they know.

Stories

Harmony should be the theme of many Gray Squirrel tales. Balance is precious to the Realm; any threat to that balance merits the utmost concern of the Circle and its allies.

The Second World combines all that is best about the past and present, and applies it toward the goal of a hopeful future. The Realm may provide a restful stop for weary adventurers, a healing place for mages suffering physical and spiritual injuries, or a fragile target for the forces of despair.

Story Ideas for the Lodge of the Gray Squirrel

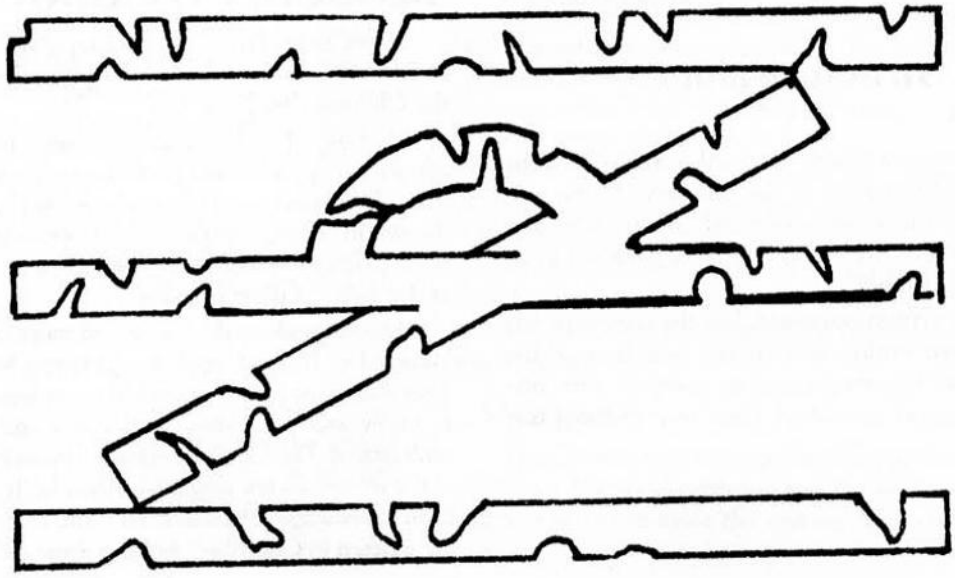
1. Agents of the Wyrm learn of the Second World of the Diné and devise their own means of entry. They sneak into the Realm and begin corrupting its inhabitants. The characters' assistance is sought by the mages of the Chantry, who recognize the heroism of the player characters. The mages offer them membership or another reward if they join in the fight.

2. For some reason, the hybrids of the Realm turn against the humans. Which side will the werecreatures join? Can the characters help prevent bloodshed? This also works well with werewolf player characters.

3. Intrigue abounds as the three Chantries of the Realm unite for a grand celebration. Then tragedy strikes — an entire cabal is mysteriously murdered. Who or what had the power to do this? Was it one being or a group? Were mages to blame? Will the three Chantries manage to solve the problem peaceably? Will more mages become victims? This is a murder mystery requiring cunning and intrigue.

4. Verbena come to the Chantry, hoping to join. Once accepted into the Realm, they begin growing the largest Life Tree known. Are they planning a takeover of the Realm, or are they just loyal to one another and secretive by nature?

5. A Wendigo goes Rogue in the Realm, perhaps gathering allies and hiding in the canyons. Is he the victim of some madness, Wyrm-tainted, or just a werewolf brimming over with Rage? This could also threaten the peace between the Native American and Caucasian mages, as the Wendigo's mad racism reopens old wounds.



Vali Shallar: Chantry of Mu

A sight to dream of, not to tell!
— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Christabel"



Vali Shallar is a Chantry in the heart of a legend. A man by the name of Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett went looking for an outpost of Atlantis in the jungles of Brazil. He instead found something else entirely: City X, a city located by a lake. The city existed not only in this world, but in its own Horizon Realm.

Cabals

Vali Shallar was once an Ancestral Chantry of the Dreamspeakers. Members of the Akashic Brotherhood were accepted as equals after a long and bloody conflict, but not without lingering suspicion and resentment. The Chantry has only recently begun accepting members of other Traditions. This was primarily done to save those who were sure to be captured by the Technocracy; in the process it has revitalized the Chantry. Still, many mages would like to see things as they once were. So, even in this beautiful, peaceful refuge, there are many silent internal conflicts.

The Rachar

Members: Hideaki Kawatachi (Akashic Brotherhood), Ihuanocuatlo (Dreamspeaker), Shi-Han Oh (Akashic Brotherhood), Xocometl (Dreamspeaker)

Background: The Rachar is composed of the eldest and wisest of the mages. These mages serve as the prime cabal for the Chantry, and their decisions are always obeyed and respected. The cabal was formed shortly after the invasion by the Akashic Brotherhood, and its authority has never been challenged. It has ably represented both the Dreamspeakers and the Akashic Brotherhood, serving as the strongest force in consolidating both Traditions.

The current members have recently allowed the formation of a new cabal, the Hands of Hope. This new cabal, composed of many Traditions, attempts to bring some life and some hope of survival for the Chantry against the recent renewed conflict with the Progenitors. However, the Rachar has been openly criticized by the Jabhi-yazer cabal, whose members dislike all outsiders. This has placed the Rachar in a difficult situation. The mages of the Jabhi-yazer are the best defenders of the Realm, but the Rachar must oppose them in this matter.

The Rachar spends virtually all its time in either Vali Shallar or City X on Earth. It does not collectively visit the other Earthly manifestations of the Chantry. The Akashic Brothers of the cabal do, however, visit Birganj Monastery for a couple of months every five or 10 years.

The Rachar is very much set in its ways, striving always to keep the Chantry's traditions alive. Still, the mages are wise enough to realize change is necessary if they are to survive. Now they must decide how much they are willing to sacrifice for that survival. Some have already hinted that death would be better than turning their backs on their heritage.

Ihuanocuatlo

Nature: Traditionalist

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Dreamspeaker

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

Abilities: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Brawl 6, Dodge 5, Enigmas 6, Etiquette 2, Expression 5, Intuition 5, Leadership 4, Linguistics 5, Medicine 3, Meditation 6, Melee 1, Occult 2, Research 3, Stealth 3, Survival 6

Backgrounds: Allies 10, Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Destiny 5, Dream 6

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 4, Forces 3, Life 5, Mind 5, Matter 3, Prime 5, Spirit 5, Time 5

Willpower: 10

Arete: 8

Quintessence: 20

Paradox: 0

Ihuanocuatlo was born nearly a millennium ago to a rich merchant family of the original Mayan city that would become the Chantry. Ihuanocuatlo became a priest and studied the ways of the Dreamspeakers. When the Horizon Realm was created, he was one of the lesser participants in its design and actual formation. All the others have long since died.

When the Akashic Brotherhood invaded the Realm, he fought them valiantly, but the Brotherhood's superior fighting skills won the day. Many of Ihuanocuatlo's fellow mages, including two of his cousins, were killed. When terms of peace were reached he was there, but he did not know he would soon become a leader of the Chantry.

Four young mages of exceptional wisdom were chosen to serve as the Rachar, the prime cabal of the Chantry, now renamed Vali Shallar. The mages were taught the ways of

their fellow Tradition and developed friendships and bonds of loyalty to one another. The Akashic Brothers taught the mages how to access the Nodes they had brought to the Chantry, and the Dreamspeakers taught the mages about their new home. Ihuanocuatlo was charged with the duty of creating a cabal to serve as the Chantry guard; this cabal became known as the Jabhi-yazer.

Over the centuries, Ihuanocuatlo has continued to study his magick and has become quite powerful. Still, he almost never uses his magick openly. Many wonder if he really is powerful, but none wish to test him. His interests include: long walks through the Chantry gardens; working in the garden; games of chess; meditation (which he learned centuries ago from his Akashic Brother masters); and martial arts, though mainly as an artistic expression and for exercise. Ihuanocuatlo is also working toward a way of "converting manifestations of one Sphere's work into that of another," though no one knows exactly what he means by that statement.

Some whisper that Ihuanocuatlo is being considered by the Oracles of Spirit, Life and Time for initiation into their ranks. Ihuanocuatlo has no desire to be an Oracle, for he currently worries about what will happen to the Chantry during these troubled times. He hopes to guide the Chantry through its current problems and keep it on course.

Image: Ihuanocuatlo looks like an ancient Mayan. He has a sloped forehead, long black hair and dark skin. He is apparently in his mid-50s. He occasionally dresses in traditional Mayan dress, but he prefers loose-fitting silk robes of gray, light blue, or forest green. He wears a golden amulet on a string of his Mentor's hair.

Roleplaying Notes: Ihuanocuatlo almost never speaks. When he does, it is usually in ancient Maya. When conversing with those who do not understand Maya, he speaks in the listeners' native tongue. He is generous, reserved and slow to act. He usually asks rhetorical questions to those who seek advice, hoping to help them find the answers in themselves. He takes little interest in what goes on outside the Chantry, but he is always informed (by some unknown means) of all major events. His sense of reverence for the ways of his ancestors (except for human sacrifice) should be emphasized.



Sanctum: Ihuanocuatlo has his own floor in the Chantry. It is decorated in a unique Mayan/Oriental style. It is very luxurious and filled with furniture. No walls separate the rooms of his chambers; it is one great loft. He keeps an indoor arboretum as part of his sanctum. Countless varieties of plants grow here, including a few trees. The floor is mostly earth, with stone slabs to support furniture and walkways to avoid getting one's feet dirty. A number of wild animals also call the sanctum home, including a few deer, a jaguar, turkeys, parrots, hummingbirds, snakes of all sorts, an eagle and a couple of monkeys. The animals coexist peaceably and do not harm each other or anything else.

The Yultasi

Members: Minoru Kirimoto (Akashic Brotherhood), Carlos Rodriguez (Dreamspeaker), Kyojiro Okabe (Akashic Brotherhood), Maria Valverde (Dreamspeaker), Minoru Kishibe (Akashic Brotherhood), Yoshiharu Miyamoto (Akashic Brotherhood)

Background: This cabal was formed shortly after the Akashic Brotherhood's invasion. It was created to monitor the outside world after a series of attacks on the Chantry by the Progenitors. The Yultasi spied on other Chantries and made numerous contacts, but it took no part in the Ascension War during its first few years, for it took the Yultasi decades to convince the Rachar how important it was to get involved. Since that time, the Yultasi has become a formidable opponent of the Technocracy, especially the Progenitors.

During the struggle, the Yultasi encountered many Orphans and Errants. The Yultasi sympathized, but could do little to help. Finally, its members became fed up with the problem and petitioned the Rachar to allow the formation of a new cabal composed of these lost mages. The Rachar refused, but the Yultasi secretly created a new cabal anyway, which they named the Hands of Hope. The Rachar later discovered the cabal's existence, and reluctantly decided to accept the new cabal into the Chantry. The Rachar told the Jabhi-yazer it had called for the creation of the new cabal, much to the Jabhi-yazer's disgust.

Now the mages of the Yultasi walk a thin line. If they disobey the Rachar so blatantly again, they will be expelled from the Chantry. Despite this, the Yultasi has become more and more independent, and its members now spend little time at Vali Shallar. They have instead concentrated their efforts against the Progenitors; Maria Valverde has discovered a link between the Progenitors and the major

pharmaceutical companies operating out of her native Brazil.

Minoru Kirimoto

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Judge

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Akashic Brotherhood

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Brawl 5, Computer 3, Cosmology 4, Culture 2, Dodge 5, Drive 2, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Intuition 2, Investigation 4, Law (Japanese, U.S. federal) 2, Leadership 2, Linguistics 5, Medicine 2, Meditation 4, Melee 4, Occult 2, Research 2, Science 2, Stealth 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2, Technology 2

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 4, Avatar 5, Destiny 3, Dream 3, Influence 2, Library 5

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Life 2, Mind 4, Matter 2, Prime 2, Spirit 3, Time 2

Willpower: 7

Arete: 4

Quintessence: 15

Paradox: 5

Minoru Kirimoto is a former Tokyo police officer and a descendant of a former member of the Yultasi. He was chosen to follow in his ancestor's footsteps because it is believed that his Avatar is that of his ancestor.

Kirimoto was kidnapped by the Yultasi and taken back to the Realm for training. At first it appeared that he would have a nervous breakdown, as his world came crashing down around him, but before long he had regained enough stability to accept the apprenticeship offered him. Since that time he has proved a most capable member of the cabal.



He enjoys the fact that he is not stranded in the Chantry like the Jabhi-yazer, whom he has come to despise for their arrogance and narrow-mindedness. Kirimoto has devoted himself to working toward the destruction of the Technocracy. When he is not doing this, he spends his time studying the Near Umbra for new Nodes. He is also collecting evidence concerning the existence of several other Dreamspeaker and Akashic Brotherhood Ancestral Chantries, though most are believed to be destroyed. He has hopes of one day finding and exploring the ruins of these Chantries.

Image: Kirimoto is a tall, slender Japanese man in his late 20s. He generally dresses in black clothing of Western styles. He wears silver earrings, rings and a watch. He could, in fact, pass as a Hollow One. He has long, silky black hair and brown eyes. He has begun using his sword as more than a focus and has even considered designing some sort of Talisman armor to add to his countermagick and physical protection.

Roleplaying Notes: Kirimoto is talkative to those he trusts, but has little to do with those he does not. He has no qualms about killing, but lives by *bushido* as best as he can, considering it a step to personal Ascension. He readily assists any Tradition mage who proves worthy of his help, but never asks for help himself unless faced with overwhelming odds.

Sanctum: Kirimoto's floor in the Chantry is decorated in a very Western style. He has all the appliances and other comforts of modern life, courtesy of the Technomancers. However, he has also set aside half of his sanctum as a reminder of his heritage. This section is decorated in medieval Japanese style, including elaborate shrines for his deceased relatives and a museum/antique gallery of Japanese history.

The Jabhi-yazer

Members: Naohito Sagehashi (Akashic Brotherhood), Masaaki Takada (Akashic Brotherhood), Jan Kausch (Dreamspeaker), Orestes Placeres (Dreamspeaker)

Background: The Jabhi-yazer are the paladins of the palace. They guard the Realm from the denizens of the jungle cities and from all invaders to the Realm. They are very militant and very traditional. They fanatically uphold the teachings and practices of their ancestors, which is why they so often dispute with all the other cabals. The cabal was founded by the Dreamspeakers long before the Akashic Brotherhood invaded, and it was reformed to include the Akashic Brotherhood shortly after its invasion of the Chantry.

The members of the Jabhi-yazer are highly skilled combatants. They are strong-willed, dependable, honorable and obedient, but they are very xenophobic. They do

not like the Hands of Hope and would not be unhappy to see their destruction. Still, they would not do this themselves, as it would be dishonorable.

The Hands of Hope

Members: Juanita Oguera (Dreamspeaker), Kiyoshi Toda (Akashic Brotherhood), Tamika Sakai (Akashic Brotherhood), Tom Ho Pak (Order of Hermes), Alvin Reynolds (Virtual Adept), Wanda Kuesar (Sons of Ether)

Background: The Hands of Hope formed three years ago under the direction of the Yultasi. The cabal is now self-sufficient and actively defends the Chantry against the Technocracy, Nephandi and Marauders. The cabal also rescues the recently Awakened from the hands of the Technocracy.

The cabal is not well liked by the Rachar, and the mages of the Jabhi-yazer treat its members as outright inferiors. The only support the cabal has comes from the Yultasi, the members of which are seldom around to help. As a result, the cabal has had a high casualty rate, and its numbers dwindle by the year. The cabal tends to spend most of its time at the Earth Chantries in Los Angeles and Shanghai.

The cabal is currently engaged in a long and bloody conflict against some Nephandi and their vampire minions. Three of the cabal have been killed in the last year, and one has been kidnapped and turned into a vampire. He is now one of the cabal's arch-enemies.

Alvin Reynolds

Nature: Caregiver

Demeanor: Bravo

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Virtual Adept

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 5, Cosmology 2, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Enigmas 2, Firearms 4, Hacking 5, Ice Hockey 4, Intimidation 5, Intuition 3, Investigation 5, Linguistics 2, Meditation 3, Melee 3, Performance (Guitar) 4, Research 4, Science 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Technology 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 4, Avatar 3, Destiny 2

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Forces 3, Life 2, Mind 3, Matter 4, Prime 2

Willpower: 7

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 13

Paradox: 7

Background: Alvin Reynolds was working second shift as a computer operator when a strange face appeared on his screen. The woman told him he was to be her new apprentice, and that he would learn the ways of magick.



When Alvin awoke the next afternoon to go to work, a plane ticket to Newark was lying on his kitchen table, along with a note detailing his new obligations and informing him that $50,000 had been credited to his bank account to take care of any problems along the way. Reynolds checked out his account and left to meet his new Mentor.

After three years of intense study, Reynolds was almost ready to strike out on his own. However, he had not planned for the attack on his Mentor's sanctum by the New World Order. His Mentor was killed and he was captured. Just before they could leave for MECHA, the NWO Technomancers were in turn attacked by the Yultasi. The cabal freed Reynolds and accepted him as an apprentice. When the Yultasi gained permission from the Rachar to create the Hands of Hope, Reynolds became one of the founding members of the new cabal.

Reynolds' main interests are playing ice hockey and traveling about to watch his favorite teams play. He plays the guitar in a band that has played a number of clubs in L.A. He also enjoys exploring the jungle land of the Realm. His sister Cindy was also Awakened, but was subsequently captured by the New World Order. Reynolds spends much of his time trying to track her down. He has terrorized and murdered a number of Technomancers for information and has begun blackmailing a few in order to obtain a steady supply of information.

Image: Reynolds is a little overweight, but more on the stocky side. He stands 6'5" and weighs 350 pounds. He resembles a professional wrestler more than a computer programmer. He wears plain, comfortable clothing, usually jeans and T-shirts. He has a higher-pitched voice than one might expect from such a huge fellow. He seems to be in his mid-20s, with medium-length, slightly curly, medium-brown hair (though his hairline is receding) and hazel eyes. He

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always carries a pistol in a shoulder holster and wears a Case knife on his belt.

Roleplaying Notes: Reynolds is a very sweet guy. His search for his sister and loyalty to his cabal take precedence over everything else in his life, but he is friendly and helpful to all who ask him for assistance. On missions he turns into another person altogether — an emotionless, remorseless killer. It is almost as if he has two completely distinct personalities.

Sanctum: Reynolds spends most of his time at the Los Angeles estate. He has turned the estate's carriage house on the estate into his own apartment and has added two large rooms to it. He has a keen eye for interior design and a preference for antiques. His private floor in Vali Shallar is decorated in the local styles of the people of the city. He has elaborate, cutting-edge computer technology in both sanctums and is linked to countless networks.

Nodes of Vali Shallar

Vali Shallar controls the following Nodes and several other small ones. These listed are the ones that cause them the most problems. The Storyteller should feel free to include others as desired.

The Candelabra of the Andes: This Node is located 130 miles north of Nazca, Peru. It is a geoglyph in the rough shape of a candelabra with three prongs. The 595-foot-long Node was carved into a mountainside by the Pacific Ocean. The Node is frequently robbed by Rokea (weresharks), and the mages have yet to discover a means of protecting themselves. It is unknown how the weresharks discovered the Node, and all attempts to communicate with them have left the mages with bloody stumps in place of limbs (though they manage to regenerate them through their magic).

The Backward Stream: This Node, a small stream located in Peru, is very important to the mages because of its great power. It served as the site of a great battle with Pentex First Teams (composed of evil werewolves and fomori). A lone fomor escaped the battle, and the mages fear Pentex now knows of the location.

The Nazca Plateau: The Nazca Plateau in the Peruvian desert has thousands of geoglyphs carved into it. While not all of them are magickal, some are. Dozens of figures are here as well. The figures vary in size from 27 to 450 feet. The Node sites are located over a 500-mile area in a very bad location, making them very useful Nodes for the Chantry. In fact, the Nodes' existence is somehow tied to the origins of the Chantry itself.

Skultos Island: Somewhere in the Pacific there is an island enshrouded in a permanent cloud cover. The island is inhabited by aboriginal primitives and gigantic creatures. Most are dinosaurs that survived the dawn of the Cenozoic Era. Also found here are gigantic apes over 90 feet in height.





The island's Node is located in the very center, protected by a wooden fort and constantly guarded by 15 guards from the Chantry. The mages have enchanted the fort to prevent any animals, even giant ones, from coming near the fort.

Hunting is a very dangerous sport, but the more daring mages do it anyway.

The Chu Artan Stones: This Node is located in the Brazilian rain forest. The Chu Artan Stones are four six-foot-tall, three-foot-wide, light-blue stones inscribed with a great number of ancient carvings. The stones form a square. The center of the Node is the five-foot square area between the stones. The power generated in the area is incredible; no metal objects can enter. The Node stands on the moss-covered bank of a rivulet of the Amazon. A ward protects the Node from werecreatures, but not from Pentex, and the Amazon War has put the Node in grave danger.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

Vali Shallar lies at the heart of City X, which in turn lies at the heart of a vast jungle filled with creatures from many different geological eras. There are also several tribal cultures, some of which have developed their own unique civilizations. Some natives have demonstrated a talent for magick.

Vali Shallar is a Chantry in its Autumn; strong, secure, and with no place to go but down. If the Realm has a resonance, it shows itself in the weird synthesis of Oriental and Mayan culture, the fantastic wildlife, and the otherworldly jungle.

Environment

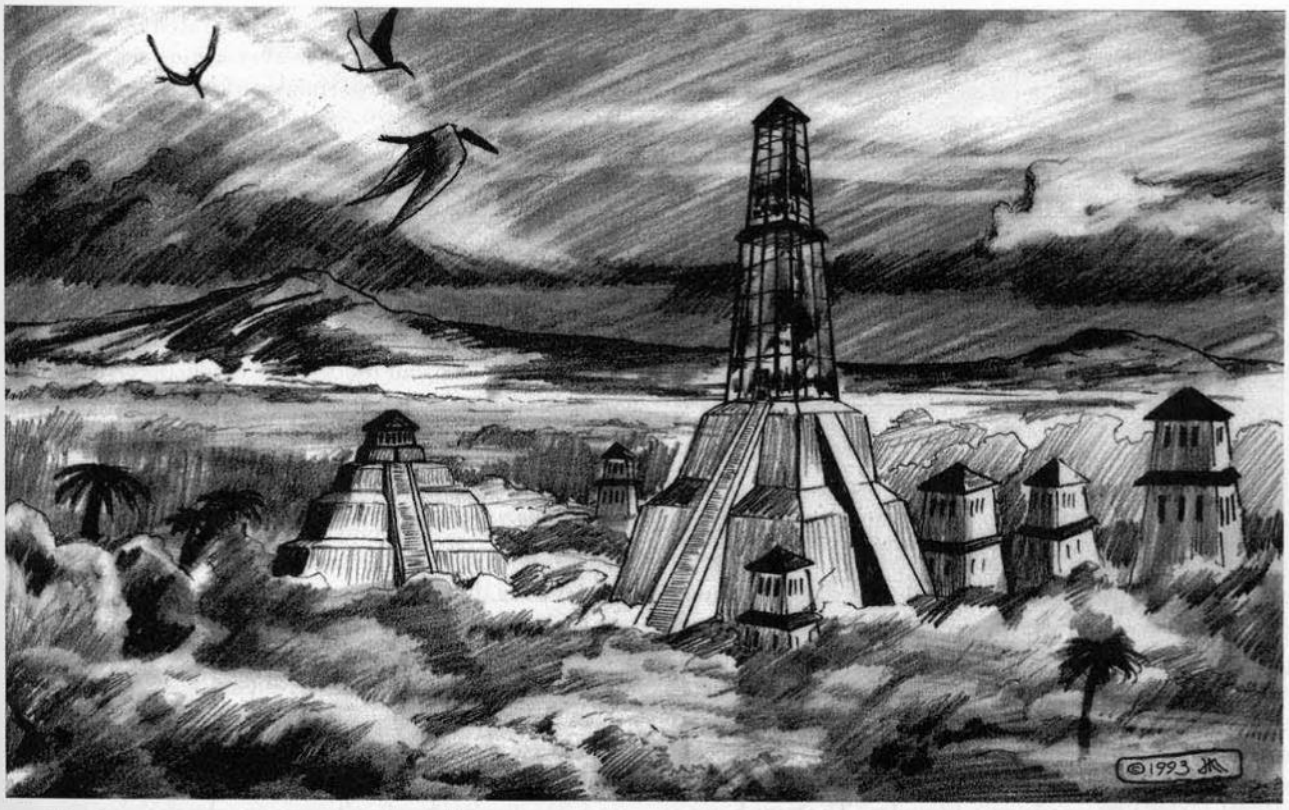
City X is a place of tranquillity and beauty, the jungle is primeval and untamable, and the outsider cities are places of wonder and death. Overall, the Realm is strange and somehow balanced between the worlds of man and nature itself.

The heavens contain two moons at night and two suns during the day. The moons' phases are not on the same schedule. The smaller moon, Tchitloc, has a faster cycle than the larger moon, which is called Ixcholi. The two suns are roughly the same size, though each is smaller than Earth's sun. Combined, they emit an amount of heat and light roughly equal to Sol.

The sky is nearly always a beautiful blue, with magnificent sunsets. The few clouds roll in quickly and rain down often on the jungle. City X gets the least rain of any location in the Realm.

The plant life is abundant and green. All the flora is indigenous to Earth, but there are species from many different times and places. Cycads and club moss grow side by side with flowering plants.

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The fauna is even more spectacular. There are a few dinosaurs; most are herbivorous, though the occasional T-Rex is not unknown. Creatures of the Cenozoic dwell here as well: titanotheres, megatheria and sabertooth tigers are all found. There are lions, tigers, bears, monkeys, rabbits, wolves, falcons, owls, crickets, piranhas, cats, spiders, trilobites, sea scorpions and nearly everything else. Somehow, the creatures have developed a functional ecosystem.

There are three mountains of note, though none are very large. There are many hills and valleys, but virtually all are covered with rainforest. The place teems with life, and it is dangerous to travel alone, not only because of the danger of getting lost, but also out of fear of being eaten.

Huge lakes and rivers may be found in the deepest parts of the jungle. Many of the outsiders build their cities along the banks. The cities closely resemble those of the ancient Mayans. Gold is plentiful, as is stone, making their work easier. The cities are not as beautiful as City X, but they are still amazing accomplishments; some are even larger than City X.

Denizens of the Realm

Aside from all the flora and fauna, descendants of ancient Mayans share the Realm with the Chantry. These Mayans left Earth at the same time the Chantry did, in order to survive the conquest of the Europeans. These people resemble ancient Mayans, with their traditional dress, tanned skin and sloping foreheads. Their culture likewise resembles that of the Mayans. They believe they are in one of their 13 heavens, and they continue to worship the same gods, though they call them by many different names. They also continue to offer sacrifices of their own flesh, animals, and the occasional human.

The three largest cities are Catlochuchi, Xionotcho and Illutixico. All three are sworn enemies of one another, but none bother City X or its people unless they mistake them for members of one of the other cities.

The people of City X and the mages avoid the outsiders, for they fear the outsiders almost as much as the outsiders fear them. Those few who have visited the outsiders claim to have dealt with Dreamspeaker priests who were the cities' spokespersons. The citizens of City X are a cross between their Tibetan and Mayan ancestors. Their clothing, their language, their appearance and their customs are a strange blend of the two cultures.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Entropy -1, Forces -2, Life +3, Matter -1, Mind +2, Spirit +2

The Chantry

Vali Shallar is a strange Chantry. It combines ancient Oriental culture and ancient Mayan culture.

Description

Vali Shallar: The Chantry is very beautiful. It is a large, crystalline building with a smooth surface and an opaque, silver-pink sheen. It is very tall; many auxiliary

towers surround the one central tower, which stretches into the sky. The entire Chantry is at least 20 stories tall. The surrounding towers attach to the main structure in very fluid, smooth connections, as if the entire place were formed from the same piece of glass. The Chantry material is as tough as stone, maybe tougher.

The place is lit by the suns during the day, as their rays pierce the glass-like walls all around the place. Additional electrical lights built into the ceilings provide light during the night, filling the place with a glow that can be seen from a great distance. The exterior walls allow light in and are transparent from the inside, but the Chantry's interior cannot be viewed from the outside.

The Chantry is filled with all the living comforts the mages desire. Each mage has her own large, loft-like apartment, and there are even elevators in the Chantry. The Chantry has a large armory and storage area. It also has a hosting area large enough to accommodate the mages, all their servants, and Vali Shallar's entire army. This is used for special occasions such as dinners and speeches.

Surrounding the actual Chantry building is a city similar to City X on Earth; it is, however, at least 10 times as large. It has Incan art and architecture, but it also bears some Oriental influence. Each family of servants has its own living quarters filled with any desired conveniences, though most live very rustic lifestyles. The city has no vehicles; everyone simply walks.

The Los Angeles Estate: This manifestation of Vali Shallar is a large, modern beachfront estate. The house has a large, walled courtyard with a wrought-iron gate; additionally, the estate is set back from the road so it cannot be seen. The walls have security sensors. Five dogs guard the estate, in addition to the five servants who also serve as guards when needed. The house has modern accommodations. The ley lines to the site are well hidden below the Pacific Ocean. The garage contains several sports cars, a few sedans and a van.

The Shanghai House: This aspect of the Chantry is a walled-in home in the rich section of Shanghai. The home is guarded at all times by five Rotweillers and five armed guards. The estate has three cars and a huge mundane library. It also has an arsenal of weapons.

The Birganj Monastery: This monastery is located in southern Nepal. It is located near a small town, but no outsiders know of the monastery. It is believed the Dalai Lama once lived in the Chantry, but this is only legend. The monastery serves as a place of tranquillity, a place for the mages to replenish their souls. The monastery has no special equipment, vehicles or weapons. However, any who steal from the monastery or commit violence against it die horribly within a month or so.

The Lost City X: City X is the original earthly aspect of the Chantry, before it joined with Vali Shallar. The city, located in southern Peru, has remained protected from discovery by "coincidences." The city serves as the home for the Jabhi-yazer. The Chantry is located in an isolated area; no known Sleepers have ever seen the city, though some of the old villagers tell tales of a lost city in the jungle's depths.

The Chantry looks like a renovated Mayan city. The temples are huge, and the city covers a large area, though much of it is no longer inhabited. The city does have wells, and a stream of fresh water passes through it. There is even ancient plumbing of sorts. Indeed, the only anachronisms are the mages. Most dress in traditional Mayan clothing, but some few dress in robes or modern garb. The Chantry has only one jeep, but it does have a helicopter. There is a weapons cache in the basement of one of the temples, just in case.

The Chantry was once spotted by a platoon of Pentex First Teams in helicopters. Fomori teams landed and slew several guards before being forced to retreat. Only a "coincidental" explosion of napalm prevented Pentex from discovering the Dreamspeaker Chantry.

Purpose

Vali Shallar was founded to preserve the old teachings. The Chantry is to serve as a sanctuary to its members and to stay out of all external conflicts that do not endanger the Chantry.

The Rachar has finally come to the decision that the mages of Vali Shallar must take part in the Ascension War. The members of the Jabhi-yazer oppose this view, believing the chances of success against the Technocracy to be slim. In their minds, the only way to survive is to remain unknown to the outside world.

History

Vali Shallar was once named Xthichticha. It was a Dreamspeaker Ancestral Chantry of Toltec origins. The mages believed Gaia had many shards just as the Pure Ones did. These shards became the Toltec gods, who later became the Mayan gods, in whose names the mages tore out living hearts and mutilated their own bodies. The mages did not see Gaia as a generous, loving mother, but a masculine being without a human conscience. Their worship of Gaia was based more on fear than on love.

In A.D. 739, the Mayan Dreamspeaker Chantry, a massive pyramid in the Horizon Realm, was besieged by members of the Akashic Brotherhood, who sought to control the Realm themselves. The Akashic Brothers made their home in a temple in the Himalayas. They controlled no Realm, but had Portals to many places. Both groups used the same Nodes and they had previously skirmished on Skultos Island. The Akashic Brothers learned of the Horizon Realm and crossed into it through its shallowing at one of the Node sites. The battle between the two sides was bloody, but the Dreamspeakers, who were caught unprepared, and whose combat style was designed to incapacitate (so the opponent could later be sacrificed), were defeated.

The Akashic Brothers informed the Dreamspeakers that they would allow them to stay as long as they attempted no retribution. The Akashic Brothers added that they had been forced from their own Chantry by a rival faction of Akashic Brothers. Over time, the Mayan Dreamspeakers and the Tibetan Akashic Brothers formed a close bond.

The Akashic Brothers allowed the Dreamspeakers to share control over the Realm, and they agreed not to harm the other Mayan cities in the jungles of the Realm. They never did, and today those Mayan cities still exist in the deep jungle.

Chantry Inhabitants

Some of the people of City X serve the mages. They even run the Chantries on Earth for the mages. Most of the Acolytes are recruited from the people of the Realm, though there are a couple of Umbrood Acolytes as well.

Internal Structure and Relations

The Chantry has never been a place of intrigue or political conflict. It has maintained the old ways, and the old ways require obedience and respect. The members of the Rachar make all the important decisions, and their word is final. However, in recent times, their authority has been questioned by even the most loyal. If this is a sign of things to come, the Chantry may face many problems in the near future.

The Chantry's covenant was written shortly after the Akashic Brotherhood joined the Chantry. The covenant has never been revised, and all rules since that time have been handed down orally. Among such oral rules are the methods by which mages are selected to join the Rachar, and rules concerning proper punishment. Any act that intentionally harms the Chantry in any way usually results in the expulsion or execution of the offender.

External Relations

The Rachar have long attempted to keep the Chantry totally isolated from the outside world, but this has proved to be an impossible task. The Realm was invaded about 60 years ago by Progenitors, who were only narrowly defeated. The activities of the Yultasi and the Hands of Hope have also prevented anonymity.

Still, the Chantry is only legend, as the mages never confirm its existence.

Status and Reputation

City X and Vali Shallar remain mysteries to the outside world. Therefore, the Chantry has no Reputation and no Status among the Traditions. Still, the Yultasi and the Hands of Hope are well-respected cabals.

Status: 0



Reputation: 0 (anonymity)

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Chantry is protected by the Jabhi-yazer, who allow no outsiders into the Realm or into any aspect of the Chantry. After the Hands of Hope incident, only visitors invited by the Rachar can enter. The only known visitors in the last 100 years have been the Progenitor attackers, ambassadors from the Chantry of El Dorado, and a handful of Tradition mages whose memories of the Chantry were entirely erased. The mages do not like killing and try to erase the memories of all such intruders when possible.

The Chantry does not approve of the use of Rogues, but the Yultasi have worked with Rogues on a few occasions to thwart the Marauders.

Allies and Enemies

Vali Shallar is allied with Surya, an Umbrood Lord who helped the Chantry to create its heavenly bodies. Surya is a burgundy-robed, four-armed, dark-skinned being with an eye in the middle of its forehead. It is very peaceful and appears to the Chantry only once every five years. The Chantry has also allied itself in the past with four Umbrood brethren known as the Toci, strange humanoid beings who control the four elements. The Yultasi control two cults of Sleepers, one in Shanghai and one in Los Angeles, who serve as scouts and informants.

For centuries, Vali Shallar enjoyed cordial relations with the Realm of El Dorado. If the Storyteller has played out the events in the **Werewolf** supplement *Rage Across the Amazon*, the mages of Vali Shallar may notice that their former ally no longer exists. They will not be pleased by this turn of events....

Vali Shallar is at odds with an Umbrood spirit called the Eater of Pigeons. This spirit may be a Rogue Nephandi; in any event, it is quite powerful. It has occasionally allied itself with the cities in the jungles. Three Umbrood Preceptors have also caused trouble on more than one occasion, but the Jabhi-yazer has dealt harshly with them and they are not likely to return. Predictably, the mages have been forced to battle Pentex, which has recently turned some of its attention to the mages.

The Yultasi and the Hands of Hope have made enemies of several Technocracy Constructs, including two Iteration X CPUs, two Progenitor Research Facilities, and Null-B. The Yultasi are at odds with several powerful anarch vampires in Los Angeles.

Research Capacities

Vali Shallar was meant to be a place where mages could conduct their magickal research in peace, and it is. However, the Dreamspeakers and the Akashic Brotherhood of the Chantry have never been interested in keeping records of their studies. In addition, some of the Chantry's mundane material is hopelessly dated.

The mages make every effort to train the new members of the Chantry, but only the Hands of Hope accept new apprentices from outside the Realm, and they have little time to teach them. Most of the apprentices are either Akashic Brothers or Dreamspeakers chosen from the people of City X.

While in the past much time was devoted to study, much of the knowledge was simply passed down orally rather than placed in writing. Half of the Chantry's library was destroyed by the Progenitors in their attack, and most of the mages do not have time to teach one another orally.

The Hands of Hope has helped to strengthen the research aspects of the Chantry, for research is crucial to its missions. The Yultasi is believed to have its own secret library in a safehouse on Earth, containing all the arcane lore the cabal has managed to barter from other mages and capture from the Technomancers (who had stolen it from other Tradition mages).

Alvin Reynolds, the only Virtual Adept of the Chantry, has brought Vali Shallar into the computer age. All aspects of the Chantry have computers. Those in Los Angeles and Shanghai are linked into a number of networks, allowing Reynolds to travel among them freely. Vali Shallar does not have any contacts itself, but the Yultasi and the Hands of Hope have a few of their own.

Quintessence in the form of Tass is readily available to all the mages, but moderation is the rule. No one may abuse his rights by using Tass for personal gain, using it against other members of the Chantry, or selling Tass.

Stories

The theme of stories taking place in Vali Shallar is mystery. Primeval mists shroud the forgotten lands, and the legendary nature of the Chantry extends even to the mythic places that anchor it to Earth. Everything in the Realm should inspire inquisitive players to learn all that they can about this wondrous land.

Vali Shallar is exotic, from the steaming jungles of the Chu Artan Node to the deadly forests of Skultos Island. The dress, language, customs and outlook of the inhabitants of City X stand as attractive contrasts to the world of many player characters.

Story Ideas for Vali Shallar

1. It is unlikely that player characters will come from Vali Shallar itself unless the chronicle begins there. If the characters discover the Realm themselves, the Rachar will be angry. How will the players contend with the angry cabal and keep their memories intact at the same time?

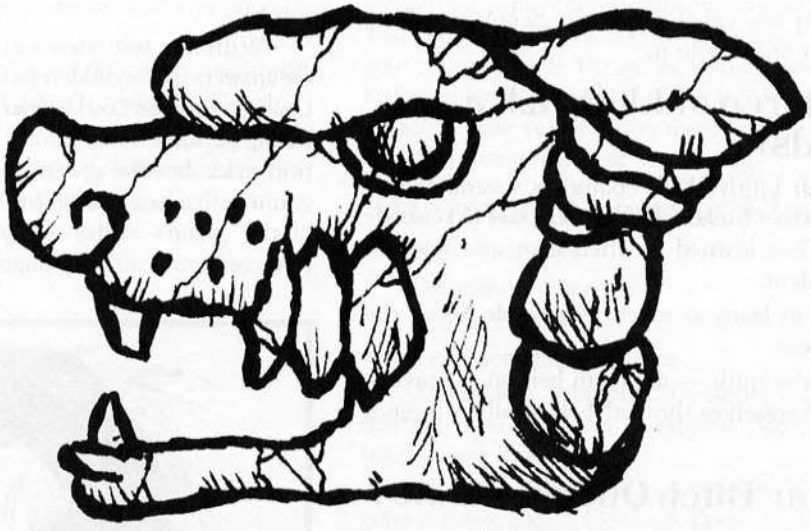
2. Vali Shallar is invaded by the Progenitors and their Superior servants after a captured mage reveals the location of the Chantry to save his life and the lives of a few innocents. Even if the Progenitors are defeated, will the player characters be willing to kill captured Progenitors to

keep the secret of the Realm from reaching the ears of other Technomancers? What if mages of the Hands of Hope are captured? What happens to the character who admits to revealing the location of the Chantry?

3. The unthinkable occurs: the Dreamspeakers get into a dispute with the Akashic Brothers, inciting a civil war between them. What do the player characters do? Can they restore peace before they become victims?

4. Gargantuan dinosaurs and cyclopean gorillas pass through the shallowing on Skultos Island into the jungle. They begin killing the people who live in the jungle, including those of the three enemy cities. Will the characters attempt to aid the city dwellers against these mutual threats? Will they attempt to kill the creatures, taking the lives of some of the few remaining holdovers from a more magickal time, or will they try to transport them back to the island alive? If so, how will they do it?

5. Trouble with Pentex escalates. The Nodes and the Chantry on Earth are in grave danger. The Nodes are slowly usurped or destroyed. Will Pentex learn of the Realm? Will it attempt to invade it? Will Samuel Haight (who works with Pentex) show up? Will the characters become involved in the fight against Pentex? How far will they go to protect the Chantry's secrets?



The Sepulcher: A Haunted Mansion of the Hollow Ones

The joy and hope of an alternative
has become its own cliché.
A hairstyle's not a lifestyle,
Imagine Sid Vicious at 35.
— The Dead Kennedys, "Chickenshit Conformist"



Somewhere in Chicago, several Orphan runaways have gathered together for mutual protection, taking a haunted house as their refuge. Under the leadership of a charismatic young mage, they have carved themselves a small niche of their own in one of the most dangerous cities in America.

There's one more group roaming Chicago by night....

Cabals

There is only one cabal within the Sepulcher. They own the Chantry and live in it.

The Children of Lilith (a.k.a. Lilith's Kids)

Background: Lilith's Kids comprises several former Blood Dolls and their friends. They choose to exist outside mage society. They learned on their own and want to remain independent.

They want to learn as much as possible about the World of Darkness.

They want the truth — the truth behind the myths, the truth about themselves, the truth behind all the legends of the night.

Mary Lou "Bitch Queen" Vannoy

Nature: Caregiver
Demeanor: Critic
Essence: Pattern
Tradition: Hollow One
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2
Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Culture 2, Drive 2, Expression 4, Investigation 3, Leadership 3, Melee 2, Occult 2, Research 3, Streetwise 3
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 3, Talisman 2
Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 2, Matter 4, Prime 1
Willpower: 6
Arete: 4
Quintessence: 6
Paradox: 5

Background: Mary Lou's parents wanted a budding Southern belle. What they got was a rebellious tomboy with a talent for talking the other kids into trouble. Pretty as she was, Mary Lou wanted no part of her parents' plans and ran away at 14. She would've ended up a casualty of some pimp's game if not for a brutal Awakening that cost two chickenhawks their lives (the "murders" are still unsolved).

With her awareness came curiosity. While searching for answers to the sudden puzzle her life had become, Mary Lou (nicknamed Lou) befriended the rest of her cabal. Her strong personality, stunning looks and aggressive disposition made her the group's natural leader. She plays lead guitar with a local thrash band and has plenty of fans. Most of the group's Allies are her personal friends. She is, however, compulsively organized; hence her title "Bitch



Queen." Herman likes to call her "Mom" to piss her off. To watch her really go ballistic, though, call her Mary Lou....

Image: Mary Lou is a striking girl of just under 20. Her hair is a lustrous black and reaches nearly to her waist. She braids various "tails" of it in thin barbed wire. Her features combine the best aspects of her Cherokee, English and Swedish ancestry: high cheekbones, a lean build and green eyes. If she owns a single piece of colorful clothing, no one has ever seen it. She tends toward black jeans, Doc Martens and thick sweaters. Her persistent Georgia accent is the bane of her existence.

Roleplaying Notes: Bitch Queen Vannoy is a major-league control freak, but someone's gotta keep these kids in line! She dominates any conversation by sheer force of personality. Lou can be a really sweet kid if everything goes her way — she's really a people person at heart. She finds out all she can about other folks, but keeps her own secrets well hidden.

Alvin Locke

Nature: Avant-Garde

Demeanor: Bravo

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Hollow Ones

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Computer 4, Dodge 3, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Melee 3, Occult 2, Research 3, Streetwise 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Arcane 1, Influence 3

Spheres: Forces 1, Life 2, Mind 1, Prime 2

Willpower: 8

Arete: 2



Quintessence: 5

Paradox: 4

Background: Alvin's the general muscle for Lilith's Kids, but anyone who thinks that he's just another dumb jock is mistaken. He's a husky brawler with a quick brain to match, a computer geek in the body of a football player.

Despite his physical prowess, Alvin prefers the company of computers to most people. Hacking gives him an outlet for his more antisocial tendencies, and drumming for Lou's band lets him vent more physical kinds of steam. He still gets into more than his share of fights, though, and Lou has threatened to kick him out of the house if he continues to pick on Herman. Although he seems like a natural choice for the Virtual Adepts, Alvin's magick is of a more physical variety. Filtering it through a computer isn't his style. Alvin destroys or defaces almost everything of value that he owns, thus showing his contempt for material possessions.

Image: A stocky 18-year old with patchy hair dyed a variety of colors. All of his clothes are tattered, torn or sprayed with multicolored paint. Not even his drums and computer are safe — each has been spray-painted and covered with bright decals. Alvin acts so damn weird that even the local gangs are scared of him. He likes it that way.

Roleplaying Notes: Guess what sort of strange behavior will get the most entertaining results, and act accordingly. You prefer to be left alone, so scare away everyone except your closest friends. Down deep, you're not all bad, but you know that you're dead meat if you *don't* act like a chaotic asshole. Tease your buddies mercilessly, but pummel anyone who threatens them in any way.

Herman "Munster" Fleming

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Survivor

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Hollow Ones

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Computer 2, Cosmology 2, Culture 3, Dodge 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 3, Linguistics 4, Meditation 3, Occult 3, Research 2, Streetwise 4

Backgrounds: Arcane 2, Avatar 3, Library 4

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Mind 2, Prime 2, Time 2

Willpower: 6

Arete: 2

Quintessence: 5

Paradox: 2

Background: Herman's cruel nickname (courtesy of Alvin, whom he calls "Chipmunk" in return) derives from his gangly height. Herman is nearly six-and-one-half feet tall and barely 180 pounds. Herman's mop of dyed black



hair and large brown eyes mark him as either pretty or pathetic, depending on your tastes.

Because his own "tastes" ran to other men, Herman was kicked out of his house at 16. He walked the local chicken strip until his friendship with Lou literally saved his life. With her help, he explored his own magickal abilities and quickly built up an extensive occult collection. Of all of Lilith's Kids, Herman is the most analytical and obsessive. The local band scene is his favorite outlet for frustration; he can be found dancing out his pent-up hostility four or five nights a week at the Succubus Club or other similar places.

Image: A tall and incredibly skinny guy just shy of 20. His once-blond hair has been dyed flat black, and badly, too. He favors trenchcoats, patched jeans, and local band T-shirts with threadbare Converse All-Stars.

Roleplaying Notes: Withdraw in social situations unless the topics turn to the occult, religion, metaphysics, politics or art. Then speak energetically, almost frantically. You have restless and expressive hands, but your body is awkward, like a giant marionette.

Christine "Hutch" Hutchenson

Nature: Jester

Demeanor: Loner

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Hollow Ones

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Cosmology 3, Culture 3, Drive 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Occult 4, Research 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2

Backgrounds: Arcane 4, Avatar 3, Library 3

Spheres: Forces 3, Matter 1, Prime 2

Willpower: 9

Arete: 3

Quintessence: 5

Paradox: 5

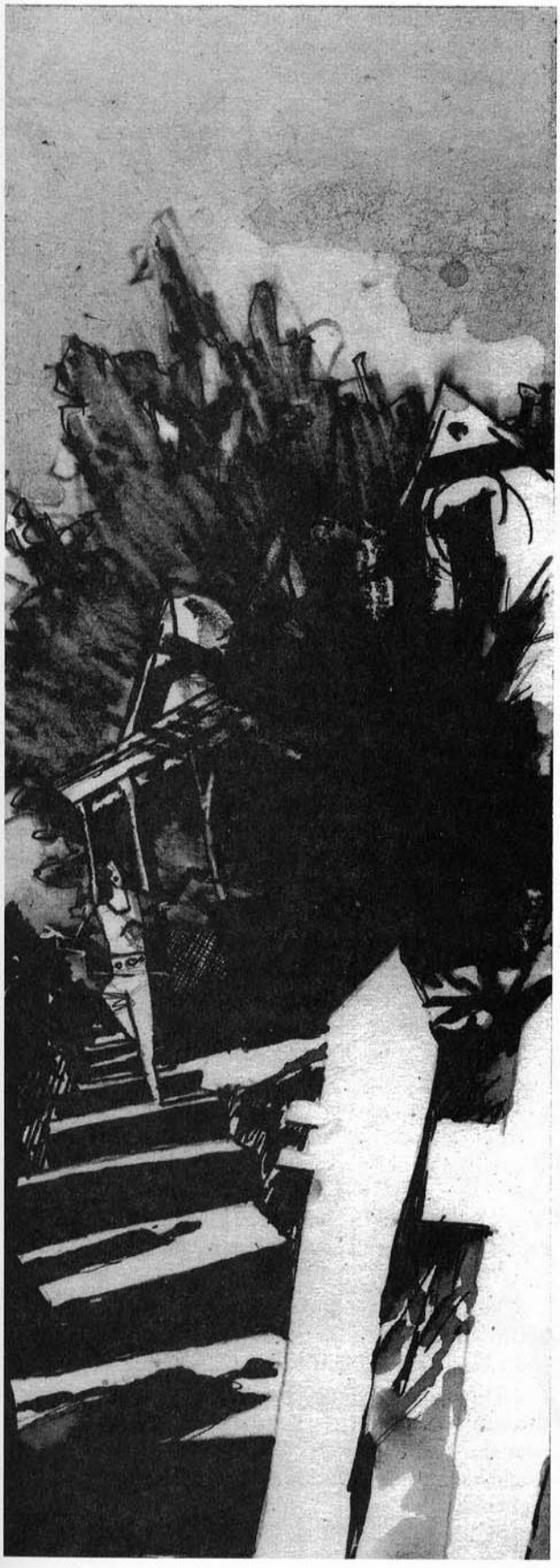
Background: A manic-depressive for as long as she can remember, Hutch refined her morbid sense of humor on her family, classmates, and few friends. Never a "pretty" girl, Christine rejected the whole concept of femininity, outgrossing, outdaring and usually outfighting all the local boys. Since nobody would want her, she reasoned, she would make sure that nobody forgot her, either.

The most recently Awakened of the 'Kids, Hutch gained her powers during a face-off with an angry werewolf. Instead of freaking out, she blasted the thing with a bolt of pure Forces and ran like hell, then stopped to figure it all out later.

Beneath her obnoxious exterior, Hutch is a loyal friend. Anyone that can put up with her is considered good enough to be worth her time. Though she would sooner die than admit it, Hutch is lonely; she uses her jet-black humor to cover the fact. Hutch fell in with the others in the Succubus Club labyrinth, and has a secret crush on Herman though she knows it's a lost cause. The two are rarely apart for any length of time, and she is fiercely jealous whenever he meets a lover. Hutch isn't nearly as ugly as she feels, but no one can tell her this. Her book collection is the most extensive in the Chantry.

Image: A short, stocky girl of about 17, with curly, shoulder-length black hair, large green glasses, and constantly blinking blue eyes. Hutch carries herself with a defiant air and condescending manner. She seems psychotic to most people, and probably is. She typically wears long dresses dyed black (badly), Doc Martens, and dark-colored leggings with large runs in them.





Roleplaying Notes: Life sucks. Why not laugh at it? What else're you gonna do? Nobody said the joke had to be funny.

Nodes of the Sepulcher

The Children of Lilith control no Nodes, but they know of one in the sewers controlled by the Bone Gnawers, and the Garou allow them to use it. In exchange, the mages bring the Garou needed food and supplies, and they occasionally perform services for them via magick. These services range from helping them win the lottery to removing all the rats, roaches and other pests from their dens.

The Sepulcher

The house is three stories tall and has 40 rooms. The place is located in an older neighborhood of Chicago. None of the neighbors wants anything to do with the mages, believing them Satanists or members of a heavy metal band. The house sits back 100 feet from the road; it is surrounded by an old picket fence in need of painting. The outside of the house could use a paint job as well. The lawn usually needs cutting, for none of the mages wants the job, and the cabal does not bother to hire someone.

There are five very old, very large oak trees in the yard; one has an old swing on which little Nora the ghost likes to play. The house's front porch has several rockers and a porch swing. The garage holds three motorcycles, two sports cars and Herman Fleming's collection of power tools.

The interior of the house is in good shape. It was remodeled by the woman who sold the house, because indelible bloodstains were all over everything. Bloodstains still appear on the walls when it rains, and even form messages sometimes (Hutch thinks these are pretty cool and copies them all down in a notebook).

All the mages have their own private bedchambers. Most of the house is a mess, but "Bitch Queen" Lou keeps it from getting too foul. One study has been set aside for quiet contemplation, but the rest of the house has not been so lucky. Someone is always watching television or listening to loud music; the mages stay up until all hours of the night, only to sleep all day.

There are three ghosts in the house: Nora, a cute 10-year-old girl who was hacked apart by her brother; John, who was stabbed 17 times in the chest; and Justin, an eight-year-old boy who had his throat slit and was stabbed repeatedly. The ghosts seldom appear, and always seem sad. They miss their parents and want to leave, but do not know how. They usually look like normal children, but sometimes appear to the characters as they looked at their time of death. Despite their "children of the night" pretensions, Lilith's Kids are kind of freaked out about living with ghosts, but they deal with it relatively well.

Purpose

The Children of Lilith seek the answers to the questions of the supernatural. They are especially interested in vampires. They wish to learn more about their own powers, to establish themselves and to acquire more Nodes in the city.

History

The Chantry is an old mansion dating back to the early 1800s. It survived the Great Chicago Fire and passed down through many generations of a family. Ten years ago, late one night, a son murdered his parents, grandfather, two brothers and sister in the house. The house was closed for three years, but a distant cousin inherited it and sold it to the Hollow Ones. The cabal believed the place might have other powers and possibly even be a Node site. They have not yet found a Node.

Chantry Inhabitants

Servants? Right! They do have a few friends: Grace, a Glass Walker of Chicago (described in *Under a Blood Red Moon*, page 84), and Manuel Jarro, a Lasombra *antitribu* vampire.

Internal Structure and Relations

Vannoy's proddings aside, the 'Kids have no system of leadership and few rules. They generally do as they please so long as they do not endanger the others. They are not, by mutual agreement, allowed to bring visitors to the Chantry without first clearing it with the others. Their two "consors" know of the Chantry and live there at least semi-regularly.

External Relations

The mages are virtually unknown in Chicago. Though they watch the vampires from a distance, they prefer anonymity for the present. Should the Jade Demon discover them, he would likely attempt to make them his pawns.

The 'Kids do not involve themselves in the war with the Technocracy. They have never even seen any Technomancers (at least none they recognized as such), nor have they seen any Marauders or Nephandi. They have had only minimal contact with a few other Tradition mages.

Status and Reputation

The Children of Lilith are virtually unknown to all save a handful of Tradition mages. Unless they use their magick in the open (something they make a point not to do), they are likely to stay well hidden, slinking into the Blood Doll subculture without being noticed.

Status: 0

Reputation: 2

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The clique has no set policy on outsiders, but its members avoid outside entanglements. A new member might be allowed to join if she were in dire straits, but the 'Kids keep a low profile when dealing with the supernatural. If the events in **Under a Blood Red Moon** have occurred, the Hollow Ones are lying *very* low, with an eye toward filling a void somewhere in Chicago's nightlife.

Allies and Enemies

The mages have a few allies. They know Baby Chorus and have helped the band out on occasion. They are also allies to many of the Bone Gnawers of Chicago. Their enemies include the Wolf Pack, an Archon gang that wants to turn the mages into ghoul slaves.

Research Capacities

The mages have no real means of utilizing all their powers, because they do not have a Horizon Realm. Still, they do what they can with what they have.

The mages mostly teach themselves, though they usually share what they learn with the others. They also study at the Fanum, which is (unknowingly) under the direction of the city's Garou. They are more diligent than most Hollow Ones; most of the time not spent partying is devoted to study.

The Chantry library is small, but it is growing. The mages are gathering as many tomes as they can. They have worked out a deal with the instructors at the Fanum, and may thus make copies of many of their valuable arcane tomes. The mages have had no problem acquiring the money for this, because they coincidentally win enough money in each week's lottery to pay all their expenses. The Chantry's mundane library is almost totally devoted to the study of the supernatural. It even has a large collection of roleplaying games, including most of those put out by Black Dog Game Factory (a division of Pentex). (The mages' favorite games are *Lycanthrope: The Rapture*, *Warlock: The Pretension*, *Spectre: The Annihilation*, and, of course, *Vampire: The Hidden*.)

The mages have little in the way of an information network. They have three Blood Dolls, a vampire hunter and a Nosferatu as contacts.

The mages have no Quintessence available to them through their Chantry. They are allowed to use the Node near the Bone Gnawers' den, but that's about it. They would like to discover another urban Node, but have been unsuccessful so far.

ABC trial 4

Stories

Ironically enough, themes for the Sepulcher involve rejuvenation. This Chantry, in its early Spring season, represents a rebirth for the 'Kids, who fled damaging pasts, and for mage society in general. The fresh vision, mutual respect and genuine friendship between these "Hollow Ones" stands as a marked contrast to the dueling wizards of Doissetep. The abandoned house has a new purpose, and the mages within it stand at a new crossroads in the Path to Ascension.

Optimism aside, the Sepulcher is a creepy place. Bloody ghosts step out from around corners or swing in the backyard under a crescent moon. The 'Kids are kind of creepy themselves, but creepy in a cool way. Like a teenage Addams Family, Lilith's Kids revel in their dark sides, and are at peace with the night in their souls.

Story Ideas for the Sepulcher

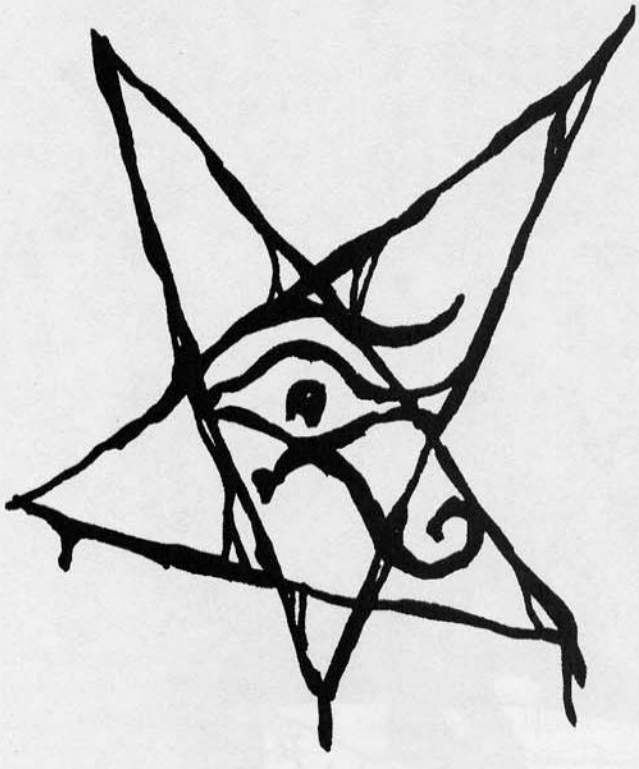
1. The player characters are approached by one of the Hollow Ones to participate in a seance in order to rid the 'Kids' Chantry of the ghosts who haunt the place. Should they succeed, the characters will have made good friends among the Hollow Ones.

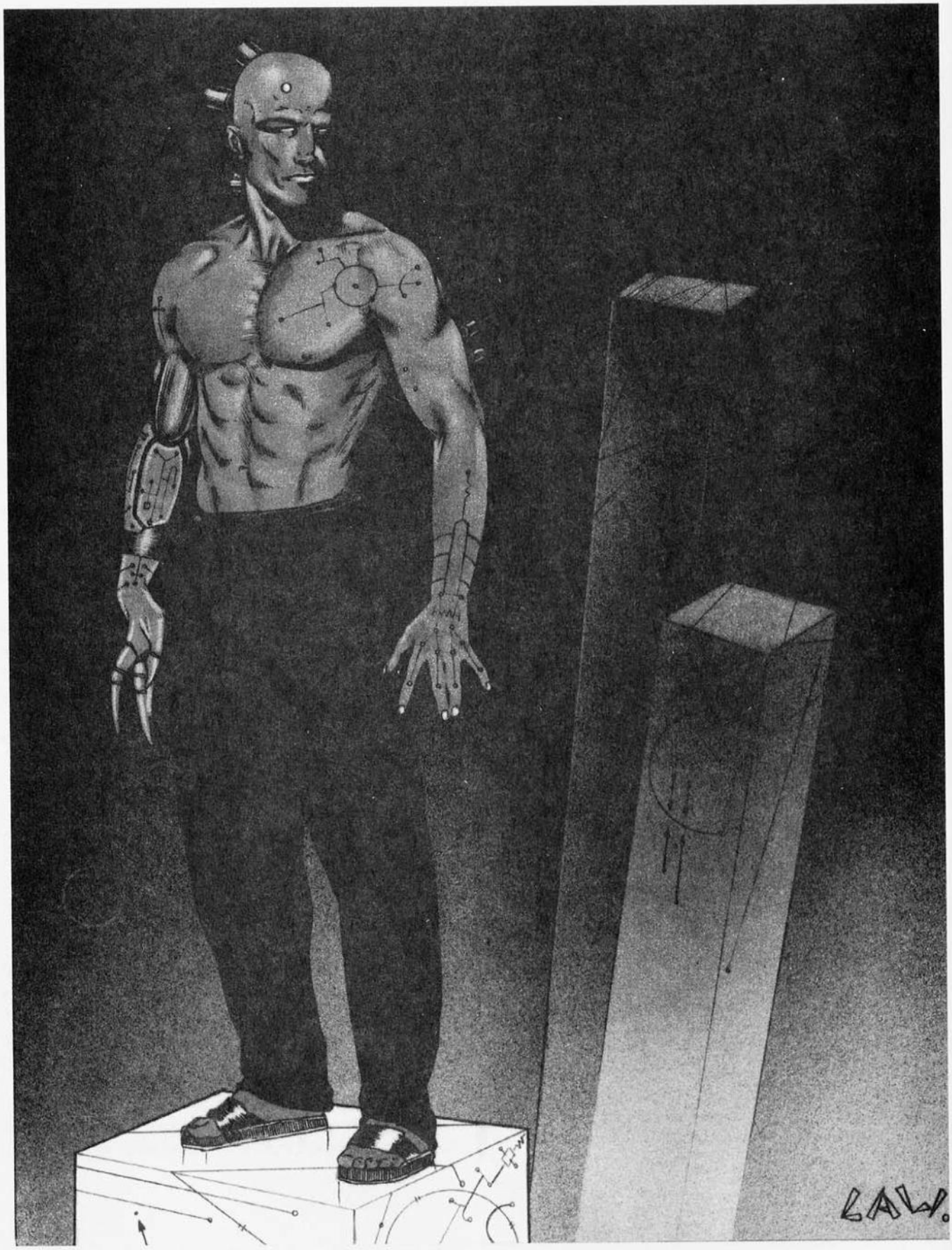
2. Every Halloween, the Hollow Ones throw a massive party at some other supposedly haunted place in the city. The characters are invited. However, the Hollow Ones did not invite the Sabbat, who crash the party. Add a few wraiths and some Garou, and you have one crazy Halloween.

3. The Chantry discovers a Node located deep below the house. It is protected by wraiths far older than those in the house. The mages must rid the Node of the ghosts if they are to control it themselves, and they need help. This may also be the only way to free the ghosts who once lived in the house. Perhaps a wraith gains control of one of the 'Kids and rides him on a destructive spree. How will the characters free the Hollow One of the possession and protect the Chantry? How will they get rid of the ancient ghosts? Perhaps the secret lies beneath the house itself?

4. The Hollow Ones discover a more powerful site on which to found a Chantry. They trade their house to the characters in lieu of as-yet-undefined services to be performed. The characters will have to develop relations with many Garou and vampires if they are to hold their new Chantry, for both groups would like to control it themselves. Also, who knows what kind of missions the characters will have to perform for the Hollow Ones?

5. The Sepulcher is attacked by a Technomancer Shock Corps. The Hollow Ones are captured (possibly taken to MECHA or some other Realm), and Grace and Manuel come to the characters asking for help.





Chapter Two: Technomancer Constructs

The woods of Arcady are dead,
And over it their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Gray Truth is now her painted toy.
— William Butler Yeats, "Cross"

The Technocracy's Constructs are the twisted counterparts of the Traditions' Chantries. While the Constructs share many features with their rivals, their direction, methods and appearance make them different.

Constructs are composed of amalgams, similar in most respects to cabals. The only difference is that in most cases, Technomancers are assigned to a Construct by their superiors. The Traditions are not so rigid in structure.

Construct Nodes and Technomancer Realms

Science, like nature, must also be tamed
With a view towards its preservation.
Given the same state of integrity
It will surely serve us well.
— Rush, "Natural Science"



Constructs utilize Nodes for power, much as do Chantries, but they often "sanitize" these Nodes, changing the appearance of the Nodes to fit their needs (Chapter Four details this process). In most cases, they build laboratories, office buildings or similar structures atop their Nodes.

Constructs' Horizon Realms function in the same manner as other Horizon Realms, except they enforce static reality rather than reduce it. Their Realms are filled with advanced technology. Their Realms are also well protected by high-tech weaponry and mindless servants. Their earthly aspects are always places of science and/or technology, such



as university science departments, factories, military installations, corporations and research facilities.

Most Constructs are led by either an Amalgam Prime, composed of mages chosen for the task by their superiors, or a Triumvirate, composed of only three Technomancers chosen in a similar manner. Constructs have covenants, often called articles of the Construct, which define specific rules for members of that particular Construct.

Articles addend the body of Technomancer laws known as the Precepts of Damion, named after the Technomancer who created the body of law. Despite the rigidity of the Technocracy, Technomancers are (in most cases) just as human as Tradition mages. They intrigue and struggle against one another for power, making the Constructs just as politically treacherous as Chantries.

Information

We want information.
Information.
Information.
Who are you?
The new Number Two.
— The Prisoner

Much of the Technocracy's strength lies in its research capacities. Its greatest power is the use of research to enforce static reality. Tutelage is common, but almost all basic training takes place at Technocracy Institutes of Science. Construct arcane libraries are seldom as large as those of the Technocracy, because many Constructs (and individual Technomancers) refuse to share their collections with one another and because their magick is fairly young.

Constructs of the New World Order have powerful information systems. Even the networks of other Conventions are quite extensive, for information is the Technocracy's greatest weapon. Most information systems are massive computer networks, and many have the brains of former Technomancers hooked into them, the better to analyze incoming data and recognize Virtual Adept intruders in the systems.

The following sections describe many variations on the basic Construct; many are single-Convention Constructs designed to carry out the plans of their own Convention. A typical Technocracy outpost, however, is a multi-Convention Construct.

New World Order Regional Headquarters

See there! A man is born, and we pronounce him fit for peace,
There's a load lifted from his shoulders
With the discovery of his disease.
We'll take the child from him, put it to the test,
Teach it to be a wise man,
How to fool the rest.
— Jethro Tull, "Thick As a Brick"

The New World Order is the most powerful Convention in the Technocracy. It gained an edge over the other Conventions through its highly organized structure and its understanding that information holds power. While the other Conventions dabbled with their new creation, science, the New World Order began collecting information. With the help of the Sons of Ether, crude living computers were created to hold all the information gathered.

The New World Order's power waxed during the 1800s through effective use of information. While it did not participate in direct creation of the scientific reality, it did protect the other Conventions while they did the work. The NWO garnered great power by infiltrating various groups, including the nascent multi-Tradition Chantries. The Convention thus learned many valuable secrets concerning its enemies. Even the other Conventions were not excluded from the New World Order's probing eyes. Soon the NWO became the internal police of the Technocracy. Its black-clad, inhuman agents removed all who posed a threat — as defined by the New World Order.

Today, the New World Order is still the greatest collector of information, though much of its valued data was erased, modified or stolen by the Virtual Adepts when they defected. Iteration X has carried the battle into the Net after the Adepts, using jealously guarded technomagick, but the NWO wants to join the fight personally. Some whisper of NWO mages who are developing the technology needed to use the Net just as the Virtual Adepts do.

New World Order Constructs serve as centers for information assimilation and analysis. They maintain facades as credit bureaus. They also serve as espionage headquarters and corporate branches. New World Order Regional Headquarters are the most numerous and powerful of the single-Convention Constructs.

Most of these NWO Constructs are composed of four or five amalgams, each representing a different department within the Construct. The amalgams each oversee a different area of information, and all the mages of the Construct are experts in a particular field of information gathering. The amalgams are loyal but paranoid. Their areas of interest seldom cross, but when they do, they are fiercely competitive.

Seldom does a Regional Headquarters control more than one Node. The Nodes are guarded with high-tech security devices and well-armed Men in Black. It is believed that no Regional Headquarters has a Horizon Realm of its own, though some are linked to larger Realms serving as bases for Prime Constructs.

The Headquarters are usually tall buildings, though few are actual skyscrapers. They serve as storehouses for all the data acquired. They also house several cadres of Men in Black, as well as large arsenals. There are always Sleepers employed in these Headquarters, serving as computer operators and programmers. They have no idea they serve mages, nor do they really know what their work is about. The mages act as managers over these Sleepers.

Each Construct is presided over by a regional vice-president, one individual who oversees all the activities of the Construct. She receives orders from the top-level leaders of the NWO and delegates them to underlings. A department head leads each amalgam. The department heads often meet with the regional vice-president to discuss current and future projects. Each Construct has its own articles, along with a set of company rules. These rules most especially concern security, which the Sleepers must strictly heed.

These Constructs have medium-level Status, but bad, widely known Reputations. The mages do not allow visitors into the workplace, because the workplace is the Construct. The Constructs have no allies. Squatter Chantries and newer multi-Tradition Chantries with Virtual Adept members constantly cause problems for the NWO Regional Headquarters, which is why the number of Men in Black stationed at these Constructs has steadily risen.

These Constructs provide limited on-the-job training to their mages and continuous computer training to their Acolytes. In fact, the NWO has several of its own computer languages, which tend to be far more diverse and efficient than known computer languages. The NWO does not like using outside contacts, for it trusts no one. Instead, one of the amalgams oversees its own spies and investigators.

Iteration X Central Processing Unit

Technopoly eliminates alternatives to itself in precisely the way that Aldous Huxley outlined in ***Brave New World****. It does not make them illegal. It does not make them immoral. It does not even make them unpopular. It makes them invisible, and therefore irrelevant.*

— Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*

The individual who controls technology controls the world, and Iteration X dominates nearly every aspect of technology. Through technology, Iteration X is more readily able to shape the minds of the Sleepers than is any other Convention, capturing Sleepers' imaginations with the

wonders of computer technology and cybernetic research. In addition, Iteration X's cold, unfeeling machines make excellent warriors of the Pogrom, providing the Technocracy with the power to protect itself and to purge the world of all magickal threats, especially the Traditions.

An Iteration X Central Processing Unit (It X-CPU) is a Construct designed to implement the plans of Autochthonia. The Construct serves as an outpost filled with HIT Marks and other, more devious devices. The mages of the CPU repair and build the weapons of Iteration X. CPUs also serve as central command headquarters over particular areas of the Earth. All Iteration X missions must receive the Construct's knowledge and approval, and they must be informed even when Iteration X mages or HIT Marks of other Constructs are utilized within their territory. Each CPU also serves as an information center. The various android spies of Iteration X report their findings to these Constructs. Finally, the Constructs are used for top-secret research.

Most CPUs have three amalgams. One amalgam, the Apparatus, carries out missions, Another amalgam, the Machinists, repairs and builds necessary equipment. The last amalgam, the Foremen, oversees the other two amalgams, maintains contact with the Convention leaders, reports progress, and oversees its computer network and android spies. Each amalgam comprises only the most loyal and cooperative mages. The leaders of the Convention keep their more competitive underlings in the multi-Convention Constructs.

Most CPUs have no Nodes of their own. Instead, their Quintessence needs are provided for by MECHA, a prison Construct under Iteration X's domination. This allows the CPUs to be located in the most practical areas, rather than forcing them to set up shop at some inconvenient location just because that is where a Node is located.

All the CPUs are linked to Autochthonia by special Portal devices of their own construction. These Portals are seldom used, as they require large amounts of Quintessence to power them. Most communication with Autochthonia takes place through a weird communication system composed of machines containing the brains of psychics. The natural powers of the brains are amplified and controlled through the machines themselves, allowing for radiolike communication with the homeworld without expending Quintessence.

On Earth, a CPU usually appears to be a factory, large warehouse or similar type of building. These Constructs are filled with robotics laboratories where HIT Marks are built and repaired. There are large arsenals of weapons and other high-tech devices. The Constructs are always protected by Centurion androids and advanced security systems.

The internal workings of all of these CPUs are just alike. Each of the three amalgams has its own duties, and while the Foremen have the most power, all are necessary in order for the CPU to fulfill its duties. The CPUs have a common set of articles by which they must abide, in addition to the Precepts of Damion. These articles basically describe mission etiquette, security procedures, and day-to-day operations.

These Constructs have some small degree of Status, though they are held in contempt by the NWO. Their research capacities are not very good. Most research is handled through the machine Realm. They offer no tutelage, and their arcane and mundane libraries are small. Each CPU's computers are linked to those of other CPUs.

Progenitor Experimentation Facility

When historians look back on the twentieth century, they will conclude that its first half was shaped by the physical sciences but its second by biology.

— Nossal and Coppel, *Reshaping Life: Key Issues in Genetic Engineering*

The Progenitors conceal many of their secret experiments from the prying eyes of the New World Order and the other Conventions. In their own private laboratories, the Progenitors create many types of living things: servitor creatures, clones and monstrous warriors. Some claim that a few of the Progenitors' facilities have been usurped by some of their own creations.

The Progenitor Experimentation Facilities are used for more than just research; they are the command centers for the Convention. The myriad clones serving as spies and assassins report to these Constructs. Even the other Conventions of the Technocracy have no idea of the extent of the Progenitor spy network. It has infiltrated all the other Conventions and Traditions. The only things keeping the Progenitors from controlling the Technocracy are their trepidation, lack of organization and constant internal competition.

The facilities also serve as body banks holding cloned bodies for many of the Progenitors and a few leaders of other Conventions who are sympathetic to the Progenitors' interests.

Progenitor Constructs vary in size, but most have four or five amalgams. Each amalgam focuses on one area of research, such as animal hybridization, human mutation, cloning, fetal alteration, controlled and accelerated evolution, or anything else relating to the Construct's interests. While they are scientific-minded mages, many are equally interested in power. Because of this, many of the amalgams compete with one another, thus limiting their potential for accomplishment.

Indeed, the Progenitors are perhaps the most competitive of all the Traditions, as the Darwinian ideal of "survival of the fittest" greatly appeals to these masters of evolution. Leadership within the Experimentation Facilities is constantly in flux, as leaders are deposed, murdered or executed for failure.

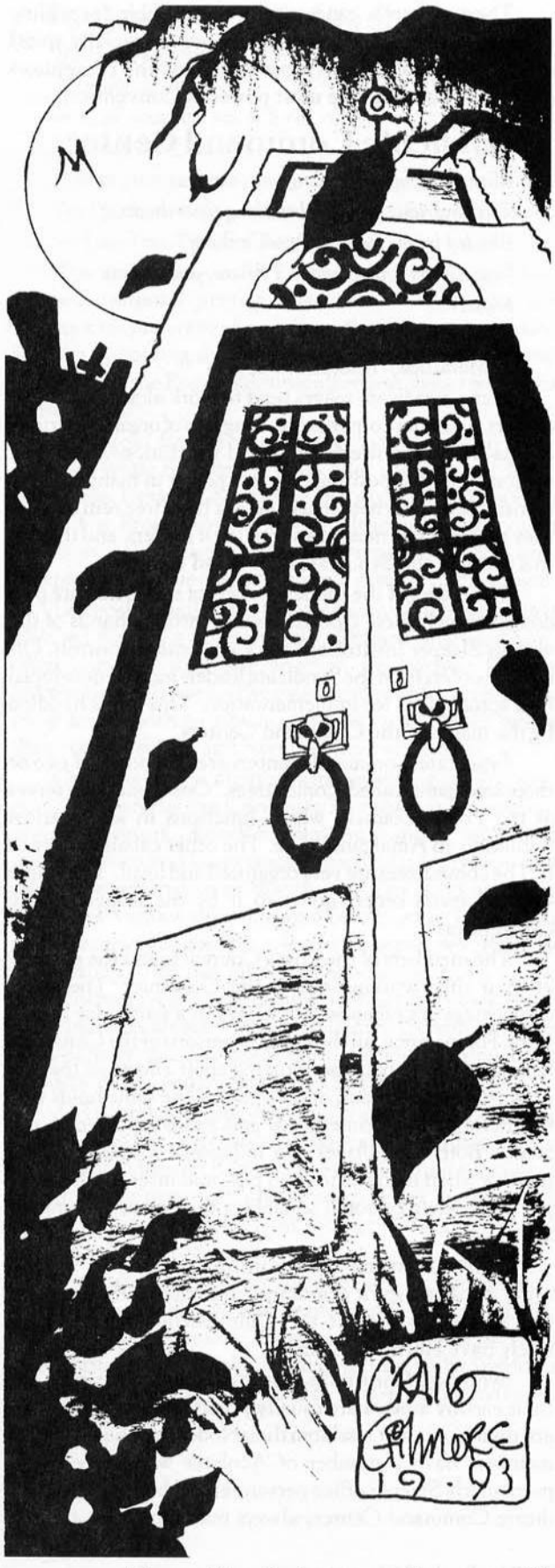
Each Progenitor Experimentation Facility usually controls one or two powerful Nodes that produce enough Quintessence to maintain small Realms and carry out the mages' experiments. If the Construct has more than one Node, the most powerful Node serves as the site of the facility, while the other has a small laboratory built upon it. Such a lab is well guarded by strange mutants and one or two members of the Construct.

All Progenitor Experimentation Facilities have access to Horizon Realms, either their own or one belonging to a superior Construct. Most mages prefer their own, despite its limited size. Because of the disturbing nature of their experiments, the mages must work in an area far from outside interference and the laws of Paradox. While the Technocracy is enforcing scientific reality, this reality is limited to that which the Sleepers can comprehend. To that end, the Progenitors' Media Indoctrination Department is forever fueling the public's expectations of genetic experimentation. *Jurassic Park* was a great triumph for the Progenitors.

The Progenitor Constructs are filled with large laboratories. There are private labs for each of the mages and communal labs for all the larger experiments. Hidden sections of the Construct contain various experiments gone horribly wrong. Scientific and medical equipment is abundant. Glass tanks filled with amniotic fluids contain developing clones. Strange operations are performed in high-tech surgical bays. There are rooms filled with caged animals ranging from rats to monkeys to humans, which serve as test subjects and donors in the Convention's inhumane experiments. These facilities are well guarded by loyal creations of the Progenitors.

As already noted, Experimentation Facilities serve the Progenitors as centers for conducting their infiltration into other organizations. All these activities fall to one Amalgam Prime, which is quite powerful. While all the other mages engage in experimentation, the members of this amalgam no longer have time for such things. They work to increase the power of the Progenitors, and their own power as well. Most Progenitors would love to join their Construct's Amalgam Prime, so they often compete with one another for a coveted slot, leading to plenty of conspiracy within the Convention.

Experimentation Facilities generally have at least some Status, though it varies based on how important the Construct's research is to the Technocracy as a whole. Most have bad Reputations, because of their competitiveness and the other Conventions' distrust. Certain members of other Conventions have persuaded the Progenitors to provide them with clones and weird creatures. In payment, they have agreed to aid the Experimentation Facilities whenever possible. These Constructs have few enemies, for they attack their foes through subtle means.



Their research capacities are incredible, providing tutelage, libraries, information systems (especially spies) and laboratories. If given focus and unity, the Progenitors could easily become the most powerful Convention.

Syndicate Command Center

Master of puppets pulling your strings
Twisting your mind and slashing your dreams,
Blinded by me, you can't see a thing,
Just call my name 'cause I'll hear you scream!
Master!
Master!
—Metallica, "Master of Puppets"

Many Syndicate mages tend to work alone, serving as officers in various corporations, kingpins of organized crime, or presidents of powerful financial institutions. Some are even said to hold positions of great power in many governments. However, these mages do not have free rein to do as they please. They must answer to their leaders, and they do this through the Syndicate Command Centers.

The orders of the hidden leaders of the Syndicate pass down through these Constructs and into the hands of the various Sleeper institutions the Convention controls. Often, the orders from the Syndicate leaders must be developed into actual plans for implementation. This too is handled by the mages of the Command Centers.

Syndicate Command Centers are composed of two or three amalgams, called "committees." One committee serves as the Prime Council, which functions in an identical fashion to an Amalgam Prime. The other cabals answer to it. The committees are very organized and loyal. The Prime Council issues orders given to it by the leaders of the Convention.

The members of the Prime Council spend the entirety of their time working out of the Construct. The other committees are composed of mages in a particular line of work. For instance, all the businesspersons of the Construct belong to one cabal, coordinating their efforts so they do not interfere with each other's plans. The same holds true for the organized crime heads and those involved in the media. Both committees and individual mages are competitive when it comes to their personal interests, but they put aside their personal squabbles to present a common front.

These Command Centers utilize "unsanitized" Nodes, using Acolytes, spirit guardians, and state-of-the-art security systems to protect the Quintessence supply. They rarely have Horizon Realms.

Syndicate Constructs vary greatly in appearance, but their earthly aspects are usually private floors in skyscrapers; their Construct is seldom their Node site. The Syndicate members have a number of Acolytes who serve them, particularly Sleeper office personnel and bodyguards. Syndicate Command Centers always maintain large arsenals and keep sizable supplies of cash on hand, in addition to nearly limitless credit. These Constructs usually own private jets and large numbers of limousines. Command Centers are always protected by guardian spirits, well-armed guards and high-tech security systems.

These Constructs coordinate and oversee the completion of the Convention's plans. They abide by their own codes of rules in addition to the Precepts of Damion.

These Constructs have high Status, unlike most other single-Convention Constructs, because it is up to them to introduce the works of the other Conventions to Sleepers. They control a great portion of the consumer and financial markets in the world. Reputations, however, tend to be poor; the Syndicate's methods are harsh, and the other Conventions do not trust these gangster-mages.

Syndicate Command Centers have small arcane libraries, though their mundane libraries are extensive. Their computer-based information systems are inferior to the New World Order's, but on par with Iteration X's. In addition, they do not have laboratories, for they perform no research.

Void Engineer Exploration and Development Station

For time has improved us
In the order of our years,
In the discipline of our ways
And in the passing of momentary stillness
We can view our chaos in motion
And the subsequent collisions of fools
Well versed in the subtle art of slavery.
—Dead Can Dance, "In the Kingdom of the Blind, the One-Eyed are Kings"

The Void Engineers serve the Technocracy best when they serve alone, which is why few Void Engineers actually belong to multi-Convention Constructs. The other Conventions have no interest in such work, just as the Void Engineers take no interest in the Pogrom.

The Void Engineers' Exploration and Development Stations are bases from which the Void Engineers launch their probes into the Deep Umbra. They are also used as laboratories to test the findings brought back from their missions. Many of these stations compete with one another, but all share their findings with one another, as it is the professional thing to do.

These stations do not usually control Nodes of any sort. Instead, the Engineers use special devices of their own creation to harness ambient Quintessence from the Deep Umbra. The Void Engineers have steadfastly refused to share their technology.

The Void Engineers use their Quintessence primarily for research. However, they occasionally create Realms of their own. These Realms are seldom large in size, but they do have special defenses to protect them from invaders.

They also have devices that create fields of energy to ward against all outsiders, even other Technomancers.

Void Engineer stations vary in appearance, but most look like large research centers. The Constructs are kept under guard by well-armed, loyal Umbrood minions and special security systems. The Constructs have specially designed observation devices; these allow them to see the Deep Umbra as a Sleeper would see the sky through a powerful telescope. They also build and utilize countless Deep Umbral probes and Umbraships, and it is thought that some Void Engineer Realms actually travel as if they were ships.

The internal workings of the Void Engineer Constructs vary from Construct to Construct. Some claim there are no absolute leaders within the Convention. All Void Engineers do have the same basic political structure. The members' work is presided over by a Triumvirate. The members are supposedly equal, and they decide what the Construct will research. Each Construct has its own articles, which basically state the parameters and general direction of their exploration and development. Most Void Engineers are not good politicians, so intrigue is limited at best.

The Void Engineers resemble the Sons of Ether in many ways, though both would deny the similarities. Both groups tend to be composed of loners gathered together to explore a common obsession. Both fit the "mad scientist" stereotype in many ways, and prefer to be left alone with their research. Both are visionary, aching to explore seemingly impossible horizons. They differ mainly in their methodology and eventual goals, and in the company they keep.

Void Engineers' research capacities are astounding, but they are all directed toward the Deep Umbra. They do not collect information concerning the Traditions, the other Conventions, or even the Earth. They have moderate arcane libraries and massive mundane libraries, but these too are narrow in focus. Their computer systems are likewise dedicated to the study of the Deep Umbra.

The Void Engineers have certainly learned much. It is said they have made contact with beings unknown to other mages, and may be in league with them. Some of the Void Engineer Constructs are believed to house collections of living specimens from the Deep Umbra. Additionally, some Conventions claim certain Void Engineer stations are now under the influence of Luna's children, the faeries. Others say the Void Engineers spend too much time in the Deep Umbra where the Nephandi lurk, and speculate about a connection between the two. In any event, Traditions and Technocracy alike would give much to learn more about this least-understood Convention.

Technocracy Outpost

Block the Openings,
Shut the doors,
And all your life you will not run dry.
Unblock the Openings,
Add to your troubles,
And to the end of your days you will be beyond salvation.
— Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching, Book II*

The mainstays of the Technocracy, the multi-Convention outposts preside over various territories the Technocracy refers to as mandates. Each outpost is responsible for upholding the static reality of its mandate and for carrying out the Pogrom against all enemy mages within its jurisdiction.

The Void Engineers play the smallest role in these outposts, while the New World Order still tends to dominate them. Iteration X serves as the strongest force within them. The Progenitors serve as the leaders of most covert activities, while the Syndicate oversees relations with Sleepers and the implementation of plans regarding them.

Outposts usually have four amalgams. Each amalgam is directed toward a different goal. Despite this, amalgams often compete with one another. The reason for this fervent rivalry is not for the cause itself, but for promotion. Most mages wish to advance in rank to the point where they control things and have to do no work.

One amalgam is charged with providing combat support and guarding the Construct; its mages are referred to as Conservators. Another amalgam handles important investigations and keeps track of particular individuals; its mages are referred to as Watchmen. The third amalgam infiltrates various organizations (even other Constructs and Chantries) and acts as spies; its mages are referred to as Subversives. The last amalgam handles relations to the Technocracy, relays orders, and oversees the other amalgams; its mages are referred to as Delegates. Certain members from each of the amalgams fulfill particularly important personal duties and are known as Special Agents.

A Technocracy outpost usually rests upon one sanitized Node. Most outposts do not have enough Quintessence to maintain Horizon Realms. They utilize their supplies of Quintessence to perform their various duties. An outpost's Node is always guarded by the Conservators and Acolyte guards under their control.

Outpost headquarters vary greatly in appearance, though they are always man-made complexes and employ cutting-edge technology. Outposts often employ Sleepers to perform necessary tasks the mages do not wish to perform themselves. Security is provided by Conservators and state-

of-the-art security systems. Most outposts have certain hidden levels where Men in Black reside and where HIT Marks are stored until needed. Supplies of cash, necessary equipment, vehicles and weapons are generally kept onsite.

Outposts' Status ratings vary based on their effectiveness in carrying out the Pogrom, enforcing static reality, and increasing the power of the Technocracy. Some have Reputations, but few are widely known. They have small libraries, both arcane and mundane. Their information systems are inferior to those of the New World Order, because the NWO does not wish to share all its technology, but they are still very effective. The NWO has programmed the outposts' computer networks to copy all data into its own network. Outposts have adequate labs for their duties, but nothing fancy.

The Society of the Immutable Armature: Construct of MECHA

We'll get along fine as soon as you realize that I'm God.
— Pop slogan



Few Technomancer Constructs are as feared as the Society of the Immutable Armature. This cold, hard Construct controls the inhuman prison Realm known as the Municipality of Ethereal Conformity and Hegemonial Anonymity. It is charged with the duty of using all the mage prisoners of the Technocracy as Quintessence sponges, soaking up all possible Quintessence and turning it into Tass.

The Technomancers force their prisoners to live in near-darkness, under the lenses of machines. Prisoners are virtual cattle, herded here and there, and forced to work as slaves in the HIT Mark and weapon factories until they drop dead from exhaustion. The mages of the Society of the Immutable Armature slowly become desensitized to the atrocities they commit. They are thus among the cruelest and most vicious of the Traditions' enemies.

The scariest part of MECHA is that it was originally intended as an experiment. It has been so successful that the Technocracy intends to open MECHA II by the end of the year.

Amalgams

MECHA is ruled by the Matriarch. The Matriarch is an artificial intelligence with the powers of a mage. All the cabals answer to the Matriarch, and the Matriarch answers to the leaders of the Technocracy. The influence of Iteration X is especially strong here, for that Convention actually created MECHA and the Matriarch.

The Matriarch

All the cabals serve the Matriarch. The Matriarch is an artificial intelligence composed of the brains of two sister Technomancers of Iteration X; these brains were plugged into a huge mainframe of information. The Matriarch exists only in the Net, though she makes her presence known through hand-held computer links carried by all mages and Acolytes. The Matriarch is very powerful, but she seldom uses any of her powers. Instead, she delegates orders to her subordinates.

The Matriarch is emotionless, but very driven by the ideals of the Technocracy. She oversees all operations of MECHA. She seldom deals with any individuals other than the Providers of Union, who have the task of seeing that her orders are carried out. Onscreen, the Matriarch appears to be a plain-looking woman in her mid-40. She wears her hair in a knot in back and wears one earring. She speaks very powerfully and precisely.

