



# CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

FOR USE WITH THE LAUNDRY RPG



By Andy Klosky, WJ MacGuffin, Paul L Mathews,  
Brian Nisbet, Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan and John Snead  
Based on the 'Laundry Files' novels by Charles Stross



The

Laundry

Cultists Under The Bed

Based on the Laundry Files novels by Charles Stross.

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# CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

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# Introduction

*True believers unnerve her, for she has seen the Red Skull in their observances, witnessed the rites of the Cult of the Black Pharaoh, and she knows the abhorrent truth: the things humanity call gods are either lies or worse, alien and abhuman intelligences that promise something not unlike hell but without any heavenly insurance policy. The pre-existing destination for humanity is death.*

— *The Apocalypse Codex*

We all want to believe. We're hard-wired for it; our brains are hungry to glom onto something that makes sense of the world around us. Anything that gives us purpose or meaning. Believe in God, believe in family, believe in the country, believe in Manchester United, believe that there's nothing out there but darkness and that nothing matters.

It's hard to sustain a belief on your own, so you find others who believe like you do. For most beliefs, that's harmless. It's going to church, it's spending time with your relatives, it's subscribing to Sky Sports, it's arguing on the internet.

But if you believe in certain things — things that don't quite exist in our reality, but are all too real nonetheless — then you're one of them. A cultist, possessed of monstrous beliefs, soon to be possessed by monsters. You don't care, of course; you believe you're doing the right thing by opening your mind to the Outer Gods.

And as a foulness shall ye know them. When you go out and look for like-minded believers, you'll know them by the goat-stink of madness that clings to them. You'll know them by the ritual scars, by the blood caked under their fingernails, by the eyes that hunger for the wild times promised in the prophecies.

You'll know them by the power they offer you. By the sacrifices you'll make.

Join them. Believe.

*Cultists Under The Bed* describes eight cults in detail. Each cult's write-up has a brief introduction for players - the sort of information that a Laundry officer could easily dig up by consulting the Stacks or asking around the office. The rest of the write-up is for the GM's eyes only, as we

delve into the secret histories and forbidden theologies that are only for the initiated.

The cults are:

- **The Esoteric Order of Dagon:** formerly the favoured servants of BLUE HADES, now a fringe sect of fishy terrorists
- **The Lodge of Dagon:** a snooty offshoot of the Esoteric Order that's also fallen on hard times.
- **The Starry Wisdom Cult:** if the stars are not right, we must go to them and urge them to rightness. Adherents to this cult gain moments of alien inspiration, driving them to make wondrous and terrifying leaps forward in science.
- **The Handmaids of Ulthar:** crazy cat ladies who intend to make war on Saturn.
- **The Red Skull:** life is pain. Therefore, more pain means more life. A sect of torturers and sadomasochists.
- **The New Model Army:** servants of a resurrected Cromwell.
- **The Fraternity of Nagalu:** God is in chains and we must free him. Also, God's a giant snake.
- **The Sodality of St. Benedict:** A sect hidden in the Catholic Church that believes in recycling; specifically, in recycling Satanic lore into magical firepower.
- **Lesser Cults:** cults that the Laundry has only limited information about. What you don't know will probably kill you.





## Faith-Based Initiative

Cults are as old as humanity. As soon as our brains evolved to the point at which we were sufficiently tasty computing platforms for exonomic entities, they started knocking on the doors of perception. As soon as we started clubbing each other to death with pointy rocks, we started doing it in their names. We're hard-wired for religion, and they did it to us. We're predisposed to believe in gods because godlike things meddled with us before we learned to speak.

Fortunately for our survival, cults trigger a lot of instinctive defence mechanisms in humanity. No one wants to live next door (or next cave) to the child-murdering spell-chanting weirdo. We club them to death in the name of sanity, or in the name of our own made-up safety gods. Cults went underground, hiding in the shadows of our burgeoning societies and cities.

Fast-forward to the present day. Cults are still with us, part of us, an older and truer system of belief than anything we've come up with on our own. To survive, though, they've mutated. They may still have the hooded robes and the candle-lit rituals, but they've learned to hide amongst us.

### Classic Cults

Old-school cults are pretty much what they sound like – a bunch of socially marginal people standing in the middle of a swamp or a dank ruin like they're posing for a heavy metal music video. It's very retro. As they chant to their alleged gods, the more sensible among them hope that they aren't

about to get eaten or turned inside out if their god actually puts in an appearance. ('Sensible' and 'cultist' is not a strong correlation.)

Cults like this have always existed. In their locked vaults, the British Museum keeps Sumerian tablets with diagrams that a computational sorcerer would find disturbingly familiar. Some of the many-angled ones that dwell in other neighbourhoods of the multiverse are timeless and eternal. For them, a few thousand years of human history is little more than a short time to wash up before lunch is served.

Almost all classic cults start in one of three ways: with a prophet, a book or a folk tradition. Prophets are typically insane. Some of them have a sufficiently atypical neural structure that they've been in mental contact with other universes and extradimensional horrors since they were children. Others either take sufficient amounts of powerful hallucinogens to render themselves open to this sort of contact or stumble upon an artefact that allows inhuman entities to communicate with them.

Regardless of the method, at this point you have someone who hears alien voices in their head. In addition to this process not being remotely conducive to continued sanity, the brighter alien intelligences are also extremely skilled at hacking human reward cycles. Using a combination of psychic pleasure and grandiose promises of power beyond dreams, these extradimensional intruders set up the same sort of training routine that researchers perform using rats, levers and rat treats. The so-called prophet is then





conditioned to obey their inhuman masters. At this point, they go out into the world to spread their good news.

Many of the people who find the wrong sort of occult books end up exactly the same way; they read the book and end up mentally controlled by intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic. However, a few of the people who pore through old grimoires actually have some clue as to what they're doing. They know how to create basic wards and communicate with various weakly god-like entities via some sort of intermediary. Instead of inviting alien gods into their own head, these sorcerers invite them into a parrot, a radio or perhaps someone too dim-witted to understand that being asked to sit in a chair while a sorcerer paints sigils all over their body is a drastically poor and often quite final life-choice. Because they don't use their own neural structures to communicate with alien intelligences, these sorcerers usually retain their free will. Instead of becoming thralls, they bargain with monstrous entities for various advantages. Some of these sorcerers prefer to work alone, but many seek followers, assistants and accomplices.

Folk traditions, finally, are cults that are far removed from their origins. The rites and rituals get passed down from generation to generation, so that the current crop of cultists don't have access to the original book, and the founding sorcerer is a mythical demi-god. Folk cults like this may persist for generations, but tend to get eliminated when they run up against modern law enforcement or just die out due to demographic pressure (i.e. when Cultist Junior rebels against mom and dad's boring old religion and becomes a Mormon).

The primary difference between these sorcerer-run cults and cults run by avid devotees and conditioned thralls is that the sorcerers have their own agenda. In addition to aiding their inhuman patrons or masters, these sorcerers usually desire money, power or fame, and many wish to see their enemies suffer horrible torments. The clever ones also want to make certain that when the walls of reality collapse, they won't merely survive, they'll be in a position of power and influence. Naturally, such hopes are often seriously misguided, but that doesn't prevent these cult leaders from performing all manner of heinous acts to aid both their patrons and themselves.

The rank and file of many ordinary and sorcerous cults are quite similar. They consist of some mixture of dupes who have only the vaguest idea of what exactly they are attempting to bring into the world, and stereotypical mad cultists, who are more than happy to offer their own lives or the lives of others in the service of their cause and their master.

Cultists from both types of cults were typically rather isolated. Sometimes an entire small town became part of

a cult. In cities, cults often consisted of small and insular communities or the congregation of a single eccentric church. These people tend to remain together in one area until they either managed to destroy themselves or were hunted down because the surrounding populace finally realised the reason for the disappearance of pets, indigents and the occasional person who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Classic cults are pretty rare these days, at least in the developed world. They're not sustainable in an era with police investigation, counter-occult agencies, and 24-hour news media. It's hard to stay under the radar unless you're organised and competent, and while classic cults may wield a lot of power, it's more in the area of "summoning horrors from beyond" instead of the more useful "covering up child sacrifices".

Some sorcerers who started cults recruited other sorcerers instead of fanatics or dupes. The members of these cults were typically exceptionally egotistical and self-interested. The lack of blind obedience rendered these cults exceedingly unstable, but while they lasted they could be exceptionally dangerous, because the members shared knowledge and worked together to perform extremely powerful spells. These sorcerous cults were also often far-less isolated. Traditional sorcery demanded money and free time, and so the members could afford to travel widely. The only real feature separating these cults from more modern sorcerer cults is the use of traditional instead of computational sorcery. Today, traditional sorcery cults still exist, but are rarer than modern sorcerer cults.

## Modern Cults

One of the first obvious differences between traditional and modern cults is that the leaders of modern cults are more tech savvy and less isolated. By their nature, cultists are a secretive lot, but in the modern world, avoiding suspicion often involves moving frequently. Many small cults have become quite mobile. These cults now resemble modern terrorist cells. They are adaptable, communicate with each other via email, texts and calls on mobile phones, and are good at thinking on their feet. They know how to avoid (or cultivate) media attention, how to evade detection or law enforcement, and how to maintain operational security.

Computers and the Internet also play a large role in modern cults. Obviously, those who've got the technical *nous* use computational demonology instead of traditional sorcery (although only a small fraction of cults have access to the Lovecraft-Turing theorem and the methods that lead on from that). However, even if you can't summon up horrors using your laptop, the Internet is an astoundingly good recruiting tool. Small cults can search for one or two

additional fanatics on all manner of eccentric message boards, singling out promising individuals for lengthy private messages. The cults' biggest advantage is that their recruiters can simply start using a new username or find a new message board if a potential recruit reacts like any sensible person would to hints that the path to success and a fulfilling life is service to monstrously inhuman beings.

Modern communications media also give cults a chance to reach a mass audience. In the past, many cults escaped notice by disguising themselves as peculiar churches. In the modern era, ambitious cults can disguise themselves as eccentric spiritual seekers, New Age self-help groups, ordinary for-profit cults, evangelical mega-churches, or garden-variety apocalyptic nutters. A few cults composed of seriously off-kilter geeks go further and make themselves appear to be interest groups dedicated to mental enhancement or exotic technologically mediated meditation. There are even cults made up of radical environmentalists who advocate a drastic restructuring of modern industrial civilisation as well as several cults that are also multi-level marketing organisations.

Like so many other organisations, many modern cults have discovered branding. Advertising that they are fanatics who want to end humanity's dominance of the earth or even humanity's survival often doesn't play well to most audiences. Instead, cults need to create a brand that attracts the attention of potential recruits, while looking innocuous enough to avoid notice by various occult security organisations. When attempting to create this brand, one key question that modern cult leaders must answer is how big they want their cult to be.

## Cults Large and Small

Cults come in all sizes, from a dozen dedicated believers to mass movements with many thousands of members. In the larger cults, most members are dupes, but the active members who are truly in the know may number in the hundreds. The size of a cult also determines how public it is and what the structure is like. For the purposes of discussion, cults can be thought of like trash bags: they contain a lot of rubbish and come in small, medium and large.

### Small Cults

Small cults are highly personal affairs with no more than, roughly, two dozen members. Their best analogues are small terrorist cells or criminal gangs. The people involved are all completely dedicated, they all know each other at least moderately well and often live in each other's pockets. Some come together as groups of like-minded individuals who share the same unhealthy interests. Others start out with a single leader, or a leader with a couple of followers who

then manage to convince or mind-control other people into agreeing to help turn hungry creatures loose on their fellow humans. Most small cults are either relatively anarchic groups of people with no formal power structure, or personality cults, where everyone follows a single leader who has sufficient charisma, wealth, or sorcerous skill to cause the rest of the cult to accede to their ideas.

Anarchic cults spend far more time discussing ideas and making plans than they do actually serving their extradimensional overlords, but once they agree on a plan, every member is usually completely dedicated and so the cult can be shockingly effective. Small cults with a single leader make decisions very rapidly: whatever the leader says is law. However, even the most dedicated cult member can sometimes feel doubts or resentment about being ordered to take the most boring or more dangerous part of a plan by a leader that never takes any risks. Also, unless the leader magically ensures the cult's loyalty, it's always possible for another member to decide that they could do a better job as leader, especially if at least some members of the cult knew the leader before the cult started.

Unless they are led by a multimillionaire, small cults have limited funds and resources, but they can be extremely agile and hard to find. Moving a dozen or so people and all of their equipment from one city to another is easy and can be accomplished both rapidly and with few suspicions being raised. If they are moderately careful, small cults can remain completely unnoticed until they start summoning monsters or sacrificing their neighbours. Even after this point, they can be difficult to locate. Small cults can also be extremely secure. They rarely recruit new members and can afford to take the time carefully evaluate and check up on their few potential recruits. Of course, unless the cult has access to computational demonology, ancient artefacts or some other force multiplier, their potential for world-ended destruction is limited. Summoning an Outer God using old-school sorcery needs more brainpower than a small cult can muster.

### Intermediate Cults

Once a cult has more than two or at most three dozen members, it becomes more than a small group of dedicated people who all know one another. Some sort of structure becomes necessary. Intermediate-sized cults consist of any cult with between 30 and several hundred members. Some of these cults divide into several branches, each located in a different city or part of town. Others have a single location, but instead of ad hoc democracy or a single leader, they possess some sort of hierarchy. The leader is served by several acolytes, who each control a different group of cultists. These hierarchies are an important part of these cults, and jockeying for power can either rip a cult apart or result in a leader or one of their assistants being deposed or killed by a sufficiently determined and ruthless underling.

For mid-size cults, think fringe political groups like PETA, think small but noisy political parties, think rapidly expanding tech startups.

One of the difficulties of cults of this size is that they are too large to avoid all notice. Also in groups this large, at least one member may be sufficiently careless or lax in their dedication to the cult that they leave at least some evidence of what the cult is up to. Members of a small cult can all live in each other's pockets and make sure that no one starts to drift away or get drunk and try to impress their date with the bizarre fun they had over the weekend. This sort of unity is more difficult in larger cults, and so a member may go to a pub and talk a bit too much.

Mid-sized cults are the shortest lived, because they are also the least stable. Most of these cults only last between a few months and a year or two before fragmenting, getting arrested or getting themselves killed. Cults of this size lack both the anonymity of small cults or the wealth and power of large cults. The most notable exceptions are mid-sized cults that are either run by an exceptionally wealthy and powerful patron or that only recruit especially talented members. These cults have sufficient influence to avoid notice, or are skilled enough to evade investigation and suppression.

Recruiting members for a cult of this size can be difficult. Most mid-sized cults lack the funds to carefully evaluate even relatively moderate numbers of potential new members. Some of these cults become careless and rely solely upon making contact in person. Others follow these contacts up with truth and loyalty geases, a process that can easily breed resentment or psychological problems.

Wealthy mid-sized cults often have the resources to perform careful and thorough background checks on potential new members and, like small cults, can typically take their time with recruitment. One of the biggest differences between mid-sized cults is between cults that recruit from the general public and those that only recruit from a highly select population, such as brilliant and well-respected engineers, exceedingly dedicated members of assorted hate groups or members of various upper-class social circles.

## Large Cults

Large cults have many hundreds, or even many thousands of members. Even the dumbest and most-earnest cultists aren't hanging out signs advertising the Church of Apocalyptic Monster Summoning, but they also can't recruit several thousand people via carefully vetted personal contacts. Instead, large cults must recruit from the public. Some rely on promotional flyers and word-of-mouth advertising, including members knocking on doors and attempting to recruit anyone who answers. Other cults

use social networking, comments on spiritually oriented message-boards, and other indirect means. Today, many cults use both. Large cults are, well, large; they're religions, they're megacorporations, they're part of the fabric of society. They're all around you. You walk past their glyphs and unholy symbols every day. You've seen the Yellow Sign and partaken in their blasphemous Eucharist, though you knew it not.

Cultists who aren't stupidly naïve always structure their cult so that it has an inner and an outer circle of membership. Almost all new recruits first join the outer circle. Outer circle members think they belong to an eccentric sect of some familiar faith or one of the many movements promoting alternative spirituality or spiritual empowerment. Members of the inner circle understand that they are the agents of inhuman intellects who consider human neural structures to be tasty snacks.

**The Outer Circle:** Outer circle members of a large cult are useful dupes. They listen to sermons, lectures, and meditations, and in some cults, they take hallucinogens. If the cultist leaders are good with sorcery, members of the outer circle may also be subject to various geases and glammers. The price of their membership is some mixture of cash and performing mundane work for the cult. These cultists recruit additional members and perform many of the mundane bureaucratic tasks that are part of the existence of any large organisation.

Outer circle members who have the correct mixture of moral flexibility and intense dedication may be asked to perform crimes like theft or kidnapping for the cult, but they'll be given a purely mundane reason for these crimes. The outer circles of some cults look like corporations, social institutions or eccentric religious sects.

A few cults have even disguised their outer circle as a large terrorist organization or a criminal gang. These cults can perform all manner of illegal activities to eliminate rivals and obtain necessary funds and equipment, all while seeming like a purely mundane threat that will not attract the attention of occult security organizations. Most cults regard outer circle members as entirely disposable, since it's always possible to recruit more dupes, fanatics, or career criminals. Regardless of their appearance and activities, the outer circle members of a cult have no idea about its true nature or purpose.

**The Inner Circle:** Regardless of the cult's size, the cult's inner circle is smaller than the outer circle. Inner circles rarely consist of more than a thousand people and are often made up of only a few dozen. Recruiting the inner circle of a large cult is very similar to general recruitment for a small or mid-sized cult. The goal is to find people who are eager to worship inhuman horrors, in return for various practical



rewards or perhaps a nice dose of carefully directed insanity and a seriously hacked reward cycle. The advantage that large cults have is that they can carefully observe their outer circle members. Members of the inner circle groom and evaluate promising outer circle cultists, who are often eager to learn cult secrets and gain more power and responsibility. Using dubiously accurate psychological tests, hypnotism, purely theoretical late night discussions and close surveillance, members of the inner circle decide which members of the outer circle to approach. The next step is an offer of membership, usually followed by a truth geas to see what the potential recruit actually thinks of the offer. Those who don't measure up or who refuse often vanish and become the next sacrifice. If the cult is careful, members who refuse to join the inner circle have their memories erased or are dealt with in some other ghastly fashion.

Among the most paranoid cults, anyone who joins the inner circle is subjected to either loyalty geases or various other less-savoury methods of ensuring that the individual obeys the cult. Summoned mind parasites that watch for signs of disloyalty, deliberately directed insanity or even magical brain damage are all possibilities, depending upon both the cult and why they need a new recruit to the inner circle. Sometimes all members of the inner circle are subjected to these methods; more often these methods are used on everyone except the leader or leaders.

A few of the largest cults effectively have two levels of inner circle. The largest and outermost portion of the inner circle consists of people who have been mentally coerced into obedience because they prove useful. However, the core membership of these cults is made up of people who are sincere believers in the cult and its cause and who do not require any mental coercion to ensure their obedience. These core members retain their free will and actually run the cult. The mentally coerced members of the inner circle are often simply useful tools who possess sufficient knowledge and free will to take part in the most difficult and dangerous missions.

## Doctrines & Cover Stories

A few especially sociopathic sorcerers have no problem with the idea that they are selling out their own species in return for power, wealth and the possibility of comfortable survival in the coming age of inhuman domination. However, many cultists are not willing to come out of the cackling villain closet, and instead justify their behaviour using some sort of doctrine. The nature of this doctrine reveals a great deal about the nature of the cult.

Some cultists believe, or at least claim to believe, that the members are in some way special and blessed and that the rest of humanity are inherently lesser beings. This belief

is especially common among hereditary cults that have existed for several generations. Members are raised to think of themselves as better than and apart from other people. Other cults believe that humanity is being tested, and that only those who know certain harsh but glorious spiritual truths will survive this time of tribulation. As discussed below, fatalist cults assume that humanity will inevitably lose its battle against CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN and that all the cult is doing is taking advantage of people who will soon be dead in an attempt to preserve at least some portion of humanity: the members of the cult.

Most cults use one of two approaches: either the idea that the members are superior to the rest of humanity and therefore are entirely justified in sacrificing other (lesser) people to inhuman monsters, or that these deaths and sacrifices are in some way inevitable and preordained and so the cultists are agents of an unavoidable fate, and thus blameless. These ideas do not hold up particularly well to scrutiny, but they do provide sufficient justification to allow cult members to perform monstrous acts while continuing to believe they are not in fact monsters.

Many older cults cast their alien patron in the role of some aspect of a more common deity. The inner circle members of some cults honestly and sincerely believe that the predatory hyper-intelligent Boltzmann brain they serve is actually Christ, Satan, or the next incarnation of the Maitreya or future Buddha. Like those of all true zealots, these beliefs are largely immune to facts, at least as long as their saviour isn't trying to devour them.