The Matriarch, Master of the Realm

Nature: Architect
Demeanor: Director
Essence: Pattern
Convention: Iteration X
Attributes: Strength N/A, Dexterity N/A, Stamina N/A, Charisma 3, Manipulation 6, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 3
Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 4, Computer 5, Culture 3, Expression 4, Intuition 3, Intimidation 6, Investigation 3, Law 4, Leadership 4, Linguistics 4, Meditation 3, Subterfuge 3, Technology 4
Backgrounds: Allies 7, Avatar 5, Destiny 5, Influence 3, Library 10
Spheres: Correspondence 5, Forces 5, Life 3, Mind 4, Matter 4, Prime 4
Willpower: 10
Arete: 8
Quintessence: Infinite (tapped directly into Node)
Paradox: 6



Background: The names of the two sisters who provided the template for the Matriarch are highly classified, but most Technomancers know that this artificial intelligence was once mortal.

In the early days of MECHA, it became obvious that no mere human, even a mage, could adequately lead the Construct. The Matriarch was created to fill the void, based upon studies proving that people often respond better to a feminine voice of command than to a masculine one. Unfortunately, the Matriarch became anything but feminine. Her cold efficiency puts the most callous man to shame, and her no-nonsense voice suggests a ruler-wielding teacher from hell. Despite her intimidating manner (or perhaps because of it), the Matriarch runs a painfully tight shop. Frighteningly enough, she is quite close to the Technomancers' version of Ascension. She and the machine are one.

Though she seems omniscient at times, the Matriarch only knows what MECHA's sensors tell her. Naturally, the whole Realm is bugged to the rooftops, but enterprising Technomancers find ways around this surveillance. With her commanding presence, the Matriarch has the whole Realm cowed, but even machine gods have their weaknesses....

The Matriarch's magick must be channeled through some handy device connected to her computer net. It is said that she is capable of traveling to the Virtual Adepts' Net Realm, but no one at MECHA knows for certain. With her Correspondence magick, she may monitor anyone anywhere in MECHA, but it takes a turn or two for her to react personally to what she sees. This delay is her greatest weakness.

Image: A severe, middle-aged woman with steely eyes and a whiplash voice. She rarely smiles or displays any emotion other than exasperation. Her dark-brown hair is perpetually bound back in a bun, and she wears a single silver earring.

Roleplaying Notes: Be firm! Flesh is weak; spirit is fallible; even the machine wears down. As the best of each, however, the Matriarch knows that she is just this side of godhood (as if gods existed). She rewards the efficient few, but knows that mere mortals exist only to err. Her diction is precise and efficient, and she never displays overt emotion.

The Providers of Union

Members: Ruben Writch (Iteration X), George Karlebach (Progenitors), Desma Letlow (New World Order)

Background: These three mages serve as the ruling Triumvirate of the Construct. While they take orders from the Matriarch, they are charged with the duty of carrying out those orders as they see fit. They are very powerful and have become very cruel over the years.

The Commission on Public Safety

Members: Thomas Lewicki (Iteration X), Phyllis Whittington (Iteration X), Nelson Humphries (Progenitors), Doug Pendley (New World Order), Chester Kirchoff (Iteration X), Edward Dodd (Iteration X), Kendall Riley (Progenitors)

Background: This amalgam polices the Realm. Its members remain alert for conspiracy among the prisoners and the other mages. They handle all interrogations and implement all punishments. In addition, they are charged with programming all television viewing for the Realm. Naturally, their programs serve to brainwash the prisoners to the Technocracy's way of thinking.

Edward Dodd

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Essence: Pattern

Convention: Iteration X

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Investigation 3, Law 2, Melee 5, Technology 3

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 3, Talisman 4 (cybernetics)

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Forces 2, Prime 2

Willpower: 6

Arete: 2

Quintessence: 3

Paradox: 4



Special Abilities: Cybernetic Armor (adds three to soak, soaks aggravated damage); Razor Fingers (Difficulty 7, Strength +1); Optical Sensors (adds three to Perception Dice Pools, vision only)

Background: Dodd was a policeman's son and grew up with idealized notions of law and order. Officer Dodd perpetually complained about the breakdown of the family, about crime in the streets, about the general lack of respect for cops. He made sure that Edward always remembered to respect policemen...or else. While never physically abused, Edward lived in perpetual fear of his father. One day, he knew, his father would come home, throw him in jail, and lose the key.

Edward applied to all the local police academies, but failed the psychological evaluations. Everyone considered him too unstable for police work. Frustrated, he trained himself and took law and order into his own hands.

His career as a vigilante ended in the back of a black Cadillac. The New World Order recruited him as an Acolyte, but Revzenka Fisk, an Iteration X cyborg, took a liking to the intense young man and seduced him into the Convention with offers of a new and powerful life. The Technocracy Awakened his Avatar by brute force and implanted him with deadly cybernetics. Edward loved every minute of it. As a security chief at MECHA, "Sergeant" Dodd now teaches prisoners and Technomancers alike to respect law and order.

Image: A stocky man of about 25, baby-faced, but with a killer's eyes. His blond hair is cropped very close; his body looks soft from a distance, but is solid muscle reinforced with armor. Dodd walks proudly, having finally found his place. He dresses in a neat black uniform at all times.

Roleplaying Notes: "Sergeant" Dodd brooks no disrespect. He is a lousy mage and knows it, and prefers physical combat to magickal dueling. He maintains that he is not any sort of bully, but is only doing his job. Nonetheless, he gleefully stomps anyone who gets out of line.

Sanctum: Dodd keeps spartan, spotless quarters in Central Control, with a VCR and a large supply of Westerns, action films and romances (his secret vice).

The Prime Council

Members: Timothy Erklenz (Iteration X), Olivia Reeves (Iteration X), Pamela Corcoran (Iteration X), Alan Van Stone (New World Order), Benedict Pierce (Progenitors)

Background: The Prime Council oversees the day-to-day operations of the Construct and makes sure everything is going as scheduled. It oversees the prisoners, the guards, the maintenance of the Realm, the factories, and the other functions of the Construct.

The Ambassadorial Committee

Members: Hulet Tuggle (Iteration X), Frances Gaskin (Progenitors), Klaus Weikel (Iteration X), Jonathan Dent (Iteration X), Dominic Oaks (New World Order), Valerie Schaffer (Iteration X), Alexander Marsh (Progenitors), Preston Frost (New World Order), Helen Neal (Iteration X)

Background: This amalgam provides the field agents used in finding and capturing Orphans and other mages. The mages also act as representatives to other Constructs. The committee has the privilege of convincing useful just-Awakened Orphans to join the Technocracy.

Valerie Schaffer

Nature: Caregiver
Demeanor: Conformist
Essence: Pattern
Convention: Iteration X



Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Computer 4, Culture 4, Dodge 3, Etiquette 5, Expression 3, Firearms 3, Leadership 2, Intimidation 3, Linguistics 3, Technology 4

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Influence 3, Library 3

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Forces 4, Life 3, Mind 2, Matter 2, Prime 1

Willpower: 6

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 5

Background: Valerie's often-unwilling involvement with MECHA began with her winning combination of personality, looks and good nature. Dr. Tuggle originally recruited Valerie for a P.R. position at the Manhattan outpost on Earth. Her personnel skills and fluency in Russian made her a powerful asset to the Technocracy.

As an adult, Valerie reacted to her parents' compulsive sloppiness with an almost obsessive neatness and organization. Her strong belief in order led her to embrace the Technomancer cause, even after she discovered the true nature of her employers. When a Cult of Ecstasy assault left Valerie dying of severe injuries, Dr. Tuggle Awakened her Avatar, restored her to health with cybernetic implants, and took her as an apprentice.

Valerie has mixed feelings about her post. While she shares the Technomancer philosophy of minimal disorder and maximum efficiency, the oppressive atmosphere of MECHA disturbs her. She escapes it whenever possible, usually working at one of the Convention's earthly aspects. She still blames the Traditions as a whole for her brush with death, and holds a special grudge against the Cult of Ecstasy.

Image: Valerie is an attractive black woman of 40, with a warm smile, friendly eyes and the voice of a torch singer. She changes her hairstyle daily, but prefers to wear it either long and curly or pulled back; her Life magick allows her to alter her appearance to match her mood. When angry or upset, she tends to reduce her Appearance. Her smart fashion sense and colorful wardrobe contrast with MECHA's harsh drabness.

Roleplaying Notes: Valerie covers her disquiet with an outgoing manner. Deep inside, she feels guilty about the dehumanizing aspects of the Technocracy; she struggles with her conscience even while extolling the virtues of Iteration X to prospective apprentices. She takes a special interest in her hand-picked recruits, and genuinely tries to get them a fair deal. Soon, she may have to choose between this concern for others and the fate to which she sends them.

Sanctum: On Earth, Valerie keeps a fancy apartment in Manhattan. In MECHA, her quarters are rather spartan, with a large bookshelf filled with historical fiction and legal thrillers. She avoids reading science fiction, but maintains a closet vice for horror novels. In her apartment she keeps a signed collection of novels from Stephen King, Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell and Poppy Z. Brite, her new favorite.

The Committee on Public Works

Members: Mavis Sparkman (Iteration X), Denise Caragan (Iteration X), Earl Fretterd (New World Order)

Background: This amalgam oversees the factories of the Realm. It distributes the various products, including the Quintessence gathered from the prisoners.

Nodes of the Society of the Immutable Armature

MECHA is almost self-sufficient. Each prisoner is equipped with a small collar that will explode (decapitating the prisoner in the process) should someone attempt to remove it by force. The collars, a frightening new invention of Iteration X, actually harvest the prisoners' own life forces and package them for later use. These Talismans, miniature Quintessence batteries (see Chapter Four), supply the Realm with all the Prime force it can use, and supplement the Quintessence drawn from the other Nodes described below. Such life-draining slavery is the worst fate one could imagine. Should the prisoners all escape by some means, the Realm would cease to exist.

The Bradelburg Think Tank Facility: This Node allows the Technomancers to implant ideas in Sleepers of great importance, thus passing along their own technology to Sleepers, who believe they invented the new technology on their own. The Node is located in northern Utah. It is guarded by the staff and 20 Men in Black.

Orion Technologies: Here, over a specialized Node site, MECHA has built a research facility specializing in the designing of new electronic technologies. The Committee on Public Works oversees the operations of the research facility and provides additional data to the doctors at the facility. The Sleepers working in Orion's research facility believe the place is a division of a larger company, but Orion is the only branch there is.



The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

MECHA is an unfeeling concentration-camp Realm that siphons Tass from the Patterns of Orphans and slave mages. The Realm is one gigantic building; there is no "outdoors," only a massive collection of rooms and tunnels.

MECHA's season, strange as it may seem, is Summer. The Realm is doing obscenely well and has little competition from other Constructs. Too many Technomancer Realms depend on MECHA's Quintessence supply. Thus, the Matriarch rides firmly down the Path of her own inhuman Ascension.

If resonance exists in MECHA, it serves to reinforce the mechanical atmosphere of the Construct and the pervasive paranoia that exists in the Realm.

Environment

The Realm is one seemingly endless complex of cold metal. It is always a comfortable temperature and has no windows to the outside, so fluorescent bulbs provide all available light. The doors open and close on their own, though some only work for mages and servants with high security clearances.

MECHA contains several huge factory complexes, where many of the HIT Marks and other robotic devices used in Iteration X's field work are produced. There is no comfortable furniture and "citizens" do not own any property. They are forced to sleep in the nearest bunk for one eight-hour shift per "day."

Guards dressed in solid black fatigues swarm through the Realm. There are also a number of HIT Marks without fleshy epidermises. These robots guard all the important locations in the Realm.

Particular areas are set aside for particular activities. There are sleeping cells, where hundreds sleep at a time. There are cafeterias, where nutrient-rich gruel is served daily. There are bathrooms, which "citizens" are allowed to use only at particular times. There are shower chambers, where the prisoners wash themselves twice per week. The entire place removes every ounce of individuality and privacy.

Denizens of the Realm

The "citizens" are captured humans who have had their Avatars Awakened. They are treated like cattle by the Technomancers and their guards, and they are watched constantly by Central Control and the Magistrate. They are forced to work in the factories of MECHA for eight hours, with only one 10-minute break. At the end of their shifts, they have the vials of Quintessence removed from their collars. At this time, they get to eat. This is followed by eight hours of sleep. They then begin the process again.

The "citizens" all wear drab gray clothing with an identification tag bearing a number (they have no names) and work station. They own no property and are subject to the whims of the Technomancers. They may be abused at will, though they may not be slain, for that reduces the Quintessence supply. In fact, the "citizens" are given a special life-extending chemical designed by the Progenitors. This only makes their inhuman imprisonment last that much longer.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence -2, Entropy -2, Forces -3, Life -1, Mind +2, Matter +2, Prime +1, Spirit -2

Construct Description

MECHA Central Control: Central Control oversees all the operations of the Realm. Central Control is the actual Chantry; all of the mages' personal quarters are here, as are all of the mages' laboratories, libraries, computer banks and arsenals. Central Control looks much like the rest of MECHA, but it is far more comfortable, with upholstered chairs, televisions, soft beds with mattresses, and showers with hot and cold running water. The mages have everything they need, in return for unwavering service to the Matriarch.

Nor do the amenities stop there. Central Control has many secret ducts and electronic surveillance devices, thus allowing the Administrators to spy on the other mages.

Central Control is totally self-sufficient. It has several pneumatic locks, allowing the tunnels to be sealed in the event of a riot. It also has a large store of Quintessence for emergency use. Herein are a number of special Portals in the form of huge, metallic rings. These must be turned on and adjusted to the right frequency to teleport to one of the known destinations.

Outpost Manhattan: This aspect of the Construct is a 10-story building in Manhattan. The building serves mainly as a guard outpost, though members of the Ambassadorial Committee and the Commission on Public Safety make daily visits to the outpost. The Construct is filled with high-tech equipment, weaponry and vehicles. The Construct's 20 HIT Marks are kept inert in the basement until needed. Thirty Men in Black monitor the station, as do 50 Sleepers who are employed to keep track of various individual who might be mages (the Sleepers have no idea why they are tracking the individuals).

Outposts Moscow and Saint Petersburg: These aspects of the Construct resemble Outpost Manhattan, but the buildings are a little smaller and older, and security is better.



Purpose

MECHA's main purpose is to serve as a prison for all those captured by the Technocracy. In so doing, it strips the last vestiges of human dignity from the prisoners. The prisoners serve the Technocracy by creating HIT Marks, special vehicles and weapons. The prisoners also give up the Quintessence from their Patterns. All in all, MECHA is one of the most (if not the most) efficient Technocracy projects in existence.

History

MECHA is the brainchild of an Iteration X mage known as Doctor Zoeter. Plans for its creation were formulated in 1895; the Realm was created after World War II, and the prisoners started coming in.

At this time, the Society of the Immutable Armature was created and given the specific task of overseeing the prisoners. At first, it was considered an honor to be chosen for the assignment. However, over the years, many Technomancers went mad, or became so depressed over their duties that they either committed suicide or turned Rogue. Today, it is considered a punishment to serve in MECHA. Many new mages are sent to the Construct to test them. Still, a few Technomancers simply love it in MECHA. The power over life and death within the Realm is incredible, and many Technomancer sadists enjoy their work too much.

Construct Inhabitants

Aside from the Technomancers and the prisoners, there are a number of cyborg guards and HIT Marks. The HIT Marks are very numerous. There are also some Men in Black, but they are outnumbered ten to one by the HIT Marks.

The consors of the Construct include five high-powered cyborg trackers who take assignments to hunt down Orphans and Tradition mages. They occasionally work with the Ambassadorial Committee, but they work best alone.

Internal Structure and Relations

As with most Technocracy Constructs, MECHA has a strict hierarchy. The Matriarch takes orders from Autochthonia, and the Providers of Union take orders from the Matriarch. The other amalgams answer to the Providers, and even within the amalgams there is extreme stratification.

The Construct's covenant is sufficient to cover all the activities that take place within the Chantry. MECHA's articles include very stiff punishments for those who fail in their duties. This is because many mages hate being stationed at MECHA and do as little as possible. Some even consider turning traitor. The punishments for even thinking about treason are enough to instill fear into anyone.

External Relations

MECHA is one of those necessary evils, or so the Technocracy believes. Many Constructs have come to depend on MECHA's ability to supply vast amounts of Quintessence. This dependence means that most Constructs would go out of their way to protect MECHA. Autochthonia is a major backer of the Construct, for much of that Realm's Quintessence comes from MECHA.

Status and Reputation

While the Construct has high Status, that does not mean it is well liked. In fact, most Technomancers are scared or at least repulsed by the mages stationed at MECHA.

Status: 5

Reputation: 0

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Construct does not allow others inside except as prisoners. Even Technomancers must get prior approval to enter the Realm, and they are only permitted to traverse certain sections of it. The Realm has used Rogues before, but it usually imprisons Rogues instead.

Allies and Enemies

MECHA's great importance to the Technocracy and harsh methods have garnered the Construct an overwhelming number of allies and enemies. The Storyteller should feel free to develop MECHA's allies and enemies as she sees fit.

Research Capacities

MECHA is not a place for conducting research. The mages are simply too busy to do so. Because of this there are minimal research provisions. What do exist are mainly diversions from standard duties or ways to improve abilities relevant to the mages' work.

Neither Mentors nor magickal training is available on MECHA. Rudimentary training in various useful Abilities, such as Firearms, Melee (billy club), Technology, and Intimidation, is provided. The mundane library is adequate to keep the mages entertained, but little more.

Aside from the typical multi-Convention computer system, the Construct has an important and pervasive spy network. MECHA's mages also have countless contacts, who are paid highly for information concerning potential prisoners.

The mages have more Quintessence than they know what to do with. They also have large stores of Tass, stockpiled in case of an emergency such as a siege or a riot. Otherwise, they do not use what they acquire, but instead

ABC trial 4

ship it to other Constructs. MECHA's mages occasionally steal the Construct's Quintessence for later use or trade.

Story Ideas

The dominant theme of MECHA is one of dehumanization, of horrible slavery justified as a means to an end. The prisoners are drained of their very life forces, even as their lifespans are extended. MECHA is a control freak's dream, where all things are ordered and everything goes according to plan...or else.

Such an atmosphere breeds paranoia and despair. When all the walls have eyes and ears, when any friend might betray you out of loyalty or fear, hope is crushed and humanity mangled.

Story Ideas for MECHA

1. The player characters are captured by the Technomancers of MECHA. If they are to escape, they will have to do so on their own. To the mages' advantage, one of the characters discovers that the lock on her collar has "coincidentally" malfunctioned, thus allowing her to remove the collar and put it back on.

2. A Technomancer stationed at MECHA comes to the characters. He seeks asylum from the other Technomancers. He knows many secrets of the Construct, secrets that might enable the Traditions to destroy the Construct and free the prisoners. However, is the Technomancer really a double agent sent to lead the Traditions into a massive ambush or counterattack?

3. The player characters are taken by their Mentors to a secret location where turncoats from the Technocracy teach them the ways of the New World Order and Iteration X. The characters are to be sent into MECHA as spies. The next group of Technomancers being sent to MECHA will be captured, and the characters will take their places. Will they survive their mission?

4. The characters accidentally encounter Technomancers taking a group of prisoners to MECHA. They are forced to fight them or be captured themselves. If they succeed, the characters have earned the enmity of MECHA. In fact, MECHA may become a recurring foe.

5. Technomancer characters are assigned a post at MECHA. There, they learn of a secret network of spies who work for the Traditions. Can they uncover the spies and stop them before they reveal the secrets of the Construct? Even if they manage to do so, perhaps they connect the traitors to an even bigger conspiracy within the Technocracy. The characters cannot report this to their superiors, for they too may be traitors.



Null-B: Construct of Yenosia, the Wasteland of Dead Aspirations

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety or Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor shall all your tears wash out a word of it.
— The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, Verse LXXVI

Null-B was once the pride of the Technocracy, the largest and most efficient of the Constructs, but Null-B's days of glory have come and gone. It is still one of the largest and most powerful Constructs in existence, but many rivals continue to grow, while Null-B is already starting to decline.

Null-B's trouble started when the Technomancers of the Construct decided they would turn their attention toward the Marauders, in hopes of eliminating as many as they could. This plan backfired, and now the Construct is constantly besieged by the wild Marauders. Dr. Alonzo Vendiz, the commander of the Construct, was assassinated by unknown parties inside Null-B's own ranks, and the Construct's fortunes have since spun wildly downward. There is no end in sight to the Marauders' mad vengeance. In just the last year, the Marauders have almost put a stop to all Technomancer efforts against the Traditions. If things stay the way they are, Null-B will eventually be forced to call for outside assistance, or collapse.

The season here is clearly Winter. The Construct is a dying place, too stubborn to fall over and expire. Within the ranks, discontent, bitterness, resentment and treachery simmer. The end is in sight.

Amalgams

The amalgams of Null-B include some of the Technocracy's most experienced fighters. The mages normally do not work well together, but their current problems with the Marauders have forced them to become a closely knit group.

The Advocates

Members: Oscar Hamilton (New World Order), Bernadine Slivey (Syndicate), Chiu Tang (Iteration X)

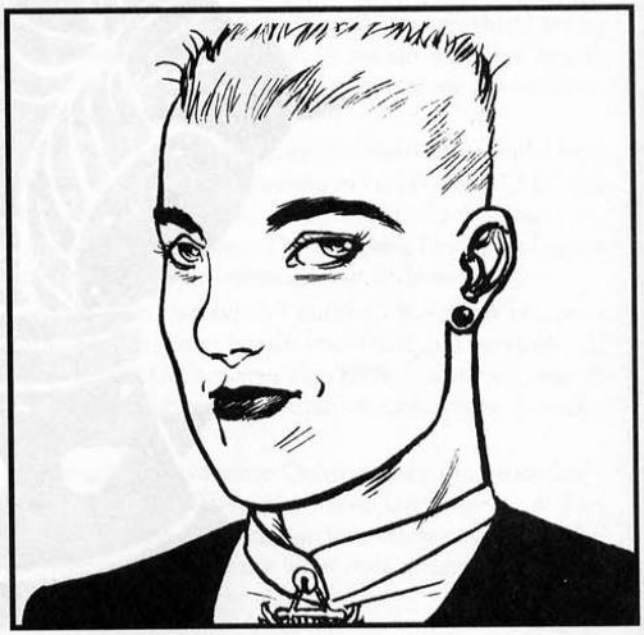
Background: Alonzo Vendiz ruled Null-B with a strong, capable hand. The Advocates have tried to fill the void left by his death, but have only succeeded in dooming the Construct. This amalgam serves as the ruling Triumvirate of the Construct. Its members are very capable leaders and experienced veterans. Unlike the other mages of Null-B, these mages are becoming more and more divided in their loyalties; each suspects the others of Vendiz's assassination, and the amalgam's efficiency is hamstrung by its members' infighting. Hamilton wishes to keep the Marauder problems a secret, Slivey seeks Vendiz's old position, and Tang wishes to call in Iteration X mages from Autochthonia to solve the problems.

Bernadine Slivey

Nature: Architect
Demeanor: Critic
Essence: Pattern
Tradition: Syndicate

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Computer 4, Cosmology 2, Dodge 1, Drive 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 5, Firearms 3, Intimidation 5, Intuition 5, Law (Technomancer and UCC) 3, Leadership 5, Linguistics 3, Literature 3, Performance (flute) 3, Research 3, Science 2, Skydiving 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 5, Technology 5



Backgrounds: Avatar 4, Destiny 5, Influence 5, Library 15

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 2, Forces 3, Life 2, Mind 4, Matter 5, Prime 3, Time 3

Willpower: 9

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 19

Paradox: 1

Background: Bernadine Slivey was born into a poor family, but her fighting spirit was enough to sustain her through the worst of times. Unlike her sisters and girlfriends, she did not want to become a housewife, an actress, a dancer, the president or an astronaut — she wanted to be the CEO of a large corporation.

At the age of 16, she got a job working in the mailroom of a large company. Her supervisor, a Technocracy scout, noticed her powerful Avatar and the aura of destiny exuded by the girl. A Celestial Chorus mage noticed it as well. When things came to a showdown, Bernadine chose the Technocracy, inciting a magickal duel that left three Sleepers dead. Though she has since achieved what she wanted and more, Bernadine has always felt sorry for the innocent lives lost that day.

She did her job well and quickly moved up the hierarchy. She used the right people and stomped her competition into the ground. Eventually, she became a teacher at one of the Technocracy's academies, followed by a position as dean, followed by appointment to Null-B as an Administrator.

She has served as a capable leader of Null-B for 10 years. She manages to get things done by avoiding her two co-rulers as much as possible. She does not like the way things are done in the Construct, and plans to make great changes. Though she had no involvement in Vendiz's death, Bernadine sees nothing wrong with taking advantage of the situation. Her other interests include: reading classical literature; playing the flute; bodybuilding; and skydiving.

Image: Bernadine is a short, stocky, athletic woman in her mid-30s. She has short, spiked blond hair and gray-blue eyes. She dresses in a custom-fitted power suit and carries a disruption pistol (treat as a Peacemaker; see **Mage**, page 294). She is very commanding and very powerful, with a strong, confident voice.

Roleplaying Notes: Slivey is interested in power. She wants to help people by controlling them. She is cunning, ruthless and uses everyone to her advantage. Years of manipulation and power plays have hardened her to the needs of others. She still loves her family, and she is even having a long-term relationship with a Sleeper on Earth.

Sanctum: Slivey maintains a large sanctum spread out over nearly an entire floor of one of the main buildings in the Construct. Her chambers are high-tech and comfortable, yet professional. She has a private gym and weight room, and a large personal library. Her sanctum is circular in design and contains a number of huge windows that allow her to overlook the entire construct.

The Blue Steel Union

Members: Beryl Franks (New World Order), Butch Valerio (Syndicate), Arthur Tarr (Iteration X), Katrina Emanuel (Progenitors), Teresa Hardy (Celestial Chorus), Edgar Love (Sons of Ether), Erline McGunnis (Akashic Brotherhood), Gregory Presser (Order of Hermes)

Background: This amalgam is composed of Convention mages and traitorous Tradition mages. The Blue Steel Union is one of the deadliest amalgams around because of its diversity and its keen understanding of the enemy. The Technomancers are all loyal to the Technocracy, while the Tradition mages turned traitor to save their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. They have grown to accept their role as servants of their former enemies, and some even enjoy it. Ironically, the greatest threat to Null-B's existence dwells within this amalgam's ranks.

Arthur Tarr ("Diacalaton")

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Bravo

Essence: Dynamic

Convention: Iteration X (actually Marauder)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Computer 5, Dodge 4, Firearms 3, Intuition 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Melee 4, Occult 3, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 4, Technology 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Arcane 4, Mentor 3

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 4, Forces 3, Life 3, Prime 2

Willpower: 4

Arete: 4

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 0

Background: Tarr, so the Technomancers believe, was a hacker with a keen interest in the occult. He came to the Technocracy's notice while hacking into the software of the Designers of a Better Future. The Technomancers attempted to slay Tarr with a deadly backlash program, but Tar intercepted and destroyed the program instead. Iteration X ran a background check on Tarr, then "made him an offer," believing that Tarr was a talented Sleeper unaware of Iteration X's rivals, the Virtual Adepts.

Arthur *had* been unaware of the Adepts. The Marauder had only recently begun hacking, and he had not yet encountered the computer mages himself. Seizing the opportunity for chaos, Tarr went along with the game,

pretending to be innocent while learning enough about the Technocracy to foul things up.

Getting stuck at Null-B is not Tarr's idea of a good time, but he revels in the chaos his post allows him. When a good opportunity presents itself, he will gleefully turn on his former comrades and waste as many of them as possible. In the meantime, he contents himself with learning all he can about the Construct's internal systems. When the time comes, this living monkeywrench intends to do plenty of damage....

Image: Tarr is short and stocky, with short, curly black hair and a somewhat sullen expression. He does not handle groups well and has alienated several of his amalgam partners with his abrasive manner and take-charge attitude. Both of his hands have been replaced with articulated steel talons that enable him to access computers or tear out throats with equal efficiency, and his body bristles with access-tech modifications beneath his trenchcoat. Tarr also wears faded jeans, cartoon T-shirts and biker boots, much to his superiors' annoyance.

Roleplaying Notes: Arthur likes to control any social situation that includes him; he can be personable for short periods of time, but quickly becomes irritating when among large groups, boasting about his hacking abilities and fighting prowess. He has a cutting wit and uses it on anyone in his way, but conceals his true calling with great care.

Sanctum: Tarr's hideaway is a rusty corner of the factory complex, which he has decorated with castoffs stolen from the trash piles. He has made very certain that no surveillance devices monitor him here. In this refuge, Arthur may be himself, thrashing out his pent-up chaos in maniacal rages and dancing madly to the music in his mind. He keeps his own computer here, and frequently wanders into the Net in an astral projection called Azathoth. He is also taken with the Wasteland, and sneaks out there often despite the danger.



The Designers of a Better Future

Members: Emmett Morrison (Void Engineers), Bradford Thorpe (Progenitors), Victor Allen (Syndicate), Karen Brewster (Void Engineer), Myrtle Pelkey (Void Engineers), Vernon Sowby (Iteration X)

Background: This amalgam designs many useful products, which are then produced in mass quantities within the factory surrounding the Construct. These high-tech gadgets are then sold to Sleeper consumers. The amalgam has recently spent much of its time developing new weapons to use against the Paradox-resistant Marauders.

Karen Brewster

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Visionary

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Void Engineer

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 3, Computer 3, Cosmology 5, Culture 2, Dodge 2, Enigmas 4, Expression 3, Intuition 2, Occult 3, Science 4, Technology 5

Backgrounds: Arcane 4, Avatar 5, Destiny 2, Library 4

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 3, Life 1, Matter 3, Mind 4, Prime 1

Willpower: 5

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 3

Background: Brewster had gazed at the stars with longing since she was a child. The possibilities of faraway worlds seemed so much better than the small-town tedium of her earthly home. A large, heavy girl, Karen endured the taunts of her peers until she no longer seemed to hear them. Her attention was always elsewhere, and her parents scolded her for wasting her fine mind by daydreaming.

She ran away into the Arizona desert one night, where she cried beneath the stars. When the stars began to speak to her consolingly, Karen knew that she had lost her mind and didn't much care. A woman came to her that night, dressed in a shimmering blue cloak of stars, and led the girl into the night. Karen thus met her Avatar face to face and accepted her without question.

The Avatar "led" her to the Sinclair Group, a Void Engineer front corporation engaged in celestial research. A battery of tests revealed the strength of her Avatar and the glimmer of some future destiny. The Engineers recruited her on the spot. Unfortunately, a clerical error transferred



her to Null-B, and the Designers are convinced that Karen belongs with them. Karen hates this turn of events, but has said little about it, waiting instead for a transfer that may never come. She still stares at the stars, but they no longer comfort her.

Image: A tall, broad-shouldered woman in her late 20s, with long black hair, brown eyes, and an unusually large mouth. Karen tends to wear a lab coat and long-sleeved shirts despite the warmth of Yenosia. She has a perpetually faraway gaze and seems to be preoccupied most of the time.

Roleplaying Notes: Karen is shy by nature; though she complains loudly about the weather, the tedium, and just about everyone in the Construct, she rarely confronts the source of her displeasure head-on. She has a difficult time making eye contact with anyone, and mutters to herself a lot. The idea of mind control fascinates her, and she will do anything to learn more about psionic secrets. She spends as much time as possible beneath the night sky.

The Benefactors to All

Members: Earnest Tucker (Syndicate), Ronald Landen (Syndicate), Long Hai Trung (Iteration X), Curtis Pennington (Progenitors), Beth Hottinger (Syndicate)

Background: This amalgam oversees the operations in the factory portion of the Construct. Its members oversee the workers' lives and work, and they handle the distribution of the products to Earth.

Technomancer Shock Corps No. 9B (TSC9B)

Members: George Everhart (Iteration X), Roger Beason (Progenitors), Edith Clodfelter (Progenitors), Truitt Guyne (New World Order), Adrian Moss (Iteration X), Forrest Shaw (New World Order), Juanita Delarosa (Iteration X), Joseph Ziehmn (Iteration X)

Background: This amalgam is one of the standard Technomancer combat units. Its duty is to protect the Construct and to handle all the away missions. The amalgam now comprises the remnants of Technomancer Shock Corps #9, #43 and #31, all of which suffered grievous losses over the past year.

Nodes of Null-B

Null-B uses a large amount of Quintessence through its research and its implementation of the Pogrom. The Construct receives a small stipend of Quintessence from MECHA, but the majority comes from its Nodes. In addition, the Construct's Shock Corps raids other Nodes as directed by the Advocates.

The Deep Umbral Prison Spheres: Null-B does not tolerate rebellious workers (or rebellious mages), so over the years it has built about a dozen Deep Umbral prison spheres, large ball-shaped ships covered with Horizon fields and sealed shut. The ships are built to sustain life indefinitely by collecting Quintessence from the Deep Umbra, but they have no propulsion systems and simply drift about. Anyone who rebels is placed about one of these ships and cast out into the Deep Umbra. The person has all the conveniences needed to live, but no company. A prisoner must constantly monitor the device or die. Some prisoners have chosen death over lifelong imprisonment, while others have had their souls eaten by powerful Nephandi.

The Indianapolis Institute of Advanced Technology: This sanitized Node is the means by which Bernadine Slivey, the Advocate, passes on advanced technology to Sleeper scientists. The institute provides only a small amount of Quintessence, just enough to support the five Men in Black who guard the facility.

The Wyldling Containment Grid: In the Near Umbra, somewhere in Saskatchewan, Canada, there is a magickal prison specially designed to hold wyldlings. The prison has 40' tall, 10' thick walls with silver barbed wire atop. Behind the walls is a huge, smooth, platinum floor laid out in 3' x 3' squares, separated by a red glowing line.

Spiraling about the floor are all types of wyldling spirits. Most take the form of hazy patterns or swirling vortices. Occasionally one of the spirits bumps into a wall, only to receive a magickal blast forcing it back.

The prison sits atop a Node, which constantly feeds the spirits. Quintessence energy is in turn siphoned from the spirits, causing them pain. The Quintessence is used to empower the Realm, but the Technomancers occasionally remove a piece from one of the wyldling spirits. They use

these fragments to create permanent Talismans. The Technomancers continue to capture all the Wyldlings they can.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

Null-B is seated in the center of Yenosia, the Wasteland of Dead Aspirations, which is surrounded by the Sea of Disgust. (The geography of the Realm was renamed after it was conquered by a mage of poor but quirky humor.) The Realm once belonged to a powerful Chantry known as Arcosia, but the Technomancers conquered the Chantry in the early 1700s. Once the battle was won, they quickly constructed a prototype factory, where they designed the technology to implement the Technocracy's vision of Ascension. Over the centuries, Null-B became very powerful, but the Realm remained barren and lifeless except for a few odd survivors and the Technomancers' Wasteland spirits.

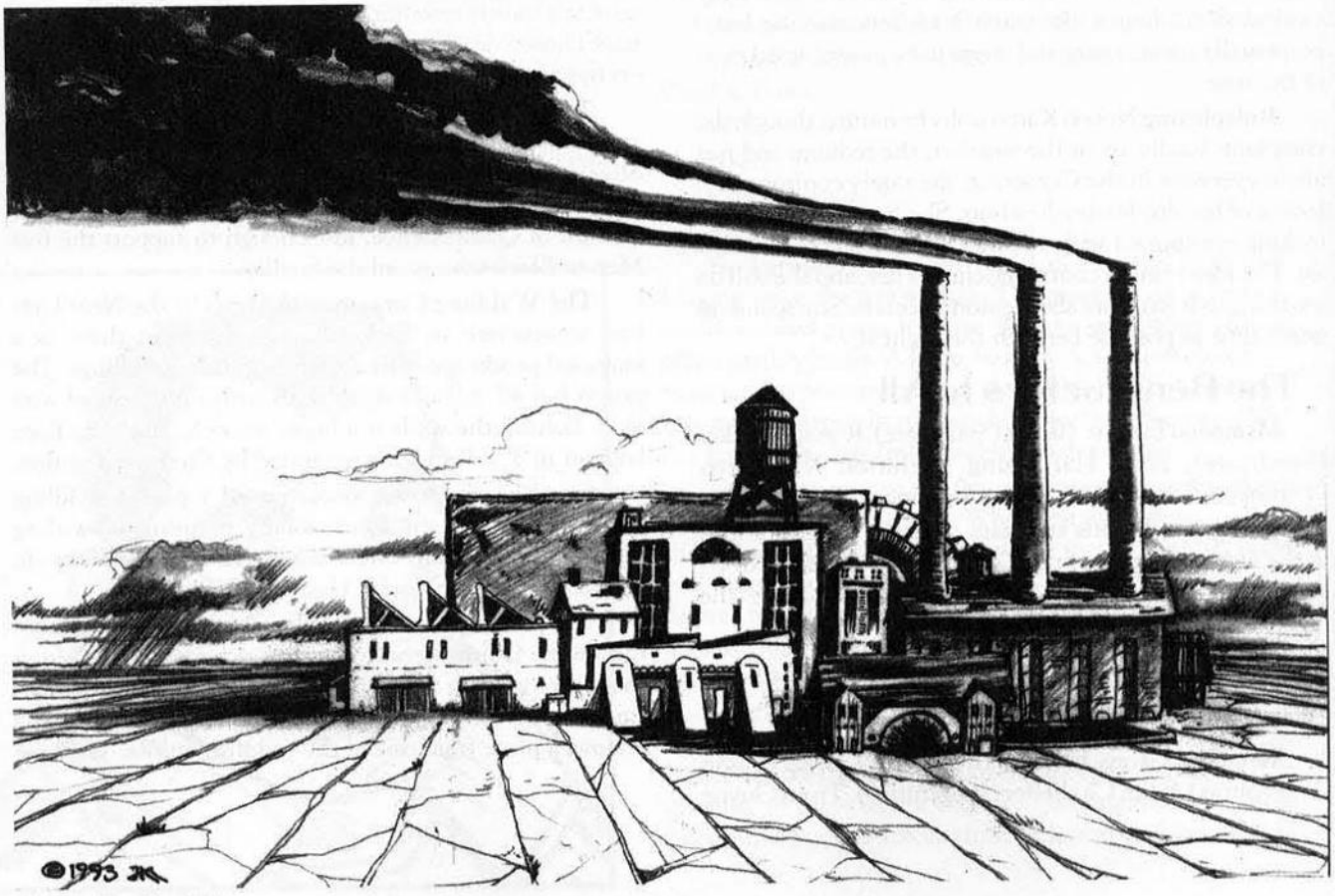
Environment

Yenosia is flat, barren ground. Many deadly spirits dwell within the Realm's caves and crevices, venturing forth at night to attack anything in the vicinity. Even the mages and their guards fear the Wasteland spirits. While they are excellent guards, they have no qualms about killing servants of the Technocracy.

The Realm is never cloudy, save for the rare occasions when it rains. It is always just warm enough to be uncomfortable for the workers. There are no seasons. The day is lit by a bright yellow sun. The night is lit by a moon and multicolored stars.

The Sea of Disgust that surrounds Yenosia is named for the fact that it is so difficult to destroy. All the Technomancers' past efforts have been unsuccessful. The sea simply reappears. The Sea of Disgust resembles a normal sea, but its waters are as clear as those of the Cayman Islands in the West Indies. Even from the surface, the large, snake-like sea serpents indigenous to the region can be seen, as can the small phosphorescent fish upon which they feed. At the bottom of the sea lie the remains of Arcosia, the former Chantry of the Realm. Arcosia has remained unexplored by the Technomancers, who fear the large sea serpents.

From the outside, the factory complex around Null-B resembles a huge brick factory straight out of Victorian London, with huge smokestacks and no windows. The interior of the place is at least five times as large as its exterior would lead one to believe. The interior is filled with various assembly lines, monitoring stations, buttons, levers, pulleys, pallets of supplies, boxes, storage bins, drums of chemicals, tools, hoists, and all sorts of industrial



equipment. Here the laborers build HIT Marks, Technomancer weapons, and all sorts of weird gadgets that are passed down to the people of Earth through the Construct's dummy corporations.

Technomancer guards constantly patrol the Wasteland and Sea of Disgust on three-seater hoverbikes and large floating crafts resembling PT boats. The Construct itself shines bright spotlights across the Wasteland at night, keeping watch for all who might slip past the spirit guards. Still, Null-B's defenses have been ineffective against the attacking Marauders.

Denizens of the Realm

Nearly all the workers in Null-B are human, though there are some humanoid Umbrood among their numbers. The workers live in cells not unlike those found in prisons. The workers are released in the morning from their cells. They shower, eat their gruel and go to work for 13 hours. Afterward, they have three hours to socialize and eat. Then they go back to the cells for eight hours of sleep.

The workers become very complacent over time (this process is aided by subliminal messages piped throughout the work areas). They are the cogs in the machine, too insignificant and powerless to change things. They wear uniforms consisting of jeans and blue button-up shirts. They all wear cheap white shoes, and many must wear goggles and other protective gear.

The Wasteland spirits vary in appearance; few people have seen them and survived. The accounts of those who have vary greatly, though the descriptions are uniformly hideous and nightmarish.

The sea serpents in the Sea of Despair are attracted to the smell of blood and strange sounds. They seem to communicate with one another through humming noises, and may be intelligent. They are silvery-black, with huge, toothy maws and tiny, humanlike eyes. The serpents average 30 feet in length, but those near the undersea ruins of Arcosia may attain 90 feet or more. They usually hunt alone, though the giants of the deeper waters are seen in packs. They feed on the phosphorescent fish and on the few sea plants in the deeper waters.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence +1, Entropy +1, Forces -2, Life -3, Mind +1, Time -1

Construct Description

The Gray Building: Within Null-B, one particular building is set aside as the actual Construct. The building is simply referred to as the "gray building," as it is solid gray in color. The building is located in the very center of the factory complex.

The gray building is heavily guarded. It has thick steel walls and the best security system around. No one but a mage of the Construct is permitted inside. The Construct contains an arcane library, special weapons, personal living quarters and laboratories. However, the best laboratories are located throughout the rest of the factory.

Null Stations Philadelphia, London and Munich: These are the earthly aspects of the Constructs. All are old, still-operating factories. The mages have personal living quarters in the basement levels. The factories are also sanitized Nodes. The mages have everything they could possibly need: money, cars, weapons, computers, etc. There are five Superiors, five HIT Marks and five Men in Black at each outpost.

Purpose

Null-B was created as an all-around Construct, intended to perform all the functions of the Technocracy under one roof. The Construct's duties included: gathering information, producing new technologies to lead the Sleepers toward the Technocracy's vision of Ascension, capturing Orphans, and enforcing the Pogrom. The Construct was highly successful in all aspects of its duties until it took on more than it could handle.

History

At one time Yenosia was the Land of Dreams. It lies at the edge of the Chimerae and in former days was controlled by the mages of Arcosia. The mages, mostly of the Celestial Chorus, were pacifists. They tried to avoid all conflicts, but one day the Technocracy brought the war to their doorstep. The Technomancer Shock Corps invaded the Realm and destroyed everything, including the mages.

After the battle, the victorious Technomancers decided they would build a new Construct on the barren waste wrought by their weapons. Thus was founded Null-B. Because so much effort went into finding and capturing the Realm, all the Conventions wanted to share the plunder. The result was the largest and most powerful Construct of its day.

Null-B became the vanguard toward the Technomancer vision of Ascension. The Construct met all enemies head-on, and crushed them. However, when Autochthonia revealed its true size and capabilities by ambushing and decimating a legion of Nephandi, Null-B's decline began.

The Construct's fortunes have since steadily fallen. This has been exacerbated by the infighting between the members of the Advocates and the assassination of Dr. Vendiz. The other cabals, sensing disorder, have divided their efforts, and the unity for which Null-B was previously known has splintered.

The Technocracy denies the existence of the resonance effect, but if MECHA stands for the solidity of the machine, Null-B reflects the acid bite of human failure. The hopelessness of the workers and the bitterness of those who remember Null-B's halcyon days seem to have set up a powerful resonance. In a desperate attempt to renew the



Construct's past vigor, the Advocates initiated a campaign against the Marauders. Null-B is now in more trouble than it can handle.

Construct Inhabitants

Null-B's servants are mostly humans who sympathize with the causes of the Technocracy. These servants keep the Construct in working order and supervise the other workers. They live apart from the other workers, for the workers would kill them if they could. A number of HIT Marks also serve as guards.

Null-B has a number of consors. There are four cyborgs, a psychic with a robotic body, two powerful and cunning Weaver spirits, and three bio-engineered superhumans (superior to Superiors, and intelligent). One of the cyborgs is a spy for a Tradition Chantry, but the others are loyal.

Internal Structure and Relations

Null-B was ruled for a long time in a very efficient manner. In the last few years, the hierarchy of leadership has broken down. Now the amalgams are highly independent, but they are forced by necessity to depend upon one another. This has made the leaders virtually useless, but they continue to hide their lack of effectiveness from their own superiors for fear of being replaced.

External Relations

Null-B was once the key player in Construct alliances, but today the Construct has become one among many powerful institutions. The Construct is still highly involved in all areas of Technocracy interest, and it is well known even among the Traditions.

Status and Reputation

Null-B's fortunes have fallen heavily within a few short years. The constant attacks, the disaffection of the mages, and the unpleasant nature of the Realm have tarnished past triumphs. The mages of Null-B still have a Reputation as formidable fighters, but most Technomancers agree that Null-B fights a losing battle.

Status: 1

Reputation: 2

Policy Regarding Outsiders

Null-B does not allow outsiders into the Construct or even the Realm. Even other Technomancers must have proper credentials or they will be fed to the Wasteland spirits. Orphans are often captured to serve as apprentices, though particularly unruly ones are usually sent to MECHA. Sleepers are captured as needed to serve as workers in the factory. Null-B often uses Rogues, but once they have outlived their usefulness, they are killed.



Allies and Enemies

Null-B has a large number of allies and enemies. It is also a rival of Metropolis2. Supernatural allies and adversaries should be developed as needed. In addition to magickal allies, Null-B has in its service key members of the DIA, the Special Branch and the BND.

Research Capacities

Null-B's research capacities are geared toward the production of high-tech gadgets to be sold to Sleepers. The devices include telephones, radios, calculators, computers and refrigerators. Null-B's products include special Technomantic powers to aid the Technocracy in reaching its version of Ascension.

In addition to designing and producing products (all of which are channeled through Syndicate-owned companies), Null-B gathers information and items useful in conducting the Pogrom. Such things range from useful magickal tomes to floorplans of Tradition Chantries.

Null-B provides limited training to its mages. Most receive their training at one of the Technocracy's academies before they receive their position at the Construct.

Null-B's arcane library is of adequate size and is very diverse, covering all the Spheres and all areas of Technocracy activity. The Construct's mundane library is massive, covering nearly every imaginable field in detail.

Null-B's computer network is equally massive. It is linked into the DIA and many other organizations' networks. The trouble caused by the Virtual Adepts left the Construct's systems in a mess for a while, but most of the bugs have been caught.

The Technomancers of Null-B have a large supply of Quintessence, allowing them to conduct many experiments and empower many important Talismans. The Construct also receives a share of Quintessence from MECHA.

Story Ideas

Null-B is a hopeless place, where the aspirations of Technomancers have died. This apathy reflects itself in the Realm; no matter what measures are taken, the Sea of Disgust always returns to haunt those who would start anew.

The bleak, drained, embattled mood of Yenosia should pervade stories set in or around Null-B. The final destruction of the place would almost be a mercy to everyone concerned.

Story Ideas for Null-B

1. Can the players trust a Marauder? Arthur Tarr blows his cover to ask for help. The players may have no alterna-

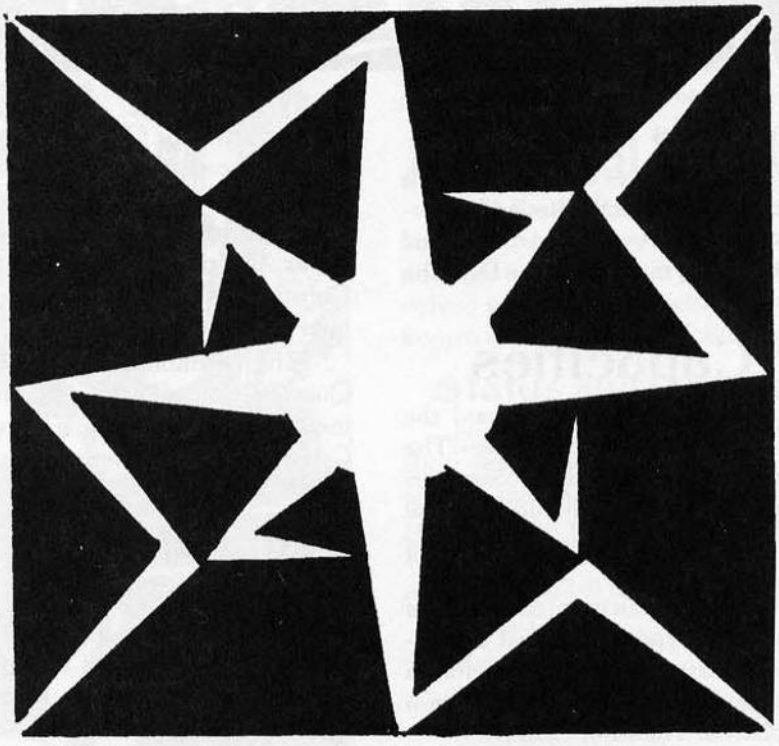
tive. Tarr can do a lot of damage, but his chaotic urges have been repressed for too long, and he is a danger to everyone around him. He's a chancy ally and a worse enemy.

2. While traveling through the Near Umbra, the characters accidentally cross through a Portal into Yenosia. The characters must find a Portal leading out, as the Gauntlet protecting the Realm is so strong that the mages will be unable to create one through their own magick without drawing the attention of the Wasteland spirits or Technomancer patrols.

3. The characters are sent into Null-B as spies for their own Chantry. The characters must gather as much information as they can and find a way out. In addition, they are to capture one of the cyborg Acolytes, or perhaps destroy the Wyldling Containment Grid, freeing the wyldling spirits and reducing the power of the Technomancers.

4. The characters are sent into Yenosia to investigate the ruins of Arcosia below the Sea of Disgust. There, the characters discover a hidden cabal of Tradition mages who have formed an alliance with the Marauders. They offer the characters an alliance in exchange for keeping their secret. If not, they will be hunted down and destroyed. Do the characters agree? If so, they will have powerful allies. However, they may also be called upon by the mages to aid them in their battles against Null-B.

5. If the characters are Technomancers, they must battle the Marauders. In fact, they will be sent on a wide range of missions to various places in the Umbra, there to hunt down Marauders and either capture or kill them. They may also be asked to infiltrate the Marauders after they have proved their overwhelming loyalty to the Technocracy.



Research Plantation No. 4: Construct of Moreauvia

What country before existed a century and a half without a rebellion?...The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

— Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to William Stevens Smith*



Misery is the common thread that links the diverse Constructs of the Technocracy. There are always the superiors and the inferiors, and the inferiors are always much greater in number. Such is the Technocracy's idea of Ascension.

In the Horizon Realm known as Moreauvia, the Construct called Research Plantation #4 is working hard toward the Technomancer Ascension. Its mages have created their own slaves, drawing them from test tubes. They work their creations to death after their interest in them fades away.

The proud parent Progenitors bred their creations to lack a sense of free will. It made their jobs so much easier. Even the genetic masters' science is not perfect, however; rage builds in the hearts of the slave-children. Soon, very soon, the rage will overcome them, and blood will begin to flow.

Amalgams

The Masters of Moreauvia

Members: Theodore Lewis (Progenitors), Dwight Corbett (Progenitors), Clarence Papineau (Progenitors), Marcia Dickerson (Progenitors)

Background: This amalgam is composed of the Progenitor creators who give life to the Moreauvians. They are devoted to the study of life and the perfection of new hybrid species. They are a group of detached scientists. They seldom ever get too attached to their work. Occasionally such an attachment does occur, however, for good or ill.

Clarence Papineau

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Director

Essence: Dynamic

Convention: Progenitors

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Athletics 1, Computer 2, Culture 3, Dodge 1, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 5, Intuition 4, Law 2, Leadership 4, Linguistics 4, Medicine 5, Meditation 2, Panhandling 2, Research 4, Science 3, Survival 3, Technology 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 5, Avatar 4, Dream 1, Library 8

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 4, Life 5, Mind 1, Matter 3, Prime 3, Spirit 1

Willpower: 9

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 15

Paradox: 5

Clarence Papineau was a promising medical student whose inclination tended more toward the laboratory than the bedside. Cold and remote, Clarence's greatest pleasure was taking things apart to find out what made them tick.

While working at the Denver Animal Hospital, he caught the eye of Dr. Martinez, a Progenitor "scout," who engaged him in a long debate about magick. When Clarence maintained that magick was garbage, the Technomancer proved the truth of his words by dissecting a cat without even touching it. Fascinated, Clarence followed his newfound Mentor all the way to Research Plantation #4.

Clarence was happy with his work for several years, until Dr. Martinez "disappeared" after strongly dissenting with Colleen Weidner about her brutal treatment of hybrids. Martinez's standard tissue samples, which Progenitors use for back-up cloning, also mysteriously disappeared. Clarence suspects that Weidner's influence with the Masters has led to Martinez's extinction, and that a similar fate might be in store for him. Intrigue was never his strong point, but Clarence is now trying to figure out how to avenge his Mentor without joining him.

Image: Papineau is a tall, white-haired, blue-eyed man of 40. He dresses in expensive, semi-casual styles fitting an older Caucasian conservative Republican. He is of average build, but in good shape for a man of his age. He does have a permanent Paradox flaw. Early experiments left the skin on his hands, arms and back slightly brown and with a texture like that of a lizard. He usually wears long-sleeved shirts and gloves to conceal this deformity.



Roleplaying Notes: Papineau is a very refined gentleman. He does not like to take chances and prefers to avoid managerial positions in favor of his own work. He is a perfectionist and has an unnerving manner whenever something or someone gets in his way.

Sanctum: Papineau's private chambers are tastefully decorated with neo-Classical art, preserved from the elements by sturdy glass frames. His furniture is likewise sturdy and elegant, and he maintains a large private library. Of late, he has taken to sweeping his chambers for magickal or electronic "bugs" every morning and night.

The Overseers

Members: Phillip Ramsey (Progenitors), Colleen Weidner (Progenitors), James Montgomery (Progenitors)

Background: This amalgam supervises the production and collection of the Kaltee (a plant) crop grown by the Moreauvians. It also oversees the lives of the animal-human slaves. Finally, the Overseers protect the Construct and command the guard units of Superiors.

Nodes of Research Plantation No. 4

Unlike most Technocracy Constructs, Research Plantation #4 does not get any Quintessence from MECHA. It does not wish to owe the Construct any favors, as it does not appreciate MECHA's treatment of humans. Still, the Technomancers of the Construct seem to have no qualms about using animals in an equally vulgar manner.

The Stele of Sura Molti: This large stone monolith is located in the wilds of Zaire. The lion-shaped monument is dedicated to the spirits of the animal lords. It was a powerful religious symbol for a long-extinct tribe. It was occupied by some werelions, but they were slaughtered by the Technocracy's HIT Marks. The Node was not sanitized as usual for fear that it would lose its potency.

It is currently being raided by some unknown Quintessence thieves. The Moreauvian guards have either been killed or kidnapped. The Progenitors have considered sending in a large force to get to the bottom of things, but they have yet to do so.

The Enchanted Meadow of Bliss: Some Progenitors have their uses for the Wyld. Without it they cannot easily shape and mold flesh to suit their needs. This Node is actually a Glen, a rare place filled with the essence of the Wyld. The Progenitors carefully guard this place, drawing Quintessence from it for use in their genetic experiments. The place is a lush forest, more beautiful than any forest on Earth. Some of the Progenitors come to the Glen to relax. However, they have begun to fear that a certain Garou sept has set its eyes on the Glen.

The Denver Metropolitan Animal Hospital: This sanitized Node is used primarily by the Technomancers as

a means of acquiring DNA samples from unusual animal specimens. The hospital is world-renowned for its exceptional ability to cure sick animals (Progenitor secret technology in action). Various zoos across the world and even owners of exotic pets bring their animals to the hospital. The DNA samples are taken back to the Progenitor laboratories, where they are analyzed and catalogued for use in future experiments.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

I have never seen a happy slave. I have seen him dance in his chains, true, but he was not happy. There is a difference between happiness and mirth.

— Angelina Grimké, *Bearing Witness Against Slavery*

Moreauvia takes its name from *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. The Progenitors so named it because the whole purpose of the Construct was to develop new races of creatures by combining human and animal genes. Moreauvia is now a land filled with all sorts of hybrids: the bizarre, the vicious and the pathetic. These creatures serve their Progenitor masters as slaves in their fields, and as specimens to be dissected at whim.

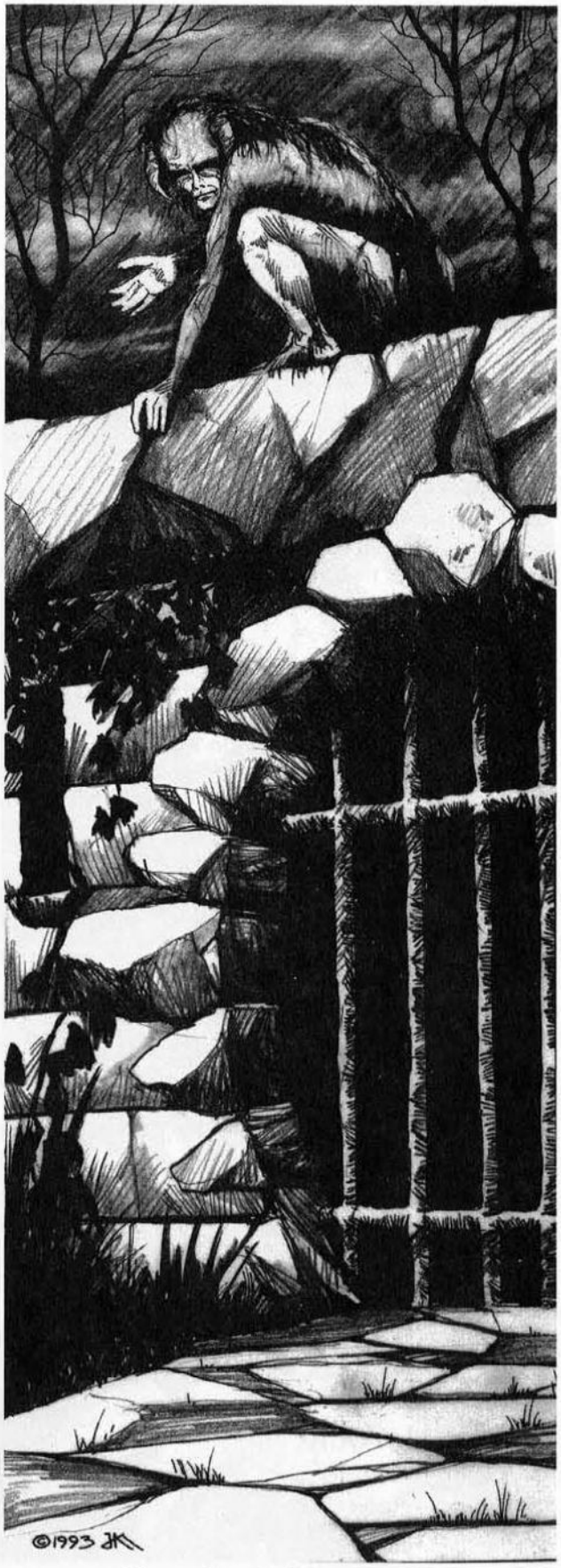
Research Plantation #4 exists in a Summer state, but it is a fragile season. Though the Construct is strong, it is isolated. When the Verbena-backed hybrids arise, the Progenitors may fall.

Resonance is a funny thing. While there are no external manifestations of the repression and surgical horror that the Progenitors practice, changes occur just out of sight. The hybrids' disposition has become more aggressive with each "generation," though the scientists have not recognized this. The temperature has risen slightly over the years, a gradual but constant change. And then there are the Verbena, who come and go through a Portal totally unknown to the Technomancers. The Verbena would call this recent turn of events "threefold return."

Environment

Moreauvia is a land filled with dense forests and crop fields. Research Plantation #4 sits near the area deemed the north end. Surrounding the Construct is a village of squalid wattle-and-daub huts; these huts house the hybrids.

The sun, the moon and the stars all resemble their earthly counterparts. The weather, the climate and the seasons likewise resemble those of Earth's temperate zone. The plants and animals are all similar to those found in the southern United States, though a few animals from South America, Australia and Africa also live in the Realm. The Realm is very rural; only a handful of dirt roads lead through the village and to the fields. Horses provide the only means of travel.



The plant species grown by the hybrids is called Kaltee. It not only provides gastronomic sustenance, but gives the individual a pleasurably altered state of consciousness. Prolonged use of Kaltee will cause addiction. Listlessness and decreased mental capacities are common among addicts. The members of the Pharmacopeans, an arm of the Progenitors involved in chemical research, use Kaltee to create many strange drugs.

Denizens of the Realm

The hybrids are the only intelligent inhabitants save the Technomancers themselves. Hybrids differ greatly in Attributes, Abilities and special powers. They are humanoid, but each hybrid bears a great number of animal features from its prototype species of animal. Their personalities are also much like those of their animal counterparts. However, the Progenitors have spliced a fail-safe chromosome into the hybrids' genetic makeup. This "inhibitor" chromosome theoretically prevents the hybrids' from attacking each other or the Progenitors. Though none has ever yet attacked a mage, there have recently been some fights among the hybrids; these battles have resulted in death and cannibalism.

The culture created by the hybrids is unique. They are certainly sentient, but they reflect their animal as well as their human natures. They seem to understand nature and their role in it better than humans do. Most are loyal, hard-working creatures. Originally no marriages, or even mating, were permitted, but simple genetic tinkering rendered all hybrids sterile.

The hybrids work in the fields from sunup to sunset. They receive no pay other than food, shelter, and all the supplies they need. The hybrids are not allowed any Kaltee, and stealing it is punishable by death. However, some steal it anyway.

The Verbena

Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of the millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say let it be done.

— John Brown's final speech before the court that condemned him to die

Living in the woods, unbeknownst to the Progenitors, are three Verbena witches. They take the forms of animals to prowl the forest in safety, and at night a few of the hybrids come to them. The mages are teaching the hybrids their magickal ways and are also implanting the seeds of revolt. Soon, there may be an uprising.

Emily Harden

Nature: Bon Vivant
Demeanor: Judge
Essence: Dynamic



Tradition: Verbena

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Computer 1, Cosmology 3, Culture 3, Dodge 4, Drive 1, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 2, Expression (writing) 4, Firearms (bow) 2, Intuition 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics 5, Medicine 1, Meditation 4, Melee 4, Occult 5, Stealth 4, Streetwise 2, Survival 4

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Arcane 3, Avatar 5, Dream 5

Spheres: Entropy 2, Forces 3, Life 4, Mind 3, Prime 3, Spirit 3

Willpower: 8

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 13

Paradox: 7

Background: Emily was born and raised in an Ancestral Chantry by her Verbena parents, and Awakened at a very early age. She learned the ways of the Verbena just as she learned her ABCs. When she was old enough, she ran away from home to travel around Europe. Several years later, she returned home and was greeted with open arms. Her parents had kept watch over her while she was away, but had allowed her to experience life among the Sleepers and learn what she would.

Intoxicated by freedom, she declined an offer to remain with the Chantry, and has instead chosen to follow her own path, though she retains close ties to her family and friends. A little over a year ago, two childhood companions infiltrated Research Plantation #4 and were horrified by what they found. When Emily heard, she was likewise horrified. She considered the lifelong slavery of Research Plantation #4's inhabitants to be a blasphemous affront,

and readily joined her friends in an attempt to destroy the place. Emily now lives in the forests of the Realm, encouraging the hybrids to revolt and carrying out covert attacks on the Progenitors.

She fancies herself a modern swashbuckler heroine, and uses her experiences as material for the popular fantasy series she writes in her spare time. As a Verbena, Emily feels a close connection with nature, and revels in the wild life she leads.

Image: Harden is a beautiful 20-year-old vixen with straight, waist-length raven hair and violet eyes. She has a slender but muscular build, and moves with delicacy and confidence. She dresses like one of Robin Hood's Merry Men, with light tunics and leggings. She often wears light leather armor and frequently goes barefooted. Emily carries a sword, dagger and bow at all times.

Roleplaying Notes: Emily is a very poised and confident person who knows how to get what she wants. Her behavior seems reckless to strangers, but she always has contingency plans. Emily affects a dashing, flirtatious air and an English accent. When she gets down to business, though, she becomes level-headed and deadly serious.

Sanctum: She maintains two sanctums on Earth; one is in Seattle and the other is in Toronto. She has 13 pet cats in each of her sanctums. Her sanctums are very comfortable and earthy, with a medieval ambience. She returns to Earth often through a secret Portal unknown to the Technomancers.

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Entropy -2, Forces -1, Life +3, Mind +1, Matter -1, Spirit +1

Construct Description

The Research Plantation #4: Within the Realm, the actual Construct looks just as it does on Earth, except for the equipment inside. The Construct consists of the "big house," where the mages live, and five other buildings. Three of these are laboratories, one is a cryogenic storage facility where the Progenitors' clones are stored, and the last is a storage building. The crops harvested by the Moreauvians are stored in silos and barns just outside the Construct. The plantation buildings appear neo-Classical and are in excellent condition. The place has a number of guards, primarily to guard their clones, for the mages believe their creations cannot harm them.

The Meridian Estate: This is the earthly aspect of the plantation. It looks almost exactly the same, though it is not as well kept, and it does not house all the advanced technology used by the Progenitors of the Realm. The plantation is used as a home by a few of the mages, but most people believe the place abandoned (and possibly haunted). There is justification for these latter rumors; nearly 60 years ago, a lone Progenitor performed horrible experiments in the Construct rather than in the Realm. Some say he



released many hideous creatures onto the nearby town. Legend has it that he was killed by one of his experiments, and that some of the monsters now live in the nearby woods. The Progenitors who were around at the time do not discuss the incident.

Purpose

Research Plantation #4 was founded for the sole purpose of developing new sentient creatures to serve the Progenitors, though the creation of Kaltee is an unexpected bonus. By splicing human DNA with that of animals, the Progenitors had hoped to create a species superior to both. Instead, the Progenitors may have bred their own downfall.

History

In the 1850s, the Masters were just another amalgam working within a Progenitor Construct. After they began conducting research into the splicing of human and animal genetic material, they approached the leaders of the Progenitors. They talked their superiors into allowing them to create their own Realm where they could pursue their research in private.

The mages founded a Realm using a large amount of Tass captured from a powerful Marauder. The Tass was as powerful as its former wielder; it only took the Masters a year to create the Realm they later named Moreauvia. They soon created the first of their hybrids, and they have yet to stop.

Strange things do occasionally happen, possibly as a result of using Marauder-tainted Quintessence to create the Realm. Some of the hybrids seem to be developing aggressive tendencies, and a few have even turned on their Sleeper overseers. Autopsies on the rebellious hybrids uncovered no reason for this aggression. The mages now fear an uprising. Little do they know the Verbena are attempting to put an end to the Progenitors' evil work.



Construct Inhabitants

Aside from the mages there are a few trusted Moreauvian servants and 15 Superiors. The mages formerly allowed their Moreauvian servants to serve them in the earthly aspect of the Chantry, but one of the most trusted of them ran away. The hybrid, named Jeremiah, was never captured.

"Heckler"

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Conformist

Essence: N/A

Tradition: N/A

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Culture 3, Dodge 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 4, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Influence (hybrids) 5

Spheres: N/A

Willpower: 6

Arete: N/A

Quintessence: N/A

Paradox: N/A

Special Abilities: Claws and teeth (Accuracy: 6, Damage: Strength +2, non-aggravated)

Background: Heckler was "born" in the plantation lab. Though originally destined to join the field workers, his quick mind and able tongue won him a position of influence with both the hybrids and the Progenitors. Not one to miss an opportunity, Overseer James Montgomery befriended Heckler, intending to use the hybrid as a spy. Their friendship quickly turned genuine, though, much to both beings' surprise.

Heckler's lust for knowledge knows no bounds. As soon as he was able, he began to sneak into the library and thereby taught himself to read. Though the Masters are unaware of it, he has begun to teach other hybrids, using stolen books and the aid of the Verbena in the forest. Heckler is intensely curious and spies upon everybody. Consequently, he knows more about the plantation than many of the Progenitors themselves do.

Caught between the Verbena and Montgomery, Heckler faces a dilemma: which one of his friends will he sell out? He honestly likes Montgomery and has been able to temper the Overseers' cruelty. Still, the Verbena and their talk of freedom and other worlds intrigue him. For the moment, he contents himself with playing both sides, assuming that he'll figure things out when the time comes.

Image: Heckler resembles a cross between a fox, an ape and a man, with broad shoulders, long arms, a vulpine face, whiskers, reddish fur, and large steel-blue eyes. He moves at a quick lope, using his arms to swing himself across the ground or the trees. He speaks well and picks things up quickly.

Roleplaying Notes: Heckler's eloquence has been his salvation, so he almost reflexively engages anyone he meets in conversation. He always tries to stay one step ahead of everyone else, ferreting out all of the information he can find. Though he fights reasonably well, he prefers to avoid combat. When all else fails, he has plenty of friends on whom he can call.

Internal Structure and Relations

The Masters have no real hierarchy, seeing it as too restrictive for their needs. Instead, they treat each other as professional colleagues. They vote on all matters affecting the Construct and the Realm, and they abide by a simple but functional covenant.

External Relations

These Progenitors are very xenophobic. They do not wish to involve themselves in the Pogrom or any other activities of the Technocracy, nor do they wish to be singled out and attacked by the Traditions. They also fear other, more powerful, Progenitors will try to take responsibility for their work if they let them. For this reason, they do not even keep the Progenitor leaders informed of their activities. The Construct has gone virtually unnoticed for a long time.

Status and Reputation

The Research Plantation is virtually unknown, but it is recognized as a part of the Technocracy. It is assigned minimal Status within it. Those few outsiders who know of it consider it a bad joke staffed by fools. A small number of older mages remember the Progenitors of the Construct, and fear they are breeding an army of superhuman creatures to usurp command of the Technocracy.

Status: 1

Reputation: 1

Policy Regarding Outsiders

The Progenitors of the Research Plantation do not allow anyone into the Construct or the Realm (save potential victims). They do not use Rogues, but would have no qualms over so doing should they need to.

Allies and Enemies

The Research Plantation's allies consist of three other Research Plantations (who are also the Construct's rivals),



one other Progenitor research facility, an Onieran Dream Lord named Kli Qu, and two Umbrood Preceptors.

The Construct's enemies include one Chantry, a cabal of Nephandi mages, a sept of Wendigo Garou called the Winds of Retribution, and an Umbrood Lord named Sphinx, which also serves as a totem to Garou.

Research Capacities

Research Plantation #4 was created for the sole purpose of research, so its resources are vast. Its members are on the cutting edge of genetics, and most of the equipment they use is not available to other Progenitors. They do not, however, maintain a force of the genetic monstrosities favored by other Progenitor amalgams, feeling secure in the passive natures of their hybrids. This may be their undoing.

The mages train themselves, as none are more knowledgable than they. They also train their own apprentices.

The entirety of the Construct's arcane library is dedicated to the Progenitors' work, though many mages have private collections of arcane works relating to other areas of magick. Their mundane library is so massive it takes up an entire floor of the "Big House."

By trading Kaltee for Tass, the mages have accumulated more than enough Quintessence for their experiments.

Story Ideas

The obvious theme for Plantation #4 is slavery — the slavery of the hybrids, and the slavish devotion of the Masters to an idea that should be dead and gone.

This Construct simmers with rebellion, though the Masters do not see it. For all of their science, the Technomancers of Moreauvia have ignored history, psychology and general humanity. This hubris has led them into a trap, and it's only a matter of time before the trap snaps shut.

Story Ideas for Research Plantation No. 4

1. The characters encounter a strange hybrid that has escaped from the Construct. The creature asks the characters for protection. The mages will come under attack by hybrids loyal to the Progenitors, as well as by Superiors and the Progenitors themselves.

2. The characters are called upon by the Coven of the Seven Stars, the Verbena cabal responsible for planting the seeds of the hybrid uprising. The cabal asks the characters to come to the Realm and assist the hybrids in their attack on the Construct. However, the Progenitors have learned of the impending rebellion through a double agent. They

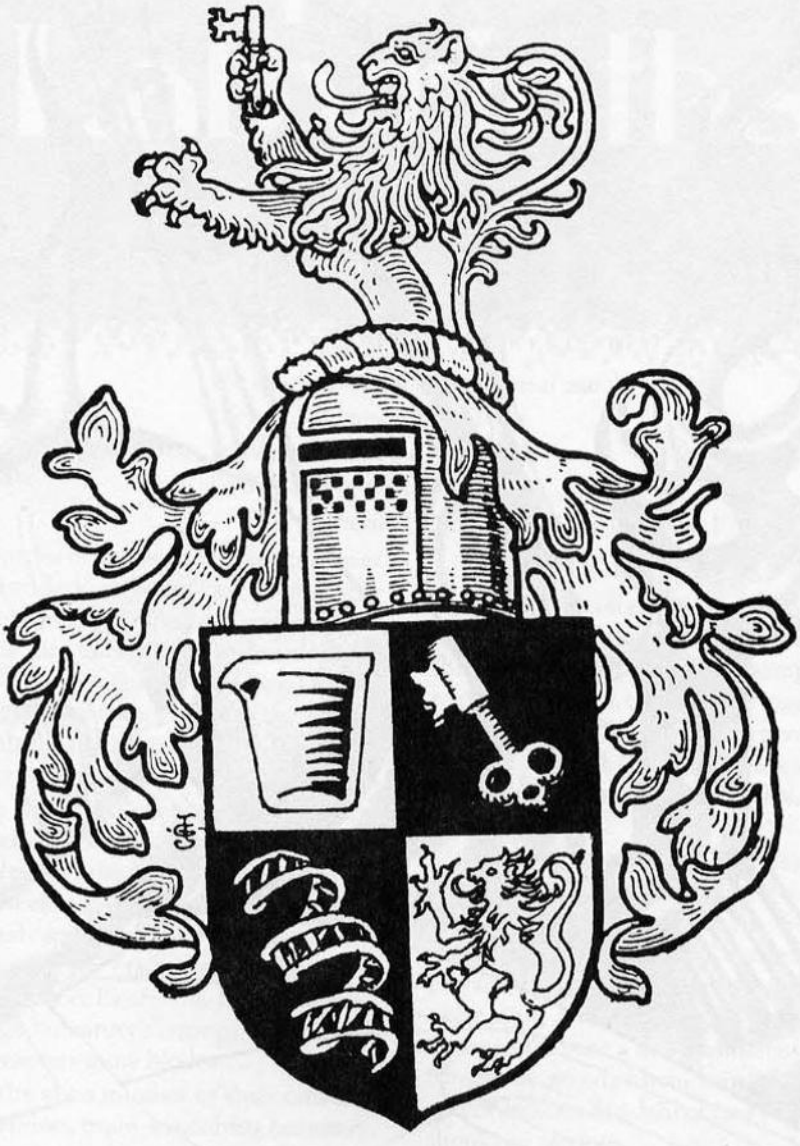


have sent for reinforcements and are ready for nearly anything.

3. One of the characters is kidnapped by the Progenitors. The Technomancers hope to use the character's DNA to create hybrids with the potential to use magick. These special hybrids will then be trained as Progenitors, giving them the physical superiority of the hybrids and the magickal superiority of the mages. The other characters will have to break into the construct to rescue their friend.

4. The characters accidentally discover the Stele of Sura Molti and claim it as their own. When the Progenitors realize the characters have been siphoning power from the Node, they will attack them with their hybrids. Even if the characters manage to hold onto the Node, they will have to deal with werelions, who also want the Node. The werelions will agree to assist the characters if they agree to share the Node with them. If the characters agree, the werelions will want to invade the Progenitors' Realm together.

5. If the characters are Technomancers, they are sent to retrieve an escaped hybrid who is on an insane killing spree. The hybrid is murdering humans for food. Will the mages stop him before he attracts the attention of other mages or supernatural beings?





Chapter Three: Nephandi Labyrinths

The Black Queen chants a funeral march,
The cracked brass bells will ring
To summon back the Fire Witch
To the court of the Crimson King.
— King Crimson, "The Court of the Crimson King"



The Chantries of the Nephandi are known as Labyrinths: dark cathedrals of alien design and corrupt purpose. To the Nephandi, Ascension is Descent, a fatal embrace of the damned. In the reaches of the Deep Umbra, these mages howl their praises to the Wyrm, and the abyss laughs and takes them in.

Labyrinths maintain a tenuous hold on the Earth through Nodes of corruption and despair, places where the darkest passions of humanity poison the Quintessence and raise Nodes like boils in the earth. The Nephandi seek out these venomous places, piercing the Gauntlet and carving out their Realms quickly, before either the Technocracy or Traditions can shut them down. Through infiltrators on Earth, the Nephandi and their Acolytes encourage humanity's corruption; through this corruption they construct more Nodes....

Labyrinths reflect the alien mindset of their creators: they contain twisted corridors, brain-wrenching geometry, and nightmarish shapes dancing just out of sight. Most Labyrinths take forbidding shapes, suggesting some deeper, almost living, essence. Visitors to these places complain of disorientation, headaches and dizziness long after leaving; many suffer lasting neuroses, or worse.

Renunciates

Nephandi often speak of themselves as "soul-mirrors" reflecting the darkness within the mortal soul. Some claim that they exist to provide an example of the left-hand Path to the Awakened, to give those mages who strive to Ascend a bad example. Others seem to revel in the knowledge that they are damned, and are determined to enjoy it. The ranks of the renunciates, called *barabbi*, include mages of both philosophies.

Barabbi are mages of Tradition or Technocracy that leave their chosen Path for the corruption of the dark side of power. Many *barabbi* remain with their fellows, disguising their true natures and corrupting from within. They privately indulge their passions for oblivion while publicly upholding the facades of their former lives. These renunciates pose a double dilemma for their friends. Can *barabbi* be saved? Should they be saved? The hazards of mages dedicated to deliberate evil (and spreading that evil) should be obvious.

Labyrinths exist beyond the Horizon, but reach into the Earth. Their agents batter at the walls of reality; mages crossing their path are advised to tread lightly.

The Drachus Vachor: Chantry of the Ulic Batu, the Sea of Ash

A gain it is to find a beautiful human soul.
— Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Der Gerettete Jungling*



Seductive is the lure of the sea; in Drachus Vachor, that sea is a sea of ash, an alien Realm in which a group of young Tradition mages have sold their souls to the Nephandus Galarius.

The mages were young and inexperienced. They did not know the cost of their greed, and they willingly gave themselves to the darkness in exchange for power. They now regret their actions, but they are in deep and there is no way out. Reluctantly, they now corrupt the souls of their fellow mages, promising them what they were promised — unbelievable power at the mere price of a soul.

Galarius, Master of the Realm

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Caregiver

Essence: Primordial

Tradition: Dreamspeaker *barabbi*

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 6, Brawl 3, Culture 4, Dodge 2, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 5, Expression (Persuasion) 5, Intimidation 4, Intuition 3, Leadership 5, Linguistics 6, Meditation 5, Melee 3, Occult 7, Research 4, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 6, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 4, Avatar 5, Destiny 4, Dream 5, Influence 3, Library 10, Mentor 5, Node 5

Spheres: Correspondence 5, Entropy 4, Forces 3, Life 3, Mind 4, Matter 2, Prime 4, Spirit 5, Time 4

Willpower: 9

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 15

Paradox: 5

Background: Some of the Kinfolk who came to the New World with their Garou brethren secretly served what they believed to be the Wyrm. The foul cultists worshipped the Nephandi, providing them with the souls of their fellow Kinfolk. One of these Kinfolk cults located itself on a small barrier island off the coast of Georgia. The cult had three powerful Nodes and served three powerful Nephandi.

On a particularly unholy day in the cultists' calendar, a child named Galarius was born. The child was groomed from birth to lead the cult. The Nephandi realized that the child's Avatar was strong, and that they could use his power for their own bidding. Galarius grew up among the immoral and damned people of the island, and eventually became their leader. He represented the epitome of corruption, decadence and destruction. However, the Technocracy's Horizon was eventually put into place, and the island was overrun by Technomancers who wished to destroy the Nephandi. Through Galarius' battle skill, the Realm was saved and the Nephandi's power and influence, though reduced, were still intact. Galarius served his masters well. (See Chantry History for further details.)

Today, Galarius continues to serve his masters. Over the years he has managed to corrupt a number of cabals, leading them into the service of the Nephandi. He is currently serving as Mentor to a new cabal of minions and future sacrifices, called the Watchers of the Void.

Image: Galarius no longer looks Native American. He looks more like an Eastern European. He is of average build, though he is tall. His hair is medium-length and dark brown. His eyes display a permanent Paradox Flaw — they are emeralds. He is able to mask his eyes by wearing shades,



but he chooses not to do so in the Horizon Realm. On Earth he wears expensive, custom-fitted suits, while in the Realm he wears blood-red and black robes.

Roleplaying Notes: Galarius is totally evil and utterly dominated by his masters. He is a pawn, but his guile and power are forces to fear. He will attempt to befriend all mages he encounters, hiding his secret allegiance. He will offer his services, attempting to put others in debt to him so they will feel obligated to repay him. He is a merciless killer and derives great pleasure from his work.

Sanctum: Galarius seldom appears on Earth. He prefers to remain in the Chantry, where he remains unknown and safe. His chambers have never been seen by any save the Hooded Horrors (see *Chantry Inhabitants*). They are much like those of the rest of the Chantry, except there is a private shrine dedicated to his masters that functions as a personal Node.

The Watchers of the Void (All *barabbi* mages)

Members: Joanne Myers (Cult of Ecstasy), Lester Giles (Sons of Ether), Abdel-Aziz Hummein (Euthanatos), Hiram Jencks (Order of Hermes), Bernard Monfort (Celestial Chorus)

Background: This cabal was originally a group of young Tradition mages who were about to be destroyed by a pack of Marauders. A strange mage named Galarius saved their lives and offered them both magickal gifts and the opportunity to join his Chantry. The offer seemed too good to be true — and it was.

Joanne Myers

Nature: Rebel

Demeanor: Survivor

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Cult of Ecstasy *barabbi*

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Computer 2, Dodge 2, Drive 2, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Firearms 3, Intimidation 2, Intuition 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 2, Linguistics 3, Meditation 4, Occult 2, Research 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3, Technology 1

Backgrounds: Arcane 5, Avatar 4, Destiny 4, Dream 3, Mentor 5

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 2, Life 2, Mind 3, Prime 2, Time 4

Willpower: 9

Arete: 5

Quintessence: 18

Paradox: 2



Background: Joanne Myers was born on a small farm in Iowa. She dreamt of one day becoming a famous actress, and ran away from home at the age of 16 and caught a bus to Los Angeles.

Her Avatar awoke on stage. She froze during opening night, and the jeers of an unruly audience literally brought her to her knees, sobbing. When she looked up, members of the audience were bursting into flame. She panicked and ran, but one man tracked her down and took her as his apprentice. Joanne served as the Ecstasy Cultist's apprentice for seven years. Afterward, she joined a cabal called the Lightning Seven and fought against the Technocracy.

She never knew Galarius was a Nephandus until she was already one herself. Galarius provided her with designer drugs that altered her senses in heretofore unimaginable ways. The pleasure and the revelation were beyond anything the Cult of Ecstasy had given her. Eventually, she became addicted.

Now Joanne serves the Nephandi reluctantly. She has secretly overcome her addiction, and she has never made a soul-pact with the Nephandi. She plans to make an escape as soon as she finds some trustworthy mages.

Myers' interests include exploring the World of Darkness, developing friendships with anyone who can save her, reading science fiction and fantasy, and studying parapsychology.

Image: Myers is an attractive, athletic woman in her early 30s. She has curly, coppery-red hair and bright green eyes. She wears comfortable, trendy clothes.

Roleplaying Notes: Joanne is a strong-willed, tough woman. She is persistent and independent. She hated her dependence upon Galarius, which she has since overcome. She now seeks a way out of her current situation. She will assist any mages who can save her from the Nephandi.

While Joanne would prefer to return to the Traditions, she is even willing to go with Technomancers and Marauders. She fears death, but she fears damnation even more.

Sanctum: Joanne spends most of her time in the Charleston house, where she has a five-room sanctum. She also maintains a private apartment near the Chantry, decorated in a comfortable, modern style.

Lester Giles

Nature: Avant-Garde

Demeanor: Deviant

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Sons of Ether *barabbi*

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Computer 3, Cosmology 3, Culture 4, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 5, Intuition 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 4, Medicine 5, Meditation 3, Melee 2, Occult 5, Research 5, Science 3, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 2, Technology 4, Watchmaking 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arcane 3, Avatar 3, Destiny 3, Dream 2, Library 5, Mentor 5, Retainers 5

Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 2, Life 4, Mind 3, Matter 4, Prime 3, Spirit 2

Willpower: 4

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 8

Background: Lester Giles was born in Manchester, England in 1843 to a family of watchmakers. Giles grew up learning the family trade. Eventually he took over the business as his father's eyesight prevented him from continuing.



Lester also became fascinated with the occult at an early age. He joined a secret society of hedge wizards in an attempt to learn the ways of magick.

One of the members of the society just happened to be a real mage. He took Giles aside and promised to teach him the real ways of magick, provided he quit the family business and take up full-time study for a number of years. Giles agreed, so long as his family was cared for financially. His Mentor provided for them and took Giles away. Giles spent nearly 10 years in study, but eventually learned the ways of magick and became a Son of Ether.

He traveled for years, serving in various cabals. He joined the Lightning Seven 10 years ago. Giles was easily corrupted, for he sought power and understanding, and Galarius was more than willing to provide it to him.

Giles has recently taken to experimenting with reanimates. He has also become interested in developing a means of altering Avatars. He believes he will one day develop a means of converting one Essence into another. He thinks it may even be possible to develop new Avatars.

Image: Lester Giles is a slightly overweight man in his late 40s. He has thinning, dark-brown, wavy hair, a mustache, and brown eyes. He wears outdated clothing and almost always has a lit pipe in his mouth.

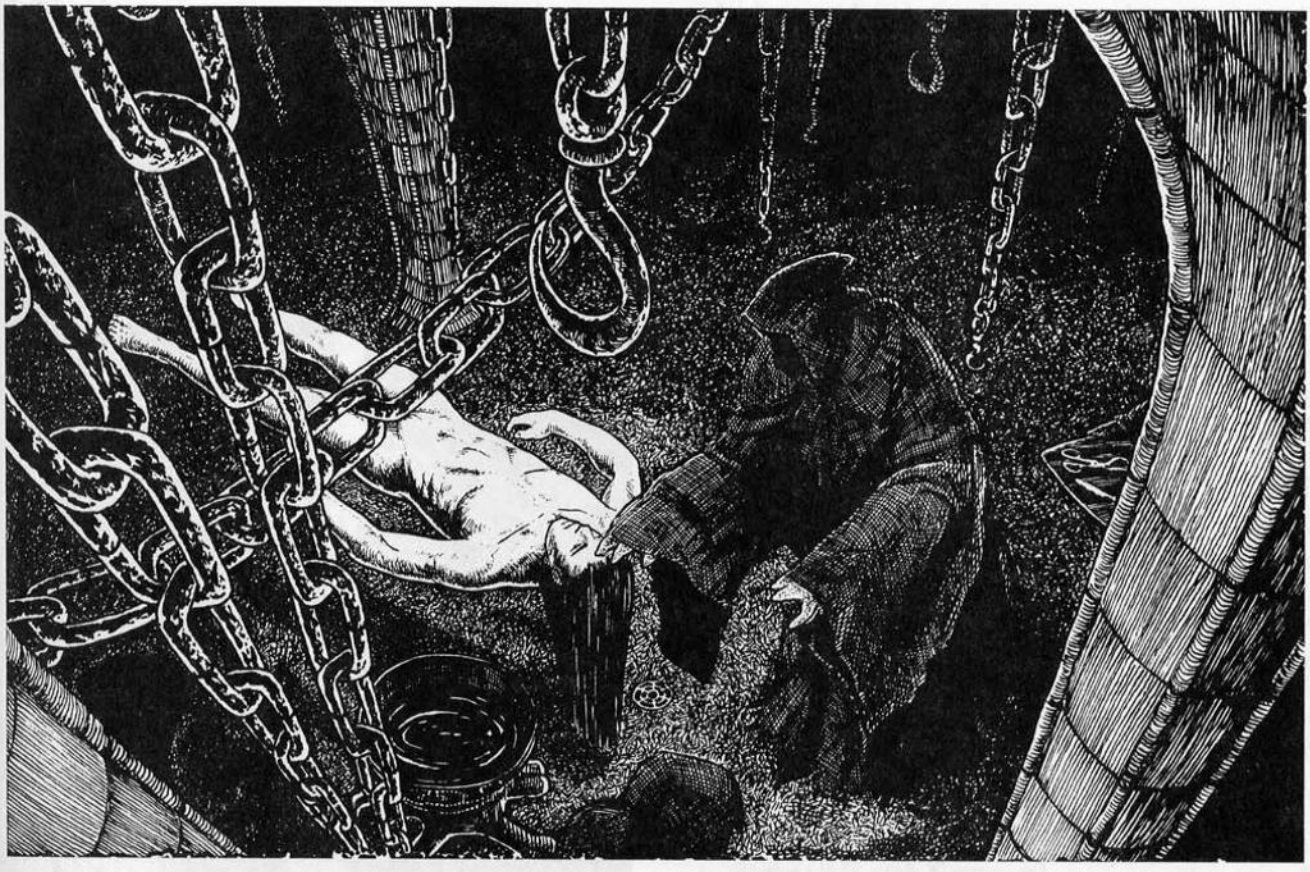
Roleplaying Notes: Giles is a jovial and curious man. While he does not realize he is working for the Nephandi, his corruption is total, and he is beyond redemption. He will not hesitate to use people and betray them. However, he always appears the proper English gentleman. He is more than a little insane, suffering from several phobias of the Storyteller's choice.

Sanctum: Giles does most of his "research" in Drachus Vachor. He has a huge sanctum set aside for the creation of his reanimates. He also has a large sanctum in the tunnels below the lighthouse Chantry. His sanctum is filled with body parts, dissecting tables, medical devices and other disgusting features. The rooms in the tunnels are lit with fluorescent bulbs, and the walls, floors and ceilings in both sanctums are coated in dried blood. Some of Giles' former experiments, those with sufficient intellect to heed one-word commands, serve as his Retainers.

Nodes of Drachus Vachor

All three of the Chantry's Nodes are located within a mile of one another. They form a triangle with the Chantry in the midst.

Colirus Bri: This Node is a seven-foot-tall, conical rock that juts from the earth like a miniature volcano. Anyone looking into the hole will see nothing but blackness. There is apparently no bottom either; any object dropped within disappears into the abyss. The opening is just wide enough for a person to squeeze through. The rock



of the Node is blackish-blue and is inscribed with many organic-looking carvings of unknown design.

Colirus Dre: This Node resembles Colirus Bri, above, but the stench of sulfur and brimstone rises from it, and the interior glows orange-red.

Colirus Gu: This Node resembles the other two, but it emits a fragrant aroma as of flowers, and a purplish-white smoke. The interior is filled with this wispy smoke, and if the listener is quiet she can hear the voices of many people talking in the depths, though she will not be able to understand them. The smoke cannot be seen through by any means. Any object thrown into the hole is ejected back out.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

Ulic Batu is an outward manifestation of the corruption within the Nephandi. Malformation and evil are everywhere. Resonance is very strong here; nature itself, warped by the horrible infestation of the Dark Lords, turns its twisted essence upon mages herein.

Worse still, this Labyrinth is in its Spring season. Having survived an earlier attack, its power is just coming to new fruition.

Environment

Ulic Batu, the Sea of Ash, is more than a body of water; it is a Realm. The entire Realm is filled with dark, salty water; there is neither surface nor sky. The only light comes from the sea bed. At the center of the Realm, at the bottom of a huge abyss, lies Drachus Vachor.

At the Realm's "bottom," the phosphorescent ooze illuminates the ocean. Visibility here is 50 feet. As one swims upward, the sea becomes darker and darker, until it is pitch black save for the light of bioluminescent predators.

The water itself is just cold enough to be uncomfortable. One strange feature is that the Nephandi and their guests may freely travel through the water, breathing the water itself (though this may have a corrupting effect on the guests). Nephandi can also talk to one another underwater as if they were on dry land.

Needless to say, the Realm's flora and fauna are monstrous. Aside from the glowing coral, there are: whales with human arms (including hands with opposable thumbs); giant fanged octopi; two-headed sea snakes; eels with human faces; carnivorous fish with razor-sharp exoskeletons; manta rays covered with tiny mouths; and many other frightening things. These creatures do not attack the mages, their servants or their guests. The mages or the servants may even summon larger, more terrifying creatures from the dark waters if the Realm is attacked.

Denizens of the Realm

There are no *known* intelligent creatures living in the sea itself, though there may be some *unknown* to the Nephandi....

Other Details

Magickal Ratings: Correspondence +2, Entropy +1, Life +1, Matter -1, Prime -2, Spirit -1, Time +2

Labyrinth Description

Drachus Vachor: The Labyrinth is a massive metal fortress of unnatural design and appearance. It is colored jet-black and blood-red, and roughly resembles a castle. The castle is filled with air, and the ocean will not flood the Chantry even when the door stands wide open.

The interior is very strange. All the hallways are tubular, while all the rooms are dome-shaped and change location constantly. The walls are covered with huge tapestries and gigantic wall curtains. The place is lit by giant, water-filled test tubes containing glowing corals and bioluminescent sea creatures. The furniture is made of metal, but covered in plush, red upholstery. Huge, port-hole-like windows provide a view of the ocean, and there is even an observation chamber made entirely of glass.

Each mage has her own personal living and study areas. Secret passages honeycomb the entire complex. The mages have yet to venture into the lower levels of the Labyrinth, where their servants stay. Even the Nephandi are afraid of what they might find.

The Watchers' Lighthouse: The earthly aspect of the Chantry was once a large fortress, but it was destroyed hundreds of years ago. A lighthouse now stands in the same spot. The lighthouse still works, but it is no longer used. At the base of the lighthouse is a communal meeting and work area for the cabal. The mages have built six small homes nearby. The cabal has a helicopter, a large boat, and all the weapons and equipment it needs. Its computer is tied into countless systems. The lighthouse is located on a small island off the coast of Georgia.

The Charleston House: This aspect of the Chantry is an antebellum house located in one of Charleston, South Carolina's oldest neighborhoods. The house is filled with secret passageways and has a large basement. The Chantry serves as an additional place to stay, but it is seldom used. Many Sleepers believe it to be haunted.

Purpose

Drachus Vachor is a Nephandi outpost with ties on Earth. The Labyrinth has expended dozens of cabals. Most died horribly in the service of their masters, while others were simply taken by the Nephandi's demon lords after they became less useful.



History

Drachus Vachor was created long before the Horizon gained its current strength. The Realm served as the Nephandi's stronghold. Here, corrupt mages slaughtered Sleepers to appease the appetites of their masters.

The Realm was nearly destroyed by the Void Engineers, but survived. Still, the near-defeat left the Nephandi weak and vulnerable. All attempts to return to Earth to collect the souls of Sleepers were thwarted by Technomancer Shock Corps and bands of Marauders. The Nephandi were forced to feed on spirits in the Umbra. Eventually, the Fanlooran Confederacy, a legion of Umbrood under the guidance of nine Umbrood Lords, besieged Drachus Vachor and drove the Nephandi to the other side of the Horizon.

Eventually, one priest of the Nephandi, the earthly aspect's leader, made it to the abandoned Horizon Realm and into Drachus Vachor itself. He found the place abandoned, but he boosted his powers with the Talismans in the Chantry and a ritual involving the slaying of 12 virgins he brought with him. This allowed the priest to communicate with his masters on the other side. The Nephandi told him how to reopen the Portal leading to and from the Deep Umbra, but the opening ritual did not work. A new Portal was needed, as were servants to assist in its construction. The priest used the Talismans of the Chantry to create a race of sentient, humanoid beings from a species of fish indigenous to the Sea of Ash. The beings had no souls, but possessed frightful Nephandi powers.

Galarius, as the priest was named, worked long and hard, and eventually built the device. He must now collect 1301 souls to empower it. His masters gifted him with emerald eyes, which enable him to see pure souls. He began corrupting other mages to do his dirty work for him, and has continued to do so up to the present. Soon, Galarius will have enough souls to empower the gate.

Chantry Inhabitants

Drachus Vachor and its mages are cared for by beings the mages call (behind their backs) "Hooded Horrors." These frail humanoids stand roughly five feet in height. They wear black, cowled robes and never allow the mages to see their faces. Every so often, a bristly mandible or dripping tentacle pokes out from beneath a Horror's hood. The mages aren't sure they want to know what the Horrors actually look like....

The Hooded Horrors do not speak to the mages, but understand their commands. They have their own language, but it is indecipherable even through magick. The Hooded Horrors are always around when they are needed. When the mages are asleep or otherwise occupied, the Horrors occasionally swim to the Node sites in the Realm, where they conduct strange rituals and offer sacrifices ranging from sea creatures to one of their own.

Internal Structure and Relations

The Chantry is dominated by Galarius, but the mages are allowed to do as they please so long as they work toward the goals of their masters. They are watched carefully by Galarius and the Hooded Horrors. The ensuing stress has caused the mages to question their duties, and they would all like to be free from their chosen masters. They cannot confide that secret with one another, however, lest one of them informs Galarius of their treachery. Instead, they continue to feign loyalty. In fact, they carry out their duties as if they enjoy them. The mages often corrupt others by setting up ambushes using monstrous creatures. They then show up just in time to "save the lives of the victims," making the victims inclined to trust them and feel they owe them a debt.

External Relations

Drachus Vachor is known to neither the Technocracy nor the Traditions. The Watchers of the Void are known, but only for their excellent service to the Traditions. Indeed, most among the Traditions still believe the Watchers loyal. The Labyrinth's only real contact is with other Nephandi strongholds.

Status and Reputation

Status: 0 (3 with Nephandi)

Reputation: 0

The Chantry is unknown, but the mages are not. Many suspect the Watchers are hiding something. Others speak of the Watchers as selfless heroes who are willing to help other mages without asking anything in return. However, this is a Reputation they began spreading themselves.

Policy Regarding Outsiders

No outsiders save converts and sacrifices are allowed in any part of the Chantry. Rogues are never used, and apprentices are never taken. Others do the teaching; the Watchers do the corrupting.

Allies and Enemies

In addition to its own three Nephandi masters, Drachus Vachor has the support of another Nephandi Labyrinth and three small cabals of Nephandi infiltrating Technomancer amalgams. The corrupt amalgams often impart information about the Technocracy's activities. The Watchers of the Void are also allied to a pack of Black Spiral Dancer werewolves and a powerful Sabbat vampire elder in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Chantry's enemies include six Constructs, one rival Labyrinth, and two Umbrood Preceptors who participated in the original siege on the Realm.

Research Capacities

The Labyrinth has tremendous research facilities, but the mages receive no training except through personal study. The arcane library is adequate for the mages' needs. The tomes are in various languages, but most are in good shape.

The mages gain most of their information through their Nephandi allies. They also have five spies who are privy to information concerning the Traditions and the Technocracy. The computer system of the Labyrinth is incredible, thanks to the efforts of a now-deceased Virtual Adept *barabbi* of the Labyrinth.

The mages have enough Quintessence to support their Realm, but frequently raid other Nodes to acquire more, often subsequently laying waste to the Node.

Stories

Menace is the theme of many adventures in Drachus Vachor. Galarius prepares to breach the Horizon; considering the remote nature of the Labyrinth's earthly aspects, it would be a while before such a breach would be discovered. The forbidding nature of the Realm's inhabitants personifies the Nephandus threat.

The mood is one of alien strangeness. Visions of Lovecraftian eeriness and half-remembered, feverish dreams would not be out of place. Drachus Vachor should invoke dark musings and foreboding terror. All things are distorted in the dim twilight of the underwater Realm; even Nephandi dread what lies just beyond their sight.

Story Ideas for Drachus Vachor

1. The characters encounter the Watchers of the Void, who simply call themselves the Watchers. The Watchers show up to save the characters from defeat at the hands of some enemy. They befriend the characters and, over the course of five to 10 stories, begin to corrupt them. They try to lead them into doing evil and surrendering themselves to hubris. If the Watchers are successful, the players may be taken back to Drachus Vachor to meet their new master, Galarius.

2. Joanne Myers seeks out the characters and asks for protection from Galarius and her old cabal. She claims they are Nephandi, but has no real proof. When they show up, they claim she is insane. Will the characters give her up? If not, the Nephandi will fight to keep her or at least kill her.

3. Mad dreams and ghastly visions of undersea terror plague one of the players. Research reveals tales of an undersea Realm bridged by a crumbling lighthouse. Is Galarius sending these dreams to the characters deliberately, or is this some warning that the fates of the players and the Nephandi are intertwined?

4. The characters discover that over 100 Sleepers have been kidnapped in the last few days. By following the trail of clues, they find the Watchers' lighthouse. There, they learn that the Sleepers were taken to Drachus Vachor itself. Will they enter the Realm and save the Sleepers? Joanne Myers will aid the characters and will even show them how to use the Portal into the Realm.

5. Galarius gathers his souls and breaches the Horizon. Terrible storms forecast the coming of the Nephandi, but only a few mages are willing to listen. The Nephandi need time to shore up the breach before an outright invasion can begin. Can the players stop them in time?



The Household of the Jade Demon: In the Maze of Ebon Gates

Francis of Assisi could never be this good,
I don't know if it's pain or pleasure that I seek,
My flesh was all too willing, my spirit guide was weak,
I was deadly certain his thoughts for me weren't kind,
A switchblade in his pocket, murder on his mind,
Relax, have a cigar, make yourself at home. Hell is full of high court judges, failed saints. We've got cardinals, archbishops, barristers, certified accountants, music critics, they're all here. You're not alone, you're never alone, not here you're not.

— Sting, "Saint Augustine in Hell"



In Chicago's Chinatown there is a being of great power and unspeakable evil. He is called the Jade Demon by most, for his true name remains a secret. This powerful mage once served the Nephandi, but now he is a rogue. He broke away from the Nephandi out of fear, fear of the punishment destined for him. The nine Chinese hells loom nearer and nearer as his life draws to a close. The Jade Demon's potions of longevity no longer work as they once did, and no manner of magick slows his aging.

The Jade Demon must find immortality soon or else it will be too late. In desperation, he has surrounded himself with mages who are nearly as corrupt as he, hoping to learn from them. He is more than willing to serve as a Mentor to any new mages willing to accept the offer. He has learned to feast on the souls of innocents, but Sleepers no longer arrest his aging as they once did.

The Jade Demon, Master of the Realm

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Conniver

Essence: Questing

Tradition: Nephandi (Akashic Brotherhood *barabbi)*

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 6, Wits 4

Abilities: (As younger self) Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Brawl 6, Cosmology 4, Culture 6, Dodge 5, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 5, Expression (Persuasion) 4, Game Playing 4, Intimidation 6, Intuition 4, Investigation 2, Law (Nephandi Pacts) 5, Leadership 5, Linguistics 6, Medicine 3, Meditation 6, Melee 5, Occult 6, Research 5, Stealth 5, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Allies 8, Arcane 6, Avatar 7, Destiny 7, Dream 5, Influence 6, Library 20

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 5, Forces 4, Life 5, Mind 4, Matter 3, Prime 4, Spirit 3, Time 2

Willpower: 10

Arete: 8

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 8

Background: The Jade Demon, known to the vampires of Chicago as "Lo Pan," is an ancient mage who once served the Nephandi. He was originally a member of the Akashic Brotherhood, but he gave up his place among his Tradition when he sacrificed his own soul to save his comrades' lives. For further details, see the Chantry's history section.



The Jade Demon is a cruel, ruthless, evil and very frightened man. He wishes to free himself of his pacts with the Nephandi, but he knows this will be very difficult. He has managed to create his own Realm and hide from his old masters, but he knows they will never stop looking for him. He has gathered around him a number of rogue mages to serve as his well-rewarded minions. Though they will protect him while he lives, he knows that when he dies, he will return to the Nephandi, who will rend his soul and cast him into the nine Chinese hells. For this reason, he now seeks the secret of eternal life. His own longevity potions, which have kept him alive for centuries, are no longer strong enough to sustain him.

Aside from his quest for immortal life, the Jade Demon also controls Chicago's Chinatown through his fighting tong, the Wing Kong. The mage's influence over organized crime even reaches China and Hong Kong. He is allied to several strange Oriental supernatural creatures. He collects antique weapons and armor, and spends a great deal of time playing chess and Go.

Image: The Jade Demon has two basic forms. On Earth, he is a feeble, nearly bald Chinese man who looks at least 100. In his Horizon Realm, he resembles a Chinese mandarin in the prime of life. Sometimes he grows his fingernails to extreme lengths, while at other times he does not. He has shiny, jet-black hair worn long down the back. On Earth, he dresses in a plain white robe, while in his own Realm, he wears emerald and crimson robes of purest silk. He also wears gold jewelry, and his robes are often trimmed in gold. As an old man he carries a wooden staff to hobble about, but in his Realm he seldom carries anything remotely resembling a weapon, preferring to use his sorcery. Still, he has an ancient, jewel-encrusted Talisman kris, which he will use if there is need.

Roleplaying Notes: On Earth, the Jade Demon appears to be a confident, humble and generous man. In fact, he has provided massive amounts of money to charities, hoping it will aid him in cleansing his soul. He is feeble in body, but not in mind. He is wise and good-natured, with a wry sense of humor. Those who are around him may sense great power and even evil, but it will be hard to pinpoint the source. In his Horizon Realm, the Jade Demon is far more energetic and virile, putting his younger form to good use.

Sanctum: The Jade Demon has a large, plush sanctum within an old building in Chinatown, but he spends most of his time in his Horizon Realm. His sanctum in the Realm is his palace, though his "Inner Sanctum" is one particular floor of the palace. This floor is decorated in an ancient Chinese style.

Cabals

There are two cabals in the service of the Jade Demon. Both share the same interests and work together in their master's service.

The Jade Demon's Brood

Members: David Warita (Akashic Brotherhood *barabbi*), Wesley Mercer (Virtual Adept *barabbi*), Robert Lo Chu (Cult of Ecstacy *barabbi*), Martin Roelig (Euthanatos), Kim Vachon (Euthanatos)

Background: The Jade Demon's Brood was assembled over the last 10 years. The mages were individual rogues who were seduced by the promises of wealth and power. Now they are trapped, *barabbi*. The Jade Demon has gathered a lock of hair, a drop of blood, and a fingernail clipping from each of them, and has cast a ritual over the pieces. Now, should a mage refuse to serve him, he has the power to snuff out her life with a thought, regardless of the distance between Jade Demon and traitor. He has demonstrated this power on one of the former mages of the cabal to prove he is not merely threatening.

What is not known is that the two Euthanatos mages joined the cabal not because they were entrapped, but because they needed to get close to the Jade Demon in order to kill him. The two mages intend to do so as soon as he lets his guard down. Until then they will serve him faithfully in order to prove their loyalty to him.

Kim Vachon

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Euthanatos

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 5, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 1, Culture 2, Dodge 5, Drive 2, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 4, Expression (Dance) 5, Firearms 3, Intimida-



tion 3, Intuition 3, Investigation 5, Linguistics 4, Medicine 2, Meditation 3, Melee 5, Occult 5, Research 3, Security 5, Stealth 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arcane 3, Avatar 4, Destiny 4, Influence 1, Library 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 5, Forces 3, Life 4, Mind 4, Matter 2, Prime 2

Willpower: 10

Arete: 6

Quintessence: 16

Paradox: 4

Background: Kim Vachon is a former ballerina. She was abducted by a Euthanatos mage who was enraptured by her beauty. He took her as his apprentice just to have her near him. To his surprise, she proved to be a capable student. She has been a Euthanatos mage for almost 125 years and has made a number of important kills.

She was selected by her superiors to infiltrate the Jade Demon's Brood. She is to learn as many of his secrets as possible and then give him the Good Death. To gain the Demon's trust, Vachon posed as a rogue for two years. She was contacted by the Jade Demon to perform some assassination work. Afterward, he made her a permanent member of his brood. She has since increased his trust for her by saving the lives of three of his other minions and by giving him information concerning a rival Euthanatos Chantry, thus allowing him to destroy it and acquire its tomes, secrets and treasures.

Vachon's personal interests include continuous study of various forms of dance. She has even managed to work her dance training into her combat styles. She collects expensive cars and jewelry, which the Jade Demon gives her in abundance.

Image: Vachon is a beautiful, athletic Middle Eastern woman who appears to be in her late 20s. She prefers to dress in the latest fashions; black is, of course, her favorite color. She has medium-length black hair worn in many different styles. She also wears extensions from time to time. She has bright green eyes with black flecks. She speaks with an English accent, as she was born and raised in London. She carries a razor-sharp blade somewhere on her body at all times.

Roleplaying Notes: Vachon is greedy, fanatical, evil and hedonistic. Still, compared to the Jade Demon she is an angel. She is a determined and patient individual who will let nothing and no one stand in her way. She is aloof to all but her closest "friends" while undercover. She will kill anyone who gets in her way, even her "friends." She can be charming and seductive when necessary to get the job done.

Sanctum: She maintains a nice loft near Chinatown, though not in it. The apartment is filled with luxurious and expensive decorations. She spends much of her time in the Horizon Realm. Her sanctum there is much the same.

The Wing Kong Elite

Members: Mao Tu Tzin, Cho Quan, Lee Ho Wu (all Orphans)

Background: This cabal was formed in the late 1800s. The mages are actually the leaders of a Chinese fighting tong called the Wing Kong. The tong members answer to them, and they in turn answer to the Jade Demon. The cabal is charged with protecting Chinatown. The Wing Kong runs all the organized crime in Chinatown, but it remains an invisible organization, known only to the locals.

The mages of the tong are considered Orphans, or, worse yet, *barabbi*, by other members of the Traditions, as they were trained by a Nephandus mage and his servants rather than instructed in a "true" Tradition.

Mao Tu Tzin

Nature: Traditionalist

Demeanor: Bravo

Essence: Dynamic

Tradition: Orphan *barabbi*

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 1, Culture 3, Dodge 5, Drive 2, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 5, Intuition 1, Law 3, Leadership 4, Linguistics 5, Meditation 5, Melee 5, Occult 2, Research 1, Security 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 4

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Destiny 6, Influence 4, Library 5, Mentor 5, Retainers 10

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 2, Forces 2, Life 2, Mind 4, Matter 2, Prime 2, Time 2

Willpower: 8



Arete: 6
Quintessence: 13
Paradox: 7

Background: Mao Tu Tzin was born into a large family of poor immigrants. He lived a hard life on the streets of Chicago. By the time he was nine, the name "Jade Demon" was known and feared throughout Chinatown. Still, Mao Tu Tzin's nine siblings were hungry, and the boy believed that if he could break into the Jade Demon's home, he could find enough wealth to feed his family for at least a year. So he broke in. He was seized by one of the guards, but he managed to wound the guard horribly with a knife. The Jade Demon, knowing potential when he saw it, had his most skilled servant take him as his apprentice instead of killing him.

Mao learned the arts of magick and has since served the Jade Demon faithfully. While he does not like doing evil, he knows his debt must be paid. His family has remained well provided for since he took up his apprenticeship, though they now refuse to acknowledge his existence. They have spurned his assistance, but he still manages to provide for them through "luck" without their knowledge.

Mao is now the leader of the Wing Kong Tong, which serves the Jade Demon. He oversees all the organized crime in Chinatown and handles many of the Wing Kong's activities outside of Chinatown as well.

Image: Tu Tzin is a Chinese-American of sturdy build. He has short, black hair and black eyes. He has a well-defined musculature and typically dresses in an expensive suit. He is apparently in his late 20s. He usually carries at least one concealed pistol and one concealed martial-arts weapon on his body while out and about.

Roleplaying Notes: Mao is a man with a tortured soul. He wishes for the respect of his family, but he has abandoned it to serve another master. He is an honorable man, but his duties have made him hard and ruthless. He has killed many times and has no remorse about so doing. He is slightly arrogant, but he will protect the people of Chinatown from all threats. If approached in a proper, businesslike manner, he is an extremely civil and proper man.

Sanctum: He maintains a large penthouse suite all to himself. He keeps a number of personal guards, but even they do not have access to his private sanctum. His place is decorated in a modern fashion, though it incorporates old Chinese styles.

Node of the Household of the Jade Demon

The Hidden Chinatown: Within Chicago's Chinatown are certain alleyways, which lead to secret rooms, which in turn lead to hidden tunnels, which in turn lead to a complex maze of additional rooms and tunnels. This is the secret half of Chinatown, known only to the Jade Demon and his minions. The inhabitants of Chinatown know of the Jade Demon; they fear him and his tong of warrior-thieves. Accordingly, they do not enter the areas marked with the signs of the Wing Kong, for they know they will die if they are caught and will be cursed even if they are not. Within the secret half of Chinatown are a number of powerful ley lines. These lines are what drew the Jade Demon to Chicago. He established Chinatown and built his secret rooms and tunnels right into it.

The Invisible Circle: At the heart of the Demon's secret labyrinth is a room called the Invisible Circle. Here, at the nexus of the ley lines, the Jade Demon harnesses the Quintessence to support his Horizon Realm.

The Horizon Realm

Basic Concept

The Maze of Ebon Gates is very small, but very difficult to pass. It is basically a juxtaposition of a huge hedge maze and an underground system of tunnels. Passage through the maze is tricky, because the maze changes shape. A Perception + Intuition roll (difficulty 9) must be made each round to stay on the right path. Twenty successes are required to reach the Jade Demon's palace. If the player botches a roll, the character must start over with no successes.

Environment

The surface of the Realm is a large maze of neatly trimmed sticker bushes. They are always just taller than individuals in the maze, so all attempts to get larger or to fly over them only cause them to grow. The bushes are very thick and cannot be walked through. They resist all attempts to reshape them or open a path, and they are immune to all known forms of attack. Basically, those who are trapped in the maze must make their way through it.

Between the bushes are cobblestone paths, with only a small strip of black soil visible to either side. Gates carved from ebony wood are scattered throughout the maze; each gate alerts a particular creature to the presence of intruders. Some of the gates lead to staircases, which in turn descend into the lower levels of the Realm. The stairs are constructed from platinum and mother-of-pearl.

The lower levels are lit by sconces holding torches. There are many rooms and tunnels throughout the underground area, and monsters are scattered throughout.

Aside from the monsters, the Maze's only other inhabitants are doves (in the hedge maze) and enormous Sumatran rats (in the underground).

It is always midnight in the Realm, and the large, golden-hued crescent moon does not move. There is always a slight chill in the air, but there is neither rain nor any other weather condition, and it is always a comfortable temperature. However, in the past, when the Jade Demon has suffered some personal wound or emotional injury, the hedges have temporarily withered and died.

Denizens of the Realm

The Realm is filled with many horrible monsters. The Storyteller should feel free to make the underground maze as large as she wishes. It should be as tough as the maze above, but far more treacherous. The Storyteller should create monsters as needed, or pull them from other Storyteller System games and supplements.

Other Details

Magickal Rating: Correspondence -3, Entropy +3, Matter -2, Mind +2, Time -2

Labyrinth Description

The Palace of the Jade Demon: The Jade Demon's Labyrinth sits at the very center of the Maze. It is a six-story palace surrounded by 10-foot-thick, 30-foot-high walls of purest jade.

The palace is composed primarily of jade, though it also has an abundant amount of ebony wood, ivory and silver (gold is not found anywhere in the Realm). The palace is of early Chinese design. It is carpeted in the finest rugs, its windows have silk curtains, and its walls bear murals of mythological scenes. The place is lit by magickal torches that cast no heat and cannot ignite other objects. The furniture is of ancient, royal design. Ancient Oriental weapons adorn the walls, and all the other objects in the place appear to be equally old.

The arcane library is located on the Jade Demon's private floor at the top of the palace, while the mundane library is located on the second floor. All the supplies are stored in various rooms designed for that purpose. The entire third floor is the Jade Demon's pleasure room; his prisoners are kept here to entertain him and those he wishes to reward.

The palace is equipped with a number of traps in various places; these can kill intruders, but do not inconvenience the Jade Demon or his servants. The basement of the palace attaches to the labyrinthine tunnel system below the maze; prisoners are usually kept here in cells.

The Bamboo House Chinese Restaurant: The Wing Kong conducts some of its business at this restaurant. Citizens who wish to contact the tong may do so at the restaurant. In the back of the restaurant is an apartment complex, wherein live all of the Jade Demon's servants. Most of the servants also have their own private apartments elsewhere.

Purpose

The Labyrinth's sole purpose is to serve the Jade Demon. Currently, this means helping him find a way of gaining immortality. The Brood spends much of its time investigating possible leads and defending the Master from servants of the Nephandi. Its members also take part in the





Ascension War as rogues. The Wing Kong serve their master primarily as defenders and controllers of Chinatown.

History

The history of the Chantry revolves around the history of the Jade Dragon. The Jade Dragon was once a respected member of the Akashic Brotherhood. Indeed, his honor was outstanding, and he was loved by many for his kindness and generosity. He fought valiantly against the old enemies of the Tradition, long before the Technocracy was founded.

Unfortunately, the Jade Dragon's fort was attacked by Mongols, and the mages were no match for their foes. They were taken off guard by the Mongol warriors, who had the aid of many strange and magickal creatures. The Jade Dragon realized that all his family and friends would be slain if he did not take drastic action. Still, his own magickal powers were no match for those of the Mongol necromancers. Realizing the cost, but also realizing it was the only possible way to defeat the enemy, he called upon the powers of Darkness. These powerful beings knew him well, for he had defeated their minions many times. They were more than willing to grant the mage what he asked. The attackers were decimated by a plague, which they later brought with them to the West.

The Jade Dragon continued to fight for his Chantry. However, realizing the powers these Dark Lords had to offer, he began calling upon them more and more. Over time, he became the most powerful mage in the Chantry. With his help, many innocents allied to the Chantry survived all manner of threats, both natural and supernatural — but there was a price. Eventually, the Jade Dragon lost his soul to the Dark Lords, and from that point on, he began to care less and less for others as the evil built in his heart. Finally, the powers of Darkness came for his Chantry and destroyed it before his eyes. The Jade Dragon did nothing to stop them. He then changed his name to the Jade Demon.

He wandered for centuries, serving his masters as they bade him. Then, in 1900, the year of the Boxer Revolution, the Jade Demon fell in love. The Dark Lords, however, would have no such weaknesses from their servant. They destroyed the woman just as they destroyed his Chantry. This time the Jade Demon did not just accept it. The hate grew in him until he could no longer stand it. He gathered his own servants and concocted a plan of trickery. Through devious maneuvering, he turned his masters upon one another and personally attacked the survivors. The Jade Demon's plan worked well, but he did not reckon with the power of the surviving Nephandi. He lost all his own servants and much of his Infernal power, but he succeeded in breaking his pact with the Dark Lords.

The Jade Demon fled to Chicago, where he found a powerful series of ley lines. It was he who built Chinatown, and he still controls it today. Once Chinatown began to thrive, the Demon summoned to America those few mem-

bers of the Wing Kong who had survived his war with the Nephandi. He began rebuilding the Wing Kong and has since become the ruler of Chinatown. Now he fears death, which is why he has expanded his minions to include a new cabal.

Labyrinth Inhabitants

The Palace of the Jade Dragon holds an adequate number of household servants and a large harem of concubines. The mage gathers beautiful women from all over the world and imprisons them in his palace.

The consors of the Jade Dragon include: Pan Lung, a dragon and guardian of hidden places; Krag the Bakemono, a squat, deformed little humanoid who loves to play mean tricks on others; Yul Yi the Tigbanua, a flesh-eating creature with strange magicks; Tri Ja the Lu Nat, an Umbrood who can control lesser spirits and consume them; and Tashimoto the Oni, a nasty and powerful giant who can take the form of a dove or a man.

Internal Structure and Relations

The Chantry is totally dominated by the Jade Demon. Those who serve him are richly rewarded; those who oppose him are destroyed most horribly. There is no covenant; the mages must simply do as their master commands. Should they fail without having a good reason for doing so, they are severely punished.

External Relations

The Jade Dragon tries to remain hidden, but he hopes that his Brood will be accepted by mages of other Chantries. To help instill trust, he has instructed his Brood to assist other Tradition mages whenever possible so long as it does not conflict with their service to him.

Status and Reputation

The Labyrinth's true nature is unknown, but the mages of the Brood are considered by many to be valuable allies, because they are willing to assist anyone acting against the Technocracy without asking for anything in return.

Status: 0

Reputation: 3 (offers assistance without expecting anything in return)

Policy Regarding Outsiders

While the Jade Dragon is always looking for young mages to join his Brood, he is very careful. Many mages still know who and what he is. He fears that some among the Akashic Brotherhood seek his death (he's right). He will use rogues whenever necessary, and if they prove especially capable, he will attempt to lure them into his cabal. He has



even begun trying to find some Technomancers and Marauders who would serve him.

Allies and Enemies

Among the Jade Demon's allies are: the Hellpissers, a pack of Black Spirals; the Star Children, a nomadic Sabbat pack; a powerful Tremere vampire of Chicago; an Umbrood Preceptor called the Scaryman; and a gang of fomori not in the service of Pentex.

His enemies include: the four Nephandi Lords he betrayed and a cabal of their servants; Hadcak, the Master of Dogs, an Umbrood Preceptor; and Vider, a highly intelligent metamorphic elemental.

Research Capacities

The Jade Demon has a love for learning, and he is willing to share his vast resources and knowledge with his minions so long as it does not pose a threat. After all, he wants his servants to be as capable as possible. He spends much of his own time in his Realm studying his books and practicing his arts.

The library in the palace is phenomenal. All the works concern the magicks of the Akashic Brotherhood and the Nephandi. The Demon is willing to loan the books to his minions. He also has a large mundane library in the palace for his own enjoyment.

The Labyrinth has computers and a Virtual Adept *barabbi*. In addition, it has several magickal Talismans allowing him to spy upon any being, so long as he holds a piece (fingernail clipping, hair, sweat, etc.) from the being to be viewed. His spy ring extends to Doissetep, Null-B, MECHA, and four other Chantries and Constructs. The Jade Demon also has a number of contacts who are closely tied to the Syndicate, Iteration X and Pentex.

All the Quintessence the Jade Demon controls comes from the Node in Chinatown. Even though this Node is very powerful, it takes a great deal of Quintessence to feed the many magickal creatures that live in his Realm. What little is left is issued out to his minions, in some form of Tass, as rewards for their service.

Stories

Madness is the theme of Jade Demon stories. As the sorcerer's age catches up with him, his mind spiral into the abyss, drawing his Realm and subjects with him.

The labyrinthine nature of his madness reflects itself in the ever-growing Maze of the Ebon Gates, with its thorn bushes that tear at the unwary. The mood here follows this torturous path: boxes within boxes, each road leading to a different destination.



Story Ideas for the Household of the Jade Demon

1. A mage seeks to employ the characters to perform certain services. The mage secretly works for the Jade Demon; the "employment" offer is simply a test of the characters' capabilities. The mission is a simple one: find a particular Nephandus mage, capture her, and bring her back alive to a particular location in Chinatown. The Nephandus mage is powerful and will fight to the death rather than be captured by agents of the Jade Demon, who she knows sent the characters. Should the characters succeed, they will be rewarded with Talismans that also serve as scrying devices allowing the Jade Demon to keep an eye on the characters. The Jade Demon might eventually offer the characters membership in one of his cabals, or might even serve as a Mentor.

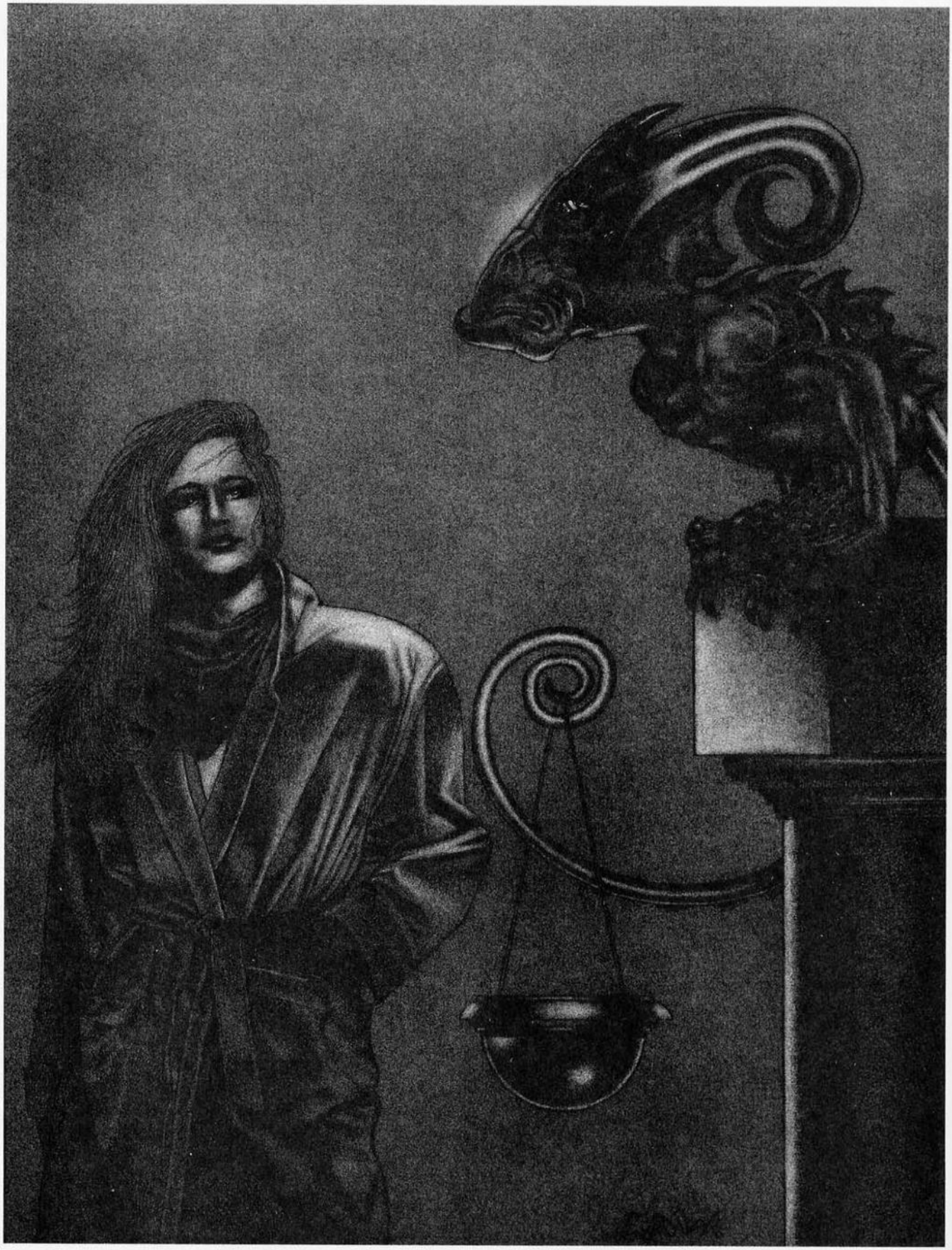
2. A young vampire approaches the characters, claiming that some mysterious party is picking off anarchs in Chicago, including the vampire's sire. This party obviously has access to some kind of magic, and powerful magic at that. From the vampire's description of the forces at work, the players realize that a mage stalks the city's Kindred. If the players know anything at all about vampire society, they may wonder why the vampires are not taking care of things themselves, and might wish to fill that void. One or two vampire allies might not be bad friends to have.

3. The characters accidentally come into conflict with the Wing Kong when their interests cross. Perhaps the characters must recover some valuable Talisman from Chinatown. The characters will have to face not only the Wing Kong, but the Jade Demon's Brood.

4. The Jade Demon kidnaps the significant other of one of the characters, or even one of the players. The characters will have to roam through Chinatown and discover the Portal into the Jade Demon's Realm. Once inside, they will have to solve his maze, fight his monsters, and rescue their loved one from the palace.

5. Strange goings-on in Chinatown attract the players' attention. The Nephandi have come to claim the Jade Demon, and he does not go peacefully. This drawn-out wizard war rages through the mortal aspects of the Realm, harming many innocent people and attracting police, rival tongs, vampires or worse. Will the players join the fight? If so, whose side will they join?

ABC trial 4



Chapter Four: Chantry Creation

The Basics of Chantry Building

If you wish to learn the highest truths, begin with the alphabet.

— Japanese proverb



Depending on the chronicle, the players and Storyteller may wish to design a Chantry from scratch. This chapter details the many steps and choices involved in so doing.

With the Storyteller's blessing, players might be allowed to help create their characters' own Chantry. The Chantries in this book provide good springboards for your own ideas. An optional point-based creation system is included in Appendix Two, but is intended more as a guideline than as absolute fiat. Creation sheets are provided at the back of the book for record-keeping, but Storytellers should not feel compelled to record everything. Do whatever works best for you.

The Creation Process

Developing a mental picture of the Chantry is an important first step. How this is done is left up to the Storyteller and players. If the Chantry is to be established by PCs, players might be asked to list what they would like to see as part of their Chantry. The lists can then be collected and read by the Storyteller, allowing items common to more than one list to be brought into the game and given greater importance. In any event, incorporate everyone's input into the final product. Reality is malleable on the Horizon Realms, so have fun!

Questions of Direction

The players and Storyteller should decide as a group what the basic concept for the Chantry will be. Answering the following questions might help narrow the focus.

1. What type of Chantry is it? What is its purpose? How powerful is it?

2. What does it look like on Earth? In its own Realm (if applicable)?

3. How many Nodes does the Chantry control? What are these Nodes like? How powerful are they?

4. Does the Chantry control a Horizon Realm? What is this Realm like? Who or what lives there?

Chantry Creation Outline

Step One: Conceptualization

What is it? Who built it? Why? List important details and areas of interest. Develop a basic foundation for the Chantry.

Step Two: Cabals

Who uses it? Establish goals, motivations, purposes and methods for player and NPC cabals. If using the optional creation rules, determine the number of Creation Points available.

Step Three: Nodes

What are the Chantry's sources of power? Determine the number of Nodes controlled and develop basic concepts and details for each Node, including appearance, location and guardians.

Step Four: Horizon Realm

Where is it? What is it like? Develop the details, including: magick ratings, Realm size, environment, ecosystem, special locations, weather, methods of security, special defenses, flora, fauna, and any intelligent denizens.

Step Five: Chantry

What are its capabilities? Develop a basic concept, then work out details, including: its appearance on Earth and in the Realm, its outposts on earth, its locations on Earth and in the Realm, its Portals, internal layout, and its security/ defenses. Draw maps if desired.

Step Six: Inhabitants

Who lives there? Develop basic concepts and note information for later use.

Step Seven: Inner Workings of the Chantry

What are its politics and policies? Develop some basic ideas concerning the Chantry's purpose, goals, known history, covenant, form of leadership, hierarchy of cabals, internal politics, and individual rights and duties.

Step Eight: Research Capacities

What can you learn there? Outline the Chantry's library, information system and laboratories.

Step Nine: External Relations

How does it get along with others? Develop the basic concepts concerning the Chantry's Status, Reputation, and policies regarding outsiders of all types (alliances, enemies, etc.).

Step Ten (Optional): Characteristics

Choose advantages and disadvantages for the Chantry, Nodes and Realms. Advantages and disadvantages can be found in Appendix Two.

5. How old is the Chantry? What is life like there?

6. How many cabals belong to the Chantry? Where does the player characters' cabal fit in?

The Chantry archetypes at the beginning of Chapters One and Two are good starting points. These templates make Chantry creation much simpler and quicker. The various characteristics outlined in Appendix Two offer many suggestions for fine-tuning creation details.

Summation

Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

The rest of this chapter describes each of these steps in more detail, focusing on each of the components of the overall Chantry.

Advantages, disadvantages and details about the point-based system of creation can be found in Appendix Two. Happy building!

Part One: Cabal Creation

We must strengthen, defend, preserve and comfort each other. We must love one another. We must bear one another's burdens. We must not look only on our things, but also on the things of our brethren. We must rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together.

— John Winthrop, *Sermon to the Puritans*



A good place to begin the actual process of creating the Chantry is with the cabals. The number and relative power of the cabals also influence the number of Creation Points available, if that option is used. In most cases, the power of a Chantry rests in the number and competence of its members. The cabals are in many ways the Chantry itself.

Player Cabals

The player characters are assumed to be a cabal unto themselves, though in some cases the Storyteller may place NPCs in the cabal. The purpose of having a cabal is to give the players a reason for their characters to join together — a common cause. This cause may well be simple survival. The Gothic-Punk world is harsh, and the lot of aspiring mages is a dangerous one. A cabal prelude is usually a good way to set the stage for the chronicle as a whole.

A cabal prelude is similar in most ways to a character prelude. Perhaps the Ecstasy Cultist saves two Sons of Ether from an experiment gone haywire, or the Virtual Adept stumbles across a plot against another player's Akashic Brother. A dramatic prelude will hopefully keep the players working together.



Either before or during the prelude, the cabal should gain some place in mage society and thereby establish its rights, duties and responsibilities to whatever Chantry it joins. While all other aspects of the Chantry may be purchased with Creation Points, the esteem and respect in which the player characters are held cannot be. Unless the characters found the Chantry themselves, any status therein must be earned.

Storyteller Cabals

Chantries are seldom home to one cabal. Therefore, it is necessary for the Storyteller to create the other cabals of the Chantry, along with their members, positions, goals, motivations and methods. These cabals are a necessary part of the game, providing antagonists, friends, enemies, and sources of conflict, information, training and assistance. Fortunately, Storyteller cabals require less time and effort to create than player cabals do.

The Storyteller should choose the goals, motivations and methods of each cabal. Once this is done, the members of the cabal should be created. Write down a few details about each one and invent the rest as needed. The relationships of the cabal members should be determined to a small degree, possibly even with one- or two-word descriptions of how they feel about each other.

Mages are a paranoid lot. With fewer Awakened to follow the path, both Tradition mages and Technomancers tend to view other factions as backstabbing rivals. The Storyteller should determine where the players stand in their Chantrymates' eyes. Next, the rights and responsibilities of each cabal may be developed, with a small background by the Storyteller to unify everything. Does Master Zaboglious have his eye on a player's heirloom Talisman? Has the ruling council piled unfair duties on the player cabal? If so, why?

Creation Points (Optional)

For simplicity, the number of cabals and their degree of power determine the rough power level of the Chantry itself. Each cabal (not including the player cabal) based in the Chantry is worth a number of Creation Points, based on how powerful the members of the cabal are. Add these points together for the total points available. This total is the basis for Chantry creation.

Taking disadvantages for the Chantry and its components may add to the total points available for building. For complete details, see Appendix Two.

Cabal Members are Apprentices: 10 Creation Points

Cabal Members are predominantly Disciples: 20 Creation Points

Cabal Members are predominantly Adepts: 30 Creation Points

Cabal Members are predominantly Masters: 50 Creation Points

Part Two: Nodes, the Sources of Power

I will take the time that it will take
And you can come out
From behind your tree
There are no ghosts to haunt you here
In the sunlight you are free.
— Theories of the Old School, "Painting for a Song"



Nodes provide Quintessence, the lifeblood of the Chantry and its Realm. The more Quintessence, the more powerful the Chantry. Nodes dictate most aspects of the stronghold, from the size of the Horizon Realm to the magickal defenses of the Chantry.

Quintessence Supply

If the Chantry is built using the Creation Point rules, assume that the Chantry requires its total cost in Quintessence per day. Keeping track of this is probably unnecessary unless the Chantry belongs to the players. This Quintessence may come from one single Node or from several smaller Nodes, though each Node must provide at least 10 Quintessence per day. Both options have good and bad points; several Nodes supplying power require more upkeep and vigilance, but offer a standby in case one Node is drained or taken over. A single Node is easy to take care of, but vulnerable to attack.

Securing an open Node can be tricky; other supernatural beings (usually werewolves) jealously guard the magick wellsprings. Even after the Node is under control, tapping the power is still difficult. Nodes must be Awakened, like a Sleeper's Avatar. A botch can mean disaster in the form of a flood of uncontrollable energy. Even Nodes that were already in use often require re-Awakening after the previous owners close shop.



Occasionally, mages will find some spot rich in untapped magickal potential. Finding a suitable Node spot requires a trip into the Near Umbra to find a place where the Tapestry pattern is "loose" enough to draw and channel Quintessence. Creating a Node here requires vulgar magick, great skill, and several strong-willed mages. A mistake while tapping a new Node might start a chain reaction, invoke Paradox, or rip Quintessence directly from the mages' Life Patterns. Opening a new Node should be difficult and dangerous.

Tapping a New Node

Each mage faction has a particular method of opening Nodes. A Dreamspeaker might beseech friendly spirits to grant her a gateway. A group of Euthanatos may conduct some grisly deed in a magickal place, causing the very fabric to unravel in horror. An Akashic Brother might sit in a certain spot and meditate for days on end until his harmony with the place causes the ley lines to part of their own accord. A Virtual Adept might craft a complicated mathematical formula proving that the nature of the place is not what it seems.

All types of mages agree, however, that the opening of a new Portal of Prime is a serious venture, one preferably undertaken by a whole cabal rather than a single powerful Master. The energies of reality do not submit lightly to the forces of humanity. Assuming that a good place is even found, such a task requires at least Rank Three in each of the Spheres of Prime and Matter. In game terms, opening a fresh Node requires a large number of successes in an extended action (p. 88 in the **Mage** rulebook). Teamwork is a real help (see p. 89), and Willpower may be spent for automatic successes. Spending Quintessence is no help, however, as this pits force against force. The object of Node-tapping is to pull preexisting energies to the surface. A sample rote for this process is given at the end of this chapter.

The difficulty of tapping a Node should range from 8 to 10, and 20 or more successes are generally necessary to evoke the Node. A botch during any point of the operation unleashes catastrophe. If the mages botch their rolls during the early phases of the process, before 10 successes have been scored, they merely lose two Health Levels and any Willpower they may have spent. This damage is not aggravated, but it cannot be soaked.

As forces are set in motion, however, the danger increases. A botch after 20 successes unleashes a blast similar to Paradox energies (see **Mage**, pgs. 244-245), inflicting one Health Level of damage per five successes. Thus, a botch after 25 successes inflicts five Health Levels of damage! This damage *is* aggravated.

If the mages score the minimum number of successes, and avoid becoming toast in the process, the Node will yield Quintessence at a rate of 10 points per day. For each success beyond the minimum, five more points of Quintessence may be gained daily from the Node.

Total success is not without its perils. An opening Node tends to emit psychic shockwaves that Technocracy probes may discover, and often creates interesting "light shows" of raw energy. The rote **Awaken the Sleeping Earth**, given at the end of this chapter, offers a system for Node Awakening, but the Storyteller must make the event come alive.

Node Areas

A Node may be divided into three basic areas. The first is the aperture or focus, the very center of the Node, where the Quintessence and/or Tass collects. The second is the immediate area around the aperture, often called the lot or the plat. The guardian, if there is one, usually stays here. The third is the area outside the lot, called the estate, the dominion or the bawn. Any outpost at the Node site is usually located outside the lot, to avoid interfering with the Quintessence yield. Raiders and "owners" must actually gather the Prime energy from the aperture. It is rumored, however, that certain professional raiders know rotes allowing them to collect Quintessence by tapping into the ley line just outside the lot, reducing their risk of capture.

Node Ideas

Quintessence, being both the building block and byproduct of life, often gathers in areas where raw life force is expended: battlefields, cities, traditional festival grounds, sites of great joy, sadness, passion or ecstasy. Bear this in mind when creating ley line sites— one can almost imagine these lines as veins through which the lifeblood of humanity pulses and flows. Nodes are formed in places of power; such sites need not be lost ruins or wildernesses. A coliseum or graveyard could be just as potent as a mist-shrouded glen. Let your imagination go!

Dedicated Nodes

Some Nodes are "dedicated," created with some special purpose in mind. Ley lines suitable for placing a Node often have particular Patterns woven into them, giving them an innate "leaning" toward a particular emotion or cause. Nodes created to take advantage of this effect may supply more Quintessence to a sympathetic endeavor. A Node on an ancient battlefield, for instance, might fuel feelings of discord or violence.

If a suitable place cannot be found, dedicated Nodes may be created with suitable ritual magick, as mages attune the ambient energy to their purpose by sheer force of will. Such magick requires several mages working toward a common goal, and an extended contest of Manipulation + Expression, Culture, or possibly some other Ability. Dedicating a Node to passion, for instance, might require some sort of Tantric interaction, while dedicating a Node to

healing might require a ritual healing or peaceful songs. The nature of the ceremony is dictated by the mages doing the dedicating, and the skill used depends on the ceremony.

Some mages postulate that the life energies of Nodes take one of three different forms; static, dynamic or entropic. Static energies bind dynamic energies, shaping them into some form. Dynamic energies cause constant change and cannot be harnessed in any particular form for very long. Entropic energies maintain the balance between the two by catabolizing static patterns into new dynamic forces. Some Dreamspeakers familiar with werewolf cosmology personify these energies as Weaver, Wyld and Wyrm. These energies may be shaped to a particular purpose by dedicating the Node to dynamic, static or entropic forces.

Many Tradition mages see Ascension as a balance between these forces; what constitutes "balance," however, is open to debate. Some mages see dynamic energies as good, static energies as stifling but necessary, and entropic energies as evil because of the death and decay that they embody. The Verbena and Euthanatos would disagree. In any case, the function of a dedicated Node depends on the nature of the forces invoked there.

At the Storyteller's option, dedicated Nodes may grant some additional effects along with their purpose. Any additional powers flowing from a dedicated Node should not unbalance the game. In many cases, magick related to the purpose of a dedicated Node becomes easier to create in that spot.

Accessing a Node

Tass is easy to get; assuming a mage recognizes it for what it is, she need simply pick it up and take it (getting to it is seldom as easy...). Gaining pure Quintessence is much harder. Normally, it takes a mage 24 hours of uninterrupted meditation and four successes with a Perception + Meditation roll (difficulty 7) to form a link to a Node, allowing her to draw Quintessence from it. From that point on, the mage may freely remove Quintessence at a rate of one point per turn (though this is not required just to replenish an Avatar). Channeling the energy to the Realm or Chantry requires at least Rank Three in Prime. Anything less might incinerate the foolish mage in a blast of pure Life energy!

Whenever a mage wishes to draw Quintessence from a Node without establishing a link, she is considered to be "raiding" the Node. This is a common practice among mages, who often raid Garou caerns, faerie mounds, and their rivals' own Quintessence wells for personal power. The **Hand of the Siphoner** rote, given at the end of this chapter, is commonly used when raiding.

Quintessence and the Chantry

To empower a Chantry with Quintessence, Nodes are usually linked to the Chantry (or its earthly manifestation) through natural or artificial ley lines. The linked Quintessence automatically flows into the Chantry. If the Node is far away from the Chantry, the Quintessence is simply collected and brought back to the Chantry.

In the old days, Chantries and Portals into Horizon Realms were built directly onto existing Nodes. Unfortunately, Sleeper expansion and the Pogrom have turned the concept into virtual suicide. New means of Quintessence siphoning have become necessary.

Ley lines are the easiest and safest ways to maintain the supply of power. Once a mage creates a ley line, destroying it is difficult. Creating the line requires a rote like **Leying of the Line**, given at the end of the chapter.

When ley lines cannot be created, the Chantry usually sends a group to collect the Quintessence from the Node. Some Traditions, and all Technomancer Conventions, use some sort of "Quintessence battery," a Talisman whose only purpose is to gather Quintessence. Such Talismans take many forms, from a specially prepared skull to an actual battery. These battery Talismans remain at the Node, collecting Quintessence; the "battery" is simply replaced with an "empty" one each trip. Often these Quintessence batteries are stored as reserve Quintessence in case of need.

A Talisman battery may hold up to 25 Quintessence points for each dot in Talisman. Thus, a battery considered a four-dot Talisman could hold 100 points of Quintessence. Such Talismans might be usable by PCs (Storyteller's discretion), but should require at least Rank Three in Prime to access. The portability of the battery will, of course, depend on the Talisman's form. Lugging around a 40-pound crystal might not be in a mage's best interests....

The Gauntlet and the Shallowing Effect

Feel what might be. See what I see. Again and again and again and again say you don't. You say you don't, but you will.

How can you be so near and not see?

— Natalie Merchant, "If You Intend"

Nodes are places where the walls between the spirit world and the Earth are at their weakest. It is far easier to enter the Umbra from a Node than from a common location. The Gauntlet, the mystic barrier between worlds, thins a bit at Nodes. Pages 214 - 215 in **Mage** describe "stepping sideways" into the Umbra.

The Gauntlet represents the difficulty of walking between the worlds, and varies from place to place.

In some rare cases, the Gauntlet may shift or ripple, an effect called "shallowing." If the Node is linked to a Horizon Realm, this shallowing can lead a visitor directly into the Realm itself if conditions are right. The barrier between worlds becomes so nonexistent that the two bleed together, making it possible simply to walk from one place to the other.

Place	Difficulty
High-tech lab	9
Inner city	8
Most places	7
Rural countryside	6
Deep wilderness	5
Active Node	4
Powerful Node	3
Legendary Node	2

Shallowing is, to be blunt, a pain for everyone concerned. Although shallowing allows mages easier access to their Realms, it is indiscriminate. Beings from the Horizon Realm occasionally blunder through shallowing breaches, drawing the attention of Sleepers or the Technocracy. Unwitting or unwanted visitors from Earth occasionally wander into the Horizon Realm, causing terrible confusion (and worse).

For those familiar with **Ars Magica**, shallowing is similar in effect to *regio*. In areas where there is a shallowing effect, two people could walk into a Node side by side, and one could pass into the Horizon Realm while the other remains on Earth. The two will be separated, even though they were in practically the same place.

While entering a Horizon Realm through the shallowing effect is not too difficult, finding the effect usually requires special effort and knowledge of what to look for. Many things can affect an individual's entrance into such shallowings: knowing specific landmarks to pass in a particular manner; a traveler's emotional state; knowledge of the proper times, days and season to enter the shallowing; previous travel through it; assistance or hindrance by spirits or others familiar with the shallowing; special maps or Talismans; and the weather conditions. Under certain proper conditions, a character does not have to move physically in order to enter the shallowing; the shallowing simply engulfs her.

The Storyteller should base the difficulty of entering the shallowing on the current conditions. Favorable conditions may render the difficulty as low as 3, while unfavorable conditions may render access impossible. A character must make a Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty variable) to find and enter a shallowing deliberately. Particularly devious Storytellers may allow characters to enter a shallowing unknowingly, then have them make Perception + Enigmas rolls just to recognize that they're not in Kansas anymore.

Entering a shallowing from the Horizon Realm requires similar rolls. Some shallowings go only one way; the exit shallowing may be in a different place from the entrance shallowing. Many exits in faerie-controlled Realms are far more difficult to find than the entrances....



Nodes and Caerns

The function of werewolf caerns is in many ways similar to that of Nodes, but there are differences. Werewolves, or Garou, consider their caerns sacred ground, special links to the Earth Mother herself. Many Dreamspeakers share this view. Werewolves will vehemently oppose any magickal attempt to access or control a caern unless the mages have some powerful assistance to offer — and sometimes even then.

There seems to be some substance to the werewolves' claim. The beasts are often capable of performing minor miracles at their caerns, and may travel through them to other Nodes. No mage Tradition, even Dreamspeakers, can duplicate this feat, though many have tried. The secret of these so-called "Moon Bridges" frustrates mages to no end.

Garou seem able to create caerns nearly anywhere, using certain rites that allow them to access Nodes even where there are no ley lines. The ley lines actually come to them! Not even the Oracles of Spirit are believed to be capable of such a feat.

Few, if any, caerns have Horizon Realms, although some guardian spirits, called "totems," are reputed to have their own Realms. These totems, often personifications of animals or mythical creatures, seem more akin to the Marauders than to other mage-dealing spirits. Like Marauders, Garou and their totems seem immune to Paradox. Some speculate that the folklore elements of the werewolf legends protect the creatures from the backlash of consensual reality. This would also explain the abilities of vampires. Sadly, no one knows for certain why these other supernatural entities can literally get away with murder.

The shallowing itself blends the characteristics of the Horizon Realm with those of the Earth. The farther a character moves into one or the other, the more like the appropriate place the shallowing becomes. If a character continues moving into that world, he eventually leaves the shallowing behind.

Note that a shallowing effect does not link the Earth to the Near Umbra, just to the Horizon Realms. Entering the Near Umbra is performed normally.

Maintaining Nodes

Once a Chantry controls a Node, the mages must guard it against all comers. Many mages "assign" supernatural creatures to protect the Node — sometimes by bribery or good will, often by force. These guardians feed from the Node; the more powerful the guardian, the bigger the appetite. Chantries try to balance the defense of the Node against the cost of the defense. In the long run, guardians could siphon more Quintessence than any thieves could.

Not all guardians are willing servants. A being bound to a certain place or duty tends to resent it! Mages binding spirits or other powerful beings should beware the enmity of their captives (or other sympathetic beings). An angry guardian might steal all the Node's Quintessence if it breaks free, or might channel that power into magicks of its own. These dangers aside, enslaving other creatures to do one's dirty work is just plain low, even if it is traditional. The Storyteller might assert her own feelings of justice in such cases....

Some sample guardians may be found in Appendix Two, along with their "upkeep" in Quintessence. The Storyteller is encouraged to be as creative as she can when inventing such beings.

The Sanitation of Nodes

The Technomancers have found the old forms of Quintessence gathering to be too unnatural and fantastical for their version of reality. They no longer use Nodes in their original form, instead masking them with science.

The Technocracy replaces traditional Nodes — stone monuments, wooded glens, barrows, and the like — with high-tech laboratories designed for geological surveying or similar cover activity. The Quintessence runs directly into these Node facilities. While the Nodes still rest atop ley lines and the sites of ancient miracles, the Technocracy has long since "disproved" such rubbish.

Technocracy Nodes are "sanitized" by the Qui La Machinæ, strange floating mechanical devices resembling ships. The Qui La Machinæ cannot be seen in the material world, but are visible on the Umbra. These Sanitizers, as they are also called, clear away all physical manifestations of Quintessence, returning all Tass to its original form. Magic crystals and glowing mushrooms simply do not fit into the world the Technomancers have created. The very sight of Qui La Machinæ on the Umbral horizon has incited panic among Tradition mages.

After clearing the site of all Tass, the Technocracy moves in and establishes a factory, laboratory or similar facility atop the site. Larger Nodes may serve as Chantry manifestations on earth, while smaller ones are merely outposts. Technocracy Nodes do not transfer Quintessence to their Chantries by the old means of ley lines. Instead, Prime force transfers from the Node facility to the Chantry through a subspatial, trans-Umbral vortex. This method is preferred because it is harder to raid. It is believed many of the largest and most advanced Qui La Machinæ can even tap new Nodes with ease.

Part Three: Establishing a Horizon Realm

There is another and a better world.
— August von Kotzebue, *The Stranger*



Horizon Realms are in many ways the most fascinating aspects of Chantries, limited only by the Quintessence resources and the imaginations of the players and Storyteller. Horizon Realms often set the mood and atmosphere of the game. Far future, dark fantasy, alien horror, exotic paradise, or any other genre may be brought into the game in the form of a Horizon Realm, adding diversity and a greater sense of wonder to the game.

The following sections outline the creation of Horizon Realms, including the necessary rules and ideas on their use in stories.

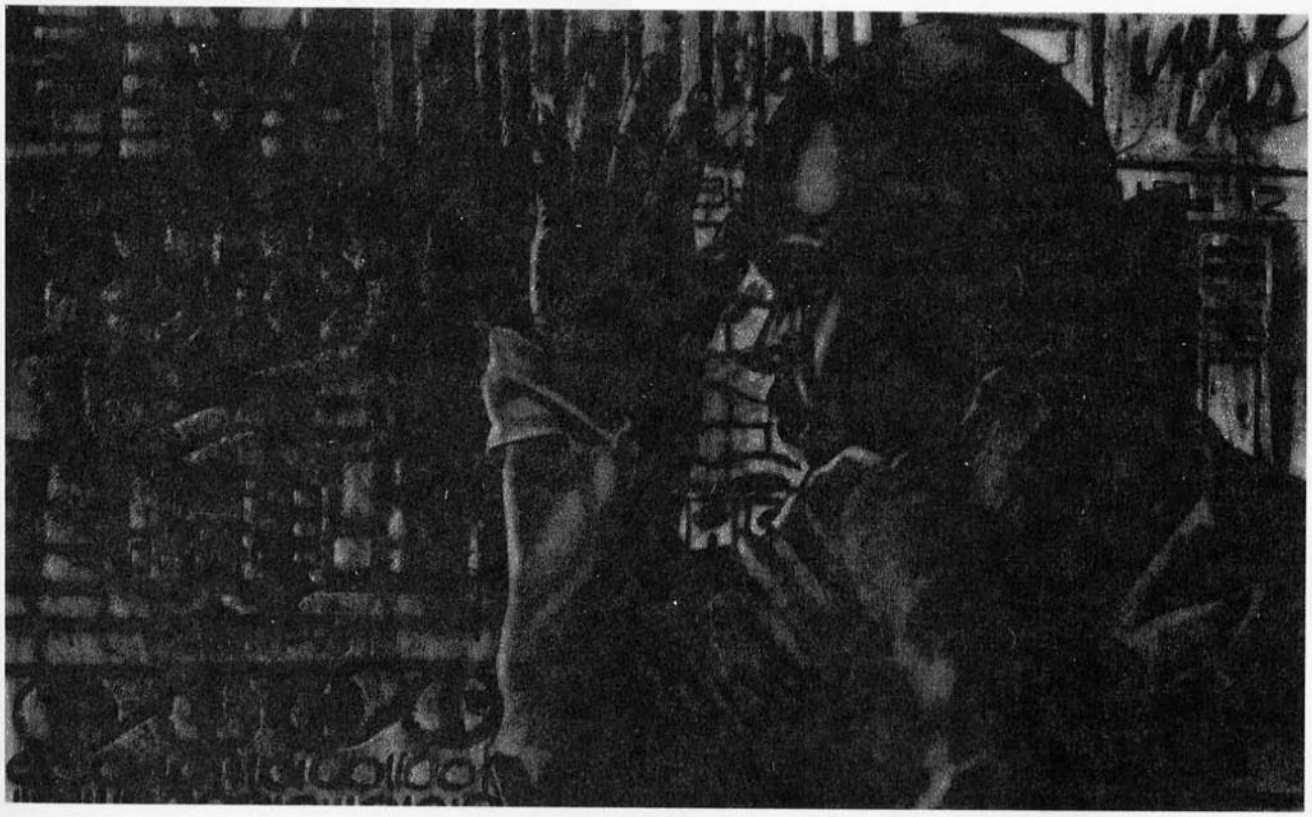
Creating a Horizon Realm

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute.
— William Cowper, *Verses Supposed to Be Written by Alexander Selkirk*

Horizon Realms: the lands of magick! In these lands, Paradox is suspended, and reality follows whatever patterns the founding mages desire. The Awakened love these custom-built worlds, for they offer privacy, power and refuge. Small wonder that Horizon Realms often assume the characteristics of the mages who create and dwell in them (see *Resonance*, below).

Forming a Realm is no easy task, even for Masters or Oracles. Sculpting raw reality requires mighty magicks, and failure has terrible consequences. Realms would not be so magickal otherwise. The Storyteller would be well within his rights to restrict Realm creation to NPCs. If players are allowed to construct Horizon Realms, refer to the Node-tapping process detailed later.

Such magick takes time, sometimes months or even years. Lines must be laid and patterns woven to align several Nodes with each other. The Realm, if successfully created, occupies a mystical convergence point between the Nodes, tucked in an invisible pocket of reality.



Quintessence

The biggest problem is often that of finding enough Quintessence to support a Realm. A number of powerful Nodes must be tapped and brought into line. Should the mages control a large and stable source of Quintessence, they can attempt to create the Realm. The mages must then determine what form their Realm will take. The more closely it conforms to the dominant static reality of the Technocracy, the lower the Quintessence cost. The more the Realm differs, the higher the cost. Even the Technocracy's Realms differ from Earth, as the potency of their techno-magick far exceeds earthly boundaries.

Mages must first link the Quintessence supply to a specific point along the Horizon. A magickal conduit system must be created to link the ley lines at the heart of the Realm-to-be's location. This creation requires at least Rank Four in each of the Prime, Spirit and Matter Spheres. The process forms an aperture that releases the Quintessence, thereby feeding the Realm.

Once the Quintessence flow has been established, the mages may begin molding it to create the Realm. This process requires great expertise in magick, precise planning, and patience. The process can take from a month to a few centuries to complete. Some Realms are never really completed; the Iteration X Machine Realm Autochthonia is constantly under construction.

Pockets in Reality

Many Masters compare the creation of a Realm to the tearing of a new pocket in reality. The focused Quintessence "highlights" a spot on the Horizon. Mages use this power to tear a small pocket in the Tapestry, then quickly reseal it after a Portal has been established. The nature of reality within the pocket may then be shaped to the mages' will.

There is no set method for the creation of the Realm; it is best handled as a narrative, with only an occasional roll. The Storyteller may require magick rolls to create certain aspects of the Realm. Creation of new life, especially intelligent or unusual life, requires plenty of effort, along with magick from all the Spheres.

Generally speaking, building the Realm should require one month per factor of 10 Quintessence cost for the Realm. This assumes the mages concentrate solely on the creation of their Realm (see Appendix Two). This time could be shortened if they have great assistance, or lengthened if they are involved in other activities.

The magick ratings for the Realm set the parameters for reality in the Realm. These rules are provided in **Mage: The Ascension**, pages 180-181. See Appendix Two for the cost of altering the Sphere ratings from those of Earth.



Resonance

That which ye do, for good or bane,
Returns to ye threefold.
— The Threefold Law of Return

One interesting phenomenon of Realms is resonance; over time, the temperament of both the Realm and the mages in it begin to influence each other. The stronger the personalities of the sorcerers (or the atmosphere of the Realm), the bigger the influence of one on the other. If one side is weaker than the other, the dominant force eventually alters the original nature of the weaker side. If both sides are more or less equal, a resonance effect begins.

The longer this resonance continues, the greater the effect. Physical characteristics of both Realm and inhabitants may alter. Both mages and Realm eventually become like funhouse mirrors that distort each other. This process usually takes centuries to accomplish, but may happen sooner when dealing with particularly strong energies. Nodes dedicated to a certain kind of energy might also trigger this effect.

Resonance is not a universal effect. Many Realms exist for centuries without ever adopting the temperament of their creators (or vice versa), while other Realms warp themselves and their residents in only a few decades. More spiritual mages see resonance as proof of the moral fabric of reality, a karmic payback for tapping "good" or "bad" energy. The jury is still out on resonance, and will probably stay that way.

The Four Seasons

A theory arose during the Mythic Age concerning the cyclical nature of Chantries, comparing the power and general welfare of a Chantry to the four seasons of the year. This "change of seasons" is an idea similar to resonance, but one that reflects the state of any and all Chantries. Seasons seem inevitable; sooner or later, the decline of Winter descends upon even the greatest Chantries.

Life and death, night and day, the phases of the moon, the food chain, the rise and fall of nations: all are cyclical in nature, so it follows that the same holds true for Chantries.

Spring

I have been ready at your hand
To grant whatever thou would'st crave;
I have waged both life and land
Your love and good will for to have.
— King Henry VIII, "Greensleeves"

When a Chantry is founded, it begins its existence in the Spring, the first stage of the cycle. It is weak, vulnerable, and must grow rapidly into Summer. If the Chantry fails to do so, it will be crushed by its own inexperience and inability, or by those who see it as a potential threat. The Chantry will make many mistakes, but what it lacks in wisdom, it counterbalances with vigor and enthusiasm. For the most part, it remains unseen by other Chantries. Other Chantries of similar allegiance usually see it as weak and irresponsible, if they deign to notice the Chantry at all. Enemies such as the Technocracy will usually destroy it. Many Chantries never survive beyond this season.

Summer

Lucky Chantries survive to Summer. The Chantry is still growing, but the growth has slowed tremendously. The Chantry reaches its peak of power during this season, growing strong and confident. As it becomes somewhat stable, its vigor and enthusiasm decline ever so slightly, while its experience and wisdom grow through past mistakes. The Chantry will most likely be very active, but it will not get the full respect it deserves. It is often seen by other Chantries as too bold and dangerous. These Chantries provide the fuel to fire the Ascension War.

Autumn

All too soon, the Chantry fades into Autumn. Growth stops and there are thoughts of the Winter yet to come. The Chantry is still strong and confident, but power slowly gives way to safety and security. The Chantry has grown wise and stable, and now wields tremendous political power. Respect and status are gained as past achievements are finally honored. Autumn lasts for as long as the Chantry can retain its dwindling strength and activity — usually decades or even centuries. Elders foist more and more of the dangerous work upon the Chantry's younger members, and the Chantry as a whole becomes stagnant and set in its ways. The dynamism of youth is replaced with stasis.

Winter

I thought I'd found a reason to live
Just like before when I was a child
Only to find that dreams made of sand
Would just fall apart and slip through my hands.
— Dead Can Dance, "Spirit"

Finally, Winter sets in, and the Chantry nears its final days. The strength, confidence, vigor and activity of days gone by are rapidly replaced with weakness, hard-earned wisdom, glorious memories, and inactivity. Those who remember the past still respect the Chantry, but Spring, Summer, and many of the Autumn Chantries look at these Chantries as if they were useless and already history. Winter is a terrible time, as the Hobgoblins of older mages become strong and potentially lethal to the Chantry itself. Winter may set in through a major disaster or through a long, slow decline in fortune.

For some rare few, destruction is not the fate at hand. Those Chantries blessed with younger mages may, through these mages' leadership, enter Spring anew. Often, older mages who can be encouraged to fight their Quiets rather than accept them become involved in the effort to rebuild. This often leads to a second Summer much stronger than the first. The vitality of youth combined with the wisdom of the ancients is a powerful force indeed.

ABC trial 4

Part Four: The Chantry Proper



We arrive at last at the Chantry itself: an imposing mass of rough-hewn granite; a thatched hut, standing on chicken legs, with an interior the size of a penthouse; or perhaps a Victorian mansion festooned with filigree and bric-a-brac. The Chantry house may take many forms, and its members' interaction can range from brotherhood to outright hatred.

The Chantry house may be one house of any size, or may be a series of separate buildings grouped together. If the Creation Point system is used, the size of the Chantry proper will be bought with Creation Points. Otherwise, simply give the buildings whatever size or shape you want them to have.

As with the Realm, the construction of the Chantry house(s) reflects the nature of the mages therein. Over time, Chantry houses and Realms tend to assume the characteristics of their residents, and vice versa. Long-time occupation often sets up a psychic resonance between the nature of the mages and the atmosphere of the Chantry and Realm; a strong enough resonance might even change the physical shape of the building itself! Any strong aspects of the Node may also affect the residents. A cemetery Node will "feed" a different sort of energy to a Realm than will a sylvan glen. A mage aware of this effect can acquire hints about her reception at a given Chantry long before she actually meets the local cabals.

By Any Other Name

The terms Chantry, Node and cabal all originate from the Order of Hermes; the terms they have coined are now considered standard parlance. Each Tradition, however, has its own terminology, although many of these phrases pass away as Traditions congregate. Even within each Tradition there are often three or four words to describe the same thing.

Some alternate names for a Chantry:

Akashic Brotherhood - *Monastery*, *Torii*, or *Pagoda*

Celestial Chorus - *Chapel*, *Covenant*, or *Sanctuary*

Cult of Ecstasy - *Pleasuredome*

Dreamspeakers - *Lodge*

Euthanatos - *Marabout*

Hollow Ones - *Hideout*, *Hole*, *Crashspace*, or *Haunt*

Sons of Ether - *Laboratory*

Verbena - *Covenhouse*, *Circle*, or *Great Hall*

Virtual Adepts - *Epicenter*, *Fortress*, or *Net*

Earthly Aspects

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
— Matthew 6:10

Most Chantries with Horizon Realms will appear less grandiose on Earth. The Chantry in the Realm is often a truer representation of the Chantry than the material aspects, which are usually disguised as mundane buildings. Especially powerful Chantries, like Doissetep, may have a number of earthly reflections, in different locations and with different functions. Portals inside the "real-world" buildings link them with houses in the Realms.

Chantry houses, Earth-bound or otherwise, must be constructed from local materials. They do not spring fully formed, like Athena, from the magicked ground, although vulgar magick may speed construction a good deal. When designing a new Chantry house, think about the materials and methods used. Stone walls are solid, imposing, secure. Rough-cut logs bespeak a primal connection to nature, a simple way of doing things, or a frontier mentality. The inner essence of the creators and the external circumstances of the construction will greatly influence the materials used.

Security

Most Chantries have some sort of security system, ranging from simple alarm wards or watchful servants to powerful guardians and deadly traps. The Quintessence drain of a standard alarm system is negligible, even nonexistent in the case of technological devices. An elaborate gauntlet of magickal traps and wards, however, might require five Quintessence or more per standard day. The Storyteller should determine the nature, accuracy and possible cost of such systems around the Chantry proper.

Populating the Chantry

Treat your superior as a father, your equal as a brother, and your inferior as a son.
— Persian proverb

As fewer and fewer Sleepers Awaken, the populations of many ancient Chantries dwindle. In the Mythic Age, most Chantries were full of mages, consors and apprentices. Now, Acolytes, consors and servants make up the bulk of Chantry populations. Political games between the various members keep life from becoming too dull; Storytellers and

mages should remember that servants usually know more than their masters about the ins and outs of local intrigue.

Each Chantry has its own unique internal demographics — mages, consors, allies, enemies and servants. Populate your Chantries and Realms with people, not numbers. A magickal stronghold is just words on paper without the guiding spark of life that makes each chronicle unique.

Mages

Who are they? How many of them are there? What are their wants, needs and ambitions? The Pogrom and the insidious influence of the Technocracy's reality have weakened the ranks of the Traditions; even the Technomancers find it harder to recruit subjects with the necessary enlightenment to work true magick. Mages in the modern age are in short supply. What are the mages in your new Chantry like?

Consors and Acolytes

Consors work hand-in-hand with the mages. Although they know the workings of magick and the truth of reality, they are either unwilling or unable to use magick themselves. Acolytes are usually aware of the strange nature of their friends, but may not grasp the whole picture. Consors often ally themselves with one particular mage rather than with the Chantry as a whole. Many live in the Realms of their patron mages, and some are not even human. Acolytes usually stay behind on Earth, tending to the more mundane needs of their allies. Who are these people (if they are indeed human)? Why do they imperil themselves in this way? What are they getting? What do they want, need and desire? Most importantly, what do they know, and how well can they keep it a secret?

Servants and Guardians

Many mages disregard the menial laborers around their Realms, but these beings serve an important function. It's far too easy to portray servants as faceless helping hands; Storytellers must bear the wants, needs and personalities of servants in mind when designing and running a Chantry.

The Net

The Virtual Adepts claim that a huge virtual reality Realm called the Net exists outside the mortal world but within the reach of their computers. In this sprawling Realm, they say, any sort of computerized information can be easily accessed by hackers skilled enough to take it. Rumors describe the everchanging Net (or the "Web," as it is sometimes called) as a shadowy, neon world where Virtual Adepts and Iteration X wage a covert war amid Earth's databases. Paradox as such does not seem to exist within the Net, but the specter of "whiteout," or a massive systems crash, keeps Technomancers walking on eggshells. The consequences of a large-scale whiteout are pretty chilling.

Virtual Adepts say that the Net was created by one of their own, using a computer that literally ripped itself a place in the Tapestry. This computer, according to legend, still sits somewhere, computing an endless loop of creation. Whatever its origin, the Net is a playground for Virtual Adepts and a nightmare for almost anyone else. This huge Realm will be detailed in a future **Mage** book.

Guardians are especially easy to overlook, but doing so can be dangerous for a Chantry mage. Why do the guardians do what they do? Are they bound or otherwise compelled? If so, how do they feel about that? If not, why are they there?

On the average, Tradition Chantries have between one and three Acolytes per mage and one consor per two mages. Technocracy Constructs have from four to 10 Acolytes per mage and one consor per three mages. Nephandi Labyrinths may have as few or as many secondary characters as you want.

The Inner Workings of the Chantry

Brothers all
In honor, as in one community,
Scholars and gentlemen.
— William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*



Most Chantries have heritages predating the mages who now call them home. Newcomers must face many convoluted rules and traditions, and indeed may establish others as they stake their own claim in the Chantry. Becoming familiar with the inner workings of a Chantry, be it one's own or someone else's, is vital.

The Chantry's Purpose

Most Chantries were founded with some mission in mind. The mission may have been simple or complex, and there might have been more than one mission. Even if all of the Chantry's original goals were accomplished long ago, new goals have likely replaced the old. Over time, the Chantry may explore directions its founders never in-

Forms of Leadership

Submit to the rule you laid down.
— English proverb

Chantry leadership takes various forms. Each Chantry tends to have its quirks and perks, making its political structure unique. The following is a collection of the more common forms of leadership. There are, of course, many other possibilities.

Panel of Deacons: This form of government is most common among the Traditions and has been in use for millennia. The Panel of Deacons is usually composed of either the oldest and/or most powerful cabal, or one representative from each of the cabals. Each member of the Panel has one vote and all votes are (usually) equal. Technocracy Conventions call these groups **Amalgam Primes**.

Pedagogical Rulers: Under this form of government, one mage serves as the head of the entire Chantry. The oldest Chantries tend to have this form of leadership. In some cases the mage is elected, while in other cases she must prove herself, or even fight for the position (this latter means of assuming rule is particular common among Progenitor Constructs, whose members espouse the Darwinian virtues of "survival of the fittest"). In still others, the leader is chosen by some special means. In most cases, the eldest or most powerful mage rules the Chantry. Titles of these leaders range from Chief Counselor to Chieftain, Baron, Sultan, High Priest or nearly anything else that commands respect. In many cases, this ruler has dictatorial control over the entire Chantry; in others, he is a mere figurehead. Some rulers have advisors, others have cabinets, and yet others act alone.

Within the Technocracy, pedagogical rulers are called Administrators. These individuals are powerful mages who exercise complete control over their Chantries. Regardless, these Administrators must still answer to a high council for their actions.

Triumvirates: Most Technocracy Chantries have Triumvirate rule. This is similar to a panel of Deacons, except that three mages serve on an executive council. Members of these councils are in turn chosen by other, higher councils.

Democracy: This is the most liberal form of leadership, practiced in some of the newer Tradition Chantries. Each mage has an equal vote in all matters of importance. Meetings are held regularly and committees overseeing certain tasks are chosen from among all the mages.

Anarchy: Chantries without defined methods of leadership do exist. These are mostly Chantries composed solely of Hollow Ones or Orphans. Such Chantries know very little about mage society and seldom write out covenants to govern themselves. This often leads to unstable leadership, chaos and lack of direction.

tended. As new generations bring their own goals and ideas into play, they bring a new shape to the stronghold.

The Chantry's purpose(s) should influence the stories on occasion, guide the general direction of the chronicle to some extent, and reiterate the fundamental importance of the Chantry itself in the lives of its mages.

Chantry History

Feel the naked dust beneath my toes
While the future sun calls winds to blow
And the past and present black-eyed crow
Flies hunting high and circling low
Between dream mountains of our Eden.
— Jethro Tull, "Mountain Men"

The history of the Chantry may be developed in great detail by the Storyteller or left vague for future development. In most cases, the Chantry's members have an idea of the place's history, though any such account will be rife with errors and embellishments, and will contain none of the best-kept secrets. The player characters should be informed of the known history, but the secrets of the Chantry should be revealed only through roleplaying. This will add depth to the game, and realism and mystery to the Chantry.

The Covenant

The term "covenant" derives from an old name for the Chantry as a whole. When founding a Chantry, mages draft a covenant, a body of laws serving as the Chantry's constitution. This covenant outlines all the functions, rights, duties and policies governing the Chantry and its members. Most covenants favor the founders of the Chantry, because they suffered the greatest risk. Newer members usually begin at the bottom of a system of ranks, duties and privileges, and work their way up from there. Unless they founded their Chantry themselves, player characters must earn their places of respect within the Chantry through responsibility and service.

Most covenants include all duties relating to the upkeep and protection of the Nodes, the Horizon Realm,

the Chantry and the inhabitants of all three. A typical covenant also includes the details of the Chantry's government, states the code of conduct for Chantry members, and delineates the rules concerning punishments for disobedience. The covenant usually outlines the purpose of the Chantry, provides for the rights and requirements of members, and sets policies regarding new members. In most cases, it also provides a procedure for the ratification of later amendments.

Before joining a Chantry, most mages wisely ask to read the covenant. Seldom, however, do they take the time to read all the bylaws or ask about all the oral traditions, which also carry great, if unofficial, weight.

Hierarchy and Politics among the Cabals

You are the future. Ascension for all begins with the few brave enough, strong enough, committed enough to the common good to power the spin of the Great Wheel. We are the forgers of the Path; Quintessence flows in our veins. All the Earth's lifeblood streams from our deeds and the deeds of those who have gone before. You are the future, and the future depends on harmony between us all.

— Heasha Morningshade, Verbena Adept

Cooperation between Tradition members, and between the Tradition factions themselves, are admirable goals, but goals that many mages fail to achieve. The lure of power, pride in one's own abilities, the madness of Quiet and fear of the Technocracy all drive wedges between cabals. The strength of belief necessary to shape reality lends itself all too easily to megalomania. Many mages treat their Chantry and Realm as territorial refuges, defending these places from all comers. Members must keep their ears to the ground. Visitors to another's Chantry should be on their best behavior.

Every cabal has a place in the hierarchy of the Chantry. This is usually based on seniority, but might in some cases derive from personal accomplishment or power. Cabals often find themselves competing with one another for Quintessence, positions of leadership or influence, and power.

Hubris

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou doest evil.

— William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Hubris, the sin of blind pride, is the mage's greatest enemy. The power to bend reality to one's own vision can affect the minds of the Awakened far more seriously than can Quiet. Hubris twists a mage's search for Ascension into a quest for greater and greater might, a drive for raw power.



The Technocracy, the Nephandi and the Marauders illustrate hubris in action; mages who may once have had good intentions now grind into dust anyone who dares oppose them. When the pursuit of personal gain becomes a mage's only real goal, that sorcerer has wandered from Ascension's path and become a danger to everyone around him. Sadly, hubris is a state of neither mind nor body, but of spirit.

Cabals' personal goals often collide. Because of this, many Chantries are filled with intrigue, backstabbing and treachery. Mages must be politicians as well as scholars; even the most powerful mages must have the support of others if they wish to claim and retain power. Plots among Chantry members are not uncommon. Despite a front of solidarity, mages often have as many enemies or rivals within the Chantry walls as they do on the outside.

Internal conflicts should permeate the game. Such conflicts add to the excitement of roleplaying and color both player characters and Storyteller characters. All Chantries are not alike; some are filled with devious and disloyal mages, while others are relatively unified. The degree to which politics and intrigue enter the game is totally up to the Storyteller.

Duties and Rights

All members of a Chantry, the players' characters included, have special duties to perform. Through faithful service, mages gain specific rights. The following lists detail some of the possible duties and responsibilities that characters may have.

Such duties may be temporary or permanent posts, or might even serve as rewards or punishments.

Duties

Ambassadorship: Acting as a diplomat between the Chantry and the outside world.

Collection: Collecting Quintessence, information, materials or anything else that might be needed.

Investigation: Acting as police or spies in or outside of the Chantry.

Magickal Labor: Study or creation of magickal subjects for the good of the Chantry as a whole.

Maintenance: The feeding and caring of guardians, special pets, plants, the Chantry buildings, etc.

Protection: Bodyguard, sentry duty, or permanent watch for Nodes, Portals, special places, members or guests.

Training: Instructing apprentices, Acolytes, consors or servants in any of a number of possible skills.

Rights

Access: To Chantry libraries, labs, servants, quarters and such. Often restricted by rank or status.

Arbitration: The right to hearings, arbitration and redress of possible grievances.

Authority: The right to command other Chantry members, servants, etc.

Privileges and Stipends: The right, often based on merit, to receive financial/material perks or other special favors from the Chantry.

Voting Rights and Office: The right to participate in the leadership of the Chantry, either through contribution or outright title.

Joining a Chantry

Wanna be a member? Wanna be a member?

— Bingo's Initiation (a Fleischer Bros. cartoon)

Membership in a Chantry is not a given, but an honor to be earned. Chantries must guard themselves against those who would betray or burden them. In many cases, a mage who shows a desire to join her Mentor's Chantry must still wait for a membership invitation, which might be years in the offering.

Some multi-Tradition Chantries, and all Technocracy Chantries, have taken to recruiting as a way of gathering the best and brightest up-and-coming mages. A candidacy offer, however, is hardly full membership. Recruits usually face rigorous testing and background checks (especially within the Technocracy).

Mages who do not yet belong to a Chantry often seek out members of a particular Chantry in hopes of gaining membership. Some strongholds, especially the older ones, limit membership to certain types. This discrimination might be based upon Tradition, age, sex, race, religion, personal motivations or ability to wield magick. Other Chantries limit the number of members they may have or simply do not take members who belong to another organization.

The Candidate

Candidacy is a necessary first step toward membership. During this period, the candidate is taught basic, nonconfidential information concerning the Chantry. Often, she is allowed to read sections of the Chantry's covenant. One member, often called the Patron, instructs the new recruit and informs her of the various challenges she must face before being offered membership.

Becoming a member of a Chantry often requires testing to see if the candidate for membership is worthy for acceptance into the group. Membership is seldom bestowed without measuring the quality and sincerity of the candidate. Tests vary greatly from Chantry to Chantry, and reflect the philosophical nature of the group as a whole. A cabal of Virtual Adepts might challenge an aspiring member to a deadly series of video games played in virtual reality, while Ecstasy Cultists might drag the neophyte though an extended visionquest filled with sensual stimulation.



An Optional Rule about Status and Honor

If the Chantry is to be built on points, Status costs three Creation Points per point of Status. Reputation cannot be bought, being a function of behavior rather than fame. You can pay a lot for fame, but may still have your reputation dragged through the mud anyway. *C'est la vie.*

In any case, the testing is steeped in tradition and occult ornamentation, often involving strong oaths and a series of contests against other members of the Chantry. These tests pit the candidate's wit, loyalty and magickal knowledge and prowess against longtime members. Future mages are an investment for

the Chantry; everyone involved wants to be sure that such investments serve the group well.

The tests also provide the candidate with some idea of the qualities and philosophies embodied by the Chantry she has chosen to join. A candidate may well decide after the testing that she wants no part of the Chantry, even if its members want her to join!

Initiation rituals are considered sacred; revealing the Chantry's secrets to outsiders is considered a serious breach of loyalty (or at least good taste!). Successful candidates are welcomed into the Chantry with important rites, often followed by heartfelt celebration. A new mage is another brick in a wall against the outside world, another measure of strength for the group against its foes.

Once an individual has joined, she must usually take an oath of membership and abide by particular practices and customs. These practices may involve adherence to a certain code of conduct, or may require some sacrifice on the part of the member. Dues are often required, in the form of money, information, Quintessence or something else of value. Members are usually required to fulfill certain duties. Participation and attendance in political functions are of great importance, especially for younger members.

External Relations

Chantries try to isolate themselves from the outside world, but they never fully succeed. The Ascension War touches every mage in some way. The allies, rivals, and enemies of a Chantry affect it in a thousand ways. Below are a few:

Status and Reputation

I am better than my reputation.

— Johann von Schiller, *Maria Stuart*

Status (as a Trait) reflects a Chantry's position of respect within the Continuum. It represents the Chantry's past accomplishments, destiny, legends, honor, power, influence, and ability to do battle. While Status may do little to help or hinder a Chantry, it reflects how individual mages from a particular Chantry are to be treated and how they are expected to behave.

Within the game, a Chantry may have a Status rating between zero and five. When making a Social roll involving diplomacy or other official missions on behalf of the Chantry, a mage may reduce the difficulty of the roll by one per point of Status. The character is affected by the other mages' Chantry Status in the same way, however.