Laundry operatives working on the cult identification task force have learned to focus on cults that preach doctrines emphasising a strong division between a glorious elect and the remainder of humanity, who are inherently unworthy and deserving whatever fate true believers see fit to impose on them. However, to further confuse matters, there's no shortage of dangerously loopy religious sects that have absolutely nothing to do with predatory extradimensional horrors. These mundane cults are solely the product of deeply repressed zealots. Telling the difference between a heretical sect run by dangerously unstable people who might be inclined to commit murder, and dangerously unstable monster-worshipping cultists who regularly commit human sacrifice can be far from obvious.

## Recruits

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The ideal outer circle recruit for any cult is either someone seeking community and a direction in their life who is willing to tirelessly serve others to gain this, someone with a useful career or position in society, someone exceedingly wealthy and free with their money, or a ruthless thug who is willing to commit almost any crime. In short, the same type people mundane cults, con artists, and criminal gangs look for as

victims or recruits. Like con artists and criminal gangs, most cults treat these people more like tools than fellow believers.

Most cults seek out young people that have newly left home and older people that are isolated. Sponsoring social events or benign-seeming lectures, especially ones that also include free food, can be an ideal way to locate vulnerable people. Also, having outer circle members befriend likely looking candidates on social media sites can be an excellent way to obtain the trust of a potential new recruit.

Once the cult has located a group of potential members, cult recruiters are friendly and welcoming. They look for people who seem interested in learning more or who simply want a friendly social environment. Recruiters then mention a weekend retreat or other isolated setting where a few potential new recruits can interact with a dozen or more cult members. A weekend of organised social activities, a friendly atmosphere and little time for sleep is an excellent way to persuade people to join the cult and begin making it the centre of their identity. At this point, most of them are happy to either pay for the privilege or to perform various forms of work for the cult in lieu of payment.

The cult's next step is discovering if there are any cult deprogrammers, journalists, undercover police officers, or occult security operatives among their new recruits. Background checks reveal careless intruders, and some cults do little more using electronic background checks and discrete truth geases. These tactics deal effectively with journalists, deprogrammers, and the police, but are a dead giveaway to the Laundry and other occult security organisations.

The most careful cults either employ their own surveillance experts or recruit cultists who possess these skills. These cults carefully observe all potential recruits, cloning their mobile phones, planting listening devices in their homes, and following them. These efforts usually discover nothing, and the new recruit is welcomed into the cult. Occasionally, these observations uncover suspicious discrepancies. At this point, the cult confronts the person, informs them that they should not attempt to enter the cult under false pretences and that they are also not welcome in the cult. In this case, even the most skilled occult security expert cannot tell the difference between a purely mundane cult that checks up on potential recruits and a dangerous magical cult. Unless the attempted infiltrator has seen evidence of illegal or magical activity, almost all cults freely allow reporters, police and other intruders to leave. All but the most insane cult leaders understand that kidnapping and murder cause far more obvious problems.

Recruiting new members to a large cult's inner circle or finding new recruits for a small or intermediate cult is considerably more difficult and demanding. The trickiest

aspect of this process is locating people willing to worship murderous inhuman horrors. Many cults look for the greedy, the desperate, and the disenfranchised; people who either feel they have nothing to lose or who would be willing to risk everything for the hope of a sufficiently large reward.

Normal people don't become cultists and so a number of cults now specifically seek out abnormal people. Some cults hack into corporate personnel records or government medical records in an attempt to find suitable subjects. Sociopaths with good anger management skills are especially popular targets for recruitment. If the cult offers sufficient rewards, most sociopaths have no trouble selling out their species.

## Funding

Worshipping unnameable horrors and working to end humanity or at least human civilisation is often quite expensive. Necessary purchases can include acquiring advanced super computers and illegal weapons, hiring career criminals, funding archaeological digs, constructing and concealing exotic technologies, and last-minute plane fights to attempt to stay one step ahead of occult security forces.

The single best source of funding for any cult is having one or more wealthy and dedicated members willing to spend their fortune on the cult. If a cult is started by or manages to recruit a software mogul or someone similarly wealthy, its problems are solved. The only difficulty at that point is making certain that none of the accountants, bankers, tax investigators and other people who keep track of large amounts of wealth learn that a substantial portion of this person's income is now going to an apocalyptic cult that worships world-eating monsters. Often all that's needed to accomplish this goal is to disguise the cult as a legitimate, if eccentric branch of some more acceptable religion.

However, most cults lack members whose assets total more than ten million pounds. Instead, they must find other sources of funds. Cults with a large outer circle perform standard forms of fund-raising, including various high pressure versions of passing the collection plate. However, much of these funds will need to be used to maintain appearances for the outer circle members. Fancy buildings, well-dressed religious personnel and all of the other accoutrements of mainstream mega-churches aren't cheap. Some cults that have a smaller outer circle can attempt to raise money and recruit potential new members by running workshops, retreats and similar middle-class forms of spiritual entertainment.

Although the number of outer circle members is much smaller, each of them typically pays hundreds or even thousands of dollars in order to experience some form of



alleged enlightenment, or at least an unusually entertaining weekend. Once again, much of this money must go to maintain the image of being a spiritual organization suitable for members of the middle class. Well appointed rooms, professional-looking websites, and smartly dressed gurus and facilitators are essential for new members to be willing to part with their money.

Other cults turn to crime to raise money. In the Venn diagram of human misery, circles like 'human trafficking', 'drug smuggling', and 'eldritch horrors' have quite a bit of crossover. A BLUE HADES-worshipping cult that smuggles victims to a particular coastal area to mate with Deep Ones might use the same network of contacts to expand into prostitution, and if you've got the chemistry to brew the Liao drug, you could also use the same skills to make crystal meth or MDMA.

Magic can also be a source of funding. Anyone who can perform powerful spells like prognostication could make quite a bit of money in the stock market. However, even the ability to work level two or level three spells can be quite powerful. A level three glamour could allow almost anyone to become an impressive con artist, entropy manipulation is an ideal tool for thieves, and sympathetic magic or a geas used on the right person could allow someone to obtain all manner of useful computer passwords, including ones connected to large sums of money.

A skilled and ruthless sorcerer could even kidnap a multimillionaire, use a geas to force this person to buy various expensive items for the cult, and then cause the multimillionaire to forget that the kidnapping ever occurred.

Small, insular cults usually need much less money, but are also more likely to have trouble acquiring it. The best answer is for the cult to have members that possess at least moderate amounts of money who are willing to spend their savings on the cult. A dozen middle-class fanatics who are willing to remortgage their homes and empty their retirement accounts for the glory of their many-angled masters can actually raise a substantial quantity of money. Even better, they don't have any overhead, especially if like good fanatics, they're willing to live four to a room in dingy rental units and eat cheap microwave dinners.

Second mortgages and pet food allow small cults to afford travel costs and most ordinary black market weapons like handguns and rifles. However, if they need a supercomputer or an abundance of cutting-edge electronics to build a transdimensional portal, they're likely to run short. At this point, the most common options are crime, sorcery or some combination of the two.

### Cults and Power

Many cults consist of no more than one or two dozen eccentric sociopaths with an interest in sorcery, and no power or influence beyond their ability to cause various forms of large-scale death and destruction. However, large cults or any cult run by someone exceedingly wealthy can be a very different matter. If someone is wealthy enough to convince the government to overlook tax irregularities in their businesses, they may also be wealthy enough to convince an important government official to stop various agencies from investigating a somewhat suspicious church or social club.

The Laundry has to answer to Whitehall, and Whitehall answers (theoretically) to Downing Street, and Downing Street answers to (theoretically) the electorate and (very definitely) to party donors, political allies and the media. One week's dangerous sorcerer under investigation is next week's personal friend of the Prime Minister who is sacrosanct and may be not harassed by "over-zealous and misguided Laundry agents".

A few ambitious cults go further and attempt to either recruit important political figures or get one of their members elected to local or national office. Accomplishing either task usually involves large sums of money and sorcery. Substantial sums of money are needed to either gain personal access to political figures or to run for office, and sorcery is necessary to either convert a politician into becoming a cultist or to influence enough votes to win an election. Both sorts of activities are possible on a local level, and a handful of cultists have even become mayors of large towns or small cities. (*"I am the dread mayor of Hull! Kneel before me!"*)

However, all of the nations of the developed world have effective occult security organisations, and one of the reasons they exist is to prevent exactly this sort of thing from happening. Using glammers in a national campaign, using a geas on a national politician or any such similar endeavours show up on these organisations' thaumometers and the would-be sorcerer-king swiftly vanishes from political life amidst government cover stories of the sorts of financial malfeasance that is both common and complex enough to rarely create lingering interest by the press.

The problem with all of these uses of power is that they require the cult, or at least the cult leader, to be noticeable, and that's exactly what most cults wish to avoid. Having a large and devoted outer circle can be exceptionally useful, but convincing these unknowing cultists that they should actively protest a government investigation of the cult can be risky. If the government has solid evidence of wrongdoing, a few press releases that have been carefully edited to remove any mention of extradimensional horrors

can create sufficient doubts among some outer circle members that they'll happily aid the government in their investigation.

Often the most successful way for a cult to exercise power is covertly. Blackmailing important officials is an excellent way to cause them to do what the cult wants, without revealing ties to or sympathy for the cult or its leaders. A blackmailed politician can claim that the evidence does not justify the time and expense needed to perform the investigation. Sufficiently clever officials may even avoid mentioning the cult at all, and instead make certain that the Laundry is too busy with other important projects to spare time to investigate the cult. Blackmail is also exceptionally useful for obtaining the cooperation of government officials, corporate heads and similar people for purposes other than forestalling investigations.

The one difficulty with blackmailing anyone is that it requires evidence of the sort that important people spend a great deal of time and money concealing. However, sorcery offers various answers to this difficulty. A geas can force an aide or a sex worker to reveal everything and then forget that they were coerced into doing so, sympathetic magic or invisible operatives can be used for spying, and a powerful glamour may convince a greedy or lustful individual to go against their better judgement.

## Modern Cults

The last seventy years have been rough on cults. Prior to World War II, cults were an Out of Context Problem for the civilian authorities. Other than a few clued-in scholars or special police forces, no one really knew about genuine magic. Cultists had the cheat codes to reality, the direct line

to Alien Space God. Spiritualism, theosophy and other secret societies flourished, and the true cultists hid among their lesser imitators.

Then came the Atrocity Machines and the Turing's Theorem, and the governments of the world started paying attention to old musty books and ritual chanting. The game changed. Back in the 1920s, your average cult might be thwarted by a trio of elderly university professors from Arkham or a rag-tag bunch of reporters, dilettantes and two-fisted detectives. By the fifties, though, the guys kicking down your temple's door were more likely to be ex-special forces working for the Laundry or the Black Chamber or some other OCCINTEL group, and they had better magic items and knew more about your god than you did. Genuine cults meant genuine artefacts and spells and exonomies, stuff that could tip the balance of power. Hitler got his start in the Thule society, and no one wanted a return to those sort of sacrifices.

There were lots of clueless cults in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the counter-culture of the sixties and especially once the Black Chamber started spreading disinformation, but the genuine article became an endangered species. Oh, a few of the bigger cults got wise to the new regime, and made the jump to computational demonology and modern spellcasting, but most of the older secret societies got stomped pretty heavily for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Now, they're coming back. The increasing proximity of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN has drastically changed many cults. Previously, cultists hoped and dreamed of inhuman apocalypses but almost never had the opportunity to actually create one. Their plans were all about preparing the way for their terrible master to someday appear to their descendants. However, that long-promised day of mind-melting horror is almost upon us.





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

The coming chaos brings other crazies out of the woodwork too. All across the world, the disenfranchised and the deranged have started pulling great-grandad's old leather-bound books out of the secret compartment in the closet, and there are witch-fires again on the unvisited island in the middle of the Miskatonic river. Cult recruitment and activity has skyrocketed in the last five years, and looks set to continue.

What did Lovecraft say?

*"The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and reveling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom."*

In other words – the prophecies are coming true. The End Times are nigh. Jesus is coming back, and he's got tentacles. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, sceptics.

However, for more than a decade, the stage has been set and cults that were clever and dedicated enough could start attempting to actually summon their masters into our world. This possibility has led to a serious upswing in cults. Various mad sorcerers now understand that they can now make their hoped-for apocalypse come true and because a host of alien intelligences see that the buffet has already been set out and know that if they want to get the choicest bits, they need to get in before it's officially open for dining.

### Fatalist Cults

One of the most disturbing and seemingly sane types of cult has arisen as a direct response to the immediacy of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. These cults aren't eager to end the world. Instead, they regard the end of the world as an inevitably foregone conclusion, and accept that the vast majority of humanity is utterly doomed. Starting from that cheerful but not entirely unrealistic premise, the cultists starting thinking of ways to survive. The easiest answer is to join the winning side. These people become cultists not because they wish to sacrifice their fellows to extra-dimensional horrors, but because they want to survive. They view the people around them as already living on borrowed time, and so killing them isn't murder, it's giving those deaths meaning, a meaning that involves saving the miserable lives of the cultists and, if possible, setting them up nicely in the coming post-humanity Earth.

In short, fatalist cults view the Earth as a sinking lifeboat, where most people must be thrown overboard to ensure that anyone survives.

Fatalist cults are often the hardest to deal with, because they aren't barking mad or enthralled to inhuman minds: they're simply stone-cold sociopaths who took a look at their odds of survival and decided that arranging for a few dozen or even a few million people to die was a small price to pay for their own lives. The Laundry has a few of this type among their operatives. If you look at Mahogany Row from the wrong angle, you can see the same patterns there too...





## The Joy of Sects

Generally speaking, no governmental body – much less MI5 or The Laundry – has a positive relationship with any organisation that could be labelled as a cult. Religions... well, that's a different (and messy) story, but certainly not cults. We're conditioned to think of cults as a bad thing, and with good reason.

This is not to say that the Laundry simply barges in, attempting to shut down any cult that it comes across. For one thing, they don't have the budget, but also cults often serve as useful sources of information regarding greater occult threats, as well as other (perhaps more dangerous) organisations.

Under normal circumstances, the Laundry maintains four levels of involvement with cults, based primarily on the type of involvement being put forward. These levels are categorised, in relatively ascending order of severity, via the 'SIDE' acronym: Surveillance (Sigma), Infiltration (Iota), Defamation (Delta) and Elimination (Epsilon).

The SIDE hierarchy is a 'nested' system, in which each step represents an increase in Laundry involvement with the cult, while maintaining the operations of the steps beneath. Each step along the SIDE hierarchy implies a different philosophical approach to dealing with the cult, which changes and evolves, based on the threat that the cult provide and the amount of resources the Laundry devotes to removing that cult's threat. A truly dangerous cult that the Laundry is currently unequipped to deal with may only be at Sigma level, while a smaller, less-dangerous cult may have reached Epsilon status.

Designation of cult status is typically done through joint review by the Department of Records, through the Monitoring Division and the Diplomatic (Unconventional) Office. In both cases, decisions are made with significant input coming from field agents and other intelligence reports and are always subject to yearly review meetings.

### Overview of SIDE Hierarchy

#### Sigma – Surveillance

- Information-gathering and file collecting. Use of remote drones for surveillance.
- No direct Lay interference.
- Second-hand information and interviews with cult-associated individuals.

#### Iota – Infiltration

- Use of espionage, cyber-espionage and 'familiar' for observation.
- Hands-on, active investigation.
- Active acquisition of moles and other sources.
- Placement of double-agents (worst-case scenario).

#### Delta – Defamation

- Passive confrontation with cult, via cyberwarfare, financial seizure, and third-party proxies.
- Use of other rival cults to create conflicts between organisations.
- Implementation of ARNESON PAYBACK and other disruptive cyber-attacks.

#### An Aside on SIDE

Byzantine as it is, the SIDE hierarchy is the fifth attempt by Laundry officials to provide an accurate determining label for the relative threat level and overall philosophy towards a given cult. Its predecessor, BARCA, was removed in 2004 after the acceptance of Directive 2004/77a/16. BARCA was often criticised for imprecision and excessive overlap between its five layers, but was viewed as a vast improvement over the earlier VISCERA groupings of the late-1990s.

After the adoption of SIDE, it immediately fell under similar criticism for the very same problems that plagued BARCA and its immediate predecessors. Field agents have claimed difficulty in remembering the meanings of each Greek letter, often making filing mistakes and taking actions inappropriate to the hierarchical philosophy. Because of this, the SIDE hierarchy is under review as the Laundry hopes to find a viable replacement. Meetings are already scheduled for early 2013 to determine whether or not to re-evaluate the hierarchy system and look for replacements, with a possibly end goal of implementing a system that can be shared among the Laundry's European counterparts.



# CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

## Epsilon – Elimination

- Active confrontation with cult, via all available and necessary techniques.
- Full-on raid of cult headquarters' (weapon of last resort).
- Use of tactical sorcery, coupled with SAS backup.

## Sigma – Surveillance

Once a cult is identified, the Laundry nearly always puts it under Surveillance. As a catch-all term, Surveillance refers to any number of passive or non-interfering methodologies of information gathering. The key here, however, is non-interference. When a cult reaches Sigma designation, the Laundry primarily wants to simply know more about the cult and what it does.

Most times, Sigma-level investigation is of the good, old-fashioned spy sort. Laundry agents tasked to a Sigma-level cult will be asked to observe believed cultist activities, acquire documents and other important pieces of information and to track monetary activity. Crackers and other tech-savvy Laundry agents often have a great deal to do when investigating a Sigma-level cult, by attempting to acquire access to the cult's financial records, tracking members' movements (both virtual and real-life), and the like.

When direct observation of a cult is required, the usual method is the time-tested tactic of sending two blokes out to spy on the place. Basic surveillance methods (see the

*Laundry Files Agent's Handbook* for more on spy techniques) can pay dividends when investigating an unprepared cult.

For a more high-tech approach, unmanned drones may be available for high-profile cases. Military-standard drones are currently capable of carrying up to a 1.8 gigapixel camera, able to take high resolution photos of areas up to 25 square miles at a time. Such photography has proven useful in locating cult gathering sites, anomalies in natural phenomena and other patterns that may show some form of offbeat geometry. Smaller micro-drones (as small as an insect) can literally bug cult headquarters or spy on individuals.

The bulk of Sigma-level investigation, however, comes through passive or second-hand information: the family and friends of suspected cultists, businesses that may have inadvertently dealt with cult leaders and eyewitnesses that have viewed suspicious activity. In all cases, these pieces of information come from sources that are not directly affiliated with the cult itself. Rather, the information stems from outside sources who have dealt with the cult, thereby minimising any suspicion or counter-intelligence attempts.

Under normal circumstances – at least as normal as they get when you work for the Laundry – any new cult discovered by Laundry field agents is added to the Sigma list. During a post-operation debriefing, Laundry agents always have the opportunity to report any new or additional cult activity via Form 77-SIDE-G, which is filed with the Records Department.

### Boss! We Got One!

So, the question rises: once you've managed to isolate a would-be summoner, what do you do with him? One simply can't tell the would-be "opener of the Way" to simply knock it off.

Rather, the Laundry recommends a long retinue of deprogramming, under the supervision of the Counterpossession and Counter-Subversion departments. Often referred to as 'exit counselling', deprogramming a victim of cult influence typically consists of a five step process:

- Discredit or disrepute the cult leader. ("If he cared about you, why would he want to cut out Jim's eyes and feed them to the Lurker Beyond the Seals?")
- Present contradictions in ideology. ("Why would you even want to worship something that's simply going to come forth and crush everything you know within its tentacles?")
- The breaking point. ("It's OK...we know you didn't know better. You can cry now.")
- Self-expression. ("You went how long without sleep? I can't believe anyone would do that to someone like you...")
- Transference ("You know, you could help us out a lot. Just give us some information on where we can find the leader, and we can take care of everything.")

Deprogramming takes place at a special secure institution, referred to as 'Camp Sunshine'. Some cultists can be successfully reintegrated into normal society; others are doomed to be lifelong residents.



### Iota – Infiltration

If the Laundry requires additional information about a given cult – or if that cult is deemed dangerous enough to warrant further information-gathering – that cult is upgraded to Iota status, indicating advanced information-gathering and infiltration.

Due to a lack of manpower and the level of danger involved, Iota level investigation is rarely done by Laundry agents themselves. Rather, the majority of infiltrations are done through a proxy: either through micronised drones (mentioned earlier in Sigma) or through specially debriefed and deprogrammed cult agents. For more on how the Laundry deprogrammes existing cultists, see the opposite page (“Boss! I Got One!”)

Rarely, an actual Laundry agent is planted within a cult, in the hopes to gather information directly. However, Laundry upper management is well aware of the dangers this provides – leaked information, rogue agents, counter-infiltration of Laundry databases – and acts accordingly. However, when an agent is planted within a cult, his ‘handlers’ have specific guidelines for mandated contact, occult deprogramming and escape clauses for the planted agent. Safety, for both the Laundry agent and the Laundry itself is paramount.

One method of infiltration that is greatly preferred over the use of a Laundry agent is through the use of a ‘familiar’ (a small creature, bound with a level three

Destiny Entanglement) that can move on its own, while still providing accurate images and information to its user. While the Destiny Entanglement by itself can bind the creatures’ will to that of the caster for a time, this can come at a significant risk, as the Entanglement binds the mind of the caster to that of his subject. If the familiar dies or becomes incapacitated, the caster is at similar risk, to say nothing of viewing horrific, sanity-blasting images.