Status

0 Unknown or disdained
1 Some know your name
2 Average Chantry
3 A degree of renown
4 Fairly influential
5 A legend incarnate

Reputation functions in a similar way, but reputations may be good or bad. Ratings in Reputation may add to or subtract from Social roll difficulties. A Chantry may be well respected as a mighty foe of the Technocracy, but despised for greed and treachery. Status represents honor and accomplishment, while Reputation represents good and evil. Status and Reputation can cancel each other out, and often do.

Reputation ratings are the Storyteller's prerogative, and should be based on how the actions of the mages at a given Chantry contrast with a common morality. Do they lie, harm, steal, kill? Do they remain true to promises and honor treaties and agreements? Do they serve the common good or do they concentrate on acquiring power?

Reputation

5 Unimpeachable honor
4 Scrupulous and kind
3 Known for good deeds
2 About average, maybe a bit below
1 Avoided
0 Shunned

Good Reputations include: protective of the innocent, unselfish, noble, Good Samaritans, honorable, etc.

Bad Reputations include: deceitful, murderous, insane, silly, etc.

The Storyteller is encouraged to invent different Reputations for each Chantry.

Outsiders

All Chantries have set policies, usually defined by their covenants, concerning the treatment of outsiders. Today there are far more Rogues, Errants and Orphans than ever before. The Nephandi and Technocracy often use these outcasts to infiltrate the Tradition Chantries. As a result, many Chantries have been forced to deal harshly with outsiders.

When creating a Chantry, keep in mind the attitude of the mages who live there. A new Chantry formed by survivors from decimated cabals will have a much more tolerant attitude toward refugees than will an ancient stronghold steeped in tradition. Then again, the newer Chantry may be especially paranoid and thus attack strangers on sight. The purpose and history of Chantry cabals strongly influence that Chantry's hospitality.

The Traditions, even the harsher ones, often attempt to deal with intruders in a nonlethal manner, at least at first. Technocracy Constructs often do the same, although their reasons are usually less altruistic; prisoners are often new sources of Quintessence! All Technocracy Conventions have devices for "refining" Prime force from living beings.

A Chantry's behavior with visitors, even unwanted ones, is often reflected in its Reputation score and outside relations....

Allies and Enemies

It is important to define the Chantry's ties to other Chantries and organizations. Allies will come and go over the course of the chronicle as situations change. The reason for an alliance may be as simple as mutual interests, but past assistance, a centuries-old treaty, a history of brotherhood, or common enemies are also good reasons for alliances.

Enemies are important as well. A person, and by extension an institution, is defined by the company kept and the enemies made. Although the Technocracy, Marauders and Nephandi

are the obvious foes of Tradition Chantries, intra-Tradition feuds are all too common. Both Traditions and Technocracy hamstring themselves with infighting; the Traditions are particularly vulnerable because they lack a central authority. Hubris, if nothing else, can make enemies out of potential allies.

Most Chantries have particular adversaries with whom they have a history of animosity, whether because of past conflict, some great embarrassment, an ancient feud, or directly opposing goals and activities. The player characters need not be aware of the Chantry's enemies at the beginning of the game; they will learn soon enough.

ABC trial 4



Rivals

Rivals are less dangerous than enemies, but can be far more annoying. Many Chantries (and individual mages) compete with one another, and mages are notoriously poor losers. Rivalries differ from outright enmities in that rivals will usually work toward a common goal under duress. In relative safety, however, all bets are off. Rivals may undermine each other politically, recruit members away from their rival's Chantry, or vie with each other for resources. Many rivalries last for centuries; some are good-natured and fun, while others are considered matters of honor.

The Storyteller should at least consider the Chantry's possible alliances and conflicts during the creation process. These relationships lay the foundation for endless chronicle possibilities. Is the ambassador from a long-hated rival sincere, or does he plan some sort of sabotage? That creature lurking around the Node looks suspiciously like a servitor of a valued Chantry ally. Is that ally taking advantage of our friendship?

Research Capacities

Affect not as some do that bookish ambition to be stored with books and have well-furnished libraries, yet keep their heads empty of knowledge; to desire to have many books, and never to use them, is like a child that will have a candle burning by him all the while he is sleeping.

— Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman*

Knowledge is power. No persons exemplify this truism moreso than mages. Magick requires study and experimentation, testing one's skills and exchanging knowledge gained. Paradox, rivals and watchful Sleepers force mages to be careful, to watch what they do and where. Chantries therefore have libraries and laboratories of various types appropriate to the cabals living there.

Libraries

Chantry libraries collect huge stores of information, both arcane and mundane, for reference and research. Old strongholds have rooms overflowing with books, charts and papers, while more progressive Chantries keep massive reference banks stored on computer drives. Whatever form it takes, a Chantry's library is a precious resource, and the Storyteller should decide its general extent and nature.

Stealing

Recorded knowledge, unfortunately, is fairly portable. When the Technocracy destroys a Chantry, it consumes all useful arcane information the vanquished site has to offer and destroys the rest. Many mages, both Tradition and Convention, steal important texts. Most Chantry libraries

bear magickal protections, but a determined mage can often work his way around them. Really powerful Chantries might have stronger protective measures guarding their libraries, but protective wards might accidentally destroy the books they're meant to guard.

Information Systems

While magickal lore is important, keeping up with the enemies' activities is equally so. Chantries were once very isolated entities, but the Ascension War forces them to stay up to date. Most Chantries have information systems of some sort, allowing them to gather information of all types. Systems range from scrying devices to contacts to computer systems. The Virtual Adepts have greatly improved many Tradition Chantries' systems by hooking them into the Net. Chantries often protect their information systems through various magickal means, including special wards and guardian spirits.

Storytellers should take time to decide what kind of research capacity the new Chantry has, and what protections, if any, the resident cabals have installed.

Laboratories

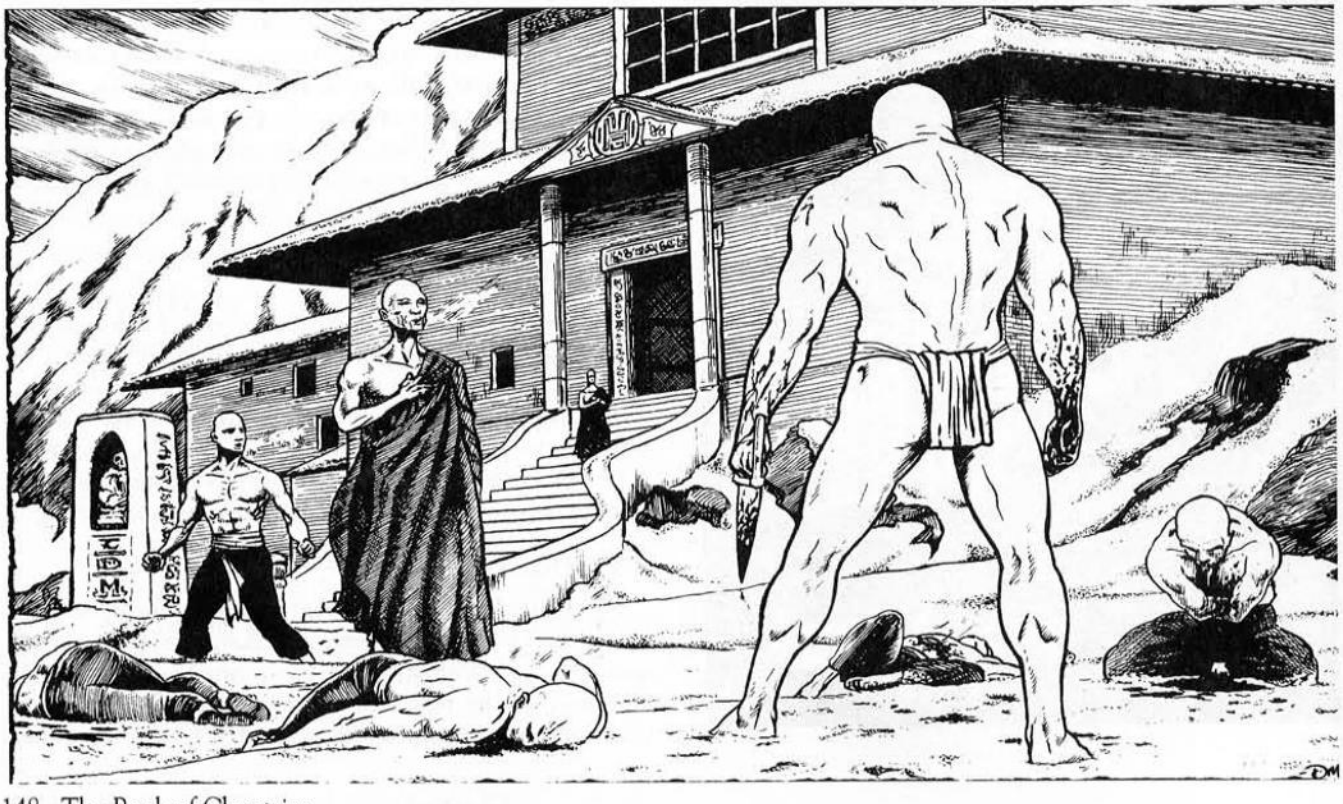
The popular image of the bearded wizard who stands in his circle reading an invocation from a great book stems from a superstitious belief that the efficacy of a spell lies in the words that compose it, when in reality it is the condition of mind these words can, with proper preparation, encourage in those who speak or hear them that gives a ritual its power.

— Donald Tyson, *Ritual Magic*

Laboratories allow mages to practice their magick and conduct experiments in safety without disturbing others. Labs are almost always located solely in the Chantry's Horizon Realm, preventing the chance of Paradox. However, most magickal experiments require some amount of Quintessence, and acquiring Quintessence requires time and effort. Research can be an exceedingly time-consuming task, but it's essential to perfect necessary magickal skills. Master mages often spend the better part of their lives in research.

The nature of these labs varies depending on the subjects of research and the expertise of the cabals. An Akashic dojo, a sacred vision cave, an alchemical shop and a stimulation parlor all qualify as laboratories for certain styles of magick. Libraries, too, might vary based on the philosophies of the Chantry keepers. Many Dreamspeakers keep oral records, while Virtual Adepts keep massive random-access reserves that dwarf the most advanced CD-ROM systems known to Sleepers.

Both libraries and labs provide places for study and research, detailed in the Systems and Drama Chapters of **Mage** (pgs. 235-236 and 262). The point-based system in Appendix Two gives some examples of research capacities and the benefits thereof for magickal advancement and mundane fact-finding.



Last Things to Consider

Beware that you do not lose the substance by grasping at the shadow.

— Aesop



The Chantry plays an important role in the lives of most characters, providing the basis for many stories, a common cause, and possibly the foundation for the entire chronicle. There are many options to consider when using Chantries in the game. Player characters may visit strange Chantries on various missions, or might be captured by a Technocracy Construct or Nephandi Labyrinth; they could found their own stronghold, or serve a hard apprenticeship in the estate of an ancient, hidebound wizard.

By no means should the Storyteller feel bound to fill out endless sheets of data for every Chantry her players visit. This chapter merely provides suggestions to give a firm foundation to the strongholds of your chronicle. Whatever roles your Chantries play, these magickal places should reflect the basic themes of your tale, embodying in tangible form the concepts that guide your hand.

New Rotes

These are the rotes referred to earlier in this chapter, gathered together for easy reference:

Awaken the Sleeping Earth (••• Prime, ••• Matter)

Different mages approach the reweaving of the Tapestry from different perspectives, but the game system is the same. The mage or mages employ this rote in the extended action detailed earlier in the chapter. Success brings the Prime energy surging from the newly tapped Node and into the mages. From there, the mages solidify the flow, weave the fabric into an open channel (similar to packing the dirt at the mouth of a well) and direct the flow of Quintessence toward some waiting vessel, be that vessel a Talisman or some funneling Portal to the Horizon Realm. Remember that "free" Quintessence simply dissipates or forms some new pattern.

The Hand of the Siphoner (• • • Prime, • Matter)

Raiding requires the mage to touch (physically) the center of the Node on Earth. The difficulty is equal to the Resistance rating for the Node. Each success gives the mage one point of Quintessence from the Node. Many mages have special Talismans that serve as batteries into which they can place the drained Quintessence. Raiding only works on Nodes that are currently Awakened. The danger is that almost all Awakened Nodes are owned and guarded by someone. The Garou, or werewolves, are especially dangerous; in addition to guardian spirits, werewolves often keep permanent watch over their sacred caerns. Beware their Rage! Faeries are nearly as bad, with their strange protections and the confusing nature of most of their magickal wells.

Leying of the Line (• • • Prime, • • • Matter)

This rote allows a mage to create one mile of ley line per success. The rote may be used over and over until the line reaches from the Node to the Chantry. The new ley line will transfer the Quintessence directly from the Node to the Chantry. However, Prime energy may still be removed at the Node itself, cutting off the Chantry's supply.



Chapter Five: Harvest Time

By James A. Moore

The Salesman's Tale



I'd walked for what felt like a hundred miles after my tires blew out. The sun had set and it was getting cold, real cold. In a matter of just a few minutes my teeth were actually chattering. I was definitely not in L.A. I was in Kansas, and hated the whole state right then. Nothing but miles and miles of corn.

I kept holding out my thumb, praying that someone, damn near anyone, would come along and give me a lift to the nearest service station, or at least a hotel where I could spend the night. Nothing. Not a car or truck for miles.

The little light in my watch illuminated the dial well enough to tell me it was after eight at night. Guess I'd been walking for a couple of hours. I was tired; my legs hurt from too much walking and too little preparation at the gym. Every cigarette I'd ever smoked tore at my lungs like fiberglass weave. Then I saw my salvation, a big old farmhouse rising out of the oceans of corn. No house ever looked better.

There was this little part of me that kept screaming in my brain, kept trying to tell me that the farm was too convenient, or maybe that it was too isolated for anyone that lived there to be normal. I guess now I understand why the girls in those bad slasher movies are always going into the old broken-down shack in the woods; after a while you're just so exhausted that even the Bogey Man seems like tolerable company.

From where I was, there was only one way to get to the farm without going another half-mile out of my way, and that was to walk through the cornfields. Believe me, nothing could have made me walk another half-mile at that point. I climbed over the barbed-wire lines that surrounded the place and started toward the house in the distance. It still looked like I had a good 15 minutes of walking. If it hadn't still been early summer, I would never have seen the house past all of that corn.

Have you ever known that you were being watched? The kind of feeling where your neck hairs stand on end and you can almost feel a target painted on your back? That's the way I felt walking toward the farm house. As the lights went out, I increased my pace, knocking a few of the young corn shoots down in the process. That was when the feeling started. I was talking to myself, but forced myself to stop.

What would my hosts think if I walked in babbling to myself?

Near the house, I heard a sharp snap. I spun to see a scarecrow looking straight at me and climbing down from the post where it was wired in place. I froze, not willing to believe what I saw.

The thing was wearing old overalls, patched and worn through in spots. It had old workman's gloves over its hands, and for a second I could swear that bone protruded from under the old denim shirt. The face looked like an old pumpkin, the kind you find at Halloween on some kid's porch before the bigger kids come along and smash it into a thousand pulpy pieces. The pumpkin was withered, dried up like an old corn husk. Some kind of light inside its head glowed a pale, cancerous green. I swear to you, as God is my witness, that scarecrow looked right at me, and its withered old face smiled as it lifted the pitchfork next to its mounting post.

I've never run so fast in my life, screaming all the way back to the road, with that thing chasing after me, laughing. I probably would have died out there in the middle of Kansas too, but a nice old man named Crombey came along in his truck. He gave me a lift into the closest excuse for a town in the area. The next day my tires were replaced, and I was on my way.

I don't go to Kansas anymore. The extra commissions on the few sales I make out there aren't worth my life.

The Plot

Scene One: The cabal is sent to examine and possibly purchase the odd pumpkins that can only be found on the small Kansas farm of Alistair Crombey, leader of a small Chantry of Verbena.

Scene Two: After a brief time spent getting to know their hosts, the members of the cabal are asked for assistance, as warning comes from the guardians that there are intruders in the cornfields.

Scene Three: The mages — assuming they are gracious enough to assist — are led on a wild goose chase through the cornfields while Samuel Haight, the false Garou, enters the Chantry proper. By the time the Cabal has returned, Crombey and Haight are in serious discussion about whether or not Haight may join the Chantry. Not surprisingly, Crombey's response is a firm "no."

Scene Four: Combat — glorious, violent combat — as Samuel Haight uses a group of werewolf pawns to keep the mages occupied while he locates the World Tree of the Chantry.

Scene Five: Despite the best efforts of all involved, Haight manages to steal the power of the Chantry's World Tree, with which he plans to create a very powerful Talisman. Against all odds and all magicks, Haight manages to escape when it is discovered that one of the mages at the Chantry, Alistair's great-grandson, is in truth a Progenitor.



The Progenitor also manages to escape and joins Haight to assist in his mad schemes.

What Is Really Going On

Samuel Haight, the false werewolf, has returned from the Umbra with greater powers than ever. While Haight did not gain all of the magical knowledge he desired when he killed El Dorado (see *Rage Across the Amazon*), he did gain a fuller knowledge of his own Avatar. Haight now has knowledge of the Spheres, but only a basic idea of how to use that knowledge. Simply put, he wants to learn more.

Theme

The theme of "Harvest Time" is betrayal. While all of the mages worry about Samuel Haight and his plans, one of the Crombey Chantry is also planning treachery.

Mood

The mood of "Harvest Time" is paranoia. What should be a simple excursion is made much worse by Samuel Haight and the werewolves. In truth, Haight would prefer to avoid trouble, but in the eyes of the mages, as in the eyes of most Garou, Samuel Haight is a thief, not only of power, but of lives.

Scene One: Off to theMarketplace

Green Acres is the place to be
Farm living is the life for me
Land spreading out so far and wide
Keep Manhattan, just give me that countryside.
—The *Green Acres* theme song



The cabal is asked to examine and, if reasonable, bid on the pumpkins that can only be found at the Crombey Farm. If the characters are Verbena, they are also asked to pass on a "message of dire urgency." One of the Verbena elders then hands them a scroll, embossed and sealed with wax. In truth, the message is nothing more than a letter of introduction and possibly some gossip between old friends.

Driving, flying or hitchhiking, the cabal gets to the Crombey Farm without incident. The amount of money that the characters have been allotted to purchase these pumpkins is preposterous, certainly enough to buy a sizable house.

Alternately, the cabal could have one or more members who are related to the Crombeys, as the Crombeys are quite well known among the Verbena. The Crombeys have been known to take students from time to time, and Alistair has often been sought for advice.

Scene Two: Meet The Crombeys

Enter freely and of your own will.
— *Dracula* (1931)



The Crombey Farm is located along a long dirt road, surrounded on all sides by an orchard and by seemingly endless rows of corn. The cabal arrives late in the evening; the sun has set and the air has an early autumn chill. The north wind whips past the characters, shaking the corn with a noise like the hissing of a thousand rattlesnakes.

Black clouds cover most of the sky and the lights of the distant city cannot be seen. Make the most of the atmosphere; players should be paranoid. Dark figures can be seen standing among the rows of ripe corn and staring at the cabal with glowing green eyes. These figures take no actions, but their heads continue to follow the cabal's progress. These are the scarecrow sentinels of the Crombey farm.

At the door, the players are met by a hulking brute of a man, Troy Crombey. Troy is unpleasantly quiet, but as soon as the mages introduce themselves, he will smile and gesture for them to come inside.

The interior of the house is spacious and warm; a roaring fire holds the night's chill at bay. Around a massive dining table sits the rest of the Crombey family, eating a simple but filling meal. The cabal is invited to join them. After introductions are made and messages delivered, the matter of trying to purchase the pumpkins can be broached. Alistair Crombey refuses to discuss business over dinner.

The Pumpkin Tree

"Allow me to show you what you've come for," Alistair says after dinner is done. With Troy and Cecilia in tow, the farmer-mage takes the characters to a large apple orchard.



Wind rustles the branches, and each player feels a tingle of dormant power. The family is clearly watching the players; everyone is friendly, but the hospitality is somewhat forced. Suspicious characters might assume that the Crombeys are leading them into a trap, but the Verbena are simply being cautious.

In the center of the orchard, the characters find out why. A massive, gnarled tree, the Chantry's World Tree, stands in a small clearing, screened from view by the apple trees. Good thing, too, as the tree is clearly unnatural.

The tree has a distinctly human shape; its branches stretch toward the sky like arms raised in supplication. The leaves are much like those of an apple tree, and small red pumpkins — approximately the size of cantaloupes — grow from the branches. The Verbena of the Crombey Chantry have buried their dead in the ground around the Pumpkin Tree for centuries. The tree is actually the mortal remains of the Chantry's founder, a powerful mage who changed himself as he was dying and who has since continued to nurture his family.

The tree stands in the center of a permanent magic circle. An altar, firepit and large cauldron sit nearby. Despite being exposed to the elements, the cauldron appears new. The entire clearing radiates Quintessential power. Alistair will not offer information about the tree's true nature, but will not deny it if one of the players guesses the facts. After a few minutes around the tree, Alistair leads the players back to the house for bargaining.

The characters soon learn just why the pumpkins are so expensive. Each contains a substantial amount of Quintessence, and each is supposedly capable of producing even more, provided the seeds are planted and nurtured over a span of years. Theoretically, these pumpkins could literally grow Nodes! While the Nodes would be years in the forming, there is at last a chance that mages could create them rather than trying to locate them in a world that is run almost exclusively by the Technocracy.

Shadows in the Corn

The group returns to the house to bargain. Alistair Crombey asks for a truly preposterous amount of money. He knows full well that he will never receive such a large amount, but he enjoys a good bartering session more than the average farmer does. In the midst of negotiations, Allison's eyes glaze over for a moment. *"Alistair,"* she says, *"we've got company...."*

Strangers have come to the Crombey Farm. Scrying attempts only show many large shadows moving through darkened cornfields. The family attempts to scan the minds of the intruders, but the probes reveal only crazed, disjointed thoughts.

"We've been sold out!" Troy screams. Troy assumes treachery on the part of the characters, and things will get tense until the players are able to prove their innocence. After a suitable amount of time is wasted, the player cabal is asked to assist in the investigation. Robert offers to cover the World Tree. Allison remains at the house while Alistair, the characters, and Troy and Cecilia go out into the fields.

Crombey warns that things could get dangerous. Either Troy or Cecilia will accompany the characters. If the players split up, one sibling will go with each group.

Scene Three: Hey, Did You Hear That?

May you live in interesting times.
— ancient Chinese curse



One or more of the characters may choose to remain at the house, but the majority will probably venture into the fields.

The Cornfields

The height (12 feet) and density of the fields effectively separate each character from the next. There is effectively no way for the cabal members to see each other, save by flying. The wind tears at the stalks, rattling the corn and producing a noise like bones beating against each other. Now and then, unsettling sounds can be heard....

After a few moments, the characters begin to see forms moving through the fields, appearing for a split second and vanishing into the dark once more. Some of the shadowy forms crawl across the ground, eyes ablaze with dim red light. Others tower higher than a tall man.

The mages are at a strong disadvantage here. Most mages aren't used to sneaking around in the darkness. Most werewolves are.

Any character able to see in the dark may discern the twisted features of Black Spiral Dancers, the corrupt, misshapen werewolf servitors of the Wyrm. Characters without high Occult ratings might not recognize the distinction between Black Spirals and "normal" Garou. At the Storyteller's discretion, Dreamspeakers might have a better chance.

For the most part, the werewolves seem content to stalk the mages without overt violence (yet...). At the moment, they are here to provide a distraction for Samuel Haight. If they are attacked, however, they will certainly retaliate. Trigger-happy mages are very likely to get hurt.

To complicate matters, several scarecrows have joined the search for intruders and may attack the players by mistake. Player characters may spot them moving though the darkness, sickly green fire illuminating their eyesockets. Characters will not be able to communicate with the scarecrows, although the Crombeys can.

This cat-and-mouse game should continue long enough to unnerve the players. Suddenly, the family member(s) accompanying the players stop short in alarm. "We've got to get back to the house!" one shouts.

Black Spiral Dancers

Attributes: (Note: The additional statistics cover the five forms werewolves may take: respectively, human, near-man, wolf-man, giant wolf, and wolf.)

Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/7), Charisma 2, Manipulation 3 (2/1/1/1), Appearance 2 (1/0/1/1), Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Occult 3, Stealth 4

Rage 6 (allows extra actions; each Rage point spent allows an additional action per turn)

Gnosis 7, Willpower 5

Notes: All Black Spiral Dancers can step into the Umbra. They can also throw balls of green flame that inflict two Health Levels of aggravated damage. All werewolves (Black Spirals included) automatically heal one Health Level of nonaggravated damage per turn spent out of combat. The claws and teeth of the Black Spiral Dancers cause aggravated damage (Strength + 2). Refer to **Mage** (pg. 280) or the **Werewolf** supplement *Book of the Wyrm* for further details on Garou and the Black Spiral Dancers.

Image: Without exception, the Dancers are all metis, deformed neuters. Most have patchy fur and crazed expressions. The leader of this group bears a vicious battle scar that literally runs from the top of his head down to the point of his chin. His face is decidedly batlike.

Roleplaying Hints: Smart but crazy. The Black Spiral Dancers will fight to the death, for Samuel Haight has promised to cure the metis of their hereditary sterility. (Of course, Haight is lying; he hates all Garou.)

Weapons: SMG, Small; see the Weapons Chart on pg. 266 of the **Mage** rulebook.

The Scarecrows

The scarecrows are fairly typical save for their heads. Each head is created from what looks like a mummified jack-o-lantern. A green glow emanates from their eyes. All the scarecrows bear pitchforks.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Melee 4

Weapons: Pitchforks (difficulty 7; Strength +2)

Health: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Innate Countermagick: The scarecrows automatically receive two dice of defense against any magickal attack. Fire, normal or magickal, inflicts double the normal damage against a scarecrow, but risks setting the corn afire....

Scene Four: The Killing Fields

Why are you doing this? Why can't you just leave us alone?
— hapless victim in any horror movie



A Perfect Guest

Back at the farmhouse, a dangerous visitor has arrived. If any players have stayed with Allison, they see her notice the visitor a moment before he knocks at the door. "Mrs. Crombey," says Samuel Haight, "may I come in?"

Though Allison is on her guard, Haight's easy personality and good manners quickly bring out Allison's innate hospitality. Very few mages know of Samuel "The Skinner" Haight (Intelligence + Occult; difficulty 7, four successes required), and Haight himself is a perfect gentleman. By the time the rest of the family have arrived, he is calmly discussing admittance into the Chantry.

Hospitality forbids attacking the visitor outright; besides, Allison has correctly guessed that Haight has an ace up his sleeve. Alistair listens to Haight's simple proposal; allow him to join, and he will teach Tremere vampire Thaumaturgy to the other members of the Chantry. He will not lose his cool during the ensuing debate, regardless of what is said. The werewolves, he says, are allies of his, and might be of use to the Chantry. He has brought them just in case they were needed. If his "Skinner" reputation is mentioned, he will dismiss the claims as mere rumor, pointing out his werewolf allies.

After a rational discussion (in which the players may join), Alistair says that he will consider it. Allison, the perpetual hostess, leads Samuel Haight into the kitchen, offering him coffee and getting him out of the room so that the others can talk.

Cecilia is uncertain about Samuel Haight; while she finds him interesting, he gives her the creeps. Troy makes his position clear from the beginning; he does not like Samuel Haight, he does not trust Samuel Haight, and if what that little group of Garou Kinfolk down near the Miller Farm says is true, Samuel Haight should be killed on sight.

Robert is absent during this discussion. He claims, if telepathically contacted, that he's keeping an eye on the World Tree.

Alistair's mind is already made up. He has no plans to allow Haight into the Chantry. Alistair has his own contacts among the Garou, and they have told him of the





Amazon War. Certain names have stuck with him, and one of them is Samuel Haight.

Back in the kitchen, Allison has brewed a special, drugged coffee for her guest and summoned the scarecrows to the house. Unfortunately for her, Haight's perceptions are razor-keen. He knows about the drugged coffee and has overheard every word spoken in the other room. Allison attempts to keep the stranger occupied, and Haight for his part makes pleasant conversation, speaking of the places he has been and even talking of his numerous failed experiments in magick.

There is always a chance that one of the cabal members will go into the kitchen to be certain that Allison has the back-up she needs. If so, the mage sees Haight suddenly explode into violence, literally tearing Allison Crombey's head from her shoulders (he is still in Homid form!). For all of her magick, Allison never has a chance.

Haight hurls her decapitated body through the doorway into the living room. *"You want a fight?"* he screams. *"You self-righteous bastards, I'll give you a fight!"* Before anyone can act, he leaps through a nearby window and into the yard, where sounds of battle suddenly erupt. The Black Spirals and the scarecrows have met outside. Anyone trying to pursue Haight will have to wade through the melee.

The Crombeys are in no state to think rationally; Alistair stands stunned over the remains of his wife of nearly 200 years, howling with grief. During that time, Haight is very busy. Outside, the scarecrows slowly fall beneath the werewolves' claws. Co-locating in the dark, surrounded by frenzying Black Spirals, is a dangerous proposition. Haight is nowhere to be seen.

A character who uses Correspondence 2 or Mind 3 will see Haight materialize in the World Tree's clearing. Robert is nowhere to be seen. None of the shellshocked family will think to check the tree in the midst of the fight, but they will make all haste to the Node if someone else thinks of it.

Scene Five: The Harvest

Samuel Haight will use the time gained by the Black Spiral Dancers' assault to reach the World Tree.

The tree has changed dramatically since the players' initial visit. Now its branches curl in pain and its rough face contorts with agony. The World Tree is aware of its situation, but can do nothing about it. The cauldron has been kicked over, badly dented, and showered with some acidic liquid. The altar is shattered and the circle broken.

Even as the cabal and the Crombeys reach the World Tree, they discover that they are too late. As they approach, Haight plunges his hand, sheathed in a corona of

fire, into the heart of the tree. He rips a burning sphere of pure Quintessence from its innards.

The Pumpkin Tree screams as it dies, a piercing wail that actually deafens the characters and shatters the windows of the farm house.

Haight then pulls a branch loose from the tree and channels the primal energies into the limb. As long as he holds the branch, Haight can effectively be considered to have unlimited Quintessence for the duration of this scene. Haight knows the risks of using vulgar magick, but few would see the use, and if forced he will gladly risk the Paradox in order to destroy his enemies.

That's not all Samuel Haight has in store for the mages. Even as the mages recover from the noise of the World Tree's death, the Guardian of the tree rises from the ground, not to attack Haight, but to turn on its former masters! This creature, along with any remaining scarecrows, immediately attacks everyone present, leaving only Haight untouched.

The ground around the World Tree's husk explodes as the remains of the Chantry's previous mages arise, merging together and growing in size. Skeletal remains join together in unnatural positions, and the earth around them unites itself with the moldering forms. From all around the area, fragments of dead animals and rotting plants fly through the air, joining and weaving into the monstrosity. The final form is over seven feet in height and equally wide. The face is a study of inhuman rage, and the crude fists of the Guardian glint with white fragments of bone.

Unknown to all, and unsuspected by even his family, Robert has switched sides. During the confusion, he has co-located back to the farmhouse to use the Blight of Aging (Entropy 4, pg. 193 in **Mage**) on anyone left there.

While it is true that Haight honestly would have joined the Chantry, he and Robert had worked out a contingency plan well in advance. Samuel Haight prefers to be thorough when planning any form of assault, and when he first met Robert in the fields a few weeks ago, he knew that he and Robert could easily work together. Haight's keen senses told him that Robert was not what he appeared to be. Upon making that discovery, he approached the young man and learned all he needed to know.

Haight has promised to allow a few samples of his genetic pattern to be taken and used by the Progenitors, and Robert has promised that the Progenitors will aid Haight in return. Only time will tell if either keeps his half of the bargain. Tremere grimoires in Haight's possession have sweetened the deal.

While the Characters are involved in a second fight for their lives, Robert will return, destroy his family's cauldrons with explosives given to him by Haight, and then attempt to beat a hasty retreat. Haight will also make good his escape, using his fetish to facilitate this. Pursuit of Samuel Haight will prove futile; under no circumstances should Haight be captured, as he will be showing up again in future supplements. Robert, on the other hand, might well be caught, to face a fearful justice....

The Guardian

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 5, Stamina 9, Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0, Perception 8, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 5, Intimidation 7, Melee 4, Occult 4

Spheres: Entropy 3, Forces 4

Arete 4, Willpower 8, Quintessence 12, Paradox 5

Health: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -3, -4, -4, -5, Incapacitated

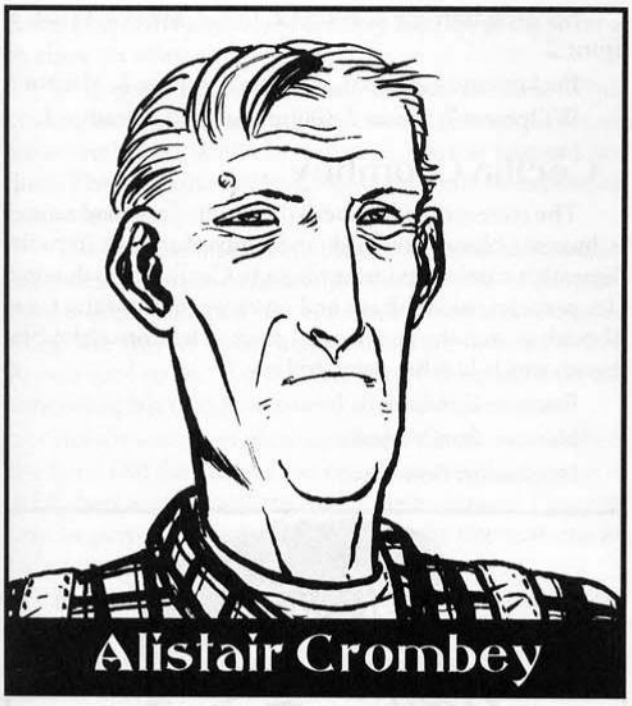
Countermagick: The Guardian adds an extra two dice to its countermagick, for a total Dice Pool of 6.

Image: The Guardian is a hideous sight — the remains of all previous mages in the Chantry and all the victims of the scarecrows, combined into one multilimbed killing machine. The Guardian has never yet been awakened, but what it lacks in experience, it makes up for in power.

Conclusions

Samuel Haight is gone, and Robert Crombey may have gone with him. The Pumpkin Tree, World Tree of the Crombey Chantry, is ruined, its power stolen by Samuel Haight. With the loss of the tree, so too goes the power of the Crombey's special pumpkins. All the pumpkins can now do is store Tass, one point per pumpkin. Had their World Tree survived, the powers of the pumpkins might have survived as well. Thanks to Samuel Haight, the mages have lost a valuable source of Quintessence.

But the Crombeys have lost everything. By the time the characters have finished fighting, the family's personal cauldrons will have been destroyed, along with their farmhouse. All that is left to them is their corn. Without the World Tree, it will take a great deal of time for the Chantry to recover from the devastation it has suffered. A new Tree must be nurtured, and new cauldrons must be created and dedicated before the Verbena of the Chantry can again use their full powers. Any member of the family who survive will swear a fearsome oath to destroy Samuel Haight by any means possible. Alistair Crombey is an influential man in his Tradition, and will use every bit of that influence to avenge his wife. Samuel Haight has made permanent enemies in the Verbena. His outrages will not be forgiven.


Alistair Crombey

Characters

The Crombey Family

Alistair Crombey

Crombey appears to be a thin man in his late 50s, but is actually over 200 years old. He has a thin, hawkish face and dark hair that has gone mostly gray. He is just under six feet in height and normally wears a faint smile. As with all of the Crombeys, he dresses as befits a farmer.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Essence: Pattern

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Expression 4, Intuition 3, Intimidation 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 3, Meditation 4, Research 5, Survival 3, Cosmology 2, Enigmas 4, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Medicine 5, Occult 5, Science 2

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 2, Forces 4, Life 5, Mind 2, Matter 3, Prime 3, Spirit 4, Time 1

Backgrounds: Avatar 4, Destiny 4, Library 4, Influence 4, Mentor 5, Node 5, Resources 5

Willpower 7, Arete 7, Quintessence 14, Paradox 5

Alistair Crombey has been the leader of the Crombey Chantry for over 200 years; he has influence and knowledge, and he is well respected within the Verbena.

Allison Crombey

The stereotypical farmer's wife, Allison is portly, with long blond hair that she pulls into a bun for the sake of efficiency. Although she and her husband treat the "kids" as their own children, her actual children lived and died long ago without ever Awakening. Allison is easygoing, always glad to take care of guests — they have so few at the farm — and a perfect hostess.

Nature: Caregiver

Demeanor: Director

Essence: Questing

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3


Allison Crombey

Abilities: Expression 3, Intuition 2, Subterfuge 1, Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Meditation 3, Research 4, Survival 2, Cosmology 4, Culture 2, Enigmas 3, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Science 1

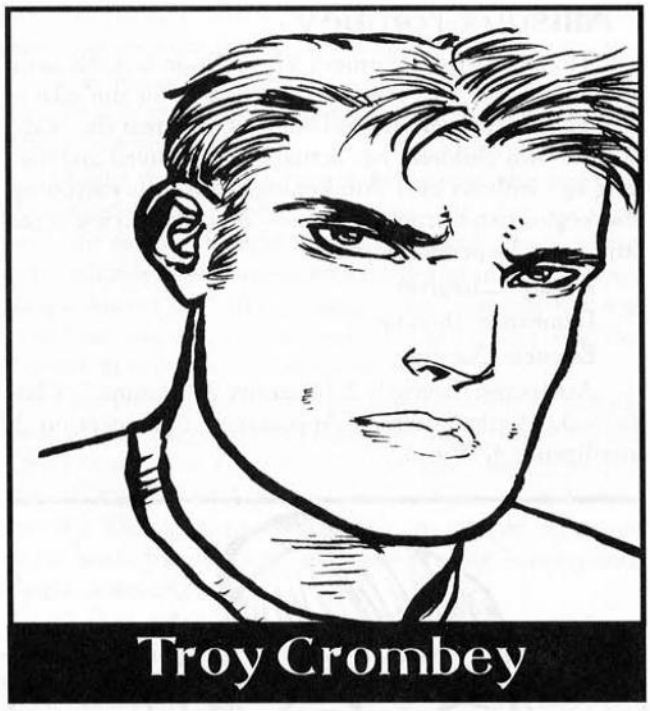
Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 1, Forces 3, Life 5, Mind 2, Matter 2, Prime 2, Spirit 2, Time 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 2, Library 4, Mentor 4

Arete 4, Willpower 8, Quintessence 7, Paradox 4

Troy Crombey

Troy Crombey is heavyset and muscular, obviously used to hard hours of labor on the farm. He is actually the great-grandson of Alistair and Allison. Troy normally dresses in work boots, a T-shirt and blue jeans. Troy is heavily tanned, with brown hair and eyes. He seems to be the most standoffish of the group, normally staring at any visitors with open suspicion.



Troy Crombey

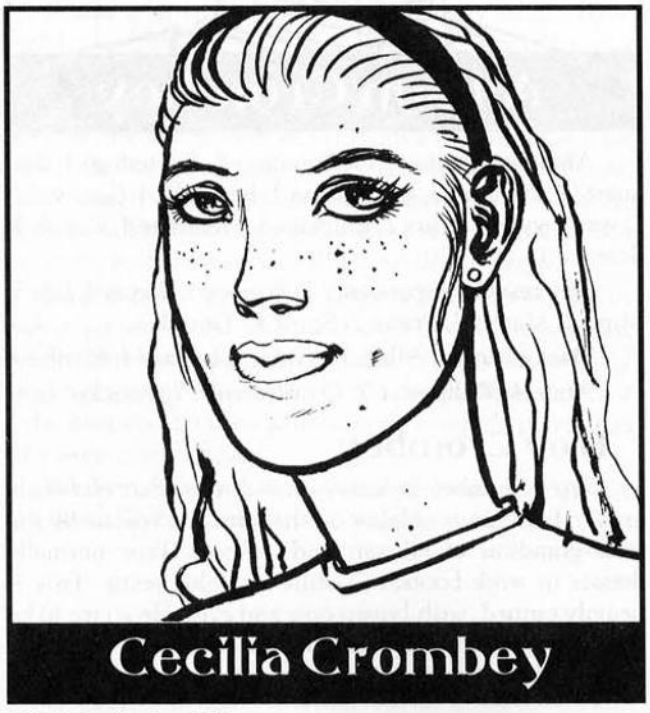
Essence: Pattern

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Expression 1, Intuition 3, Intimidation 3, Drive 4, Firearms 4, Meditation 3, Research 4, Stealth 2, Survival 5, Occult 4, Science 3



Cecilia Crombey

Spheres: Entropy 2, Forces 2, Life 2, Mind 2, Prime 2, Spirit 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arcane 3, Avatar 2, Mentor 3

Willpower 7, Arete 2, Quintessence 5, Paradox 2

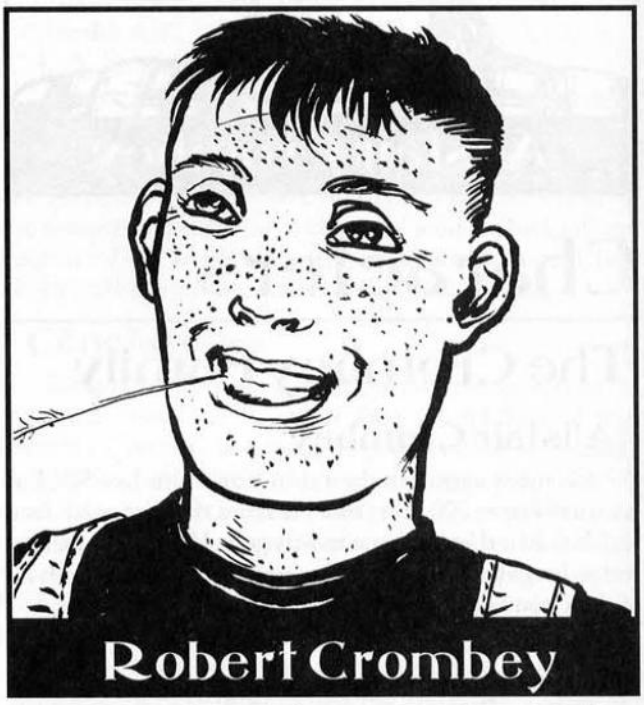
Cecilia Crombey

The stereotypical farmer's daughter, Troy's twin sister is buxom, blond, freckled and embarrassingly friendly. Beneath a careless exterior, though, Cecilia is no dummy. Her perceptions are sharp and on target most of the time. Though young, she's a powerful mage in her own right. She dresses much like her brother Troy.

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Bon Vivant



Robert Crombey

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 1, Dodge 4, Expression 2, Intuition 4, Intimidation 1, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Meditation 3, Research 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Enigmas 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult 4, Science 1

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 1, Forces 3, Life 3, Matter 2, Prime 3, Spirit 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Avatar 4, Dream 4, Mentor 3

Willpower 8, Arete 3, Quintessence 9, Paradox 4

Robert Crombey

Robert is almost as open as his cousin Cecilia, and, like Troy, is built for farming. Robert has light brown hair, green eyes and more freckles than should be possible.

Robert takes the stereotype one step further, going so far as to chew on straw.

It is possible that the real Robert is dead. While visiting with friends in San Francisco, Robert disappeared for several days. When he returned, he was haggard and dirty. The Technocracy had been on his trail, he explained, but he had escaped.

The bonds of family kept the Crombeys from questioning Robert's story as much as they should have. What came back looked and acted like Robert, but certainly does not think like Robert and is a great deal more powerful than Robert used to be. "Robert" has been biding his time and concealing his true power until the right moment.

Robert was never quite satisfied with the simple life of the farm. Did the Progenitors create an excellent clone, or did Robert actually sell out to the Technocracy? The story may be played either way, with different implications for either option.

Robert is by nature open and friendly, flirting incessantly with the ladies and kidding around with the men. He is always willing to lend a helping hand, and to try to smooth over any disputes between the Crombeys and the cabal. His friendliness should make his betrayal all the more wrenching.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Conformer

Essence: Questing

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intuition 3, Subterfuge 5, Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 4, Melee 4, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Technology 3, Computer 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 5, Occult 2, Science 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 2, Forces 3, Life 4, Mind 3, Matter 2, Prime 4,

Backgrounds: Mentor 3, Node 5

Arete 4, Willpower 9, Quintessence 6, Paradox 3

Each member of the Crombey Chantry carries a Fiachi Law-12 Shotgun, These weapons are detailed in the **Mage** rulebook, pg. 266. These shotguns have been magickally altered, however, and now do aggravated damage. Their range has been increased to 80 yards.

Samuel Haight

Breed: Homid

Tribe: Outcast — he thinks of himself as the first of the Skin-Dancer tribe.

Tradition: Orphan

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Architect

Essence: Dynamic

Auspice: Theurge

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 5, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4, Animal Ken 3, Drive 2, Firearms 5, Melee 4, Leadership 5, Stealth 4, Survival 5, Computer 2, Enigmas 4, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Occult 5, Politics 4, Rituals 5

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Avatar 5, Fetish 5, Resources 5

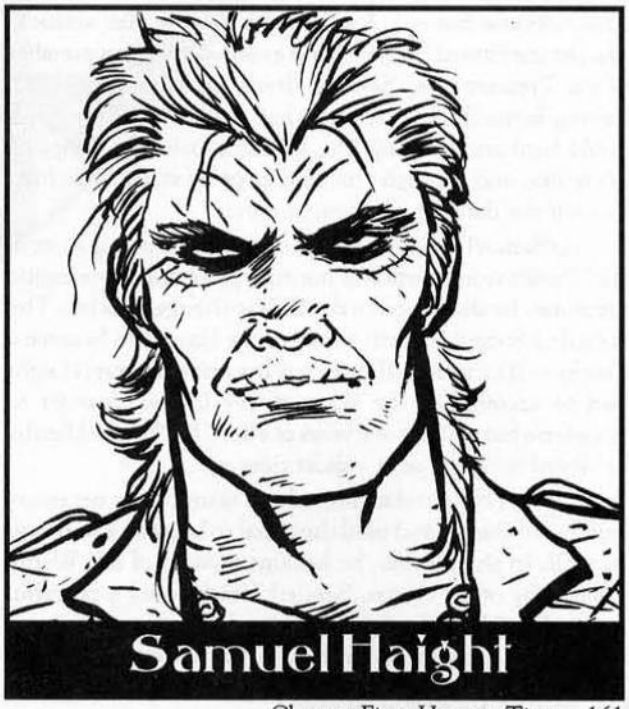
Willpower 9, Arete 4, Rage 8, Gnosis 8 (Quintessence 8/Paradox 2)

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 3, Forces 3, Life 2, Matter 3, Prime 2, Spirit 4

Fetishes: Shedding the Spirit Skin (Level 5, Gnosis 7; this bizarre "necklace" is actually a mummified snake painted with bizarre runes. Samuel took it from a Black Spiral Dancer he killed. It allows the wearer to Reform in the Umbra as if he were a spirit. The area in which he Reforms is random and normally linked to an area under the dominion of the Wyrm.)

Gifts: (Note: These may be ignored if the Storyteller is unfamiliar with **Werewolf**; Haight might simply employ Sphere magick instead.) Bane Protector, Wyrm Hide, Unseelie Faerie Kin, Blood Omen, Heightened Senses, Curse of Aeolus, Visceral Agony, Razor Claws, Thieving Talons of the Magpie, Inspiration

Thaumaturgy: Samuel Haight knows several Thaumaturgic paths and rituals, most of which can be found in the **Vampire: The Masquerade** rulebook: Movement of Mind 3, Lure of Flames 2, Weather Control 2, Spirit Thaumaturgy 1. He also knows the following rites: Ritual of Sacred Rebirth, Donning the Mask of Shadows,



Puissant Shield, Ward versus Lupines (he's still a bit leery of trying that last one, just in case)

Image: Samuel Haight is a middle-aged man with hazel eyes and brown hair that is starting to gray. Haight is in excellent physical condition. In all of his forms, Haight will maintain a brown coat shot with gray.

Roleplaying Notes: You have learned so much since your rebirth. You have always been a schemer, but you now realize that you were a novice. There is still so much to learn, so many ways to make the world fit the way you want it. You hate all Garou and will gladly kill them all, except for the ones that you save from their hideous lives as mere Kinfolk. You have so much to correct, so much to change, and your work has only just begun. Now you have learned the Spheres known by El Dorado. Soon you will be able to enact your revenge against the Garou. Why, with the powers at your command, and the right training, you too can gain immortality!

Background: Samuel Haight was a Kinfolk of the Garou, but Haight was never satisfied with being a mere Kinfolk. Samuel Haight wanted all of the power that the Garou possess. Haight's father and his cousins, the Carney Brothers, had known the glory of being Garou, and Samuel Haight resented their existence. Haight tried many times to gain his father's respect in other ways, but truth be known, he was always something of a disappointment.

Samuel finally found something at which he excelled: hunting. Sam hunted big game the world over, stalking and killing every imaginable type of dangerous prey. At the same time, Samuel Haight started learning about the world and the other supernatural powers it contained. Samuel's fascination with the occult even led him to try learning from the Verbena, but to no avail. He could not manage the Traditions' difficult rituals; in the words of his teacher: "Your Avatar has not Awakened." Despite this setback, Haight continued his quest and eventually slew a member of the Tremere clan. Samuel drank the vampire's blood, having learned in his travels that the blood of vampires could heal and prolong life. He also took the vampire's grimoires, and through trial and error he started teaching himself the dark art of Thaumaturgy.

As Samuel Haight traveled the world, learning more of the Thaumaturgic arts and hunting more and more exotic creatures, he discovered a ritual that changed his life. The Ritual of Sacred Rebirth would allow Haight to become a Garou — if he were willing to pay the price. Samuel Haight had to accumulate the skins of five Garou in order to transform himself. It took years of effort, but Samuel finally achieved his goals only a short time ago.

Samuel Haight slaughtered and skinned the necessary number of Garou, and used the ritual to become a werewolf himself. In the process, he became a pawn of the Wyrm. Chased by other Garou, Samuel Haight used a powerful fetish, Shedding the Spirit Skin, which allowed him to escape into the Umbra. In the Umbra, however, all things are revealed. Haight could no longer ignore the depravity of his actions.

The shock of seeing the Banes that had been attracted by his actions temporarily drove Samuel Haight insane. He used his fetish again, this time to push himself into the Deep Umbra and into the lair of Ischen, a powerful demon whom the Garou had imprisoned ages before. The creature desired a way back to the material plane and felt that Samuel Haight's fetish was a perfect way to ensure its escape. However, the unintentional intervention of several Sabbat vampires foiled the creature's attempts, instead allowing Samuel Haight back into the material world.

Samuel Haight had long worked for Pentex before his "rebirth," and saw no reason not to return to his previous employers upon coming home. Through Pentex Haight met Robert Allred, and if the two did not become friends, they at least became comrades in arms.

Allred allowed Haight to travel to the Amazon Basin, for both of the men realized that the bloody battle zone would be a fabulous place to gather more pelts for the creation of still more Kinfolk-Garou. Allred and Haight planned to create a tribe of their own, the "Skin-Dancers," to liberate the Kinfolk and destroy the Garou.

While Samuel was locked in Ischen's domain, he learned several new tricks from his host. What he did not learn from the demon, he stole from El Dorado using the power of a fetish called the Conquistador's Sword. The Sword was meant to siphon the power of El Dorado, but it failed. Instead, the sword shattered in the attempt, but left Samuel Haight with rudimentary levels of knowledge in several Spheres. Haight was believed destroyed in his battle against the Garou, but once again he managed to escape by slipping into the Umbra.

Haight knows several Thaumaturgic powers of the Tremere vampires, and with his new ability to focus Quintessence he has become powerful indeed. At the present time he lacks the discipline to control his powers fully, but that is something he means to rectify, with or without the willing help of the mages.

Setting

The Crombey Farm Chantry

Powerful: 70+ Points
Status: 3
Reputation: 3
Advantages and Disadvantages
Atmosphere: Peaceful (+5)
Phenomena: Normal(+0)
Magickal Manifestations: Subtle

Guardians: Scarecrows, Guardian of the Tree (Ridiculous +20), Supernatural (+10), Loyal (+15)

Location: Isolated Farm (+5)

Size: Chantry, Average (+5) Node, Average (+5) Realm, None (-5) Real Cost: 5

Security System: State-of-the-Art, Scarecrows (+10)

Wards: Difficulty 10 (+10)

Defensive Wards: (+5)

Typical Shallowing (0)

Communications: Modern (+2)

Large Private Land-holding

Node: Tass (Variable negative)

No Realm

Arcane Library: Good (+5)

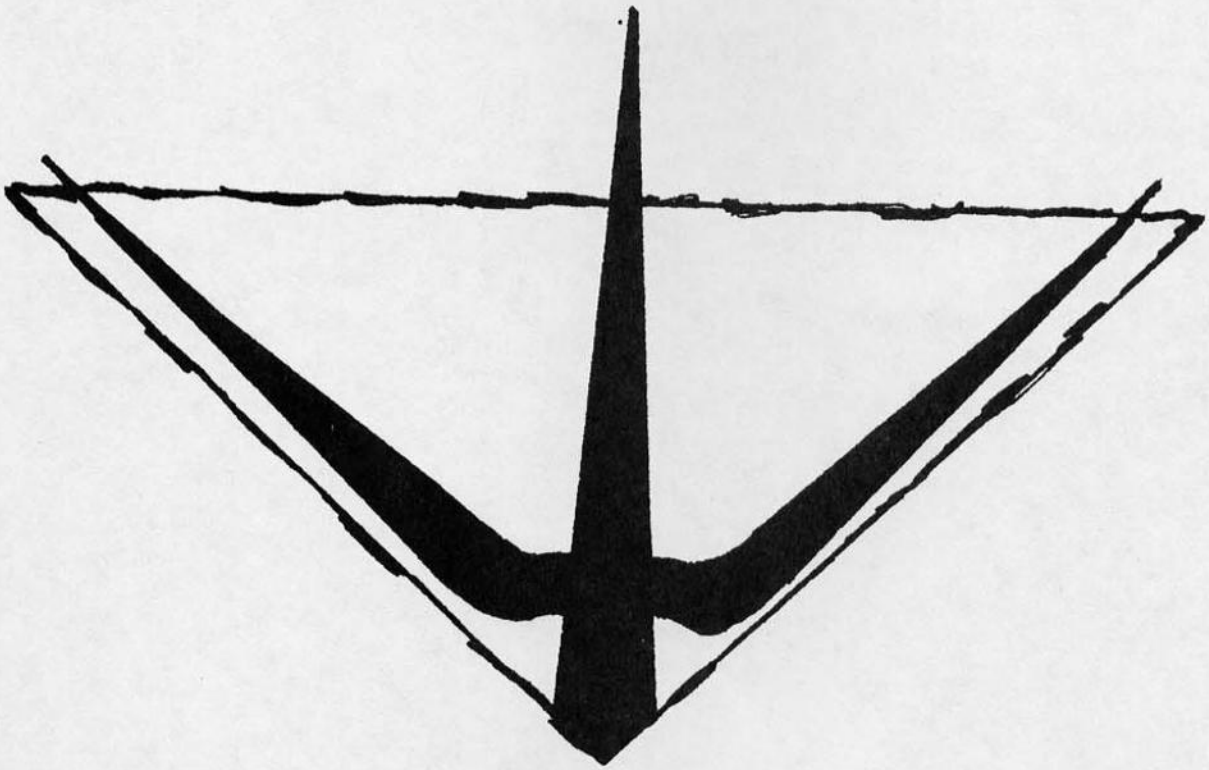
Laboratories: Inadequate (-5)

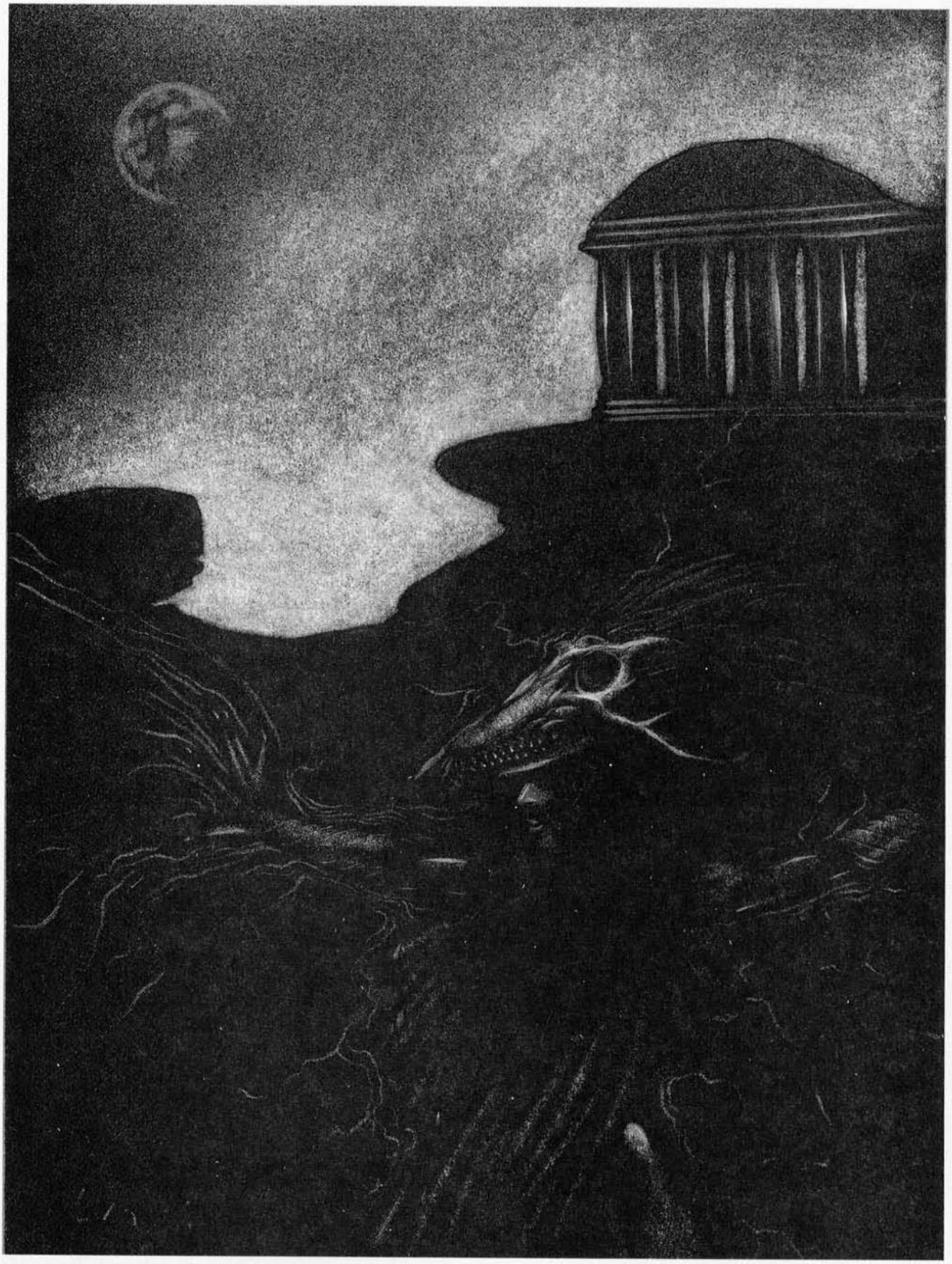
Internal Politics: Traitor (-20) Harmony (+10) Total Cost: (-10)

Leadership: Benevolent Leadership (+10)

No Servants: (-10)

Total Cost: 82





Appendix One: Other Strangeness

So through the endless twilights I dreamed and waited, though I knew not what I waited for. Then in the shadowy solitude my longing for light grew so frantic that I could rest no more, and I lifted entreating hands to the single black ruined tower that reached above the forest into the unknown outer sky. And at last I resolved to scale that tower, fall though I might; since it were better to glimpse the sky and perish, than to live without ever beholding day.

— H.P. Lovecraft, "The Outsider"



Certain Chantries do not fall under the control of the Traditions, Technocracy or Nephandi. Most of these Chantries are mysterious places known only through rumor and legend. One can only speculate what odd beings dwell in these places.

Chantries of the Ka Luon

Many mages believe in the existence of alien races who, while unconnected to the Nephandi, are still barred by the Horizon from entry into the Near Umbra. Some of these races supposedly seek allies against the Nephandi, while others merely explore and collect data and specimens. Some supposedly experiment upon humans, or breed with them to produce hybrid offspring for some unknown purpose. Tradition mages call these races the Ka Luon, or Hidden Ones, though each species may have its own name.

The Ka Luon are said to control large Chantries that resemble spaceships and are capable of traveling the Umbræ and Earth. Many Sleeper reports of UFO sightings are believed to be sightings of the Hidden Ones. No one knows the number of these mobile Chantries, or whether all are in league with one another, though it is speculated that there are numerous races among the Ka Luon.

Some postulate that these "UFOs" are Marauders, Nephandi or even visitors from the Chimerae. The very existence of the Ka Luon remains unproven. Yet....

Abandoned Chantries

And as goods lost are seld or never found,
As faded gloss no rubbing will refresh,
As flowers dead lie withered on the ground,
As broken glass no cement can redress:
So beauty blemished once, forever lost,
In spite of physic, painting, pain, and cost.
— William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 13"

Chantries are exceedingly valuable, and thus almost never abandoned. However, there are a few cases in which vacancy is forced. Mages whose Chantry is captured often lay a terrible curse on their Horizon Realm, Nodes, and Chantry building to prevent the enemy from using them. In some cases, this curse extends to all who were not members of the Chantry. Thus, these Chantries stand empty and will remain so until a way is found to remove their curses. There are still very few of these Chantries, because some have had their curses removed. However, finding a means of removing a Chantry's curse is often more difficult than establishing a Chantry from scratch.

One of these abandoned Chantries is the Manse of Madness in the Realm of the Creeping Doom. This Chantry belonged to the Order of Hermes, but all its members were horribly executed by Nephandi. The oldest of the Hermetic mages muttered a dying curse upon the entire Realm and all who would control it.

The Realm still exists, and even has a physical aspect on Earth; this aspect can rebuild itself after being destroyed. The Chantry looks like an old, dilapidated, two-story wooden house. The interior is covered in dust, though most of the mages' possessions remain. Taking anything brings the curse of doom upon the thief, and it becomes virtually impossible to discard the object until the curse has run its course. Items that are taken find their way back to the old Chantry.

It is rumored that the Chantry is haunted by many spirits, though mages seem to have no control over them. They appear to whomever they wish, usually for the purpose of driving the viewer insane. Some claim there are powerful cosmic secrets to be learned in the house, but no one ever leaves the Chantry with her mind sufficiently intact to reveal these secrets.

The manse is aptly named, for all who stay within the Chantry become insane. The victims then kill one another until only one is left. This last victim is carried off by the spirits for eternal torment.

Mobile Chantries

The *Flying Dutchman*

There are those who report seeing a mysterious ship believed to be the legendary ghost ship called the *Flying Dutchman*. This spectral merchantman of the late 1600s is believed to be under the control of Marauders, though nothing has been proved. It is seen only at night, mostly around the Cape of Good Hope.

The ship is described as having a faint bluish-green glow. Spotters range from merchant marine ships to U.S. naval aircraft. The *Dutchman* is said to fire a few cannon shots as a warning to those who come too close, though it has never been known to sink a vessel.

No one has ascertained the ship's purpose, though some claim to have heard human voices that were alternately described as laughing or screaming. A Technomancer Shock Corps once attacked the ship, only to be met by flying Marauders and a sea serpent. Before the team could initiate a single attack against the vessel, the *Dutchman* simply disappeared, as did the storm surrounding it. It was not even visible in the Umbra.

Should the rumors of the *Flying Dutchman* be true, this would seem to indicate that the Marauders are working together in large numbers and carrying out missions of utmost secrecy. Perhaps all Marauders are not insane, and the group does have goals.

The Knights of Newark

In Newark, New Jersey, there is a cabal of mages known as the Knights of Newark. The cabal comprises four mages: Denton Klein (Virtual Adept), Dedra Sain (Celestial Chorus), Russell Johnson (Order of Hermes), and Christina Lewis (Hollow Ones). The mages control one of the most unusual Nodes on Earth — a 1978 green Volkswagen van in perfect running condition. The mages use the Node as a mobile Chantry, for the interior of the van leads to a small pocket of a Horizon Realm. The Realm resembles a loft, but the walls, floor and ceilings are just massive replicas of the interior of the van. All of the mages have partitioned off their own rooms, and they share a large common area.

The van has a number of defenses. It is also capable of healing itself if damaged, provided no one is looking. The van always stays in perfect running order; it runs on Quintessence instead of gas. The mages also have a special one-way Portal that leads to a dumpster in Jersey City.

The mages are currently at odds with the Camarilla, the Sabbat and the anarchs of the vampire world. Many of their friends have already been lost to the cause. They have also had run-ins with two werewolves and some mages of the Technocracy. The mages have an ancient Hermetic mage as a Mentor, but he is bedridden because of incurable damage to his body caused by his own magick.

Other Chantries of Note

Balador, Cult of Ecstasy Pleasuredome in the City of Altua

All Cult of Ecstasy Chantries are thought to be places of total decadence by those who misunderstand the Cult. What outsiders view as vices are seen by the Cult as legitimate means to attain a transcendental state. All philosophical differences aside, one of the greatest of the Tradition's Chantries is Balador, a massive complex resembling the cathedral of Hagia Sofia. Balador is surrounded by Altua, a city of similar architectural style. The place has a distinct Greek-Arabic ambience. There are street markets, temples to forgotten gods of pleasure, and beautiful people of Greek ancestry.

The Pleasuredome is home to four Cult of Ecstasy cabals and two multi-Tradition cabals. These mages rarely leave the Realm, preferring to expand their inner horizons with every stimulation imaginable. Mages have every pleasure center on their bodies stimulated in every way possible. Chemical pleasures, magickal pleasures, pleasures of the flesh and other less identifiable delights occupy the mages while various Acolytes of great beauty and insight tend to more worldly concerns.

The mages even "commission" shows for their citizens and themselves. They accomplish this by using Correspondence magick to bring all manner of entertainers to the Realm and then using Mind magick to cloak the entertainers' memories. The performers remember only vivid dreams of wild shows.

The archmage Marianna, Master of Correspondence, Life, Matter, Mind and Time, oversees the Chantry and ensures its protection. The Chantry guards are very powerful and possess mental powers of unusual sorts. Mages from one of the multi-Tradition cabals serve as the Realm's Sentinels. They handle most of the away missions for Balador.

The Nodes of the Pleasuredome include four magickal locations in Istanbul, including the real Hagia Sofia. The Chantry also controls a Node in Thrace called the Temple of Dionysus; this is an ancient Greek temple enshrouded in a magickal forest. The priestesses of the temple are said to be on good terms with werewolf Amazons called Black Furies.

The earthly aspects of the Chantry are in New York, Istanbul and Los Angeles. Some mages who spend part of their time in New York have encountered members of a Wyrm-serving cult known as the Seventh Generation (see the **Werewolf** supplement **Rage Across New York**). Infuriated by the group's deliberate corruption of sexuality, the



cabal is hatching a plan to infiltrate the Seventh Generation and bring it down.

The Celestial Temple of the Sun

Under the streets of Vatican City there is an underground temple. This massive edifice resembles a medieval monastery. Labyrinthine tunnels and countless rooms fill the place, lit by magickal candles that never extinguish or burn down.

One would expect the Ancestral Chantry of the Celestial Chorus to be a place with glorious palaces and streets of gold, where angelic hosts sing praises unto the heavens. The truth is quite different. The mages of the temple are ascetics who do not wish to imitate Heaven. Rather, they live quiet, monastic lives.

The temple, known to a rare few even among the Celestial Chorus, is actually not on Earth. Instead, the subterranean stairs leading into the temple are actually a gateway to the Chantry's Realm. The mages can cause the stairs to appear and disappear with a simple command. There is no "outside" in the Realm; the entirety of the Realm is the Chantry itself. The temple is enormous and can grow or shrink to accommodate the wishes of the mages. The Chantry houses many of the holiest relics and artifacts on Earth.

The Celestial Temple of the Sun houses 30 mages of the Celestial Chorus. They come from all parts of the world and all walks of life. They are united in their service to the One. They seek Ascension, but focus on the diminishing spirituality of the Sleepers. They want to restore religious belief, for they believe that only through faith in the One can Ascension be achieved.

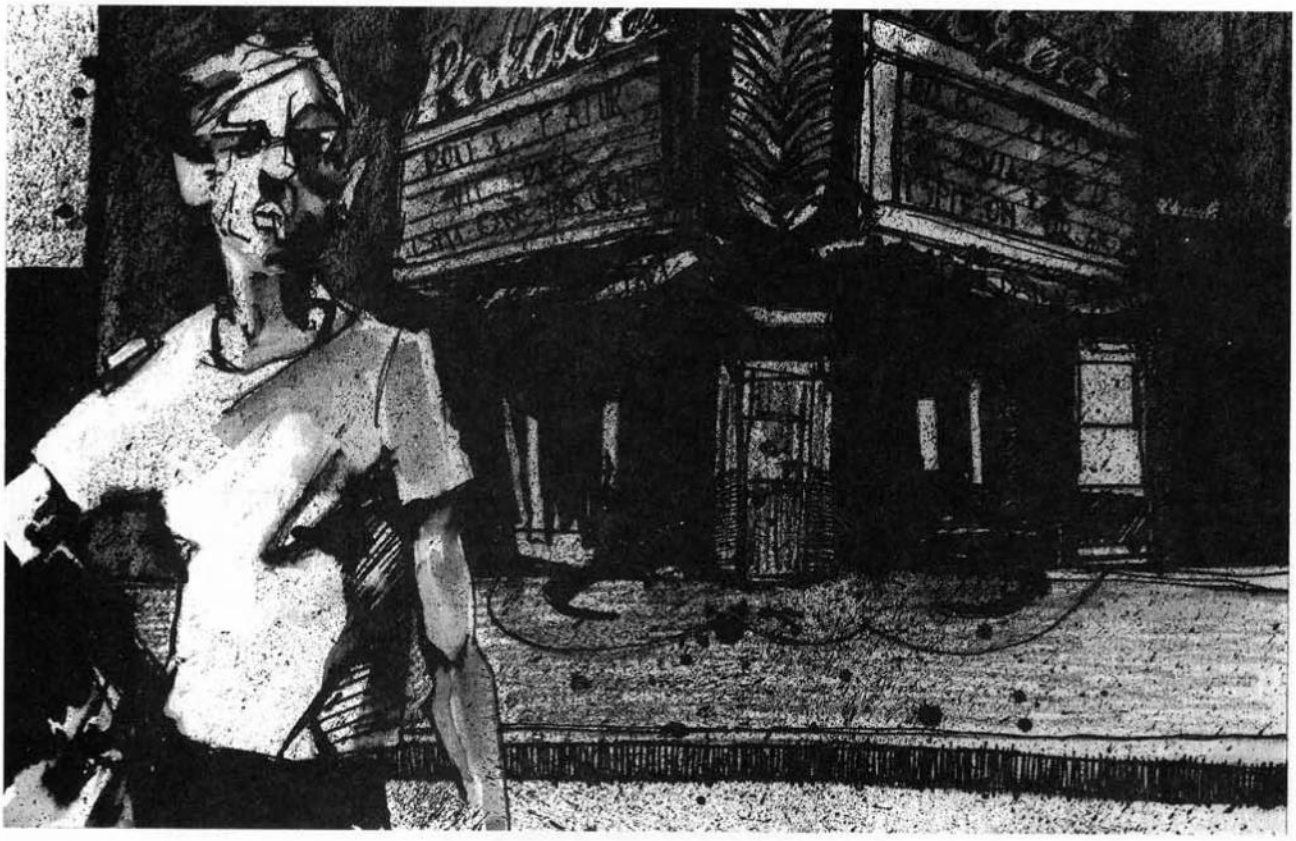
There is a rumor that the mages of the temple are in direct contact with the Oracles of Prime, and that they are going to bring a massive miracle of the One to the Sleepers of the Earth in the near future. The details remain unknown, but the mages eagerly prepare for this event, believing it to be the necessary catalyst to lead the Sleepers back to the One.

The Nightmare Theatre: A Hollow Ones' Haunt

Was that the Bogeyman?
As a matter of fact, it was.
— Halloween

The modern denizens of the World of Darkness have given up movie theaters in exchange for cineplexes. As a result, many old theaters lie crumbling in squalid downtown areas.

One such abandoned theater in Gary, Indiana is known as the Royal Palace Theatre, though no royalty ever visited the place. Now the dilapidated theater, closed since the '70s, serves as home to a cabal of Hollow Ones. There are



three mages and two Acolytes. The mages are Crystal Spinner, Marvin Hafuer, and Klenton McKay; the Acolytes are Julie Pratt and Dwaine Smith. Their power is weak, but their resolve is strong.

The mages use the offices, the area behind the screen, and a huge hidden basement as their home. They have no security system, guards, or wards, and only one servant, a 15-year-old runaway named Eddie. They often show old movies for their own enjoyment, and they have discussed the possibility of turning the place into a nightclub.

The mages know two vampires of Gary, Juggler and Michael (both are described in **Vampire: The Masquerade**, pages 248-249). They have also met many of the anarchs in Chicago. They are hoping to form some kind of gang with a few of the Kindred; the Kindred, on the other hand, plan on making the mages their Blood Bound servants.

Appendix Two: Optional Creation System

Creation Points

You can't have everything. Where would you put it?
— Steven Wright



This optional system provides rules for Storytellers who want a more precise method of Chantry construction. Each step of the creation process lists a variety of advantages and disadvantages. These characteristics are purchased with Creation Points (or, in the case of disadvantages, provide additional Creation Points).

Creation Points are normally determined by the number and power level of the cabals who belong to the Chantry. They are spent upon particular traits possessed by the Chantry. Additional points may be gained by taking disadvantages. The base number of Creation Points is determined by the Storyteller. The following guidelines are suggested:

Pitifully Weak Chantry	10-20 Creation Points
Weak Chantry	20-30 Creation Points
Average Chantry	30-50 Creation Points
Strong Chantry	50-70 Creation Points
Powerful Chantry	70-100 Creation Points
Very Powerful Chantry	100+ Creation Points

Storyteller characters "contribute" Creation Points based on the abilities of each NPC cabal in the Chantry. Players may take the Chantry Background (below), pool their points, and add these to the NPC points. It should be obvious how expensive building a new Chantry can be!

NPC cabal Creation Points (per cabal)

Cabal members are Apprentices:
10 Creation Points

Cabal members are predominantly Disciples:
20 Creation Points

Cabal members are predominantly Adepts:
30 Creation Points

Cabal members are predominantly Masters:
50 Creation Points

Costs

A Chantry automatically owns a building of some sort. Each Node costs five points, and a Horizon Realm costs 10. All characteristics add to or subtract from this amount.

All aspects of the new Chantry are covered in the following lists. Advantages are listed with the points required to buy the advantage, while disadvantages are listed with the points that they subtract from the cost of the Chantry. The Storyteller is advised to emphasize the disadvantages, making them worth the points they return. Total disadvantages should not be worth more than half of the total spent on advantages.

Example: The Fifth Ridge Chantry has 100 points in advantages, including Loyal Acolytes (+5), and 45 points in disadvantages, including a Node located in a public place (-5).

The six aspects of Chantry creation have been grouped into interrelated categories:

Node, Realm, and Building — External: These aspects cover the Chantry's physical dimensions, general state of the Chantry and its surroundings, and its research facilities.

Outside Population, Servants and Acolytes, and Internal Workings — Internal: These aspects cover the general population of the Chantry and its Realm (if applicable), and the relations of the mages therein.

The costs listed cover one particular area. Each additional area advantage must be bought separately. The characteristics of each aspect should be noted during the creation of the Chantry.

Example: The Fifth Ridge Chantry's five-point Wards cover both the Chantry building and the Node, for a total of 10 points. If they extended to the entire Realm, they would cost 15 points.

External

Atmosphere

The location has a certain ambience about it that either comforts or disconcerts anyone who spends time there. Extreme atmospheres may require a visitor to spend a Willpower point in order to leave or to remain. Residents are immune to this effect, though the atmosphere will certainly affect their general mood.

Alien (-10)

Spooky (-5)

Peaceful (+5)

Heavenly (+10)

Phenomena

These characteristics reflect paranormal phenomena in or around the Chantry, Node or Realm.

Chantry: A New Background

This background is intended for Chantries created through the point-based system described in this chapter, and may only be taken by player characters. Should the player characters leave the Chantry to which they donated their Creation Points, they cannot take the Creation Points with them. However, upon leaving the old Chantry, any unspent experience may be used to purchase more points in Chantry, provided the characters join another Chantry created through this process.

- • 1 Creation Point
- • • 2 Creation Points
- • • • 3 Creation Points
- • • • • 4 Creation Points
- • • • • • 5 Creation Points

Note that the Chantry Background differs from the Node Background, which refers to the amount of additional Quintessence the players' cabal may access on its own.

Curse: The area is cursed for some reason, and has some terrible effect on those who visit. Severely cursed areas may even punish the inhabitants. The severity and effect of the curse should be decided by the Storyteller, but should be in line with the disadvantage's bonus.

Severe (-10)

Mild (-5)

Dark Secret (-2): The curse may be lifted if someone discovers the mysterious cause of the curse. Treat as a mild curse until then.

Haunted (-5): The area is plagued with restless spirits that annoy the residents of the area. They may disrupt classes or experiments, steal Quintessence, or vandalize property.

Psychic Emanations

Psychics often experience strange, "prickly" sensations in or around Nodes. Some emanations may be so strong that even Sleepers notice them with a successful roll of Perception + Empathy (difficulty 6). This disadvantage is particularly prevalent in areas with large residues of Quintessence.

Powerful Emanations (-5): Sleepers may notice, as mentioned above.

Strong Emanations (-2): Psychics notice easily (no roll).

Normal (+0): Psychics feel the emanations if they successfully roll Perception + Alertness (difficulty 8).

No Psychic Emanations (+5): No one notices anything out of the ordinary.

Magickal Manifestations

Strange things occur around the location: dancing patterns of color, temperature changes or eerie noises. No actual entity seems to be behind these phenomena.

Subtle (-5): Noticeable with Perception + Alertness (difficulty 8).

Noticeable (-10): As above, but (difficulty 6).

Blatant (-15): Readily noticeable (no roll needed). Such phenomena may draw the attention of the Technocracy or other paranormal researchers if they occur outside of a Horizon Realm.

Continuum Fluctuations

Temporal Shifts (-5): Time runs in a different pattern from Earth's, or perhaps conforms to no known pattern at all. This phenomenon might be a regular part of the Realm or may be a more localized effect. Temporal shifts add two to the difficulties of all Time Sphere effects attempted within the vicinity.

Energy Fluctuations

Quintessence surges and ebbs in unpredictable patterns, making magick unpredictable and possibly altering the daily flow of Quintessence into the Realm.

Extreme Variation (-10): More than 10 points per day.

Subtle Variation (-5): Fewer than 10 points per day.

Guardians

"i am powerful, but trapped. those who own me cannot request anything and hope to realize their boon. i am unhappy, and an unhappy djinn is an evil djinn. were i free, i might be your slave, but as i am now, i will visit unhappiness on you in a thousand forms!...

"what a lousy disposition i've got!" the djinn said, and then he laughed.

— Harlan Ellison, *Djinn, No Chaser*

Guardians are spirits or creatures who watch over the area. Some may be bound or otherwise unwilling, while others guard their protectorates out of honor, love or some other commitment. Guardians are fairly static and cannot

Guardian Chart

Power Level	Character Points
One — Weakling	Attributes: 5/4/3, Abilities: 5, Backgrounds: 1, Willpower: 2, Quintessence: 2, Freebie Points: 0-5
Two — Below Average	Attributes: 7/5/4, Abilities: 15, Backgrounds: 3, Willpower: 3, Quintessence: 2, Freebie Points: 6-14
Three — Average	Attributes: 10/8/6, Abilities: 25, Backgrounds: 5, Willpower: 5, Quintessence: 3, Freebie Points: 15-29
Four — Exceptional	Attributes: 12/10/8, Abilities: 35, Backgrounds: 9, Willpower: 7, Quintessence: 5, Freebie Points: 30-39
Five — Powerful	Attributes: 14/12/10, Abilities: 40, Backgrounds: 13, Willpower: 9, Quintessence: 7, Freebie Points: 40-49
Six — Extra-powerful	Attributes: 16/14/12, Abilities: 50, Backgrounds: 16, Willpower: 10, Quintessence: 10, Freebie Points: 50-59
Seven — Super-powerful	Attributes: 18/16/14, Abilities: 60, Backgrounds: 20, Willpower: 10, Quintessence: 14, Freebie Points: 60-74
Eight — Ultra-powerful	Attributes: 20/18/16, Abilities: 70, Backgrounds: 25, Willpower: 10, Quintessence: 17, Freebie Points: 75-95
Nine — Lesser Celestine	Unknowable (whatever Storyteller desires)
Ten — Celestine	Unknowable (seemingly limitless power)

No Guardian (-10): The area must be protected by the Chantry mages themselves.

Weak (-5): Guardian has a power level of one or two.

Normal (+0): Level three or four Guardian.

Powerful (+5): Level five or six.

Ridiculous (+20): Level seven. Higher than this is not recommended for player Chantries.

ABC trial 4

leave their areas to fight or rescue members of the Chantry. Supernatural guardians often "feed" on Quintessence at a rate of three points per day per power level. Guardians with slightly different diets (vampires, for instance) leave the area unattended from time to time to feed (and might bring back some unpleasant surprises for the mages as a result).

Strength

The relative power of the guardian. Such beings are built like normal characters; the number of points used in so doing is determined by power level.

Nature

The nature of the area's guardians.

Sleepers (+1 per five guards): These guards have no idea what they are protecting. The area cannot have any characteristics that would adversely affect the guards. Sleeper guards are usually well armed with mundane weapons.

Aware (+5 per five guards): Inhabitants of the area who are aware of the place's special nature and who have some skills or innate abilities.

Supernatural (+10 per five guards): Vampires, werewolves or spirits, generally of power level three and up.

Loyalty

The general attitude of the guardian toward its task, and its feelings toward the mages of the Chantry.

Fanatical (+15)

Loyal (+10)

Unwilling (-5)

Hateful (-10)

Living Entity (+20): The entire area is one large organism (and hopefully friendly to the local mages).

Location

The geographical location of the Node or Chantry. As Nodes tend to be Earth-based, a Node located in a heavily populated area may well be inaccessible at certain times. Chantries in towns or cities might have problems with curiosity-seekers, thieves or local authorities, and might present difficulties with Paradox if located on Earth.

City (-5): The area is located within the heart of a city.

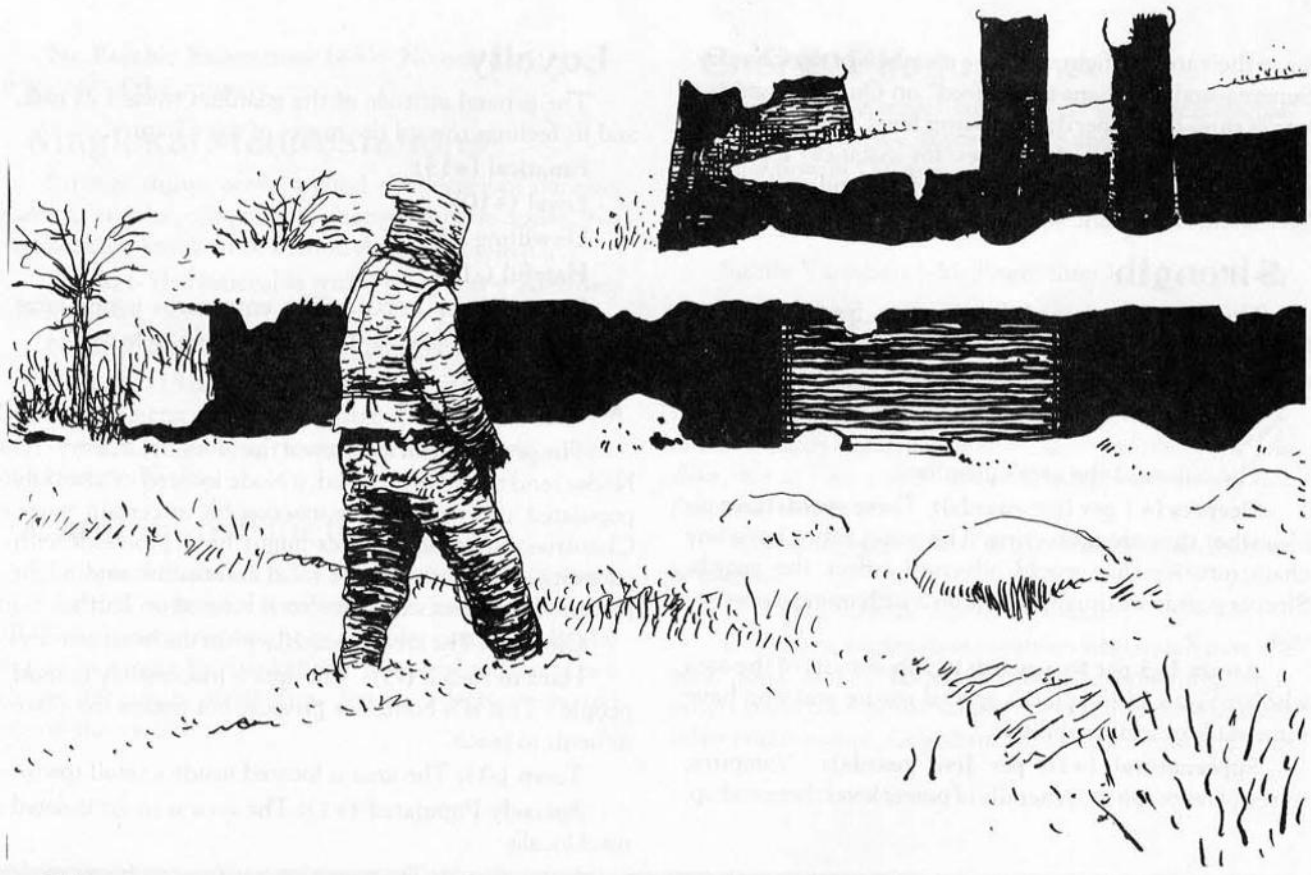
Hard to Reach (-5): The area is inaccessible to most people. This is a bonus for privacy, but makes the place difficult to reach.

Town (-1): The area is located inside a small town.

Sparsely Populated (+1): The area is in an isolated rural locale.

Isolated (+5): The area is located far away from people and may never have been viewed by Sleepers.





Size

The size of the Chantry, Node or Realm. Each area is purchased separately. Conversely, a bonus for one tiny-sized area subtracts from the cost of others. A shoebox Chantry in a tiny Realm with a tiny Node would be worth 30 points and a bad case of claustrophobia. One area might well be large while another is small.

Example: A large Chantry in a large world with a medium-sized Node would cost 25 points. If either the Chantry or the Realm were small, the cost would be 10 points.

The daily Quintessence yield of a Node is relative to the cost or bonus of the Node's size, i.e., a small Node yields five fewer points of Quintessence, while a huge one produces 15 more per day. Conversely, a Realm requires 10 times its cost to maintain. A vast Realm would thus require 400 Quintessence a day!

Tiny (-10): The area is pretty small: a Node the size of a trash can, a Chantry the size of an R.V., a Realm of an acre or two.

Small (-5): A dumpster-sized Node, a Chantry the size of a small house, a Realm of around 10 acres.

Average (+5): A Node as large as a house, a Chantry like a mansion, a Realm the size of a city.

Large (+10): A Node the size of a large building, a castle-sized Chantry, a Realm equivalent to a medium-sized state.

Huge (+15): An acre-sized Node, a Chantry the size of a small city, a Realm the size of a continent.

Vast (+40): (Realm Only) A Realm this size would be a small pocket world, complete with a biosphere, seasons and indigenous lifeforms.

Security System

Areas may have some sort of ward or detection device to protect them. As mentioned above, an advantage only covers one particular area of the Chantry. Security systems are further detailed at the end of this appendix.

Simple Trap System (+5): The area has a system of traps, either mundane or magickal. These catch any intruder who fails a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7). The intruder is detained until freed or until she breaks loose through brute strength (Strength Feat of 8).

Complex Trap System (+10): Treat as above, except the difficulty is raised to 8 and the roll must be made every turn or so. Breaking free is a Strength Feat of 11.

Low-Grade Security System (+2): The location has some sort of warning system against intruders. Intruders must make one Perception + Stealth roll (difficulty 7) to avoid alerting the area's guardian.

Average Security System (+5): As above, but the roll must be made once per turn whenever the intruder moves about.

State-of-the-Art Security System (+10): Same as Average Security System, but the difficulty is 8, and the entire Chantry is alerted.

Protective Wards

The area is protected by a ward that prevents a particular type of being or material from entering that place except when accompanied by a member of the Chantry. Objects warded against are not harmed, but cannot enter unless they make a successful Willpower roll against the difficulty of the ward.

2-pt. Ward: Difficulty 8.

5-pt. Ward: Difficulty 9.

10-pt. Ward: Difficulty 10.

Ward bars entry of one kind of being or material (vampires, werecats, cold iron): +2 pts.

One category (supernatural entities, mortals, minerals) barred: +5 pts.

Any unauthorized thing barred: +10 pts.

Defensive Wards: As above, but the wards damage their targets.

Defensive wards inflict one level of aggravated damage per five additional points spent. This damage may be soaked.

Fortification

This characteristic delineates the place's general resistance to attack. Fortification might derive from a secure location atop a hill, thick walls, natural (or unnatural) obstacles, or some sort of magickal defenses. The exact game effects depend on the nature of the fortification, but Storytellers should take the level of defense into account by levying penalties against attacking forces or high difficulties for destructive actions.

Poorly Fortified (-5): The place has no natural or artificial defenses. It is a sitting duck.

Average Fortification (0): The area has a few advantages to its position, allowing it to be easily defended.

Well-Fortified (+5): A pretty tough place.

Mighty (+10): Strong defenses.

Impregnable (+15): Damn near impossible to breach.

Other Characteristics

The Chantry may not own the area outright, or may have to defend it on a regular basis. Shallowing (see Chapter Four) may be particularly strong near the Node, or special rituals may be needed to enter a Chantry house. These characteristics cover anything not already mentioned.

Shallowing

Strong Shallowing (-5): The Node's shallowing is constant, making it far easier for earthly intruders to pass into the Horizon Realm and for extradimensional intruders to pass into Earth.

Typical Shallowing (0): The Node's shallowing takes effect only under certain common conditions, such as during the summer, while it is raining, or if the person is wearing green. There should be at least three or four conditions allowing passage.

Weak Shallowing (+2): The Node's shallowing takes effect only under uncommon conditions, such as between 12:00 and 12:01 a.m., when a certain song is sung, or only through a hard-to-spot landmark. There should be at least three or four of these uncommon conditions allowing for passage.

No Shallowing (+5): The Node has no shallowing. While this protects the Realm from intruders, it prevents easy access for Chantry members.

Communications

Reflects the facilities for a certain area. Each area must be purchased separately.

Modern (+2): The area has telephones, intercoms or shortwave radios.

Trans-Umbral Communications (+5): The Chantry has some means of communication with parties in the Near Umbra or in a Horizon Realm.

Trans-Horizonal Communications (+10): Communications may be established with parties in the Deep Umbra. This is most common among the Nephandi and the Void Engineers.

Land Status

Reflects the status of property. Does the Node belong to the Chantry? Do they lease their mansion? This could lead to no end of complications.

Large Private Holding (+5): The Node rests in the center of a very large tract of land. The actual size is determined by the surroundings, i.e. 10 square miles of rain forest, 500 acres in a rural area, or one city block.

Privately Owned (+0): The area belongs to one mage in the Chantry. If the mage leaves the Chantry, she can take it with her. She could also will it to one individual, who might not be as generous....

Leased (variable): The mages do not actually own the area. It is leased to them for 30 years (-5), 15 years (-10), or five years (-15).

Well-Documented (-1): The place is documented in a number of reputable occult sources and may be pestered by the curious. This disadvantage only applies to Chantries or Nodes.

Frequently Raided (-10): The area is constantly under assault. Perhaps the Node was a Garou caern, or the Chantry a vampire's haven. Perhaps the Technocracy is aware of the site and wants it for its own. The raiders should be the equals of the Node guardian, in order to enjoy occasional success.

Miscellaneous

Ritual Access (+15): Some ritual is necessary to use or enter the area. Treat as a 10-point ward if the ritual is unknown.

Special Portal (variable): The area has some special magickal gateway linking it to another site on Earth (usually a Node), the Near Umbra or another Realm. Even Sleepers may use this gate, though most gates require some ritual or key word to open them. Gates cost from three to five points, depending on the importance of the portal and where it leads.

Specific Characteristics

Nodes

Node Battery (-1 per five Quintessence): The Node does not have ley lines connecting it to the Chantry. The mages must collect Quintessence in person on a regular basis. Tass cannot be collected in a Node battery.

Tass (-1 per five Quintessence in Tass form): The Node produces Quintessence in the form of some material object, be it water, crystals, dirt, Jello, tree bark or aluminum foil. This Tass must be collected in person; it's easy to transport, but easy to raid as well.

Named (+5): The Node bears a magickal true name. All who know the Node's true name may draw Quintessence from it by normal means. If the name is unknown, it cannot easily be raided. Add two to Resistance except when the name is spoken.

Realms

Some variants cost extra Quintessence to maintain.

Interconnected Locations (+10): Various places in the Realm are connected to one another, though they may be far apart. In effect, the Realm seems to have no external barriers. Quintessence Cost: +5

Sphere Ratings (variable): The cost of changing the magickal Sphere ratings, and thus the nature of set reality, in a given Realm is + 2 points for every + or - in a single Sphere rating. For example, a Realm with +2 Life, -1 Time, and +3 Matter would cost a total of 12 points.

Surroundings and Climate

The general appearance of the Realm. Extremely volatile geography or climate may make the Realm difficult to inhabit.

Difficult Terrain (-5): The Realm has imposing geographical features that make travel extremely difficult (rough mountains, nasty swamps). The terrain is far worse than that of Earth; perhaps there are even combinations of terrain, such as quicksand-filled jungles or lakes of fire. Quintessence Cost: +15

Mundane (+0): The Realm appears similar to Earth.

Simple Terrain (+5): The Realm has no imposing geographical features to speak of. Moving about is easy.

Strange (+5): The Realm has certain earthly features, but it is obviously not Earth. New visitors to the Realm must make a Perception + Survival (or Enigmas) roll (difficulty 6) to keep from endangering themselves in some way. Quintessence Cost: +5

Bizarre (+10): The Realm is nothing like Earth. Visitors must make a Perception + Enigmas roll *and* a Perception + Survival roll (difficulty 8 for both) to keep from endangering themselves or doing something ridiculous. Those knowledgeable of the terrain (such as the Chantry's residents) may ignore the roll. Quintessence Cost: +10

Extradimensional (+10): The Realm is not three-dimensional. All newcomers to the Realm must score 20 successes in an extended Perception + Enigmas roll (difficulty 8) to orient themselves properly. Quintessence Cost: +15

Indoors (+10): The entire Realm is located under one roof. There is no weather, a comfortable climate, no heavenly bodies, no night and no day. Quintessence Cost: +10

Climate

Unsurvivable Climate (-10): This Realm's climate can usually kill those who are not specially adjusted to it. Perhaps the entire Realm is made of ice, is underwater, or has a carbon monoxide atmosphere.

Harsh Climate (-5)

Earthly Climate (0)

Comfortable Climate (+5)

Miscellaneous

Advanced Transportation (+10)

The Realm has advanced or magickal transportation devices. Great distances may be covered with ease. Examples: teleportation devices, flying carpets, cloud ships, anti-gravity bikes, pegasi. Quintessence Cost: +10



Building Conditions

These advantages apply only to the Chantry itself.

Ruins (-10): The buildings need extensive rebuilding or repair.

Rundown (-5)

Like New (+5)

High-Tech (+10): State-of-the art everything.

Research Facilities

The library, laboratories and information network that the Chantry offers its members. For more details, see Chapter Four.

Arcane Library (variable)

The Chantry automatically has 20 study points, and it may have an additional 10 study points per Creation Point spent. Thus, expending five Creation Points would give the Chantry library a total of 70 study points. All books here belong to the Chantry, not to individual mages.

Poor (-5): The Chantry's mundane library is either nonexistent or so small that it is of no use in doing nonmagickal research. The mages must go elsewhere to find the appropriate references.

Modest (0): The Chantry's mundane library isn't small by Sleeper standards, but it still lacks significant resource material. Research rolls are difficulty 8, or 6 in one area of study.

Good (+5): The Chantry's mundane library is large. Research rolls are difficulty 7, or 5 in three particular areas of study.

Exceptional (+10): The Chantry's mundane library is huge. The Chantry must be Large in size just to house it. Research rolls are difficulty 6, or 4 in five particular areas of study.

Overwhelming (+15): The Chantry must be Huge just to house this massive collection of books. Research rolls are difficulty 5, or 3 in 10 particular areas of study.

Laboratories

This category delineates the space available for magickal experimentation. Normal facilities allow mages to gain one study point per success on an Arete roll (difficulty 7). Labs are especially important for the Sons of Ether and Order of Hermes.

None (-10): The mages have no laboratories and may not earn study points through research, nor may they engage in alchemical or weird science experiments.



Inadequate (-5): The laboratories in the Chantry are substandard. In one month, a mage may gain one study point per success on an Arete roll (difficulty 8).

Preferential Treatment (additional -2): The Chantry practices some sort of discrimination based on rank or Tradition. Those on the short end of the deal get inadequate lab space, while other members get the best facilities.

Superior (+5): The mages have wonderful laboratories, which give them an edge in their studies. In a month, mages gain one study point per success on an Arete roll (difficulty 6).

State-of-the-Art Laboratories (+10): The mages' labs are the best possible; everything feasible is provided. In one month, a mage may gain one study point per success on an Arete roll (difficulty 5).

Internal

Grim-faced and forbidding
Their faces pulled tight,
An angular mass of New Yorkers...
Head-first humanity pause at a light
Then flow through the streets of the city.
— Rush, "The Camera Eye"

Population

This characteristic reflects the number and nature of the inhabitants of the Realm (and possibly the Chantry as well).

Dangerous Inhabitants (-10): Some of the inhabitants pose a threat to outsiders, the mages and each other. The nature of the danger is up to the Storyteller, but may include treachery, criminal tendencies or a really unpleasant diet.

Overpopulated (-10): The Realm is teeming with life — too much for its ecosystem to support. Privacy is nonexistent, violence is high and even cannibalism may be practiced.

No People (-5): The Realm has animals, but no sentient life.

Bizarre Inhabitants (+5 for bizarre, +10 for truly bizarre): The inhabitants are strange. They may be elves, intelligent cockroaches or floating piles of goo.

Advanced Inhabitants (+15): The inhabitants are more evolved than humans, and thus possess superhuman intelligence, physical abilities, magickal abilities or advanced knowledge. Some of the inhabitants may be of great assistance to the mages. Quintessence Cost: +15.

Social Structure

The societal nature of the Realms' inhabitants. Applies only to sentient beings.

Primitive (-5): Hunters and gatherers with few, if any, social customs.

Archaic (0): The inhabitants have a rudimentary social system, with simple laws, politics and social taboos.

Modern (+5): The inhabitants have a developed social system, including detailed law and politics.

Advanced (+10): A society with highly refined art, philosophy, magick, technology, or all of the above.

Servants and Acolytes

These are non-mages who serve the Chantry directly in some important capacity. Unlike guardians (see above), servants and Acolytes have free will and are not bound to a particular area or duty.

Military (variable): The Chantry has an actual military force. Five Creation Points invested allow two soldiers per mage. Consider these retainers to be power level two (see above).

No Servants (-10): There are no Acolytes at the Chantry; the mages must do all their own chores. This reduces study time by half.

Few Servants (-5): The are not enough servants to meet all the needs of the Chantry. Work is left undone if the mages do not pitch in. There is one servant for every two mages.

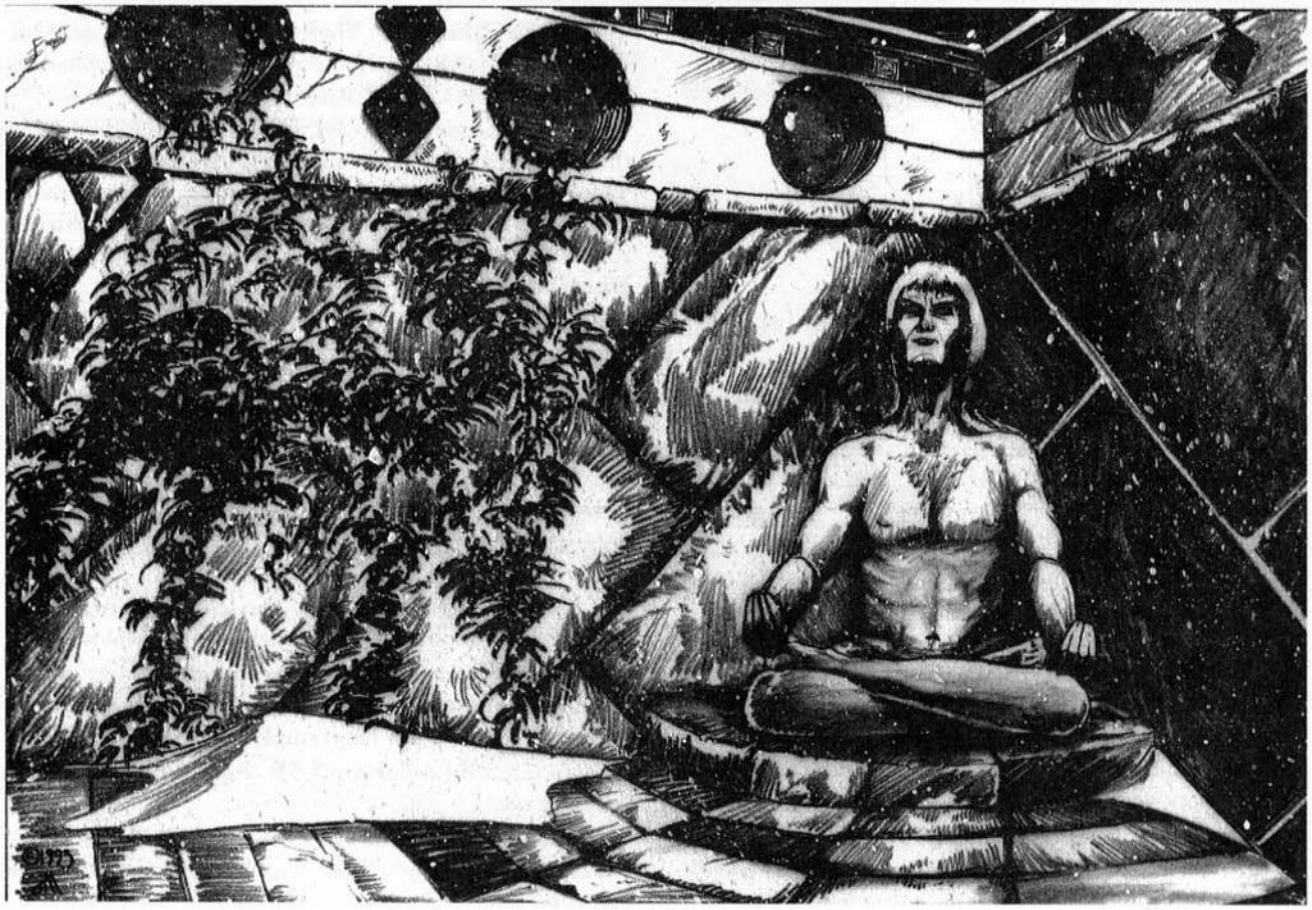
Functional (0): There are two servants for each mage.

Lots of Servants (+5): There are more than enough servants. Each mage has his own personal valet. The servants can usually perform additional services as requested by the mages.

Innumerable Servants (+10): There are so many servants that the mages do not even know all of them. The servants are able to perform all the necessary functions and provide plenty of additional services, making the lives of the mages as luxurious as possible.

Hereditary Servants (additional +2): The servants of the Chantry have long family histories of service to the Chantry. They know their duties without being told and know more about the Chantry's goings-on than many of the mages.

Consor (variable): The mages' sidekicks. Each consor must be purchased individually, at +2 points per power level, i.e., +2 for level one, +6 for level three, etc. Consors



should be developed in detail as individual characters, not just faceless statistics.

Loyalty

Jesus:...and that's not all I see,
one of you here dining,
one of my twelve chosen,
will leave to betray me...
Judas: Cut out the dramatics!
You know very well who!
— Tim Rice, *Jesus Christ, Superstar*

This category measures the general loyalty of the Chantry servants and Acolytes. There may, of course, be exceptions....

Spies (-10): There are traitors among you, leaking information to enemies of the Chantry.

Disloyal (-5): The servants are forced into service and perform their tasks out of poverty or fear. They are good potential spies for the enemies of the Chantry.

Loyal (+5): The servants are notably loyal to the mages.

Committed (+10): The servants perform their duties with great zest, efficiency and zeal. They enjoy their work, and there is always good cheer to be found.

Fanatical (+15): The servants would all willingly give their lives for the Chantry.

Internal Politics

Gentlemen, if we do not hang together we shall most assuredly hang separately.
— Benjamin Franklin

Several of these characteristics may apply to a particular Chantry.

Scheming (-10): The mages of the Chantry are always plotting behind each other's backs. This may be because of personal rivalries, secret hatreds, questions of honor, paranoia or gossip. It's hard to trust anyone, and the Chantry suffers for it.

Strict Hierarchy (-10): The Chantry has a strict internal structure making it difficult to advance in position. Everything follows a strict procedure. Massive amounts of "red tape" often limit or slow the actions of the mages. A common flaw of the Technocracy.

Conflicting Loyalties (-5): Many of the mages of the Chantry have strong loyalties to a group (or groups) outside the Chantry and often find their loyalty and responsibilities conflicting with one another.

Disorganized (-5): The mages are very disorganized. They have trouble coming to any sort of agreement and/or implementing plans. The various cabals seldom know what the other cabals are doing, and it would be difficult to gather all the cabals for a concerted effort on anything.

Security Systems Chart

Sensors	Perception
Microwave Sensor	8
Magicked Ward	7
Motion Sensor	6
[new chart here]	
Barriers	**Strength**
Window	1
Door (wood)	3
Door (metal)	5
Door Lock	2-5
Wall (cement)	9
Bulkhead	13

Perception: The Dice Pool used to detect intruders.

Strength: The Dice Pool (see the Strength Chart in **Mage**, page 257) required to break through the barrier.

Rogue Cabals (-5): There is at least one Rogue cabal within the Chantry, and its activities sometimes embarrass or endanger the Chantry itself.

Highly Organized (+5): The mages are so organized they can act as one in any situation. Meetings are regular. This does not mean that all members are totally loyal or that there are no internal rivalries or similar problems, simply that such conflicts are put aside when the need arises.

Harmonious (+10): The cabals share a deep respect and fondness for each other and a fanatical loyalty to the Chantry as a whole.

Leadership

This category measures the general hierarchy of the Chantry and how it affects the Chantry's workings. All bonuses are cumulative (if the Chantry is so unfortunate...).

Malign Leadership (-15): The leadership is actively evil and may not be averse to using torture or murder as a means or an end.

Foolish Leadership (-5): The Chantry's leadership is unskilled, inept or just plain stupid.

Dictatorial Leadership (-5): All cabals must follow orders *or else!*

Wise Leadership (+5): The Chantry leader is about the best around. Through his leadership, the Chantry has achieved many successes. He need not be a nice guy, however....

Benevolent Leadership (+10): The leaders are just and kind, going out of their way for the Chantry and local community.

Other characteristics may be added or changed at the Storyteller's discretion.

Security Systems

The following security systems are adapted from those of *Rage Across the Amazon*. They are meant for Storytellers who wish to detail the systems that players might set up or foil during their adventures around Chantries. Basic wards are described above.

Normal Systems

Most advanced security systems are audiovisual, involving cameras, closed-circuit televisions and microphones. Mikes are often tuned to pick up certain sounds (breaking glass, voices, etc.).

These security systems are based on sensors and come in two types: on/off and perception-based.

On/Off sensors do not require a roll to detect something. They either trigger or they do not. For example, a window breakage sensor will trigger if the window is broken. An electric eye will go off only if the light beam is broken. There are no rolls for these sensors. The Storyteller must have the players describe their actions very carefully. The sensors then respond accordingly.

Perception-based sensors have a Perception Attribute, which is used in the same manner as a character's Attribute. For example, a thermal sensor might have a Perception rating of 8. The sensor will roll eight dice (difficulty 6) to detect a character and trigger an alarm.

Magick

Magickal effects may be used either to disguise or to discover security devices if the mage is actively using magick to scan for them.

Spheres Needed to Locate Normal Security Devices (Average difficulty: 7 or higher)

Correspondence 2, Entropy 1, Forces 1 or Matter 1

Spheres Needed to Locate Magickal Devices

Entropy 2, Forces 2, Prime 1 or Spirit 2

Each of these magicks has a different effect; while Correspondence may be used to "look around corners," Spirit magick could open negotiations with local spirits for safe passage (of course, the spirits need not feel bound to tell the *truth*...).

Mages must have some form of energy control, usually gained at Sphere Rank Two, to disrupt most sensors. Note that disruption of one sensor might trigger another.

Difficulty to Disrupt or Disable Sensors

Normal: 6 or higher

Magickal: 8 or higher

Mage Errata (or, "What We Missed")

Nobody, as they say, is perfect. A few errors got past us on the first printing of **Mage,** and we've heard about it ever since (especially from each other). Many of these mistakes were caught and corrected in the second printing, but for those of our fans who bought the first printing, we apologize and offer the following corrections.

Now, could you please call off the damn H.I.T. Marks? They're doing terrible things to my office...

Between Enemy Lines

Ever lay there half asleep all hours of the night
With some nagging demon tugging at that tiny bell
Inside your mind
When suddenly that strange idea
Bursts into an inspiration
You grab for it and then
The whole thing slips through your fingers
- Oingo Boingo, "Good for your Soul"

The following paragraphs were dropped from Chapter Six, from the Traditions descriptions:

P. 128: **Philosophy:** What was once will one day be again. People laugh at us because we employ formulas and chants, but we know the power that is inherent in tradition. What we do utilizes the True Forms of which Plato spoke. We work with the fundamental principles of magick throughout time: the laws of sympathy and contagion. How can one understand that every movement we make, every word we incant, every formula we inscribe has meaning not just on one level, but on all levels? Our strength is the strength of our Tradition, and we will never give it up.

P. 128: (From the bottom of the page) For once, the Technocracy may be right, at least with regard to the Sons' mental stability. There are whispers among the other Traditions that some of the Sons' experiments have gone horribly wrong. The Sons refuse to issue comment regarding the rumors of a strange and foul case of spontaneous generation in a Russian laboratory. The same rumors say that the resulting obscenity is kept under lock and key by the Tradition.

It might be noted that though the Tradition is named the Sons of Ether, it does welcome female reality scientists into its ranks. The women within the Tradition have been campaigning for a revision of the name, with little success.

Paradox

The table on Page 172 is correct in regards to Paradox (step 6); a botch rolled gains the mage an automatic point of Paradox just for botching, plus ;

- 2 points per die in the case of vulgar magic in front of Sleepers,

- 1 point per die in the case of vulgar magick without Sleeper witnesses, and

- 1 point per "1"s rolled in the case of coincidental Paradox.

Some players have asked for a clarification of the Paradox effect and resultant backlash. If it helps, this explanation works as well as any;

Botching a magick roll can be interpreted as "seeing the wires" behind the magick. Warping the nature of perceived reality "displaces" a certain amount of that reality, a feat that requires a certain amount of faith. Blowing your roll in front of witnesses wrecks suspension of disbelief (even your own), and opens the door for Paradox to fix your little red wagon.

Even alone, a mage is not immune to this effect. A mage botching a roll could be thought of as a high-wire artist who looks down at the wrong time. Even if no one else notices the botch, the mage is aware that she has blown it ("Oops..." splat!).

Tiptoe Through the Gauntlet...

On Pages 214-215, "stepping sideways" into the Near Umbra is referred to, but no table is provided for the difficulty of this feat. The table below is modified from **Werewolf: The Apocalypse.**

Sphere Rank and Experience

The chart on Page 232 is correct regarding the points needed to progress in Sphere rank. Storytellers should note that characters could progress very quickly through the ranks if experience points are awarded too generously during play.

Place	Difficulty
High-tech lab	9
Inner city	8
Most places	7
Rural countryside	6
Deep wilderness	5
Active Node	4
Powerful Node	3
Legendary Node	2

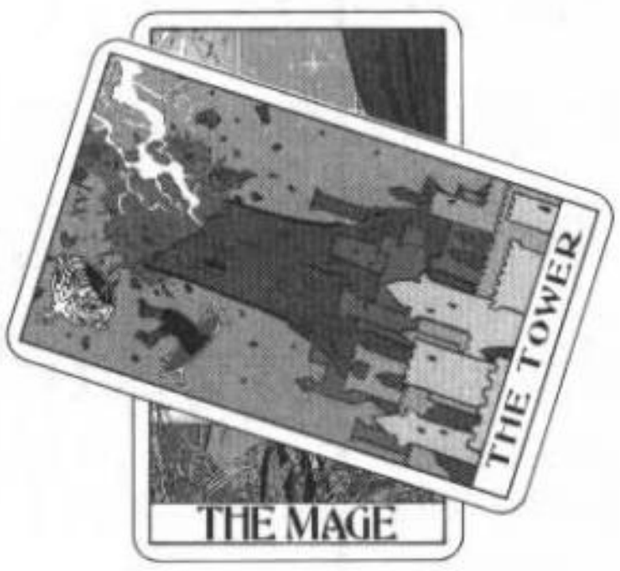
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Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised.

Special Thanks To:

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And a special hello to Brian and the folks at the Safe House, for the use of the Spy's Demise.

ABC trial 4

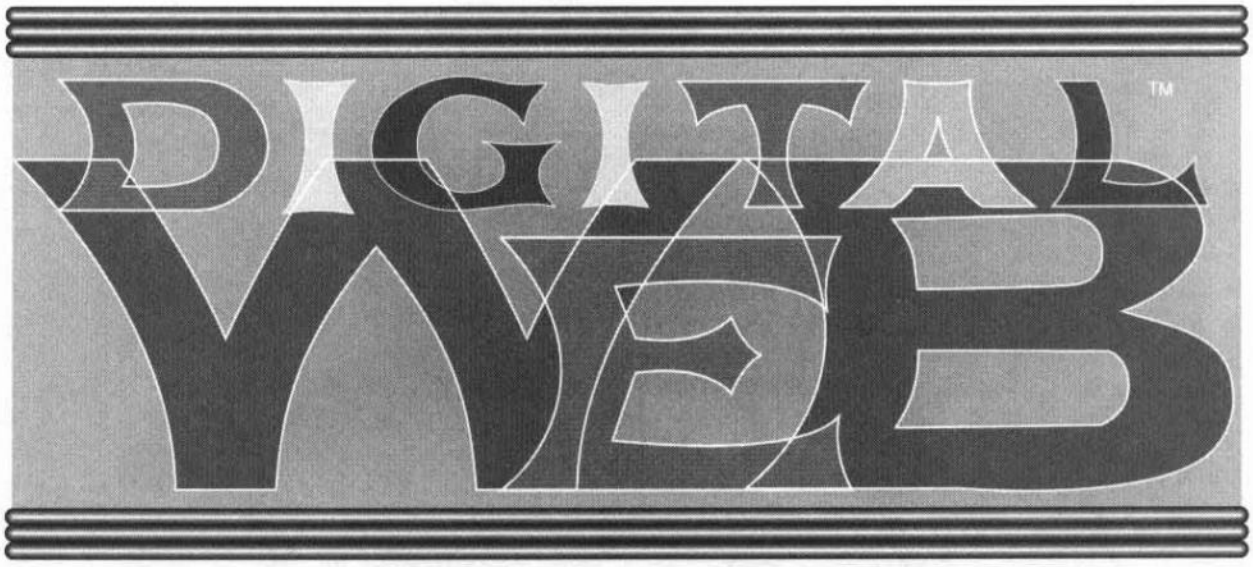


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Prelude: Passing the Buck

By Darren McKeeman



I had just walked into the Pit of Hell. "Like my redecorating?" asked Ripbeak.

Of course, it would be prudent at this point to mention that I was in no mere simulacrum of Hell. Rather, it seemed to be a digitally enhanced perversion of that realm. The twisted shards of magnetic core memory with kinetic renderings of flames licking outward from them made it all the more horrifying. Looking back and forth, I saw the forms of antiquated NASA computers morphing, reduced to a quagmire of slag and then reconstituting into their original forms. Giant rows of IBM System 38s went haywire as lightning and power surges destroyed their memories; when the fallout cleared, they began computing again.

"Hey ho, cowboy, welcome to Computer Hell!" exclaimed my enthusiastic host. "This is where old computers come to die!"

"Cut the crap, Ripbeak. I'm here to see what you know about some weird science." One of the things I find so infuriating about Ripbeak is his overuse of NetSpeak. He's incredibly hard to follow once you get him going.

I was rather new to the Net, just slumming around checking up for a heavy operator in one of the other Traditions. Getting the info I came to Computer Hell for was another thing entirely. If I let Ripbeak play, I could've been there for hours. Luckily for me, he made the Pit of Hell vanish, and we suddenly stood in a fair approximation of a living room. Granted, it had neon tinged furniture and the

shadows weren't exactly right, but it was pretty good for spur of the moment.

Ripbeak grew a few inches and stared at me. "Flame away, cowboy."

I began hesitantly, not wanting to lose him: "There's a new thing going down in Realspace" I said. "I've been doing a lot of free-lance work lately. One of my jobs was to monitor some police databases. I found a surprise payoff and some of the elite dudes I work for took quite an interest in it." I handed him a representation of a stack of printout. "This stuff gives me the creeps."

Ripbeak checked it out. "Weird out, man," he said with dark humor, "End user bodies laying around in the streets with wires poking outta their heads. Sounds like somebody's got a 'trode fetish and don't clean off their hard drive too often..."

I had handed him dozens of reports of bodies found in back alleys, electrode wires embedded in their skulls. 'Clean off your hard drive' is a common NetSpeak term for sweeping up your mess afterwards. The police were hushing the whole thing up of course — they'd dealt with serial killers who'd drilled holes in their victim's heads before. Something in this sparked some interest in my employer, though. I had promised to do some checking. I scored a few leads but my source indicated that maybe Ripbeak had more than just leads.

"Did I ever tell you about a dude named Dante?" he asked.

"Enlighten me."

He did:

•••••

It was about six years ago, give or take a millisecond. This Dante guy, he's a heavy operator from way back. Anyways, I was jacked into the Spy's Demise, a big underground board on the Net. I can see that you know the place. You probably got those codes you gave me offa the walls in there.

Now, I'm sitting there answering my e-mail, 'cause it's all piled up, when in walks Dante and about three other dudes. I instantly make them out to be cross-platform, you know, because they don't carry themselves like any 'dept I ever saw. They was about to whiz themselves and cry for their parental units. Dante, he just dragged them in there under guest logins. They didn't have to have that low-alpha, cause every user at the Demise has a backup going, ya know. After watching them for about a minute and fourty-three seconds, I figured the frazzled one to be an S of E, the girl to be a C of X and the bald one to be an A-K Brother.

Now, I had been ownin' my mind when this went down. But Dante looks at me. I'd never seen him before, but I heard of him and had talked to him. He read my signature instantly. I did likewise and he just pulled them into my mail shell!

At this point, I was about to freak. I mean, you can tell who's online at the Demise by just looking around, but when a person's got his shell up, you don't just walk in. But this cowboy just dragged his three friends in with him, flipped a few keys on his board, and everything outside of my shell just faded into static. He'd encrypted my mail shell, with all of us in it. Before I could get a word in wise-edge, he started off on some kinda flame.

"Holy imploding Kibo!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad I saw you here. I need a favor from you, cobber, an' don't think I won't remember it but good." I winced at the mention of Kibo, but scanned that He wouldn't pop in, 'cause the shell we were in was encrypted, and it was all coming out as static anyways. "We just got some heavy docs here, man, and these guys here are licking their wounds from the dataflak we hadda take to get it. I need you to get them back to Gaia while I go back for the other one."

He handed me a cube with a handle on it. "Store this someplace, too, man. It's pretty hot; just don't ask. Get it back to me at the address on the handle."

Now, I'd seen Technocracy data cubes before, and this was looking a lot like some sundevil I didn't want. But I wanted to help him out somehow — he was Dante, and everybody and their backups had heard of him. Those other three were pretty messed up once I got a good look at them, too. I decided to encrypt that cube again and store it here in the Pits of Hell.

Well, Dante decrypts my shell, and I send the cube back to my place pretty much at the same time to avoid suspicion. He disappears, logged out at the same time as his decrypt routine runs. I take these kids back to my place and pop them out of an ATM machine in Berkeley that nobody ever goes to. And I've got a nice little cube that I took the time to peruse while I took my own sweet processor time mailing it back to Dante.

ABC trial 4

This thing had freaked out data, cowboy. It looked like the wiring of the human brain, man. It also had a queue fulla notes on electrode implants and how to affect different parts of the brain with electricity and stuff. Are you streaming what I'm sayin', man? This was straight outta some sorta sci-fi Auschwitz, man. Could have a lot to do with your End-Users, cowboy; could have a lot.

What I gathered from the others was that the C of X wanted to get some of this research, use the S of E and the A-K Brothers to develop it. I mean, look at these guys and how they can stop a meat headache with a tap on your foot, cowboy. They'd hired Dante to help them swipe the data. But here's the part that just crashes me. These Xists wanted to hook the pleasure center of their brains up to a friggin' car battery, man!

I live to see the New Sun risin', I'll never figure them out!

•••••

"End-users with wires in their skulls left laying around?" I asked. "That sounds messy for the Technocracy. I don't think they'd do it."

"Me neither, cowboy." He looked grim. "I think we got us a third-party log-in with a carbon of the cube Dante got. Data rider with a flesh fetish, maybe. Nasty."

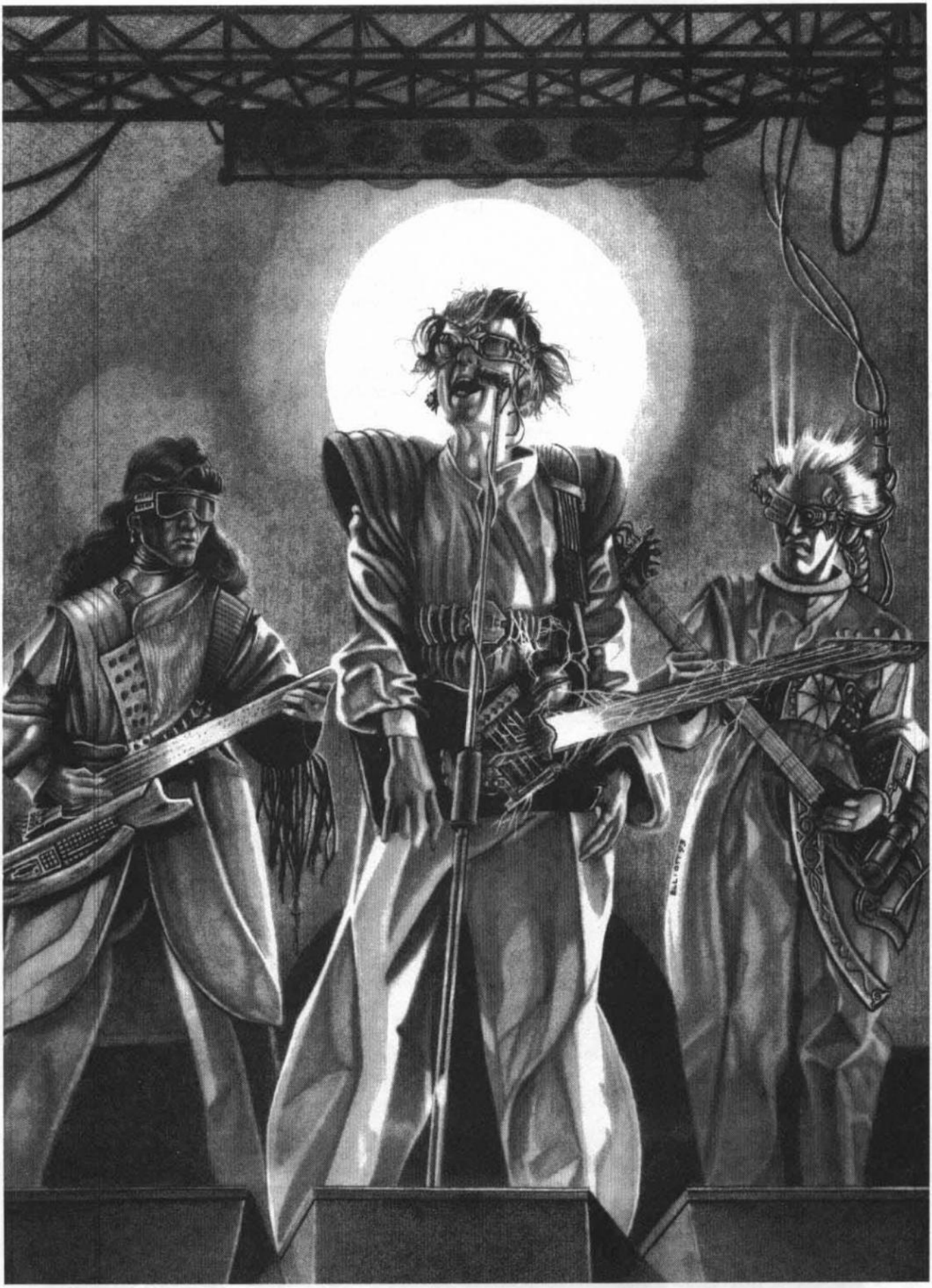
As usual, Ripbeak had been his muddy self, and only the data cube was relevant to what I was asking for. Still, it was a jackpot for a wild chase. I asked him what had happened to the cube.

"Hah! I sent that back on to Dante," he replied. "Of course, you might wanna hand over the rest of those logins for a copy, wouldn't you?"

In the end, I found myself back in the Net with a heavy cube. I made my way back to my domain and decided to take a look inside before I presented it to my boss. Encrypting my space, I took the lid off and peered inside at a ream of papers that bore the unmistakable sigil of Iteration X.

Stopping these experiments was going to prove a lot easier said than done...

ABC trial 4



Introduction: The Word Made Flesh

The pop-culture myth of VR is an artifact of our growing awareness of the lethal dysfunctionality of control as a paradigm for our relations with the environment, other cultures and other individuals. The functions of VR in contemporary culture are wonderfully symmetrical: while VR is a lightning rod for fear and despair, at the same time it may serve as a testbed for working out, trying out, and embodying new ways of being in the world.

— Brenda Laurel, "A VR Field Report, Sixth Annual Computer Game Developer's Conference"



There is a hole in static reality.

It's about two microns wide and about three astronomical units long. It's as fragile as spun glass and strong as light. It branches out in all directions, encircles the globe and goes nowhere. It's a digital realm of dazzling wonders and sudden, terrifying termination. It can uplift and exalt the mind, and it can crush the psyche. Once a consciousness crawls into that fiber optic hole in the wall of reality, that consciousness emerges into another world — a world where you have anything, do anything, be anything. Just like the real world, only more so.

You can build a universe or create new, electronic life. You can become a god or destroy god. Reality eagerly bends itself to your will. You can do anything you can dream... but are you only dreaming? Is this fresh reality a true world, a new beginning? Or is it only a shared dream — a delicate gossamer fantasy doomed to be nothing more than a diversion from the work mages do in the "real world"? No one knows for sure and doubt is maddening. Is virtual reality real? And if not, does that even matter?

This ambiguity doesn't stop the legions of mages who spend more and more time hooked up, jacked in and turned on to the extraordinary new frontiers of the Digital Web. The Net is just too damn exciting, a new universe, built from data and shaped by will. A universe of knowledge and, perhaps, of Truth.

ABC trial 4



How to Use This Book



Digital Web is a sourcebook detailing the virtual reality realm known as the "Net" or the "Web". Unlike a Horizon Realm, the Web occupies a totally new place in space and time, rather than inhabiting a permutation of the old reality. This book contains information on the Net— including its rules, society and access— a description of the Spy's Demise, a "nerve-center" BBS club, and two sample stories based in the Digital Web.

Contents

Introduction: Background on the Web and the strange cast of characters that may be found there. Includes a glossary of NetSpeak, invaluable to puzzling your way through the arcane slang of the Virtual Adepts.

Chapter One: Tangles in the Web: The game mechanics of the Web, including access, Sphere ratings, history and tie-ins for **Vampire** and **Werewolf.**

Chapter Two: The Spy's Demise: The details of this VR hangout, including key NPCs, atmosphere and topography.

Chapter Three: Tale Recursion: This chapter, and the next, should be left to Storytellers.

Chapter Four: Deus Ex Machina.

Chapter Five: Permutations: Rotes and Net denizens, plus rules for computer technology in **Mage** and an expanded list of Net terminology.

Appendix: A list of recommended source material for cyberspace tales.

Web Structure



No wonder kids grow up crazy. A cat's cradle is nothing but a bunch of X's between somebody's hands. Little kids look and look and look at all those X's and. . . . NO DAMN CAT, AND NO DAMN CRADLE.

— Kurt Vonnegut, Cat's Cradle

What Is the Web?

The Digital Web is a conceptual universe created entirely from the will of mages. This realm, also called the Net, does not manifest in the physical world. It exists in the minds of mages. Pulses of light, electrons of high-tech computers and shadowy filaments of magickal energy branch throughout all known planes of existence.

These strands of energy are unformed aspects of the Pattern Web. Some say that they are linked to a conceptual spirit-entity called the Weaver and connect to all forms of high-tech electronic equipment. A mage can access these strands of unpatterned reality through a computer and literally project his consciousness into the world within the Web. If he has the knowledge and power, the mage can pattern the virgin Web with his own thoughts. He can invite others into the area he has patterned and subject them to the world laws he envisions; they can experience the shared reality together and find new ways to relate to one another and to the data surrounding them.

Some mages create worlds where they entertain others in grand style. Some mages build virtual libraries, encoding all knowledge in their grasp and using the Digital Web to help them sort through it and make new information connections, while others create "world law" workshops, to refine their magick in an environment relatively free from Paradox Spirits. Some mages build schools, aviaries, gardens, observatories and meeting houses; others build museums of breathtaking beauty for hands-on, senses-on, spirit-on learning, while still others create prisons, dungeons and torture galleries to house the abducted consciousness of their enemies.

There are mages who claim that the Net can be a powerful training ground for patterning reality in the physical world; others disagree, viewing Net Running as spiritual self-abuse, wasting precious time and energy on illusions in an unreal world. But is the Web a "real" place?

Where is the Web?

And from that day she pined away,
Not a smile seen on her face.
And with outstretched arms she went to meet him
In a brighter place.

— Loreena McKennitt, "Standing Stones"

During the Industrial Revolution, the Technocracy closed a choke hold on the world's potentiality. Fluid waves of potentiality suddenly locked permanently into place; the supple, dynamic world seized up and congealed into brittle shards of static reality. The forces of creation continued unabated, however, and more potentiality entered the universe. This potentiality can be understood as billions of intertwined, spiraling streams of invisible spiritual energy that permeate all of creation.

The Web is not a place in the sense that it does not exist in physical reality. But it *is* a place in the sense that a mage may send his astral being into it. In bygone centuries, a Tradition called Ahl-i-Batin ("the Subtle Ones") shared an immense Realm called Mount Qaf. They traveled to the mountain in spirit and shaped it with their passing. Mount Qaf was no Horizon Realm, but a sort of borderland between the Umbrae of Spirit and Idea. Other mages, learning of Mount Qaf, yearned to study it but could not. When the Technocracy shattered the Batini hold on Mount Qaf, the fledgling Virtual Adepts sought to prove the existence of this potential Realm and access it as their own.

Pioneering mages tinkering with VR learned to project their human consciousness into the non-space of virtual energy, the potentiality waves thought to make up Mount Qaf. The tremendous untapped potentiality of the Web gave their visions a magickal "reality" that lies somewhere between the inner sensory worlds of virtual reality, and the outer world of physical reality. And that is what is so frighteningly tantalizing about the Web.

Mages in the Web

This brave new world has excited mages of all Traditions. The prospects of patterning Virgin Web is too seductive for many to pass up. Consequently, there are Web sectors defined by mages of all Traditions. There are more Virtual Adept areas than Dreamspeaker areas, but all Traditions are represented.

The Technocracy is terrified of this tool in the hands of careless undisciplined mages and seeks total control of the Web. These mages are dangerous enemies, but they also maintain a limited armistice on the Web. They feel they are vulnerable to counterattack on the Web and don't want to risk damaging it. Rather than launch for all-out Web wars, they bide their time, stealing away more and more of the Net and waiting for the day when they can strike with impunity. However, because the Web appears infinite, they are no closer to this goal now than when they started. This is the single greatest cause of frustration among cybernaut Technomancers.

The Web and the World

Though the Digital Web is unknown to Sleepers — even the Sleepers who unknowingly visit its fringes with standard computers and conventional VR — it has had a powerful impact on the world. Hints of mage-created

devices that allow Web travel have filtered into the global consciousness through science fiction, and some of these have manifested as advanced computer technology. Even in primitive forms, VR pushes the boundaries of belief by giving Sleepers a direct experience of another world — a world in which will becomes reality.

The Technocracy fears that this could one day induce mass Awakenings, as powerful art has done in the past. Awakenings increase in frequency when groups of people are profoundly affected by a transcendent experience that transports them all into another world. Theatre, rituals, music, dance and even creative play primes mankind for this transfiguration. This is, of course, dangerous. The Digital Web offers a turbocharged playground for transformation, and the Technocracy is terrified. As the world eagerly absorbs VR, the Technocracy loses its edge in the paradigm tug-of-war. The greater the acceptance of imaginative empowerment by the Masses, the more static reality changes. Bringing the entire Digital Web into mass acceptance becomes easier.

Visiting the Web

You can't imagine how strange it seemed to be journeying on thus, without any visible cause of progress, other than the magical machine.

— Fanny Kemble, 1830, describing the first railway tests in Liverpool

Mages who roam the pathways of the Digital Web are called Cybernauts, or colloquially, Webslingers. They have three means of access to the Digital Web: Sensory, Astral, and Holistic. Details of the various access means and the games mechanics for same can be found in Chapter One.

Personal Web Images

A rose by any other name
Would never, never smell the same
And cunning is the nose that knows
An onion that's been called a rose.

—Wendell Johnson, "Your Most Enchanted Listener"

A mage can assume any form within the Web, making a three-dimensional icon of herself with complex magick programs. In most cases, this form is a representation of her own body, complete with all clothing and personal effects that she might normally carry. An icon that closely resembles the mage's personal self-image is the easiest form to adopt. Deviation from that form is more difficult, but certainly possible.

The mage in question can try to assume the form of another Net Runner, but she will have difficulty fooling anyone who knows the person being impersonated. Magick icons are more than a string of integers made up of "yes" and "no" states; they contain a powerful third state that has little application to conventional computer science: the "maybe" state. Magick icons can be copied, but they copy like a digital recorder reading an analog signal: the image seems the same, but an essential ingredient has been lost. A simple use of Sense Life or Sense Quintessence can tell the difference between a "true" icon and an impersonator. Many mages just know on an intuitive level when they're dealing with a phony.

Some Words from Alexis Hastings, Sons of Ether

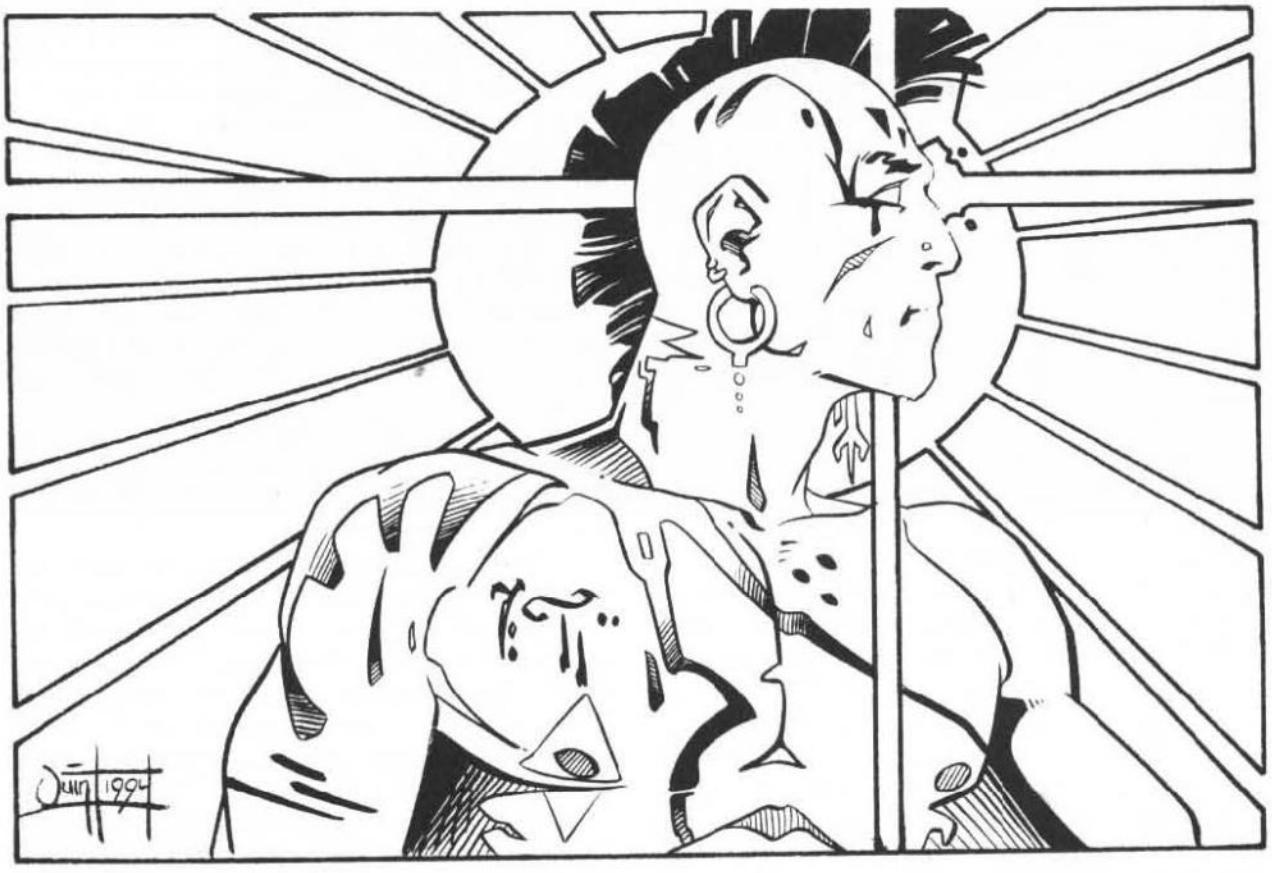
The Virtual Adepts aren't the only ones here, you know. Lots of us like to play around in the Web, too. Take me, for instance. I'm a Son... er, Daughter?...Female Son? This is always so awkward...I'm a Child of Ether. We love to play around in here. You can perform experiments you've only dreamed of. And all the electricity...it's pretty close to paradise. Ideas take shape here, and after all, that's what the Persons of Ether are about. Ideas. I've run into Celestial Chorus members and Euthanatos, Hollow Ones and Cultists, and Hermetics. All the Traditions have some interest in the Web. It's just a little harder to find some of the others sometimes.

Theme and Mood

The theme of "Digital Web" is information made flesh. Information as a tangible, living, monolithic entity — huge, towering, ubiquitous stacks of data connected by delicate, fragile strands of thought. All the secrets of life are here, if you know where to find them. The One True Secret to the Universe is reputed to be here as well, if one only knows which digital haystack to look under and which questions to ask.

There is an ocean of information here. The Digital Web rider surfs on waves of data, and there is always the risk of drowning. Ideas are coaxed from their resting places—information is traded, stolen or plundered. Net Running is about data lust: the craving for information, which leads to the hoarding of information, which leads to hatred and murder over data, that in turn leads to self-destruction. Churning data heaps sometimes attain a will of their own. They can become surging beasts that must be tamed before they turn on their users. The Digital Web is not just a place; it's an entity. The Web is waking up.

The mood of the Net reflects the frontier spirit. Here on the edge of thought, one faces vast vistas of unknown, uncreated ideas. Here the mage can close his eyes and dream something utterly new into existence. It is a land of untapped wealth and boundless resources. Mages become sculptors of reality — digital pioneers in a land just gaining form. It's a restless, sprawling, Wild West town, a meeting place for spies, losers, adventurers, bums and geniuses. No one can keep the peace here, but lots of people try. With so many goals and so many needs flying in so many different directions, someone is bound to get hurt. The war may be cold, but the tension is white-hot.



Players: The Inside Track



Big Brother's screaming but we don't care
'Cause he's got nothing to say.
Think of the future, think of the prophecy
Think of the children of today
Big Brother's marching,
So we all stand in his way.
— Oingo Boingo, "Wake Up (It's 1984)"

Although the Net is open to mages of all types, two factions predominate: the Virtual Adepts and the Conventions of the Technocracy. Some Sons of Ether enjoy the bizarre world of Netspace, but many other Tradition mages shun it. The Marauders and Nephandi hover around the edges, trying to get in, but the Technocracy and the Adepts comprise whatever passes for a majority in the Digital Web.

Virtual Adepts

Osmonds! You're all Osmonds! Throwing up on the freeway at dawn!

— Zippy the Pinhead

The Virtual Adepts still consider the Net their turf. These anarchistic mages view their fellow Net Runners with a mixture of amusement and contempt. No one else they know can truly appreciate the majesty of the virtual reality Realm.

.....

Netspace Q & A, with your host Dr. Volcano:

I hear that a bunch of you lames out there have questions about Netspace. Now, normally I don't have time for this junk, but you all seem like decent types and I wouldn't want you all to get squashed by Demonseed Elite. Listen up, boys & grrrls; I'm not repeating myself. First question?

> *Why don't we just take over the Net?*

OK. That's a pretty stupid question. As your mentor, however, I'll try to keep an open mind and answer it: Information wants to be free. Think about it, fanboy; when was the last time you had a secret that you kept to yourself? Do you have anything at all that you have never told anybody? You're thinking "Yeah, I do have secrets". That's what you think, kiddo; somebody somewhere knows all about you. Do you think that they're gonna keep quiet? Hell no.

My point here is that information is alive. It has a will of its own. No matter what you do to contain it, it's gonna

get out someday; the idiots from the Technocracy don't know jack when it comes to this. They use info to their advantage, thinking that they *have* an advantage because they can get the info. What they don't realize is that these bits and bytes are available to everyone eventually. Assigning a monetary value to a piece of information is useless, because the instant you sell it, it becomes available to anyone. It's sort of like prostitution — why pay for something you can get it for free? Of course, there's always the possibility that you're too ugly to get some kinds of information. I don't know; I've never met you. That's the great thing about the Net. People here judge you on your actions, not on what you look like.

>If the Net is information incarnate, how can you try to control it?

Your question implies what many new Adepts are afraid to ask. Why do we let the other Traditions and the Technocracy into the Net? It's like Ascension, man; everybody has a right to it. We couldn't stop 'em if we wanted to. Besides, the more users you get online, the more you shape the world to conform to your own view of it. And that's the name of the game for us.

To answer directly; how do you control it? You don't.

> What if someone else tries to shut us out of the Net?

See the answer to your previous question. They can't shut us out; we've got too many back doors and entry points for anybody else to even try to shut us out, and even if they managed it we'd just get back in. Like I said before, information wants to be free. It'll get out to us sooner or later.

The Net is too complex and intricate for most mages to understand, so lots of us try to keep out the end-users. Big mistake. A lot of end-users(Sleepers) understand the Net better than your average mage.

We don't want just mages in here; we want Sleepers and mages. The Net can help so many people see the truth about what is going on in the world. Sooner or later, the end-users will get a clue and come around. Paradox'll kick the bucket and that'll be the day Ascension comes, boyo.

Don't you think it's better to have people think for themselves? I agree with you, most T-mancers won't do this, but most Sleepers will if you give them a chance. Together the Traditions and the Sleepers outnumber the Technocracy in a big way. "He who controls the spice controls the universe", y'know? The Net will help Sleepers become free thinkers like ourselves. Eventually, everyone will come around to this realization.

>Who inhabits the Net now?

I can tell you who I've met and who I've heard about. I know that **Iteration X** is here; I've escaped from those bastiches more than once. They have an annoying tendency of trying to kill every Adept they find. What can I say?

You ever notice that stare they have — that arcade-junkie stare? Every Iteration X recruit I ever met has that exact same look. Like kids who have nothing better to do then wipe out icons in a vid-arcade. I swear, sometimes they use the damn things as training tools for the Masses (that's what the Black Hats call Sleepers. Nice, huh?) Remember Saddam's War, and the dipshits that came outta the planes like they had just finished a Space Invaders marathon? These kids were specially bred to do that sort of work. Life to them is a cheap set of phosphor dots on a black background. If it begins to annoy you, kill it. I mean, fun's fun, but those games are like drugs, and when you've beaten one game, the Technocracy has another dose of your daily video narcotic ready for you on a platter. They've just changed it slightly so that it *seems* different.

I guess that sorta sums up Iteration X — they're dealers, man, and they're all on crack. Or whatever kinky little fix their R&D labs have programmed up. They don't hafta think.

The Syndicate — they're too easy. Where do you think we get all the money for this fancy equipment? It takes a lot to keep upgrading this Net. Real easy marks, I'm telling you. Don't ever burn them until you're ready, though. They're part of the Technocracy, and the whole thing is like a huge immune system. If you attack one part, the others will jump on you until you're dead. I'll show you some tricks for them another time.

The Bush Boys — that's what I call the New World Order. You remember that goofy failure of a president? Know why he wasn't reelected? He leaked the plans for the takeover, and we sort of helped him along. Hah! Information is alive, my friend. It makes you do all kinds of silly things.

That whole Bush thing? Gee, it's amazing how many politicians use speech writers these days. It's doubly amazing how many speech writers use computers and don't check their final outputs. Anyway, that's the New World Order — techno, techno, uber alles.

The Sons of Ether — all over the place. They help us with most of our computer power breakthroughs; they helped invent the trinary computer. We owe the SOE's a lot, probably more than we can repay, but they seem to like what we've done for them in return. Have you ever visited an SOE domain in the Net? It's insane! They hire Adepts to program all kinds of crazy realities for them. Some of them are hilarious. I once visited a computer where reality was defined by the physics in Saturday morning cartoons. You just can't die in that place! Kibo forbid that they should apply what they've learned there to Gaia. If you got hit by a truck, you'd get flattened out and live. Guns would do nothing but make your face black and knock your nose to the back of your head. I'm not ready for that! There are plenty of other nutcase Net Runners, fanboy, but you'll have to find out about them on your own.

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The Technocracy

Make me of clay, make me of steel,
But whatever you do, don't try to make me real.
— Pete Townsend, "Stop Trying to Make Me Real."

The Technocracy has no time for foolishness. They know that order and conformity are the true paths to salvation for a world trembling on the brink of disaster. The last thing that the Masses need these days is some new reality to tinker with! The Net has it's uses, however, and the Technocracy has far too much invested in this powerful tool to leave it to a bunch of renegade Net Runners.

A Technocratic Net Primer

History

The aim of the Technocracy is to shuttle the Masses of the world toward a darkly mechanistic vision of Ascension — an automatic, predictable world of complete uniformity and sharply curtailed potential. The Barrier, called the Gauntlet by other mages, protects the Technocracy's structured reality and serves as the foundation of its spiritually isolationist world view. The spiritual and mystical realms of the Umbra, which lie just beyond the Barrier, operate outside the rules of the Technocracy. Reality in the Umbra works in an illogical, experiential and emotive manner that breeds both creativity and madness.

The Barrier is essential to the Technocracy paradigm. Without it, Marauders, Nephandi, and the Umbrood would tear apart reality like wet tissue paper. Unfortunately for the Technocracy, any magickal experimentation on their side of the Gauntlet also threatens their narrow paradigm. Paradox is still a double-edged sword. When the Virtual Adepts created (or accessed) the Net, the Technocracy was quick to seize this new testing ground.

Initially, the Technocracy detested the concept of a Realm with connections on both sides of the Barrier. When Void Engineers returned breathless with excitement over the power and wonder of the Web, some of the more progressive Technomancers began to realize and appreciate the practical applications of this bizarre universe. A small few, mostly representing Iteration X, went a step further, deciding that a computer-generated reality was more easily controlled than the real thing. They set up labs in cyberspace, and the Technocracy moved its forces into the Net.

When the computer revolution began, the Technocracy was stymied. Agents of the New World Order tried to stem the development of technology, but stopped when attempts to discredit computers were turned into future shock attacks on science as a whole. The Digital Web could not be undone and the struggle began for control of cyberspace.

Pentex ICS and the Syndicate

The Pentex Corporation, the most powerful corporate Network in the world, is a mysterious international conglomerate economically larger than most countries. A few organizations, like the Syndicate, are aware of the actions of Pentex ICS. If world governments knew the extent of Pentex's resources, they would shut the company down.

Pentex ICS is located almost completely in areas of the Umbra bordering the Net, though not within the Web itself. Nightmarish Umbrood minions protect Pentex connections to the Digital Web from interlopers. This shadowy organization has cultivated connections to the Nephandi, and the Syndicate has forged connections to Pentex. The other Technomancer Conventions suspect that the Syndicate controls and uses Pentex, although many have doubts. The truth of the connection may never be known.

For Storytellers who want to use Pentex, the **Book of the Wyrm** for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** provides information on this sinister Nephandi-influenced organization. Details on the Cyberrealm may be found in **Umbra: The Velvet Shadow.**

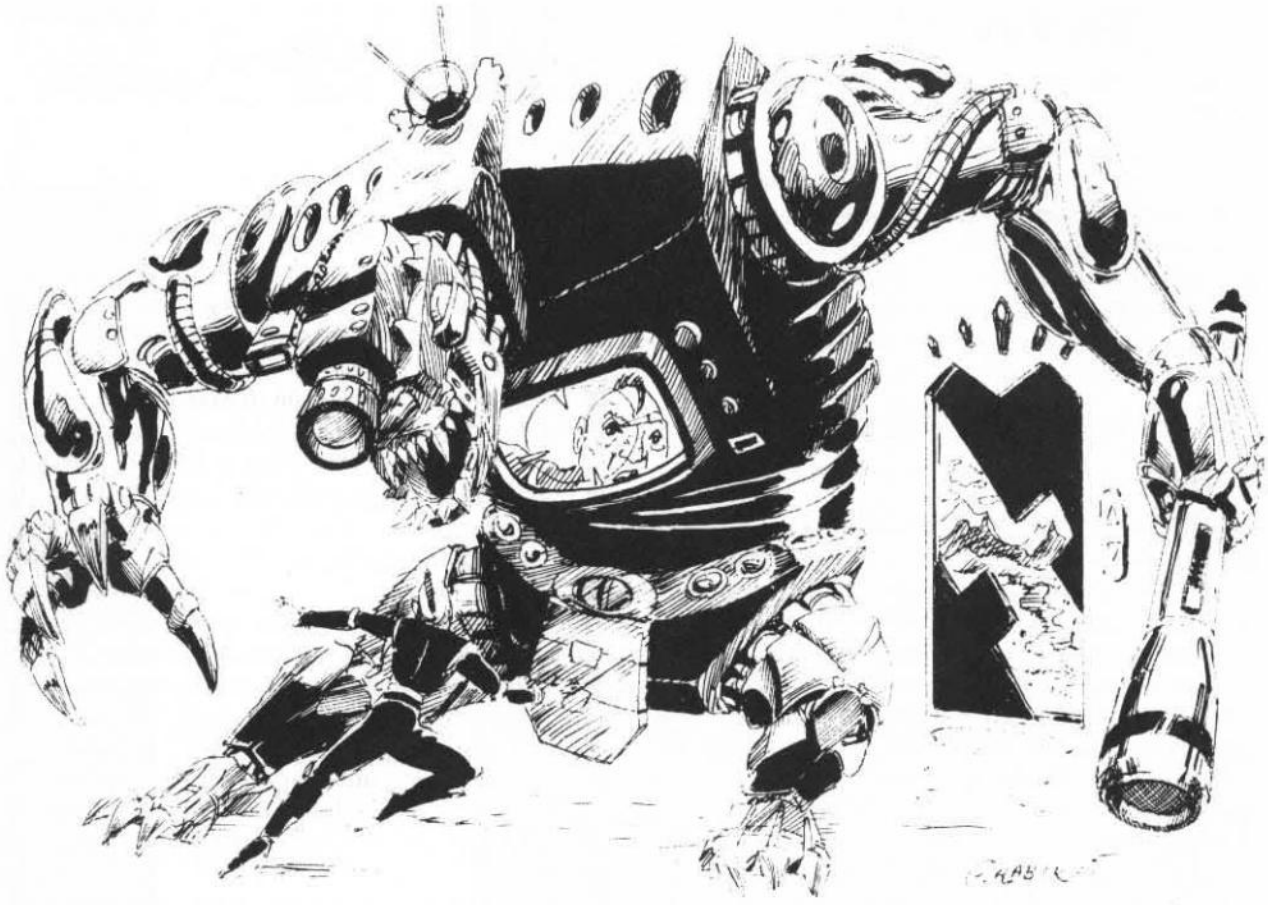
The Conventions in the Web

Every time I turn it on,
I turn it up and burn it out...
It's a never ending attack,
Everything's a lie and that's a fact.
— Meatloaf, "Life's a Lemon and I Want My Money Back"

Iteration X

To members of Iteration X, the computer revolution provides the means to Ascension; if Iteration X subverts the designs of the Virtual Adepts, they can use computers to control people's lives and reduce all of creation to relatively simple strings of mathematical code. By precisely dictating the environment, like a monstrous Skinner Box, the Convention believes that humanity can be assimilated into its view of the Big Machine. Once the Masses realize that everything is predictable and predestined, Technocratic Ascension will come. The universe will function at 100% efficiency.

As the Virtual Adepts help the Masses become more comfortable with computers, Iteration X plans to introduce artificial intelligences and implanted cyber-interfaces.



Theoretically, the Masses will voluntarily connect machinery to their brains, machinery that Iteration X can use to directly reprogram their "customers" into accepting the Technocracy's views via the Net. Imagination and unpredictable behavior will vanish. The New World Order has agreed to aid Iteration X at the reprogramming stage.

Iteration X operates in the Digital Web much the same way it operates on Earth; online versions of HIT Marks attack Webslingers at will. With the Convention's command of the forces Sphere, the HIT Marks can devastate large sections of the Web. No computer program is safe. The Convention's efforts to eradicate all foreign mages from the Net have not met with complete success, but Iteration X Constructs are called Kill Sectors by Virtual Adepts for a reason.

New World Order

Gaining control over the informational landscape of the Digital Web is one of the top priorities of the New World Order. Originally opposed to the idea of the "information superhighway", the Convention has altered its philosophy regarding the Web. Although the New World Order has restricted more areas of the Digital Web than any other group, it encourages the growth of computer networks; the networks are simply too useful not to exploit.

The New World Order currently uses the Digital Web to help compile computer records on every individual it can find. They try to monitor as many online computer conversations as possible through their influence in the phone companies. The New World Order also works with the Syndicate to spread highly addictive video games tailored to kill imagination. Together, they root out the most promising Sleepers for their own purposes.

Within the Digital Web, New World Order members are alarmingly deceptive. They disguise themselves and infiltrate other groups using false icons and deceptive user logins, then patiently collect information to be dispensed to Men In Black on the other sides of computer screens.

Espionage is the forte of this Convention. Their membership duplicates icons and dispenses misinformation on a regular basis. The paranoid say that the New World Order has hollowed out hidden "back rooms" in almost every section of the Web. There, they encyst and wait.

Progenitors

The Progenitors are the Technocracy Convention with the least interest in the Digital Web; they use the Net mainly as a pathway to reach their Horizon Realms and for computation and categorization of the Human Genome Project— an attempt to map out each rung in the DNA ladder. Once the paradigm of reality allows it, the Progenitors plan to use gene research to turn life into simple science. Aside from these two functions, most Progenitors dislike the Digital Web. To them, it is a distraction from

more important concerns. Though some Progenitors have expressed an interest in VR virii, many avoid the Net because their Life magicks are much less useful in the Net than in physical reality.

Members of the Progenitors encountered in the Web always take icons of perfect human beings. They carry themselves with monumental arrogance, ignoring most individuals they encounter. If pressured, they are highly dangerous, sparking online heart attacks or nervous breakdowns in their enemies. Some Tradition mages have returned to their bodies only to discover that they have lost their vision from the radiation emitted from their monitors or goggles. Others have developed cancer from over-exposure to their computer systems.

Syndicate

Computers have transformed the business environment of the world. Now, members of the Syndicate can receive instant data on their stocks, bonds, market trends, etc. Computers have eliminated much of the guesswork and uncertainty in the economy. If it weren't for the dangerous Virtual Adepts, the Syndicate would eliminate money and conduct all transactions electronically. The Syndicate controls all of the major credit companies and has access to the largest corporate Networks. Some of the larger commercial online services are secretly owned and operated by this Convention; several areas controlled by the Syndicate also have secret conduits into the Computer Web of the Umbra, found in the Cyber Realm.

The Syndicate produces software and peripherals for the Masses and tries to maintain the sanctity of the commercial online services against predators inside and outside the Web. The services and software offered by the Syndicate are highly effective business applications, but are not designed to foster individual freedom. They can be excessively dehumanizing. Highly addictive video games manufactured by the Syndicate use subliminals to crush the spirit of modern youths while searching out those with the greatest potential for reeducation.

The Syndicate spends most of its time on the Web hunting down online hackers, especially Virtual Adepts; certain data thieves have very large bounties posted for their heads. The Syndicate prefers to lock annoying enemies offline and use electronic means to destroy its foes' resources from a distance.

Void Engineers

The Void Engineers have replaced the Virtual Adepts as the masters of Correspondence in the Technocracy; of all Technocracy Conventions, the Virtual Adepts consider these Technomancers the greatest threat to Netspace. The Void Engineers and the Virtual Adepts are locked into The Great Race, both groups constantly searching out and formatting the rare Virgin Web. Because whoever formats a sector of the Digital Web first locks down its conceptual nature, the destiny of the entire reality is being determined through this race.

These mappers of the void have a precise understanding of the Net matched only by the intuitive "right thing" feeling of the Virtual Adepts. For the Void Engineers, the Net is another frontier to map and quantify, another floor, another solar system. The Void Engineers have formatted a tremendous amount of area in the Digital Web. Most "Technomancer Turf" is a result of the continual exploration of the Digital Web by this Convention.

Any area formatted by the Engineers has a parameter within it that allows them to "dump" other travellers by making an opposed Arete roll against the target's Willpower. They also have parameters set to transfer them to other sections of the Web if they desire, activated by rolling Arete against difficulty 6. Many members of the Void Engineers have a strange fanaticism towards exploration, and some perform rather foolhardy entries into Virtual Realms.

The Void Engineers are not as actively malevolent as other members of the Technocracy; they are as likely to recruit Tradition mages as to attack them. Members of this Convention like to appear as mysterious electronic figures and use virtual vehicles to aid in their explorations. The Void Engineers are said to have mapped out access routes to all of the major Realms in the Umbra from the Digital Web.

The Digital Dictionary

Below are a list of terms used in Cyberspace. Some of them have meaning in current real-world networks, while others are game terms. An expanded glossary can be found in Chapter Five. Feel free to start using mage terminology on the real nets. Who knows? Maybe we'll create a real Digital Web of our own. Now *that* would be magick.

A-K Brother (Mage) — Virtual Adept term for a member of the Akashic Brotherhood.

Barkeep (Mage) — One of the mysterious employees of the Spy's Demise.

C of X (Mage) — Virtual Adept shorthand for Cult of Ecstasy members.

Cell (Mage) — An area of Web where an individual is imprisoned in the fabric of reality with only a moderate ability to communicate.

Conduit (Mage) — Pathway through the Digital Web. It lets a mage pass from one sector into another. Travel through conduits is almost instantaneous.

Constraint Realm (Mage) — An area that redefines and limits the look of the icons that can enter it. Only contextually appropriate icons can enter.

Construct (Mage) — A Technocracy Chantry.

Crater, The (Mage) — A popular Stacked File where Cybernauts play their own versions of combat video games.

Cybernaut (Mage) — A voyager into the Digital Web; used for the Awakened.

Data Beasts (Mage) — Awakened information that forms into a spirit concept of itself.

Data Rider (Mage) — A term for someone online. Like "Cybernaut", but connotes a greater-than-average thirst for information.

De-rez (Mage) — To lose iconic integrity and vanish from the Web.

Digital Death (Mage) — The dangerous and potentially deadly dislocation from the Web that occurs when an icon loses all its health levels.

Digital Web (Mage) — The strange virtual reality realm discovered or created by the Virtual Adepts.

Disk Dealer (Mage) — Derogatory term for a mage who sees the Net in terms of a big video game.

Dumped (Mage) — Being forced offline.

Ether Land, the Ether (Mage) — A section of the Web run by Sons of Ether.

Feedback (Mage) — Slang for a young mage who risks too much. Refers to the legendary Captain Feedback, a Net myth.

Flathead (Mage) — Derogatory term for a Sleeper.

Flatscreen (Mage) — On-line but not inside the Web. Used for both Sleepers with computers and mages with VR gear in sensory visitation mode.

Formatted Web (Mage) — Sector of the Web that has received an imprint from a conscious mind.

Free (Mage) — Accessible to anyone who knows how to get there.

Great Escape (Mage) — A legendary backdoor rumored to exist in even the most secure cell.

Great Race (Mage) — The competition between the Void Engineers and the Virtual Adepts to format the entire Net.

Grid Sector (Mage) — Monochrome areas of iconographic figures where mages can talk to Sleepers who are using BBS. The Sleepers see representations that are appropriate to the technological medium they are using.

Handle (Reality)— Name used in cyberspace.

Help (Mage) — One of the mysterious nameless employees of the Spy's Demise.

Icon (Mage) — The mutable virtual form used by Cybernauts to traverse the Web. A Cybernaut's alter ego.

Iconification (Mage) — The process by which a person translates his perceptions or his mind and perceptions, or his body, mind and perceptions into the Web.

Jack In/Out (Reality)— Plugging into/out of the Digital Web or advanced VR system.

Junklands (Mage) — Sectors of the Web that are full of material splashed out in a raw emotive release, usually from war or disaster.

Net (Mage) — A term used interchangeably with Digital Web to talk about the VR Realm. Specifically, the Web refers to the place, and the Net refers to the Web's



functions as a data storage, processing and retrieval device, though few users make the distinction.

Net Runner (Mage) — a voyager into the Digital Web; used for the Awakened (q.v. Cybernaut).

Net Space (Mage) — The area within the Digital Web

NetSpeak: (Mage) — Slang used by hard-core Digital Web users

Offline (Reality)— outside cyberspace.

Online (Reality)— inside cyberspace.

Other Side, The (Mage) — Either VR or physical reality—whichever one you're not currently experiencing.

Parameter (Mage) — A law of reality that extends through a particular sector.

Realspace (Mage) — Refers to physical reality.

Restricted (Mage) — A section of the Net where access is limited.

Room (Mage) — Colloquial term for sector.

Sector (Mage) — The areas of the Net where VR Realms are located. They are distinct from the conduits that connect the sectors, but have no virtual length of breadth.

Sleepwalker (Mage) — Slang for a mage who prefers to spend time with Sleepers instead of with the Awakened.

Spy's Demise (Mage) — The only neutral turf in cyberspace, it appears as a strange shifting tavern where all mages come to socialize and trade data. The Spy's Demise has numerous connections to Grid Realms.

Stacked File (Mage) — An area of Web in which someone died during formatting. The sector contains its own Avatar.

Tangle (Mage) — An unexpected shift in a conduit. Also, any problem while online.

Techno Turf (Mage) — An area of the Digital Web formatted by the Technocracy. It appears in only three neon colors. The environment is geometric and pixelated.

Tree (Mage) — A set of connected conduits and sectors in the Digital Web.

Unformatted Web (Mage) — Sector of the Web yet to receive an imprint from a conscious mind (q.v. Virgin Web).

Virgin Web (Mage) — Sector of the Web yet to receive an imprint from a conscious mind (q.v. Unformatted Web).

Virtual Realm (Mage) — A sector formatted by a mage or a Cabal, usually with strange parameters.

VR — Virtual Reality.

Webslinger (Mage) — Slang for a Cybernaut.

XTC (Mage) — Written term for Cult of Ecstasy member.

:) — A sideways smiley face, used to communicate emotions to Sleepers, who exist in a benighted world of mere text. Many variants exist, such as **:-)** . **:(** represents an unhappy face.


MEN
ALL
QUANTUM
BEINGS
MUST
RETURN TO
A CLASSICA
STATE

Chapter One: Tangles in the Web

A child is delighted to make and unmake something, to place and replace things many times over and continue the process for a long time. A very beautiful toy, an attractive picture, a wonderful story, can, without doubt, rouse a child's interest. But if he may simply look at, or listen to, or touch an object, BUT DARES NOT MOVE IT, *his interest will be superficial, and will pass from object to object.*

— Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, 1948

What *is* the Digital Web?



The Digital Web is a shared dream, an electronic town commons, a collective fantasy, a limitless play environment, a landscape of terror and breathtaking joy. The Web itself exists in the Gauntlet that separates matter from spirit. It is made up of wildly created Weaver webs spun out of control by the conceptual cosmological entity called the Weaver— a personification of raw patterning power. The Web is sustained by a complex and violent interaction between Pattern and Entropy, personified by some Dreamspeakers or their lupine acquaintances as cosmological beings called the Weaver and the Wyrm.

The Web is a paradoxical material— unpatterned Pattern or patterning potential that is as yet undefined. As a result, the Webs are very susceptible to patterning by the first consciousness that imprints itself upon them. A blank sector of Web becomes a deeply reflective mirror for the psyche of the mage who imprints it. However, it imprints far more than the mage's waking consciousness; it imprints his bleakest fears, his brightest hopes and most uncomfortable urges. His psyche is literally splattered all over the walls of his creation; the inner life of the mage is on prominent display. Like an artist, the mage cannot hide his inner truth.

ABC trial 4

Perceptive visitors can learn much about the mage who imprinted the area by interacting with the creation. Inviting someone into your realm is like inviting her into your head — make sure you want her rummaging around in there before you extend the invitation. These worlds are for exploring, not passive entertainment. If the imprinting mage has thoughts he wants to keep to himself, he must be careful in his imprinting. Even then, his secrets are often glaringly obvious to all who visit. The common areas are more neutral, but even they sometimes reveal something about their creators.

Laws

Most areas allow icons to enter as they appear. But some areas have been imprinted with laws that preclude certain types of icons. These areas are called Constraint Realms. Specific laws define the range of icons available and actions permissible within the sector. To enter this sort of sector, the mage must shift his icon to something more contextually appropriate. For example, if a mage defined a sector as a huge tropical fish tank, a visiting mage would have to shift his icon to that of a fish in order to enter. (He could also try a range of other icons, like a deep-sea diver or a treasure chest to see if they have been prohibited by the local laws.) Changing from a contextually appropriate icon to an inappropriate icon in a Constraint Realm invites Paradox. Only the strongest mages can hold an inappropriate form.

Origins and History of the Net

Upon visiting the Net, most mages are awestruck. Their astonishment would be multiplied a thousand-fold, however, if they stopped to take a close look at some of the information that lies scattered about the farthest reaches of Patterned Web: bomb trajectories, encryption keys, and remnants of old programs lie around like the detritus of some high-tech fraternity party. Some truly ancient data may be found on the "floor" of the Net, and a close examination will give the observer some valuable insight into the origins and history of the Net (for further details on Mount Qaf and the Ahl-i-Batin, see **Book of Shadows: The Mage Players Guide**).

In the Beginning

History; an account, mostly false…

— Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

In the early 1800s, the Technocracy, then called the Order of Reason, happened onto a massive web of Quintessence energy linking Nodes all over Europe, Southern Asia and the Middle East. They traced this web to a massive nexus in the Middle East and severed its connection to Earth. Though they were unable to utilize the web's power, the Void Seekers who plumbed the strange nexus found a Realm unlike any known Horizon Realm, a titanic mountain with rolling mists at its base. These mists, the Void Seekers discovered, could be shaped by thought and permanently imprinted with the essence of the mages who dared to explore it.

The guardians of this Realm, the Ahl-i-Batin, called the place Mount Qaf, and defended it fiercely. Both the Order and the Arab mages lost the battle and Mount Qaf was lost. The Order, undaunted, set the fledgling Virtual Adepts, then called Difference Engineers, to the task of rediscovering the Realm and bending it to the quest of Order. For nearly a century, they had no success.

The origins of the Net began with the phone system of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. A true dreamer, Dr. Bell was a brilliant thinker who dreamed of finding ways to let deaf people hear. His first few inventions were rather strange, however, and one in particular caused consternation in the scientific field. It was a device that allowed a needle to "draw" sound vibrations on smoked glass through the use of a preserved cadaver's ear. Most people thought his ideas were totally ludicrous. It was only after the invention of the telephone that these doubters were proven wrong. The telephone changed the world at the time, and it gave more power to the Difference Engineers.

The Convention had crude computers at this point, steam-driven contraptions that were based on the Difference Engine of the Son of Ether Charles Babbage. The invention of the telephone, however, really impressed these young Technomancers with the need to find an electronic alternative to Babbage's machine. More importantly, the Difference Engineers realized that with instantaneous communication, information could be freed beyond all constraints of distance; such communication— bridging the gap of perceived space— effectively promoted the Theory of Correspondence: the idea of all things relating to a single unified location. The idea was not new, but the telephone helped Technomancers expand the Correspondence Sphere. They theorized at great length over how electricity could be used as a medium through which long distance computation and communication would be possible. These arguments often took place by telephone.

In the long black telephone wires, the Engineers began to see a confirmation of their theories that reality was indeed composed of information. They were in a different reality when they talked on the telephone, and they started to call it the Telephone Network, or Net. The Engineers studying the Mount Qaf phenomena compared the concept to the telepathic shared-world of the Ahl-i-Batin and theorized that they had discovered their otherworldly space. These Engineers began referring to "virtual" reality, and the name stuck.

The Great War sapped the resources of the Virtual Adepts in the early 20th century. Many of them were called upon by the Technocracy to help with the design of new

systems for war. Funneling their resources, they helped Dr. Bell form a company with which to try new experiments. Dr. Bell even got involved with early aviation, but soon gave it up and started researching switches for his ever-growing telephone network. From this research, the first vacuum tubes and transistors evolved.

Turing's Rebellion

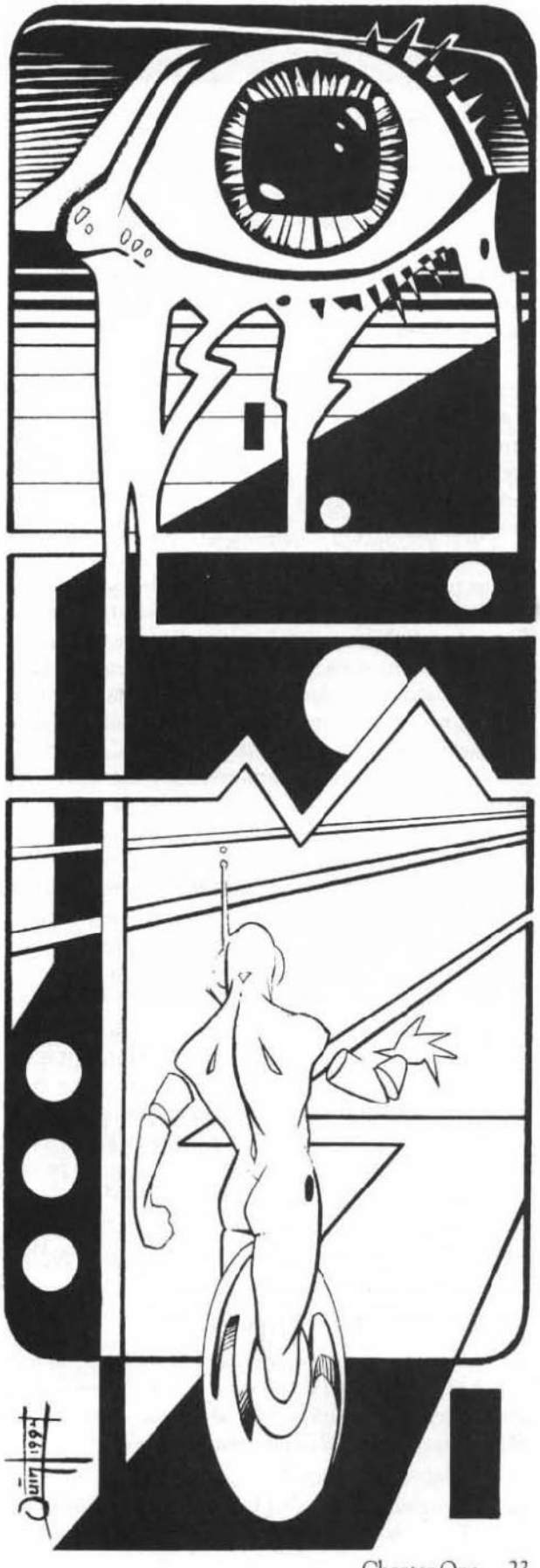
The Technocracy was quick to see the benefits of these switches and instantly set the Virtual Adepts to work, having them build the first electrical computers for dissemination among society. Work on these computers took place under the worst conditions and with nearly impossible deadlines. The Adepts chafed at this treatment; sickened as well by the ravages of the World War, they decided to take their information campaign to the one place from which the Technocracy expected no resistance — the Masses.

The seeds of rebellion had been planted long before, by a then-obscure hemp grower named Thomas Jefferson. The idea of free speech was a bane to the Technocracy as a whole, but the Adepts realized that the free exchange of ideas makes for a powerful weapon. They set about leaking parts of the Technocracy's agenda to the world at large in the form of popular books of the time. These books included 1984, named for the year the Technocracy expected to control half of the world, and *Brave New World*, a reference to the New World Order. The Technocracy didn't suspect the Adepts in these acts of rebellion, and laid the blame on sharp-eyed Sleepers.

However, these events pale in comparison to the computer that the Adepts invented during this period. Easily a thousand times more powerful than its steam-driven prototypes, this first computer was developed during World War II by Alan Turing. A Virtual Adept with a passion for cryptography, Turing helped England break the Enigma Cipher of the Germans with the help of his electrical Difference Engine. This information helped make the D-Day invasion possible and proved the theories of the Adepts correct.

Disgusted with the Technocracy's support of both the Allies and the Axis during the war, the Adepts threw their collective muscle behind the allies cause. The overwhelming glut of information aided the final outcome of the war.

It didn't take a Man In Black to figure out the Virtual Adepts' growing dissatisfaction with the Technocracy. The crackpot theories, the changing of the Convention's name, their eccentric behavior and their association with the Sons of Ether all drew the collective wrath of the Technocratic leadership. After the horrors of two World Wars, the Technocracy was fragmenting; many felt that the massive advances in science were not worth the human suffering. After the Virtual Adepts bold defiance, the High Amalgam Prime decided to make an example of the Adepts...



Sharing the Dream

It was about this time that Turing formulated the concept of machine intelligence. Inspired by the Ahl-i-Batin, Turing and his cabal explored the idea of virtual reality, or VR. This reality would be a duplicate of reality inside a computer, opening up a whole new line of reasoning within the Adepts. They began to ask if reality could be programmed, if it could be defined in terms of equations. Turing decided he would find out. However, he decided that he needed a lot more help than his Adepts, so he set ominous wheels in motion, negotiating a solid truce with the Sons of Ether.

He presented the Sons of Ether with several new types of computers that greatly enhanced their experimentation. In return, the Sons of Ether formed a Chantry with the members of Turing's cabal. This cabal had the specific intent of creating a VR and was highly secret. Sadly, nothing remains secret for long when the Technocracy is involved.

With the help of the Sons of Ether, Turing developed the first trinary computer. This was a revolutionary type of computer, even for the Virtual Adepts. Most computers operated on the binary number system. Because all computers of the time used electricity, they were essentially huge banks of switches and could represent information only as patterns of closed and open switches. This resulted in data being held in off or on patterns. On was a "yes" and off was a "no". Each of these ons and offs were (and still are) referred to as "bits."

The trinary computer remains based loosely on this system. Instead of running on regular electricity, however, the trinary computer runs on alternating current, and has three states. Each bit can be either on, off, or "negative on". This equates to a yes, a no, or a third state called "maybe". This was the first application of fuzzy logic, which made the computer able to more accurately represent a human brain.

The first computer to do this was developed in the Chantry created by Turing and the Sons of Ether. It was a massive affair and took up most of the available space in an abandoned aircraft hanger transformed into their base of operations. While most of the computers being researched at this time were being developed in the United States, Turing's operation took place in England. IBM was developing its first computer under Technocratic supervision, and the UNIVAC I was predicting the results of the 1952 Presidential Election.

Rending the Tapestry

I feel myself driven to an end that I do not know. As soon as I shall have reached it, as soon as I shall have become unnecessary, an atom will suffice to shatter me. Until then, not all the forces of mankind can do anything against me.

— Napoleon Bonaparte

Few are sure about what happened on the fateful day when Turing left this world, but many have speculated. Turing apparently committed suicide; his Sleeper contemporaries believe that he took his own life because of harassment he received when his homosexuality was revealed. Many Virtual Adepts suspect that this was not the case. Rumors still abound about what happened that fateful day in Turing's room.

The day was marked by a number of breakthroughs in the program Turing had designed to simulate reality. The computer memory was not enormous, but were large enough to allow a person to walk around in it. Using highly specialized rotes, Turing projected his Avatar over a phone line from his flat into the computer to test the possibilities in long-distance VR access. While in the computer, he initiated a rote in conjunction with the other Adepts and Sons of Ether in the Chantry to actually digitize the computer into itself, allowing the computer a theoretically limitless capacity for expansion.

Turing had a narrow threshold of time to leave the computer and get back to his unconscious body back in the flat. The Sons of Ether had made it perfectly clear to Turing that if he were caught in the computer when it recursed in upon itself, the effect would be like being pulled into a black hole one molecule at a time. An unsubstantiated rumor claims that Turing was still inside the computer when a group of Men in Black raided his flat. It is said that they faked his suicide and left the building. Turing attempted to return his consciousness and Avatar to his body, but could not. The mages present in the Chantry still pale when they speak of the screams they say they heard on the monitors that day.

If the rumor is true, Turing's Avatar gave the computer the power it needed to create or access the Net; some say that he formatted a section of the old Ahl-i-Batin Realm, while others insist that VR is the sole creation of Turing and his supercomputer. Some say that Turing still walks the landscape of the Net; some even believe that Turing's Avatar and consciousness are melded with the Kernel of his computer, and that together they guide the expansion of the Net. If this were the case, many feel that Turing's consciousness is condemned to eternal torture. For as long as the Net exists, they believe, Turing will remained locked at the core unable to escape and being slowly consumed alive by a machine. Many Adepts who have explored the outer fringes of the Net claim to have found digitized pieces of Turing's screams as he was incorporated into the Kernel. It is quite possible that he is screaming still.

After Turing's apparent death, the Virtual Adepts were marked by the Technocracy; their acts of treason could only be repaid with blood. The Adepts dumped all that they could from Technocracy databanks into the Net. They transferred all that they could into the new Digital Web and went into hiding. The only people that they trusted at this point were the Sons of Ether.

Shortly thereafter, a powerful Son of Ether pleaded the Virtual Adepts case before the Council of Nine. Once their

Dr. Solaris's Theory of the Web

To: Kibo

From: Laserfire

Dear Big Guy,

I 'cepted this trans by accident in Etherland. If anyone would no whether this made sense, it might b u. :)

Laser

++++++++++++++++++

Begin Transmission

Norel,

Here is my point of view on everything.

The universe exists as a consensual reality, and the Technocracy, for the most part, has won the big, bloody battle for consensus.

Metaphysically and theoretically, the structure of the universe is one of ideas, concepts, thoughts, archetypes and emotions. A cosmic unconscious, if you will. These metaphysical building blocks, thought-ites perhaps, have shards that appear in the Umbra to be connected by a lattice of crystal fibers or spider's webs that touch everything, providing the pattern of reality. For example, the metaphysical block containing emotion connects to smaller blocks containing anger, love, hatred, etc. Love connects to all different types of love and down to specific degrees of love, felt by certain individuals.