### The Dangers of the Double Agent

One of the riskiest manoeuvres in the Laundry’s investigative arsenal is the placement of a ‘double agent’ within the ranks of a cult: a loyal Laundry member, placed within the rank of a cult. This is often the best way to gather information on a cult, but also the most dangerous way and most likely to backfire.

While the Laundry certainly has more sleeper and double-agents in global cults than in the other occult intelligence organisations around the world, intelligence organisations rarely focus on indoctrination and brainwashing to the level many cults do. While a Laundry agent’s training may help him resist the influence of a cult, that tenuous grip on sanity wears as he participates in rituals, faces the various rites and daily activities of the cult and immerses himself in debauchery.

Worse, when a Laundry agent ‘goes native’, it becomes all the more likely that the cult will not only become aware of the Laundry’s interference (and thereby move against them!) but also to use the reprogrammed operative as a sleeper agent, feeding misinformation back to the Laundry, while simultaneously stealing valuable data, artefacts, and spell algorithms for the cult.

The order to place a Laundry agent in a cult as a double agent always comes after careful deliberation by high-ranking management. Such agents are always watched carefully by the Counter-Subversion department, even for years after an Iota-level investigation has ended. Most certainly, they don’t take such things lightly...



## Delta – Defamation

Once a cult has undergone Iota-level investigation, Monitoring may determine that the Laundry may need to take a more active role in confronting that cult's perceived threat. At this point, the cult is designated for defamation and indirect confrontation.

One of the most common – and most aggravating – methods of indirect confrontation in the intelligence community has been to prop up a proxy threat, in the hopes that the two groups will simply exhaust themselves facing one another. In modern intelligence, this occurs quite often: the United States, for example, providing arms for the Taliban in the hopes that they would resist Soviet influence in the 1980s. While detractors of this method cite the fatalities from Operation FLAMESKULL INTERMEZZO, none can deny the effectiveness of VENTURE BRAVO or UNDERBITE FLOWERS, each of which resulted in the total annihilation of the target cult and the acquisition of several new occult resources, including contacts amongst the survivors.

The use of a proxy threat tends to work best when the Laundry is able to “point them in the direction of one another and stand back”. Longer-lasting cults often have rivalries and vendettas that stretch back for generations, which the Laundry is able to use to play the groups off against one another. Doing so, however, is akin to lighting one's cigarette with a flamethrower... entirely possible, but just a touch on the dangerous side.

A safer way to go about such methods is through the inclusion of a second governmental body, such as the local police, Scotland Yard, the SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency) or MI5. For more information on how why these

organisations may get involved, see the sidebar Innocent Until Proven Guilty.

More level-headed advisees, however, have begun to advocate a more technological, precision-based approach, particularly in dealing with cults that have considerable resources of their own at their disposal. The core of these attacks come from the Laundry's IT department, creating denial-of-service errors on a cult's network using zombie botnets, as well as launching malware and virus-based attacks on cult-affiliated computer systems. While many older cults still resort to ritual-based magic rather than computational demonology, the most influential (and dangerous) cults have advanced their technology to match that the Laundry, the Black Chamber, and the rest of the worlds' occult intelligence divisions. Assaulting these cults through their primary means of spellcasting becomes a crucial part of the Laundry's ongoing efforts to control cult activity.

A typical anti-cult malware program is not simply a virus or Trojan, but rather comes packaged with a payload of Entropy Manipulation algorithms meant specifically to erase data and wreak havoc on electronics. Such a program is designed not only to eliminate any malicious incantations or the like on the potential cultist's hard drive, but also to self-replicate and to spread to said cultist's neighbours and compatriots. The Laundry's most commonly used malware program is referred to as ARNESON PAYBACK, and is currently in its fourth incarnation (4.42 to be precise).

If a cult uses traditional spellcasting instead of computational demonology, that opens up a different set of denial-of-sorcery tricks. Spiking the mouse blood with gasoline, moving the ley lines or just summoning one of the cult's patron demons before they get to him and turning him into a Laundry asset are all options.

### Innocent Until Proven Guilty?

Being a cultist isn't illegal. Worshipping tentacle beasties from beyond the stars as if they were gods, in the hope that you might get eaten first is perfectly legal and protected, if somewhat foolhardy and generally a poor idea. Because of this, cults are particularly difficult to arrest, detain or prosecute, despite their desires to call upon Iog-Sotot and “rend open the 87th veil”. However, cults have a tendency to accumulate lesser charges that can allow local law enforcement or Scotland Yard to take action, based off of information specially vetted by the Laundry.

Most of these charges tend to come against the leader of a given cult. Most cults – both modern and archaic – tend to be focused around a central, charismatic individual capable of convincing others to follow his lead. Due to the necessities of the job, most of these cult leaders do their best to live ‘off the grid’, refusing to fill out any form of documentation or necessary governmental forms.

Usually, this occurs when tax time rolls around. Yearly income tax must be filed through HM Revenue and Customs for all citizens, through many cult leaders refuse to simply bow

down and pay Her Royal Majesty her natural due. Numerous cult leaders have been detained based on years of back income tax claims, resulting in charges based on tax evasion and tax non-compliance. Many of these cult leaders have attempted to claim excision based on religious grounds, but as the majority of cults are not recognised as tax-free non-profit organisations, such claims are disputable.

When belief of tax evasion or non-compliance is found - most usually during the Iota or Delta phases of a cult investigation - the Laundry typically shares its information with HMRC. A tax-evading cult leader can then be detained indefinitely, pending sentencing, though most detainment lasts for less than a month. However, the benefit to this method is the ability to seize cult assets in lieu of taxation. Many important Laundry artefacts have been added to the collection, simply because Gilbert L. Cult-Leader didn't feel like filling out his yearly income statement.

Similarly, many cult leaders view their subordinates much as chattel, meant to be used up for the chanting and blood sacrifices, exploited for their personal assets, then discarded. In many cases, cult leaders also maintain control of their cult members through regimens of hard physical labour, nutrient deprivation (and occasional starvation), and sleep deprivation. While subjecting willing adults to such behaviours is nominally legal (if bloody crazy and massively unethical), subjecting minors to such conditions is tantamount to child abuse and neglect, which comprise a range of charges under Section 224 Criminal Justice Act 2003. Prolonged abuse or neglect cases can result in a maximum sentencing of up to 10 years of incarceration. Cases involving sexual assault or molestation of minors incur further charges, which can result in life imprisonment.

While rarer than abuse or tax-related charges, some cults can also be tracked down via missing person or kidnapping charges. Obviously, these are more serious charges, but are often difficult to prove, if a given person has been brainwashed or programmed as a member of the cult. However, an ongoing investigation can establish a governmental liaison within the cult, keeping the group from taking any "drastic" measures, for fear of further repercussions.

Weapons charges, as well, are often commonplace in cults. Cult leaders often fear governmental reprisal, in the fear of being forcibly shut down or detained. As such, financially affluent cultists often make ties with underground figures and arms smugglers, in the hopes to arm themselves against federal backlash. The Laundry, while having a somewhat uncomfortable relationship with local police, often has great success in disarming militant cults by cutting off the cults' arms suppliers, then offering plea deals to the suppliers for information on their customers. When a violent cult is fully investigated or raided, the illegal arms found within a cult compound can often go a long way towards providing tangible charges against a cult leader.

Obviously, numerous other charges can also be piled on would-be cultists. Theft of an artefact from a museum or historical landmark carries a penalty of up to seven years imprisonment. Animal cruelty cases (those blood sacrifices have to come from somewhere!) carry stiff fines and even imprisonment for repeat or egregious offenders. Trespassing, even, can incarcerate a cultist or cult group for up to 48 hours, giving the Laundry ample time to take action.

Of course, if the cult presents a clear and present danger to the stability of reality within the United Kingdom - i.e. they're actually able to summon a class three or greater entity into this continuum, or are prepared to something equally threatening like a mass stoner attack - then the gloves come off. The paperwork can be filed once the cultists are all dead.



## Epsilon – Elimination

The most drastic of the four philosophies in the SIDE categorisation comes in the form of elimination, representing a devoted and total eradication of a cult's influence. No Laundry official recommends Epsilon status lightly, as it essentially labels the cult as a terrorist organisation with whom there is no negotiation, only sanctioning. Further, a group under Epsilon status becomes a devoted enemy of the Laundry, often seeking out retribution as Laundry and MI5 agents do their best to shut the cult down permanently.

Before advancing a cult to Epsilon status, a joint meeting must be called between Monitoring, Diplomacy (Unconventional), Predictive Branch and the Black Assizes, all under the watchful eye of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Interdepartmental Liaison Group, with the Dustbin (MI5) inevitably sticking their noses in too. A unanimous decision must be achieved by all members, in order to move a cult from Delta to Epsilon status – a rare feat, indeed!

Once a cult reaches Epsilon status, it comes under constant surveillance, both via technological and arcane means. Typically, Epsilon-level cults fall into one of two categories: the ones which are taken down in a single, precise strike by valiant OCCULUS, SAS, and Laundry agents, and the ones with whom direct assault would not work, instead beginning a protracted battle of Tentacled Alien Death Chess. Cultists of the latter are constantly sought out and isolated, in the hopes to deprogramme them while away from the cult itself. The Laundry continually attacks from every viable route, utilising financial, social, psychological and cyberwarfare techniques to confront the cult on a daily basis.

MI5 and OCCULUS have learned much from the actions of global intelligence organisations, when dealing with cults, particularly the actions of the American FBI and CIA in

their dealings with the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in 1993, as well as the deaths caused at Ruby Ridge, Idaho in 1992. However, recent steps in small, squad-based combat against terrorist organisations in the Middle East have been even more useful when preparing an Epsilon-level confrontation.

Ideally, any physical confrontation will result in the cult's unconditional surrender. Note that this has never, ever happened. While even the most 'transcendent' cults might claim that their souls and minds are beyond their physical forms, nearly every cultist resists when faced with their own mortality at the end of an MP5. During a raid, however, it is usually the most fervent (or brainwashed) members of the cult that resort to armed combat, arson and hostage-taking, even as their less-insane counterparts surrender. However, the game changes significantly if a cult has access to computational demonology, ritual magic, or occult instruments and technology. These assets become the priority target in an Epsilon raid, even ahead of hostages or cult leaders. The Laundry would much rather be able to confiscate an unauthorised copy of the Wormius Necronomicon on a cult's server than try to catch the actual cultist using it. Depriving a cult leader of their necessary materials effectively disarms them, minimising the very real threat of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN for another day.

In actuality, Epsilon-level raids often have a high toll in human life. Both cultists and Laundry agents alike often die during these raids, as factions clash violently. A greater risk than simple firearms, though, comes when desperate cultists attempt to activate some occult artefact or summon a creature from outside our own reality. In several cases, the highest casualties during an Epsilon-level raid have come when some would-be sorcerer releases a dormant ANNING BLACK specimen or an immature GENOA FRACTAL experiment.



Epsilon-level raids are most often executed by specially trained members of Field Support, in conjunction with SAS 21.

## Previous Cult Investigations

Since its split from the SOE after World War II, the Laundry has investigated numerous cults throughout the British Isles and across the world.

### CASE MOUTHY INTERLOPER

The Followers of Fachan believed that a creature of Scottish legend – the titular Fachan – represented the ideal individual. Unfortunately, as Fachan was notable for having one arm, one leg and one eye, the majority of the Followers resorted to bodily mutilation to better emulate their patron. After significant investigation and conjecture, Laundry arcane researchers determined that Fachan was actually an entity referred to as Y'Golnac, better known amongst Laundry officials as MOUTHY INTERLOPER.

Over a period of three years, the Laundry launched a series of financial attacks and staged kidnappings, attempting to cripple the Followers, but to no avail. In conjunction with MI5 and SAS, the Laundry launched a raid against the Followers of Fachan stronghold in late 1968. 14 cult members were killed, but nearly 75 were saved and deprogrammed, sparing those individuals from a miserable, deformed existence. Several high-ranking members amongst those that surrendered later were vetted and deprogrammed by Laundry internal

security and brought into the fold. Numerous arcane texts and artefacts were brought into the Laundry archives that day, and the raid was marked as a total success.

### CASE FOURTEEN GREY

A cult under Delta-level investigation – the Winding Cairn – had sent a delegation of members to Sicily to trade a series of powerful arcane artefacts to noted members of VEVAK, the Laundry's Iranian counterpart. The Winding Cairn had gotten wind of the Laundry's continual monitoring activities, and hoped to procure some conventional arms from VEVAK, fearing Laundry reprisal.

A PATROCLES LEGION team attempted to intercept the delegation before the trade could occur. Unfortunately for the Laundry agents already on-site, the PATROCLES LEGION team was late arriving, and the trade had already begun. The VEVAK operatives had requested a demonstration of the artefacts, one of which was capable of generating a level four Entropy Manipulation, causing massive seismic activity throughout the area.

Unbeknownst to any of the factions, a DEEP SEVEN specimen lay dormant under the site chosen for the trade. When the Winding Cairn leader activated the artefact, the seismic disruption awakened the DEEP SEVEN, causing it to attack all nearby.

While Lockhart and one of his men managed to escape, it was originally believed that three died in the incident. Unfortunately, this was only partially the case. Two of the





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

men – McDonough and Miller – died in the attack. However, the final Laundry officer, Marcus Clifford, was only knocked unconscious, and was taken by the Winding Cairn.

Six months later, Clifford resurfaced. He was quickly brought in for interrogation and auditing. Unfortunately, he never made it that far. As soon as Clifford was subjected to a standard level two truth geas, he immediately went berserk, drawing a hidden sidearm and killing four Laundry agents. Luckily, a nearby agent was able to knock the gun out of Clifford's hand and wrestle him to the ground. Clifford was placed in temporary holding but, upon being left alone, killed himself. the Laundry, to this day, has not deduced the methods used to turn Clifford or defeat their own loyalty wards.

Following this incident, the Winding Cairn was immediately upgraded to Epsilon-status. While a raid on the Winding Cairn headquarters is still being planned, numerous agents have an axe to grind following Clifford's betrayal.

### A Cog in the Works – Cultist Infiltration

Following the results of Project FOURTEEN GRAY, the fear that one's partner might be 'working for the other side'

has become a very real, very likely premise. Confronting the very real chance that your co-workers are brainwashed members of a cult may be even more terrifying than a dreaded audit. While the Laundry has several counter-intelligence methodologies in place to prevent information from leaking out, the likelihood that a cult member has already infiltrated the Laundry is incredibly likely... and frightening.

Even from the beginning, any counter-intelligence operation – whether it be Laundry-initiated or as a response to cult activity – requires incredible psychological scrutiny. Any agent having known direct contact with cult agents immediately enters additional screening by Counter-Subversion. If a Laundry agent is believed to be leeching information, they are immediately taken before the Auditors for... let's call it "advanced questioning".

Unfortunately, not every cultist infiltrator is easily identified. Binding and silence geases are commonly found amongst cults, which make the use of compulsion magic a gamble at best. Oftentimes, the Laundry must simply resort to good, old-fashioned spy techniques and information gathering. It's a deadly game, but one that no one in the Laundry can afford to lose...

#### Twenty Cult Plots for Crafty GMs

1. Users of a certain smartphone app begin forwarding funds to a mysterious charitable organisation.
2. A prominent House of Commons representative begins acting erratically, making late-night visits to a sordid part of London.
3. After returning from a mission, several Laundry agents are held under observation. The PCs must investigate their comrades, but are not briefed on exactly what those agents were up to.
4. Stone monoliths in Wales are being extracted and moved to points unknown.
5. Following a major investigation, Laundry agents begin to fall prey to mysterious 'accidents'.
6. An underground Brighton nightclub is rumoured to have occult leanings.
7. A cult leader defects to the Laundry, claiming that things have "spiralled out of control."
8. A communal farm in the Lake District has an unseasonal bumper crop...and some alarming philosophical beliefs.
9. A hospital psychological staff begins experimenting with the patients in service to the Sleeper in Dreams.
10. A toxic gas is released on the London Underground. A group calling themselves "the Supreme Truth" claims responsibility.
11. Protesters, led by a prominent international starlet, infect a series of vaccines with something much-less wholesome.
12. A group of born-again Christians 'fear divine wrath after their multi-storey statue of Jesus Christ is struck by lightning.
13. A celestial event – a comet's passing or a notable eclipse – brings about hysteria in one small Yorkshire Dales town.
14. Laundry agents must extract a child from a would-be cultist, on grounds of child neglect and endangerment.
15. Tax files necessary for prosecution of a would-be cult leader have gone missing.
16. A semi-popular heavy metal band has literally gained 'cult' popularity, as a sect of their listeners begins to believe their lyrics are religious doctrine.
17. Artefacts collected from a series of cult raids begin disappearing. Is a Laundry agent involved?
18. Agents must oversee a government auction in which materials formerly owned by a cult leader are sold to the highest bidder.
19. Individuals begin appearing in London emergency rooms with self-inflicted flagellation wounds. The individuals refuse to give their names or the reasons behind their wounds.
20. Rival cults begin a violent war on the streets of Manchester, as each pursues a pagan artefact beneath the city itself.

# THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON - OVERVIEW -

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The Esoteric Order of Dagon

**CULT OVERVIEW:** The Esoteric Order of Dagon is the term used for the loosely associated collection of cults, families, isolated communities and other adherents of the former BLUE HADES terrestrial network. Up until the Agreement of the Azores, BLUE HADES used these cults as their primary channel for information gathering and action on the surface.

**HISTORY:** Cults of this type existed across the world, notably in Norfolk (Dunwich), Scotland (Durness), New England (Innsmouth), Micronesia (Pohnpei), as well as Spain, Portugal (the Azores), New Zealand, Japan, Siberia and Indonesia. The cults began as BLUE HADES breeding programs; according to cult records and debriefings, BLUE HADES offered financial and magical support to struggling communities in exchange for breeding rights. Later, hybrid descendants of the Deep Ones would move into positions of influence or authority, backed by the wealth and power of the cult. While each cult outpost was originally connected only to the local BLUE HADES settlement, the growth of transoceanic travel and communication in the modern era meant that there was limited contact between various EOD 'families'. The cult also expanded away from its traditional coastal strongholds, and became increasingly involved in organised crime and politics.

The destruction of the Innsmouth branch in 1928-9 was a significant blow to the cult. The cult leaders attempted to regroup and rearm, although their ability to do so was limited by the US Government's increased awareness of the EOD. This effort, while it met with some success, was entirely undercut by the Benthic Treaty. Articles 3 and 4 both limit BLUE HADES activity above the 1-kilometre border line. While the breeding grounds and cult enclaves are permitted to exist, the treaty effectively cut the EOD cultists off from their BLUE HADES patrons. The cult was no longer useful to BLUE HADES – from their perspective, the cult's purpose was to observe and ensure that the surface civilisation did not trigger CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN prematurely, and the Benthic Treaty gave them a far more effective and direct method of achieving this purpose.

BLUE HADES no longer needed their worshippers.

The worshippers, however, still wanted BLUE HADES.

**BELIEFS:** Various branches of the cult have various different eschatologies, but all revolve around becoming BLUE HADES hybrids and living under the sea. The degree of worship of hostile exonomies varies from cult to cult. The Pohnpei branch, for example, actively sought to recover and revive ANNING BLACK and other unclassified entities, and there are suspected correlations between the Free Kirk of Durness and CODICIL BLACK SKULL geometries.

Since the 'great betrayal', most EOD cults have also adopted the belief that the various Benthic signatory governments 'tricked' or 'forced' BLUE HADES into cutting off contact. They therefore blame the authorities for, effectively, locking them out of 'Heaven'.

**STRUCTURE:** EOD cults all centre around a small coastal community, where some or all of the population are Type II Hybrids. The elder members of the community normally serve as religious leaders, transmitting and interpreting BLUE HADES instructions to the laity. In cases where a cult has metastasised, cult members have left the small coastal community and integrated into the surrounding area, while still remaining loyal to their families and the Order.

**ASSETS:** Varies by cult. The traditional gifts of BLUE HADES were fish and immortality, with gold as an optional extra. Some cults also gained access to BLUE HADES thaumaturgy or biotechnology.

**ONGOING OPERATIONS:** Officially, none – the Benthic Treaty restricts BLUE HADES to a limited sphere of influence, and the cult no longer has any sanction from the deeps. To avoid diplomatic incidents, Laundry policy is to contain the Esoteric Order instead of eliminating it. Many former EOD members have found employment in the Laundry, or are claiming state benefits in exchange for not worshipping eldritch horrors.

However, individual cultists or small cells may continue to engage in hostile operations. The Diplomatic Office (Unconventional) and Inhuman Resources should be included on the distribution list for any reports related to the EOD, and such reports should be classified ROTTEN FISH in addition to any other relevant keywords. Maybe we can convince the Deep Ones to clean up their own messes...



## Cult Overview

**NOTE:** The term 'Esoteric Order of Dagon' is taken from the Innsmouth branch of the cult. Other cults had other names for themselves, but the EOD name is the common term used by OCCINTEL groups.