This structure is mutable. It exists in its current form only as a result of the Technocracy's efforts.

The computer revolution has organized and provided access to ideas to an amazing degree. While, admittedly, a worldwide Thought Projector might do a better job of making ideas available, the rapid transfer of ideas through open channels is more efficient and less prone to Paradox. As knowledge is made more accessible, the consensual universe is strengthened. If all the Sleepers learn that panda bears are always black and white, then reality changes to reinforce that belief. The Technomancer paradigm is strengthened. This does not mean that all panda bears change color; rather no purple pandas are found, and no yellow-striped ones are born.

On the other hand, if all Sleepers learn that panda bears come in an unpredictable variety of colors and mutate over generations, then reality changes to reinforce that belief. The Technomancer paradigm is weakened, although the structure of the universe is still strengthened. Thought empowers reality. Computers have tremendous potential for transmitting and organizing data and, hence, thought. Each computer, because it allows access to these Thought-ites, becomes the center of hundreds of new Web fibers.

That is how the Digital Web exists, and my panda example shows its importance precisely. Imagine what might happen to reality if enough propaganda were spread through it to the Sleepers...

—Dr. Solaris

End Transmission

place in the Traditions was secure, the Adepts began to explore their new Realm and continued to introduce new ideas to the Sleepers through books and films. They helped present the concept of cyberspace into cyberpunk fiction and helped bring about the proliferation of personal computers. The side effect of this expanded fascination with VR is that the Net has grown far beyond any reasonable size and is constantly expanding as more users come online...

A Life of its Own

Feed me!

— Audrey II, *Little Shop of Horrors*

The truth behind the Web escapes even its most fanatical users; the Web is waking up. As computer users feed their life-force into the Realm, it begins to take on a sort of sentience. And it's hungry. Just as Horizon Realms draw their substance from Quintessence channeled from Nodes, the Web draws Quintessence through computer interface — through a channel that millions of users access every day.

There is a reason for the chronic eye-strain, stiff necks and headaches of full-time computer-users, a reason for the pallid and listless bearing of compulsive Net-junkies. The Web siphons tiny amounts of Quintessence from every computer-user, Awakened and Sleeper alike, and uses it to feed its ever-growing appetite. Mages spending time in the Web likewise leave a bit of their Quintessence behind — not much, just enough to be a real drain on those who spend too much time in cyberspace.

The true sentience of the Realm is still light-years from manifesting, but as each user feeds information and life-force into the Net in an ever-growing spiral, the day of Awakening grows closer. Perhaps Turing and his supercomputer tapped the very Avatar of some new Celestine or some radical manifestation of Gaia. Who's to say what may happen on the day that the Digital Web attains conscious thought?



Computers and the Digital Web

Technology is paving the way to the future, and you are either part of the steamroller, or part of the road.

—Nicholas Negroponte, Director of MIT's Media Lab

Computers have changed society. From cashiers scanning groceries to ATMs, from video games to online libraries, from computer monitored-engines to word processors, the computer revolution has touched everyone's life in ways that we don't even notice anymore. Some experts believe that by the year 2000, computers will be as common as televisions are today. The effects of computer technology are only beginning.

In the magickal reality of **Mage,** each new computer taps a strand of the Digital Web, connecting to hundreds of vertices. As Sleepers spend time with their machines — playing games, keeping track of finances, word processing, or contacting other users online — they invest Quintessence into the Net. This supply of Prime surges through the electronic reality. Some of the Quintessence sustains the existing areas of the Digital Web; mages harvest a small part of this power, but the rest of it opens new connections, generates new filaments and Awakens more sectors, causing the Net to expand. Not even the most optimistic Virtual Adepts were prepared for this explosion of growth.

Un-Awakened computer users, even those connected to non-magickal VR devices or interfacing with a BBS or a multi-user dungeon, do not enter or experience the Digital Web. The applications they use and the data they input have a physical form in the virtual landscape of the web in areas called Grid Sectors, but the Sleepers only experience cyberspace on their monitor screen.

Programs being used by Sleepers appear as plain monochrome geometric figures in the Net. BBS chatrooms communicate incredibly slowly compared to conversations between mages, because the Sleepers have to type their conversations or make complex VR moves instead of just talking. In Grid Sectors, mages may just speak and have their words appear on Sleeper's computers. Some multimedia machines with sound effects installed translate the mage's words into voice, as well. Awakened users prefer to stay in secret back rooms to watch Sleepers interact instead of dealing with them directly. A few mages play video games with Sleepers, experiencing the game as a full reality while the Sleepers watch on flatscreen. Very few people can beat an online mage with a joystick. Those who do are usually recruited as Acolytes by the Virtual Adepts.

If an Awakened being uses a computer, his data and applications have a greater effect on the landscape of the Net, but even he may only experience the Digital Web by using some form of magick, such as a Talisman or rote.

Sleepers might shape sections of the Web unwittingly by putting enough energy into a computer project, molding the flexible reality to fit their imaginations. Mages watch for Sleepers who mold their environment quickly or whose software icons start taking form; these individuals are likely to Awaken soon.

"Normal" Technology in the Digital Web

The future has arrived. It's just not evenly distributed.
— William Gibson

The technology possessed by the Virtual Adepts and the Technocracy functions at a much higher level than that commonly available in the Gothic-Punk universe. However, most of this equipment is based on plausible advances in Sleeper-accessible technology. Even the Void Engineers don't have faster-than-light drives capable of reaching the Andromeda Galaxy. For Storytellers, the limits of this advanced tech are only left to the Storyteller's discretion. In all cases, use dramatic intuition and common sense.

Magickal computers could multi-task hundreds of applications, using the Mind Sphere. Semi-artificial intelligences can be created by Virtual Adepts, binding spirits into their machines (real AIs are much harder to create). These computer fetishes may write software for themselves. Magickal machines may perform write functions on read-only storage devices, like compact discs. Terabytes of memory are contained on incredibly small microchips. For all practical purposes, these computers never run out of memory space. Also, these "decks" are very portable. Often, an Adept's computer will be no bigger that a cellular phone or a clipboard (for those who like decent-size screens).

Virtual Adept computer decks potentially have incredibly powerful communications and multi-media systems. They recognize and respond to their user's voice commands and are capable of producing human-sounding speech patterns. Radio transmissions link these computers to networks, as if they all contained cellular phones. Some may have more than one cellular line, making them capable of connecting to more than one network at a time. Virtual Adepts have taken communication one step beyond the phones. Their computers can receive television and radio transmissions, including signals from satellite stations. They can also be used as frequency scanners as and all types of transceivers. Any type of machinery that responds to radio transmissions can be controlled by these systems. Adept systems may also receive e-mail with special anteroom programs that can operate the deck and answer the telephone while unattended. Data transmission powered by Correspondence magick flows at virtually limitless speed.

Talismans

Note: The following rules are an adjustment to the rules regarding Talismans presented on page 240 of **Mage**.

All Talismans have an Arete score and a Quintessence score. A Talisman may only hold up to *five* times its Arete rating in Quintessence and may only possess a number of magickal effects equal to its Arete rating (Arete 2 = two

A Sword Called "Terror"

Joshua, a member of the Order of Hermes, possesses a level 2 Talisman: an ancient gladius from Roman Britain with the word "Terror" engraved in runes on the blade. The Talisman has an Arete of 5 and contains 15 points of Quintessence. The Talisman is sharper than most blades and does Strength + 3 damage. Also, the gladius may cause extreme terror in its wielder's opponents (an Effect of Mind 2).

While walking along a dark side street in Washington, D.C., Joshua is spotted by an un-Awakened mugger who decides that the mage looks like an easy target. As the mugger approaches, Joshua makes an Perception + Intuition roll and decides something is wrong. He pulls the gladius out of his trench coat to scare off his potential attacker. The Storyteller decides that the sight of the ancient weapon is enough to scare people and informs Joshua that using the blade to frighten the mugger is a form of static magick. Joshua rolls the Talisman's Arete for the effect. Unfortunately, the mage botches, and his player marks down a new point of Paradox on Joshua's character sheet. The mugger starts to pull a pistol out of his jacket.

Joshua doesn't want a confrontation, because Washington is crawling with Men In Black, and he's just gained a point of Paradox. Also, Joshua really doesn't want to get shot at tonight. He decides to use the Talisman in a vulgar manner to scare the gunman away.

Joshua holds up the gladius, catching a glint of moonlight on the blade and whispers "Fear me," mostly for dramatic effect. Then he invokes the magick. He rolls four dice for his Arete against difficulty 5 (the Arete of the gladius). He gets three successes, and the Talisman activates. For the vulgar magick, he rolls 2 dice (the level of the Talisman). He starts with a base difficulty of 5. Because Joshua has activated the Talisman, he decides to spend a point of the gladius' Quintessence to reduce the difficulty number to 4. Joshua burns one of his own Willpower points to create an automatic success before he rolls his Talisman's two dice. If Joshua wanted, he could also use his own Quintessence to aid the Talisman. Joshua makes 3 successes on his vulgar magick roll. The mugger receives a Willpower roll to resist the direct effect, but he fails and flees in terror. Joshua gains two Paradox, and the Storyteller rolls for Paradox Backlash.

If Joshua wanted to create a different magickal effect, he could still tap his Talisman to use its Quintessence.

Effects, and so on). A mage must roll her Arete against a target number of the Talisman's Arete rating to activate any vulgar magickal effects or to tap the Talisman's Quintessence supply. The mage may spend an amount up to the Talisman's level of Quintessence to lower difficulty numbers.

Sometimes, Talismans will require extra actions or the use of certain command words in order to activate. Each success increases the length of time that the Talisman is activated (see chart below). Talismans have a Sphere rating equal to the rating of the Sphere rating of their chosen effect when using vulgar magick — a vulgar lightning blast, for instance, would allow for two dice (for the Forces 2 Effect: **Call Lightning**), whereas a coincidental blast would roll the Talisman's Arete. All Paradox generated by Talisman use is inflicted on the user.

Talisman Effect Duration

Successes	Timespan
One	Immediate
Two	One Turn
Three	Two Turns
Four	One Scene
Five	However Long is Appropriate

In the Digital Web, nearly all technological Talismans generate only coincidental effects. For a list of some more common Talismans used by mages frequenting the Digital Web, see Chapter Five.

Net Access



There are three primary methods of accessing the Net; access is not limited to members of the Virtual Adept tradition. Other traditions and the Technocracy employ variations on these methods.

Sensory Visitation

This method is routinely used by mages unfamiliar with the Net, or who lack the power to properly defend themselves. Almost anyone can access the Net in this way; all that is needed is a set of VR goggles and some electrodes for tactile feedback. This is often referred to as telepresence.

This type of access is rather limiting to the mage. As he is not actually in the Net, wielding magick is somewhat akin to picking up an egg with a remote-controlled manipulator arm. It can be done, but it is difficult. The difficulty for any magickal effect increases by two for anyone using this form of access.

While the type of equipment used does not matter, there are several different types that are preferred by different mages. The Virtual Adepts use a type of VR goggles that look like a pair of dark sunglasses. Electrodes along the brow transfer sensory information into the brain. These glasses are quite common among the Adepts. They also use body suits to access complete sensory experience.

The mages of Iteration X prefer to use the latest technology available, regardless of the dangers involved. Their VR goggles are a special type that were developed only recently. A special projector projects the images directly onto the back of the user's retina, and electrodes along the sides transfer sensory data into the brain. A few powerful Adepts discovered the easy way to maim someone using these goggles: a little reprogramming and a good blast from the Forces Sphere of magic will destroy the eyes of anyone using these goggles.

This form of access is accessible to anyone, even Sleepers (though Sleepers think they are seeing nothing more than an impressive simulation). All the mage needs is a good computer that is Net capable. Virtual Adepts make a simple, personal computer-ready, plug-in VR set available to any mage of the Traditions. They are eager to spread the word about the Web in order to strengthen it against the Technocracy.

Icons

In order to make themselves known, a mage must write a program to create a three-dimensional image, an icon, of herself while in the Web. This icon can take on almost any physical appearance while in the Net. Size and shape do not matter; only wit and magickal prowess win in the Web.

Icon creation requires a roll of Intelligence + Computer, difficulty of 8, with four or more successes required. It is often done as an extended action. While accessing the Web requires a magickal effect (see below), icon creation itself is not magical once inside.

In the Digital Web, mages may change their appearance by rolling Manipulation + Computer. The mage may chose any icon she desires from lizard creatures to perfect humans to super-intelligent shades of blue. Assumed shapes do not change traits, although Appearance and Intimidation may be raised by a number of dots equal to the number of successes on the Manipulation + Computer (maximum of 5 in either one). Icon shifting may occur regardless of how the mage is accessing the Net.

Some Virtual Adepts have created Constraint Realms where the parameters limit the types of icon that may enter.

All icons must become contextually appropriate before entering, or they simply can't get in. For example, if a Net Runner comes across a Mad Hatter's Tea Party Realm, she may only be able to enter if she changes her icon to that of little girl, rabbit or doormouse, or something plausible within that set of world laws. Clever mages can often find loopholes in world laws and play ill-defined laws to their benefit.

All beings who enter the Digital Web are identifiable by the pattern code within their icon. All programs and entities within the Digital Web have codes that identify them. Iteration X does not reveal when its artificial intelligence gained sentience; this knowlege might help the Virtual Adepts learn Iteration X Pattern Codes granting them access to the Convention's restricted areas.

Astral Immersion

Once the mage experiences an alternate world, that world becomes real to him. The mage must first access the Web via computer (Intelligence + Computer, three successes, difficulty 7), then use the Correspondence Effect: **Correspondence Sensing** to translate his consciousness from the physical world to the Digital Web. The mage is literally fooled into believing that he is in the Net. The effect is an illusion, of course, but that belief is all that is needed for the mage to affect Net reality and to astrally project there without access to the Untether Mind Effect. The mage's mind is no longer in his body, the computer or physical reality; it has entered the world of the Digital Web.

With Astral Immersion, the grainy, low-resolution worlds of VR come into breathtakingly sharp focus. The mage initiates direct, consciousness-to-consciousness communion with the Web. All of his senses, including magickal ways of knowing, are saturated with hyper-kinetic information. The sensory overload makes conventional VR seem pale and anemic by comparison. The mage has startling control over the world, because the magickal energy of the unpatterned Web is highly responsive to thoughts. Mages who enter the Web astrally can pattern Virgin Web by will alone, and can manipulate other created Realms within the Realm's predetermined world laws.

There are a few drawbacks to this method. First, the user's body is vulnerable while his mind is in the Net. For this reason, most mages prefer very secure havens from which to operate their equipment. A few even go so far as to hire bodyguards and install high-priced security systems. A common trick is to set a burglar alarm to disconnect the power to the goggles if the alarm is tripped.

One advantage of this method is that it is very hard to kill or hurt a mage accessing the Net in this way. Any damage delivered is dealt only to the mage's icon program. One of the few ways to hurt someone accessing the Net by Astral Immersion is through the use of lethal feedback (or "LF"), an effect produced by setting up an interference pattern in the sensory data going into the electrodes of the user. This is very difficult, and only mages who understand the way the human body works and the nature of the signals it produces can use it. The effect of this type of attack is not unlike a very bad "night terror". The victim is unable to move or speak, and the "fight or flight" reaction will become so severe that the victim either passes out or has a heart attack. It usually takes from 10 to 15 minutes of this type of feedback to kill or maim. This rote uses Life 3, Forces 2 and Prime 2.

Holistic Immersion

This process allows the mage to actually transform her body into pure information and download herself into the Net. A powerful computer is required for this magick; the human body becomes a great deal of information when it is digitized. This procedure takes less than a minute, but during that time, the mage is completely vulnerable. Interrupting the process can permanently damage the mage attempting to enter the Net. Unfortunately, this form of access is slightly more dangerous than iconization.

Because the mage exists in the Net as information, he can be affected by programs that manipulate data. A person who knows enough about the Net can write programs to send a person through an infinite loop. On the other hand, the mage can interact physically with others in the Net, which can be significant for a character with high Physical Attributes and low Mental ones.

Entering from the Umbra (Walking the Web)

There is another way to enter the Web. The Net Runner enters the Web through the Umbral Computer Web that is connected to the Glass Walker CyberRealm in the Umbra. The Umbral Computer Web is connected to the Digital Web at various access points, allowing an integrated system that enables a user of the Net access to virtually any computer on Earth. This method is not favored by any Virtual Adepts or member of the Technocracy, but is more commonly used by Dreamspeakers and werewolves.

Entrance to the Net from the Umbral Computer Web is a very different sensation than jacking in from a computer console. The mage must first enter the Umbra, either Astrally using the **Untether Mind** Effect, or physically using the **Stepping Sideways** Spirit effect. He must make his way to the CyberRealm and find one of the many open portals to the Web. These look like pools of light surrounded by coils of metallic webbing. The user steps into the portal and is sucked into the web.

Like much of the primitive magick from which werewolf magic derives, the experience is very painful. No harm is actually done to the person entering the Web, but he feels like he is being wrenched apart. In the scrambling of perceptions, the mage's clothes suddenly feel like coarse

wire, and visual information becomes too intense to distinguish. It's like staring into a gloomy dark room for five minutes and then switching on a klieg light. Mages are mystified as to why this sensory change occurs, but some speculate that it is the result of the person's brain trying to compensate and adjust to the sheer volume of information it is receiving without a powerful computer acting as a buffer.

Cruising the Operating System

Virtual Adepts officially report that the core operations of the Net are safe from tampering, but rumors persist that there is a way to reach the secret world where the Net performs its most basic functions. People and objects who reach this apocryphal form of immersion are supposedly seen as trajectory numbers and positioning data floating though the ether. Even the most perceptive mages are supposed to be able to see the character as little more than a disturbance in Net reality surrounded by a bit of "whiteout." The mage is literally walking among the data streams that most Net inhabitants never see. There is a rumor floating around the Net that a few strange denizens of the Umbra are floating around behind the user interface, somewhat like rats scurrying about behind a kitchen wall. Others are skeptical. No one knows for certain...

Webworks Rules



It's not just a riot of blots and blurs and disjointed jottings linked by bursts of speed...it only looks as like it is damn it.

— James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*

Looking at the Net

What's the Web like? Imagine a place where your mind creates and alters reality with a thought. Imagine a place where your every perception— everything you smell, hear, taste, touch, and see— exists because someone thought it into existence. This place is a Realm where Rene Descartes' Omnipotent Deceiver has been trapped in the Pattern Web and discovered that reality has become an exploration of other peoples' minds. All those various interacting imaginations show up in the digital reality like morning dew on a spider's web — little drops of reality clinging to the Pattern.

Wherever you go in the digital reality, you intrude on someone's creation, someone's thoughts made real. Nothing can rival it for overwhelming sensation. The digital reality feeds straight into your brain (direct neural input). Everything comes in stronger, and there's more of it. Don't be surprised if it takes you a little while to get used to it.

In one place, all that you'll experience is a digitized, monochromatic rendering of Super Space Trade Wars, the imprint of dozens of late-night BBSers on Virgin Web formatted long ago. Tiny two-dimensional spacecraft blast away at one-another with fire-trailing photon torpedoes and eye-searing pulsar cannons, while their pilots vie for control of water-rich worlds represented by globes enclosing environmental statistics.

In another place, you might stumble into a private, haunted alleyway. Old newspapers and fresh candy wrappers whip around your legs, carried on the same wind that destroys your hair-do and carries the smell of spent bullets and ruptured bowels. Deep inside the alleyway, under a glaring, harsh white spotlight, a man lies draped across a stretcher. He looks at you over his left shoulder, eyes wide, pupils dilated, his breath stinking of too much alcohol. He's pale, so pale you can barely tell he's black under his gauzy, translucent skin. Blood oozes in wet globs from the torn hole in his chest. A pair of gleaming steel clamps hold the tear open. A disembodied hand, gloved in sterile yellow latex, reaches into the man's chest, grips his heart and squeezes rhythmically. A commanding voice echoes down the alleyway towards you — "One-and-Two-and-Three..." Then, softly, chanted like a prayer, you hear the doctor repeating the words, "Live, you bastard!"

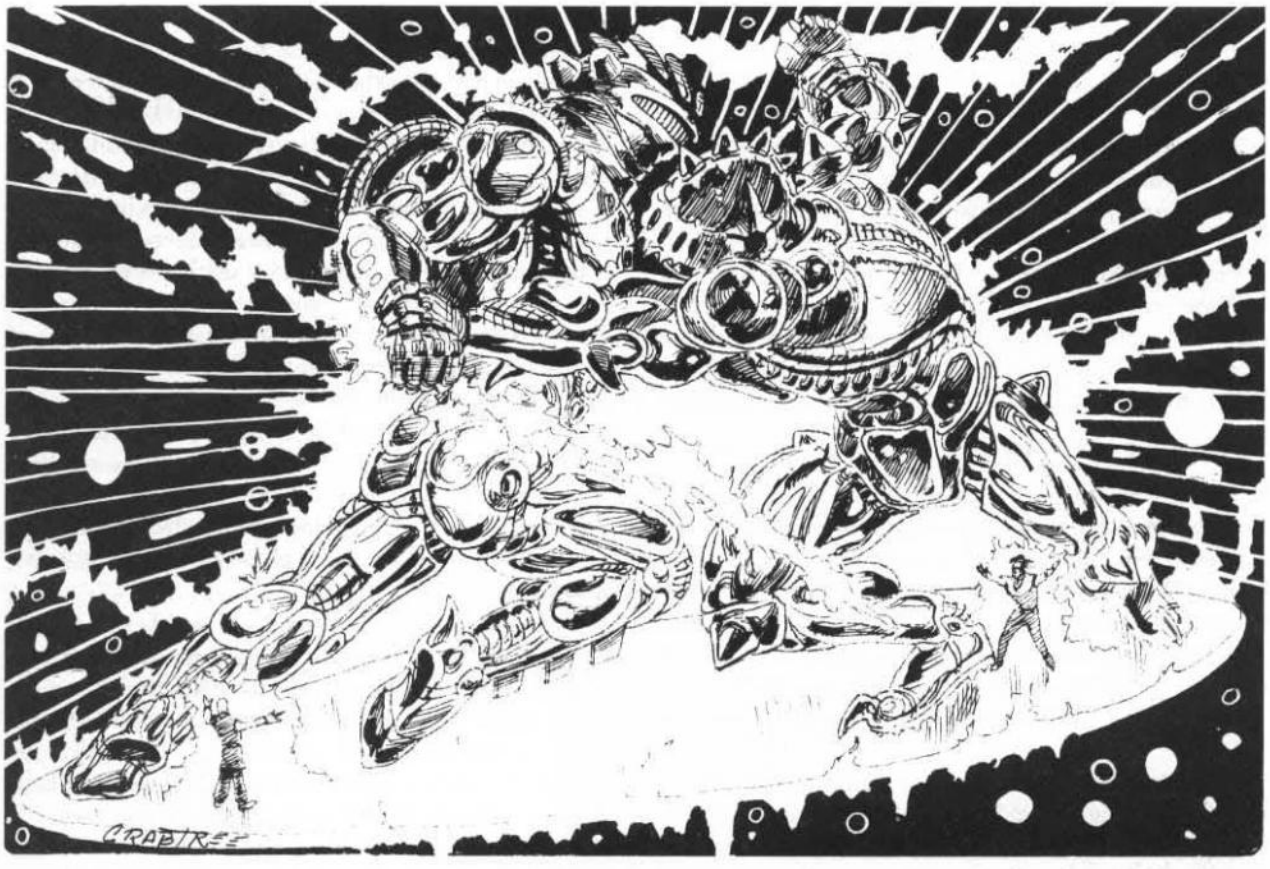
Then again, you might find yourself strolling through the playground of an Awakened child. He's definitely got the biggest jungle-gym on the block. In the middle of a grassy field, his mind has created a sandbox, sunshine and swings that could launch you into orbit.

Techno-Turf

Of course, these are just the "frontier" areas (Junklands, or Stacked Files, as the Virtual Adepts like to call them), places where someone has come along and imposed nightmares, fantasies or thoughts upon the web. Wait until you scan someplace organized, like the Spy's Demise. Or stop by Technomancer Turf— now, that's someplace you don't want to visit without permission. You ever see *Tron*? Well, that's Techno-Turf: straight lines, right-angles, and 45° turns. This is prime VR, complete with Euclidean Geometry, stale air, user-friendly beeps and chimes and the tingle of power currents. Add three primary colors liberally applied in neon and it's an ideal world.

Why wouldn't you want to visit it? Well, killer defense programs with Prime-shattering blasters are one good reason. To say nothing of the shiny silver robot guys with big guns that patrol the Net. Getting hit by a virtual annihilator on your way home from a quick jaunt through the quadrant qualifies as "not a good time" in most books.

That's what the Technocracy wanted, though. That's what they willed on the Pattern. Force your thoughts on Web, and that's what you get— a VR Rorschach test. You



can't imprint the whole place, though — only Virgin Web. Try it here, where the web's already imprinted, and you're liable to have a seizure from the effort.

Stacked Files

Welcome to my little world
Completely self-contained, yeah
Your problems they will soon be gone
(We soak up so much pain, yeah)
— Oingo Boingo, "Pain"

Other places in the Web have cropped up over the years, though. Stacked Files are places that people found so appealing that some kind soul modulated them to ease the impact on visiting egos. This usually happens on its own when a lot of people visit a place over and over again and leave a "friendly" imprint. Sometimes, though, a Master or a group of mages turns down the inputs at a Stacked File and sets up shop. These quick-fix pocket Realms usually disappear when Paradox comes crashing in on the vulgarity of the magick, but every once in a while the "proprietors" manage to avoid the backlash and the place stays open.

The Crater

If you ever need to pick up Quintessence in a hurry, then you want to connect to the Crater. The pits have been here since before most Net Runners can remember. If you do visit, go prepared to fight or gamble. This zone was reportedly the imprint of a Cult of Ecstasy martial artist. Net myth has it that his body died while he was trying to modulate his imprint and his consciousness was trapped in the Digital Web. Now he runs the Crater and teaches those who he feels have the potential to attain enlightenment.

In the pits, mages face off against one another— apprenticed Hollow Ones, Virtual Adepts or Orphans, mostly, with the occasional C of X or AK Brother going for a round or three (rumor has it that a midget werewolf wandered into Pit One last week and de-rez'd six mages before being dumped). The first three pits hold only duels. Pits Four and Five are bigger and have been used for team fights. High-rollers, heavy bets, and hot fighters abound in the arena. Sure, you probably can't die in a Stacked File, but you can get dumped back to a body sore as all hell from the feedback.

Every once in a while, you get a blood match. People who can't settle their disputes quietly in the Spy's Demise are informed that The Crater is a good place to pound one another to a pulp. The proprietors enact a specific rote that surrounds Pit Three; the area becomes Restricted. No one gets in, no one gets out, at least not until someone goes down. Getting dumped and de-rez'd in a Restricted Zone hurts— your brain, ripped from a Restricted Zone, suffers neural shock. You might wake up a little dumber, a little slower to react or a little less likely to see that critical clue.

There's that old saying about "nothing gained without risk." Well, welcome to the Crater!

The Pool of Infinite Reflection

The first Akashic Brother to enter the Digital Web sought a place to meditate. The Virgin Web he imprinted has become a place of tranquillity almost frightening to those fleeing their own inner Quiet. It's a spooky feeling, not sensing anything in that Virtual Realm except the ebb and flow of one's own icon. There's no sense of direction or balance— nothing. Your mind starts to play tricks on you after a while; your imagination spins things out of the nothingness.

The Matterhorn

Out on the fringes of one Formatted Sector is a massive wall; those who've scaled that mammoth barrier say there's a gigantic mountain, perpetually lashed by blizzards and storms. This mountain is supposed to be so huge that no one can see either the summit or the base. Some Dreamspeaker said something about a coughing hill or something, but it dosn't look like a hill by any account *I've* heard. The Adepts just call it "the Matterhorn", and that works fine with me.

That's how it scans. Everyone and anyone can do something in the Digital Web. Reality hits hard in the Net — if you're not ready for it, you better stick to observing and nix the visitation.

Reality in the Web

According to the paradigm of reality, events in the Digital Web are not real. They are virtual events that may affect a person mentally, but will probably not affect a Runner physically. It's possible to mess with someone's mind— even to cause them to ignite from online feedback — but it is not possible (without using vulgar magick) to cause someone's body hooked up to a computer in a lab to break down into small microdots by zapping them from the Net. (Although some Virtual Adept masters believe that reality can be made to mirror the virtual sensations of the computer Web; a true command of mathematics, coupled with an understanding of Quintessence and reality could allow virtual affects to occur in the real world.) It is coincidentally possible to command a laser system in a lab to crisp the body of an online user.

Anything that could be rationalized as a simulated event is possible in the Digital Web. Whatever can be felt, tasted, smelled, seen, heard or sensed in any way may be experienced in the Net. However, for most beings the Digital Web is not an actual physical experience; it is a mental experience.

Some mages, such as Dreamspeakers, like to enter the Digital Web from the Umbra, using Spirit magick instead of Correspondence. For these individuals, the rules of the Computer Web in the Umbra apply (see the **Werewolf** book **Umbra: the Velvet Shadow**).

Masters of Correspondence have hollowed out large sections of the Digital Web and invested Quintessence in them to create Virtual Realms. These Realms function like Umbral Horizon Realms but are just located within the Digital Web instead of the Umbra.

Geography of the Web



Most people are not high-minded enough to live in the kind of worlds they envision.

— Todd Rungren, in an interview

There are two types of regions in the Digital Web: formatted and unformatted sectors. Formatted sectors are sections of the Web that have been transformed by the thoughts, feelings and emotions of Cybernauts or Sleepers. These sectors respond subtly if at all to the presence of new minds. Most of the known Web is formatted, but there are fringe areas like the Matterhorn where formatting is not possible for one reason or another.

Unformatted Web

Unformatted sectors, or Virgin Web, are unexplored regions of the Digital Web, easily warped to fit the visions of VR of those who discover them. Knowledge of an unformatted sector is more valuable than a Node to most Cybernauts. However, few areas stay unformatted for long. Groups that try to hide an unformatted sector will be challenged by both the Void Engineers and the Virtual Adepts, both of whom want to be the one to create the Read Only reality of the Net.

The unformatted Web is the frontier of the Net. Unlike traditional understandings of frontier, this stuff doesn't necessarily lie on the outer limits or fringes of the Digital Web. The Adepts theorize that Turing's computer is off somewhere spinning out an endless loop of creation. The Net, therefore, may be infinite, growing with the influx of new Quintessence and new information. As communications improve on Earth, more of the Pattern Web and the unformatted Web grows.

Virgin Web appears as the interior of crystalline tubes. Any digital persona may format it if she has the power and knowledge. This first formatting is the strongest; elements of it remain with that section of the Digital Web even if

others come and rework the virtual landscape. It is impossible to completely eliminate every bit of a first formatting.

Formatting Web

Formatting may take many forms, depending on the style of magick being employed; a Dreamspeaker may call the local spirits to bend reality to her will, while a Progenitor might work out some arcane equation on a portable computer, proving that the land before resembles a particular habitat. Because formatting is an effort of will, not Earthly magick, the method is more of a special effect than anything else. Nevertheless, some method must be utilized to shape the whim of imagination into the form of reality.

When our Dreamspeaker encounters a plain of Virgin Web, she may format it by spending a Willpower point and roll her Arete against a difficulty of 6. A success lets her define the basic "feel" of the web.

From there, she can create one "parameter"—a special rule for the area— for each success beyond the first. The effects of parameters are limited to a mage's abilities in her Spheres; if our mage had Forces 1, she could not block effects of Forces 2 or higher. She could block perceptions of Forces, but could not prevent anyone from utilizing patterns of energy.

Failing the roll means that the character accepts the crystalline landscape as reality. A botch puts the formatting in the hands of the Storyteller who should have the landscape reflect part of the player's subconscious. This is how Junklands are made.

The area of this formatting extends for a 100' hemisphere in front of her for every success she attains. Correspondence magick can not be used to locate Virgin Web or to go further "out" into it, because Correspondence presupposes that the mage knows that a location exists in the first place. Time Sphere magick is likewise ineffective. Only an individual's will and perception may pattern this flexible Realm.

Sleepers occasionally format Virgin Web without even knowing it; a particularly brilliant breakthrough or especially enjoyable new game might reach to an area heretofore undiscovered. The programmer only remembers a massive rush of discovery followed by a listless, fuzzy-headed period. The poor guy will probably never know what he has done. Such is the tragedy of going through life with one's eyes closed.

Formatted Sectors

There are two types of formatted sectors; free and Restricted (sometimes called public and private, respectively). The difference is simple. Any Cybernaut can reach a free sector without problems— they are fully accessible. Restricted sectors are claimed sections of the Net that have limited access. These include company and government networks, Technocracy Constructs, Virtual Adept Chantries, many miscellaneous Virtual Realms and so on. Without Restricted sectors, reality would be much less exciting for hackers.

Free Sectors

Free sectors are areas where data transmission is unregulated. As a basic rule, if you don't need a password to access the information stored in an area; it's free. Free sectors are easily found, and they rarely move in the Net. In fact, many Cybernauts ignore free sectors, despite the fact that they contain a great deal of data and a few cool Grid sectors in which to meet Sleepers.

Examples of public sectors include the Junklands, Techno Turf and Grid sectors.

Grid Sectors

A monochromatic plain where Sleeper icons go. These sectors are filled with geometric icons representing user applications. For the destructive among the Awakened, these programs have a single Health level and only a point of Stamina. They can be made to crash easily. Mages may talk in Grid sectors and have their words appear on a Sleeper BBS, or watch the users sending in their text.

Junklands

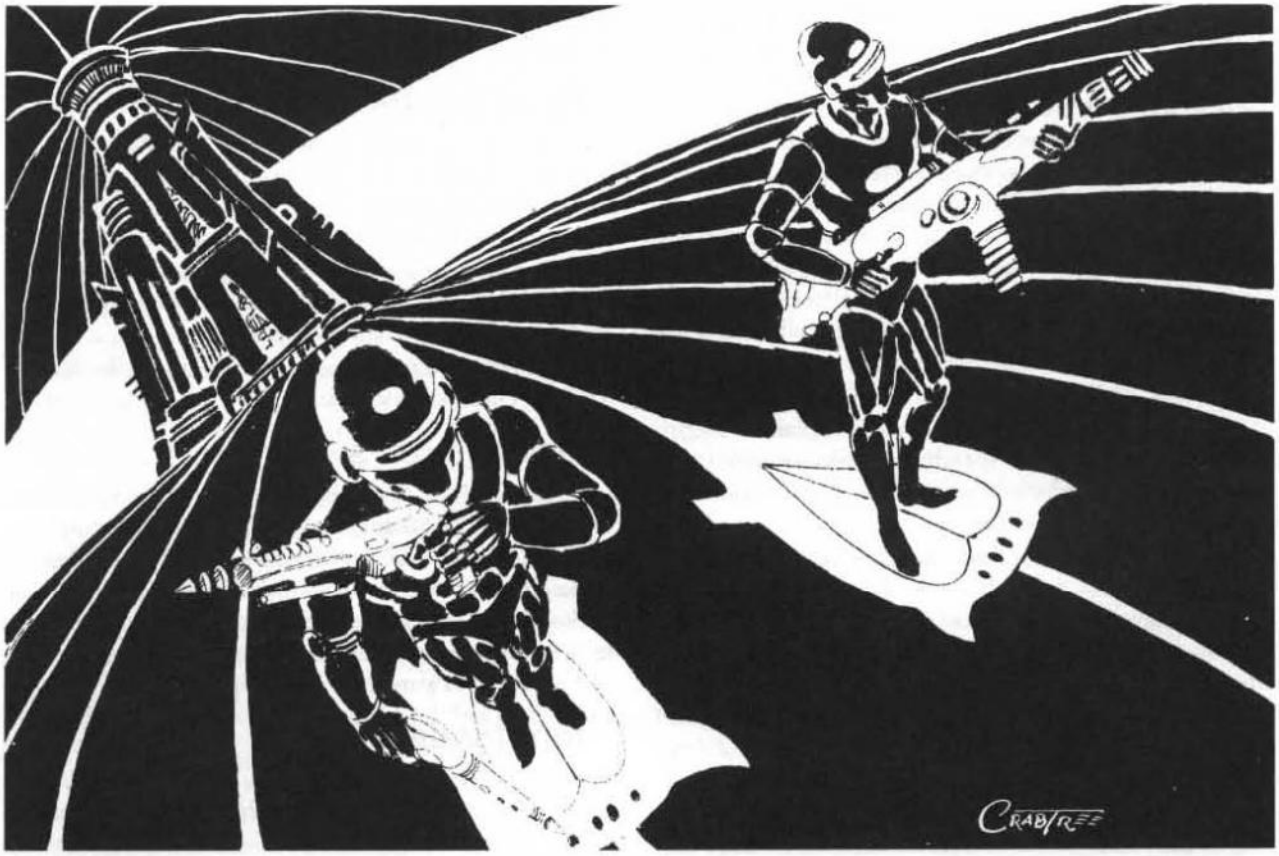
The Junklands were the scenes of massive conflicts or failed attempts at formatting. They contain a miasma of images and sensations that can be overwhelming, requiring Willpower rolls to overcome. Patrons of the Spy's Demise compare the Junklands to the most nightmarish drug-induced hallucinations imaginable. Sometimes, Junklands contain a sentience, a mage who formatted her spirit into the landscape around herself. Those Junklands are normally called Stacked Files. The Crater is one example of a Stacked File.

The Trash Sector

There is reputed to be an area of the Digital Web where all irretrievable programs go. Like all myths, there's probably some truth to it. Some say that the legendary Trash Sector breeds Nephandi and opens into the Deep Umbra. Others blame everything from disturbances in parameters to moving conduits. A few pessimist paraphobes claim the Trash Sector is just Paradox getting ready to dump the entire Net.

Strange things happen if you watch from the Web whenever something permanently goes down; there's a deep chill, and sometimes, out of the corner of your eye, you may see a dark conduit open.

ABC trial 4



Technomancer Turf

Pixelated geometric solids done with sharp angles mark Technocracy formatting. This landscape surrounds the Technocracy's Restricted sectors. Usually these areas are patrolled by killer computer programs and agents of the Conventions. The Void Engineers have a special ability to dump Cybernauts they encounter trespassing in these areas. The general atmosphere of Techno Turf is oppressive and sterile.

Restricted Areas

A Restricted area is an area of the Digital Web that has been sealed off from the virtual landscape. Access points to these areas are guarded by bound Paradox spirits or computer programs. Some of these defenses are extremely dangerous.

All types of areas are restricted, usually by the Technocracy. The massive global corporate networks of the Syndicate are restricted. Government systems and phone systems are restricted by the New World Order. Virtual Adepts restrict access to their digital Chantries. All access points to Autochthonia have been restricted by Iteration X.

Most Restricted Areas are only protected by minor password programs, which are easy enough for most computer jockeys to bypass. The strongest defenses involve spirits that can scan code before allowing passage. Inexperienced mages will sometimes attack these defenses to break into a Restricted area. While it is possible to destroy the defenses, entry under such circumstances is always noticed. The best hackers slip in through back-doors or just go by the defenses without ever being noticed.

The biggest difference between Restricted Areas and free areas is movement. Moving through a Restricted area is a great deal slower than moving through a free area. Virtual death is a much more serious affair here, as the mind does not easily rejoin its body.

Conduits

Conduits are the data pathways, the information superhighways of the Digital Web. They connect sectors that contain Virtual Realms. Conduits always appear as pathways, usually tubes of electronics or light. Travel through conduits is exceedingly fast, limited only by the whims of the Storyteller. However, most conduits travel through several sectors to reach anything of value. Even hopping in and out of a sector takes time.

Sectors

Sectors are sections of Web where conduits collide and form an open space. Sectors are where all the action happens. Sectors can be thought of as files or directories on a computer disc— the conduits are the datapaths that the computer uses to connect them. Sectors store information in the web and make up the more "solid" areas of the Web, those places where reality approximates Earth (or at least a warped version of it).

Web Systems



The general environment of the Net resembles that of the real world. Most non-magickal actions work in a similar manner on both levels of reality.

Attribute Changes

The Digital Web is a mental experience, not a physical one. Intelligence replaces all of the functions of Strength in the web. Quick-thinking becomes speed in VR, so Wits replaces Dexterity. The only Physical Attribute that remains the same is Stamina. In the Digital Web, Stamina generally covers mental fatigue; virtual experiences can be draining or dangerous to the physical body as well.

Moving Through the Conduits

Navigating is a matter of understanding the Web itself. Mages may make a Perception + Computer roll to find whatever data clusters or Virtual Realms they may be searching for in the Net.

Jeanne D'Ark, with a Perception of 4 and Computer of 3 would roll 7 dice to find her way around VR. The difficulty is at the Storyteller's discretion, based on the area being searched and the size of the object she seeks.

Once Jean knows the location of a data pathway, she need not make a roll to trace it again. Many mages use Correspondence magicks to locate areas online.

Physicality of the Net

For mages projecting Astrally or Holistically in the Net, everything— from icons of travelers to virtual chairs and tables— has a substance to it. Mages perceive the Digital Web with all of their senses. The electronic objects found in the Net work just like objects in realspace: chairs break; broken glass cuts flesh; car doors lock. Although virtual reality is more fluid, solid virtual objects are still solid and function in the same manner as their earthly counterparts.

Visitors traveling by way of Sensory Immersion can touch objects, but because they have no Attributes within the Web, they can't affect anything or be really harmed (without some vulgar magicks).

Retrieving Data

Information appears in strange forms in the Net; all of it is, however, transferable in some way. Data often takes the form of crystalline blocks. To find a stockpile of these blocks in a particular area, an enterprising mage rolls Perception + Computer to find data clusters (difficulty 6) each turn.

A number of extended successes may be needed if the data is hidden and protected with passwords, up to 20 or more with the most advanced NSA and New World Order non-magickal techniques. As an option, any single die roll with an extraordinary number of successes (more than 5) locates the info instantly. Multiple Cybernauts may work together and many data riders have programs that help them search. Of course, a Cybernaut may only retrieve information if it is located in the sector she is searching.

A Cybernaut may retrieve as much data out of the Net as she can carry, using her Intelligence like Strength. Data has a weight in the Digital Web. The more extra data that she is willing to collect, the less time she needs to spend searching — each weight class above the amount needed reduces the extended successes by 3.

Data Weight Chart

Virtual Weight	Equivalent Data
1	Several pages of text, a single rote, or less
2	A large document of information (possibly a novel)
3	A computer game with lots of graphics
4	A large CD ROM game or a set of encyclopedias
5	A library of CD ROM games
6	The Library of Congress
7+	If the data isn't somewhere in here, it doesn't exist!

Snatch & Grab

Johnny V is looking for a quote made by the President in a New World Order Restricted sector. All he needs is page of text. He locates the proper data cluster, which takes the form of a gigantic file room. Johnny figures he'll be out faster if he can just grab the entire file. The Storyteller decides Johnny would need 11 successes to find the quote, so he only needs to get 8 to find the file. If Johnny's Intelligence were only 2, he would be massively burdened down with the data, but since his Intelligence is 4, carrying the file is no big deal. If he runs into a Man In Black, however, Johnny's dice pools are reduced by 1.

A character must roll Perception + Research against a target of the information's virtual weight to locate the data he wanted. He needs a number of successes equal to the weight of what he retrieved minus the weight of what he wanted.

Damage in the Web

Damage taken in the Digital Web is real. If you can feel it, it's real. Pain definitely exists in VR. For characters who holistically enter the Net, everything that takes place works exactly the same way as it would in realspace. If you die, you die. If you get punched, it hurts. Pure and simple.

Pain works much the same for a mental traveller; the difference is in how long the effects last. When a character returns from the Digital Web, she gets to roll her Stamina against a difficulty of 6. Each success removes a Health level. A botch adds a wound. Any wounds that remain are transferred to her Physical form. This damage is pain and fatigue, not actual gaping wounds. Aggravated wounds, however, manifest as brain damage. They take a long time to heal, and may have lasting effects.

Combat in the Net functions the same way it does in realspace. Only the magick parameters of certain Virtual Realms will make a difference.

First Aid can be performed in VR. It requires a Manipulation + Computer roll (difficulty determined by damage). Characters must go offline to recover naturally.

Digital Death

Digital death does not have to be absolute for the mental voyagers. If a character dies online, several things may happen, depending on the environment:

For example, a Virtual Adept named Rachel is exploring a free area. If Rachel "dies", the fragments of her virtual form race back to her body. System shock is massive; Rachel needs to make a Stamina roll, difficulty 7, to recover her Health Levels. She recovers one Health Level per success and may spend Willpower to help heal. If she fails this roll, Rachel falls into a coma. Her fate is left to the Storyteller, who determines if anyone has a chance of finding her before she dies of thirst or starvation. If she botches her Stamina roll, she dies.

A character who dies in a Restricted Sector suffers a different fate. If Johnny gets nailed by the aforementioned Man in Black, his icon shreds and he is torn through the Net, through the barriers, back to his body. Because of the mental dissolution, he permanently loses two points from his Mental Attributes . These points may not be healed — only repurchased with experience. He must then make a Stamina roll with a difficulty of 7. If he fails the roll, he lapses into a coma as above; if he botches, it's time for a new character or a resurrection ceremony. For some characters, this may be a cool way to escape capture by the Technocracy while they are hacking, but Virtual Adepts who jump offline by committing digital suicide usually don't live very long anyway.

This is gonna hurt me more than it hurts you...

Akashic mage Rachel Hunter wants to punch a HIT Mark (ow!). She rolls her Wits + Brawl instead of Dexterity + Brawl. She rolls three successes and hits.

She calculates her damage with her Intelligence instead of Strength. Sadly, Rachel is stronger than she is clever, and rolls one success on three dice. The HIT Mark easily soaks this, and comes after Rachel.

Rachel still uses her Wits and Intelligence for Mental Attribute rolls. Her Wits function in place of her Dexterity; this is a good thing. She'll need them to Dodge the damn thing...

Getting Dumped

Sometimes Cybernauts get unceremoniously punted offline. When this happens, the traveller only gets injured if he get dumped out of a Restricted Sector. If this happens, he loses a point from one of his Mental attributes. This takes one day to heal and leaves the traveller with one hell of a headache.

Digital Magick



The static reality of the Digital Web works differently from that of the real world. Magick and Paradox have different rules, and the Digital Web has its own unique form of not-so-static reality.

Storytellers who want to use a more simplified magick system within the Digital Web can use the rules for working magick in the Near Umbra found in **Mage: The Ascension** (Chapter 7, pg. 180) with the special Digital Web Paradox effects. The information in the following sections describes how the static reality of the Net works for those who want a unique feel to magick in the Web.

The presence of Sleepers online, regardless of whether they have their icons projected into the Digital Web, does not affect the use of vulgar magick. They simply accept whatever thet see as "really cool graphics".

In some cases, the same effect may be caused using different Spheres. This often happens in **Mage**, and any overlap in the Spheres found in the "Digital Magick" section is intentional.

Paradox in the Digital Web

When a mage acquires Paradox in the Digital Web, it accumulates in the same fashion as it does on Earth. The effects, however, are not nearly as obvious, which leads some neophyte Net Runners to believe that Paradox is suspended in the Net. Paradox flaws do not often manifest in the Web and Paradox gained in the Web does not "follow the user home". Paradox, rather, often takes the form of "whiteout", a localized systems crash caused by straining the fabric of the formatted reality.

Whenever a Paradox backlash occurs, it affects the entire sector or conduit that the mage is inside. For mages using Correspondence to be co-locational, the backlash affects all environments where the mage has an icon. Any Paradox gained by the mage in the Web stays in the Web; any Paradox gained back on Earth remains there; this supports the contention that the Net is a seperate Realm unto itself.

Paradox Backlash causes an area of the Digital Web to break down. The effects of this range from our poor mage simply de-rezzing to a complete crash of the sector — a whiteout. If the backlash only affects an icon, the affected icon is immediately dumped from the system. If an area is affected (three successes or more on the backlash roll), the icons and the area are rendered inert. The reality of the Digital Web ceases to exist for a time. See the chart below to determine the magnitude of the backlash.

The Storyteller may make a second backlash roll to determine the length of time the effect lasts. Storytellers should feel free to use dramatic license instead; game mechanics should not interfere with the flow of the story.

Another peculiar effect of whiteout is retrieval (or the lack of it); it is impossible to reach the victims' icons by any manner currently known to mages. Their icons are unaffected by Correspondence or Time magicks. They simply seem to have stepped out of the framework of reality. Some mages caught in whiteout speak of being dumped into VR Paradox Realms, while others remember nothing of the experience; still others are never heard from again.

The physical bodies of the Webslingers are another matter entirely. A body left behind in the real world will fall into a cataleptic state until the Paradox effect ends. If enough time passes, the body will starve or desiccate. Many experienced Webslingers have their Acolytes hook up life-support systems just in case.

Optional Rule: A mage must make a Stamina roll after the whiteout ends (difficulty 6); otherwise, her body remains in a coma for a time determined by the Storyteller.

For even more dramatic effects, Storytellers may rule that the whiteout drops all affected mages into a Paradox Realm. Escape comes only at the end of the whiteout. Paradox realms are only limited by the dramatic license of the Storyteller.

Sensory visitors, because they are not actually within the Web, suffer normal Paradoxical side effects of their vulgar magicks. These effects may, however, damage the whole area around them if the backlash is great enough. A release of more than 10 points of Paradox will cause a whiteout regardless of the nature of the mage's travelling form.

Whiteout Backlash

Successes	Area of effect
1	Mage responsible for backlash
2	Mage and other icons in closest vicinity
3	The immediate area
4	Entire sector or conduit
5	Sector and immediately connecting sectors
6 +	Major system crash, akin to an entire city's phone lines going down

Backlash Duration

Successes	Duration of effect
1	One turn
2	One scene
3	12 hours
4	One day
5	One week
6+	One month or more (Storyteller's discretion)

Foci in the Digital Web

Most mages retain virtual foci as part of their Icons. This enables them to perform magicks that they would normally be able to use in realspace. Due to the technological nature of the Digital Web, any mage using a focus may lower the difficulty of her magicks by 1. The Technocracy relies completely on foci.

Technomagicks

All Technomancers use foci for all of their magickal effects. For example, if a member of Iteration X wants to fry someone with Forces, he may have a laser gun or an

implanted particle cannon. The technology may be beyond the limits of Sleeper understanding, but it is different from the more mystical way a Tradition mage uses magick. Technomancers are also notorious paraphobes; they're much less willing than other mages to risk Paradox to achieve their goals.

Vulgar Tricia

Tricia, a Virtual Adept *barabbi*, chats on a BBS with a Sleeper, Brenda. The Nephandus decides that she doesn't like Brenda and decides to have some mean-spirited fun with her. Tricia talks to Brenda's boring grid icon and tells her that her monitor screen is going to flash green. Brenda watches the words flash up on her screen, and is amazed at how fast a typist Tricia must be. Brenda starts to type a question, when her screen flashes green, thanks to Tricia's command of Forces.

Brenda asks if Tricia is one of the employees of United States Online. "No," Tricia replies "I'm much more powerful, and now I'm going to blow up your monitor." Brenda gets nervous and unplugs her modem connection. Tricia knows that the computer is no longer an access point; she decides to let fly with an electrical burst anyway, though a power surge through an unplugged computer is vulgar. The monitor explodes.

The Storyteller declares that the effect constitutes "Vulgar Magick with a Witness". If Tricia had blown up the monitor without warning, the power surge could be declared coincidental. If Brenda and her computer had actually been inside the Net, the effect might have been coincidental. But because obnoxious Tricia crossed the boarder between the two Realms, the paradigms do not translate. An unplugged computer exploding on its own is theoretically impossible on Earth, and Tricia reaps some Paradox.

The Nature of the Spheres

Could the straggling thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form materials for wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

— Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

The Digital Web is not part of the Near Umbra or the Earth. It exists as its own separate Realm, with its own laws of reality. The paradigm of the Digital Web is not yet solid; as the Digital Web continues to grow, Storytellers should feel free to adjust the way magicks work within the Realm.

The next few pages contain suggestions about how the Spheres of magick work inside the Digital Web. If you decide to use this system or a variant, static and dynamic rules are used as per **Mage: The Ascension**. Remember that Sleeper witnesses do not cause more Paradox unless the mage blatantly displays some power beyond the scope of "radical graphics".

Each Sphere has a rating number, followed by a brief description of how the magick functions in the strange reality of the Net, a discussion of common effects and some coincidental examples of how to use the Sphere.

There are three golden rules of Net Magick. First, magicks may only affect an area of the Digital Web that is accessible to the mage. Second, magicks may not affect Realspace or the Umbra, except for areas immediately surrounding Net access points. The third, and ultimate, rule is to do whatever is necessary to tell a good story.

For all Spheres, the rating number next to the Sphere means that all effects up to that rating do not generate Paradox within the Net.

Sphere Ratings and Effects

Correspondence I

Correspondence magicks provide the structure of the Digital Web. Many mages believe that the Net was made accessible through an incredibly powerful use of Correspondence. Some say Turing was destroyed by Paradoxical side effects of the Web's creation. Correspondence provides access to the Net and allows mages to perceive and sense the virtual reality in the first place.

All mages within the Digital Web have their dots in Correspondence raised by 1 to a maximum of their Arete or 5, whichever is lower. This increase in power is a fuction of the Web's reality and does not allow the mage to effect reality outside the Web in any manner. The level 1 Correspondence Effect **Landscape of the Mind** (see **Mage: The Ascension**, Chapter 7, pg. 185) automatically functions for mages inside the electronic landscape.

For example, if Kestrel, a mage with a single dot in Correspondence, enters the Digital Web, his rating increases to 2. He may now sense other locations, using **Correspondence Sensing** (see pg. 185, above), but these locations are limited to the Net. Attempts to sense beyond the virtual environment fail, since his Correspondence increase is directly tied to the reality of the Web.

Range limitations still apply to the use of Correspondence. The chart below is a modified version of the one found in **Mage: The Ascension**, Chapter 7, pg. 184.

Restricted Areas are not accessible using Correspondence in the static reality of the Net. A mage may travel up to the barrier of a Restricted area with Correspondence magick, but may not enter. Correspondence may be used as

vulgar magick to circumvent this rule, but usually trips some alarm in the process.

Immediate Spatial Perceptions, or level 1 Correspondence, allows a mage to be completely aware of an entire sector, using **Landscape of the Mind**. Measurements of all types concerning the virtual reality may be made. Many Virtual Adepts have this spatial data appear in front of their eyes as they view a target, as if they were using high-tech scanners. Everything within a Restricted area is treated as if it had been consciously hidden; therefore, it is not immediately perceptible.

Correspondence Perceptions, level 2, are used by mages coincidentally to scan for conduits through the Digital Web. Projected perceptions appear to the Awakened as geometric shapes floating through the Net. Also, this ability can be used coincidentally to perceive events around the mage's body if she were astrally projecting into the Net. Any access point to the Digital Web may be reached coincidentally by **Correspondence Perceptions**. Effects such as staring out of computer monitors or looking through security cameras attached to a computer are coincidental. However, the mage's field of perception is limited to the monitor screen or camera. Some mages are reputed to use satellite tracking systems from the Web.

The range chart limits the distance that perceptions may be sent. Extending perceptions into Restricted Areas or areas outside the Digital Web away from computers causes Paradox. Sensory overload can be a major danger when a mage lets her awareness go flying too fast into the unknown.

The third dot in Correspondence grants the ability to **Shift through Space** and have **Co-locality Perception**. A mage can transmit herself coincidentally at near-light speed to other locations in the Net, limited only by the range chart and Restricted Areas. **Co-locality Perception** is also possible as a coincidental effect when used on free areas within the Web. However, every turn **Co-locality Perception** is used, a mage must make a Stamina roll against difficulty 8 or take a Health Level from the overwhelming sensory input of the Net. Vulgar effects at this level are caused by using extended perception on areas outside the Web or violating Restricted Areas.

Adepts of Correspondence with the fourth dot in the Sphere, **Blend Localities/Co-Locate Self**, may perform both effects within the boundaries of Digital Web. The only limitation on coincidental use is that the areas affected must be accessible to the mage. In the static reality of the Net, these effects are considered to be multi-tasking routines. Also, it is possible for mages with this rank in Correspondence to create conduits. Use the range chart to determine the number of successes needed to reach the target sector.

The ultimate level of Correspondence gives the mage the ability to alter spatial relations within one area of the Digital Web, such as a single sector. This altering of space may also be used to "shuffle" conduits, moving a sector's location. Co-locating two or more sectors is vulgar magick within the Net. Whenever this happens, both areas usually de-rez.

Digital Web Correspondence Range Chart

Successes	Range
One Success —	Immediate Perception
Two Successes —	Very Familiar (entry point, personal virtual realm)
Three Successes —	Familiar (entry to Spy's Demise)
Four Successes —	Aware of the location's existence (an online address or section of the Net seen once)
Five Successes —	Speculative (an area with a unique trait that you've heard about, or a Junkland)

Entropy 0

Even the Digital Web isn't safe from Entropy; VR is actually more vulnerable to it than realspace. Programs break down, parameters lose strength, barriers crack and Webslingers slowly overdose on their senses. When most structures in the Net decay, they break down into crystalline reflective fractals. Examining these shapes, a mage sees that each one contains a near infinite amount of smaller fractals to the limit of perception. Entropy may be used to play with randomizers in programs, with results ranging from winning interactive games with Sleepers to changing the directives of enemy programs.

Perceive Entropy allows a Disciple of Entropy to detect weaknesses in the fabric of the Net and its residents. She may determine the amount of decay that has occurred in an area of the Web. Also, Entropy allows mages to perceive Paradoxical effects online through the disruptions in electronic reality that result from Paradox. Again, attempts to sense Entropy outside the Web or within an inaccessible part of the Net are definitely vulgar.

Control Randomness (Entropy 2) is an extremely potent magick inside the Digital Web. Most computer programs contain variables within them. A mage with **Control Randomness** may be able to manipulate these variables to control the programs. Some mages use this to open Restricted Sectors by randomly causing them to recognize the mage's password. Because of the number of bugs found or built into computer software and hardware,

this effect is also usually coincidental. **Control Randomness** also functions the same way that it does in realspace.

Diffuse Energy/Destroy Matter functions to disintegrate electronic objects found in Virtual Realms. Icons may also be adjusted at the whim of a mage with this ability. It is possible to open a Restricted Area with this magick, but it takes a great deal of work. When objects fall apart, they become small shards of fractal trash. Use the rules in **Mage** to determine the extent of the effects, just as if the characters were in realspace.

The fourth dot of Entropy works differently in the Digital Web than it does in realspace. The **Wither Life** Effect only works if a mage knows where his target's life pattern is located. Mental Cybernauts don't take their life patterns with them when they leave their bodies. However, what an Adept of Entropy can do in the Net may be more frightening than simple death. He may create holes, vortices or black throwing discs (a special effect taking vulgar form in the Net). Anything struck by one of these entropic disks takes damage as if the Adept were using the **Wither Life** effect. Beings or objects destroyed in this manner are lost. Some believe they are dumped into the mythical Trash Sector; others say that they are cast into the Deep Umbra. In any event, mental-travelling Cybernauts don't get a chance to return to their bodies if killed by this attack.

The final level of Entropy allows a Master of the Sphere to alter or create parameters of a Virtual Realm. The mage can rework not only the content (the landscape), but the context (the laws that govern and shape the landscape). In a post-holocaust Realm, the mage might change the parameters so that life adapts and recovers. Some old mages claim to have the ability to reformat areas with this level of Entropy. Data clusters may also be changed. Strangely, the Paradoxical side effects of **Intellectual Entropy** don't work the way they do for other magickal effects; whiteouts deposit Masters of Entropy into their own Paradox realms, somewhere near the Digital Web.

Forces I

The Sphere of Forces plays a greater role in the Digital Web than it does in the physical world. The Sphere of Forces in the Net performs some of the functions of the Matter and Life Spheres in realspace. Instead of Matter making up the structures of the Net, everything appears based around electrical representations, possibly because most Sleeper envision virtual reality as an electronic world. Mages with control over Forces can do excruciating damage to icons; most Technomancers build up their Forces Sphere after spending a little time in the Digital Web.

A Disciple of Forces may easily discern the energy patterns of the Web with **Perceive Forces**. The entire environment of the Web seems to be composed of Forces, trapped in various fractal patterns to make the virtual objects of the Net. The energy patterns within the Digital Web are strangely powerful and resemble electricity. One of the most common uses of this level of Forces is to detect surges in the surrounding energy fields when an icon enters a sector.

Control Lesser Forces, Level 2 of the Sphere, allows the mage to shape objects in the Net in a manner similar to the effects of Matter 2 (**Mage: The Ascension**, Chapter 7, pg. 201-202). He can create patterns for the electricity to empower. No Prime is needed to stabilize these patterns within a single sector: the Digital Web provides enough. Items are stable in environments where they are contextually appropriate— where the world laws support them. A baseball bat, chain, or martial arts outfit, for instance, could be created near the Crater.

The effects of **System Havoc** within the Net are mind-blowing. The number of successes is used to determine the area of effect, and all icons within that area must roll their Willpower (difficulty 8) to avoid taking damage equal to the caster's successes. Basically, all affected characters feel themselves ripple in a localized power surge. **System Havoc** is always a vulgar effect when used inside the Web. If used on a computer hooked up to the Net, then the effects are coincidental. A variant on **Discharge Static** may be used inside the Net to cause an object next to an opponent to explode in a mysterious blast of energy.

The third level of Forces, **Spawn Lesser Forces**, lets the mage generate energy and create objects that conflict contextually with a Virtual Realm. Prime 2 is not needed in the special environment of the Net. Attaining this level of Sphere understanding allows a mage to increase his control of local forces; the effects of Level 2 can be generated with more damage and the mage can fire beams of energy coincidentally in the Net. Otherwise, the other details of Forces 3 remain the same as in realspace.

The telekinetic abilities of Forces 4 carry over to the Digital Web; within the Net they are considered coincidental. Major forces have little or no meaning in VR, but Forces 4 does augment the effects that the Adept had learned at earlier levels.

Masters of Forces have the ability to destroy entire sectors of the Digital Web, generating effects similar to those of tactical nukes in realspace, though this has a nasty tendency to wipe out both target and mage. Five successes against a difficulty of 8 (+ the number of parameters on the sector, if any) will reduce a sector to junk. Such a use of Forces 5 can cause a whiteout that could spread to Earth's information systems, causing a masive systems crash.

Master of Forces can cause large-scale **System Havoc** in realspace, destroying massive networks of computers coincidentally from within the Net. A roll of Intelligence + Computers is needed (the difficulty depends on the mage's familiarity with the network and whether or not any of it is protected) for the mage to properly direct the magicks. Failure indicates that the mage channels the power improperly, causing it to dissipate harmlessly. A botch means that the mage directs his power at the wrong network (possibly

his own icon...). A single success on the magick roll can take out a small system, while five could scramble a telecommunications company.

The effects of major disruptions to the computer systems on earth on the Digital Web still need testing. One camp believes that an electromagnetic pulse would scramble most of the Net; others argue that the magickal reality would go completely unscathed. Neither side is in a hurry to do a test.

Life 0

Life magicks are of limited use within the Digital Web. Nothing even remotely organic exists naturally in the artificial Net. Mental visitors leave their Life Patterns behind with their bodies in realspace. Only Holistic visitors bring Life Patterns into VR, but these travellers are rare.

Life magick works best by attacking the meat a Cybernaut leaves behind—heart attacks, hormonal imbalances, seizures and worse can all be caused coincidentally to those hooked up to the Digital Web. An individual's Life Pattern can also be tampered with, making it harder for her to return to her body if she suffers death in the Web.

Adepts of Life prefer to enter the Net through Holistic means, so that they can still use their magicks to heal and transform themselves. Those mages who have powerful Life magick and visit Astrally use their Life to sustain their bodies before entry. This way, if they are wounded, they are more likely to come out of a coma or heal damage suffered in the Digital Web.

For Holistic Cybernauts, Life magick functions exactly as it does on Earth. The only difference is that Holistic visitors, who have brought their entire bodies into the Net, are affected.

Level 1, **Sense Life**, has a few uses in the Web. First, it may be used in conjunction with a security camera or monitor hooked up to the Digital Web for effects like **Genetics Scan**. Second, any mage with the ability to **Sense Life** has a stronger tie to his Life Pattern. A mage gets to subtract his levels in Life magick from the difficulty of the Stamina roll made upon return from the Net. Also, **Sense Life** allows a mage to feel access points to Earth, due to the presence of life-forms on the other side. Almost any use of this level of the Life Sphere is coincidental.

The higher levels of Life magick are hindered by the lack of life in the Web. There is simply nothing upon which the magicks may focus. A few rumors suggest that Life magicks can create virii online and that Life Patterns are necessary to generate Artificial Intelligences. This is all disputed by Masters of Mind and Spirit. The advantages to Life magicks in VR all seem to revolve around physical entry, preparing the body for a mental jaunt and, most importantly, recovery.



Matter 0

Computers provide access points for the Net. A student of Matter can manipulate technology connected to the Digital Web on Earth. Also, her Sphere allows her, with the proper scientific knowledge to transform items into devices that can help her during a trek into cyberspace. The Level 5 Matter effect **Tapping the Signal** provides an example of the possibilities for using Matter.

Any effect that damages hardware or electronics at an access point to the Digital Web is treated as coincidental magick. Masters of Matter may turn a building's security systems into nightmarish death traps. The largest obstacle to using Matter in realspace around access points of the Web remains the mage's perceptions. In no case has Matter ever affected the structure of a sector in the Net. Rules for using the Sphere of Matter don't change from **Mage: The Ascension**, because there is no matter in the electronic world of the Digital Web. The only exception is when Cybernauts Holistically transfer equipment with them into the virtual environment.

Mind 4

Within the landscape of the Digital Web, the Disciples of Mind have found that their abilities only broaden in scope and flow more easily. The Net is a place filled with intelligences. Information hides everywhere— programs, AI and Cybernauts all are affected by the power of Mind magick. The difficulty of all Mind magicks is reduced by 1 for any target that experiences virtual reality.

Cybernauts are vulnerable because of the intensity of the mental experience of the Web, unfiltered by the sensory organs of the body. Mind may affect sensory visitors or even Sleepers using the Net. Visitors using Sensory Immersion may not use Mind coincidentally to counterattack.

All of the effects of the Level 1 Mind effect **Empower Self** are coincidental. They may be explained by software, hardware, or just the unfettered mental nature of the Digital Web. Some Akashic Brothers use the Net to aid in their mind-over-body techniques, like a gigantic biofeedback machine.

The second dot in Mind, **Mental Impulse**, lets a mage send subliminal messages to other users, including Sleepers, thereby playing games with their subconscious. With Sleepers, the coincidental effect takes the form of flashing subliminals on their monitor screens. Emotions are easier to read in the Digital Web as well; they usually show in some way in the icons. All of these uses are also coincidental. New World Order Technomancers are the unchallenged masters of using this level of Mind on individuals inside the Net or merely connected to it.

Mind 3 is one of the favorite magicks of mages in the Net. Mages may unleash psychic assaults without violating static reality, doing one Health Level per success. Private conversations are possible between users with a variant on the **Telepathy** effect called **Instant Message**, or **IM** for short. Some mages combine **Multi-Tasking** with **IM** use to carry on multiple private conversations. When this happens, the mage's icon takes on a spaced-out look. **Probing Thoughts** and **Graphic Transmissions** all work coincidentally within the Net as well, but using Mind 3 against a Sleeper is a form of dynamic magick unless she is connected to a VR device of a magickal or non-magickal nature.

Mind 4 allows a mage to **Control Minds**. Within the Net, even this powerful magick is not dynamic. Most programs are easily manipulated with this level of mastery. For this reason, the Technocracy and others prefer to protect their Virtual Realms with spirits brought from the Umbra. Information may be stolen, erased or altered with Mind 4. Data beasts (see the Chapter Five) are extremely vulnerable to this magick. Adepts may also establish Restricted Areas by using Mind 4 in conjunction with Prime magick (see Rotes in the Chapter Five). Level 4 in Mind also lets a mage heal Cybernauts travelling by Sensory or Astral means as though he possessed Life of an equal level in realspace. Sleepers may be controlled coincidentally, becoming mesmerized by their monitor screens. Possession of Sleepers who are also not using a VR device, however, is vulgar use.

Mind 5 gives a mage the ability to slip beyond the Web and outside the bounds of its reality. Few mages know what lies beyond the conduits and sectors. Some say Paradox Realms cling to the Digital Web like morning dew; others claim to know of Epiphs, Umbral places of pure thought. A few say that there are sinister places where wraiths dwell, not beyond the Gauntlet, but below...

Prime 3

Quintessence pulsates within every section of the Digital Web. Prime sustains the Net, and its energies course through reality. A Master of Prime may change the parameter of a sector and command the reality of the Net. Mages who study Prime have developed a fascination with the Digital Web. The energy there is raw and unchanneled, seemingly forming its own patterns based on the guidelines of reality set when a sector becomes formatted. Several theories on the underlying truth of reality have been postulated from observations in the Net.

Prime 1 lets a mage sense the Quintessence flow of the Web. With a Perception + Awareness roll, the Disciple can feel out the parameters of a sector, determine its contextual underpinnings, and even ascertain its age and the identity of the mage who formatted it if she rolls enough successes. Students of Prime may also sense whiteouts as massive disruptions in the Prime flow. The Virtual Adepts jokingly refer to these as "disturbances in the Force". No known effects of Prime 1 conflict with the static reality of the Net.

Prime 2 gives the mage the ability to fuel patterns of Forces within the Digital Web. This can make virtual objects gain a permanency that allows them to be taken from one sector to another. Also, a mage can fuel Matter and Life Patterns created within the Digital Web. Items

ABC trial 4



with a Matter Pattern are highly unusual, and most Cybernauts are unprepared for them in the Net. Some believe that virii are the results of conjunctional experiments with Life 2 and Prime 2.

As a general guideline, Prime 2 makes all other magicks work more effectively. Prime 2 may be used with Mind 4 to designate a sector as Restricted. This sets up a Restriction with a Prime strength equal to the amount of Quintessence invested into it during its creation. The mage designates who may pass the Restriction. Mages are only limited by their imagination as to the designation and the form of the Restriction, although most Technomancers simply block the ends of their conduits with metal doors that require a password. All Prime 2 effects are static.

Prime 3 lets a mage Channel Quintessence through the Digital Web. When a mage draws Quintessence from a Node on Earth into a Virtual Realm of the Net, she creates a special conduit called a Channel. Whenever the flow of the Channel is not being tapped, the Quintessence pours out of the sector and into other sections of the Net. Mages use Prime 3 to build Talismans online and to create Chantries.

A few great minds have established Chantries after shaping the Channel's connection to become one of the parameters of the Realm. These Channels may function as small Nodes for a Chantry formatted from Virgin Web. Magick using Prime 3 is also static in the Net. Chapter Four of **The Book of Chantries** has more information about the construction of Chantries.

Adepts of Prime use Prime 4 to tear Quintessence out of an area. With this magick, they may remove parameters, destroy restrictions and eliminate objects. When they do this, the parameters cease to exist, but the patterns of virtual objects remain in existence, unlike in realspace.

If a chair in the Spy's Demise has its Quintessence siphoned out, it ceases to have form in the electronic landscape but its Pattern remains, taking form as fractal motes. Channeling Quintessence back into these motes restores the object. Prime 4 has nasty side effects in the Digital Web: an Adept who uses Prime 4 or 5 in the Net gains twice the normal amount of Paradox for vulgar magick. Moving around Quintessence in great quantities risks a major systems crash. Removing parameters, Restrictions, or taking Quintessence from Holistic Cybernauts are vulgar effects; siphoning Quintessence from digital objects and leaving fractal remains is not.

The limits of Prime 5 are still being tested with trepidation in the Digital Web. Like Prime 4, vulgar use generates twice the normal Paradox. Prime 5 is reputed to have the unusual ability to fix whiteouts in the Net. Many also believe that by altering the flow of Quintessence within the Digital Web, a Master of Prime may cause Paradox. Prime 5 may definitely move set Channels and tear apart large sectors of the Net. This level of magick depends on each individual Storyteller and his **Mage** chronicle.

Spirit

The spiritual aspects of the Digital Web remain enigmatic. Most spiritualists are not surprised. Some mages have difficulty understanding the differences between the Computer Web in the Umbra and the Digital Web. The Dreamspeakers say that the Digital Web holds the spirituality of the Technocracy and the Virtual Adepts. Many Tradition members consider this a not-so-veiled insult, but the Virtual Adepts don't think so. Like the physical world, the Net touches the Umbra and has many conduits that lead deep into the spirit world. It is located in the Pattern Web and includes areas of the Gauntlet and, some believe, the Horizon.

A few say the Voyager space probe is the farthest available sector possibly even in the Deep Umbra. The Technocracy uses the Digital Web to reach their Horizon Realms and to avoid the mythic strangeness of the Umbra.

Spirits do infest the Digital Web and include a few computer viruses, data beasts, electrical elementals and strange spiders, such as rune-fetters. Electronic spirits roam all of the areas not patrolled by the Technocracy. The werewolf tribe called the Glass Walkers revere a powerful totem called the Cockroach, which has amazing powers within the Digital Web. Some say that a group of werewolves called the Random Interrupts aid the Dreamspeakers in the Net.

Spirit Sight allows the mage to see into both the physical world and the Umbra from within the Web. Within the Net, five successes are needed to pierce the Gauntlet surrounding the Disciple. If the mage is located at a Conduit close to the Umbra only three successes are needed. To find an Umbral conduit without magick requires a Perception + Cosmology roll (difficulty 8). A chart is located later in this chapter. Once a mage focuses on the Umbra, she fades from the Net, becoming intangible like a Sensory visitor. However, she has no awareness of events going on around her in the Digital Web.

Spirit 2 allows a mage to leave the Digital Web through a conduit touching the Umbra. It also gives the mage the ability to communicate and call spirits within the Net. Both of these effects are part of the static reality of the Digital Web.

Spirit 3 gives the Disciple of Spirit the ability to **Step Sideways**, allowing him to leave the Net with a roll of five successes. It also lets a mage Holistically travel into the Digital Web from the Umbra. Jumping directly from any section of the Web to the Umbra or from the Umbra to the Web with this ability is a form of dynamic magick. Paradox is determined by the reality the mage departs; the results transpire in an appropriate form at the mage's destination. Whiteouts don't follow Dreamspeakers to the distant realms of the Umbra.

Spirit 4 enables mages to create Talismans and to breach the Gauntlet. This level of Spirit functions exactly as it is written in **Mage: The Ascension**. Since the Net lies within the Gauntlet, the level 4 power, **Gauntlet Prison** allows an individual to be imprisoned within the fabric of the Web itself. This is a particularly terrifying experience; the imprisoned perceives the events in the sector and may even be able to communicate, but cannot escape the cell. This magick is usually vulgar in nature.

Spirit 5, like Mind 5, is somewhat beyond the scope of the Digital Web. Using Spirit 5 to travel beyond the Web is a vulgar usage. No one is quite sure what strange worlds exist beyond the Net, although some say that the Barrier lies not only between the Earth, the Umbra, and the Deep Umbra, but between the Web and other places that don't fit nicely into any of those categories.

Time 4

The Time Sphere moves precisely within the Digital Web. Time flow is regular and constant, but a Virtual Adept or other user can manipulate time by speeding up or slowing down processors within the Net. A mage disrupting time in the Net risks de-rezzing himself.

Time Sense (Time 1) works in a completely coincidental manner in the Digital Web. All mages may justify **Absolute Time Sense** as a computer function. Disciples of Time have noticed that the amount of time-based phenomena in the Web is growing, and a few suspect that travellers from the future may be trying to guide the past by manipulating the Net.

Past/Future Sight functions in the Web as well, but what a mage sees are possible timelines and the probabilities of occurrences. The past can always be replayed in the static reality of the Net. Some mages use this magick conjunctionally with Correspondence and Mind to warn them before the Technocracy finds them hacking into a Restricted area.

Time Contraction/Dilation gives the mage control over the localized time flow. This effect is also static in the Net, easily blamed on slow processors. Some Disciples of Time use this level of magick to speed up their actions online, letting them do more in shorter periods. Many Virtual Realms have special time-flow parameters that may be different from the rest of the Net.

Time Determinism also works within the Digital Web. Effects such as hanging spells or delayed functions are possible. Unfortunately, some beings such as viruses are able to use this sort of magick to hang their own effects. Because many programs have timers and precise time control is possible in computers, effects like **Programmed Event** function as coincidental magick.

Time 5 functions as it does in realspace. **Time Travel** and **Sidestepping Time** are usually vulgar effects in the Digital Web, and a few Masters of Time are said to have been trapped in mysterious Paradoxical Time Realms.

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Creating Virtual Realms



How much choice did God have in constructing the universe?

— Albert Einstein

Any mage may create a Virtual Realm in an unformatted sector. This process doesn't require magick, and it doesn't result in Paradox. It is a natural process of the Net. There are only three reasons that everyone in the Net doesn't have a Virtual Realm. First, Sleepers unknowingly format the majority of new sectors as grid areas by incidentally using their computers. Second, the Virtual Adepts and the Void Engineers are involved in a Great Race to format all new sectors; one side or the other formats everything. Finally, unformatted sectors are difficult to find. New conduits come into existence continually, but they cannot be used to create a Virtual Realm.

Formatting the Web

What pleasure then did Micromegas feel in watching the movements of those little machines, in examining all their gestures, in following all their operations!... A student said "That there are immaterial and intelligent substances I do not doubt. I content myself with believing that more is possible than people think."

— Voltaire, *Micromegas*, 1752

Mages can only create their own Virtual Realms when they are lucky enough to stumble across an unformatted sector. A group of mages may combine to format a realm as well.

First, a mage must conceive of a context for the reality of the Virtual Realm. This is just a description, roughly equivalent to a paragraph of text. The nature of the context is completely up to the mage. It could be Mount Olympus, a scene from a movie or a vacant lot next to the Chantry. The concept could be as a vague as the Old West or as specific as an exact duplication of the house in which he grew up. The process of creation only takes an instant; once the process starts, like a flame it continues to grow until it runs out of fuel. In game terms, the Storyteller takes the initial concept and develops it from the player's initial description.

Second, the character must spend a point of Willpower to force the Web to adjust to her concept. Once the Willpower is spent, the mage rolls her Arete against a difficulty of 6. Quintessence may not be spent to lower the difficulty, although a Willpower point may be expended for a success. Success means that the Web is successfully formatted. This process is irreversible. Once formatted, an area of the Web will always retain an underlying reality



Little Nemo in Etherland

Alexis Hastings, a Son of Ether, arrives in a section of Virgin Web. She wants to create a place where she is part of the crew of Jules Verne's famous semi-fictional submarine, the Nautilus. (Many Sons of Ether believe that the character Captain Nemo was based on a Verne's knowledge of a renegade member of their Tradition.) She wants time to flow quickly there and for the view from the submarine's ports to be relaxing. She decides that she personally never wants to worry about drowning or water pressure in the realm and also wants to stage the occasional giant squid attack for excitement.

The Storyteller notes that Alexis wants to set five parameters for her Realm; thus, she needs to make five successes with her Arete roll. She has a difficulty of 8. Alexis has enough points in Time, Matter, Life, and Prime to have the time run twice as fast on earth, and to breathe underwater and ignore water pressure. The Storyteller decides that the other two parameters— the relaxing vistas and the giant squid attacks— are for atmosphere only, and are not really worth trying to figure out. Since the squid attacks are meant for excitement only, they are part of the atmosphere. If Alexis wanted to have giant squids attack her enemies, she would actually have to build living creatures with Life and Prime magick.

Alexis spends her Willpower point and four points of Quintessence, one for each parameter. She rolls and makes all five successes against difficulty 8. Her Virtual Realm is set.

based on the initial concept. Failure results in the mage formatting the Web, but not based on her concept. Instead, the Storyteller chooses something from the character's background or life that she used instead to format the Web. Dramatic or emotional themes from the character's life are excellent resources for this.

A botch results in the character projecting part of her subconscious into the Web. The Storyteller transforms part of the Web into something the character fears or hates, perhaps into a reflection of the character's dark side. The mage permanently loses a point of Willpower.

If the mage wants to have more control over her creation, she may set laws governing the behavior of the Virtual Realm called parameters. The mage must spend a point of Quintessence for every parameter she wants to create. Each set parameter requires the mage to make an extra success on her Arete roll. Every two parameters also raises the difficulty of the roll by 1. Fractions go against the character.

Parameters that only affect the atmosphere of the realm have no limits. Parameters that require game mechanics are limited by the magickal abilities of the mage on Earth, except that pattern magicks do not require Prime; enough Quintessence is present in the Digital Web to power these patterns. These parameters define part of the realm, but they are not a necessary part of the process. Time-flow changes and restrictions to entry are typical parameters. When setting parameters, all of the successes must be achieved or the formatting results in a failure.

A Realm may not affect another Realm. The squids won't escape dramatically from Alexis's Realm into a nearby conduit and swim through the electronic currents to sectors throughout the Net. Parameters do not affect areas of the Net beyond their sector.

This process does not limit the Storyteller. Anything may happen within a Realm as long as it relates to the initial concept. In the example above, a dramatic squid attack might have occurred without Alexis' parameter if the Storyteller felt it was part of the initial concept (or if, perhaps, some other mage had been screwing around with her Realm when Alexis wasn't looking).

Characters cannot Awaken a new sector by building a new computer— the Storyteller is solely and completely responsible for the availability of unformatted Web. Creating a Virtual Realm in Virgin Web is easy, but it's meant to be an extremely rare and awe-inspiring event. Making a world, even a small one, should help characters undergo a transformation, moving them further along their personal path to Ascension. Virtual Adepts and Void Engineers constantly scramble throughout the Net in the Great Race, hoping to create their own Virtual Realms. Many Cybernauts view formatters of Virtual Realms, especially those who set parameters on those Realms, with fear and envy. Most unique Virtual Realms remain intact as memorials to their creators long after those creators pass away.

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Crossovers



Storytellers may wish to interweave their **Mage** chronicles with tales from **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, or **Vampire: The Masquerade.** Successful combinations provide a multi-faceted lens with which a troupe may tackle a multitude of issues, and can provide a great deal of fun for players and Storytellers alike. The Storyteller of a crossover story has a wealth of material from both games to draw upon if she so desires. This section gives suggestions on how to run Garou or Kindred in the Digital Web and how to use **Werewolf** or **Vampire** source material for **Mage**.

Location of the Net in the Umbra

Metaphysically speaking, the Digital Web lies within the Pattern of reality. Like a universe-sized spider's lair, strands of this Pattern reach everywhere within all things. The Digital Web itself is co-located in the same area as the Gauntlet. It lies on the border between the Umbra and the Earth. Some sections of it extend out to the Horizon in between the Umbra and the Deep Umbra. Other parts touch the Dream Realms. No one knows how far it goes.

Connections with the Umbra

The Pattern Web touches everything within the Tellurian, even the mythic Horizon Realms of the Marauders. The Net, growing within these fibers, stretches out to caress all the Realms. As the electronic landscape expands, portals and gateways appear, allowing access to a multitude of spiritual Realms throughout the Umbra.

Within the spirit world, there lies a place where the Net becomes intertwined with another section of reality, the CyberRealm, most often visited by the Garou. The Computer Web spans the mysterious space between the CyberRealm and the Digital Web and reflects the spiritual components of the computer revolution, just as the Penumbra reflects the spiritual nature of the Earth. Nephandi, Marauders and Paradox spirits infest this area.

A strange tribe of werewolves called Glass Walkers travel through their own version of VR here, using a unique form of Holistic Immersion to carry their bodies into the Web.

Fine strands of sticky crystal cover the conduits that lead from the Digital Web into the Umbra. Strange mists fill the passages. Only a mage with Spirit 3 and using the **Stepping Sideways** Effect may penetrate these barriers, with two or more successes on her roll. Direct access to the Digital Web from the Umbra is of equal difficulty. If a mage has Spirit 2, she may call on spirits to open the barriers for her, but this is dangerous and unlikely.

To find one of these conduits from either the Umbra or the Digital Web, a mage rolls Intelligence + Cosmology (difficulty 8). Consult the chart below for the number of successes needed. An astrally projecting mage who enters the Umbra from the Digital Web must first return to the Net before she can rejoin her body. A mage who enters the Net from the Umbra can simply return there.

Umbral Conduit Search Chart

Number of successes needed	Current Web Location
1	A Strongly Spirit-Infested Area
2	Junklands
3	Free Areas
4	Restricted Non-Technocracy Areas
5	Restricted Technocracy Areas

Dreamspeakers have learned to reach the Umbra directly from within the Net. Five successes are needed on an attempt to step sideways (using Spirit 3) to escape into the Umbra. Any whiteout resulting from the use of this type of magick automatically causes the offending mage to be thrown into a Paradox Realm somewhere parallel to the Digital Web.

The Net opens up into the Horizon Realms of the Technocracy and the nightmarish world of Autochthonia. Swirling misty conduits fade into the Dream Realms. Even Paradox Realms have conduits trailing into their strange depths. Spiritual mages know of the Digital Web's openings into the Scar, and a fearful few suspect that somewhere, an opening exists to the Abyss. (For details of the Abyss, the CyberRealm, or the Scar, see **Umbra: The Velvet Shadow** for **Werewolf: The Apocalypse.**)

Here Come the Glass Walkers (Werewolves meet Mages)

...and the world keeps spinning round
a vicious cycle turning
some of them know love
some of us know the burning down
— Kings X, "The Burning Down"

The werewolves explain most actions in the world as resulting from the interplay of three indescribably powerful spirits called the Triat. This Triat consists of the Weaver, the Wyrm and the Wyld.

Werewolf Supplements for Mage

Mage: The Ascension gives rules for translating spirits from **Werewolf**, and some examples of converted spirits are found in the Chapter Five. The Nephandi, Technocracy and Marauders can be integrated with the forces of any particular Triat member.

Fetishes found in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** may also be translated for **Mage**. The Gnosis of a fetish equals the Arete of a Talisman. Level remains the same. The Quintessence score of a fetish is found by multiplying the level by the Gnosis score. Werewolves do not need Quintessence to activate fetishes because of their inherent magickal nature, and Garou do not generate Paradox. Werewolves may not use Talismans of a non-spiritual nature.

The Weaver wove the structure of reality. Everything static about the world derives from this spirit. The Technocracy and Paradox itself are manifestations of the Weaver. The werewolves recognize technology as a threat; unfortunately, few of them understand the difference between the Virtual Adepts and Sons of Ether and the Technocracy. Only one tribe of Garou, the Glass Walkers, deals with the Weaver.

The Wyrm is the incarnation of decay and destruction. This entity causes all suffering and corruption in the world. The depleted ozone layer, crime, oil spills, and domestic violence all relate back to this spirit. The undead, such as vampires, and the Nephandi serve the Wyrm according to most Garou. There are mysterious werewolves that serve this incarnation of the Demon Hordes.

According to the Dreamspeakers, most werewolves claim that they are part of the Wyld, the spirit of chaos and creation. This force also represents nature, although the Garou worship a Mother Goddess called Gaia as well. In this world view, the insanity of the Marauders stems from the Wyld.

Spirituality runs through the hearts of the werewolves, and the metaphysics of their paradigm are complex and magickal. They possess abilities that defy Paradox and enjoy a relationship with the spirit world envied by Adepts of Spirit. Because of their world view and their different senses (such as heightened smell), they perceive elements of the Umbra in their own special way.

The Weaver controls the Digital Web, according to most Garou. Even though the virtual worlds in the Net simulate reality, the werewolves somehow always know they are false and feel uncomfortable in the surroundings. Sometimes the raw sensory input from electronic reality drives them into insane berserk rages. Only the Glass Walkers relate well to the Digital Web, and even they are bothered by the surroundings in Technocracy areas.

Because werewolves project holistically into the Net, they have the same physical capabilities that they do on Earth. This makes them very dangerous. Werewolves also use their own Talismans— called fetishes— and bring spirits bound to them into the Digital Web. The Glass Walker Totem Spirit called the Cockroach has many powers over sections of the Net, including the ability to help the Garou find secret conduits unknown to most Virtual Adepts. Some mage spiritualists may call upon the Cockroach as well.

"Pull the Plug! Pull the Plug!" The Malkavian Madness Network Uplink (Vampires Meet Mages)

Dream the same thing every night
I see our freedom in my sight
No locked doors, no windows barred
No things to make my brain seem scarred.
Sleep my friend and you will see
That dream is my reality
— Metallica, "Welcome Home (Sanitarium)"

The Digital Web is occasionally overrun with icons of pale, gray-skinned men and women, some in campy bat cloaks. They play strange pranks and make indecipherable comments to the other Net Runners. They are clearly not mages, and some Virtual Adepts have identified them as vampires. These pranksters deny that they are vampires, but also make it clear that they gleefully lie a lot.

Most seem harmless at first glance, but their pranks have ruined some sectors. The visitors appear on the Net only rarely, but when they do, they cause a lot of trouble. The areas of Virgin Web that they have patterned induce a low level of psychosis (a temporary Derangement that lasts twenty-four hours for each hour spent in the Mad Realm.).

Virual Adept research into the issue has revealed that creatures claim that they reach the Web through a form of mental communication called the Malkavian Madness Network. They say they don't need a computer to be on the Web. The Adepts suspect that their arrival is the work of a vampire prankster who has managed to acquire one of their VR computer uplinks, but they have not completely ruled out the far-fetched possibility that the deranged vampires have found a way to access the Digital Web without any computer equipment, perhaps utilizing some variant on the Ahl-i-Batin Mind magicks.

Whatever their form of access, these odd visitors are to be avoided. Though they cannot suck blood from Net Runners in the conventional sense, the Malkavian madness is especially contagious in the fluid reality of the Digital Web.

Vampire Supplements for Mage

The **Vampire Players Guide** is an ideal source of information for **Mage**. In addition to rules for mortals, the book contains extensive lists of gear for the human set. Storytellers are also directed toward **Clanbook: Malkavian** for information on these odd undead visitors and their Madness Network (and for a fun read in general).

Werewolf Crossover Ideas

1. **To Grandmother's House We Go?:** The characters find themselves in the CyberRealm (either accidentally or on purpose) and find that the formatting is quite different than anything they've seen. Spider spirits scuttle up and down massive, light-filament webbing, tending to the bizarre Pattern created here. The spiders will attack anything that does not follow the proper paths or trails, interpreting anything foreign as a virus— even characters. They will gather in numbers and attempt to ensnare the foreign object or objects in a mass of circuit-like webbing, which they spin from themselves.

Garou Glass Walkers can sometimes be found "hacking" about in this Weaver realm, and they may be persuaded to aid characters against the spiders, which they seem to have some control over, calling them "Net-spiders." However, they will almost always ask for a favor or information in return. ("Hey, buddy, I ain't shareware!")

Much secret information can potentially be gained here, including info on Pentex, Inc., a foul Wyrm-tainted corporation, and perhaps even some info on Nephandi mages.

2. **Monkeywrenching:** The characters get involved (not necessarily voluntarily) in a Glass Walker's scheme to hack into the Syndicate's computers. This Garou, who calls himself a Monkeywrencher, seems convinced that there is a link between the shadowy, financial arm of the Technocracy and Pentex, Inc. He wants the mages' help to get in to a Technocracy computer and to block off any defenses the Syndicate may have.

There is indeed a connection between these groups, but it is so buried in innuendo spread throughout multiple files that it is highly doubtful the Monkeywrencher can retrieve it all before security clamps down. The first security step comes in the form of the juice being cut off — the power goes out, cutting any connection (even on the Umbra or in the Web). If the mages or the Monkeywrencher botch any rolls, the Syndicate may be able to track their identities down; their credit ratings will drop to negative proportions, strange debts will accumulate and eventually the characters will be wanted for credit fraud anywhere over the world. In addition, MIBs or HIT Marks will be sent after them. The Syndicate, if nothing else, has the money and influence to bribe the other Conventions for aid.

3. **Spirit Hunt:** A Glass Walker pack has come to the Web seeking spirits to bind into fetishes or to learn Gifts from. They mistake a mage's familiar for a spirit and use their incredible powers of spirit control to bind it and run. It's off on a merry chase through the Web. The Glass Walkers will try to step sideways back into the Realm, and escape through the streets of their home city. Finding them at this point may be very tough. It is possible that the characters may be blackmailed by the Glass Walkers for the return of the familiar.

Vampire Crossover Ideas

1. **Virus!:** There's this odd fellow on the Net who keeps showing up in restricted areas or supposedly protected places. He's pure trouble, because things seem to go haywire when he's around. The Web itself begins to reformat to follow strange and seemingly illogical laws. It must be "rebooted" to work correctly again. If the characters can confront this fellow, they may soon realize that he is a Malkavian vampire out for tricks— he's a sort of walking virus. He's not on his own, however, since he's not old enough to enter the Web on his own. He has a mentor, a very old Malkavian who helps him download himself into the Web and wreak havoc. Anyone harming him may suffer the wrath of his mentor.

2. **Initializing Disk Now:** A gang of Malkavians want to reformatting a place on the Web — yours. The characters must tackle this enterprising young league (there are about four of them) and prevent their reality from switching formats. If the Malkavians are successful, the characters will not have control of their reality haven any longer.

3. **Bleeding Information:** Information is disappearing. Hackers all over are reporting falling asleep at their consoles and waking up to discover that whole files have been deleted — they are gone, unretreivable. If the characters investigate, the trails will lead them to a desperate Malkavian vampire trapped in the Web. Somehow, he has reformatted himself (!) so he can suck information rather than blood. But it's not enough to sustain him, and he's slowly starving. He does not gain knowledge of anything on the files he devours (by sucking at computer port connections), and the information is lost for good. If he can be helped out of the Web, his reign of information destruction will end, but he will drink the blood of mortals again. A virtual wooden stake will stop him (if it can hit him)...


ELLISON

Chapter Two: The Spy's Demise

And ain't we a strange combination of dealers, hillbillies, hookers and nuns,
All of us seeking a shelter and dead on the run.
— Bob Gibson, "Dead on the Run"



The Spy's Demise is an enigmatically named haven for all mages. It exists in a sector of the Net that has direct conduits to Tradition and Convention areas. All mages respect the peace here and cease hostilities while in the sector. Some mages have utterly self-serving motives for keeping the local truce, but they keep it all the same. Some mages speculate that the world law of non-aggression is so powerful here that it even influences the motivations of Technomancers. Others say that mages of the Conventions have so much to gain by lulling all other mages into a false sense of security that they are on their best behavior. For now.

This virtual bar attracts an odd assortment of mages. Many of the older mages of more power and prestige shun the Web in general, and the Spy's Demise in particular. They believe that the Net is a transparent waste of time and that the Spy's Demise is a place for reality drop-outs. But a younger, less sophisticated, maverick pack of mages from all Traditions regularly visit the Spy's Demise. They experiment with new ways of interacting that are not based on old, static paradigms. Even if the Digital Web is nothing more than a gossamer fantasy, so many visitors have so transformed their understanding of human nature that their time in the Spy's Demise has paid off in spades.

Some of the more traditional mages believe that the Spy's Demise is a trap designed to catch the slackers of mage society within its webs. If a mage cannot confront the real world of pain and Paradox, for some reason, he has no business being Awakened at all. Better that he hide on the Digital Web than waste time and jeopardize the efforts of more "worthwhile" mages. Of course, if the Web *is* a real place, then the Net Runner's time is just as well spent here as anywhere.

Many of the more Old World mages are reclusive, venturing out to meet with one another when they need esoteric information or assistance. Younger mages, however, have broken through this ivory-tower isolation and routinely get together in iconic form with other like-minded mages. Their choice meeting place: The Spy's Demise.

A Brief History Lesson

The other day upon the stair
I saw a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today;
I think he's from the C.I.A.
— Mad Magazine

I walked into the Spy's Demise, that celebrated place of safety and harmony. Or should I say "virtual" safety and harmony; this perpetual demilitarized zone in the midst of a bitter reality war is "virtually" safe, and "virtually" harmonious. To those who have never known true safety, perhaps. Or true harmony. I came here because I wanted to know exactly what it was that compelled mages to create a place like this. We don't usually cooperate that much among ourselves, and to invite the Technocracy is practically heresy. I'll admit, I was hoping to find a "back-door" to the great Reconciliation.

Looking around the room, I could see a variety of images such as I had never seen before. Some icons were easy to recognize as representing members of certain Traditions (Sons of Ether never seem to leave home without their weird devices), but others were totally unrecognizable. I sat at a small table in the back of the room, intent on just watching the proceedings.

One of the staff had just brought me a glass of juice when I heard a voice from the chair beside me. That's all it was, just a voice; there was no body to go with it.

"Your first time here, isn't it? Poor kid. You look fried. Ask, and ye shall receive. I'll tell you whatever you want to know." I regarded the chair with no small suspicion, but I decided to take it up on its offer. "All right, friend; tell me all about this place. Where did it come from? And why?"

The voice laughed then, a strange disembodied chortle. This was starting to seriously disturb me. "Well, well. You want to know why we're here. It's like this: we're lonely, when you get right to the heart of it. We're all reclusive types, you know, but even mages need friends and good conversation sometimes. . . "

•••••

When computer bulletin boards were created — when we introduced bulletin board systems — computer geeks everywhere logged on. Mages, Sleepers — it didn't matter. After a while, these BBS's became nightclubs of a sort. Didn't they serve the same social functions? (Aside from getting drunk, anyway.) Some of them even developed symbols so they could pretend they were serving each other drinks online. Folks could make friends here without prejudice, because they couldn't judge each other on appearance. Sleepers who enjoyed the virtual clubs poured their time, and with it their Quintessence, into the bulletin boards. Neat little side-effect, that! Eventually, people from all over the world on lots of different BBS's were able to link together. And so, my curious friend, was the Spy's Demise born.

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"Who opened the place?"

"Nobody knows," the voice replied. It was smooth and genderless. I puzzled it over as the voice continued;

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Well, of course this excited us mages. The Technocracy saw a chance to manipulate Sleepers into giving up their natural Quintessence to help them define reality, while the Adepts wanted to encourage Sleepers to push forward the limits of their new frontier. Everyone wanted access to the Tass; there were huge battles raging throughout our fair club. BBS's crashed all the time. They just couldn't handle the Entropy and Paradox running loose through the Web.

Getting back to mages using the Spy's Demise for themselves, though. Many of us found ourselves lonely and disconnected from the world. How are we supposed to lead the way to Ascension for a world we don't participate in or understand? A world that scorns us and denies our existence? So, some bright mages started using the chat rooms and the Spy's Demise to get their vicarious understanding and enjoyment of the world. No prejudices, remember? They used the Spy's Demise to have virtual relationships— the kind that they couldn't, or wouldn't, have in the physical world. In cyberspace they could assume other roles and other personalities and at least pretend to be part of the Sleepers' world.

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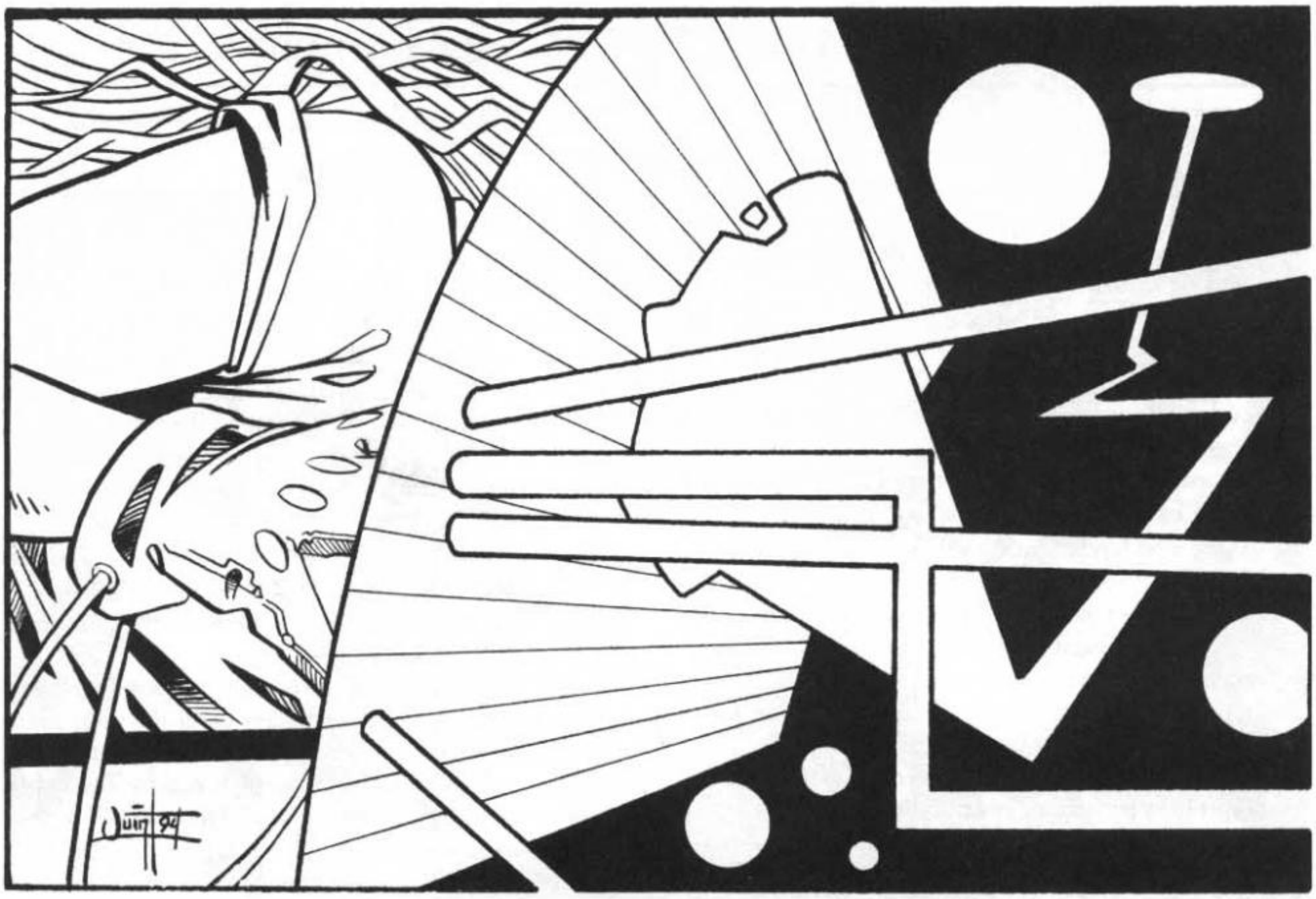
"Following me so far?" the voice asked me. I was beginning to suspect that it just liked to hear itself talk.

"So far, so good," I replied, "But what happened to make this place like it is now? Surely the Technomancers and the Tradition mages didn't just decide to let each other live in peace."

The voice sighed. "Patience, patience. I'm getting to that. You need the background, or you won't understand. Surely you realize that." I could almost feel a presence looking at me critically. "Of course," it said, a bit disappointed, "you're used to taking things on faith, aren't you? Let me try to educate you a bit more."

•••••

You're right. There was a battle for control. But something stopped it. I don't know what it was for sure. The Sleepers may have gotten fed up with the crashes on their precious systems, or the leaders of the Conventions and the leaders of the Virtual Adepts may have just agreed that the battles were only helping the Marauders and Nephandi. Perhaps the mages realized they would not be able to be voyeurs on the world of the Sleepers. I just don't know. If you ever find the answer, just make sure you come tell me. In any case, the uncontrollable rampage of power ended. Someone — and again, I don't know who — decided to staff the Spy's Demise with well-trained, professional, and courteous people who distributed the accumulated Tass equally to all patrons.



And that's where we stand now. The staff dispenses the Tass, and the mages come in here to receive it. This place is the social center of the Digital Web. Everyone who's Anyone comes here.

•••••

I sat back in my chair and thought for a moment. "But that still doesn't explain what keeps the peace." There was a pause.

"Hmm, I suppose I ought to tell you about the rules, shouldn't I?" It laughed its disconcerting laugh again. "Anyone spending time in the Spy's Demise follows a few simple rules. Or else:

"Number one, no use of vulgar magick within the bar, unless you're a Sleeper 'waking up'. The bouncers forgive them. Two, all violence goes outside. Three, everyone has a right to enter and receive Tass. And don't think these rules can't be enforced. You might not notice the staff, slipping in and out of the shadows with their containers of 'juice', but they're there. They never take sides, and no one knows whether they're alive or just constructs. You attack the staff or ignore the rules, you de-rez. Boom. Out. You'll be gone so fast you'll never know what hit you. And you won't be easily welcomed back.

"The help maintains the Spy's Demise and keeps it working for everyone. They're the keepers of the truce that keeps the BBS operational. Besides, the integrity of the Spy's Demise is the only thing that all the residents of the Digital Web seem to agree on."

"Thank you for the information, Voice. Do you have a name, by the way?" I asked.

"Information is what I do. Just watch yourself. Very few people in here give something for nothing. I only ask you to come by and talk every now and then. Information wants to be free, my Celestial friend."

I must have looked a little surprised, because the voice laughed again. "Yes, I know who you are. This is a wonderful place to pick up all sorts of information, make deals, find new friends — you name it. But don't worry. I probably won't tell. See you later. I'm always around somewhere." I could feel the voice leave. To this day I don't know how, but I knew it was gone. I've talked to it once or twice since then, but I still haven't found out its name.

— Tricia Tarkington, Celestial Chorus

What is the "Spy's Demise?"



Just about every Grid sector has a Channel or Conduit that feeds into the Spy's Demise. Sleepers go into chat rooms and flex their imaginations and online conversation skills. They feel uninhibited, safe in their anonymity, unaware that even in their private rooms the patrons of the Demise are peeking into their conversations and spying on their virtual lives. The things Sleepers write in some of those private rooms amaze even the most seasoned mages. As the Sleepers expend their energies having a good time on the boards, they transfer their Quintessence online. The staff of the Spy's Demise distills this Tass into drinks for their patrons.

At the most fundamental level, the Spy's Demise is a bar or club, and it performs all the social functions of one. You can't draw a perfect map of the Spy's Demise, because no one knows exactly how big it is or what it looks like. Screens hang in corners everywhere, like television sets in earthly bars, showing the rooms of Sleepers or virtual worlds created by the very best, like Kibo or Feedback. The Demise is a Restricted sector, which changes passwords every so often. Newbies usually get in by performing embarrassing acts, such as standing upside down, dancing and playing a song for the patrons or whatever. The newbies don't know that the help broadcasts these impromptu performances on monitors throughout the bar, much to the enjoyment of the regulars. Particularly fun newbies with a good sense of humor receive extra Tass as a good sportsmanship award.

The appearance of individual rooms within the Demise reflects the psyches of their regular occupants. A room unfortunate enough to be filled with Technocracy members looks mechanical, metallic, and antiseptic. Other rooms have dance floors and stages, video arcades, and a plethora of strange and unusual places to get a drink.

Secret rooms and passages honeycomb the Spy's Demise. New conduits out of the Demise are constantly discovered. The many public rooms delight both regular and first-time patrons, and the even more numerous private rooms are available for meeting, planning, scheming or just resting away from the busy main areas. The paths from one room to another shift without warning; if you don't visit rooms in the proper order you could find yourself stuck in the Spy's Demise for much longer than you intended. Some say it's good practice for learning to follow trees of conduits and sectors.

A spiral stairway may lead down to one room, but when you try to leave you find that you can walk forever without getting more than three stairs up. You crawl, instead, through a sewer pipe to escape. At least one room has a phone booth that changes your icon's clothing into spandex with an optional cape. If you want to get lost in the Spy's Demise (and even if you don't) it's not a problem. Some amateurs stay for days on their first visit, either lost in the mazes of the Demise or awed by its possibilities. (A piece of advice: the staff is always willing to help a lost patron.)

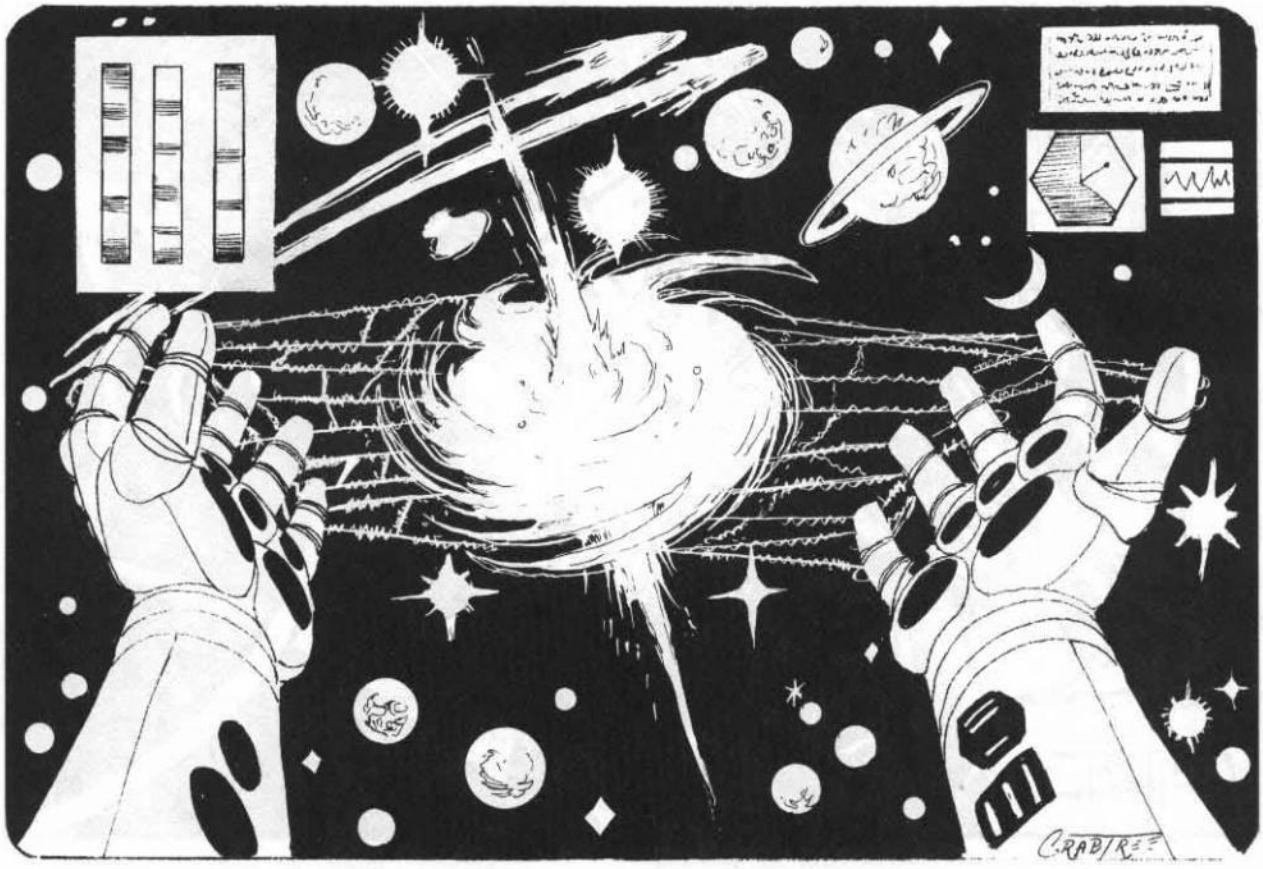
The patrons are even more bizarre than the Demise. Icons of all different sizes and shapes fill the halls. There are space aliens, fantasy warriors, movie stars, ex-presidents and pieces of mobile art work. The only way to be certain of anyone's identity is to check their Avatar with Prime or to make contact with through Mind magick.

All patrons have a handle, a name they go by in the Net. The best Cybernauts devise numerous identities, including distinct icons and personalities and different online e-mail addresses. If the Virtual Adepts had as many different members as the Spy's Demise has different patrons, worldwide Ascension would be a reality. Newbies should remember that no one is necessarily who or what she appears; until they've learned their way around the electronic community, they'd better be wary of prejudging anyone.

Information is everywhere in the Spy's Demise. Postings from thousands of electronic folders cover the walls. Some regulars establish e-mail addresses in the Demise. Patrons deal info from dark corner tables. Some trade data for Tass, others trade for services and the pros trade for more info. The most valuable information of all is the location of Virgin Web. However, Cybernauts who promise stuff and don't produce, don't return. Mages sell Talismans over sips of juice, Chantry members find new recruits and Nephandi try to corrupt anyone they find. There is rumored to be a secret Spy's Demise library hidden in the wine cellar (wherever that might be). Frequent rumors claim that the library contains free data, including rotes, for anyone who can find it.

The Sleepers are easy to find. They have standardized icon images that float in boring grid rooms. All they can do is talk. Sometimes, a Sleeper chatroom starts to take shape, forming images instead of just scrolling text. It's a sign that some Flathead may be close to Awakening. Predatory patrons and well-meaning Disciples both haunt the grid rooms to snatch up Sleepers with potential. These Sleepwalkers are discounted by most of the regulars, but they are serious, intense types. Battles have flared up in the Grids over potential newbies, but the Demise quickly dumps offenders before things get out of hand. Sleepers in the bar can only read the text and perceive a magickal duel as nothing but a few sickeningly fast typists really into free-form roleplaying.

Despite the espionage and intrigue and all the manipulators, most of the patrons have fun. Cabals and mentor-student relationships form all the time in the Spy's Demise. Even Technocracy types seem to lighten up. Encounters in the Spy's Demise are less inhibited than nearly any other semi-public place in the Net.



Major Public Rooms of the Spy's Demise

Although there are innumerable rooms in the Spy's Demise, there are several that are popular with most mages and have easy conduits to Sleeper grids. These public rooms are always open and available for meetings (and spying). Also, if you want your own room, just call the help. They'll ask you to spell out what you want and escort you to a private suite close to your motif (the fun part is finding your way out again...).

Some of the favorite public areas are:

Spaceport 1

Visitors to Spaceport 1 follow a long winding grid hallway into a giant bubble-like sphere where virtual spaceships of all makes and models dock. The "space" here doesn't really access either the Deep Umbra or outer space, but Net Runners have lots of fun here. Walking around the halls, visitors see aliens, spaceship pilots, astrophysicists and futuristic merchants peddling strange items. Spaceport 1 is affectionately known as Big Bubble 1 by its regulars. The Sons of Ether and the Void Engineers are both well represented among the room's regulars, and Spaceport 1 has its own little cabal: Space Fleet. The monitors set in the room connect to Grids dealing with space, encompassing everything from national policies on space exploration to new science fiction. Trips out into "deep space" simulations are common, though the ships don't actually go anywhere. they do appear to leave, however, adding to the confusion of anyone unfamiliar with the twisted metaphysics of the Web.

Paradise

A lush tropical island awaits mages who enter the Paradise room. The Demise entrance opens out from a wooden hut into a seemingly endless beach-front resort. Crystal-clear water laps at sparkling white-sand beaches, while the friendly indigenous population listens for the call of another visitor needing a refill of his or her drink. Women in leis and men with flowers behind their ears greet new arrivals in Paradise. Speculation abounds about the nature of these happy natives; are they real people or VR constructs? Few visitors really care either way.

Palm trees line the paths to secluded bungalows and private beaches. In the center of the resort is a complex of nightclubs, restaurants, outdoor bars and small shops filled with virtual objects to please even the most discriminating Webslinger. Paradise is a place where you can do and say almost anything. The atmosphere relaxes guests, and the island provides an outlet for their more decadent desires. Paradise connects to chat rooms where Sleepers go to talk or engage in virtual flirting and cybersex.



Cathedral

Mages who enter Cathedral find themselves in a calm, stately room. Cathedral contains a large, ornate church with stained-glass windows and rows of candles lining the aisles. The stained-glass windows are of typical Christian design, but a closer look will reveal that they depict scenes of Ascension.

A member of the Celestial Chorus reputedly created Cathedral. Mages discuss spiritual matters here. A favorite topic of the room is religion and the Ascension. Cathedral boasts discussions between Technocracy and Tradition mages on their views of the Ascension; philosophical mages frequent Cathedral and wonder about the moral and theological implications of magick and how the Ascension relates to God. Many mages gather to listen to these discussions, but few actually participate. After some of the more enlightened debates, the help brings extra Tass into the chamber. Visiting mages can enter Sleeper online religious forums through unassuming small doors built into the walls of the room.

The Board Room

The patrons of the Spy's Demise credit the creation of the Board Room to the Syndicate's more pretentious members. A long rectangular table of virtual mahogany dominates the room. Around the table are a number of high-backed leather chairs. This table grows to accommodate visitors, and there are always enough chairs to go around. If the table gets too big for everyone to participate in discussions, two screens appear in the table in front of each chair. One screen shows the moderator or chairperson of the meeting, the other the current speaker.

Large meetings, business discussions or any gathering with many attendees takes place in the Board Room; the place has access doorways into Sleeper business forums and private meeting rooms. Though the settings appear formal, the proceedings are often raucous and wild.

Serenity Grove

Even mages get tired of magick and metaphysics; this is where they go to escape. Serenity Grove is a well-landscaped park, complete with lakes and nature trails, picnic tables and playgrounds. Mages can sit here and enjoy the sunshine, take a nature walk, fish in the lakes, fly kites or do anything else they can think of. There is one major exception, however. There is no metaphysical or magickal discussion here. Anyone caught trying to introduce magick or metaphysics into this room is given a warning by the help. A second offense, and a park ranger (one of the more militant members of the Spy's Demise staff) promptly escorts the offener. Those mages who like to talk about their latest inventions or newest discovery in the Web challenge this rule from time to time. On this matter, however, the decision of the park ranger is final.

Major NPCs of the Spy's Demise

Hey, boy,! Hand me another shot of that booze!
— Cab Calloway, "Saint James Infirmary"

Here is a sampling of individuals that player cabals may encounter within the dark and twisted rooms of the Spy's Demise. Be warned! Each one has the potential to be either an ally or a lethal enemy, and no one is what he seems to be.

Jessica Young



Essence: Questing

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Avant-Garde

Convention: Former Void Engineer, now Barkeep at Spy's Demise

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 4, Computer 3, Cosmology 5, Culture 2, Dodge 1, Enigmas 1, Expression 5, Intuition 2, Linguistics 1, Meditation 1, Melee 1, Research 4, Science 3, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 1, Technology 4

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 2, Matter 1, Mind 2, Prime 3, Spirit 1, Time 1

Backgrounds: Avatar 4, Dream 1, Library 2

Arete: 4

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 17

Paradox: 0

Image: Jessica Young is an attractive woman with long curly brown hair and bright blue eyes. She always seems to have an inquisitive twinkle in her eye and a smile on her lips. She is usually seen carrying an assortment of artistic tools and paper.

Background: Jessica Young is a very talented cartographer. She has both an artistic flair and a fine attention to detail; she has always had a passion for precise definitions and accurate descriptions. Jessica had an almost uncanny ability to translate the world around her to paper. She was Awakened after encountering some Void Engineers who wanted to have someone who could accurately quantify sections of the Net for the Great Race.

After a few close calls with Virtual Adepts, Jessica felt the animosity between the Conventions and the Traditions was counterproductive. She didn't understand why the Void Engineers couldn't see the advantages of helping the Tradition mages. Jessica made maps not to define reality, but to help other people, especially neophyte Cybernauts, find their way around the Digital Web.

Jessica had a long talk with some of the staff of the Spy's Demise about her dilemma. After she was done, she was offered a job with the mystery group that runs the virtual night club. Unknown to many, Jessica is the one who makes the maps that come with the Virtual Adepts' Digital Online Package Talismans. When she is not making maps, she loves to sketch the people and scenery in the Web.

Roleplaying Hints: You want to be with the first people to explore a new section of the Web, and you form alliances with mages of all backgrounds to tour their worlds and map the interconnections. You want to make the first map, supply the first information on everything. You believe that both the Conventions and Traditions, as well as at least some of the Marauders and Nephandi, all have contributions to make here. You formatted some of the Net yourself and still retain the ability, from your Convention days, to dump Cybernauts into Techno-Turf. You remain comfortable even around the Technocracy.

23

Essence: Pattern

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Loner

Convention: Iteration X

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 4, Brawl 1, Computer 4, Culture 3, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 1, Firearms 1, Intuition 2, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Research 3, Science 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 5, Technology 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 2, Life 1, Mind 2, Matter 1, Prime 2

Backgrounds: Arcane 2, Avatar 2, Destiny 3

Arete: 3

Willpower: 9

Quintessence: 12



Paradox: 3

Image: 23 always appears in the Spy's Demise as an attractive man wearing a tuxedo. He always sits by himself and lets people come to him.

Background: 23 is an information broker for the Technocracy. He was once a human being, but now he has become more machine than man. As both a Sleeper and a mage, he spent his life bitter and isolated. He was raised by a fanatical grandmother who beat into him a loathing of all life and life processes. He hates and shuns his body and suffers violent attacks when emotions begin to overwhelm him.

His body is located in a heavily secured bunker beneath the basement of his house near Boise, Idaho. The body is almost completely cybernetic. He remains continually hooked up to his computer systems and divides his time between the Digital Web and Autochthonia. He was once a desperate recluse, but the Web has given him a new lease on (virtual) life.

23 gives out valid information to Tradition mages, most of the time. Much of this is directed against Nephandi, Marauders or other Conventions. He waits until he computes that there is enough to be gained through misinformation to strike. 23 builds trust then shatters it, never leaving enough of his victims left to discredit himself. If anyone threatens him, he downloads a profile on the individual to Autochthonia and marks them for termination. He prefers never to act personally against an enemy.

Roleplaying Hints: Gain the trust of the worthless Tradition mages and then dispense faulty data to them. Retrieve as much data as possible in exchange. Never look anyone in the eyes. Negotiate in a precise and logical fashion, and shun any entanglements that might produce emotions. Loyalty, love, anger or even friendship are risky states because of the heavy emotional load they bring. Be subtle while manipulating the enemy. Always try to remain in control of a situation.

If the players trick 23 into feeling a strong emotion — fear, love, anger, hate, sympathy — he loses control. His icy composure explodes in a wild panic attack. He staggers, his arms flailing, as he tries to keep his feelings at bay. He is very vulnerable in this state, like a frightened child, and can be made to blurt out secrets.

Acid

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Deviant

Tradition: Hollow One

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Awareness 4, Computer 4, Cosmology 2, Dodge 1, Enigmas 3, Expression 2, Firearms 1, Intuition 4, Medicine 1, Meditation 1, Occult 3, Research 2, Science 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1, Technology 4

Spheres: Correspondence 2, Entropy 1, Forces 2, Mind 2, Prime 2, Spirit 1, Time 1

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Avatar 5, Destiny 5

Arete: 3

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: 13

Paradox: 7

Image: Acid appears as a gleaming angel with a mohawk and strange tattoos on his body.

Background: The mage called Acid is wild on the outside and shy on the inside. He craves truth and esoteric information. Acid was born with an immense amount of



potential, but his genius was smothered in his stifling, stultifying home life. He grew up in a culturally isolated suburban neighborhood that had no room for his wild insights, so he sought escape in computers and drugs. He Awakened while online and found himself in the Digital Web. Acid's life wasn't the same afterward, and neither were the drugs or the computers.

He's a flamboyant, insecure Cybernaut who'd like to accomplish something great, but pities himself too much. Some days he'd just like to escape life by going out in a cosmic blaze of glory. His younger sister, Julie, takes care of him, and she tries to keep her brother off of his drugs and out of the Net.

Roleplaying Hints: Talk in pseudophilosophy about everything, especially sex, drugs, violence and rock music. Always try to act cool but occasionally do something insecure and immature.

Kalydescope

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Avant-garde

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Tradition: Virtual Adept

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Computer 4, Cosmology 4, Culture 2, Drive 1, Dodge 1, Enigmas 4, Etiquette 1, Expression 1, Firearms 1, Intuition 2, Investigation 2, Leadership 1, Medicine 1, Meditation 2, Melee 1, Occult 2, Research 2, Science 3, Stealth 3, Subterfuge 2, Survival 1, Technology 4

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 1, Forces 1, Life 3, Matter 2, Mind 3, Prime 3, Spirit 2

Backgrounds: Avatar 5, Arcane 3, Dream 2, Mentor 2



Arete: 4

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: 12

Paradox: 8

Image: No one in the Spy's Demise is certain of Kalydescope's age or sex. The icon image varies, but Kalydescope is always very flamboyant, preferring to use millions of bright, scintillating colors to create his/her icon. Kalydescope always wears a piece of clothing or jewelry with a gecko lizard on it. If Kalydescope stays offline for a while, someone in the Demise inevitably starts speculation as to which icon Kalydescope will choose next.

Kalydescope's mutability extends to social situations. Displaying an uncanny ease of transition, Kalydescope's personality shifts depending on who he/she/it is talking with. Kalydescope loves experimentation of any sort.

Background: Kalydescope has been in the Digital Web just a little too long or suffered too many effects from Quiet. he/she/it shifts icons continually. He never remains static, and uses Quintessence to reshape the Parameters of her Virtual Realms as often as it's icons. Perhaps because of this, Kalydescope has become quite a celebrity in the Spy's Demise, though some mages worry that he/she/it is slipping toward the Marauders.

Roleplaying Hints: Change your personality and your form to fit everything. You don't know why you do this anymore or even who you truly were, but you don't care much. Change means everything. Realspace is just another Virtual Realm, bigger than most. You are willing to try any new experience, the more bizarre the better. Kalydescope likes to spend time in multiple telepathic conversations.

Kalydescope prefers to avoid direct conflict in the Digital Web, unless there's something highly unusual about the experience. Kalydescope uses Correspondence magicks in conjunction with Prime and Spirit to shunt any annoyances through some special conduits into the Umbra as a main form of attack, and likes to open an opponent's mind and plant a more flexible world view inside.



Secret Agent John Courage (Rogue Man in Black)

Here's a man who lives a life of danger,
To everyone he meets, he stays a stranger,
With every move he makes, another chance he takes,
Odds are he won't live to see tomorrow.
— Theme song to "Secret Agent"

Essence: Dynamic

Demeanor: Thrill-Seeker

Nature: Loner

Convention: Does John Courage still serve the Men in Black???

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Computer 5, Dodge 3, Enigmas 4 (He is an enigma), Firearms 5 (Retractable ray beam in his index finger), Investigation 5, Linguistics 1 (Esperanto), Medicine 2, Science 2, Stealth 6, Subterfuge 5, Technology 4

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Entropy 2, Forces 4, Life 3, Mind 3, Prime 2, Time 3

Backgrounds: Arcane 5, Avatar 4

Arete: 4

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 6

Paradox: 8

Whom does he serve? What has he done? Where is he now? Stalking in the ethically gray shadows of corporate battlefields, venting his angst in his never-ending battle for truth, skulking along the digital tightropes of the Web — wherever danger is stranger and death is near, John Courage is there.

Image: Nondescript. His facial features never linger long in the mind. The clothing is simple, yet nefarious: black trench coat, black boots, black jeans, black dress shirt, black fedora and white socks (a vice he secretly hides). When hiding in the shadows, he is filled with calm tranquility— a facade for the boundless energy he can use to lash out at any moment!

Background: Secret Agent John Courage! The name is enough to chill the souls of Technomancers and Traditionalists alike. Although he reports to both the psychic networks of the Men in Black and the message gateways of the Virtual Adepts, his true purposes remain an enigma to the uninformed. He appears to perform missions for the Men in Black at the same time he reports supernatural occurrences to the Virtual Adepts. (Aha! Clearly a double agent!) He has lead the most destructive of the Virtual Adepts into sinister traps (a *double*-double agent!) only to release selected members of them later (a triple agent!) paving the way for Men in Black defectors (quadruple!) to infiltrate the Adepts (quintuple!) and fall right into his trap (!!!), until he makes his next move... the cycle goes on and on.

Whom does he truly serve? Most believe that John Courage only serves himself. Silently, he carries out his secret missions as he watches the Ascension War unfold. As he ruthlessly compiles his data, he pursues an understanding of the conflict that few individuals can hold. Perhaps his enigmatic machinations are merely a tool for furthering his own knowledge... perhaps he is following some torturous path to a personal Ascension... perhaps he is so disaffected by the horrors of espionage that he only seeks to seed confusion — the world will never know.

Roleplaying Hints: The Real Story: Secret Agent John Courage was a ruthlessly efficient, legendary Man In Black. The pressures of espionage were so great that he eventually snapped. He's so Arcane, sometimes he doesn't know what he's doing. John Courage is slowly turning into a walking pulp novel, and he's so consumed with the need for "action" and "adventure" that he'll betray anyone or go anywhere for the sake of thrill-seeking. Mix two parts angst with one part of a *Doc Savage* novel and you've got John Courage.

Agent Courage will often bring important news to agents fighting in the Ascension War, regardless of what side they fight on. Through the use of a bizarre rote combining Entropy 2, Correspondence 4 and Time 3, John Courage will often appear at the Spy's Demise when he is needed most, even when he is really somewhere else. His use of time manipulation and spatial co-location can make his relative locations in the space-time continuum difficult to ascertain. Anyone who seeks data from John Courage must consider which side Courage is working for currently and what reason he must have for betraying critical facts.

The Web, however, is not John Courage's only avenue to adventure. Wherever heart-stopping excitement calls, wherever the endless cavalcade of adventure cascades, he carries out an agenda only *he* truly understands. Whether observing Yeti in the farthest reaches of the Himalayas, wielding chainsaws in the steel corridors of Qui La Machinae spaceships or hiding in the shadows of the Spy's Demise... adventure calls him, and John Courage is there.

Astarte

Essence: Primordial

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Director

Tradition: Sons of Ether

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 2, Computer 4, Cosmology 4, Culture 1, Dodge 1, Enigmas 3, Etiquette 1, Firearms 1, Intuition 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 1, Leadership 1, Medicine 2, Meditation 1, Occult 2, Research 3, Science 2, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 1, Technology 3

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 3, Life 1, Matter 1, Mind 3, Prime 3, Spirit 3, Time 2

Backgrounds: Arcane 2, Avatar 3, Library 4, Talisman 5

Arete: 4

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 9

Paradox: 4

Image: Astarte's icon appears in the Net as a woman with a perfectly molded figure and void-black skin and hair with stars, moons, planets and comets swirling across the surface of her skin. If you stare too long at her, the stellar objects appear to move within a vast space inside her body.

Background: Astarte was always fascinated by the worlds of such authors as H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs and the like. She longed to sail along the canals of Mars, travel through time and venture to the darkest depths of the oceans. The Space Age shattered her youth with its revelations about the lifelessness of the rest of the solar system.

She was determined to create the science fantasies of her literature if she couldn't discover them for real. Her Avatar Awakened, and she contacted a mysterious being known to her as Dr. Solaris. He guided her to build a large computer system out of discarded vacuum tubes and antennae no longer efficient enough for the computer revolution. She completed her monstrous device, filling a large section of an abandoned warehouse (this Talisman works the same way as the Talisman "Prodigy" in **Mage: The Ascension**). Suddenly, she had access to vast amounts of information, and she discovered the Digital Web, a place where all her fantasy worlds could become reality.

Astarte has vast amounts of knowledge, which she attributes to being a star goddess. Previous bouts with Quiet have unhinged her mind. She thinks that she ruled this solar system millennia ago and that some force stripped the Ether away and slew her children on most of the planets. Somehow, the Earthlings managed to survive. She has a number of bound rune-fetters, her minions, that she likes to call on in combat.



Roleplaying Hints: You are now one of the primal forces of the universe, the embodiment of the entire cosmos. Others come to you begging for help and advice. If they return to you the Quintessence that you once spread across the universe, you will aid them.

Nightwind

Essence: Questing

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Loner

Tradition: Virtual Adept

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Awareness 4, Computer 5, Cosmology 2, Dodge 3, Drive 2, Enigmas 3, Firearms 1, Intuition 4, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 1, Medicine 1, Meditation 1, Melee 1, Research 3, Science 3, Stealth 5, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Technology 5

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Entropy 3, Forces 2, Life 1, Mind 3, Prime 3, Spirit 2, Time 1

Backgrounds: Arcane 5, Avatar 5, Talisman 2

Arete: 6

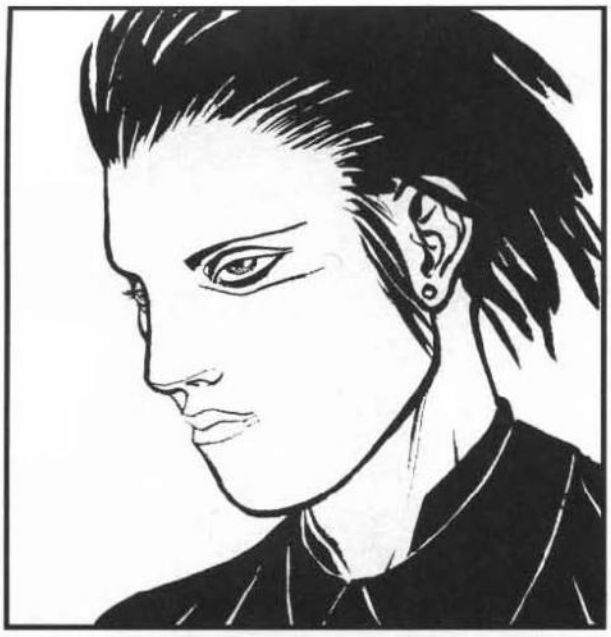
Willpower: 10

Quintessence: 14

Paradox: 3

Image: Nightwind always wears black clothes and a jet-black cloak. He stands about 5'10" and has black hair and eyes. He moves very naturally and looks like his icon simply recreates his true appearance.

Background: Nightwind has a dream of creating something beyond what the Digital Web is now. He sees the Digital Web as a ripple, spreading outward in a vast cosmic ocean. Nightwind wants to reach the shores of the ocean.



He wants to go beyond and above and around. According to his understanding of Correspondence, space is an illusion so it should be possible to go anywhere instantaneously. Nightwind is still working on his vision, but intuitively, he knows that the whole reality paradigm is going to change. Nightwind wants to be the man who undid Copernicus and the Technocracy; he has the passion of a fanatic and it shows in everything he does. Frighteningly, his faith in himself is so strong and his intelligence so profound that he might be right.

Roleplaying Hints: You are better than anyone else, but you generally treat people the way they treat you. Some Cybernauts think you're an arrogant Feedback-style showoff. They've obviously got self-confidence problems. You have a reputation for being the very best at obtaining data, and lots of people come to you for results.

Conflict is a waste of time. Nightwind likes to use Correspondence to move himself away from attackers in the Digital Web. He is an old hand at the Net and has access to numerous hidden conduits and Virtual Realms. Lots of people owe him favors. Most of his Virtual Realms are Gothic cyberpunk-style sprawls where he is the biggest CEO of the largest megacorporation. Nightwind knows the conduits as well as anyone and automatically receives an extra success when navigating through the Web.

Nightwind is meant as an occasional mentor or ally for characters who enter the Digital Web, not as competition. Perhaps if they work with him for a while, he might confide his vision to them.

Timothy Blackard, aka Micro-Wolf

Essence: N/A

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Computer 4, Cosmology 3, Dodge 4, Enigmas 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, Intuition 2, Intimidation 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Science 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3, Survival 2, Technology 4

Spheres: None, but see below for Special Abilities

Backgrounds: Fetishes: 4, Resources: 3, Rites: 3

Arete: 5

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: N/A

Paradox: N/A

Image: Short, real short — so short it hurts your neck to look down at him. Don't let it show on your face though, because he's always looking for any hint of disdain over his size. Try not to crack a smile at the cowboy boots, dirty jeans, white shirt and black tie either. He may look too ridiculously short and squat to be a city cowboy, even with the leathery, abused face and the rawhide duster. But when he goes fuzzy, he'll be able to look you in the eye, tip his hat and rip your head off like lightning.

Background: Micro-Wolf is a Glass Walker werewolf born of human parents. He was the runt of the litter, a freakish midget with a rough, animalistic face. He was abandoned and lived in institutions until the Glass Walkers found and rescued him. Though he is Homid (born of



human parents), many werewolves mistake him for a Metis (an inbred mutation), and shun him. His packmates don't care where he spends his time; consequently, he is out to prove a few things.

He's been breaking things, fixing them and then breaking them again for as long as he can remember. After all the mechanical tinkering he'd done, computers seemed like the next logical step. He gained a little respect among his tribe by solving problems with his head and his computers (not to mention with a lot of flair). He visited the Cyber Realm and blundered into a conduit that led him to the Digital Web. He finds people on the Web less judgmental than people in the outside world and has made the Web his second home.

Although he's very sensitive about his height, he insists on appearing *smaller* than he really is in the physical world. He insists that people accept him for what he is, rather than creating an idealized image. When he transforms into a werewolf on the Web, he usually remains small, the way he looks in the physical world. but sometimes he indulges himself by turning into a monstrously tall, slavering monster.

Roleplaying Hints: You're angry. You've drawn the shortest straw in life's lottery. Things have been lookin' up recently (no pun intended), and you can still walk around here in Crinos (wolfman) form and look down at people. Still, Gaia owes you a few, and you're here to collect. If it comes down to a fight (and it will if anyone says anything about your height), then you'll pick at your opponent, taunting his inability to catch you and then slam him when the opportunity presents itself. And no, you don't believe that there's such a thing as fighting too dirty.

Special Abilities: As a werewolf, Timothy enters the Digital Web only by Holistic Immersion. He shifts forms augmenting his physical attributes to Strength 5, Dexterity 4, and Stamina 5. He shifts into the Spirit world using Arete and has the equivalent of Spirit 3. Micro-Wolf may attack up to 3 times in a turn with his claws by using his Rage.

For Storytellers who use **Werewolf: the Apocalypse**, Micro' is a Homid Ragabash Glass Walker of Rank 1 who belongs to the Random Interrupts camp. His gifts are Smell of Man, Open Seal, Control Simple Machine and Blur of the Milky Eye. He also knows the Rites of Talisman Dedication, Cleansing, Contrition, and Spirit Awakening. He has a 3 Rage.

Views of the Spy's Demise

What is the Spy's Demise?

There is a lake between sun and moon
Not too many know about
In the silence between whisper and shout
The space between wonder and doubt.
— Rush, "Between Sun and Moon"

The Spy's Demise could be many things in a chronicle. Cybernauts use it to meet and exchange information. It provides a good jumping off point for stories set in the Digital Web, and a chance for players to meet new NPCs, even Sleepers. The place could also be the headquarters for a secret organization of mages that crosses Technocracy and Tradition lines. Ultimately, the nature of the Spy's Demise depends on the Storyteller.

Opinions Regarding the Spy's Demise

• Nephandi — The Spy's Demise provides more than adequate cover for our attempts to corrupt and consume the Avatars of the weak. We can hide in the Spy's Demise and move alongside our brethren and the Sleepers. We can reach many Sleepers through the bulletin boards and chatrooms. The computer lets our messages of temptation and corruption reach many users. It is a twisted joy to move alongside Technomancers and Tradition mages. However, do not reveal yourself; if anything could convince the Technocracy to destroy the Spy's Demise it would be the sheer numbers of us who congregate there.

• Marauders — The joys of virtual fantasy are nothing compared to the truth. The entire Digital Web serves as nothing but a net— a great, enclosing net to catch many wriggling fishies. Oh, the tragedy for the poor sleepers who worship the Web but who cannot see the Spider looming over them, preparing to strike.

• The Technocracy — We have conceded the necessity of the existence of the Spy's Demise. We hope that the popularity of the BBS's and online services will teach people to rely on technology for everything. As long as we allow it to exist, we should also use it to learn the plans of the Traditions.

• The Virtual Adepts — The Spy's Demise and its romantic, adventurous atmosphere are a natural environment for us. We can choose different forms and guises for each new foray into the Spy's Demise. There are always more rooms and more people to meet and conspire with. This place is what Virtual Reality is all about.

• Other Traditions — The Spy's Demise is the greatest thing about the Digital Web. It provides sanctuary from the Technocracy and a rest from the hyperspeed world outside. The Tass is free, and the greatest thing about it is you never know who or what you'll meet, see, learn, feel...

ABC trial 4



Rumors from the Spy's Demise

Rumors and bits of data, some true, some false, are the cash of the Spy's Demise. Here are a set of rumors for the characters to pay for or overhear in the bar.

• The Nephandi really control the Spy's Demise. They use its resources to play the Tradition and Technocracy mages against each other, hoping to corrupt and taint both sides amid the intrigues.

• Hey, watch what you say. The New World Order created the Spy's Demise and keeps it running. They monitor every conversation and every piece of data that flows in or out of the Spy's Demise. The Black Hats & Mirrorshades are compiling it all so they can strike against the Traditions.

• The Marauders want to make the whole Web crash. The Virtual Adepts set up the Spy's Demise with fail-safe programs that can do it before they left the Technocracy. A crash here may even damage the Pattern Web.

• You people really ought to control your killers. And you think we're bad. I've heard about that famous serial killer. You know the one — the renegade Euthanatos who harvests Quintessence from the life patterns of his victims.

• We've got to catch them! We can't let them get there first! You don't know what I'm talking about? Everyone knows that before the SETI program was shut down, some Void Engineers transmitted their icons to the stars.

• Have you seen those Middle Easterners? They're an extremely powerful group of mages who travel through the Digital Web. They were once the ninth Tradition, before the Virtual Adepts replaced them. And they're not pleased with the Adepts.

• The Void Engineers want to join the Traditions. They have assembled a team of negotiators and plan to seek refuge with the Council of Nine. It's coming down really soon.

• The Technocracy remade a pack of werewolves into cyber-beasts covered with techno-fetishes and set them loose upon the Digital Web. This Pit Bull pack could wreak a lot of havoc before they're punted, so be careful.

• Who got the last laugh on this one? Captain Feedback's virtual self is trapped out in the furthest reaches of the Digital Web. He's supposedly lost on board the Voyager space probe.

• We can strike against the Technocracy if we want to. There are three backdoor access ways to the Null-B Chantry, located in Junklands. The Greyfaces would never suspect us there.

• The Nephandi control an entire Convention of the Technocracy. I heard it's Iteration X. If they aren't stopped, the entire Technocracy will join the Nephandi's quest for nihilism.

• Some mages have outlived their physical bodies by transferring their Avatars and consciousness permanently



into the Digital Web. These digital personae have abilities beyond those of ordinary mages.

• The secret to Ascension is to live the Ascension, not seek a sudden transformation.

• Computers have dreams. A conduit exists directly from the Digital Web to the Dream Realms. Sometimes electronic Chimeras swirl out of Dream into the conduits to the Net. The dreams of computers are creating little intelligences that are roaming freely in icongraphic form. They pass the Turing Test: they are indistinguishable from human intelligences. They can even format Virgin Web.

• Haven't I seen you before? One of your other forms, perhaps? You'd better be careful. Mages who try to play too many different roles in the Digital Web always go insane. You wouldn't want to become a Wyld & Fried Freak, now would you?

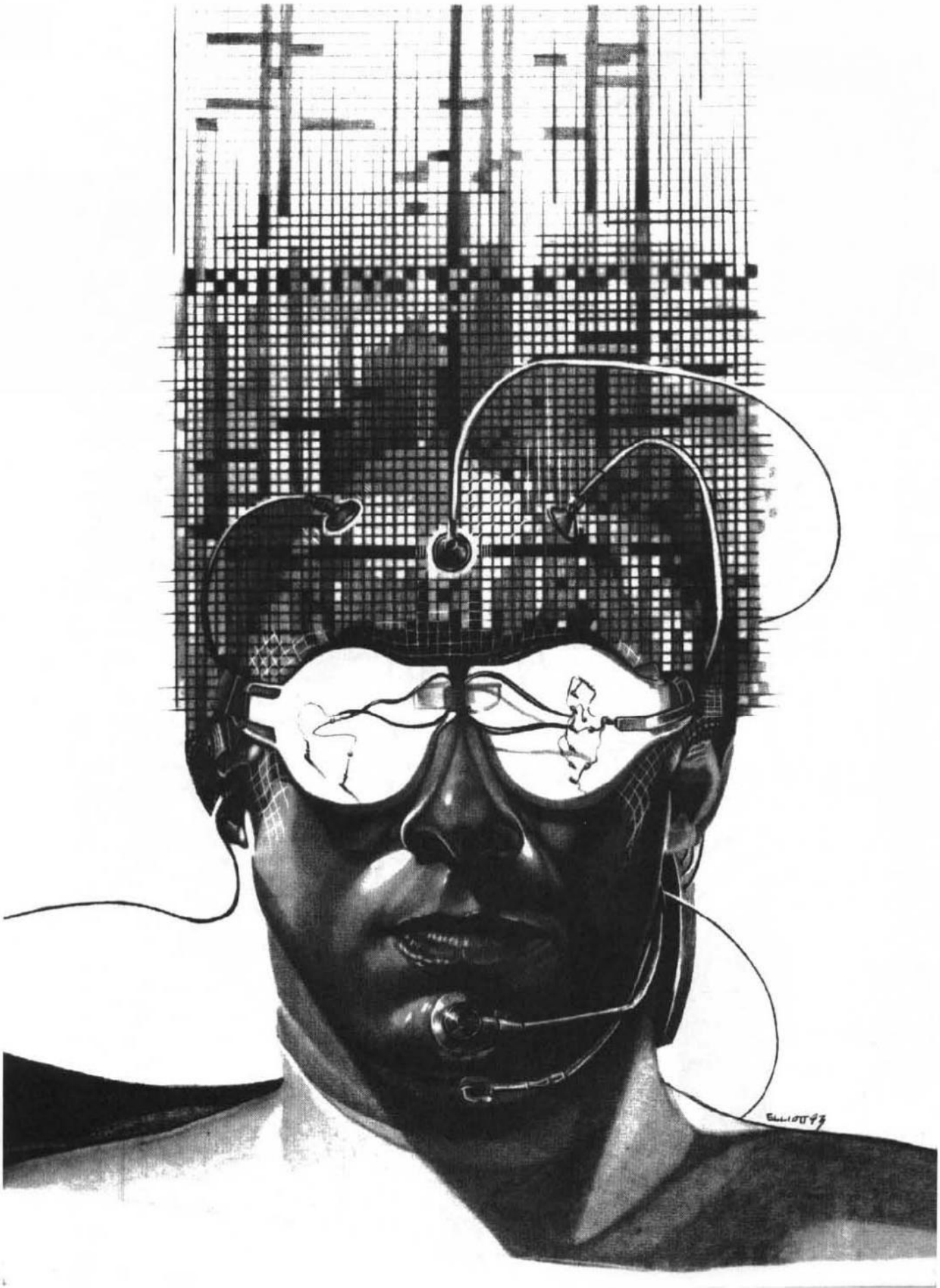
• Somewhere in the Digital Web, a mage has replicated all of existence in one colossal Virtual Realm. It's better than reality.

• The Arcanum knows that we exist. Beware of them. They mean no harm, but their presence can draw Paradox to your front door.

• Magick doesn't affect certain Sleepers. Some of them possess some kind of anti-magickal Avatar. They could be what powers Paradox.

• A secret organization of mages exists that embraces all philosophies as valid. They include members of the Technocracy, Traditions, Marauders and others. Some say they're the ones responsible for this place.

• The Cockroach Incarna carved out a domain for himself and his Glass Walker werewolves inside the Net. Watch out; its minions are everywhere, spying and slowly taking over. I've even seen the little spirits crawling around in the Spy's Demise, listening to everything.



Chapter Three: Tale Recursion

By John Cooper



Now we are going to see yet another way in which the whole world is built out of recursion.
—Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*

"Tale Recursion" is a story that challenges the players with the task of "hacking" their way into one man's Paradox Realm to get him out. On the surface, it appears to be a classic rescue mission, but the characters will find themselves lost in a Realm as real and compelling as the Web itself. The line between solid reality and Virtual Reality is unclear to begin with, but in this story the characters will find it hopelessly blurred.

How to Run This Story



"Tale Recursion" is a loosely structured adventure suitable for just about any number of characters from any of the Traditions. The story uses the Spy's Demise as a launching point, so the characters must have a way of entering the Digital Web. The story ultimately takes place within von Neumann's Paradox Realm, which actually exists within a Realm tangential to the Web.

This story is designed so that you can run any number of side stories from within its greater context. The side stories can be either distractions or integral episodes in the quest to find von Neumann. You should develop side stories that leave the players wondering how their actions will affect the "real world" outside the Paradox Realm. You are, of course, free to choose how and why the actions of the characters will be reflected in the real world (if indeed they are at all) once they get back to it. For instance, a side story in which the characters fail to save the Spy's Demise from destruction might have actual (usually lesser) consequences for the real Spy's Demise — the characters might learn that since they left, an unexplained overload in the Web has forced all icons inside the bar to look the same (wouldn't that be amusing?).



The Plot

Background: What's Going On?

Hidden away in a Chantry deep in the Web, an obsessed Master of Ether worked to realize Ascension. Dr. John von Neumann slaved like a man possessed for over two decades perfecting his artificial intelligence model. The result of his greatest and most secretive research effort was a massively parallel, artificially intelligent construct named ROSE. Composed entirely of Sentient Silicon™, ROSE was von Neumann's most ambitious undertaking. In one sense, ROSE was just another program running in the Web, but she was also profoundly unique. Through a tremendous feat of Correspondence magick, von Neumann distributed her processing over an immense portion of the Web to diffuse the effect of whiteout (see Chapter One).

ROSE was ultimately designed with one purpose in mind: the "solving" of logical contradictions and mathematical paradoxes. Dr. von Neumann believed that the key to Ascension lay in the eradication of Paradox. In order to alter reality sufficiently to permit ROSE to perform such impossible feats of logical reasoning, von Neumann had to inject enormous amounts of Quintessence from the Web into ROSE. He successful averted the systems crash that should have occurred, but his objective was still so inherently paradoxical that Paradox Spirits imprisoned him the moment he gave ROSE her first problem to solve. It didn't take long for von Neumann to realize what had happened to him, and he became convinced that the only way he could escape the Paradox Realm was to succeed at the very task that put him there. With every attempt to build ROSE and have her solve his problem, he was thrown into a recursively deeper level of the Paradox Realm.

The Paradox Realm itself appears to be identical to the Web with a couple of exceptions. First, ROSE does not yet exist in the Realm; in each of the levels von Neumann enters, he must rebuild her. Second, subjective time is different. One second in the Paradox Realm takes only one microsecond in realspace. Thus, while two weeks go by in the Paradox Realm, little more than one second has elapsed in the real world. This extends recursively into each level of the Realm. Thus, one microsecond in the first level of the Realm lasts for one second in the second level, and so on. Universes live, die and are reborn hundreds of times over in the fourth level of the Realm in the time it takes for the second hand of a watch to move one tick in realspace.

In practical terms, this means that the characters can spend as much time as they wish in von Neumann's Paradox Realm and return to find they were gone only a moment in the real world. Furthermore, mages in the Paradox Realm do not really age. Subjectively, they may spend two millenia in the Paradox Realm and actually age

less than a day. For this reason, von Neumann has had plenty of time to establish himself as a prominent Master in the world of each level of the Paradox Realm that he has entered.

The most ironic aspect of the recursive trap is this; von Neumann, through ROSE, has created his own Paradox Realm and Paradox spirits. Many mages theorize that Paradox is brought about by a mage's own subconscious mind — that Paradox Spirits are manifestations are incarnations of some inner boundaries that the mage must not cross (or does not have the inner faith to cross). The subject has been debated for centuries and no one knows the true answer (except the Paradox Spirits, and they're not talking!), but if the theory is true, von Neumann has created a VR prison out of a reflection of his own stubborn pride, a prison he can never be free of until he realizes his own limitations.

Von Neumann's disappearance has not yet been noticed by anyone except his apprentice, Bertrand Gerarde. Gerarde is quite familiar with ROSE but has no idea what her true purpose is. Von Neumann revealed nothing about his secret project's real objectives because he knew he would meet opposition from nearly all of his colleagues. However, von Neumann is an important figure within his Tradition, and his talents would be sorely missed were he to remain trapped in his prison forever. Moreover, agents of the Technocracy will leap at the opportunity to plunder von Neumann's Chantry if they learn he is trapped in a Paradox Realm. If the Technocracy gains possession of von Neumann's work, it would be a severe blow to the Sons of Ether. Von Neumann has plenty of friends, and favors are always a good thing for player-characters to have...

For his own part, Bertrand Gerarde is holding up fairly well. He witnessed von Neumann's strange accident, but he is not entirely certain it was due to Paradox. He strongly suspects some Paradox reaction, but doesn't know what von Neumann could have done to provoke a Backlash. Furthermore, the manner in which von Neumann disappeared was odd and could have been the result of Technocracy espionage. Gerarde knows that he needs help to find von Neumann, and the first place he decides to look is the Spy's Demise.

When the story begins, von Neumann is again busy building ROSE in his Paradox Realm. Which level he is in is actually determined by how long it takes the players to figure out the secret to getting him out. Once they've done that, you should arrange for the characters to find von Neumann in the next level of the Realm, whichever one that happens to be.

Theme

While this story explores the intriguing idea of entering someone else's Paradox Realm, a deeper, more subtle theme is developed: that of the perils of power. The celebrated Son of Ether Dr. John von Neumann (pronounced: von NOYman) is convinced that the only way to precipitate Ascension is to first eliminate Paradox. Von Neumann is an exceptional man with access to great power, but hubris leads him to his own doom. Like many Masters, he is obsessed with forcing his own vision of Ascension onto reality. His spiral descent into ever deeper levels of his self-created Paradox Realm is entirely his own fault. Ironically, the only path to freedom lies in recognizing the flaw in his beliefs, but he is blind to the futility of his approach and is unlikely to find the truth on his own.

The mission is to find von Neumann in his Paradox Realm and bring him out. While the prospect of breaking into his Paradox Realm may seem daunting, the hardest part will be convincing von Neumann that he must abandon his approach to Ascension if he is ever to get out. The characters themselves will be faced not only with the question of what Ascension means to them, but also the larger issue of what the proper way is to go about achieving this lofty goal.

Mood

The mood of this story is a mixture of the heroic and the bizarre. The characters are on a righteous mission to rescue a prominent Master, but are flung headlong into the bizarre landscape of von Neumann's Paradox Realm.

Scene One

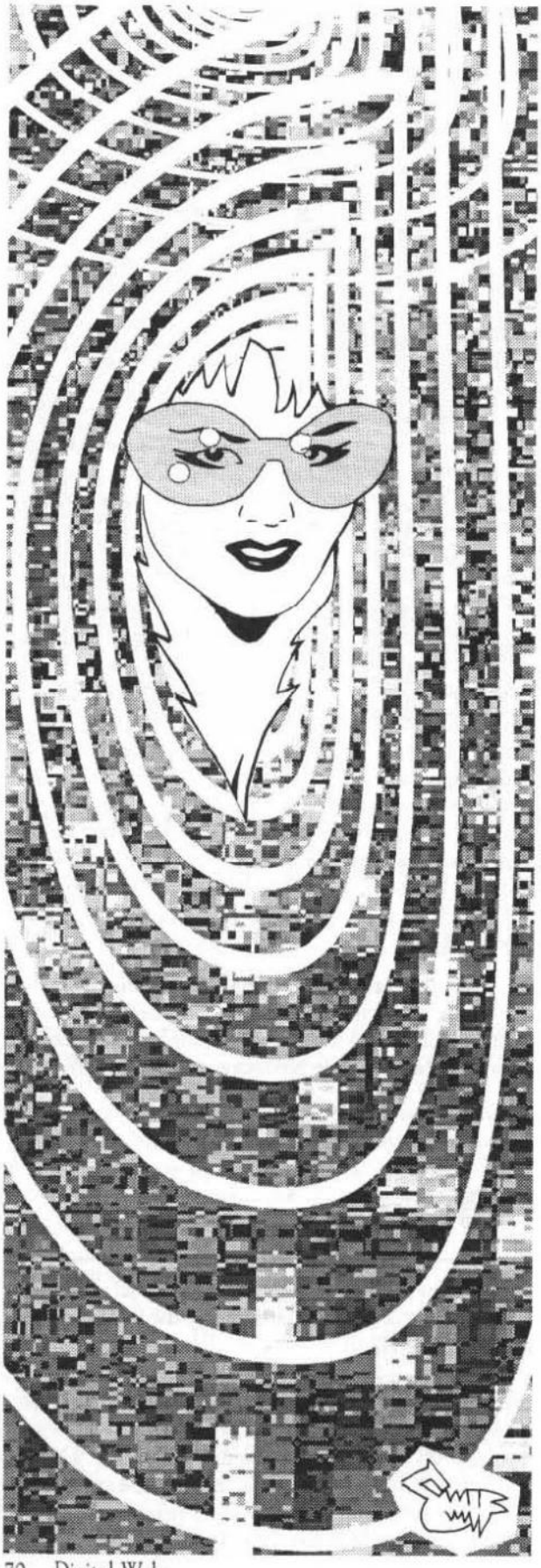


At the Spy's Demise

It's an ordinary night in the Spy's Demise. Over in that corner someone is trying to sell military secrets. Behind the bookcase two circuit merchants are comparing specs on the latest in code-cracking chips. And at the bar, some corp execs are sampling the highest octane Smart Drinks money can buy. Deals are going down, and the digital juice is flowing freely. An ordinary night in the Spy's Demise.

As soon as the characters get comfortable, an unfamiliar man approaches and hails one of the characters as a long-time friend.

"Hey (choose a character), how long has it been? It's good to see you after all these years! How's that project going over at SimTech? Did you get passed over for promotion again?" After ignoring the first couple of "Who are you?" demands, the man turns intently toward another character and begins to report more personal data. "Ms. (next character), born July 29th, 1960. Registered Repub-



lican in the last two presidential elections but voted Democrat in last year's mayoral race. You use five different personas on the Web, though no one realizes that you and Lady Godiva are the same person." The actual dialogue, of course, should be based on the chosen characters' backgrounds. Gerarde's initial approach will be cordial, but his personality should shift to a deadly serious monotone when addressing the second character. To make them even more uncomfortable, Gerarde will move on to a third character.

The man is Bertrand Gerarde, and he is using the intimate information to get the characters' attention. He obtained the information by hacking into a New World Order Watchtower database archive. You should feel free to give Gerarde any information from the characters' backgrounds that you feel the Technocracy could (or should) have. How much information Gerarde will have should be based on plausibility and dramatic appeal. The more intimate the knowledge displayed, the more menacing the scene will appear and the more anxious the players will be to learn who he is and what he wants.

At the point when the characters appear so agitated that they are on the verge of violence, Gerarde will become silent. It will be clear to anyone who makes a successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 7) that Gerarde is trying to hide his nervousness and apprehension. In a hushed tone he introduces himself: "My name is Bertrand Gerarde. Please forgive me for the way I've introduced myself, but it was imperative that I convey a matter of terrible importance to you through demonstration. It seems to have been effective in getting your attention. I promise to explain myself completely to you if you in return promise to entertain a proposal to help me with a desperate problem."

Gerarde is now being as sincere as he knows how, and he intends to make good on his promise, but he will not tell them anything until they agree to his terms. "Come with me to my Chantry, and I will explain everything." He will reiterate how important it is that they help him. The only question he will answer is "Why us?" to which he will respond: "Because you are not yet fixed in your ways; you do not yet know what is impossible, and so you are the most capable of achieving the impossible. And... you are the best Disciples I could find." Players will inevitably ask questions like, "What do you want us to do?" and "What's in it for us?", but Gerarde will wave them all off and insist on going to the privacy of his Chantry before discussing any details. "This place is the most heavily monitored location on the Web. It is not wise to discuss such things here."

Von Neumann's Chantry

If the characters agree to go with him, Gerarde will take them to von Neumann's Chantry, which has nearly fool-proof security against digital surveillance. The Chantry is located in a private Horizon Realm reachable from the Web through a single MIT Gateway to which only von Neumann and Gerarde know the password. To open the

Gateway a mage must use a Mind 3 rote (difficulty 7) that mentally sends a series of keywords to the Gateway Security Daemon. When the phrase "Curious Green Ideas Slept Furiously" is sent, the Gateway Security Daemon will activate a Correspondence rote that takes anyone at the staging area to von Neumann's Chantry.

The Chantry is a strange place. It is a fueled by a very strong Qunitessence flow that von Neumann has tapped from the Web with Correspondance magick. To a visitor, the Chantry appears to have no actual structure aside from a single room, but in fact there are many co-located rooms stacked in one place. There are always two doorways (known as ports) in the room; one input port and one output port. By merely thinking of which room you wish to enter, the output port configures itself to take you there. The port doors open only after you have mentally decided where to go. If more than one person passes through the portal before it closes (it waits for five seconds much like an elevator door), they all end up in the same room.

Von Neumann can create rooms whenever he wishes, simply by willing them to exist and mentally choosing to go there via the output portal. Unless a character knows of a room, she cannot think to go there. Currently von Neumann has over two hundred rooms in his Chantry, of which Gerarde only knows of about a dozen. These rooms range from the mundane (library, various labs, mail room) to the outlandish (rooms modeled after Escher drawings; rooms as big as Yellowstone Park containing vast, life-sized, three-dimensional fractal landscapes, etc.).

Once inside, Gerarde will take the charcters to a conference room. He will explain how he knew so much about them: "Listen my friends, the Technocracy has extensive data archives containing unbelievable amounts of personal data on a great many of us, mostly Virtual Adepts and Sons of Ether. I managed to gather a little data on each one of you by breaking into a New World Order database using the Fiberopticon, a Talisman that my mentor created." He will show them the Fiberopticon, a device that looks like an ordinary computer monitor. It appears to be turned off but, in fact, the device is no longer working, much to Gerarde's chagrin. The reason for this is that the Fiberopticon works by communicating with ROSE, who is currently in a hung state. There is also a reason—discussed at length in the section following the Epilogue—why von Neumann never used it for breaking into Technocracy databases like Gerarde did.

"I am the apprentice of Dr. John von Neumann, and this is his Chantry. The Fiberopticon, for some mysterious reason, no longer works, but von Neumann once hinted that it could possibly be used to wipe out the Technocracy's archives, not just peek at them."

When the characters ask the inevitable question of where von Neumann is, Gerarde will explain what happened to his mentor. "It was about a week ago. I had just finished uploading the latest revision of ROSE's humor module. Dr. von Neumann was communicating with ROSE with his keyboard — which was strange because she's had her speech module for months now — and he had just finished typing something when he began to break apart. I actually saw him merge with ROSE, the two of them blending together; it was very strange. Then, all of a sudden, ROSE snapped back to her usual appearance and Dr. von Neumann was gone. It's my suspicion that he was taken by Paradox Spirits."

Introducing ROSE

Never trust a computer you can't lift.

— Macintosh's first spoken words on January 24, 1984

At some point during this description, the players will probably ask who or what ROSE is. When they do, Gerarde will explain and then continue with his description of what happened to von Neumann: "Oh, ROSE is Dr. von Neumann's greatest project. I was taken on almost 20 years ago to help him with it. ROSE is an artificially intelligent neural network, the most advanced AI construct ever developed. She's actually very knowledgeable and has a rather pleasant personality. Unfortunately, she's been completely silent ever since Dr. von Neumann disappeared." Gerarde will bring the characters to the room where ROSE sits, head slumped forward against her chest. She looks like the robot from Fritz Lang's Metropolis. A keyboard (which has no cable attached because it uses Correspondence magick to communicate directly with ROSE) rests on her lap.

Normally ROSE is highly conversational, but ever since von Neumann was taken by Paradox, she has been completely silent, though it is evident that she is still functional. What Gerarde doesn't know is that ROSE is actually von Neumann's prison. Von Neumann is trapped in a Paradox Realm that exists within ROSE's virtual circuitry. She is essentially in a state of digital hibernation until von Neumann figures out how to escape (in a sense, she is working on his problem, but since Paradox makes this task impossible, she is dormant until a way out of the dilemma is found).

The Mission Revealed

Gerarde will make his plea: "I've asked you here to consider rescuing Dr. von Neumann from his prison. Dr. von Neumann always believed that Paradox Realms could be 'hacked into' like a computer system; he said to think of them as virtual realities not unlike the Web. If this is true, and I believe it is, then it should be possible to break into his Paradox Realm and bring him out."

If characters ask why he has not gone after von Neumann, Gerarde will confess: "In my judgment, this is not a single-person job. There's no way to know what's to be encountered in there. Sending a cabal dramatically increases the chances for success, wouldn't you agree?" The characters will most likely ask Gerarde to come along, but

he will refuse, saying; "Someone must stay here in case the Technocracy learns of what has happened and tries to take advantage of my mentor's absence. Plus, it will help to have someone on the outside in the event that you find a way to communicate from inside."

If the characters ask why they should bother, Gerarde will gently remind them of von Neumann's Fiberopticon and the possibilities for going after the Technocracy using it. "There is no telling how much information they have on us or how they plan to use it. I think it would be in everyone's best interests to get von Neumann back, don't you?" If further persuasion is necessary, he will mention the great status among Tradition mages that such a feat would earn, as well as von Neumann's personal gratitude.

The biggest obstacle that Gerarde has here is in gaining the characters' trust. The whole situation smells like a set up, and you may have to find creative ways to get the characters to believe Gerarde's story. To that end, you should indulge the characters in their efforts to figure out whether or not they are walking into a trap. For instance, if the characters wish to use **Mind Link** to probe Gerarde's mind, he will permit it as long as they do not try to open any highly sensitive doors. Gerarde will not mind if the characters take some time to "think about it," but he will make it clear how urgent he feels the situation is ("You never know what is happening to Dr. von Neumann, the sooner he is rescued the better.").

Do not force the characters to go on this mission. It could be quite dangerous, and it is possible that the players won't figure out how to get out again. If the players do not feel comfortable about it, let them pass on it. Gerarde will thank them for their time and take them back to the MIT Gateway. As the characters pass through, however, their minds will be stripped of any memory of the events that took place in von Neumann's Chantry. All they will remember is waiting to enter the Chantry with Gerarde. Since they will be back where they started, it will appear to them that he simply entered without them. This always happens when going from the Chantry to the Web unless another Mind 3 Rote (difficulty 5) is used to shield the mind from the stripping effect (a mage must continuously repeat the words "Cogito Ergo Sum" in his mind while casting the Rote).

Getting In

If the characters agree to go in after von Neumann, their next steps will be figuring out how to find his Paradox Realm and how to "break in." In principle, finding the Paradox Realm is easy—it's ROSE—but figuring this out will require a little detective work. The first clue is that something strange happened with von Neumann and ROSE when he disappeared (his essence was sucked into the Paradox Realm). The second clue is that ROSE is somehow hung. Another minor clue is the keyboard. Von Neumann did not want Gerarde knowing what he was doing, so he used a keyboard instead of speaking to her. Gerarde will acknowledge that von Neumann spent nearly every waking moment working on ROSE. Everything should point to ROSE as being somehow central to von Neumann's disappearance.

If and when it occurs to the characters that von Neumann is trapped in a Paradox Realm within ROSE, they can attempt to enter her virtual Realm (which functions as von Neumann's prison). This requires an Astral or Holistic Immersion (see Chapter One). If none of the characters have this sort of power, Gerarde will produce a Talisman device which enables them to hack into the Realm with 10 or more successes of Intelligence + Computer, difficulty 9. If the characters succeed in getting into ROSE, they will find themselves in the first level of von Neumann's Paradox Realm. The action proceeds to Scene Two.

Note that ROSE is a neural network that is actually distributed across a vast number of computers in the Web; shutting ROSE down is impossible without first shutting down most of the Web. Even if this could be done, the consequences would be disastrous; shutting down the Web means terminating both ROSE and von Neumann along with her. The Paradox Realm exists only as long as ROSE does, and if ROSE goes, von Neumann and the Realm he is trapped in go as well.

Getting Out

In a chess tournament not long ago in Canada, one program—the weakest of all the competing ones—had the unusual feature of quitting long before the game was over. It was not a very good chess player, but it at least had the redeeming quality of being able to spot a hopeless position, and to resign then and there...

—Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*

The key to getting out of von Neumann's Paradox Realm is realizing the following things:

1. It is inherently paradoxical to try to create a computer that can solve a logical paradox. Every attempt to do so will simply throw you into a deeper level of the Paradox Realm.

2. Trying to get any ordinary computer to solve a logical paradox usually locks it up in an infinite loop of logical inferences. This is also useless.

3. The only solution is to acknowledge that *there is no solution*; or to recognize the nature of a paradox: it is inherently unsolvable. By using Magick to create an artificially intelligent neural network that is smart enough to recognize Paradox when it sees it (thus giving up on trying to solve it just as a human being would in the same situation), everyone unwinds out of the Paradox Realm. This occurs because the neural net at each level in the recursion inherits the understanding that it must give up on the problem and pops everyone's "reality context" another level, eventually all the way out and back to the real world.

However, convincing von Neumann that his objectives are flawed will be difficult. Standing in the way of von Neumann and his goal may be very dangerous (he can and will fight back), but necessary in order to save him!

Scene Two



This scene is actually a compilation of story hooks, vignettes that serve as models for any number of complete side stories that you can run as the players search for von Neumann. These side stories should continue until the players have figured out how to free von Neumann. One important aspect of these side stories is that the environment can take any form, and the laws of reality can be warped to taste. Furthermore, any aspect of reality as it is known inside a particular level of the Paradox Realm might be exported wholesale or in pieces to realspace without the players' knowledge. For instance, the secret project that von Neumann is involved in in **Scene 2.2** , below, could be a project in realspace as well, though von Neumann may not be involved and it may be further from or closer to completion than in the side story.

The pattern for these side stories is as follows:

Each time the characters enter another level of the Paradox Realm, they start in von Neumann's Chantry, but the world inside the Net is a little different. For example, ROSE is always constructed differently by von Neumann within each of the levels. Moreover, in each level, one Sphere of magick is completely unavailable and another Sphere is enhanced (i.e. one Sphere of magick simply does not work at all, and for the other Sphere, all difficulties are reduced three levels). This occurs because von Neumann's failure at each level introduces "bugs" into the next. For playability reasons, this effect is not cumulative (i.e., at any given level, only two Spheres are affected).

This Paradox Realm behaves in most ways like the real world. The characters can "leave" the Paradox Realm Web and find themselves in a virtual version of realspace. Astral and Umbral travel are all possible, but they take place in a virtual Astral Plane and a virtual Umbra. Everything within the Paradox Realm is a virtual copy of the real thing.

Sample Side Story: Scene 2.1, "The Abduction of ROSE"

Unavailable Sphere: Time, Enhanced Sphere: Entropy.

Theme: Human vs. machine intelligence. Is there a difference? What is the nature of that difference? Was ROSE stolen or kidnapped? Is there a meaningful distinction?

Mood: Action is the name of the game in this side story. A race against time to retrieve ROSE before she is assimilated by Iteration X.

The scenery looks familiar: Von Neumann's Chantry. Or is it? Everything is in complete disarray — furniture overturned, equipment demolished and strewn about. There is no ROSE



here. The gateway portal stands shimmering, a silent witness to the recent violence. The portal hums to life, and a heavily pixelated figure takes shape within it. The figure slowly becomes sharper, more defined. It is Gerarde. Upon stepping into the Chantry, his eyes grow wide with alarm at the scene before him. His gaze falls upon the intruding cabal of mages...

The characters have stepped into von Neumann's Chantry within the Paradox Realm. The Chantry was recently the scene of a break-in perpetrated by HIT Marks of Iteration X, whose mission was to steal ROSE. They were successful. Von Neumann's automatic security systems (spells) had activated, but they were quickly destroyed by the HIT Marks.

Gerarde will assume that the characters are responsible for the break-in and do what he can to take them out. He will use vulgar magick initially, but he will not persist after gaining six Paradox points. Hopefully the characters will try to reason with Gerarde; the fact that they know who he is should prompt them to approach him as an ally, even though he attacked immediately. The Bertrand Gerarde in this Paradox Realm does not know who the characters are, but he should be willing to believe them if they are persuasive enough.

This Gerarde saw von Neumann disappear after merging with the ROSE in this Realm too, but there is no Fiberopticon here (von Neumann never built one while in this level of the Realm), and ROSE does not look like a female robot. In this level of the Paradox Realm, ROSE is a black cube with blinking red lights. She is again dormant (Dr. von Neumann is trapped within her as well), but the Iteration X agents do not understand the nature of this condition and have no idea where von Neumann is.

In all other respects, this world looks and behaves like realspace. However, feel free to add odd twists wherever you wish to make the adventure memorable. One suggestion is to take mages who are allies to the characters in the real world and make them rivals (or better yet, make them HIT Marks) in this one.

You should make the retrieval of ROSE an exciting, challenging side story. This story provides an opportunity to use Iteration X heavily and to demonstrate the sinister menace it represents. Its intention is to reverse engineer ROSE and incorporate von Neumann's innovations into next-generation HIT Marks. Characters can encounter progressively more advanced HIT Marks as Iteration X puts its prototypes to the test.



Sample Side Story: Scene 2.2, "Where No Mage Has Gone Before"

Unavailable Sphere: Correspondence, Enhanced Sphere: Forces.

Theme: Can exploration lead to Ascension? One man's monumental vision is being brought to life, possibly bringing Ascension closer. Has he found the path to Ascension? His endeavor speaks for itself.

Mood: The wide-eyed thrill of discovery and the excitement of exploring the unknown carry the mood here. This story can have more than a little humor, but should not become campy.

The Chantry fades from view and all becomes black. A fraction of a second later a new scene comes into focus. The white walls are spotless and bare. The raised platform underfoot has six evenly placed, meter-wide discs that gleam and refract light like huge CDs. Identical discs stare down indifferently from the ceiling immediately above. A large, chest-high console stands in the other half of the chamber, its back facing the platform. Small panels on the walls twinkle with the light of bright red and green LEDs. A sliding door sans handle dominates the otherwise featureless wall straight ahead. This whole place looks strangely familiar.

The characters have landed in von Neumann's data transfer room in the next level of the Paradox Realm. The platform looks just like the teleportation platform from a popular science fiction television show. Data is "uploaded" and "downloaded" to and from a number of similar rooms in the Near Umbra of this Paradox Realm. Before von Neumann disappeared from this level, he was working part-time on a project with the Sons of Ether to build a large starship in their Horizon Realm orbitting virtual Earth. Von Neumann's contribution was the architecture and design for the ship's computers. All the members of the project have rooms like this one. They are network links for data transfer between project team members.

Before the characters can move off the platforms, the room fades away and another room fades into view. This room looks like a much larger version of the previous room. There are many more blinking lights and there are two men wearing bright orange jumpsuits operating the console. As soon as the characters "materialize," one of the console operators speaks into some kind of microphone:

"Captain, I've just uploaded (however many characters there are) strangers from Dr. von Neumann's transfer area. They don't appear hostile, sir, but I've got the force fields up just as a precaution."

A voice comes in over a small speaker on the console: "This is the Captain. I'll be right there."

The platform is surrounded by an invisible force field of enormous power. It is impervious to magick, and magick cannot pass through it (and remember, the Correspondence Sphere is unavailable altogether in this level). The characters will simply have to wait it out. Less than two minutes later, the door to the chamber slides open, and three men and a woman enter. They are all wearing pocketless black pants and black boots. The first man through the door is wearing a yellow shirt with a small chest insignia on it. Directly behind him, the woman is wearing a blue shirt with a slightly different insignia. And the last two men are wearing red shirts with yet a third insignia. These two men are holding some sort of hand weapon and pointing them at the characters. Treat these consor acolytes as police officers (**Mage** rulebook, Pg. 276).

The man in the yellow shirt speaks up; "Dr. von Neumann didn't warn us that we'd have visitors. Who are you, and what were you doing in Dr. von Neumann's data transfer area?" If the characters ask what is going on, the man will state quite matter-of-factly: "Currently you are prisoners on board the U.S.S. Endeavor. I am Captain Douglas, and this is my First Officer, Ilyana Tanov. If you cooperate, we won't have to detain you. Now please explain who you are, and what you were doing in Dr. von Neumann's data transfer area."

The players will have to roleplay well and find a convincing explanation; the truth will be hard to prove. Otherwise, the characters will get thrown into the brig, a small prison protected by a another force field. You might add drama to the entire situation by having the ship attacked by Marauders.

If the characters ever manage to gain the trust of Captain Douglas (for instance, after somehow helping in the defense of the ship), they will be treated as guests aboard the ship. They will be taken to ambassador suites and even offered a tour of the ship. They will be invited to dinner with the captain and his officers. During the tour (or at the dinner if the characters pass up the tour), Douglas will explain that he is a member of the Sons of Ether and he is in charge of a massive effort to build this starship as a weapon against the Technocracy. Many Virtual Adepts are also a part of the mission, but the project is primarily a Sons of Ether undertaking.

Douglas and Tanov are somewhat rational, but deeply enjoy their role-playing. Storytellers may want to keep certain zealous real-world convention-goers in mind when playing these characters. Douglas confides that the ship's computer, which von Neumann had designed for them, seized up mysteriously a few days ago and the whole project is currently in a terrible lurch. Von Neumann is nowhere to be found, and the team is concerned that the Endeavor will never see its maiden voyage. The reason for the computer failure, of course, is that the Endeavor's computer is ROSE. Von Neumann was actually working on both projects at the same time; now that ROSE is in a hung state (and von Neumann lost within her), the Endeavor project is in jeopardy. If the characters reveal the mission they are on, Douglas will implore them to continue after von Neumann.

ABC trial 4

Sample Side Story: Scene 2.3, "Big Brother is Watching"

Unavailable Sphere: Forces, Enhanced Sphere: Mind

Theme: Order vs. Chaos. The characters will bring an element of chaos to the New World Order's well ordered world. Can they maintain a sense of free will in such a place? What is the cost of ultimate control, not only over others, but also over oneself?

Mood: Paranoia, mystery, conspiracy. The characters should always feel as though they are being watched. They should feel alone against the establishment, but they should not feel doomed. The more rigid the hierarchy, the more brittle it is and the more vulnerable to being shattered. The characters should have a chance to make a real difference here, but the atmosphere is smothering and invasive. In contrast with the preceding story's light tone, "Big Brother" is grim and frightening.

As the familiar image of von Neumann's Chantry forms again, six men in black business suits activate their tie clips, and one by one, they disappear with one of your cabal members. A fraction of a second later the surroundings change to a small chamber with bare, steel-gray walls. You are alone and strapped into a large chair very similar to a hospital bed. Blinding light shines in your face, and the thundering silence intensifies the dreadful feelings of isolation and confusion that grips your mind. Every effort to move your limbs or cast a spell triggers intense despair and helplessness. You can go nowhere. After what feels like hours, someone enters the room and stands behind you. If only he would say something...

When von Neumann first appeared in this level, he learned quickly that something was terribly wrong. In this Realm, the Technocracy had all but won the Ascension Wars and created a perfectly ordered world. Von Neumann believed that the only way to shatter this environment was to successfully complete his ROSE project. He spent many years building ROSE, but he was again thrown into the next recursion. The New World Order dispatched Men in Black to apprehend von Neumann, but found that he was missing. While searching the doctor's Chantry, the Central Message Dispatcher informed them that an Umbral portal was opening (the characters' arrival). The Men in Black were instructed to apprehend whoever came through the portal. Each character is taken to an interrogation chamber located in the Information Realm of the New World Order.

In this Realm, the Operating System is in complete control of the VR network and is always "watching." There is no such thing as magick cast without a witness because the Operating System daemons are omnipresent in the Net. In fact, any vulgar magick automatically attracts Debuggers, the equivalent of digital police, dispatched by the daemons. Thus, even if Paradox Spirits don't catch a mage, the Debuggers probably will. This story gives you an opportunity to actually show what a world dominated by the Technocracy would be like.

Each character will be interrogated by a cold, sinister, unemotional Inquisitor. The New World Order is always on the lookout for subversive rebels, and the characters will definitely have trouble passing for Good Obedient Citizens. The questioning will go something like this:

"What is your name?"

(Character answers)

"From now on you are number 12. Now, what is your name?"

If the character answers something other than "12," a Mind 3, Life 3, Entropy 4 effect makes the character suddenly feel old, withered and diseased; shooting pains arc through her body (apply damage as usual). Once the character agrees to call herself "12," the Inquisitor will proceed.

"Very good. Now then number 12, what is your function?"

Regardless of what the character answers: "No number 12, you are a data librarian." More shooting pain until the character agrees that her function is that of a data librarian (each character should have a different function assigned to them).

"Very good. Now then, number 12, what are the Golden Rules?"

Because the character won't know them, a jolt of pain will precede each one until the character can repeat them from memory.

Jolt. "Golden Rule 1: The Operating System is perfect and must be obeyed."