Say you're a spy, playing the Great Game in the mountains of Afghanistan. Englishmen and Russians at the turn of the last century, Russians again in the eighties, and the Americans at the turn of this century – it doesn't matter. You find a village overlooking a strategic pass, and decide to recruit the villagers as your agents. You bribe them, tell them they're serving a higher purpose, arm them with weapons that are military surplus to you but cutting-edge to them. You make them think of you as a god – and then wonder why they turn on you when you abandon them.

The parallel isn't exact, but it's a useful thought experiment – the Order of Dagon is an abandoned network of agents, left stranded and alone by a shift in geopolitics. Some of the agents retired, forgetting their former lives and missions. The fat, bald guy behind the counter in the fish and chip shop, the homeless woman who stinks like something dragged up from the sea, the nerd with the coke-bottle glasses and the skin condition and the PhD in mathematics – they're all descended from the cult, but are unaware of their heritage. Their grandparents may have dreamed of immortality and the triumph of the Deep Ones; their great-grandparents may be swimming under the waves, but their parents lived through the great betrayal and gave up on the cult years ago.

Other agents may keep to the old ways at home, but are content to sit and wait. Hybrids sit around in the extant cult centres like Dunwich or Durness or California, staring at the sea and waiting for the Change to take them. The Laundry (or the Black Chamber, or whoever) keeps a close watch on these 'reservations', ensuring that the locals don't get into trouble or stray too far. The cultists are allowed to continue their religious ceremonies, as long as they're suitable defanged, and are kept on government support.

The dangerous agents, though, are the Dagonic equivalent of the mujahideen. Their aims include:

- Re-establishing regular contact between the EOD and BLUE HADES.
- Conducting dangerous rituals and summonings.
- 'Punishing' western governments and OCCINTEL agencies for the 'great betrayal'.
- Advancing CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, in the misguided belief that this event correlates to the return

of BLUE HADES and/or certain economic entities such as Dagon.

Countering these rogue Dagonists is tricky, despite the Laundry's connections with the cult. Even if Sally Gilman is a card-carrying member of the Laundry, she might be unwilling to report that her cousin Bobby Gilman summons shoggoths. Family's family, after all, and fishy blood is a lot thicker than water. As for making enquiries through BLUE HADES, the Laundry suspects that some Deep Ones use the cult as a way around Articles 3 and 4 of the Benthic Treaty.

For the purposes of this document, we'll call the squat-at-home-and-wait-for-orders guys Reformed Dagonists, the forget-the-cult-and-all-its-weirdness guys Lapsed Dagonists and the Laundry-screwed-us-over-revenge-at-all-costs bunch the Rogue Dagonists.

### Hybrid Characters

Rules for Deep One hybrids as player characters can be found in the *Laundry Files Agent's Handbook* supplement. In summary: hybrids have a Taint score that works like SAN in reverse; you gain Taint through doing magic fishy things, like worshipping Dagon and hanging around live summoning nodes; when your Taint hits 100, it's off to the sea with you forever.

Hybrids are also bigger, tougher and better swimmers than normal humans, even before they become the immortal amphibian children of Dagon and Hydra.

## Beliefs

Teachings vary from one branch of the cult to another. The Innsmouth Esoteric Order, for example, taught the worship of Dagon and Hydra. The Durness branch, though, worshipped the Sleeper in the Pyramid in addition to venerating other alien gods. These teachings may reflect the beliefs of the local Deep Ones (in which case, there's an apocalyptically included BLUE HADES settlement off the Scottish coast), or may be misinterpretations by the Dagonists (implying that the Deep Ones pay little attention to what their agents believe, as long as they get the job done).

Traditional elements to Dagonist theology are, predictably:

- **Deep Ones Ancestor Worship:** The cult venerates their ancestors who have already become full-fledged hybrids, as their full Deep One progenitors. (Ancestor

## THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON

worship is always popular in cults where your immortal ancestors pop in for tea every few years.) Depending on the cult's particular theology, 'ancestor' may be defined as the Deep Ones who founded the cult, the semi-mythical elder Deep Ones or some other tentacled deity.

As hybrid ancestors take an active interest in the running of the cult for decades or centuries after they transform, Esoteric Order cults are invariably organised along family lines. (*"The Fishworts are always in charge – if you've got a problem with that, take it up with Granny Fishwort!"*)



- **The Truth Is Only For Those Of The Blood:** The Esoteric Order of Dagon does not proselytise. The cult's teachings are only for those descended from Deep Ones. Outsiders may be recruited into the cult (normally through marriage), but these newcomers are never allowed to learn the deeper mysteries. The families that have proved more adept at producing successful Hybrids become the leaders of the cult, and are permitted to learn even more secrets from the Deep Ones.
- **Trespassing in Sacred Places is Forbidden:** All 'traditional' Esoteric Order strongholds are located in isolated coastal locations, normally within a short distance of a Deep One settlement. (Then again, given the Deep One population, any coastal location is within

a short distance of a huge Deep One settlement.) Outsiders are not welcomed in these communities. The cultists pressure visitors and locals not of the blood to leave; those who pry into the secrets of the cult must be killed, ideally through human sacrifice. The Dagonist temple is the centre of the community, and all cultists are obliged to support the church through tithes and labour.

- **Wealth Comes From The Sea:** The Deep One super-civilisation has access to vastly more resources than humanity. Their alien science produces unlimited energy; they can extract minerals and metals from deep-sea vents or mining, or by elemental transmutations. Supporting surface cults is not a drain on the Deep One economy. The gold and fish given as gifts to surface colonies are the Deep One equivalent of shiny glass beads traded to primitives. (The real importance of the gold jewellery bequeathed upon surface cults is not in its substance, but in its geometrical shape.)

Despite being, effectively, subsidised colonies of a greater power, Dagonist settlements rarely dominate their surrounding territories. Innsmouth, for example, was a decaying and poverty-stricken town even though the Deep Ones provided gold and good fishing. The Dagonist mistrust of outsiders ensures that they are rarely able to fully exploit their economic advantages. Certain Greek shipping empires, though, can trace their fortune back to unusually wealthy coastal villages...

As cult theologies go, this is a comparatively benign one. The Dagonists anticipate an eschaton in which the seas rise, the Deep Ones ascend into glory, Dagon becomes King of the World and his hybrid followers are transformed to be with him forever. Humanity will, of course, be wiped out. The Dagonists are content to wait until the stars are right, and do not generally attempt to hasten this apocalypse. All things happen in their time.

Until the stars come right, traditional Dagonists are harmless as cults go. If you can turn a blind eye to their loathsome appearance and the occasional mysterious disappearance, and if you don't trespass in certain coves, and if you can ignore the smell of rotten fish, then they won't bother you... except in your dreams.

Of course, that rose-tinted, fish-scented view of Dagonism is outdated. It still applies to traditional cults, but the radical 'rogue' faction has a somewhat different outlook. Their tenets are:

- **We Were Betrayed:** The renegades believe that they were unjustly denied their rightful inheritance (immortality under the sea) by the perverse machinations of the government. Some cells also



blame the Deep Ones; either the Deep Ones should have pushed more, the betrayal is a test of faith or the Deep Ones themselves are corrupt and venal. The cult's actions to avenge this betrayal are therefore wholly righteous and justified.

- **Deep Ones Ancestor Worship:** The rogues continue to venerate the Deep Ones. Without direct contact and oversight by Deep Ones, rogue cultists seek out more lore and magic. They dig into the ruins of old Dagonist colonies, they try to reverse-engineer Deep One sorcery (and apply modern computer demonology techniques to it) and go beyond the bounds observed by the traditionalists.
- **The Truth Is Only For Those Of The Blood:** This tenet determines the structure of cult cells. Those with a blood connection to BLUE HADES are the leaders and prophets of the cult. Unblooded members are permitted to join and when the cult is reunited with their watery masters, these unblooded outsiders will breed with the Deep Ones and bear immortal children.

The cult targets Lapsed Dagonists, as well as those with BLUE HADES ancestors who are unaware of their curious heritage, with the intent of recruiting them - by force if necessary. Without fresh infusions of BLUE HADES genetic material, they have to conserve and utilise every scrap they can find.

- **Wealth Comes From The Sea:** The rogue cult still has connections to shipping, fisheries and other nautical activity, but has diversified into other fields; notably smuggling and human trafficking. The BLUE HADES spells that quell storms and protect boats can be adapted to hide speedboats and ground customs patrol helicopters.
- **The Stars Must Be Brought To Rightness:** The rogue cult seeks to bring about the end of the world as we know it. Most cult cells believe that this will be achieved through the Deep Ones, and seek to overthrow or destroy the governments that signed the Benthic Treaty. Others take a more direct approach, and intend on invoking higher-order entities such as the Sleeper in the Pyramid to bring about CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

## History

Numerous accounts and debriefings involving BLUE HADES identify Father Dagon and Mother Hydra as entities of great importance to the Deep Ones. Suggestions indicate that they are somewhere on a continuum between 'ancient and especially powerful BLUE HADES specimens',

'mythical progenitors' or 'lesser exonomic entities'. Of the two, Dagon is traditionally associated with contact between BLUE HADES and humans. Most pro-Deep One cults venerate Dagon in some aspect.

The first appearance of Dagon as a figure occurred in approximately 2500 BC, in various Amorite texts as one of three primary deities leading over a pantheon that included 200-odd beings. Various attempts to trace the etymology of Dagon have been inconclusive: while in Samaritan and Hebrew, the name refers to 'grain' or 'plenty', Aramaic and Middle Hebrew texts associate the word with either 'sacrifice' or 'to be cut open'. BLUE HADES recruitment tactics often involve either gifts and blessings (good fishing, gold from the depths, immortality) or tactical assistance (tidal waves, destruction of one's enemies with mysterious plagues).

In all cases, early worship of Dagon was believed to be vicious and bloody. In relating a dream to King Zimri-Lim of Mari in the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC, one chronicler and court official describes Dagon promising victory in battle against the rival Yaminites in exchange for servitude and prayer. Dagon, in the dream, promises to "have the kings of the Yaminites cooked on a fisherman's spit". This reference to fishing implements is believed to be the first documented association between Dagon and the sea.

Worship of Dagon was continued throughout the Bronze Age and into the Iron Age throughout the Middle East. However, with the advent of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, worship of Dagon slowly began to die out. Dagon is referenced several times in the Christian Bible, most notably as the primary deity of the Philistines, in whose temple King Saul's head was displayed as a trophy. More notably, though, those same Philistines captured an Israelite artefact referred to as the Ark of Yahweh—known also as the Ark of the Covenant—which was then taken to the temple of Dagon. A massive statue of Dagon there is described in the Book of Samuel as a fish-like monstrosity, with the head and hands of a man, but the lower body of a sea-creature. That statue, however, shattered after merely one night in the presence of the Ark of Yahweh, apparently displaying the power of the Israelites' god. Following the Ark's removal from the temple, references to the Ark disappear.

However, as the 'people of the Book' rose in the Near East and the West, Dagon worship was relegated to pagans and outcasts, who were constantly and consistently hunted for heresy and blasphemy. King Philip IV of France even implied worship of Dagon – along with other pagan deities Baal and Baphomet – resulting in the destruction of the Knights Templar in 1310. Dagon worship was driven to the literal fringes of the world, as the cult retreated to its heartlands: the coastal villages where, on certain nights, the elder ones crawled out of the sea.

## Structure

Traditional cells of the cult follow the familiar pattern: coastal village, isolated community, weird church, fish sex overseen by sinister, hidebound hereditary priesthoods. The pattern repeats from the shores of New England to the islands of the South Pacific, from Norway to Patagonia.

At the bottom of the totem pole are the unblooded relatives and those without sufficient Deep One ancestry to successfully change. They're loyal to the cult, but will never share in the watery rewards of Dagon. Their role in the cult is to support and conceal the hybrids and the priests, and to deal with outsiders (that's deal as in 'run the local guest house and spy on visitors' as well as 'go all Sweeney Todd on the visitors, with a shoggoth playing the role of the trapdoor').

It's possible for an unblooded cultist to rise in the cult hierarchy, if they have useful skills and are ruthlessly ambitious. These cultists may never have religious positions in the community (not unless there are no blooded cultists left to speak for the Deep Ones), but can become enforcers, advisors, assassins or take control of the cult's financial assets.

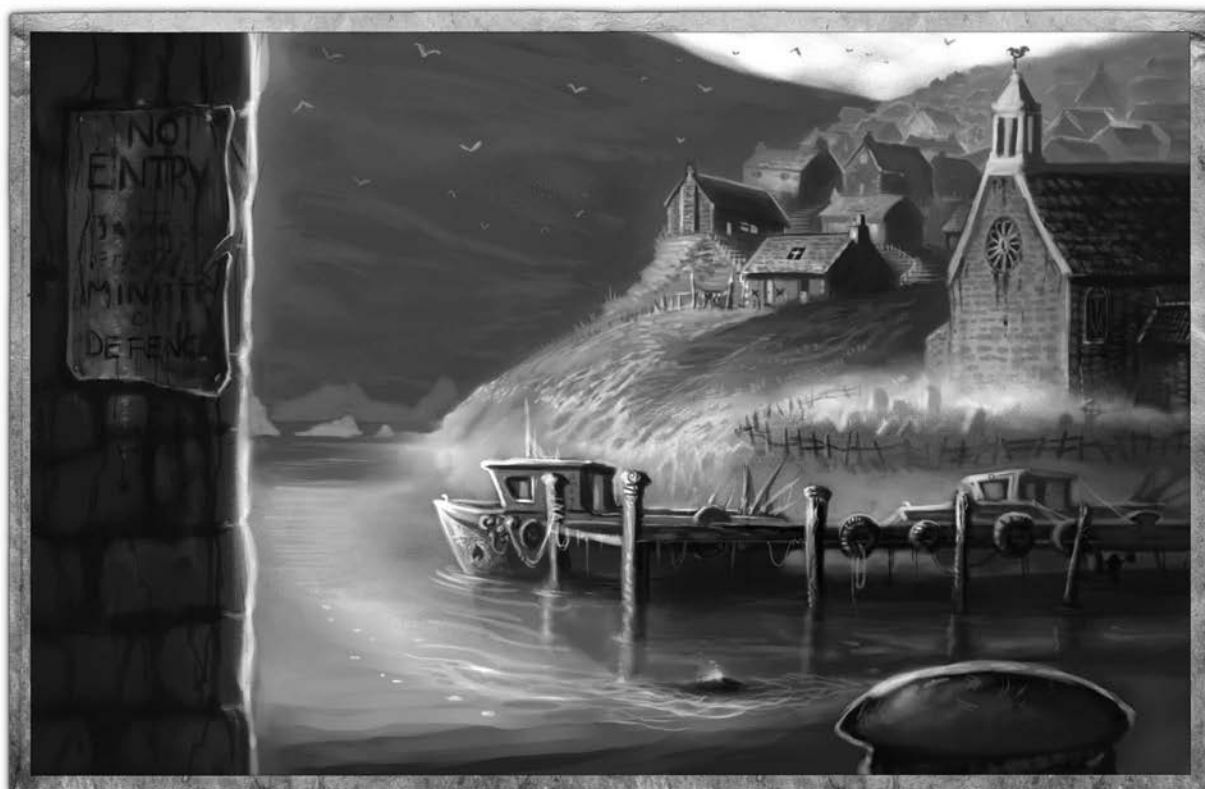
Next come the young blooded who have not yet begun the change. Exposure to thaumic fields triggers and hastens the BLUE HADES transformation; assuming the standard (mildly elevated) flux common to EOD cult centres, it takes fifteen to thirty years to begin the change, and another five to fifteen years to complete it. The change can be arrested (but not

reversed) through sorcerous manipulation and cult leaders use this as a reward mechanism. Fail in your duties and your eventual ascension will be postponed for another decade.

Before they change, young blooded cultists are the rank and file of the cult, although they are never used as cannon fodder. A hybrid looks forward to an immortal existence under the sea; why risk your life during the larval 'human' stage? Therefore, if the cult is forced to engage a foe directly, they use unblooded acolytes or overwhelming force. Lone cultists are cautious and shy away from danger. Once a young blooded begins to change, it becomes progressively more difficult to conceal their hybrid nature from the outside world. Any EOD cult stronghold therefore has hiding places for their hybrids. In Innsmouth, they lived behind closed doors; in Imbocca, the cult hybrids lurked in caves and tunnels under the village. The Polynesian cults have island refuges that are only for hybrids.

The inner circle of the cult consists of the elders of the cult families and the church leaders. These leaders are usually fully transformed hybrids who return from the sea, or especially powerful sorcerers. Of course, these days you can add 'social workers', 'case officers' and 'anthropologists' to the roster of inner circle members. The Esoteric Order – in the UK at least – is neutered and controlled. These cults still possess a considerable magical arsenal, so it's more cost-effective for the UK government to pension the cultists off instead of pursuing the Innsmouth solution.

Plus, these days, cultists have lawyers.





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

Rogue cells follow more conventional cult patterns - one charismatic cult leader, a bunch of enforcers and lesser priests, and a lot more clueless followers and dupes. The leader and most of the enforcers are hybrids, while the followers are unblooded. Cult leaders use their followers for sexual gratification, and to propagate Deep One genetics.

The rogue cult uses the Esoteric Order church as a model. Cell enforcers are deacons or acolytes, cell leaders are priests or arch-priests. Advancement in the cult involves religious rituals, human sacrifice and lots of chanting. The cult leaders operate in impenetrable secrecy; they dispatch relatives to set up cells to carry out arcane terrorist operations. The cult is an international organisation. The original leaders were all members of American or European Dagonist communities, but ever since the cult began recruiting in the Pacific, its centre of gravity has shifted eastwards, and the cult leadership now gathers at Irem in the Middle East more often than anywhere else.

Each cell operates independently except when they need added resources, in which case they pass a request up to the cult leaders, who co-ordinate activity between cells. Secure communications go through the dream realm, while

electronic messages get routed through an offshore facility called Seaward - an artificial island built in World War II as a gun emplacement that was claimed by squatters in the 60s. The cult took it over in the eighties, and upgraded the station's computer systems along with its arsenal. The Royal Navy doesn't like to admit it, but the cult managed to smuggle Libyan-built anti-aircraft guns and Otomat anti-ship missiles to Seaward.

The cult's ruling council is a conclave of nineteen. Most are former heads of Esoteric Order of Dagon churches, or their kin. They all lost influence after the Benthic Treaty. Nine members of the conclave are still in positions of authority in Traditionalist communities, and must dodge the Laundry (or equivalent) handlers to conduct cult business. Another six are outside Laundry surveillance; three are internationally wanted criminals and are on Interpol's books as well as the Laundry's. The identity of the remaining cultists is a mystery - they may be fully fledged BLUE HADES.

### Notable Members

#### Eugene Marsh

Marsh is Innsmouth royalty; he's a direct descendant of Obed Marsh himself. Eugene's grandfather escaped the raid on Innsmouth, and the family moved to Newfoundland and later to England. They abandoned the Esoteric Order faith and hid from both the Federal authorities and their former kin. Eugene rediscovered the family secret when he was seventeen, when the dreams started. He studied mathematics and computers at Cambridge, and spent the summers visiting various Dagonist sites in secret. When he turned 23, he broke with his family and rededicated himself to the cause of the EOD.

Since then, he has continued to travel the world, rallying isolated hybrid communities back to the cult. He has dual passport status and access to the Marsh fortune, and the Marsh name still holds weight in certain occult circles. Despite his best efforts, though, he has failed to make direct contact with the Deep Ones themselves, which is a point of frustration and shame for Eugene. Should he obtain the blessing of a full BLUE HADES, he would be in position to make a play for ascension to the cult's ruling conclave.

**STR** 16    **CON** 15    **SIZ** 15    **INT** 18    **POW** 16  
**DEX** 10    **CHA** 7    **EDU** 18    **SAN** 0    **HP** 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Handgun 65%, damage 1d10

**Skills:** Brawl 55%, Command 40%, Computer Use 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Dodge 30%, Drop Family Name 70%, Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Knowledge (Philosophy) 60%, Research 70%, Science (Mathematics) 80%, Science (Thaumaturgy) 30%, Sense 60%, Sorcery 65%, Swim 90%, Yearning Desire to Replace Family He Rejected With Deep Ones 90%

Any followers of the Esoteric Order of Dagon may re-roll any one failed skill check per encounter when acting to defend or obey Eugene.



# THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON

## Dr Lynn Gilman

Unusually for such a dangerous member of the cult, Dr Gilman has no hybrid ancestry (she took her husband's name when she married). Dr Gilman is a medical researcher and geneticist, who met Wilbur Gilman through her work. Wilbur was a hybrid who was misdiagnosed with Noonan syndrome, a hereditary genetic condition. She began studying Gilman's hybrid genetics, and became obsessed with him. The Laundry attempted to recruit her, but the attempt was botched and resulted in the death of Wilbur.

Lynn continued her research into hybrid genetics and adopted increasingly unethical methods as her obsession grew. The cult funded her experiments, and supplied her with lab equipment and genetic samples. In the past, she has used fertility clinics as cover for her work in triggering latent hybrids and introducing BLUE HADES genetic material into the human population; she dropped off the Laundry's radar in 2009. She was either eliminated by a rival, or else the Esoteric Order of Dagon has sufficient confidence in her research to provide her with a custom-built research laboratory. Psychological profiling of Dr. Gilman suggests that she considers BLUE HADES to be a higher form of life, and that hybrids are the future of humanity. She has no genetic link to BLUE HADES in her own history, although some of her experiments involve retroviral therapy and transfusions designed to create hybridisation directly.