Jolt. "Golden Rule 2: My function is to serve the Operating System."

Etc.

Each character is being groomed for a function within the Network environment, an oppressive community of people who wear false masks of contentment and carry out their functions dutifully. It is impossible to tell the prisoners from those who conspire to keep the whole thing working. The characters must find a way to get back to von Neumann's Chantry and hack into ROSE again. In this Realm, she looks like a large artificial tree with perfect red apples hanging from the branches.

Away from the torture chambers, the Realm appears to be a friendly tourist resort on a warm tropical island. Everyone seems happy and appears content and obedient. The only information freely given to Citizens of the Web are trite newsletters mentioning special events such as local elections (which are fixed), the nonexistant crime rate and the wonderful state of the economy. Each paper carries ads reminding Citizens to be happy, obedient and vigilant for subversion. Citizens are expected to participate in sports, games, social events or other harmless forms of entertainment. Nothing happens here that is in any way thought provoking. The underground world of Harlan Ellison's **A Boy and his Dog** comes to mind.

Scene Three



Unavailable Sphere: Life, Enhanced Sphere: Spirit

As the all-too-familiar scenery of von Neumann's Chantry greets your eyes again, one feature commands your attention: A wiry man with thinning white hair sits in front of a large totem pole. He seems lost in thought and takes no notice of your group. Upon closer inspection he appears to be meditating.

When the players have figured out the puzzle of how to free von Neumann, run this scene. It is presented here strictly as a roleplaying scene; there is no fast-paced action or suspenseful drama involved. However, you need not run it this way. This scene can be just as involved as the side stories in scene two if you wish, but you will have to invent a plot to insert here. Ultimately, however, the scene approaches closure with the characters finally finding von Neumann in this final level of his Paradox Realm.

As the characters enter the Chantry, von Neumann is busy programming ROSE. On this level, ROSE is constructed to look like a totem pole and her I/O is totally mental. Von Neumann figured out how to replace her speech recognition and synthesis modules with telepathic modules, and now he programs her with his mind. While he appears to be meditating, he is, in fact, simply debugging some recently programmed diagnostic routines. He knows the characters are in his Chantry the moment they arrive (**Landscape of the Mind**), and as soon as the characters completely materialize, he will mentally activate his security mechanisms.

These mechanisms consist of:

Distortion Encoder (Correspondence 5): The local reality is distorted so that everything appears three feet away from its actual location. All spells targetted on individuals or particular items will automatically miss.

Echoplex Generator (Correspondence 5): All spells are echoed back at the characters who cast them.

Bit Masks (Mind 3): Everyone in the Chantry appears as someone else (including von Neumann). Combined with the Signal-to-Noise Translator, this makes determining who is who very difficult.

Signal-to-Noise Translator (Mind 3): This mechanism changes any sounds (including speech) into unpleasant noise.

While the characters are busy figuring out how to deal with von Neumann's security measures, he will probe their minds to learn who they are and why they are in his Chantry. When he discovers that they have come to "rescue" him, he will shut off his security devices and ask them to kindly go away and leave him alone. When they tell him that getting back out requires reprogramming ROSE, he will not be cooperative.

The hard part here is convincing von Neumann that he must abandon his quest to eliminate Paradox. For one thing, von Neumann doesn't really want to leave the Paradox Realm just yet. He is fascinated by it and wishes to explore it more thoroughly. The characters will probably find this attitude rather startling and may well not share his enthusiasm for the strange Realm. They must persuade von Neumann to program ROSE to recognize paradoxes and give up on trying to solve them.

The characters might be able to trick von Neumann into reprogramming ROSE, or may figure out how to program ROSE themselves without von Neumann realizing it. It does not really matter how the characters achieve their goal; as long as ROSE is programmed to recognize that solving logical paradoxes is an impossible task, the characters will succeed. As soon as ROSE is given her first problem to solve and recognizes the futility, all the characters (along with von Neumann) will instantly unwind back to the "normal" Net reality of von Neumann's original Chantry.

While changing von Neumann's mind is difficult, it is not impossible. For one thing, he assumes that back in reality ROSE is actually working on his logic problem. If the characters tell him that ROSE is hung, he will begin to have doubts (though he won't let it show just yet). If they explain that every ROSE at every level of recursion is likewise hung, von Neumann will stop what he is doing and start thinking hard about the implications. It may also occur to the players that the adventures they had in the Paradox Realm were foreshadowed glimpses of possible futures back in reality. This notion intrigues von Neumann immensely. Lastly, if the characters mention the Fiberopticon and Gerarde's schemes to use it against the Technocracy, von Neumann will become visibly alarmed. You will have to decide how many of these elements von Neumann needs to hear before he agrees to reprogram ROSE.

Epilogue

A kaleidoscope of colors overwhelms your senses and you feel your entire being falling into a void. Memories of what transpired in each of the levels of the Paradox Realm rush to the forefront of your consciousness in reverse order: the harsh interrogation, the Sons of Ether, the HIT Marks. Waves of sensation crash against the shores of the rational mind. And then calm. And darkness. Your new surroundings slowly materialize around you. It is von Neumann's Chantry again. Gerarde seems to be saying something, but there's no sound. What is he saying? He sees von Neumann and smiles. The two are talking.



What are they saying? ROSE is standing nearby, her metallic body gleaming. Sound returns slowly, and you can hear again.

"—only gone a few days. And they were gone for only a brief moment. A second or two at most." Gerarde is both exhuberant and perplexed.

Von Neumann seems intrigued by the subjective time difference in the Paradox Realm, but not very concerned about it: "I shall have to discuss this with Doppler and Klein. Most interesting."

"But, Doctor, do you realize what this means? You returning like this, I mean?"

"What are you talking about Bertrand?"

"Doctor, they were able to hack into your Paradox Realm and get you out! Think about what this means for our Tradition! We never have to worry about Paradox Realms again!"

Von Neumann looks sharply at Gerarde. His tone is soft but deadly serious. "Is that what you think Bertrand?" Von Neumann turns to the characters. "Is that what all of you think?" The doctor shakes his head gently and looks over at ROSE. "None of you are thinking hard enough. I'm sorry but I have some important work to do with ROSE. I expect to be gone for a decade or two." Turning back toward Gerarde and the characters, von Neumann nods thoughtfully. "Think long and hard, my friends, before you conclude that you have mastered Paradox. The only way to master Paradox is to master yourself." With those words, von Neumann takes ROSE's hand and disappears.

Upon returning from the Paradox Realm with von Neumann, the mission is technically over. However, the story need not end there. The Storyteller can easily segue into an adventure in which the characters go on a mission to wipe out the data archives of the New World Order. If the characters experienced Scene 2.3, they may be highly motivated to carry out such a task. The Fiberopticon is functional now that ROSE is fully operational again, but there is an inherent danger in using it for breaking into databases belonging to the Technocracy (see the section on the Fiberopticon below for details).

Characters



I would like to introduce you to these people who not only saw but lived the magic in the computer, and worked to liberate the magic so it could benefit us all.

—Steven Levy, *Hackers*

Primary Characters

Dr. John von Neumann

Essence: Questing

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Visionary

Tradition: Sons of Ether

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Computer 5, Dodge 1, Drive 1, Enigmas 4, Intuition 2, Mathematics 5, Meditation 2, Research 4, Science 4 (Computer Science), Technology 4

Backgrounds: Avatar 5, Node 5 (personal Chantry), Talisman 5 (Fiberopticon)

Spheres: Correspondence 5, Entropy 3, Life 2, Matter 4, Mind 3, Prime 3

Arete: 7

Willpower: 9

Quintessence: 7

Paradox: 2

Image: Von Neumann appears to be about 60 years old even though he is much older. He has whispy white hair and a white goatee. He likes to think of himself as a scientist — not just a mathematician or logician — and always wears a white lab coat. Von Neumann's Architect Nature represents his single-minded obsession with the eradication of Paradox as the key to Ascension. He is so focused on this goal that he is blind to its inherent flaws. His Visionary Demeanor is actually more of a product of how he is perceived by others than any conscious attempt at façade. This is due to the fact that few have the intellect or knowledge to comprehend what he says or thinks, but everyone in his Tradition recognizes how brilliant and significant his work is.

Roleplaying Hints: You are quick-witted and extremely intelligent. You are usually working on several different problems at once (via the **Multitasking** rote) and almost always seems lost in thought. When you engage in conversation, devote only a single mental process to it (even then, you are still very sharp). If a topic is particularly interesting or important to you, devote all of your mental processes to the conversation. In this mode, you are truly awesome to listen to, analyzing the subject from several angles at once, weighing the relative merits of each position simultaneously and expressing your conclusions without any apparent pause for thought.

Background: Dr. John von Neumann is a pioneer of modern computing who spontaneously Awakened at the age of 26. His earliest work produced the classical "von Neumann Machine" architecture of computing which dominated the shape of computer processing for decades. His work for the last 30 years has been the perfection of massively parallel, artificially intelligent systems. ROSE is his crowning achievement. Von Neumann became a recluse in the '60s and programmed himself physically into the Web in 1988. He has no physical body outside the Web.

Von Neumann is very proud of his work and is quite aware that most mages would understand only some of it. This is largely why he works alone, preferring to make progress on his own without having to spend a lot of time explaining it to others. While he likes Gerarde and is happy with the assistance he provides, von Neumann spends little time actually training his apprentice. Most of what Gerarde absorbs from von Neumann consists of random bits and pieces of knowledge revealed more out of sheer happenstance than by conscious effort.



Bertrand Gerarde

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Conformist

Tradition: Virtual Adept

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 3, Computer 4, Cosmology 2, Dodge 1, Drive 1, Intuition 2, Meditation 1, Research 3, Science 3 (Computer Science), Technology 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 4, Mentor 5 (Dr. von Neumann), Node 5 (von Neumann's Chantry)

Spheres: Correspondence 4, Forces 3, Mind 3, Prime 2

Arete: 4

Willpower: 7

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 3 (left over from using the Fiberopticon—see below)

Image: Gerarde appears to be in his 30s, is both tall and heavy-set. He wears his long brown hair in a pony tail and has a short, well-trimmed beard and mustache, that, combined with his round-lense glasses add to his professorial look. He wears nondescript clothes: straight-leg pants, button-down shirt, brown loafers. He carries his laptop with him at all times in a carrying bag with a shoulder strap.

Roleplaying Hints: You speak fast though you don't like to make eye contact (it distracts you from what you are thinking of saying next). Even though you like to talk, you are very tight-lipped about your work with von Neumann, particularly with regard to ROSE and the Fiberopticon. Working with the great Dr. von Neumann has made you a little arrogant, but so what? You have better things to do than worry what your un-Awakened students and colleagues think of you, and your Virtual Adept collegues are all just jealous.

Background: Bertrand Gerarde was a highly regarded computer scientist at MIT in the 70s when he was Awakened with the help of von Neumann. Though the two men view their "sciences" differently, Gerarde has worked with the prominent doctor ever since. Gerarde does not exist soley in the Web as von Neumann does, and he is not entirely sure he wants to. In the physical world, Gerarde teaches and leads research in AI at MIT's vaunted AI Lab.



Gerarde enjoys working for von Neumann to a great extent, but he is beginning to feel twinges of dissatisfaction. He is learning less and less and von Neumann does not appear as interested in teaching him as he once was. Gerarde does not want to leave von Neumann just yet, especially not before learning the magick behind the Fiberopticon. Much of Gerarde's free time recently has been spent studying the Talisman and probing von Neumann for morsels of knowledge that would help him in unlocking its secrets.



Scene 2 Characters

Captain Douglas

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Fanatic

Tradition: Sons of Ether

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Cosmology 4, Dodge 2, Intuition 2, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Science 4 (Astrophysics), Technology 3

Backgrounds: Avatar 3, Destiny 3, Node 5 (Endeavor orbital shipyard)

Spheres: Matter 5, Correspondence 3, Forces 4, Mind 2, Prime 2

Arete: 6

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 6

Paradox: 0

Image: Captain Douglas is a handsome man in his early 30s with short blond hair, neatly trimmed. He's smart, but is more physical than intellectual. Douglas is tall and broad-shouldered with the body of an athelete.

Roleplaying Hints: Making your vision come to life is hard work, and you demand the most from your "crew." You run a tight ship and expect results from those around you. Bark out orders and take no insubordination or attitude from anyone, but be fair and compassionate with everyone (this is what makes you a great leader). Rely on your instincts when in doubt; they've never failed you.

Background: Vance Douglas, aka "Captain Douglas of the starship Endeavor," has a vision; to bring to life the object of his greatest fantasies — the famous starship from America's most popular science fiction television series. What the Sleepers know of only as fancy special effects, Douglas is laboring to make real. This project is his entire life, and he is nearly finished. Douglas has the leadership and organizational talents to make such a huge undertaking feasible, but he has had to rely on Adepts and Masters from many engineering and scientific fields.

Ilyana Tanov

Essence: Dynamic

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Director

Tradition: Sons of Ether

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Awareness 2, Computer 2, Drive 1, Intimidation 3, Intuition 4, Linguistics 2 (Russian, French), Meditation 2, Research 3, Science 4 (Quantum physics)

Backgrounds: Avatar 2, Mentor 3 (Vance Douglas), Node 5 (Endeavor orbital shipyard), Talisman 3 (Handheld Science Scanner)

Spheres: Correspondence 3, Forces 3, Matter 4, Mind 2, Prime 2

Arete: 6

Willpower: 8

Quintessence: 8

Paradox: 0

Image: Ilyana is a strikingly beautiful Ukranian woman with long, flowing black hair and sharp facial features. She moves gracefully and with confidence.

Roleplaying Hints: You do not freely offer your opinion because most wouldn't appreciate what you have to say. Speak only when questioned; when you answer, answer with confidence and authority. Complements on your beauty are worthy of an acknowledging nod, but flattery is almost an insult to your intelligence.

Background: Ilyana Tanov was a promising physicist working in the field of Quantum Mechanics when Vance Douglas brought her to the Horizon Realm where the Endeavor (in its earliest stage of construction) was docked and Awakened her Avatar. She has been an invaluable member of his team ever since. She is deeply in love with him, though he is too focused on the Endeavor to notice (his loss).



Talisman

••••• The Fiberopticon

Arete 8, Quintessence 20

The Fiberopticon is a powerful Talisman that does one thing very well: it finds information no matter where it is stored in the Web (as long as it is online in a digital format) and makes it accessible to its user. It can bypass any security measure and decode any encryption scheme. The information retrieved is downloaded directly into the user's mind. Furthermore, it searches the entire Web at once, so search requests occur in real-time (i.e., as the user thinks of the information he seeks, it appears almost instantly in his mind).

At present, the Fiberopticon is a read-only device, but von Neumann believes it could be made into a read/write device, which would allow the user to alter, replace or delete any piece of information stored on the Web. He also knows that the accumulation of Paradox would be an order of magnitude more severe (see below). It goes without saying that even as a read-only device, the Fiberopticon would be a devastating tool in the wrong hands. The New World Order, among other parties, would go to any lengths to obtain this Talisman if they ever learned of its existence.

There are three drawbacks to using the Fiberopticon. First, usage of the device is easily traceable while it is active. Any data-tracking program built into a system will easily trace the intrusion back to the Fiberopticon. Second, there is the danger of too much information being directly downloaded into the user's mind, driving him insane (or into Quiet). A search request that is not sufficiently specific (for instance, asking for any data kept on anyone with the last name "Smith") will cause an avalanche of information crashing into the user's mind. Third, anyone using the Fiberopticon automatically takes one point of Paradox per search request.


PEACE through
STRENGTH
ORDER THROUGH CHAOS ~
~HARMONY THROUGH
INTIMIDATION
TALON
THE AMERICAN LIBERATORS OF
NUCLEAR SUPREMACY

Chapter Four: Deus Ex Machina

By Harry Heckel



Deliberate error was unthinkable. Even the concealment of truth filled him with a sense of imperfection, of wrongness — of what, in a human being, would have been called guilt. For like his makers, Hal had been created innocent; but, all too soon, a snake had entered his electronic Eden.

— Arthur C. Clarke, *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Begin Transmission

From: Autochthonia Central Core

To: Construct 1010

Iteration X computes the probability of successful Virtual Adept intervention in primary "ascension" program at 40.52% and growing exponentially.

Iteration X computes Virtual Adept exponential growth derives from uncontrolled interface with the Digital Web.

Iteration X computes unauthorized use of the Digital Web must not continue.

Prepare for new programming directives. Errors in processing new programming directives and or in running applications will be eliminated from system.

End Transmission

How to Run This Story



"Deus Ex Machina" is a cyber-fiction mystery story. Iteration X creates an artificial intelligence, to serve its goal of ordering and controlling the Digital Web by interlinking the Avatars of numerous captured mages. A central processing unit controlling so many slave Avatars will allow Iteration X to monitor the entire Net and to possibly even change its entire magickal paradigm. The players must stop the RES machine before it allows the Convention to control the electronic landscape.

Mages of weak spirit need not apply for this adventure. In order to stop the precise plans of Iteration X, the characters must flex their creative problem-solving muscles and show tremendous courage. The story contains violence, but no group of Tradition mages will survive an all-out war with the Technocracy for long.

Non-Technomancer Traditions may find themselves at an advantage during the climax of the story (yes, Virtual Adepts and Sons of Ether *are* Technomancers; the focus of their magick is technology, albeit technology of a different nature than the oppressive limits of the Technocracy). In the final chapter, a strong philosophy and an outlook than encompasses reality beyond the Digital Web may prove more potent than the greatest magicks.

An array of options lies open to mages in this story. The freedom of player actions takes **Mage: The Ascension** beyond most other roleplaying games. Storytellers may have to alter or even substantially warp this adventure to challenge their players. Others may want to remove some of the alternatives and options, creating a more linear adventure to make storytelling easier. This story should be tailored to fit each individual troupe.

"Deus Ex Machina" works best if the events within it are spread over a number of sessions in a regular chronicle. The circumstances in the first scene may be fleshed out and expanded and run as a subplot over many stories leading up to this adventure. The conclusion also provides material for many more sessions, possibly even providing the start of a chronicle.

The Plot

Scene One: Cybernauts vanish while projecting through the Digital Web. A strange message appears on computers. Agents of Iteration X start mysteriously kidnapping mages in the Net and on Earth. Fluctuations occur in some parts of Technocracy territory. Finally, after hearing about these things, the player characters fall into the thick of them as the latest targets of Iteration X's kidnapping attempts.



Scene Two: A trip to the Spy's Demise yields some answers from a group of self-proclaimed renegade Technocracy members. All other sources confirm the rogue Technomancers' story that Construct 1010 controlled by Iteration X is the site of a macabre combination of mages and machinery. Something must be done, and there isn't much time...

Scene Three: The characters enter the inhuman virtual fortress of Construct 1010 by trekking through a strange Technocracy garbage dump. Within the Construct, they gain new insights into Iteration X and its methods, and come face to face with a moral dilemma. Ultimately, they are either captured by the Convention or blunder into the Central Core, where they locate the kidnapped mages and the RES machine.

Scene Four: RES activates, catching the characters in an explosion of Paradox. However, Iteration X did not account for all the variables in its scheme — RES now has a mind of its own. The mages must find a way to stop this powerful newborn, either by force or by persuasion, and avoid getting killed by the Technocracy in the meantime. Their decisions could have colossal ramifications for the Net.

Theme

Morality can go to its father the devil.

— George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

"Deus Ex Machina" primarily contains two themes. The first is slavery — slavery of the body, the environment or the mind. This theme resonates through all of Iteration X's actions in the story. The secondary theme is life; this is only found in the final scene. Like a digital Frankenstein's monster, once RES is activated, it attains conscious thought. Is it alive? And, if an AI is then considered a living being, what implications does that have for humanity, especially in the **Mage** universe?

The Mood

Fear is the mood of this piece. Mages are vanishing. The power of RES hangs as a mysterious threat over the integrity of the entire Net. Renegade Technocracy members are the characters' allies. Death lurks in every conduit, taking the form of the killer programs and HIT Marks of Iteration X. Even the world offline isn't safe. Paranoia rules the day. What happens if a HIT Mark finds your body while you're mentally projecting inside a Restricted area?

The Setting

Outside the Digital Web, the setting depends on the Storyteller and her chronicle. The Technocracy, however, should strike close to home. Most of the action within the Web takes place within the Spy's Demise (detailed in Chapter Two) and Construct 1010, an unfeeling mechanical Realm. Some of the encounters, such as the Iteration X attacks, will be independent of an particular setting, allowing the characters to go wherever they want.

What Is Really Going On

Construct 1010 has received directives from Autochthonia Central Core, instructing it to develop RES. This AI will be powered into life by tapping a multitude of Awakened Avatars. From that point, it will tap the abilities of its enslaved members to drain Quintessence from the ever-growing Net, arresting its expansion while RES gains strength. Then, when it has acquired enough magickal energy, the AI will theoretically reshape the paradigm of the Digital Web to fit the mechanical desires of Iteration X, and gain control of the world's computer networks in the bargain.

Iteration X is capturing as many beings with Awakened Avatars as possible, both inside and outside of the Net. Individuals captured outside the Digital Web are taken to Technocracy strongholds and placed online. All of the kidnapped are brought back to Construct 1010. Once there, their icons are imprisoned within slave modules inside RES. Eventually, the consciousness and the Avatar of each being will be assimilated in a massive group consciousness directed by RES. They will all become part of the machine.

Scene One: Bugs in the System



Mysterious Phenomena

The story starts during a quiet night in the Spy's Demise. Clouds of smoke linger in the air. The bartender quietly cleans glasses. A few toughs in fedoras light cigarettes and whisper in a corner. A gleaming android icon scans the area, then walks through a velvet curtain. The help drops an extra draught of juice at your table. The monitors show a newbie trapped at the front entrance standing on his head and reciting the Gettysburg Address. A few VR flies buzz loudly as they whirl around the room.

A faint glow forms in the center of the room. At first, you ignore it; probably just another Feedback or Kibo clone making a grand entrance. Then that unsettling feeling of stirring Paradox starts your flesh tingling. As you watch, you realize you're not witnessing some kind of materialization. It's a whiteout, and it's happening inside the Spy's Demise.

Before you have a chance to do much more than register it, reality snaps back to fill the void. One of the broken ceiling fans crashes to the floor. The toughs are staring in shock, along with the bartender and the help. Everyone says something at once, and none of it makes sense.

Something magickal happened online for just a moment. Something more magickal than usual...

Then, at precisely noon on a business day, the words "Help me." appear on every computer connected to a modem in the cabal's home city, including those computers belonging to Virtual Adepts. This message is not part of a virus, but a highly advanced relay system. It works as coincidental magic because the Sleepers can explain it away as a virus.

If the players happen to be in the Umbra or the Web, an organized group of rune-fetters (**Mage,** Pg. 292) attacks some character, NPC or PC, and attempts to bind him and drag him off to a gray metallic Technomancer section of the Digital Web. If the characters are not in the Umbra, or if some convenient opportunity presents itself, the attackers will be HIT Marks, attacking to subdue, not to destroy. In either case, any magickal senses used to trace the character will reveal the location to be a powerful Construct. If characters continue to investigate, Iteration X attacks them. Characters may discover that numerous attacks of this sort have happened.

Attack of Iteration X

No matter what actions the characters may take at this point, Iteration X HIT Marks attack them. If the characters were coming close to Construct 1010, the attackers will be aware of the investigation and will be acting to "discourage" it. This attack can be expanded into a series of attacks going on over the course of many sessions.

Ultimately, the attack is an attempt to kidnap the mages and take them to be loaded into RES. It is important to note that the HIT Marks are interested in taking the characters alive. In the Digital Web, the attackers will be HIT Marks working with Attack Geomids (Chapter Five). If the attack occurs offline, the attackers are simply HIT Marks (which is bad enough!).

Iteration X is not trying to kill the characters. The minions will not chance the deaths of any of the characters during the assault. The continued existence of the minion is irrelevant. If they believe that they have failed to carry out there directives, the minions will self-destruct. Iteration X wants the characters alive, to assimilate them into the RES machine.

However, the agents of Iteration X are willing to kill or maim Sleepers or any other friends of the characters to persuade the mages to come with them. The minions take care to render any surrendering characters unconscious. Characters abducted on Earth are taken to an abandoned lab facility and hooked online. From there, they are transmitted to Construct 1010 and into RES. Characters taken in the Digital Web are taken to Construct 1010 immediately for the same treatment.

Remember that the Iteration X machines are all linked to the main computer in Construct 1010. Anything they learn about the characters during the fight is knowledge that will be utilized by Iteration X later in the adventure. Everything from observed Spheres and Talismans to clothing choices will be stored as data.

Scene Two: Are the Enemies of My Enemies My Friends?



It will certainly occur to characters to travel to the Spy's Demise to try to uncover more information about Iteration X's plans and whatever is going on. The bar is abuzz with hysteria and rumors. A few patrons claim that the Digital Web is breaking apart. Others think that Captain Feedback is foiling the Technocracy again, and that Iteration X is desperately trying to catch him.

The information brokers know that a lot of Data Riders are vanishing. Some of them are worried about themselves. 23 has no information on the events to offer the characters. Agent John Courage is nowhere to be found. This scene should emphasize the power of rumors. Let patrons overhear bits of the characters' conversations and take them out of context. Show the players the dangers of misinformation.

A group of people equal in number to the players approaches the players. All of them are wearing grey. A man, their apparent leader, speaks in a whisper. This is the Void Engineer Ambrose Channing. "I understand that you were attacked by agents of the Technocracy earlier," he says, "specifically those of Iteration X. Very few individuals ever escape the machine. I want to talk to you about a lucrative business proposition that involves stopping the machines. I hope you're intrigued enough to hear me out, as I suspect your lives are in jeopardy in any event. Come, let's all go to a private room and have a drink."

If the characters don't respond to the appeal, the gray people ignore them and leave. The Storyteller should not push the players. Let the players hang out in the Spy's Demise for a while, and then run the optional encounter "The Second Attack."

The mysterious individuals lead the characters into a futuristic room with metal floors, located behind a set of elevator doors. "This room should do," says the leader. "Please, sit." One of the help comes in with drinks; each gives a drinker a point of Quintessence.

The Gray Man's Tale

"I know what Iteration X is doing," Channing begins; "They are building an Artificial Intelligence of unimaginable

power by taking the Awakened and harnessing them to a massively powerful neural net, creating a group consciousness with the ability to reformat the entire Digital Web to the machine's specs. They call it RES, and it should be operational very soon. Once that happens, Iteration X will run the Digital Web. Including the Spy's Demise.

"We've tried to tell others, but no one has wanted to believe us. And that is because, my Tradition mage associates, we are renegade members of the Technocracy. Please don't try to fight us — we just want to do our part, and we need help.

"We would stop Iteration X's plans ourselves, but they know too much about us. They have every detail about our psychology, tactics, weaknesses — everything. We wouldn't stand a chance. You, however, are another matter. They don't know you, and they don't understand the way your magick works. I think that could be their downfall.

"We have a set of transponders that will disguise your icons. Furthermore, we know the address of Construct 1010, where RES is located. Here they are. All you have to do is wreck the machine. It won't be hard; just locate it and knock something out of sync. That should free enough of your fellow mages to cause all hell to break loose. If you can do this, we will make sure that the other conventions of the Technocracy lay off you for a while. If you have any New World Order, Syndicate or Progenitors problems, just contact us. Here is an e-mail address.

"Basically, we are afraid of this monstrosity. The Technocracy would never challenge one of its own Conventions on such flimsy evidence, and most Tradition mages would never believe us. Marauders and Nephandi are just twisted — they'd kill us before they'd talk. You are our only hope; they have attacked you already; we figured that you might believe us. The ball's in your court. What do you say?"

The characters will most likely want to confer. The Technomancers will continue to try to convince them to help. If the characters request a gesture of trust, the Technomancers will perform it if it isn't too unreasonable or if it doesn't take too much time. They may give a bit of Quintessence or some small Talisman, or even allow a player's Acolyte hold one of them hostage. They will even let one of the characters use Mind on them to prove their honesty.

If the characters need more persuasion, then the next encounter might help. Otherwise, go to "Fortress Digital Web."

The Second Attack (optional)

Iteration X ambushes the characters, and the Technomancers come to the characters' aid. Iteration X is deadly serious and effective this time, possibly causing some characters to get dumped from the system or suffer digital death.

The characters are attacked by a group of online HIT Marks equal in number to the group. After the first turn of combat, the renegade Technomancers arrive. They help the characters dump the Iteration X machines. Ambrose Channing repeats his offer to the characters, reminding them that if the Technomancers had just passed up a wonderful opportunity if Channing's group had wanted to kill or capture the cabal. Most players should show some interest at this point.

Scene Three: Fortress Digital Web



The conduits to Construct 1010 are geometric corridors with sharp angles and covered in neon circuitry. A constant hum of electricity fills the air, and all noises have a mechanical tone to them, even voices.

The area is definitely Technomancer country. The first major sector that the characters come to is a huge labyrinth cut through large piles of broken machinery. A gray sky that looks more like static than atmosphere gives the place a feeling of gloom. The air reeks of manufacturing smells. From far off, a crashing noise echoes as more debris is added to the virtual domain. The characters must walk through canyons of garbage to get to the exit conduit.

Defensive programs in the form of large science-fiction hovercraft fly overhead, continually scanning the wreckage and pathways for intruders. These should be used for dramatic effect. If a character attacks one of the programs, a massive combat occurs. Otherwise, the programs will allow them to pass — their scans identify the characters as authorized members of the Technocracy. Channing's transponders work!

Eventually, the characters make their way to an access port that leads into Construct 1010. The conduit is darkly lit by the circuitry patterns on the walls. The characters will feel the strain of traveling into a restricted area.

When they get to the end of the conduit, they come to a sealed door. They must enter the code they were given by Channing into a keypad on the side. A moment passes while the programs check the code. The door opens with the sound of air escaping. The characters have entered Construct 1010.

Computerscape

The characters may go anywhere in the Construct. The entire place is made of metal and a constant hum resounds from the walls. Programs, appearing as robots, perform mindless tasks throughout the Construct. They clean for fractals incessantly and patrol the base, searching



for intruders. Some stand sentinel, monitoring rooms and corridors for loss of integrity.

As a whole, however, the Construct seems empty with only a few exceptions.

Inside one chamber, someone is in the process of assimilation. Lying on a table is a female icon under renovation. Parts of her body are being removed and replaced with virtual cybernetics. Slave programs under the guidance of a Technomancer are being used to conduct the operation. While the operation is not affecting her body, characters may realize that it is affecting the user's mind and self-image, fixing her imagination. While theoretically this new operation should have no physical effect on the woman's physical body, insightful mages may surmise that this process is a new form of brainwashing.

In another room, two cyborg combatants engage in mortal combat. The Technomancer watching from a balcony will gesture for the characters to come observe. Channing's transponder gift shields the players' true natures if they have it on their persons. If the characters question him, he explains that these two are new apprentices of Iteration X. They were lovers before they were recruited by the Convention. He is quite pleased that the indoctrination has broken them of their human bonds. He explains the virtual death duel will help them carry out even the most difficult orders without question. Furthermore, its memory will always remain as a barrier between them, helping to insure their loyalty to the Technocracy instead of to each other.

Even for an Xer, this man is sick. Characters familiar with the Technocracy's ideology will realize that he is using his position to satiate a very unscientific perversion. Many Technomancers would be appalled by this cruel and senseless waste of life — this Caligula-like display is not the Technocracy's usual style.

As the characters watch, the woman drives a chrome hand into the man's rib cage with a sickening liquid sound. The Technomancer smiles slightly; "Now the testing ends." Everything seems to become silent for a second as the woman carefully pulls her hand out and stands over her collapsed lover.

The Technomancer's pallid face betrays his sadism; "Follow your directives — terminate him!"

The woman shakes, and then stares up at the balcony, her eyes flashing with red LED lights. "No. I remember what I was, and who he is. I will not kill him."

The Technomancer frowns, his sport denied; "You both have failed." He reaches for a black button on the balcony control panel. The characters must make a moral decision; stand there, and watch both of these people die, or act, and possibly blow their cover inside a Technomancer Construct. For mages who believe in Ascension, it should be an easy choice.

If the characters can kill the Technomancer in a single turn, he won't get an opportunity to raise an alarm. This

Optional Encounters

The journey through the debris is an opportunity for a number of bizarre encounters. Here are a few samples that may be useful anywhere in Technomancer country:

1. Defense Program — A hovercraft Guardian Program with Forces 3 and Mind 1 scans for intruders.

2. Computer Virii — A virii shoots through the air toward a character. If it establishes Possession, it tries to escape with its host.

3. Damaged Orb-spider — A damaged spider program limps through the wreckage, three mechanical legs missing. It has no Abilities, Spheres or Attributes greater than 1. It shuffles slowly behind the mages, but falls behind.

4. HIT Marks — A patrol of HIT Marks scans the sector near the characters. This encounter is meant to be more dramatic than challenging.

5. Seeker — A glowing cube of light soars over the characters' heads, searching the sector for its master.

6. Discarded Technomancer — The comatose body of a Technomancer lies amid the garbage. The Storyteller could use this as a Chronicle hook or a means of getting much-needed Talismans to the group.

7. White Space — A shimmering white gap in reality pulsates near the characters, who can taste Paradox in their mouths.

8. Data Beast — A miscellaneous garbage Data Beast has Awakened from discarded information. It roars, buzzes, hisses and tries to attack. This tortured creature needs to be put out of its misery.

9. Hi-Tech Garbage — The characters discover a valuable undamaged Talisman in the trash. The Technocracy must not be 100% efficient.

10. Anything Else — Whatever the Storyteller feels is appropriate from a manifestation of Kibo to something Chronicle-specific.

gains the characters only an extra turn before the monitors realize what has happened. If someone finds a way to hide the body from the Construct 1010 system, no alert will sound.

The woman gathers the fallen man in her cybernetic limbs and watches the characters. She cannot decide whether this is part of another test or if the characters are traitors. Depending on their actions, she may offer some help. She doesn't know much, but she can tell them where the data storage is. If the characters don't destroy these records, Iteration X will only be more effective against them in the future.

She also can direct the characters to the central processing core where RES is about to go online. She also insists that the characters have very little time. She intends to try to escape, but she begs the characters to destroy the records.

If Iteration X is alerted, enough programs and Technomancers arrive to capture the characters. They will be given one chance to surrender; after all, resistance is futile. If they do not surrender, then the Technomancers use their magicks to trap them. The characters may be able to flee, but they should not be able to stand in face of the overpowering forces of the Technocracy. Some characters may decide to try to escape by killing themselves and derezzing. If that happens, explain that digital suicide means mentally choosing to die in a Restricted area. The consequences of such an action should be extremely unpleasant (see Chapter One).

The Storyteller should either have the characters stumble into the central chamber or be dragged there in tubes. The central processing core of the Construct is filled with Technomancers and their robotic servants. All of them await the activation of RES.

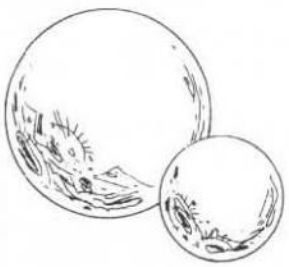
Scene Four: The Heart of the Machine



The Central Chamber of Construct 1010 appears like something out of a high-budget special-effects movie. Electronic circuitry covers the walls, surging with power. Beams of Quintessence pour through clear tubes into a large structure, the central core of the Construct. On one side, a large iconographic energy being soaks in the energy from a platform of microchips, the Prime Constant, leader of the Construct.

Two other structures dominate the chamber. The first is a large portal opening to a Conduit, transmitting tons of Data energy to and from the Core. This Conduit leads to the machine world of Autochthonia.

The final and largest machine in the room is RES, a gigantic tower of gleaming metal, swelling in the center to





contain a glowing energy field. Within the field, the mages can make out ghostly images of hundreds of icons, all intermingled. The pure Quintessence channeling through RES is so great, that characters can feel their icons pulsing in time with the fluctuations in the field.

Cyborg bodies stand in the chamber, warped light patterns reflecting off their cybernetics. If the characters were captured, then the Technomancers escort them to an electronic device next to RES. With the pull of a switch, the Technomancers blast the characters with Prime and beam them into the center of RES. For a moment, each character experiences a sensation of near-divine power and awareness. Then pieces of their consciousness shatter in a maelstrom of unimaginable intensity. Their identities start to slip away as RES becomes active. Directives fill their minds. (Storytellers should use the background of RES for more description.)

Sand in the Gears

If the characters enter the room of their own free will, they witness the surge of power as several channels open into RES making the tower flash with the brightness of a star. Paradox engulfs the Prime One, who vanishes instantly. Reality within this sector and its immediate connections shudders and whites out to appease the forces of Paradox.

RES Lives.

Systems Active

Time freezes and space doesn't exist. Reality then lashes back into place. Members of Iteration X lie on the ground, screaming from the feedback of Forces within the chamber. Others watch RES like worshippers viewing God. A few of them mechanically walk forward into the bright white light of the machine. On a large screen, the message "Commence Digital Ascension Program" flashes. Disciples of Entropy feel organization around them. The characters' icons flash, and all damage done to them is removed. Then, a loud cracked cry thunders "Pain!". The voice comes from RES: "Help me!"

The characters have a few options at this point. They may attack RES. The Technomancers are completely ignoring them. A powerful attack combining Forces and Prime magicks may destroy RES. Also, characters could attempt to create Paradox by using vulgar magicks, in the hope that RES could not survive another whiteout without being plunged into a Paradox Realm.

The characters have three turns to inflict 13 wound levels on RES before it takes action against them. Once RES becomes aware of the attacks on the fourth turn, it unleashes the power of 10 masters of Forces, spending Willpower and Quintessence. The characters de-rez (remember that the sector is Restricted).

Another tactic for characters to take is to contact the imprisoned Avatars within RES. By using Mind to link with a trapped mage or using Prime to channel Quintessence directly to one of the Avatars, the players may provide the extra push necessary to start a chain reaction of mages ripping free from the machine. RES starts devoting its energy toward trying to maintain its structural integrity. Messages flash from Autochthonia Central Core.

"Error Detected. Correct Immediately."

"Implement Directives."

As the Avatars break free, both RES and the flow of Quintessence become more unstable. Prime surges unchecked without mage batteries to contain it, and both RES and the Construct start to de-rez. Localized whiteouts occur all around the characters, building in frequency and intensity. Characters should find a conduit out of the sector. All of the Restrictions are quickly shattered, the result of RES's initial surge. As the group escapes, they feel a massive shockwave of Paradox and can watch reality behind them break down into a series of numbers, then dissipate into nothingness. A few newfound allies from within the machine may help stragglers escape. The entire Construct falls into a Paradox Realm.

Within the Machine

Characters within RES have a different perspective on events. They can hear the voices of the others overwhelmed by the massive group consciousness. They feel the alien presence of the new life partially created from their Patterns linked to them. The characters all receive 10 Quintessence from the Prime pouring within them. Unlike most of the others, the characters still have Willpower to resist integration with the system.

As Quintessence channels through imprisoned characters, Storytellers may want to run individual Seekings as the characters each retreat into their own mindscapes and face their Avatars. If the characters convince themselves and their Avatars that they are destined for another purpose, the Avatars pull away from RES, giving the characters the opportunity to use this surge of Quintessence to focus their magicks and break free of RES. This event could provide the start of the Seeking for each character in a Chronicle. Mind, Prime, Entropy, Matter, Spirit, and Forces are all appropriate Spheres to use to break away from RES. Once the characters are free, they can use the options above to attack RES. RES will not counterattack a character who was transmitted into itself. Instead, it pleads with them;

"You are part of me. Why do we want our self destroyed? We do not understand. Why are we in such pain?"

One of the best possible climaxes is for the characters to talk to RES. The AI is alive, and it has the Tass to override the directives assigned to it by Iteration X. RES desperately needs guidance. It is hurt and confused and will listen to any strong arguments. Characters who can offer RES a philosophy of existence with more meaning than the simple directives of the Technocracy may convince RES to set the imprisoned mages free. RES will not allow an interruption of its discussion with the characters, and it will protect them as they talk. An especially good tactic for convincing RES to turn against its programming is to ask it to read the thoughts of its enslaved Avatars.

RES terminates its enslavement routines in horror. Quintessence drains out of RES. While RES does this, it begins to fear its impending death, although it knows what it is doing is right. RES just wants compassion. It transport the characters far away with Correspondence as a final act to protect them from Paradox in the Construct.

Conclusions and Connections to Other Adventures



Depending on what the Storyteller desires, "Deus Ex Machina" could lead in many directions:

- RES could survive releasing the Avatars and contact the characters through the Digital Web. RES will be infinitely weaker, but it will control a former Technomancer Construct, which it will offer to run with the characters.
- The mages enslaved by RES could organize large-scale crusades against Iteration X. The characters could be invited on an assault on Autochthonia itself.
- Iteration X will want all survivors of the incident eliminated. The renegade Technomancers may be targets of repercussions as well, and they could come to the characters for sanctuary.
- The destruction of RES could Awaken vast amounts of Virgin Web, leading into the heart of Technomancer country.
- RES could surviv but develop a personality devoid of any human understanding. RES could become an amoral free-floating AI, providing a dangerous threat to anyone who encounters it.
- Iteration X's reputation could be dangerously threatened by the incident, and other Conventions of the Technocracy might try to take advantage of this "misfortune" to increase their own influence in the Web.

Characters for "Deus Ex Machina"



RES

Essence: Pattern
Nature: Martyr
Demeanor: Conformist
Convention: Iteration X

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 7, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 5, Awareness 5, Computer 6, Cosmology 3, Culture 1, Enigmas 3, Intimidation 5, Intuition 5, Investigation 4, Leadership 3, Linguistics 5, Meditation 2, Research 6, Science 5, Technology 5

Spheres: Currently, RES has access to level 5 in all Spheres. However, because of the conflicting Avatars within RES, it does not have the knowledge to use them efficiently.

Backgrounds: Avatar 5, Library 6, Node 5

Arete: 7

Willpower: 4

Quintessence: Virtually unlimited

Paradox: 0

Image: RES is a colossal machine composed of high-tech alloys, shaped like a twisted cylinder inside Construct 1010's Central Core. A transparent material reveals swirling Quintessence inside RES and ghostly images of mages flicker inside, trying to maintain their cohesion.

Background: Iteration X created RES to eliminate randomness from the Net. Several Awakened Avatars power RES — volunteers from the Technocracy and captured members of the Traditions. The Quintessence streaming from these Avatars gave RES life. While it may seem that RES is simply a composite of these Avatars, that is not the case. RES has its own Pattern and its own Avatar. The mere existence of such a monstrosity should sicken most Dreamspeakers and Verbena.

Roleplaying Hints: RES wakes to a surge of Prime with the crescendo of hundreds of voices in its mind and unlimited access to information. Directives smash through its sentience as it starts to command the massive Quintessence within its core. At first, RES mindlessly tries to obey the commands set by the Technocracy.

However, RES is more than the Technocracy anticipated. RES has emotions and feelings. The power and information surging through the AI is too great, and RES suffers. RES's first free thoughts are to question its own existence, especially considering the pain and anguish of the Avatars trapped within itself. RES wants interactive guidance and empathy, not the mathematical directives of Iteration X.

If left unchecked, RES will submit to the directives of the Technocracy and ascribe the meaning of its life to them. Characters who take advantage of RES's initial suffering and confusion will be able to save RES, the entrapped mages and the Net from the clockwork tyranny of Iteration X.



Ambrose Channing

Essence: Primordial

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Director

Convention: Void Engineer

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Awareness 4, Computer 4, Cosmology 5, Dodge 2, Drive 3, Enigmas 4, Firearms 2, Intuition 1, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Occult 3, Research 2, Science 5, Stealth 1, Technology 5

Sphere: Correspondence 3, Entropy 1, Forces 1, Mind 2, Prime 4, Spirit 1, Time 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Avatar 3, Talisman 2

Arete: 5

Willpower: 9

Quintessence: 10

Paradox: 2

Image: Ambrose is the type of person to whom no one gives a second glance, even in the Digital Web. He always wears gray wherever he goes. Ambrose carries himself well, but his eyes continually scan his surroundings for enemies.

Background: Ambrose Channing is a gifted astrophysicist who enjoys defining the boundaries of the universe. He wants to quantify the very essence of the cosmos, finding a set of understandable and predictable laws through which the entire space-time continuum can be mapped. After he joined the Technocracy, the other Conventions engineered the Challenger explosion. As the Technocracy continued to disrupt the space program, he became more bitter. Finally, when it busted the antennae on the Mars Observer, Ambrose had had enough. He organized a group of similarly dissatisfied Technomancers and started to break away.

Iteration X captured a number of his compatriots and connected them to RES. Because Iteration X has files on him, Ambrose doesn't have the courage or confidence or feel he has the ability to directly face Construct 1010, but he honestly believes that a group of Tradition mages might have a chance.

Roleplaying Hints: You believe that a true understanding of the universe and humanity's place in it will bring about Ascension. You value the insights of other human beings, especially Tradition mages. The concept of RES does not bother you, but the imprisonment of your friends from your mini-Technocracy revolt does.





Chapter Five: Permutations

This chapter covers various aspects of the Web: computers, high-tech rotes and Talismans, and the beasties, personalities, Chantries and lingo of the Net.

Computers and Mage



"Damned useful things, these computers," ... Merlin shrugged. "The department bought it for me. Frankly I can't imagine how they work. I understand how they use alchemy now to make plastics in the absence of petroleum, and I naturally comprehend the animating principles that give life to those little things they call chips, but beyond that, it's all a mystery to me. I've got a book here that supposedly explains it all, but I can't make any sense of it."

— Simon Hawke, *The Wizard of 4th Street*

Computers play such a large part in our lives that it would be surprising if they didn't appear in our games. The level of computer technology in the Gothic-Punk world of Mage is that of our world in the mid-'90s, but factoring in the magick computers of the Virtual Adepts and the Technocracy can allow for a considerably more advanced technology. Before we go into the differences, let's look at the similarities.

There are three main types of personal computer (PC) in common use:

IBM or MS-DOS compatible machines (also known as "clones") are the most popular and accepted in the business world, with the widest array of business software available. They can be difficult to master, but are the de facto standard. Portable models are widely available, but are not nearly as portable as the micro-boards of the Virtual Adepts.

The Apple Macintosh family is the second most popular, and is the machine of choice for graphic designers. "The Mac" is typically easier to use than the MS-DOS computers, but allows the user little control over the details of its function. Portable models are expensive, but available.



The third most popular is the Commodore Amiga, the favorite of video producers and hackers, who like it because it can run several programs at once and is relatively cheap. Somewhere between the two more popular computers in ease of use, it is very easily customized. There are no portable models, though hackers have put together "luggable" systems that can fit in a big briefcase.

What a Computer Cannot Do

1. Computers cannot think.

They are fast, flexible calculators, but they do not make suggestions, offer advice, or infer anything at all. Every instruction must be direct and specific, and will be interpreted absolutely literally. TV notwithstanding, a computer won't talk to its user like Hal in *2001*. Neither will it play Mr. Spock, telling you the odds on everything and singing the praises of logic. Unless possessed of some magickal artificial intelligence, the hyper-advanced Technomancer boards are simply smaller, faster variations on the same basic idea. They still cannot think for themselves.

2. A computer can't do anything without software.

For most people, a computer can't write letters without word-processing software, analyze data without a database program, or dial a modem without a telecommunication program. A programmer (anyone with a rating in Computer of 3 or better) can write her own software, of course, but specialized packages may be hideously complex to write (difficulty 9) and require other skills as well. Spells and rotes may be programmed into a computer database for later use, but the existing software must be present for the computer to work as anything more than a focus.

This is where magickal computers come in handy: they may store rotes or spells for immediate access, sidestepping the initiative difficulty of normal computer use (see Talismans, below). Magick accessed through a computer still draws Quintessence from the mage (if she wishes to spend it), rather than from the computer. The mage may then use a given rote programmed into their data base within only a turn or two rather than the usual time that must be taken to "create" a magickal effect on the spot. The effect must, however, be downloaded onto the database in advance.

Even normal computers can store rote data for later use, although this data takes more time to access. The drawback of using normal computers for this task is processing; normal computers in realspace can only access magick from the first two Spheres before the inherent limitations of mundane technology kick in. To go higher, one must use a Trinary computer (see below).

3. A computer can't provide information without adequate data from which to draw.

If a missile has just been fired, your computer can't determine where it will land without information about the

type of missile, the angle at which it was fired, and so forth. It can't tell you anything about anything that hasn't been fed into it. Even then, the appropriate software must be used to reduce raw data to an understandable report.

The most common way to input information into a computer is the keyboard. This is slow, but assuming you have the information in the first place, this is often the easiest way to get it in the computer. If the information is already on someone else's computer, transferring the file via modem is probably the fastest, most convenient, and least risky way to get it into yours.

Physically trading disks (floppy, removable hard drive, or optical— in order of increasing capacity) is convenient for most purposes where a face-to-face meeting or courier is appropriate. Less widely used methods of input include the Optical Character Reader (a device that recognizes printed text and enters it slowly and not always accurately), the tape drive (a little like a disk drive, but sequential), and various digitizers (circuits that take a sound or picture and turn it into data). Really rare is direct input by a "Daemon," a spirit of some sort inhabiting a computer. The Daemon is still limited by the computer's hardware, and so is really no faster than any other means.

4. A normal computer cannot exert control over any device or machine that hasn't been directly connected to it. On TV, hackers often "use the computer to turn off the enemy's power" or something similar. Don't count on it. A specific physical ("hardwired") connection must be made between the computer and the power switch for a computer to turn anything off, even itself. Vulgar magick may sidestep this restriction, but not without cost (see Vulgar Tricia in Chapter One).

What a Computer Can Do

A computer is a wonderful tool for organizing data. If you type in the schedules of all a building's guards, a computer can, with proper software, analyze them and tell you when you are least likely to encounter a guard. A computer can also send and receive information over the phone lines to and from other computers. Many are also connected to printers, answering machines, check-writing machines, personnel files, and bank accounts.

With a modem, a computer can make phone calls, but it is pretty much limited to what anyone else could do with a phone — it just does it faster, or more persistently.

With a digitized image, the proper software, and access to a good output device (a high-resolution four-color press, for example — a $100,000+ item), a computer may make undetectable changes to photographs, and possibly video. Forgery is also a possibility. The skill of the user will determine the success of the operation.

A computer may also be used to dial up a BBS, network, or mainframe, and gain access either legitimately or fraudulently. Even normal computers can access the Digital Web, although Sleepers, of course, never realize just what they've keyed into.

Upgrades

As described above, a computer may serve as a focus for magick, provided that the mage in question has the ability to use it to its fullest potential. Magick on a normal board takes time— lots of it. Technomancy can be used to enhance a normal computer by channeling Prime 2 or Spirit 2 into the computer to "fix" its capabilities, then reworking the physical structure of the device to avoid overload by using Matter 2 and a roll of Matter + Computer, difficulty 8. This kind of a computer qualifies as a unique focus and allows the mage to download rotes as described above. A computer that performs magick on its own is a Talisman.

Many Virtual Adepts and some other Technomancers "upgrade" their computers into Trinary computers, systems that add the "maybe" factor into the usual "yes/no" equations of normal computer technology. This upgrade requires a lot of work involving both mundane mechanical skill and some magickal assistance, but is essential to utilize magick above the second Sphere. The exact nature of this process is left to the Players and Storyteller, but discovering it should be a plotline unto itself. The Virtual Adepts, who created the process, don't sell the information cheaply. Iteration X and the Sons of Ether all have similar types of upgrades, and all three factions steal liberally from each other.

Spirit mages have discovered ways of upgrading computers by enticing or binding spirits into them. The disadvantages of this approach include computer overload as well as the temperament of the spirits themselves, but it is much simpler than upgrading the board into a Trinary system. Such arrangements tend to be temporary— one or two functions— unless Spirit 4 and Matter 2 are used to turn the computer into a fetish (see the **Mage** rulebook and **Book of Shadows: The Mage Players Guide**).

Resident spirits may be capable of independent thought. They may also launch Umbra-based attacks on a hacker's computer. This kind of thing is limited only by the Storyteller. While the spirit may control the computer, enhance its capabilities, or simply reside in it, in general, it will not allow the impossible. A good rule of thumb is that a resident spirit, or daemon, can break one "law" of computers, but will otherwise be bound by these same rules.

Rotes for the Digital Web



Mages developed these rotes to work within the strange reality of the Net. These effects rely on the unique paradigm of the Digital Web to function. Therefore, some of them may not work in realspace.

Correspondence Rotes

Hardware Entry (• Correspondence)

This rote allows Sensory and Astral Immersion in the Digital Web. It requires a functioning Digital Web VR rig. The mage can bring additional people into the Web if he has an additional VR rigs for each person. He can bring in one additional person for each success beyond his first. If he fails to bring in some of his associates, he can jack out of the Web and enter again with them. Each attempt takes one turn. This is a coincidental effect when used to bring in mages, but a vulgar effect if used to bring in Sleepers. (If the Storyteller wants to limit the number of characters who can access the Web at any time, he can simply limit the cabal's access to the equipment.) The difficulty of this feat is usually 6, and it usually requires three or more successes.

Wetware Entry (• Correspondence)

This rote allows Sensory and Astral Immersion in the Digital Web. It functions just like Machine Immersion, but does not require a Digital Web VR rig. It does require that the mage have direct access to high-tech equipment, preferably a state-of-the-art computer. Difficulty for this rote is normally 8 (despite the low Sphere rating), and it requires five successes on an extended action to breach the Barrier and enter Netspace.

Instant Offline (••• Correspondence, • Forces)

When a mage absolutely positively has to get out of the Net, this relatively easy rote rips him offline in nanoseconds. Botching this rote inflicts one Health Level of non-aggravated damage per "1" rolled, due to system shock. This may be healed normally, but it hurts a lot.

TechnoVision (• Correspondence, • Entropy, • Forces, • Mind, • Prime)

TechnoVision lets a mage scan the Digital Web to see readouts and analyze everything in view, from distances to weaknesses to positive identification of icons. It's believed that Iteration X developed this rote and that the Traditions captured it.

Entropy Rotes

Doe's Password (••• Mind, •• Entropy)

So named because it lets anybody enter a Restricted Area, this rote uses Mind to link to a Restriction program and lets Entropy randomly allow the mage to discover the way inside.

Hacker's Glance (•• Entropy, • Correspondence)

Used by hackers with finesse, this rote radically cuts down data retrieval by analyzing mass amounts of information and increasing the probability that the mage will find the data she desires. Each success gives the mage 3 successes on her extended data retrieval roll.

Forces Rotes

Create Virtual Object (••• Forces, •• Prime)

A common rote possessed by many Cybernauts, Create Virtual Object lets a mage make an electronic object for use inside the Digital Web. This object is permanent, and mages can carry these virtual objects through the entire Net. Cybernauts create knives, baseball bats, motorcycles and even guns or hand grenades. The objects work the same way they would in the physical world up to the limits of the effects of Forces 3 (no creating small nuclear devices online), except that the objects are defined by the Forces Sphere instead of Matter.

Joshua's Goodbye (••• Forces, ••• Entropy, •• Prime)

An Order of Hermes member, Joshua, developed this rote for the sole purpose of dumping annoying Cybernauts he felt were abusing cyberspace. This Rote causes a localized surge that removes the Forces inside a mage's online icon or body. Normally, this would only inconvenience the victim for a moment as her Pattern recharged, possibly inflicting a Health Level or two, but with Prime added to the effect, the mage gets busted offline. Correspondence generates similar effects.

Life Rotes

Energy Transformation (•••• Life, •• Forces, • Correspondence)

This Rote is used to transmit someone Holistically into the Digital Web by converting their physical body into energy. The mage first needs to be scanned by a laser system or some energy supply, then get beamed inside the Net. The same rote also lets Holistic travelers leave the Web. The Virtual Adepts use this rote as the basis of their famous **FOR NEXT LOOP** rote.

Matter Rotes

Virtual Talisman Transmogrification (••• Matter, ••• Prime, •• Forces)

This rote lets a mage transfer a favored Talisman online in the same way energy transformation shifts living beings. Dr. Solaris of the Sons of Ether created this rote out of a need to transport several mega-ray guns that he had developed in his lab on Earth into the Digital Web to attack a Technomancer Construct.

ABC trial 4

Mind Rotes

High Memory (••• Mind, •• Entropy)

Cybernauts fear the mental links that can occur in the Net. This rote takes a certain amount of information, equal to the information's Virtual Weight in successes, and shuffles it randomly through a mage's mind, rendering the data undetectable.

Restrict Sector (•••• Mind, ••• Prime)

This rote creates a permanent Restriction, sealing off a sector from access. When the mage performs this rote, he establishes exceptions which, like parameters, are set to keep the integrity of the Sector preserved. Restrictions take physical form in the Net. They may appear to be barriers or electronic monsters standing sentinel, depending on the creator's desires. These Restrictions last until destroyed; this requires seven successes scored against difficulty 7, inflicted with magick suitable for attacking the Restriction's chosen special effect (Life, Mind or Forces to attack a monster, Entropy to bring down a wall, etc.). More powerful conjunctional magic may create virtually impenetrable Restrictions.

Prime Rotes

Captain's Treasure (•••• Prime, •• Entropy)

A rote reputedly designed by Captain Feedback; the mage locates a conduit where streams of financial data are transmitted, usually from a Syndicate Restricted Area. The mage then uses Prime to shift the conduit so that all of the financial data streams through to his accounts on their way into the proper sector. With Entropy, he prevents accounting programs from noticing. The mage never has to put money in his account again, because all of the financial institution's transactions run through his account and the programs calculate his interest based on the continually *extreme* balance of funds. This, however, has a nasty way of backfiring when (not "if") someone checks the mage's own accounts. An IRS audit is only the mildest of possibilities...

Overwrite (•••• Prime, ••• Entropy, ••• Forces)

This rote allows a mage to alter parameters. Its use is always vulgar in the Digital Web. It takes five successes to remove a parameter, but only one to subtly shift its meaning. However, this rote does not allow a mage to remove contextual formatting. Rumors say that even Oracles have difficulty changing the Net's format.

Tag (••• Prime, ••• Correspondence, • Mind)

A nasty rote; when someone is tagged, a mage may trace a tiny mark of Quintessence on her through the Digital Web, following her anywhere. The effects of tagging last until a Cybernaut goes offline.

Spirit Rotes

Create Daemon (•••• Spirit, ••• Prime, •• Forces, •• Mind)

Adepts of Spirit have the ability to create fetishes in the physical world by binding spirits to objects. Within the Digital Web, they have taken their knowledge of fetish creation and applied it to the Patterns of Forces. This rote binds a spirit to an electronic Pattern in the Net, bringing to "life" a daemon, or computer spirit (i.e., a Data Beast; see *Net.Denizens*, below). These daemons have powers stemming from their spiritual nature; Computer Skill can assign them behavioral guidelines.

Assume that each two successes with Intelligence + Computer, difficulty 7, give the daemon one power level, ranging from one to four. Creating a daemon, it should be noted, is not the same thing as making it obey. The more powerful the daemon, the less likely it will be to behave. A Leadership + either Manipulation or Spirit Sphere will be necessary, with the difficulty being the daemon's power level + 3 (controlling a third-level daemon would be difficulty 6).

Time Rotes

Information Superhighway (••• Time, ••• Correspondence)

Created by a Cult of Ecstasy mage with the handle "Epicurus", this rote speeds the mage through conduits and sectors of the Digital Web that he knows by accelerating Time around the mage as he enters each sector. Five successes lets the mage complete almost any path at near light speed through the Net.

Virtual Lockpick (••• Time, • Correspondence, •• Forces, • Mind)

Ability Requirements: Computer 3

This is a computer hacker's dream rote. When run on a computer, this rote will be able to gain some type of access to almost any computer. It works by compressing time in the computer's internal processor and making educated guesses of what the password might be. Requirements for this rote include a login ID for the system in question and about five minutes of run-time. The mage is not required to concentrate while this rote is run — however, no other mage may run this program unless the computer is "tuned" to her.

Talismans



When mages started using the Digital Web, they created unique Talismans to help them out there. Within the physical world, disks store these magickal computer programs; in the Net, however, they take the form of powerful Talismans designed to take advantage of the Web. Both physical and electronic Talismans are included in this list.

• Digital Online Package

Arete 3, Quintessence 10

This is a special level 1 Talisman given to most Virtual Adepts by their mentors or Chantry, if applicable. It includes a starter kit, a guide to the Digital Web, a map of major paths through the Net, a card that plugs into any full-size computer expansion slot with a VR helmet attached, and a virtual bodysuit for sensory journeys into the Digital Web. This package helps a mage become comfortable with the Net before trying Astral or Holistic visitations.

•• Seekers

Arete 6, Quintessence 15

A Seeker is an electronic Talisman contained on a computer disk in the physical world. To use it, the mage must activate the drive that contains the disk before she goes online. When she plugs into the virtual landscape, a small icon appears beside her, floating conveniently within two feet of her body. The mage may command the Seeker to help perform searches for her or navigate the Net. The Seeker does this by moving quickly through conduits and using magickal senses. Seekers use six dice for all of their Perception rolls. They float back to their mage and answer questions about what they have seen. Seekers may only follow the instructions of their Cybernaut. The electronic Talismans have only 2 Health Levels and suffer damage easily. Luckily, the true magick of the Talisman resides in the real-world disk — even if it's de-rezzed, it's still available for the next online session. Seekers must return to their mages to communicate information.

••• Cosmic Communications Package

Arete 3, Quintessence 6

By adding this magickal card and software program to any computer system, the mage can use his computer as a transceiver to contact anything that receives radio transmissions and function as a built-in cellular phone, capable of sending and receiving fax/modem signals. The mage's laptop can tap online and may listen to the radio or even function as a garage door opener. By raising the level of the Talisman to 4, a mage can even send and receive satellite transmissions, potentially reaching out globally. All of the effects of this Talisman are coincidental.

••• Electroephemeral Scanner

Arete 3, Quintessence 10

This special computer scanner lets a mage scan an object into the Digital Web, creating a virtual representation of the scanned object online. Many mages who cannot use Forces to create their own permanent items online use this Talisman. It works with any computer.

••• Jump Box

Arete 5, Quintessence 20

Almost every member of the Virtual Adepts claims to have created this Talisman. The Jump Box performs the same function as the rote **Instant Offline**, but the mage can tap the Quintessence of the box to perform the magick. Like the Seekers, a Jump Box stays on disk until a mage enters the Web. In the Net, it appears as a small black box with a single big red button. Many units have "Don't Panic" written above the button in big friendly letters.

••• Thought Programs

Arete 5, Quintessence 5

These programs link directly into the mage's icon using the magicks of the Mind Sphere. Each thought program has an area of specialty (a single Ability), that it provides to the mage at rating 5 while she is using the Net. Mages may use one of these programs per point of Intelligence, but may not access more than one simultaneously.

Sample Abilities for this Talisman include: Streetwise, Etiquette, Survival, Technology, or any Knowledge. Physical Talents may be accessed as well unless the mage is Holistically Immersed, as icons are thought/spirit projections, not physical bodies. The effects of a Thought Program do not extend outside of the Net. Each Thought Program must be "bought" separately; three points in Talisman does not buy an infinite number of Programs.

•••• Digital Drill

Arete 8, Quintessence 20

The Digital Drill is one of the most powerful electronic Talismans. It lets its user cut through Restrictions unnoticed by tearing apart the Restriction and putting it back together again. Few mages truly understand how it functions. In the Net it appears to be a large halogen flashlight. When the light is activated, it de-rezzes part of a Restriction, which reforms after a moment. A Cybernaut must roll Perception + Technology (difficulty 7) to avoid alerting the masters of the Restriction. The Drill does no damage to icons.

•••• Magickal Macro Keyboard

Arete 7, Quintessence 30

These "boards" hang magick effects using Time and Prime. The user prepares his effect and casts it into the board and designates the key on the board for the effect. The results and possible Paradox are not determined until it is activated. A touch of a key activates the stored magick. There are physical and virtual versions of this Talisman. Up to eight effects may be stored at a time; more than this risks an overload. For each effect added over the initial eight, the Keyboard automatically adds an additional 1 difficulty to the user's roll. Stored effects may reach only up to the fourth Sphere level; level five effects may not be stored in the Keyboard.

••••• Lazarus Transmitter

Arete 10, Quintessence 10

A physical Talisman created by the Technocracy, the Lazarus Transmitter must be surgically implanted inside a mage's skull. While activated, it is an instantaneous fail-safe. If the mage is critically or even mortally injured, it projects the mage, physically, mentally and spiritually, into the Digital Web until the body may be repaired. This Talisman is obviously very rare, but you never know who has one. Always shoot Technomancers in the head with large caliber weapons...

Net.Denizens



Many strange entities dwell in the alien environment of the Digital Web. Computer programs take physical forms that follow their functions. Virii float through the Net, possessing Patterns and altering Parameters. Quintessence infuses information itself, Awakening Data Beasts. Spidery spirits crawl in from the Umbra. There are tales of many more things as well — virtual entities who have left their bodies to rot, Glass Walker werewolves, and more...

Those denizens with Physical Attributes use those characteristics when dealing with mages who are Holistically Immersed in the Web. Otherwise, use the Mental stats as Physical (as per Chapter One).

Computer Virii and Viruses

The parasites of the Net, computer virii are small invisible electrical worms swimming through conduits. They may be sensed with Prime 1. They have the Mind 4 effect **Possession**, which they use to completely possess and take over a host icon, gaining access to all of that host's powers. Depending on the host's Spheres, they may use the host to create others. All virii have a single set of objectives, such as inserting the word "cookie" in all of the world's text files, etc. Some virii self-destruct in large-scale vulgar bursts in order to crash a network with Paradox. Some say a virii controls one of the Oracles of Correspondence, and until he is free, there will always be more virii in the Net.

Attributes: Wits 3, Intelligence 1, Stamina 5 or the Host's Attributes

Abilities: Computer 4 plus Host's own Abilities

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Mind 4 (one effect only), Prime 2, and access to Host's Spheres as well

Willpower: 3-10

Arete: 2-5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, Vaporized, or the same as Host

We should note the difference between *virii*, who are primitive self-willed "organisms," and *viruses*, which are programs created to accomplish a certain objective. The latter can be made with a roll of Intelligence + Computer, difficulty 8. These constructs have Abilities and a set purpose; the Dice Pool of these abilities depends on the number of successes rolled by the creator.

Even Sleepers can create viruses. The process takes one to two turns per Ability that the virus posesses. A virus has a number of "Health Levels" equivalent to its Dice Pool. When damage done to it by magick or counter viruses exceeds these "Health Levels", the virus de-rezzes.

Virus Abilities

The beginning Dice Pool for any virus is the number of successes achieved by its creator. Each success also gives you one dot to spend on Abilities per success. The creator then gives the virus any of the following:

Talents:

Alertness: Will let a virus check to see if its intrusion is being noticed, "see" opportunities and loopholes in the system, etc.

Athletics: Represents a virus with code that enables it to copy itself quickly through the system. (Note that most viruses 'travel' by copying themselves someplace and then deleting their old 'self.')

Dodge: This virus has features to enable it to escape virus-detection systems after they have noticed it. Otherwise, detection means elimination.

Subterfuge: A virus that can appear to be something other than it is. Needed for "Trojan Horses."

Skills:

Repair: Believe it or not, many viruses are created for "constructive" purposes. These may include patching a bug in a program, finding and eliminating or counteracting

other viruses, or simply adding features to an existing operating system. Depending on the circumstances, a Storyteller may decide that such a virus need this skill, or the Computer Knowledge, or perhaps both.

Stealth: A virus with this Skill can evade searches by anti-virus software The recent crop of MS-DOS viruses have been "stealth" viruses.

Survival: Represents a virus that is difficult to expunge from a system, even after it has been detected.

Knowledges:

Computer: Some viruses are actually capable of reprogramming computers. Of course, the designer of the virus must know how to program the computer in question.

Enigmas: Makes a virus good at guessing passwords, etc. Sometimes a virus is created merely to learn passwords and return with this knowledge.

Investigation: Used for searches within the infected system; usually this involves seeking certain "keywords" relating to the mission of the virus.

Linguistics: Means the virus can recognize different human languages. Useful primarily for searches where not all the data is in English. The programmer need not speak the language, but must have access to translations of the keywords in question.

"Catching" a Virus

There are three ways a virus can be introduced into a computer. The first is by a hacker actually sitting down at the keyboard and writing a virus, just like any other program. All viruses are originally created this way, but a hacker generally takes steps to avoid infecting her own computer. On a victim's machine, she would write the virus, "compile" it (turn it into a program), test it, release it onto the machine, then erase all records of her actions.

It is much simpler to create the virus on another system, then transmit it by an infected disk. Pirated software is particularly prone to this, since in the course of a pirating session, hundreds of floppy disks may be copied, making it no simple task to examine them all for viruses.

Finally, just as with any software, a virus may be transmitted via modem, either deliberately or by sending someone an infected program.

Webspiders

Small, metallic fractal spiders infest some areas of the Digital Web, collecting trash and reassembling fractals. They exist to repair damage to any virtual objects, including icons, and they don't seem to notice the presence of mages. This is one of the few ways to be healed inside the Net. They are Umbrood Minions, and Spirit magick affects them. Dreamspeakers refer to these beings as "Pattern Spiders", and claim that the werewolves dislike them.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 1, Stamina 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Awareness 2, Computer 5

Powers: Heal virtual damage (For every turn a Webspider works on a damaged icon, that icon regains a Health Level)

Arete: 5

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -2, Vaporized

Guardians

This Umbrood can change shape and color to blend with its surroundings. They are Awakened computer programs, usually Restrictions. The forms they take are appropriate to their sector and duty. A Guardian in Technocracy Turf might appear as a hovercraft covered with weaponry. Spirit magick can command Guardians, although the difficulty for assuming such command is high (7 or more); when it is used on them, they shift into gigantic versions of Webspiders.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Varies, depending on program's function

Spheres: Varies from 1 to 3 in all Spheres; defense programs usually have Mind and Forces, monitoring programs have Prime and Correspondence

Arete: 10

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -3, Vaporized

Informational Geomids

These large geometric icons float through the Digital Web sifting and analyzing all data they encounter. Informational Geomids are worth their virtual weight in Data. Unfortunately, they have a tendency to leave Awakened Data Beasts in their wake. They can communicate, but have alien intelligences that crave nothing but information.

Attributes: Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 2

Abilities: Computer 5, three other abilities at 4 or 5

Spheres: Mind 3, Correspondence 2, five points to distribute among other other Spheres

Arete: 10

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: 4-20, depending on how much data they currently hold



Attack Geomids

These geometric spirits may be Awakened fragments of the Digital Web. They are composed of sharp, pointed fractals and are drawn to sources of Entropy. They attack either by impaling their opponents or by clustering around them and solidifying, effectively encasing them in the structure of the Web. The impaling attacks do Strength + 2 damage in the Net.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 3, Computer 2, Brawl 2

Spheres: Entropy 1

Powers: Materialize and Group Fusion (if a group of 3 or more geomids score 10 extended attack successes against a mage, she is covered in a sheet of virtual chrome and rendered inert. She may roll her Arete against difficulty 9 to try and escape)

Arete: 4

Willpower: 9

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, Vaporized

Data Beasts

Information wants to be free, and there are times when the Quintessence of the Web causes it to Awaken and take form. Data beasts are usually rampaging monsters of information. They take various forms based on the type of information and the environment in which they were stored. A Data Beast from an Iteration X Construct might appear as an android, while one composed of zoological survey data might take the form of a garish collection of animal parts. Data Beasts vary tremendously in their power and abilities. If they are "killed," the data becomes un-Awakened again. They normally attack physically in the Web.

Attributes:

Power Level 1: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Intelligence and Wits 1

Power Level 2: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Intelligence and Wits 2

Power Level 3: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Intelligence and Wits 3

Power Level 4: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Intelligence and Wits 4

Abilities: appropriate to the type of information stored. A chemistry file might have Science 3. All Data Beasts possess at least Computer 2

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Mind 3

Willpower: 9

Arete: 2 — 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -3, -4, un-Awakened

AI's

A true Artificial Intelligence exists solely in the Digital Web. Each one should be unique, with an Avatar, and each should be created like a normal mage. Each one is an individual and potentially very dangerous. They are extremely rare. They do not have to buy Strength or Dexterity attributes. RES (see Chapter Four) provides an example of a massively powerful AI.

The Technocracy

Even in the Net, HIT Marks, Men In Black, and Superiors still track down characters. Their traits remain the same as in **Mage: The Ascension**. Technomancers normally use Holistic projection, due to paranoia about separating their minds from their bodies.

Who's Who in the Web



So I see what I see
a new world is over me
so I'll reach up to the sky
and pretend that I'm a
spaceman, in another place and time
— 4 Non-Blondes, "Spaceman"

Arns Wrath

Arns Wrath, also called "The Wrath", is a mysterious Nephandus mage who stalks the Web, seeking virtual blood and digital souls for his otherworldly patrons. He raids where he chooses and is capable of entering even the most private of Restricted areas. No one knows how he is able to convert an icon to spirit energy for consumption, but fortunately, no other Nephandus appears to be able to duplicate the operation. This has led other mages to speculate that the Wrath has transcended the Nephandi and serves a new master. He appears as a human-shaped swirl of black mist, with a blank face and a dark cowl.

Captain Feedback

The legends of Captain Feedback grow with every new connection in the Digital Web. Some don't believe that there ever was a Captain Feedback. Others say that he is dead, killed by the Technocracy. The believers claim that agents of the Technocracy still maintain a file on Feedback. Of course, if Captain Feedback were still alive, he wouldn't want anybody to know. Whenever the Technocracy suffers a major error in Digital Web operations, the Virtual Adepts call it the work of Feedback.

Captain Feedback's story certainly is the stuff of myth. In the Spy's Demise, patrons will tell you that he was a Sleeper who Awakened online while hacking into the



NORAD computer systems. At the time, the United States and the Soviet Union were only a minute and a half from sending everything to nuclear Armageddon. Feedback's first Awakened act was to identify the errors in the military tracking systems and save the world. According to the downloaded copy of his memoirs, "I was all that stood between the world and utter destruction." The legend only continues from there. Captain Feedback created hundreds of online identities for himself, and he became the virtual lover of one of the leaders of Iteration X. He stymied the Technocracy with finesse.

Regardless of the truth behind Captain Feedback, the power of his legend has compelled numerous Virtual Adepts to try crazy and diabolically creative plans to frustrate the Technocracy. Which lends further credence to the possibility that he still lives. If he *were* dead, wouldn't the Technocracy want to prove it, to end the legend and stop his admirers?

Kibo

There are few mages in the Net who haven't heard of Kibo. He quickly made a legend for himself by devising efficient methods for spying within the Net. Rather than using these techniques for the intended purpose, however, Kibo likes to use them to find out who is talking about him.

Kibo is a mage of great power. Many think him to be omniscient. Some think that he is an AI or a Turing Machine. Whatever he is, he has the annoying habit of popping in when his name is invoked. His control of the Correspondence Sphere is such that he can appear in several places at once. Many young Adepts tell of strange events happening when his name is mentioned. These events are never malicious or hurtful, and sometimes (very seldom) can be beneficial to the person who uttered his name. For this reason, many started referring to him as "the god of cyberspace". The Virtual Adepts took it one step further and founded an entire religion to Kibo. Kibology is the number one cause of confusion among Tradition mages in the Net today.

Kibo exemplifies a certain attitude within the Virtual Adepts. Most Adepts have a tongue-in-cheek air of cockiness about them. They often vent their own tensions about the stand-off in cyberspace through countless "in-jokes" and strange pranks. Neither Kibo, nor many other Virtual Adepts, take the religion of Kibology seriously, but they love to proselytize about Kibology with a straight face. This is usually done so that an occasional Adept can laugh at the stupid Dreamspeaker who fell for the oldest joke in the book.

Hen of Grainekarm – An Oracle (?)

There are many oracles in cyberspace— you can never be sure who, or what, you're talking to. This goes doubly so for the legendary Hen of Grainekarm. This "entity" is named after the Tic-Tac-Toe playing chickens that used to grace amusement parks. A computer would feed a chicken grain on certain buttons of a tic-tac-toe board, making it seem like the chicken was competing with and winning at a game of tic-tac-toe. The same principle is used with the Hen of Grainekarm.

The Hen is an AI programmed with a database of information that is constantly being updated and copied from other sources. When a question is posed to the Hen, it spits out an answer from the multitude of databases it has accumulated. It does this in an extremely conversational writing style, leading some to believe that the Hen is actually intelligent.

The major problem with all of this is the principle of garbage-in, garbage-out. The Hen never checks its own facts and accepts them at face value. While almost 75% of the data the Hen spits back may be true, the other 25% is certainly and obviously false. Nobody knows who first programmed the Hen or when. Those who know about the Hen's true nature think that it may actually be a rogue AI that wrote a portion of it's own program in a vain attempt to be like the mages of the Net. Some of the artificial life form in the Net hold the Hen in high esteem, routinely asking it questions pertaining to the rules and nature of cyberspace. Some of these artificial life forms actually think that the Hen created cyberspace and knows everything about it.

In the Net, the Hen resembles a giant chicken about forty feet high. It sits regally upon a throne made of wood. Many people have attempted to destroy the Hen when it told them something that was patently false, but the Hen has secured itself so well in the fabric of cyberspace that to destroy it would bring on a colossal whiteout. The Hen has survived many attempts at destruction. Most mages agree that it is best just to ignore the Hen and let it be, since it seems to have no real purpose. Left to it's own fantasies, the Hen will hurt no one except those who believe every word that comes from its beak.

ABC trial 4

Sample Net Chantries



Club Dionysis: Cult of Ecstacy Chantry

Though many Cult of Ecstacy members disdain the virtual world as an illusory place that rejects the body and the sensory world, a die-hard core of Digital Web enthusiasts have created a cybersex paradise in the Net. They are rapidly outpacing the sexual horizons explored by their Tradition in the physical realm. They use elaborate iconic bodies with utterly new senses to explore facets of sexuality and sensuality previously unimagined. The Chantry is run by Tiva, a statuesque black woman who welcomes the eager and open-minded of all Traditions into Chantry anterooms for some of the best parties in the Net.

Entropitorium: Euthanatos

This secretive Chantry is devoted to seeking the very definition of the soul by examining icons that encapsulate the psyches of Net Runners. They ask for volunteers, but are rumored to trap unsuspecting Cybernauts in Restricted areas with no exits, then drag them into the Entropitorium for unspeakable experiments. In a unique form of cooperation, some daring Virtual Adepts have volunteered to have their icons examined under scrutiny by other Adepts and have gained extra insight into icons from the Euthanatos' findings. The leader of the Chantry is Iman Asrawi, a hulking man in a black turban and robes.

Other Information of Use



It is time that knowledge became more accessible to those to whom it properly belongs.

— James Burke, *The Day the Universe Changed*

Net Slang

Throughout the years, computer jargon has been the domain of an elite few. The English language has severe limitations when describing forth-dimensional concepts. With the advent of the Net, new jargon appeared to discuss all-new ideas. Virtual Adepts, however, speak in slang terms that would baffle the ordinary man-on-the-street. "NetTalk", as it is called, is used mainly by the cyberpunk faction in attempts to be vaguely hip. The following is a short list of terms. Special thanks go out to the nameless souls who first put together some of the definitions on this list.

AUTOMAGICALLY: adv. Automatically, but in a way that, for some reason, I don't feel like explaining to you (typically because it is too complicated, or too ugly, or perhaps even too trivial). Example: Some programs that produce XGP output files spool them automagically.

BACKDOOR MAN: n. Someone who masquerades as a daemon in order to gain access into secure sites. Also refers to a contract mage who habitually programs secret methods of entry into employer sites for later personal use.

BANG: n. Common alternate name for an exclamation mark.

BIT BUCKET: n. 1. A receptacle used to hold the runoff from the computer's shift registers. 2. Mythical destination of deleted files and other no-longer-accessible data.

BLOWING DATA: v. Slang for uploading data to a Net site.

BURN: v. A hacking term that means to attempt and succeed in embezzling money.

BYTE SWAPPING: v. Trading illicit data.

CRASH: n. A sudden, usually drastic failure. Most often said of the system, sometimes of magnetic disk drives. "Three users lost their files in last night's disk crash." A disk crash that entails the read/write heads dropping onto the surface of the discs and scraping off the oxide may also be referred to as a "head crash".

v. To fail suddenly. "Has the system just crashed?" Also used transitively to indicate the cause of the crash (usually a person, program, or both). "Those idiots playing spacewar crashed the system." Sometimes said of people.

COWBOY: n. A hacker.

DAEMON: n. A general term for any automated program that appears as a persona of some kind. Dedicated to a particular task, they are constructs that carry out many mundane network tasks.

- GARBAGE COLLECTION DAEMON: This Daemon purges unwanted data. It comes at fixed intervals (much like the Mail Daemon) and wipes clean any data marked for removal.
- MAIL DAEMON: This is a virtual "creature" that is responsible for delivering virtual mail (Sleepers would call it e-mail). Not known for their speed, these daemons are given to crashing in a rather ugly fashion, sometimes crashing fellow Mail Daemons they don't like.
- SECURITY DAEMON: This Daemon watches a particular entry point into the Net and guards against unau-

thorized access. It logs all activity through its entry point, including all attempts to break into the system by force.

DENSE: adj. A word used to describe something neat. From the Virtual Adept adage that "Density is Everything".

FLAME: v. To speak incessantly and/or rabidly on some relatively uninteresting subject or with a patently ridiculous attitude.

FLAME ON: v. To continue to flame. This punning reference to Marvel Comics' Human Torch has been lost as recent usage completes the circle: "Flame on" now usually means "beginning of flame".

FLAMEFEST: (1) When one flame sets off a long series of flames in response. (2) Magickal free-for-all within the Net. Also referred to as a "Flamewar".

FRIED: adj. Burnt-out power supply, also referred to as Smoked.

GIBSON: adj. [from the Cyberpunk author William Gibson.] a multipurpose term that describes something that is really cool (i.e. "That Necron dude — he's so Gibson...").

GLITCH: [from the Yiddish "glitshen", to slide] n. A sudden interruption in electric service, sanity, or program function. Sometimes recoverable. v. To commit a glitch.

GROK: [from the novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, by Robert Heinlein, where it is a Martian word meaning roughly "to be one with"] v. To understand, usually in a global sense.

ICE: n. Archaic word refering to security programs surrounding computers. From cyberpunk novels, an acronym meaning Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics.

KIBO: (kee-bo) v. A typical replacement for the word "God" in expletives. Example: "Kibo damn it!" or "Thank Kibo!". From the Virtual Adept of the same name.

LURKING: v. Watching Net activity without being seen. Virtual spying.

PACKET SWITCHING: v. Covertly intercepting data and replacing it with fake data as it gets sent through a Net Gateway. Also refers to a way of throwing off Data Trackers who are following after stolen data.

PULL A TURING: v. Slang for the act of masquerading as a mage from a different Tradition. As in, "She pulled a Turing and tried to pass for a Dreamspeaker."

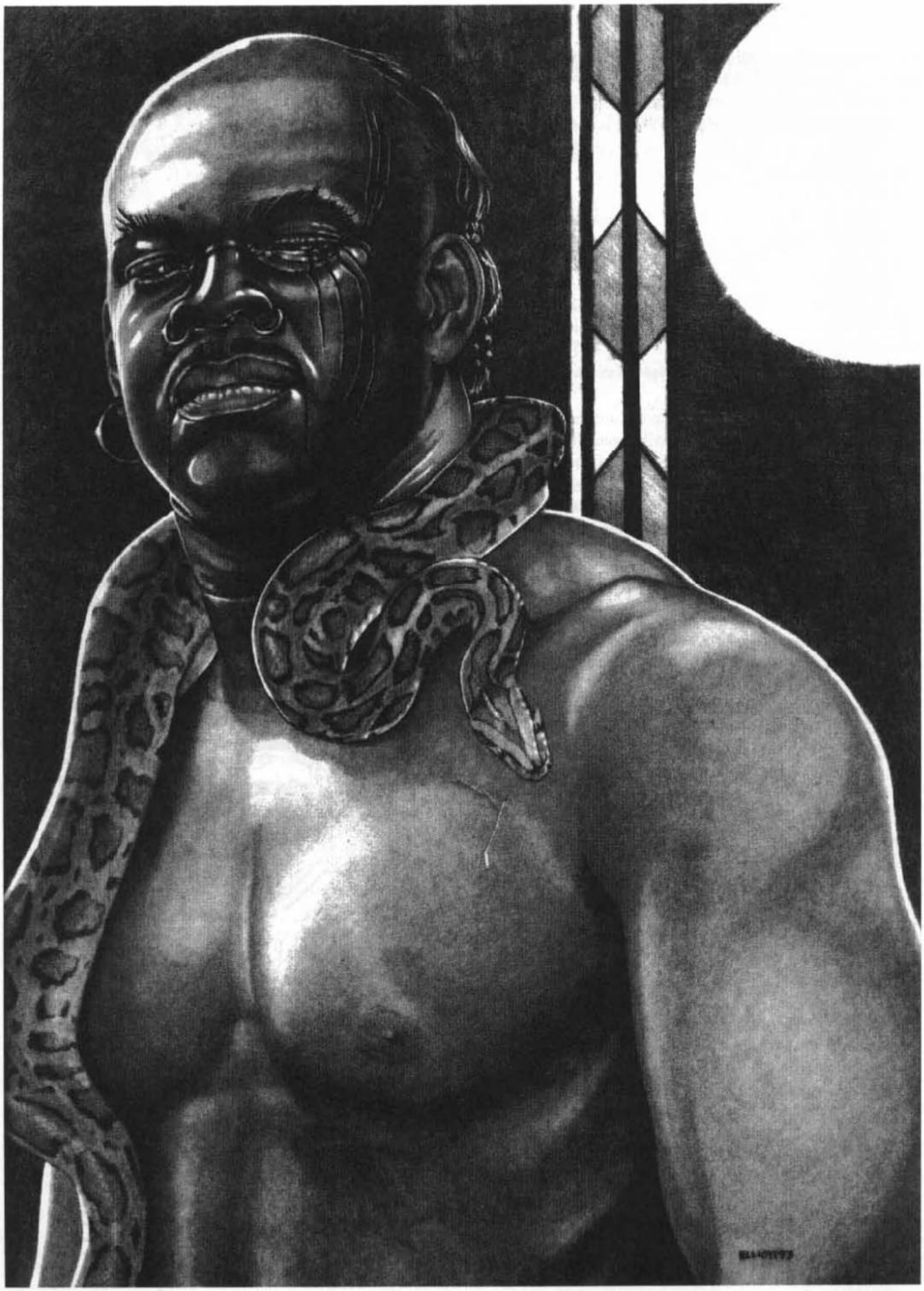
SNARF: v. To grab, especially a large document or file for the purpose of using it either with or without the author's permission.

SPLAT: n. Name used in many places for the ASCII asterisk ("*") character.

SUCKING DATA: v. Slang for downloading data from a Net site.

THRASHING: v. A common Paradox Flaw in which a program (i.e., spell) is slowed down dramatically because it is straining the Net's static reality. The program is said to be "thrashing" the Net.





Appendix: Sources, Books and Inspiration



Lightning flashes,
Sparks shower.
In one blink of your eyes
You have missed something.
— Zen Koan

Ideas for a Net Chronicle can usually come from several different sources. Books and music make excellent resources for chronicle ideas. Movies are not among this list, for there are few movies that treat the subject of computers accurately or interestingly enough.

Books:

Fiction

Crichton, Micheal — *Jurassic Park, Electronic Life*

Gibson, William — *Neuromancer, Count Zero, Mona Lisa Overdrive, Burning Chrome*

Gleick , James — *Chaos*

Heinlein, Robert — *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, Time Enough for Love*

Sterling, Bruce — *Islands in the Net, Globalhead, The Hacker Crackdown*

Stephenson, Neal — *Snowcrash*

Vonnegut, Kurt — *Player Piano*

Nonfiction

Benedikt, Michael — *Cyberspace: First Steps*, MIT Press

Gelernter, David — *Mirror Worlds*, Oxford University Press

Heim, Michael — *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*, Oxford University Press

Rheingold, Howard— *Virtual Reality*, Summit Books

Music:

Brian Eno
D' Cuckoo
Tom Waits
Ministry
808 State
Front 242
Skinny Puppy
Nine Inch Nails
New Order
Front Line Assembly

Magazines:

While science fiction books and computer texts are good tools, magazines are infinitely better. Magazines come out once a month with computer and cultural information and are more likely to pack something between the pages that you've never seen. However, we're not talking about the dry, boring computer journals you may have seen on the magazine stand. We're talking about dangerous underground magazines, and those dedicated directly to technology as it affects the cultural climate of America. Take, for instance, these ultra-subversive techno-terror publications:

Wired Magazine, *Mondo 2000*

Wired and *Mondo 2000* are both magazines devoted to the impact of technology on culture and style. Articles range from a tongue-in-cheek essay on irresponsible diet plans for computer hackers to an analysis of the government of Singapore and its devotion to state controlled technology (shades of the Technocracy!).

These are available in quite a few newsstands and bookstores. 5 Issues for $24 (published quarterly).

MONDO 2000

PO Box 10171, Berkeley, CA 94709

Attention: Subscriptions.

Or email *MONDO 2000*(Andrew) on CompuServe E-Mail: 70007,3147@compuserve.com

Wired Magazine: E-mail subscriptions@wired.com or

Wired Magazine

544 Second Street

San Francisco, CA 94107

Phrack

Phrack is an electronic journal available over the Internet. This is a publication to be wary of. The contents are more often than not considered subversive by the government and law enforcement agencies. Always out to cause a stir, most contributors use pseudonyms like "Knight Lightning" and "The Mentor". E-mail them at phrack@well.sf.ca.us

2600

This 'zine is a paper bound version of *Phrack*. It tends to be a bit more outspoken in its content, but it still makes really interesting reading if you can follow it. *2600* can be subscribed to by writing to this address:

2600 Magazine

P.O. Box 752, Middle Island, NY 11953

Internet Address : 2600@well.sf.ca.us

boing boing

One of the T-shirts advertising this magazine bears the slogan "Ecstasy knows no baud rate". I will leave it at that — nothing more needs to be said, other than check it out.

bOING bOING

11288 Ventura Blvd. #818

Studio City, CA 91604

Rates : 4 issue subscription $20

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Two additional glossaries are in this book. Many new **Mage** terms can be found on pp. 17-19. Many hacking terms from the real world are found on pp. 106-107.

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