**STR** 8    **CON** 13    **SIZ** 11    **INT** 17    **POW** 10  
**DEX** 14    **CHA** 10    **EDU** 21    **SAN** 0    **HP** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Scalpel 40%, damage 1d3+1, Syringe 55%, damage 1 + Poison (usually POT28 neurotoxin or POT20 sedative)

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Disguise 50%, Fanatic Fish Fetish 75%, Fast Talk 60%, First Aid 70%, Look Innocent 50%, Medicine (Genetics) 90%, Medicine (Surgery) 75%, Medicine (Wholly Unnecessary) 90%, Research 60%, Science (Biology) 70%, Sorcery 15%, Swim 40%, Trigger Deep One Transformation 40%.



## Brother Fish

'Fish' controls gang territory in Virginia and Maryland. His organisation deals in methamphetamines and other synthetic drugs, as well as smuggling and prostitution. Fish and his inner circle are all Deep One Hybrids, and bolster their gang's firepower with street-level magic such as minor Bullet Wards, death curses and Hands of Glory. The gang offers muscle to other Dagonist cells across the East Coast, and has even begun to branch out into the UK, Netherlands, Portugal and North Africa. The gang's influence has introduced Dagonist symbology into rap music and gang culture, and a new church to Dagon recently opened in a gang-controlled neighbourhood in Baltimore.

Of all the high-ranking members of the cult, Brother Fish is the most ambitious and aggressive, and has made several attempts to acquire Dagonist relics lost during the Raid on Innsmouth. Currently, he is planning to relocate his core operations outside the United States and the reach of the Black Chamber, and is building up allies in Mexico and the Caribbean in preparation for such a move.

**STR** 17    **CON** 15    **SIZ** 16    **INT** 15    **POW** 18  
**DEX** 14    **CHA** 14    **EDU** 14    **SAN** 0    **HP** 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6

**Weapons:** Uzi 70%, damage 1d10

**Skills:** Appraise 50%, Brawl 50%, Command 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Dodge 40%, Drive 60%, Gangland Contacts 80%, Hide 60%, Persuade 65%, Punishment Beating 90%, Sense 60%, Sorcery 30%, Strategy 60%, Stay Ahead of the Law 80%, Swim 90%





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

### Vlasis Fykos

Fykos has not been seen in public in more than five years, and may have succumbed to the change. He certainly still exists as a legal entity, as the head of the Fykos shipping dynasty. The family owns a private island off the coast of Greece near Kalkis, where the sandy coves have echoed prayers to Dagon and Hydra for more than four thousand years. A well-armed security force protects the island, but satellite photography shows the presence of at least one structure matching the configuration of an EOD temple (which itself mirrors the terrain around the Pyramid on the dead plateau where the Sleeper waits). The loss of contact with the BLUE HADES civilisation means that Fykos can no longer bolster unprofitable shipping routes with Deep One gold. The company formerly helped other Dagonist cells with smuggling, arms shipments and human trafficking, but now can no longer afford to support their fellow cultists without recompense. This hard-nosed attitude stems from Vlasis' son Eduro, who is a lapsed Dagonist and wants to steer the company away from the family faith. So far, Vlasis has proved unwilling or unable to gainsay his son's policy, although those who know the patriarch well suspect that he's using Eduro as an excuse; as soon as the cult acknowledges Vlasis as the head of the Order, he will put Fykos's resources back into the Order's service. Ongoing joint pan-European OCCINTEL operations aim to break Fykos Shipping by going after the company's tax history and mounting debts, in the hope of eliminating this potential asset before the Order regains access to the shipping fleet.



STR 14    CON 16    SIZ 17    INT 15    POW 19  
DEX 12    CHA 11    EDU 16    SAN 0    HP 17

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6

**Weapons:** Ceremonial mace of Hydra 80%, damage 1d6+2+damage bonus + waterlogged lungs, causing instant drowning.

**Skills:** Appraise 60%, Bargain 65%, Brawl 40%, Bureaucracy 50%, Command 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 30% Dodge 40%, Dodge Tax 80%, Heavy Machine (Crane) 60%, Knowledge (Occult) 60%, Knowledge (International shipping) 90%, Navigate 60%, Pilot (Ship) 70%, Repair 65%, Sorcery 40%, Swim 90%.

### Bishop McIsker

Albert McIsker is at least two hundred years old, and was the patriarch of a Dagonist church in Scotland for more than a hundred of them. He kept to the very old ways, even for the patriarch of a monster-worshipping cult in the Outer Hebrides. Ritual drownings, offerings to the Deep Ones, chanting about the ending of the world. He watched as, one by one, his siblings went down into the sea, but he clung to the shore. He believed that the younger generation of cultists were weak and feckless, and they needed the iron crook of a patriarch to guide them. He gets no satisfaction from being proved entirely correct. The cult fell away from the old ways, the true path. McIsker gave up immortality under the waves to bring them back. McIsker is a powerful sorcerer, but is extremely hidebound. He's barely familiar with the ideas and technology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, let alone the 21<sup>st</sup>. Imagine a Taliban cleric, only with a thick Scottish accent, bulging fishy eyes and enough magical firepower to sink a battleship.



STR 13    CON 16    SIZ 13    INT 14    POW 21  
DEX 10    CHA 14    EDU 15    SAN 0    HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Crozier 60%, damage 1d6 + damage bonus + level two geas to walk into the nearest body of water and drown yourself..

**Skills:** Command 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 70%, Impenetrable Scottish Accent 90%, Knowledge (Occult) 70%, Terrify Followers 100%, Perform (Rites of Dagon) 80%, Persuade 70%, Sorcery 90%

McIsker's deep connection to the Order means he increases the POW bonus to spellcasting from any places of power associated with Dagon by +1.



# THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DRAGON

## Roimata Moana

The agreed-upon history of New Zealand claims that the islands were the last major land-mass settled by humans. Polynesian explorers first arrived around 1250CE, and Europeans showed up six hundred years later. New Zealand was the last frontier, short of Antarctica, for the human race.

And as long as you have a very narrow definition of 'human', that's true.

Roimata Moana is the scion of a hybrid colony that's lived on the North Island for more than five thousand years. Even with the backing of the Deep Ones, her ancestors never travelled south, and certain ancient legends of her tribe whisper of star-headed monsters who tunnelled deep into the mountains of the South Island. The hybrid tribe was one of the most feared iwi until the Europeans (pākehā) showed up. The other tribes purchased muskets from the newcomers, and the hybrid tribe was virtually wiped out by 1850. A few managed to survive, and re-established contact with their Deep One patrons in secret. They preserved one of the oldest mystical traditions in the world.

Roimata Moana is a sorcerous prodigy; she is one of the most accomplished ritual magicians in the world. Thaumic flux and spellcasting normally triggers the change, but Moana has developed a technique (either through research or through chance) that allows her to 'discharge' her thaumic energy into another hybrid. She can therefore awaken latent Deep One traits while still maintaining her own human appearance.

The New Zealand colony is under the protection of the government, and permitted to practise 'safe' versions of its traditions. Moana was a member of this colony until she vanished in 2002. Fifteen other members of the colony began to undergo rapid change at the same time, suggesting a huge thaumic discharge or ritual, or else direct contact with BLUE HADES.

Despite her magical powers, Moana has few supporters or allies within the rogue cult cells.

**STR** 14    **CON** 14    **SIZ** 11    **INT** 19    **POW** 22  
**DEX** 15    **CHA** 15    **EDU** 13    **SAN** 0    **HP** 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Sacrificial Dagger 60%, damage 1d4 + DB. If the attack kills the victim, then the dagger absorbs their POW and can be tapped for outsourced magic in a future spell (see page 133 of the *Laundry Core Rulebook*). Each victim's POW can only be used once, and the dagger gives a POW bonus equal to 20% of the victim's POW.

**Skills:** Ancient Ritual Sorcery 70%, Art (Carving) 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Disguise 60%, Hitch Ride 70%, Insight 50%, Knowledge (Occult) 70%, Navigate 60%, Prodigious Sorceress 80%, Research 60%, Scarily Intense Fish Eye Star 70%, Sense 90%, Sorcery 80%, Stealth 70%, Swim 100%.

(If you're using the expanded rules from *License to Summon*, then Roimata's also got Mental Magic 70%.)

## Assets

The traditionalist branch of the cult still controls the bulk of the assets. They have church buildings, land, money, influence over their communities, Innsmouth gold and the arcane secrets of centuries of trade with BLUE HADES – and it's all lying there unused and inert. The Laundry and the other agencies who monitor the old order ensure that the considerable assets built up by the Esoteric Order remain sequestered, or have already seized them. The treasures of Innsmouth, for example, have been in the Black Chamber's vaults since 1930.

The assets available to rogue cells vary from cell to cell, but overall the 'terrorist' branch of the EOD severely lacks

funding and magical power, forcing them to employ criminal schemes to fund their activities, and to use dangerous rituals and invocations of hostile economic entities.

Certain assets are common to both branches of the cult:

### Churches

An Esoteric Order church squats – if a building can squat – at the heart of every Dagonist settlement, sucking up the psychic energy of worship and depositing it like layers of fat in its dank cellars and twisted belfry. The chapel inside resembles a tomb more than a church. The 'altar' is always a sarcophagus or coffin or some sort, and the assembled faithful worship that which is not dead, only sleeping. The church always has some sort of connection to the sea, or at



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

least a standing body of water like a well or an artificial lake in the basement.

Rogue cells also have their own churches, although they have to give up the Gothic stone monstrosities of their ancestors in favour of more ad hoc arrangements. The magical resonances still work, though, when charged with enough blood and suffering.

In game terms, an EOD church gives +1 POW to all spells cast by Esoteric Order members, and a juicy +2 bonus to any spells associated with summoning or contacting BLUE HADES, binding BLUE HADES servitors like shoggoths or controlling the weather. Any other spells cast near a church by anyone who doesn't have BLUE HADES ancestry suffer a -1 POW penalty; that gets boosted to -2 within the church itself.

Oh, and add on another +1 POW to the bonus garnered when sacrificing people to squiddy gods (see *License to Summon*, page 25).

### Spells

The Esoteric Order's conception of magic remains stuck in the Middle Ages; it's all chanting and fish guts and crowd-sourced invocations. Most of their spells are actually pretty optimised, thanks to their Deep One instructors, but they're still strictly old school. Some of the renegade cells have switched to modern computational demonology, and someone like Eugene Marsh or Roimata Moana could become extremely dangerous if they translate the higher-order EOD rituals into computer code, like the putative level five Weather Control spell that lets you drown cities.

If you've got *License to Summon*, then the Esoteric Order has the spells Weather Control, Call Shoggoth, Call Deep One and Wither.

### Send Dreams

Anyone with BLUE HADES in their ancestry is a potential agent of the cult. About 2% of the population of the UK has a BLUE HADES carrier somewhere within the last four generations (think back: did your great-grandmother smell of fish?). Under normal circumstances, that heritage lies dormant unless it gets activated by mischance – say, by visiting that little coastal village where your great-grandmother grew up, or reading certain books, or exposure to a high-thaum field – but as the cult teaches, that is not dead which can eternal lie.

The EOD possesses a magical technique for sending dreams to latent BLUE HADES carriers. There's a tiny chance (1%) that the dreams of sunken cities and drowned gods activate these latent gene sequences. There's a considerably bigger chance that the target suffers nightmares or even spontaneously drowns and is found dead and soaking wet

in an otherwise dry bed. If the dream's correctly calibrated, though, then the target carries out any basic instructions sent through the oneiromantic connection. Want to draw someone into a trap, or convince a police detective to drop an investigation into your cult's schemes? Zap 'em with a dream.

This technique is a variation on the Sending spell (see *License to Summon*, page 28). It's a Level 3 spell that only works on those with a strong enough Deep One heritage (within four generations, unless you got really lucky with recessive genes). The target gets to make a Luck roll to resist the spell. On a 01, the target wakes up with a Taint score and is on the damp path to becoming a hybrid. On a 96-00, the target gets hit for 2d6 damage right to the lungs instead. On a success, the target has bad dreams but there are no other ill effects. On a failure, the target gets a simple post-hypnotic suggestion through the dream.

### New Traditional Magic Spells

These new spells don't exist as computational demonology formulae, so they can only be cast using traditional magic, not a computer. Casting times listed are for traditional casting methods.

Each spell lists a Base Spell – anything that modifies the Base Spell also affects any spells derived from it. For example, if you've got a magic relic that lets you see through Glamours, then you can also see through any spell that's derived from Glamour.

### Lure

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**Level:** 2

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Base Spell:** Glamour

Lure affects one target, who must be within sight of the caster, or else the caster needs a magical link of some sort. When cast, the target feels unaccountably drawn to a location specified by the caster. It's not an irresistible force, just a niggling feeling that you should be somewhere else. The target may ignore the Lure at the cost of Sanity. The amount of Sanity lost depends on proximity to the designated location (see the table).

If the target cannot reasonably get to the location, then the effect of the spell weakens. If you Lure someone to, say, the bottom of the Pacific Ocean or the Andromeda Galaxy, then they'll feel drawn to those places, but won't go crazy unless they can get there without injuring themselves.

The target only loses Sanity when not actively travelling towards the Lure. If you're Lured to New Zealand, then you don't lose Sanity while flying there, but do lose Sanity while queueing at the check-in desk.

Lure Sanity Loss	
The Location	Sanity Loss
Is somewhere far away	1/day
Is within a few hour's travel and I can get there	1/hour
Is very close by	1/minute
Is right there! Let me go!	1/round

If someone's driven temporarily insane by the Lure, then they'll take crazy risks to get there. Lure has a base duration of 24 hours or so, but the caster can prolong the Lure by dedicating a point of POW to it.

## Curse of Dissolution

**Level:** 2

**Casting Time:** 10 rounds

**Base Spell:** Entropy Manipulation

Aka Magic Leprosy. This charming spell increases the damage suffered by the target. It's a single-target spell and the caster needs Ye Olde Magical Link. While cursed, any injury causes a Major Wound (see the table on page 65 of the *Laundry Core Rulebook*). Stumble and bang your knee? Whoops, your leg just came off. Get shot? That 9mm blows shotgun-sized holes in your flesh.

The spell lasts for a number of minutes equal to the POW used to cast it.

## Ward by Water

**Level:** 2, 3, 4 or 5

**Casting Time:** 8 hours per level

**Base Spell:** Area Ward

Ward by Water blesses a distinct body of water – a bay, a river, a lake, a sewer network – or the waters around a particular area. The blessed water counts as an Area Ward of the appropriate level. Anyone drenched in the water counts as being protected by a Personal Ward, and dunking yourself in the water counts as an Exorcism. The caster of the original Ward by Water spell can also command the water, causing tides to rise or making the water flood or retreat from a nearby area.

Anyone who knows the correct pass phrases and incantations can bypass the Area Ward and Personal Ward

aspects of the spell. So, the nasty EOD sorcerer doesn't need to worry about the ward when throwing Defensive Bindings on his damp shoggothy horde.

Downsides? Well, the enchanted water tastes odd and glows strangely under the full moon. Oh, and this spell requires a lot of fuel to keep going. If you don't have a suitable source of magical energy to tap, then you'll need to sacrifice a human being every month or so to keep the ward running, and that's for the level two ward. A level three ward needs a human every week; level four, every day. At level five, it's probably simplest to build a slaughterhouse with a conveyor belt running up to the altar.

## Artefacts

### Rebreather

Necessary for any sort of human/BLEU HADES interactions, these organic rebreathers were once the most common artefacts used by the Esoteric Order of Dagon. In the past, BLEU HADES produced the rebreathers in the deep ocean and shipped them to EOD churches. Since the loss of contact, the EOD has learned to cultivate the artefacts on dry land, although they can produce them only in limited quantities.

Resembling a small sea cucumber with two large filaments extending from its rectal cavity, the rebreather must be held in the mouth while it extends its filaments into the sinus cavities of the would-be deep-sea diver. Once the filaments have latched into the sinus cavities, the rest of the rebreather can be swallowed, whereupon it attaches itself to the interior of the subject's bronchial tubes.

Rebreathers are often grown in a salt-water tank and held in complete darkness, as they are light-sensitive. Exposure to more than 15 minutes of light is enough to kill a rebreather, so those seeking to use them regularly often grow rebreathers in tanks lined with UV or infra-red lights.

Implanting a BLEU HADES rebreather is uncomfortable, though not damaging. However, doing so requires a SAN roll (0/1). Inside the subject's bronchial tubes, a rebreather will last for approximately five years before dissolving into so much goo. During this period, the user can breathe both air and water, as the rebreather extracts oxygen from water, feeding it into the lungs.

After the rebreather itself has dissolved, the filaments must still be extracted, usually with a pair of pliers, dealing 1d4 damage to the unlucky subject. This often leads to scar tissue building up within the subject's sinuses. Repeated use of BLEU HADES rebreathers often leads to sinus



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

infections—a good way for agents to track potential Esoteric Order cult members.

Note that simply using a rebreather does not make one immune to the problems presented by deep sea pressure and intense temperature fluctuations. Defensive Binding spells can protect a diver from the effects of pressure.

### Contact Stones

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These flat carved stones are BLUE HADES communications devices. When thrown into a body of water, the stone emits a neutrino pulse that summons the nearest Deep Ones. An experienced operator can also use Entropy Manipulation to modulate the pulse, allowing the stone to be used as a direct link to Those Below. In the heyday of the Order, every lodge possessed multiple stones, but most were sold off in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Deep Ones no longer respond to summoning attempts directly, but may instead dispatch hybrid agents to investigate any attempts at contact.

### BLUE HADES Toxins

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One of the staples of any BLUE HADES arsenal, the Esoteric Order of Dagon has been quick to adopt the use of numerous toxins and poisons into their repertoire. The symbol of office for an EOD collector was traditionally a small gold ring with a hollow core and a hidden needle. This ring could be filled with a dose of toxin and used to surreptitiously inject the venom into an enemy of the cult.

**Cone Shell Toxin:** Harvested from the geographer cone (a type of snail) from the coast of Australia, cone shell toxin may be one of the most debilitating poisons known to mankind. A single injection of cone shell toxin is capable of killing over 700 full-grown men. Further, the toxin is incredibly fast-acting, slowing heart rate and deactivating neural receptors almost instantaneously.

**Speed of effect:** 1-3 minutes

**POT:** 22

**Symptoms:** Decreased heart rate, numbness, death.

**Stonefish Venom:** While not as virulent as cone shell toxin, stonefish toxin is much more abundant than its snailish counterpart. A stonefish's venom lies within sacs along the creature's spine, which push hollow spines deep into a victim's flesh. Unfortunately for that victim, while stonefish venom can also be fatal, death does not come for hours, only arriving after intense pain, temporary paralysis, shock and outright frothing frenzy.

**Speed of effect:** 4-8 hours

**POT:** 17

**Symptoms:** Muscular paralysis, pain, shock, unfounded rage, death

**Nematocyst Packets:** Of all the toxins used by BLUE HADES and the Esoteric Order of Dagon, nematocysts are the most poorly understood. Most often used by jellyfish, weaponised nematocysts consist of a series of fragile tissues suspended in a salt water solution within a throwable packet. Upon impact, the packet bursts, exposing any exposed flesh to a number of debilitating effects. Most commonly, these nematocysts break down lipids, proteins and other necessary tissues. However, nematocysts are notably difficult to remove once applied...

**Speed of effect:** 10-15 minutes

**POT:** 15

**Symptoms:** Varies, depending on species. Non-lethal.

**Special:** Requires two Resistance tests to remove effects!

**Tetrodotoxin:** Tetrodotoxin is found in the liver and genitalia of the fugu, a type of pufferfish found across the Sea of Japan. While the fish itself is rather docile and even prized for the delicacy and texture of its meat, the toxins found in its liver are amongst the most potent and virulent found in nature. Tetrodotoxin causes numbness, shortness of breath, and respiratory failure within minutes of exposure, depending on the amount of toxin ingested.

No known antidote to tetrodotoxin exists. Rather, suspected victims have their stomachs pumped, then filled with activated charcoal to prevent the toxin from entering the bloodstream. The victim is then placed on life support, in the hopes that they might simply ride out the exposure. Rarely does this happen.

**Speed of effect:** 5-10 minutes

**POT:** 25

**Symptoms:** Numbness, dizziness, shortness of breath, death.

**Special:** No known antidote; ingested.

## Grimoires

**The Rites of Dagon:** Effectively, the boot-up sequence for a Dagonist cult. It starts off by teaching Contact Deep Ones, gently introduces the idea of mating with fish monsters from the sea and then starts talking about how to use magic to conquer your enemies and protect your settlement. Variations on this text have been found everywhere BLUE HADES once had servants, although most versions have a lot of religious cruft and moonbattery picked up over the generations.

**The Rites of Hydra:** Considerably rarer, the Rites of Hydra appears to be the legacy of a failed BLUE HADES experiment in using their surface cults as disposable summoning nodes. The Rites of Hydra contains spells that the Deep Ones considered too perilous to use themselves.

# THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DRAGON

Book	Year	Language	Time	Sanity Loss	Mythos	Sorcery	Skill Requirement
Rites of Dragon	Antediluvian	Greek	20 weeks	1/1d8	+15%	+5%	Knowledge (religion) 50%, Greek 70%, Knowledge (history) 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%
Rites of Hydra	Antediluvian	Greek	40 weeks	1d4/1d10	+10%	+15%	Greek 90%, Knowledge (occult) 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%
The Apocalypse Codex	500AD	Latin	12 weeks	1d6/2d10	+10%	+5%	Knowledge (religion) 10%, Latin 25%

**The Apocalypse Codex:** This is the original form of the book, not the Christianised version that got passed onto cults like Schiller's Golden Promise Brotherhood. The content is mostly the same, but the reader is left with no illusions about the nature of the Sleeper.

## Ongoing Operations

The Esoteric Order isn't just one cult – it's a mixed seafood platter of evil. You've got everything from toothless, sleepy old fishing villages that conceal eldritch secrets, to international criminal gangs with a Mythos bent, to fish-themed terrorists who blame you for stealing their gods. One rogue cell can have a completely different *modus operandi* to another, while still being equally dedicated to the return of BLUE HADES and the destruction of the human race.

On top of that, you've got internal cult politics. An Esoteric Order headed by Bishop McIsker will be very different to one controlled by Brother Fish or Vlasik Fykos. The player characters may find themselves in bed with certain fishermen in order to prevent a worse danger from gaining control of the Order.

## The Azores Operation

The Benthic Treaty's up for renewal every few years. Politicians from each signatory government, including representatives from the deep, gather in the Azores to discuss the treaty and current affairs, and to reaffirm the bargains made in 1954. For the Esoteric Order, it's a target they can't ignore. For one thing, it's one of the few occasions where you can guarantee a BLUE HADES presence, and maybe this time they'll acknowledge their wayward worshippers and bring them home. Other cells are more interested in sabotaging the treaty negotiations, or just

wreaking vengeance upon the government bastards who stole the gods.

Security for the Azores is the responsibility of JPCOG (see the Laundry Files Rulebook, page 119), aka a complete clusterfuck. If the player characters get assigned to protecting this conference, they'll need to deal with the Black Chamber and the French and the Portuguese, as well as keep a bunch of diplomats happy and safe.

## The Hundred Year Anniversary

The raid on Innsmouth was the beginning of the end for the Esoteric Order. 2027 is still a few years off, but there are already rumblings about EOD cultists planning something big – like, say, unleashing a swarm of shoggoths on a major metropolis, or knocking California into the ocean. 2027 is right in the middle of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, which means the cult will have more than enough magical firepower to accomplish their goals.

The Laundry – and, presumably, the Chamber – will have other things to worry about when 2027 rolls around, so current thinking is to deal with this threat long before it comes to fruition. Operation DEVILS REEF aims to identify and eliminate any EOD cells aiming to avenge the fall of Innsmouth.

## Rising Tides

Every year, it seems like there's another report of huge floods somewhere in England. Rivers burst their banks, cars get swept away, grannies get left behind or float out to sea and sad families talk about water damage to their carpets on Sky News. What if there's a sinister cult behind it, and all the floods are test runs for an incantation to drown the whole country?





## THE LODGE OF DAGON - OVERVIEW -

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### CULT OVERVIEW

The Lodge of Dagon is an offshoot of the Esoteric Order of Dagon. Unlike its parent sect, the Lodge recruited primarily from among the educated and the upper classes, who were attracted by the promise of eldritch secrets obtained from BLUE HADES. The cult began in England in the late 1600s, and rose to prominence in the 1900s before collapsing in the wake of the Innsmouth incident and the Benthic Treaty.

### BELIEFS

The Lodge's belief structure is virtually identical to that of the Esoteric Order of Dagon; they venerate BLUE HADES, and members are expected to procreate with Deep Ones in order to produce hybrids. The Lodge, however, applies a Masonic mystery cult gloss to the EOD theology, with elaborate ceremonies and levels of initiation designed to conceal the cult's ultimate purpose from new initiates.

### HISTORY

European occultists and scholars obtained copies of the Esoteric Order of Dagon teachings, and realised that what appeared to be an obscure folk superstition actually contained powerful secrets. The Lodge formed to study these secrets and to make contact with 'higher beings' through BLUE HADES intermediaries. The first such Lodge appeared in London; daughter lodges spread throughout Europe and America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

While the Lodge was not part of the Esoteric Order, it got caught in the backlash resulting from the 1927/28 raid on Innsmouth. Authorities on both sides of the Atlantic investigated the cult, and key members were arrested for various crimes. Its influence diminished, the cult attempted to fight back using increasingly desperate

methods; the signing of the Benthic Treaty effectively ruined the Lodge.

### MEMBERSHIP

At its zenith, the Lodge recruited members from the wealthy and well-educated families of Europe and America. Most of its surviving adherents are the descendants of those families, although history has not been kind to them. The average Lodge member is a batrachian-faced lunatic in a crumbling mansion, driven mad by bankruptcy and blasphemous rites, who sells the family gold (with its curious arabesques and eerie, piscine carvings) to pay for his crazy degenerate fishman brother who's locked in the attic.

### ASSETS

The Lodge still owns buildings in many key cities, although these lodges are mostly in disrepair and are valuable only for their location. Individual Lodge members often have considerable personal estates or fortunes, and Lodge doctrine demands that they lend whatever support is asked of them by their superiors. If needed, the Lodge can muster considerable financial muscle, but at the cost of exposing some of its members.

The Lodge also has a vast occult library and an arsenal of magical relics, primarily BLUE HADES items.

### ONGOING OPERATIONS

Minimal. The loss of BLUE HADES support crippled the Lodge, and unlike the more desperate members of the Esoteric Order, Lodge members have a lot more to lose by clinging to their beliefs. Projections indicate that the Lodge of Dagon will be effectively disbanded well before the middle stages of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN might revitalise it.

## Cult Overview

Cults mutate and evolve over time. One tradition bleeds into the next. The Lodge of Dagon is an example of how an existing belief structure – the worship of Dagon by the marginalised hybrid communities of the coast – can be appropriated by an entirely different social group.



## Beliefs

The Lodge of Dagon has no interest in the destruction of the world or in bringing about a tentacled apocalypse for all mankind. That doesn't mean that the Lodge is benign or even helpful in any sense. The beliefs held by the Lodge are outright inimical to any sane-minded British person (or anyone else, for that matter).

## Humanity is a Lesser Form of Life

Above all else, the Lodge believes that humanity is inferior to BLUE HADES – genetically, culturally, physically, mentally and in any other capacity one might mention. Some members believe that humanity can only be improved by studying the secrets of BLUE HADES, and that they will lift us up from our current fallen, unenlightened state to the heights (or depths) of perfection. Other Lodge members wholeheartedly believe that humanity belongs at

the flippered feet of the Deep Ones, serving until either used up or discarded.

When in the presence of a BLUE HADES specimen, Lodge members show great supplication, often dropping to their knees in reverence as soon as one is sighted. Generally speaking, the more 'fishy' the Deep One, the more highly revered they are by the Lodge. Were BLUE HADES to launch an invasion of the surface, the Lodge would be there to greet them with open arms, ready to put the shackles on.

## The Deep Hides Many Things

The depths of the ocean hide everything. When something gets lost, it eventually washes out to sea. After all, where does one look for sunken treasure or lost ruins? At sea, of course.

The Lodge believes that the greatest and most enlightening finds will be found deep within the depths. Confronted with the bio-technology and ancient artefacts raised by BLUE HADES, the Lodge believes that even more can be found by scouring the depths and recovering what has been lost to the ages.

For these reasons, the Lodge often tries to sponsor deep sea exploration expeditions, in the hopes that some greater occult knowledge or some lost artefact may be found. While the Lodge's funds are limited by their relatively shrunken stature, each active lodge does its best to finance at least one expedition per year, usually to various locations in the Atlantic. Sometimes, these expeditions are met offshore by BLUE HADES liaisons, leading to orgiastic celebrations in between deep sea dives.

Lodge regents often use golden tiaras as status symbols, depicting their close relationship with various BLUE HADES specimens. These tiaras are kept in sterling condition and are handed down between Lodge members as heirlooms. In earlier years, the relative rank of a Lodge member could be determined by the decoration and intricacy of their tiara. However, as of the early 1900s, this is simply no longer the case.

## The Higher Powers are Reached through the Depths

Lodge theology is heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian beliefs, and casts the Deep Ones as angels to some aquatic deity. They bring the word of the Lord out of the depths. While the Esoteric Order seeks only to worship BLUE HADES, and sees Dagon and Hydra as merely the greatest among the Deep Ones, the Lodge believes that the Deep Ones are intermediaries, and that Dagon and Hydra are divine beings who exist on a spiritual level beyond the deepest ocean.



## The stars must not be right...

The Lodge utilises a great deal of sorcery. Additionally, they control ANNING BLACK slaves, as well as other minor servitor creatures. Their BLUE HADES allies use sorcery even to the point of engineering entire cities and structures around mathematical principles that would make most MIT graduates' heads spin. However, the Esoteric Lodge appears to have no vested interest in causing CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

To the contrary, they seem to fear the appearance of Those Things From Beyond just as much as humanity. Therefore, the Laundry may find the Lodge a rather surprising ally in staving off CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. While the Esoteric Lodge's resources are not what they once were, their close relationship with BLUE HADES grants them numerous incantations and artefacts that have proven to be incredibly effective in countering manoeuvres by smaller cults worldwide.

While the Lodge does not pursue cults as part of their own agenda, they believe that the world must be kept intact in order for their BLUE HADES masters to gain ascendance. For that to happen, occasionally some other magically minded individuals need to die.

## History

Most Dagonist cults are provincial affairs, restricted to their little coastal enclaves. Unlike other cults, their BLUE HADES masters have little interest in recruiting powerful or influential members. While cults that worship other economic entities like GIZA DISORDER deliberately sought out wealthy, ambitious mortals, the old Esoteric Order of Dagon did not.

That did not stop wealthy, ambitious mortals seeking them out. At some point in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Dagonist lore cross-pollinated into the European crypto-masonic occult tradition, especially the English branch. References to Dagon begin to appear in works of art, in architecture, in poetry, as messages to the initiated. For example, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Dagon is described as a fallen angel, and one of the servants of fallen Lucifer:

*"Next came one  
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the Captive Ark  
Maim'd his brute Image, head and hands lopt off  
In his own Temple, on the grunsel edge,  
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshippers:  
Dagon his Name, Sea Monster, upward Man  
And downward Fish: yet had his Temple high  
Rear'd in Azotus."*

Many modern scholars believe that Milton himself may have been at the head of the group that founded the Lodge of Dagon. Certainly, Milton's beliefs later in life were viewed as heterodoxical, and did not fit with any of the major English religions of the time period. Further, Milton was a believer in what was later referred to as 'animist materialism' and was criticised for portraying angels engaging in basic human urges, like sexual congress and eating. Further, the religious tribulations in England at this point – conflicts between Catholic and Protestant, each vying for control of the country – led to additional splits along Milton's heterodoxical beliefs.

## The First Lodge

The first records of the Lodge of Dagon begin appearing in 1668, just two years after the London fires. A consortium of men, using the pseudonym of William Lathan, purchased an apartment building in Mayfair, which was



then converted into a sort of French-style of salon. There, members gathered to gossip, smoke, and play at being nobility. Members were divided into fourteen 'regencies', based on seniority, overall wealth, and purported arcane skill.

Early in its existence, the Lodge's leader was Bartholomew Hoskyns, but as of 1702, Hoskyns seems to have simply disappeared. Records from this time show that Hoskyns had an ongoing rivalry with another senior Lodge member: a young nobleman from Portsmouth named Richard Lytchfelde. Lytchfelde had become independently wealthy by unknown means and, for whatever reason, hated Hoskyns with a passion, even challenging him to a duel in 1700. Hoskyns declined the duel, citing an ongoing rheumatic condition in his back.

After Hoskyns' disappearance, Lytchfelde assumed command of the Lodge, and began to induct new members via a series of midnight rituals, in which would-be regents swore fealty to Dagon, forswearing other religions, beliefs, and even family ties. While many incoming Lodge members were sceptical of Lytchfelde's new rituals, none could decry his talent with ritual magic and his knowledge of things both strange and squamous.

Lytchfelde maintained control of the Lodge as First Regent until 1724, whereupon he was arrested following an effort to break into the Tower of London. While Lytchfelde pleaded guilty to all charges, his only words at trial were "It's a fair trade. I come in. She comes out." Two weeks following Lytchfelde's incarceration, the Lieutenant of the Tower was informed that a female prisoner – a virtual

unknown with no name, no records and little information – escaped on the very night Lytchfelde was arrested. All that was known about the prisoner is that she was being held in solitary confinement and was fed weekly with a bucket of raw carp, pulled fresh from the Thames.

Little did the Lieutenant know, but the mysterious prisoner in London Tower was a BLUE HADES specimen, first discovered through a divination ritual by Bartholomew Hoskyns. Hoskyns immediately identified what the BLUE HADES was, recognising it from an occult tome he had read years before, and refused to be party to its liberation. Hoskyns banned the others from contact with the creature, much to the chagrin of Lytchfelde. Lytchfelde instead believed that an alliance with the BLUE HADES creature could lead the group towards a whole new world of occult talent and power.

Lytchfelde began using a ritual to contact the prisoner, gathering as much information from Lucy – the name he gave to the creature – as possible. After four months of contact, one of Lytchfelde's followers made the implication that the Lodge's new leader had fallen in love with Lucy. The corpse of James Mulaney, the follower that made the accusation, was found three years later in a stone quarry, embedded in a block of granite.

After Lytchfelde's arrest, the Lodge of Dagon floundered. Members vied against one another in typical Masonic fashion, with one bickering against another over trivial matters. The number of magically talented members of the Lodge dwindled, many of whom left Britain for new opportunities in the Americas. The main lodge at Mayfair

## The Prisoner in the Tower

Dig down into the stacks, pushing your way through endless strata of thaumic weather reports and geomantic surveys, past the minutes of committee meetings from the sixties and transcripts of every psychic hotline call since 1982, past the photocopies of occult tomes and philosophy theses. Ignore the mummies, the cases sealed with black wax and the scrapings of church bells, and the vials of blood. Get deep enough, and you'll find the collections that pre-date the Laundry – archives inherited from the Invisible College, the Black Assizes, the secret societies and all the other precursor organisations.

And in all those files, you'll find no reference to the Prisoner in the Tower.

There are some strange anomalies in the records of the Tower of London itself, which hint that a prisoner was indeed kept in a cell close to Traitor's Gate in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (those same records do note that the cell was kept unused due to flooding).

Recheck the stacks. Keep digging, until even the Residual Human Resources start throwing suspicious glances in your direction. You still won't find any sign that the government ever imprisoned a Deep One in the Tower of London. Did someone erase those records? Was there a rival cabal in the British government who tried to bargain with the Deep Ones? Or is the Lodge's history a tissue of lies to hide the real identity of Lucy?



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

fell into disrepair due to lack of funds, and was repossessed by the Bank of London.

In the mid-1800s, the Lodge of Dagon experienced its own renaissance. Following the French Revolution, participation in 'secret societies' became fashionable amongst the nobility. A group such as the Lodge – with over 200 years of existence already – became particularly appealing, swelling membership immensely. The First Regent at the time – a Scotsman named Angus McCormack – was even able to repurchase the original Mayfair house, refurbishing it into a massive temple and social hall.

Membership across Europe swelled. The Lodge was seen as a form of Freemasonry (if you replaced the stone-cutting and building metaphor with a lot more fish), and proved especially alluring for those in search of strange wisdom and exotic pleasures. The poet and mystic William Blake was a notable member, although he never passed the rank of Ichthyian. His famous painting, *The Ghost of a Flea*, depicts the Deep One hybrid he encountered as part of his initiation.

Branches also opened in the Americas, notably in Boston and New York. These branches initially had no direct connection to the original lodge, but had strangely similar rituals and beliefs. A few of the 'rustic American cousins' were welcomed into the European occult circles, although only a few of the American families were wealthy enough to send their scions across the sea to the salons of London and

Paris. The Lodge also reached out to the various Esoteric Order of Dagon branches across the world, but was rebuffed. Traditionalist Dagonist patriarchs saw the Lodge as a perversion of the true way; the secrets of Dagon were only for those of the blood, and most Lodge members had no BLUE HADES heritage.

With this foothold in the United States, the Lodge expanded into the New World. The New York lodge was founded to thunderous applause in 1868 – precisely 200 years after the foundation of the Mayfair House itself. Rumour claimed that numerous New York notables joined the Order at its inception, including Boss Tweed, Chester A. Arthur, Herman Melville, and many others.

The most notable member of the period, though, was an old one: Richard Lytchfelde. Appearing two weeks after the New York branch's temple was opened, Lytchfelde appeared on their doorstep, hand in hand with an exotic-looking woman he introduced as Lucy. Few truly believed that Lytchfelde was whom he said he was – after all, he'd have to be nearly 400 years old, yet hardly looked older than forty. Claiming that he had been living amongst the 'Enlightened Masters' in a far-off underwater realm, which he called Y'ha-nethlei, where he had learned sorcery from "the greatest of Lord Dagon's servants".

Lytchfelde's return to dry land was viewed with great scepticism, though few could deny his talent for the arcane...

### BLUE HADES and the Lodge

The Lodge saw themselves as brave leaders, reaching out to a higher power in order to bring wisdom and enlightenment back to humanity. They would learn at the scaled feet of the Deep Ones, our elder brothers, for the benefit of all. In their eyes, they were philosopher-kings, pioneers, prophets.

It's unclear what BLUE HADES actually thought of them. Their sexual relations (see page 41) imply that the Deep Ones initially treated the Lodge as just another surface cult. They offered the standard fish, gold and immortal offspring bargain, and did not discern (or did not care about) the Lodge's higher level of education and curiosity. To BLUE HADES, the difference between some Bronze Age fisherman and the finest mind of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is minimal.

Certainly, the few surviving accounts of direct contact between the Lodge and BLUE HADES show little evidence of special treatment. The Lodge records do describe ceremonies where "Angels rose, and walked amongst us", in which the Deep Ones "taught us secrets of great worth, and gifted us with wonders", but that could be a rather florid description of the standard Deep One/human interaction.

The growth of the Lodge's occult power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (especially after Lytchfelde's return) can be attributed to their own research and acquisition of occult lore without assuming they received tuition from the deeps. The Lodge may have had its special patrons and allies among BLUE HADES, but if they existed, their aid was discreet and subtle – which possibly suggests that they acted without the full sanction of the rest of their civilisation.

or, for that matter, the woman with the silvery skin and great, watery eyes who accompanied him everywhere. Lytchfelde was given the honorific title of 'Protector of the Deeps' and allowed access to all of the Lodge's libraries and facilities.

However, Lytchfelde and his unnerving companion chose to live in points unknown, appearing only at major Order events and rituals. Lytchfelde did bring numerous artefacts of indeterminate origin with him, which he claimed were "those left behind by Mighty Dagon and Mother Hydra, to aid their servants in the depths".

## Rise & Fall

Success was not to last, however. The end of the Victorian era and the rise of the Great War brought an end to the flippancy and decadence of modern "high society". Coupled with this, investigations into various "immoral" activities began popping up again and again, across both Europe and the Americas, and the Lodge again entered a period of decline. Membership dropped across the world.

In 1928, following an FBI investigation, virtually the entire population of Innsmouth were detained by the US Government, and a US Navy submarine discharged torpedoes at Devil's Reef, just off the coast nearby. Subsequent investigations connected the Esoteric Order to the Lodge in the bizarre affair, and police raided several other Lodge houses, including the New York branch. Accusations of kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, tax evasion and other crimes surfaced.

Lytchfelde disappeared in the attack entirely. Numerous Lodge members cited him as their leader during questioning and trial proceedings, though no reference to Lytchfelde was ever found. Several Order members, however, identified the body of Lucy, the silvery skinned woman who accompanied the Protector. Backlash against the Lodge of Dagon swept across the world, regardless of border or ethos.

The American response at New York led to investigations worldwide into Lodge activity and accusations of corruption, immorality, and vices. Far more damaging, though, was the withdrawal of BLUE HADES support from many of the cult's branches. In the cult's greatest time of need, their gods slipped back under the waves and vanished.

In 1927, once again due to falling Lodge membership and a sheer lack of operating funds, the Bank of London repossessed Mayfair House, signalling an end to the Lodge of Dagon as one of the world's occult powers. Mayfair House was torn down to make way for a tenement complex, and the cult's artefacts were put to auction in 1929.

## The Lodge In Modern Times

Like the Order, the Lodge went underground, hoping to re-emerge as a power once the Deep Ones returned. The cult fell under the control of a fundamentalist faction, who believed that weak humanity had failed the glorious Deep Ones, and that the Order had to redouble its efforts to please Father Dagon and Mother Hydra.

The thirties and forties saw the cult's use of murder, ritual sacrifice and sorcery increase in inverse proportion to its dwindling wealth and influence. This ensured that the Lodge was suppressed instead of being quietly pensioned off like the villages of the EOD.



The Benthic Treaty in 1957 eliminated all hope of resurgence for the Order. During the proceedings of the treaty itself, BLUE HADES did their best to actively distance themselves from the Lodge. The Deep Ones unceremoniously dumped their human pawns in favour of a formal relationship with the surface governments.

Currently, only a handful of Lodge houses are currently active. These houses have fallen into disrepair over the years, with only limited funds to maintain facilities or to put forward new initiatives. Most cult members pass off the Esoteric Lodge as a men's organisation, similar to the Oddfellows, Freemasons or Elks. Any suspicion of 'weird'



activity is played off as an urban legend or vicious rumour, often simply laughed off.

However, the cult's fallen status has only endeared them to the few BLUE HADES the Lodge has made contact with, as regents are more and more likely to accept drastic rituals and dangerous assignments on the surface. It seems that the BLUE HADES who continue to patronise the cult are members of a rival faction among the Deep Ones, or possibly BLUE HADES is playing both the cult and the Benthic signatories. The weaker that the Lodge becomes, the more desperate their members will be.

In one respect, the loss of contact with BLUE HADES has allowed the Lodge to find its own path. Without BLUE HADES to guide them, Lodge sorcerers have begun exploring other forms of magic. The Lodge has always sought out promising students, and has connections in public schools and universities. This new generation of sorcerers seek to make direct contact with the higher beings, without relying on BLUE HADES intermediaries.

### Structure

These notes apply primarily to the surviving European lodges. The 'Dagonist scare' of 1928 began in the United States, and the Black Chamber thoroughly wiped out the Lodge there.

In the heyday of the Esoteric Lodge, structure and formality were of the utmost import. How else could you lord it over your 'noble' compatriots, if you didn't outrank them in some Byzantine measure of influence, wealth, arcane ability and general brown-nosing? However, since the collapse of the Lodge in the 1920s, things have become much more primitive.

In earlier years, all potential new members were referred to as supplicants, until they had been indoctrinated (through several rituals, the paying of six months of forward dues and their first exposure to a BLUE HADES individual or magical working). After indoctrination, new members attained the rank of Ichthyian, which itself had fourteen

#### The Lodge and the Order

Both cults are part of the same occult tradition; both cults venerate the Deep Ones and try to please them; both have an arsenal of BLUE HADES lore and relics; both derived their power and influence from BLUE HADES, and both were left adrift after the Benthic Treaty. Why not consider them as a single cult?

Well, firstly, if you suggested that to a member of either cult, he'd try to gut you with a fishhook (if he's old school Esoteric Order) or an expensive pearl-handled sacrificial dagger (if he's a Lodge brother). The Esoteric Order (in all its forms) believes that the Lodge are a bunch of untrustworthy dilettantes who will never truly be of the blood, and seek only to use the Deep Ones to further their own petty, profane, greedy aims. For their part, the Lodge members see most Esoteric Order adherents as rustic idiots whose sole purpose is to provide breeding stock, and who do not have the courage to seek the deeper mysteries.

Secondly, the two cults have wildly different spheres of influence. With the exception of the renegade faction, the Esoteric Order is almost completely limited to a few coastal enclaves, and recruits new members from among the local population. The Lodge, at least originally, was an urban phenomenon, and attracted new members from among the wealthy and well-educated. The Esoteric Order had regular congress with BLUE HADES, while the Lodge only made infrequent contact with the Deep Ones as part of their highest ceremonies.

Thirdly, communication between the two cults is extremely limited. A few ambitious hybrids were members of both cults, and there has always been a small amount of contact between the leaders of the various lodges and EOD patriarchs. After all, both cults serve the same masters. These limited contacts, however, often ended with one cult betraying the other to curry favour with BLUE HADES representatives or to steal cult relics and treasures. During the chaotic years between 1928 and 1957, the Lodge was as big a threat to the Esoteric Order as the Laundry or the Black Chamber.

Of course, BLUE HADES don't care - both sides are just prattling monkeys to them, and both were equally ignored when the Deep Ones signed the Agreement of the Azores.

## THE LODGE OF DAGON

degrees of rank. Ichthyian members were expected to attend regular Lodge meetings, participate in group rituals, and contribute towards Lodge endeavours. Rarely were Ichthyians asked to actively lead rituals, though if a higher-ranking member could not be found, a high-ranked Ichthyian would take the helm.

Upon at least four years of service, an Ichthyian could be nominated for ascension to one of two relatively equal positions: Collector or Lensman. Lensmen were responsible for recruiting new members, advancing existing members and maintaining secrecy in the public eye. Collectors, however, were responsible for the occult ends of the Lodge: maintaining accurate records, upkeep of rituals and incantations and acting as liaisons with BLUE HADES representatives. While relatively equal in rank – each having six degrees – Collectors were more powerful in the arcane arts than their Lensmen compatriots. However, since they were in charge of advancement, Lensmen typically advanced faster than their counterparts, and held the reins when choosing a new Regent.

The head of an individual lodge, ranking over all other Lodge members, was referred to as a Regent. Regents held

executive power over all Lodge decisions, and were expected to visit Mayfair House at least twice a year. Regency over a lodge was chosen by a two-thirds majority vote by the Lensmen, with the position to be held for a period of no more than ten years at a time. Regents met at Mayfair House to consult with the 'Enlightened Ones' – a BLUE HADES specimen, who either appeared in a vision or swam up the Thames to attend in person.

By tradition, each lodge sponsored 'charitable institutions', usually orphanages, hospitals and refuges for 'wayward women'. The orphanages provided material for sacrifice; the refuges were sometimes used as breeding stocks by those lodges in direct contact with BLUE HADES populations.

These days, few lodges have enough members to fill all their official positions. The distinctions between Lensman and Collector have broken down in many cases, and Regency is determined by force of personality or perceived closeness to the Deep Ones instead of voting.

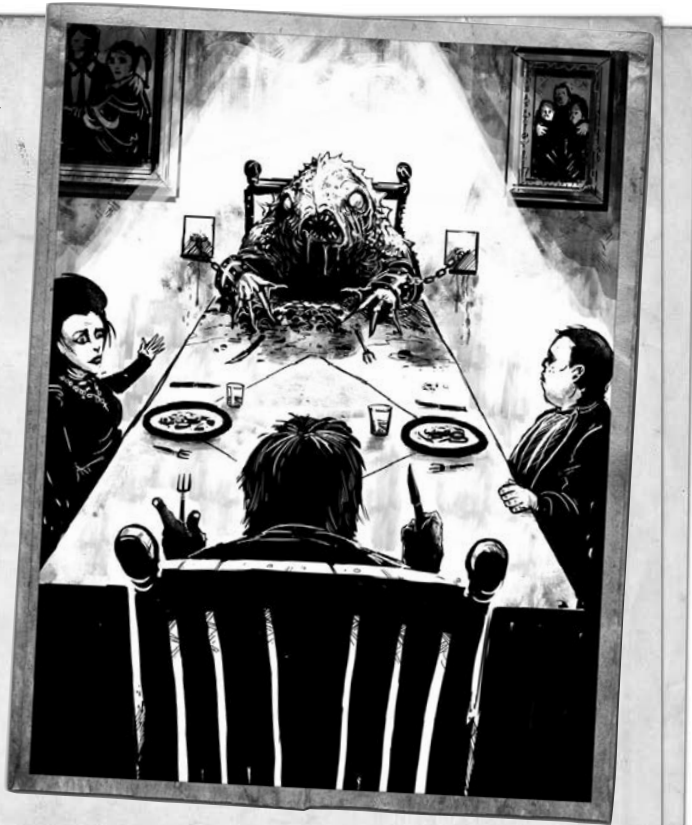
The title 'Protector of the Deepes', given to Richard Lytchfelde, was one unheard of amongst the annals of the Lodge of Dagon. It has not been given again since.

### The Changed

While not every lodge had direct contact with BLUE HADES, let alone sexual congress, a sizeable minority did. As the Lodge in Europe drew many members from the educated upper classes, this meant that the resulting hybrids were effectively born into the aristocracy. Different lodges dealt with their hybrids differently. In some cases, they were treated as humans – there's a reason chinless wonders are chinless, and why David Icke insists the royal family are lizard people. He's off by a genus or two, but he's not far wrong, and that's without bringing the Merovingians and their fishy progenitor into the mix.

Most lodges, though, saw breeding 'the Changed' as a necessary duty. Having sex with a Deep One (or handing your wife over to one) was viewed as part of an occult initiation. You had one child to 'pay your dues' and could then get on with having a more conventional heir.

The Changed were not really part of one's family, and so were either kept in the lodge's cellars or in special homes by the sea until they became full Deep Ones. Other members were permitted to provide 'substitutes' who would fulfil the member's breeding requirements.





# CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

## Notable Members

### Richard Lytchfelde

Surely, the most notable member of the Esoteric Order of Dagon's history has been Richard Lytchfelde, its leader through the cult's early years in Mayfair House and again until the raid of 1927.

Lytchfelde was born in Portsmouth and grew up loving the sea. As a lad of 8 years old, young Richard swore to his friends and family that he had seen a mermaid while walking along the docks one afternoon. While the dockhands and Richard's grandmother simply laughed at the boy's tale, Lytchfelde was adamant. He would find his mermaid, and would spend years trying. As he grew, so too did his obsession.

Eleven years later, Richard was successful. At night, along the rocky shores of Gosport, Richard Lytchfelde met the object of his affection... the Deep One that he named Lucy. Richard's obsession with his 'mermaid' led him to fall in love with the Deep One. Lytchfelde spent night after night with Lucy, as she taught him various arcane rituals and incantations, revealing to him the glories of the deep.

Richard's talent for occult knowledge and spellcasting led him to the Lodge of Dagon, but he quickly felt stifled by the likes of Bartholomew Hoskyns and other nobility, playing at being sorcerers. Hoskyns refused to assist Lytchfelde after Lucy was captured by the Crown and by 1702 Lytchfelde was fed up with Hoskyns's refusals and had him killed, assuming his place as First Regent of Mayfair House.

Richard languished for years without his beloved Lucy, but brought the Order great arcane power and many secrets that the group had never fathomed before. In 1724, however, Lytchfelde formulated a plan. Unfortunately for him, that plan resulted in his capture, despite the fact that Lucy was freed by his team. Richard languished for 14 long years in the Tower of London before Lucy managed to repay the favour and save Richard from his incarceration.

Richard's reappearance in the late 1800s only served to perplex and confuse the resurgent Lodge, though the First Regents were eager to have him back amongst the fold, no questions asked. Though Richard's seeming insanity and the ongoing enigma of his 400-year lifespan were elephants in the room, Richard's goals were simpler - to re-establish the Order as an arcane power.

The raid at Innsmouth put a massive halt to those plans. 'Lucy' was among the Deep Ones killed there. With Lucy dead, the time came for Richard to go once more into hiding, rejoining the other adherents of Dagon in deep Y'ha-nthlei.

What few know, however, is that Richard has returned. Recently surfacing with his Deep One 'family' at the London lodge, Lytchfelde is slowly working towards taking control of the Esoteric Lodge once more. And surely, the world will shake for the loss of 'Lucy'.

### Richard Lytchfelde - Oft-Swimming Sorcerer

AGE: Unknown (well over 400 years)

STR 9    CON 14    SIZ 12    INT 19    POW 22  
DEX 12    CHA 14    EDU 15    SAN 0\*    HP 13



## Damage Bonus: +0

**Skills:** Appraise 75%, Bargain 55%, Brawl 40%, Bureaucracy 60%, Command 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 75%, Disguise 40%, Etiquette 70%, Fast Talk, 40%, Insight 45%, Knowledge (Biology) 65%, Knowledge (Occult) 80%, Languages (French, Latin, Deep One), Listen 45%, Medicine 55%, Melee Weapon (Sacrificial Knife) 55%, Navigate 45%, Pilot (Ship) 40%, Research 85%, Sorcery 95%, Swim 90%

**Notable Possessions:** Sacrificial Dagger, BLUE HADES Rebreather, Level Four Ward, Level Four 4 Bullet Ward, various occult tomes and artefacts, including the Witch's Snail and the Bound Sea of Zin.

Lytchfelde's dagger stores POW; if used to murder a human, it stores 1/4 of the victim's POW that can be tapped for spellcasting.

The Witch's Snail is a talisman, described in Von Junzt's book. According to this account, the talisman transforms the wearer's blood into a deadly poison, so potent that a single drop could kill millions. The wearer is unaffected by this toxin.

The Bound Sea of Zin is an ancient artefact of BLUE HADES origin that resembles a twisted loop of coral. Contained within the artefact is a small sea that once lay beneath the North American continent. The user of the talisman can release a small portion of this sea to flood a nearby area. If released fully, the Sea of Zin would cover an area bigger than France to a depth of 500 metres.

## Assets

Outside of the few remaining lodges, the cult has little in the way of material possessions. Members are typically debauched members of 'old money' houses, living off of slowly dwindling trust funds or parcelled-out stipends from more wealthy, more successful members of their family. Those members brought in following the raids tend to come from more modest means, being disillusioned members of the middle class or impoverished lower-class individuals, who came to the Lodge seeking something better.

The true assets of the Lodge come in the numerous BLUE HADES artefacts that members have collected over the years, in exchange for information on the surface and for breeding rights with both members and abducted individuals. Note that supplying BLUE HADES with breeding stock outside of certain 'grandfathered' communities is in direct violation of Article 5 of the Benthic Treaty, providing the Laundry (and similar agencies) a clear legal jurisdiction to shut down any offending operation.

However, the Lodge has been able to keep a low profile – primarily due to their small numbers and low frequency of such illicit "trades". However, if the Lodge were to step up their efforts, they may quickly find unwelcome scrutiny from the occult arms of the world's intelligence community.

The artefacts brought to the surface by BLUE HADES are rarely used outside of cult rituals, though were the Esoteric Order to take the initiative against the world's governments, they surely would provide a significant edge.

## The Ark of the Covenant

The prize of the BLUE HADES collection, the golden box known as Yahweh's Ark fell back into BLUE HADES possession hundreds of years prior, after the Israelites were conquered by the Babylonians. The Philistines' version of Dragon was likely just a powerful, charismatic Type I BLUE HADES specimen, who traded material wealth and fish for access to Israelite slaves, for use as breeding stock.

The Ark itself has been described numerous times throughout history, appearing as a wooden box clad in gold with rings at each corner, meant to support staves so that the Ark could be carried. The Ark's cover is adorned with biblical figures of cherubim and other angels, which supposedly guard the Ark against those who would use its power for themselves.

Richard Lytchfelde first laid eyes on the Ark of the Covenant in 1684, after his dealings with Lucy led him to a cache of BLUE HADES artefacts off the coast of France. He kept the Ark secret from all but the closest of his followers amongst the Lodge, even after he assumed control following Hoskyns' disappearance.

None know precisely what the Ark of the Covenant does, or to whom it's truly dedicated. If BLUE HADES knows, they certainly aren't talking. While the Israelites – and most of both Judaism and Christianity today – believed the Ark to contain the true word of God in the form of the Ten Commandments, some occult scholars suspect that the texts are somewhat more piscine in origin.



What may be strangest is that BLUE HADES has had no issue letting members of the Lodge viewing or even manipulating the Ark. Either they believe it has no true value over any other particular text, or they may simply believe that we simple land-monkeys can't comprehend its true value.

## Pressure Bombs

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An advanced technological device, this strange weapon works on the same principles of modern thermobaric weapons, super heating the air (or water) surrounding it, then exploding outward with a wave of intense pressure and force.

However, where thermobaric weapons are utterly ineffective in water due to the lack of oxygen, BLUE HADES pressure bombs – dubbed GRAVITON MINCEMEAT by Laundry operatives – provide a lethal blast radius upwards of 750 metres in radius. In comparison, similar surface-made thermobaric weapons have only managed to achieve a 400-metre lethality radius.

Recently, the radical elements within the Lodge of Dagon, working with BLUE HADES specimens, created a smaller, yet no less lethal, hand-held version of GRAVITON MINCEMEAT. While intelligence has been sparse thus far, Laundry armourers believe that a finished product would be similar to the Russian TGB-7V thermobaric grenade, which was used in Chechnya. Delivered via a GM-94 pump-action grenade launcher, the TGB-7V grenade proved intensely powerful in close combat situations, demolishing resistance tunnels and even entire houses with ease.

## Ongoing Operations

- TasteeFish Cannery, out of Scotland, has just announced its intent to purchase SeaScapes Water Amusement Park near Blackpool. SeaScapes, featuring its premier orca whale attraction, Mampu, has been closed for nearly three years, citing financial difficulties. The company that previously owned SeaScapes – Mampu Entertainment LLC – has filed for bankruptcy, and is auctioning off as many assets as possible in an attempt to stave off the purchase.

- In a rare joint venture between brother Lodges, Abbot Grahame and Joseph Whalen have built a cash reserve large enough to mount an expedition to Iceland, in search of some lost BLUE HADES outpost that was raised from the sea bed by seismic activity. However, the site is in the shadow of an active volcano, making the artefacts dangerous for anyone to excavate.

- “Mother” Kelly isn't happy with the overcrowding at her ‘nursery’, and wants to expand. She intends to sell the house at Arkham and move on up to the big city: Boston. There, she hopes to play up the house as an “all-natural, organic fertility clinic”, taking advantage of the desperation of would-be mothers and spreading BLUE HADES genes throughout Beantown.

- Richard Lytchfelde wants to bring back the glory days of the Lodge of Dagon, but needs capital to do so. Taking advantage of the high price of gold worldwide, Lytchfelde uses a series of proxies to sell off a large amount of gold coin and bullion from the watery deep. He then repurchases the site of Mayfair House and goes about the process of rebuilding the original lodge. With a fashionable new gentlemen's club in London, can another wave of success for the Lodge be far behind?

- The recent tsunamis in Japan and other points in the Far East have resulted in strange relics and stone fragments being washed ashore around the Pacific Rim. With many of those artefacts holding special significance for BLUE HADES, the Deep Ones approach the Lodge, pushing them towards recovery efforts. Laundry agents quickly find themselves in something of an occult arms race, attempting to lock away dangerous relics before the Lodge can return them to their cold-blooded masters.

- The crew of “Traps and Tides”, a vastly popular reality show, detailing the exploits of lobster fishermen in the North Atlantic, goes missing under mysterious circumstances. No wreckage of the crew's boat, no bodies and no other evidence seems to surface. However, the captain's recent membership in the Lodge of Dagon points to a forcible commandeering at best, with a trip to Davy Jones' Locker much more likely.



THE STARRY WISDOM CULT  
- O V E R V I E W -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

Historical records indicate that the Starry Wisdom Cult originated in the United States, in Providence Rhode Island in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeologist Dr Enoch Bowen returned from Egypt with an artefact referred to as the shining trapezohedron (OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT), which seems to have been a powerful piece of non-human technology. The cult worshipped an entity they referred to as the "Haunter of the Dark" hereafter referred to as ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT. This entity made contact with the members through the artefact. The cult murdered more than a dozen people who they offered as human sacrifices to ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT. By far the most interesting aspect of this cult was the fact that the visions induced by the presence of OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT included hints of advanced scientific and technical information, in addition to the far more standard strange alien vistas and feelings of numinous power.

When their activities were discovered in 1877, some cultists were arrested and the rest fled Providence to other cities in both the United States and the UK. OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT was lost at this time and did not resurface until 1935, when it was found by author Robert Blake. This object vanished after his death later that year and its whereabouts remain unknown.

After the artefact's second disappearance, branches of the cult persisted in London, Boston, and New York, but remained small, disorganised, and greatly handicapped by the loss of OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT. According to our most recent investigations, these cults were only able to make the most fleeting contact with ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT using traditional sorcery. We believe that that these cults all effectively disbanded around the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There may still be a few elderly people praying to the ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT, but our best evidence is that this cult is a historical curiosity. However, if the OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT resurfaces, the cult might reappear and become dangerous. Operatives are directed to treat any rumours of the reappearance of either OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT or ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT as a top priority.

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**ADDENDUM: REGARDING OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT**

An analysis of all information about this artefact indicates that it seems to be closely related to the replicas constructed using the ill-fated ZOCCHI JAMJAR GAMMA, but possessed somewhat different capabilities. Within the last four years, there have been a few rumours that OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT may have reappeared. Records recovered from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Starry Wisdom Cult indicate that this item can provide users with limited amounts of advanced scientific and technical information, as well as some knowledge of sorcery.

Any operative who makes contact with hostiles in possession of OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT are instructed that their first priority is to make certain that all technical or occult data these hostiles obtain from OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT is contained. Agents are authorised to use all means that minimise civilian casualties to contain this data. Whenever possible, agents are further directed to retrieve this data and deliver it to their superiors. However, if attempting to acquire this data would result in the data not being contained, agents are instructed to instead destroy the data. In all cases, acquiring or destroying this data includes any data contained within the minds of hostiles. Hostiles who cannot be captured and swiftly remanded into secure Laundry facilities should be either geased to forget all such information or killed. Obtaining technical information provided by OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT is a high priority to the Laundry, but making certain that all such information is contained is a far greater priority.



## Cult Overview

Although the Laundry believes the last traces of this cult faded away a decade ago, the Starry Wisdom Cult is actually thriving. Run by Joanne Storch, a wealthy engineer who obtained the original Shining Trapezohedron slightly more than a decade ago. She revitalised the cult and renamed it the New Visions Institute, using contact with the Haunter of the Dark to obtain advanced scientific and technical knowledge. To this end, she gathered a group of like-minded engineers and industrialists to work with her on this project. She is also using the remnants of the older Starry Wisdom cults as pawns that she controls by granting access to the Shining Trapezohedron. Currently, the cult is attempting to use contact with ASTRONOMY BLACKOUT to obtain weapons that will be useful against both human foes and against CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. The cultists are also working on advanced propulsion and power generation technologies to allow a select group of humans to successfully leave Earth and survive elsewhere in the solar system, if the battle against CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN fails.

The members of the older branches of the cult worship the Haunter of the Dark and are jealous of the fact that an outsider controls their most precious artefact. They are also aware of the fact that at least some of Joanne Storch's associates regard them as disposable assets. Only Joanne Storch's careful security precautions prevent the leaders of these cults from attempting to steal this artefact. Unknown to any of the cultists, including Joanne Storch, contact with the artefact and with the Haunter of the Dark has twisted their minds so that all members of this cult are interested in exceedingly risky technologies. In addition, members of the cult ignore or downplay the risks involved in using these technologies.

## History

The actual church of Starry Wisdom was founded in Providence Rhode Island in the 1840s by Dr Enoch Bowen, a noted archaeologist, Egyptologist, and occultist. During his time looting tombs in Egypt, he discovered an artefact known as the Shining Trapezohedron. This object was a faceted sphere made of a black and red stone that glowed when active and unless placed behind an opaque barrier, induced visions in anyone in its vicinity. This artefact was of unknown alien manufacture and placed users in contact with a hyper-intelligent alien entity known as the Haunter of the Dark. Bowen wrote a suppressed pamphlet, *The Potter's Wheel: Ptah & the Origins of Industry* (1852) that claimed that the shift from primitive hunter-gather culture to agriculture and the first cities was triggered by contact with 'higher intelligences', and hinted that the Shining Trapezohedron was responsible for all human culture.



This stone was the focus of the cult's activities. Reports from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicated that the cultists gazed upon the stone and had a wide range of visionary experiences. These experiences produced some mixture of madness and elation as well as images of distant stars and alien worlds. In addition, several of the members seem to have learned the rudiments of sorcery via these visions and more than half of them obtained ideas for fantastic inventions and new scientific discoveries, although most of these revelations were wildly beyond the capabilities of 19<sup>th</sup> (or, in many cases, 21<sup>st</sup>) Century technology. The Shining Trapezohedron inspired relatively average citizens of 1850s Providence to dream of M-theory, of black holes, of Dho-Nha curves and stranger things. Other worshippers were inspired to create strange works of art. Descriptions of these ideas were found in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in notebooks hidden in the church.

The price for these visions was steep, as the Haunter of the Dark was a hungry patron and fed upon the souls of its worshippers. During the period from 1851 to 1877, the Starry Wisdom Cult was responsible for more than two dozen murders. Police reports of the bodies indicated that all of these corpses had been stabbed and tortured. However, later information indicated that the Haunter of the Dark left no marks on its victims. Instead, victims appeared to die after having a massive seizure. The cutting and stabbing was performed by the cultists as part of a ritual to make the victims more appealing to the Haunter of the Dark. At its height, the Starry Wisdom had a membership of almost

150 people, some of whom were sufficiently wealthy and influential to shield the cult from scrutiny. In addition, the cultists made certain that all of their victims were poor or belonged to local ethnic minorities.

However, Providence was a small city. As the murders continued, an increasing amount of suspicion began to fall upon the cult. Although the first official investigations revealed nothing, friends and relatives of some of the victims demanded justice and began threatening the church and urging the town's leadership to investigate further. In 1877, officials closed the church, and most of the members that did not fall victim to mob violence fled the city. The Shining Trapezohedron was lost during the cultists' escape from the city and remained within the church, hidden and undisturbed for almost 60 years.

Other than two members who became sorcerers and more than a dozen notebooks filled with sketches and descriptions of various inventions that were never produced, membership of the cult seems to have provided the members with little practical benefit. However, all of the surviving members retained their dedication to their patron and did their best to pass on this devotion to their children. Between 1877 and 1935, the cult continued in several locations, including New York, Boston, London and Edinburgh, but membership fell in all of these branches.

When the cult disbanded, members fled to other portions of the US and to the UK. A few of these cultists were skilled sorcerers. However, their most powerful magics could make only limited contact with the Haunter of the Dark. These cults obtained visions from the Haunter of the Dark and occasionally made sacrifices to it, but they received few visions and membership gradually decreased. Soon, only the most dedicated members remained. These cults continued in a sporadic fashion from the 1880s to 1935.

## The London Cult

In 1935 author Robert Blake rediscovered the Shining Trapezohedron but died under mysterious circumstances in the same room as this artefact. Shortly after Blake's death, the Shining Trapezohedron was allegedly thrown into the ocean by the physician who examined Blake's body. In fact, Dr. Dexter kept the stone, and threw only an empty casket into the cold waters of Narragansett Bay.

The report of Robert Blake's death in the Providence Journal associated his death with the Starry Wisdom Cult and mentioned the odd stone found with him. Members of three separate splinter cults learned of these reports and all became exceptionally eager to obtain the Shining Trapezohedron. From 1935 to 1939, the London, New York, and Boston cults all struggled to locate the Shining Trapezohedron. Examination of police reports and

rumours reported by prominent occultists indicate that this search resulted in at least four murders as member of each of the cults struggled to obtain the Shining Trapezohedron. These efforts eventually resulted in the London-based cult obtaining the Shining Trapezohedron in mid 1938, a few months before the start of WWII. They tracked Dr Dexter down in Florida, murdering him to obtain the stone.

The London cult lasted from 1938 to 1943. Shortly after acquiring the Shining Trapezohedron, the leader, Robert Chesham, realising that the insights provided by the device might be used to fight the Germans. He recruited three engineers and a chemist into the cult. From late 1939 to early 1943, the members of the cult captured suspected Nazi sympathisers, indigents and anyone who stumbled into the wrong underground tunnel during the Blitz and sacrificed them in an attempt to gain useful knowledge. Chesham's writings during this period show that his sympathies shifted towards the Nazi regime, and he directed the cult to seek a way to rapidly end the war in Europe so that "Northern Aryan culture" could be protected from the "Slav horde". He wanted to force Germany's surrender, so that a German/English/American alliance of "scientific Aryans" could destroy the Soviets.

By 1943, working with minimal resources and limited expertise, the cult jumped well past the wildest dreams of the British TUBE ALLOYS project and developed a prototype atomic weapon. Their prototype was a low-yield weapon, comparable to only a few tons of TNT.

Robert Chesham stored the Shining Trapezohedron and some of his notes in the bottom of a chest in his flat and then joined the other members of the cult to test the explosive device. Unfortunately, they underestimated the explosive power of the relatively small device by more than an order of magnitude. The resulting explosion killed all 14 members of the cult in April of 1943. The explosion took place in Harrow, a wealthy borough in north-west London. The police assumed the explosion was due to a large unexploded bomb that went off while a group of people were gathered in a small park, ignoring the fact that 14 people were gathered in this park at 2am.

The Shining Trapezohedron and the associated papers remained in the trunk until 1958, when Robert Chesham's niece Laura examined both and experienced a brief vision. Laura Hartwell was a young, well-off user of various recreational drugs and greatly enjoyed the experience of the visions. She soon introduced her friends to these visions. After becoming addicted to these visions, the newly formed cult began a spree of murder and debauchery that resulted in four of the eight members going insane by 1962. In 1963, two others were arrested for kidnapping a prostitute and were suspected of committed eight murders, although the latter was never proven. The remaining two members of the cult



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

abandoned their efforts. One committed suicide in 1974, while Richard LeMarche hid the Shining Trapezohedron and the associated papers away and attempted to forget his involvement in the cult. He deliberately blinded himself to protect himself from the stone's visions. Although other cults persisted, the Shining Trapezohedron remained locked away in LeMarche's safe for the next 23 years.

### The Modern Cult

The Laundry knows a great deal more about this cult's past than about its present. According to their best intelligence, the remnants of this cult may still exist. However, they don't seem to be allied in any fashion, do not have access to the Shining Trapezohedron, and are at most low-priority affairs. These splinter cults were somewhat active throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but largely seemed to fade away around the turn of the century. Like the original 19<sup>th</sup> Century cult, the majority of the members of these splinter cults obsessed by the visions the cult rituals gave to them, but without access of the Shining Trapezohedron, these visions were far less enticing.

In 1998, Joanne Storch obtained the Shining Trapezohedron from Richard LeMarche. Richard LeMarche was the last sane member of the 1958 London cult, while Joanne Storch had briefly been a part of a small Starry Wisdom splinter cult in Edinburgh. She left after realising that the visions were largely useless entertainments, but also that clearer and more powerful visions might contain valuable information. Having already heard a few rumours about the Shining Trapezohedron, she began researching the cult's past and the history of the Shining Trapezohedron. Having learned that Robert Chesham was rumoured to have possessed this artefact during WWII, she continued to follow its trail and discovered that Chesham's nephew Laura Hartwell had been imprisoned on charges of kidnapping and murder. After

tracking down all of Hartwell's relatives and associates, she encountered Richard LeMarche. He refused to discuss the stone, but she used sodium pentathol and torture to learn the location of the relic and the combination to his safe.

For the next few years, Storch experimented with the Shining Trapezohedron and began to analyse the visions it induced. After learning that at least some of the information provided was accurate, she set out to recruit a group of like-minded individuals using the promise of advanced technological information as her primary recruiting tool. The modern cult began operation in 2003. To avoid scrutiny, she named her organisation the New Visions Institute, which she describes as a private think-tank devoted to the development of advanced technologies.

Joanne Storch limits the use of the Shining Trapezohedron to no more than twice a year, because she believes that more frequent use significantly harms the user's sanity. Some members resent the degree to which she limits the device's use, but both of the attempts to steal the Shining Trapezohedron from her have failed. After the second attempt, Joanne Storch discovered the person responsible and sacrificed, revealing her reasons for doing so to the rest of the cult. Since then, no one has attempted to steal the Shining Trapezohedron.

The core of the New Visions Institute consists of a cartel of 17 wealthy industrialists, engineers, arms merchants and corporate heads led by Joanne Storch. Most of the members enjoy the rush and feeling of power that the rituals involving the Shining Trapezohedron produce in participants. However, their primary focus is the knowledge imparted by these visions. Members use these visions as a source of inspiration for new weapons, power generation systems, genetic engineering techniques and other wondrous new technologies. The members have learned



that each participant has a somewhat different vision. Most of the members share their visions with one another, or at least they share those visions that do not directly pertain to projects their company is working on.

In 2005, Joanne Storch began working to expand the New Visions Institute. Instead of recruiting additional wealthy industrialists, Joanne was interested in finding more people who would willingly serve the cult and who would be willing to perform various illegal and semi-legal activities, like obtaining captives for sacrifices or illegally gaining access to research and prototypes owned by various corporations or governments. She turned to the descendants and other remnants of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Starry Wisdom cults. Membership in these cults had continued to gradually decline, but by 2005, there were still three surviving cults in Edinburgh, New York and Boston. Between them, these three cults had 51 members.

Joanne Storch contacted the leader of the Edinburgh cult she belonged to in the early 1990s and announced her ownership of the Shining Trapezohedron. She also claimed that the Haunter of the Dark had given her a message that all of the Starry Wisdom cults must unify and grow in preparation for their coming glorious triumph. the Haunter of the Dark delivered no such message, but the leader of the Edinburgh cult was overjoyed at the idea of gaining access to the Shining Trapezohedron. In return for several private sessions with the Shining Trapezohedron, she also gave Ms Storch the names and locations of the leaders of the other cults.

By late 2005, Joanne Storch had contacted the leaders of all three cults and arranged a huge ceremony at her mansion, attended by all members of the three cults. She provided transportation expenses and lodging for all of the members and treated them all to two sessions with the Shining Trapezohedron over one long weekend. Many members of the three cults were convinced that their cult deserved sole access to the Shining Trapezohedron, and the leaders of two of the three cults conspired to steal it from Joanne Storch. However, her security precautions were daunting and the wondrous visions provided by their sessions with the artefact easily convinced everyone to at least be willing to work with her until they found a way to 'liberate' the Shining Trapezohedron for themselves.

Over the course of the next four years, members of the three older cults reached out to former members and others they knew who might be interested, and discretely informed them that the Shining Trapezohedron had been found. Often, potential recruits were told little more than that they would experience mind-expanding spiritual wonders before they joined the rest of the cult in one of the Shining Trapezohedron rituals. By 2009, these three cults had a total of 397 members and this number has gradually continued

to grow. Although fears about increasing mental instability caused Joanne Storch to limit the exposure of her close associates and colleagues to the artefact, she cares more about the obedience of the members of the associated cults than about their sanity and gives them far more access to the artefact.

## Structure

The New Visions Institute is organised into two tiers. The upper tier consists of a group of industrialists and CEOs who got their start as engineers and who maintain a keen interest in advanced weapons or power technologies. Joanne Storch continues to lead and direct the upper tier, and maintains control of the Shining Trapezohedron. Important decisions are made with substantial input from the entire upper tier.

The remainder of the institute is in the lower tier. This group is just as secretive as the upper tier and is made up of the recently revitalised remnants of the three older Starry Wisdom sects that survived since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Most of the members of the inner tier either grew up in the cult or joined because they were seeking some form of supernatural transcendence.

The most striking differences between the two tiers are wealth and education. The members of the upper tier are multi-millionaires with extensive technical educations. Members of the lower tier are middle and working-class eccentrics, spiritual seekers and religious zealots, very few of whom have technical degrees.

For the first four years after Joanne Storch reformed and contacted the lower-tier cults, there was a great deal of tension between the upper and lower tiers. Upper-tier members considered lower-tier members to be ignorant fanatics who might be useful, but were unworthy of respect. Similarly, lower-tier members considered the upper tier, especially Joanne Storch, to be blasphemous defilers of their sacred tradition who were only worth dealing with until they could gain control of the Shining Trapezohedron.

Over time, these tensions have decreased, in large part because visions from the Haunter of the Dark gradually changed the attitudes of the upper tier members. For the last few years, the upper-tier members openly revere the entity they now refer to as their "Benefactor". Many lower-tier members now believe that even the most arrogant upper-tier members have at least gained some degree of divine wisdom and are devoted members of the cult.

Some upper tier members still regard the lower tier members as foolish and uneducated. However, as long as Joanne Storch continues to grant the lower-tier members regular



access to it, the situation should remain stable, especially since security on the Shining Trapezohedron remains exceptionally tight. An increasing number of lower-tier members are being both formally and informally employed by the upper-tier members. Some lower tier members work as bodyguards, security personnel, and corporate spies as well as IT professionals and technicians who deal with secret projects. Other lower tier members work completely off the official books and are hired thieves and thugs.

### Beliefs

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The New Visions Institute began as a method to gain access to information about advanced technologies. The official rhetoric is all about the cult's alien "Benefactor", who provides them with advanced technological information, in return for worship and the occasional human sacrifice. Sacrifices are justified as being for the ultimate "good of humanity", and often consist of either violent criminals in private prisons partially owned by one of the cult members or corporate spies and whistle-blowers.

The formal doctrines of the cult seem straightforward and exceedingly self-serving. However, the reality is quite different. All members of the cult participate in visionary trances induced by the Shining Trapezohedron, and these visions have altered the minds and beliefs of the participants. All members are now firmly convinced that the best way to insure the survival of humanity is to continue to develop advanced and inherently risky weapons, power generation and space travel technologies. If asked about these issues, members respond with an almost missionary-like fervour, going on at great length about how world-shattering weapons actually promote peace, that the promise of limitless energy will free humanity from poverty and ignorance and how space travel is essential for humanity's long-term survival. They're transhumanist technofetishists with a Mythos twist.

Members dismiss critics as foolish and unrealistic Luddites who don't understand the realities of the modern world. Many members of the cult also have some understanding of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, although opinion is divided on what it means. Some acknowledge the dangers, but most equate CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN to the concept of the Singularity – a point beyond which technological and magical advancement becomes infinite. Most upper tier members also view space travel as a way for at least some portion of humanity, naturally including the cult members, to survive the destruction of human civilisation. Believers minimise the risks of their ideas and dismiss anyone who expresses doubts or fear about these technologies as cowardly or lacking vision.

The most striking change in members who have repeatedly experienced visions from the Shining Trapezohedron is

their attitude towards the Hunter of the Dark, who the vast majority now refer to as the Benefactor. While most members had purely selfish reasons for joining this cult, exposure to the Shining Trapezohedron and to the Hunter of the Dark's inhuman messages produced a profound and consistent change in their attitudes. Instead of viewing their patron as either another ruthless business partner or a resource to be exploited, even the inner tier cultists begin to see this entity as a wise and charismatic leader. The psychological changes produced by these visions cannot make alien minds comprehensible to cult members, but almost all of the cultists now see the Hunter of the Dark's thought patterns as brilliantly eccentric and are convinced that the only reason that its ideas are nearly incomprehensible is that its mind is so much wiser and more advanced than their own.

The inner tier of cultists largely agree on their immediate goals and enjoy working together to solve various problems associated with the devices they are attempting to create, but there is also a major schism within the inner tier. Most prefer to have the Hunter of the Dark as their distant and wise benefactor, but an increasing number are starting to dream of a world where the Benefactor rules all of humanity, with the cultists as its assistants and advisors.

Most cultists in both the upper and lower tiers are fascinated by outer space and space exploration. They want humanity to expand outwards into the universe, and wish the Benefactor to help them accomplish this. Many of them dream of humanity, or at least the members of the New Visions Institute striding across the stars alongside the Hunter of the Dark. Seeing grand vistas of alien worlds and distant suns, combined with the Hunter of the Dark's various messages, seems to induce a profound and lasting passion for space exploration.

### Assets

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The first and most obvious of the cult's assets is money. The New Visions Institute is exceptionally well-funded, which makes it exceedingly difficult to infiltrate or investigate. The active support of a group of 17 individuals with a combined personal wealth of several billion dollars buys a great deal of secrecy and governmental protection. Fuelled by OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT revelations, the group of 17 have all become absurdly rich and their companies are all at the cutting edge of their fields. In fact, the only thing holding many of them back is the limits of human technology; the stone's visions are piecemeal revelations, and it can take years to put the pieces together.

This same wealth also buys lots of private security. In addition, the cult contains members with a great deal of technical expertise and access to various cutting-edge

technologies, including advanced intelligence technologies much like those used by the Laundry or various conventional intelligence agencies. The wealthier and more prominent members effectively possess small private armies of security personnel and freelance intelligence experts who are all equipped with the latest military and espionage gear. These assets make the New Visions Institute exactly as formidable as you'd expect.

The cult's at the forefront of research and design when it comes to the nastier applications of computational demonology. So, low-flying drones with look-to-kill stoner weapons, ward-penetrating summoner rounds, virtualised blood eagle sacrifice-mines, Kevlar golems... all the sort of stuff that Laundry boffins doodle on napkins, but don't implement due to lack of funding. Starry Wisdom has all the best toys.

## OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT

This alien artefact is the core of the cult and it's also what differentiates the New Visions Institute from the remnant cults that worshipped the same entity from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup>. This carefully shaped lump of exotic alien matter is a direct portal to the Haunter of the Dark. Gateway spells allow sorcerers to make exceedingly limited and low-bandwidth connections to this entity, but only the stone allows prolonged, in-depth contact, just as only the stone allows the Haunter of the Dark to briefly manifest on Earth.

When not in use, Joanne Storch keeps this artefact locked in a vault in her estate. She keeps the precise location of the vault and the various forms of security used to protect it secret from everyone. Even her private security force does not have access to either this vault or any camera feeds from it. Instead, they monitor the various motion and heat-based alarm systems that protect it and notify the guards of any intrusion. Not all of her guards are human; she's got plenty of lamias and other summoned nasties that can be trusted to guard the holiest of holies.

Whenever the cult holds a ritual using the Shining Trapezohedron, Joanne personally carries it from the vault to a special podium in the centre of a large windowless room. This room only has a single door and is both soundproofed and armoured. The Shining Trapezohedron's metal case contains automatic locks that can only be opened when it has been placed in a compartment inside the top of the podium. Once it is in place, Ms Storch must enter a secret combination to open the box and expose the Shining Trapezohedron and its alien visions to the waiting cultists. The doors of the room automatically lock once the Shining Trapezohedron is exposed, and Storch only unlocks them once the artefact's case is closed and locked on the podium.

After obtaining unusual results on a routine psychological inventory, Joanne Storch began looking into the side effects of using the Shining Trapezohedron. Her examination of old cult records and further experiments with the Shining Trapezohedron revealed that frequent exposure to its visions warped brains in decidedly non-human ways. Exposure to the gemstone's alien light causes damage similar to K-Syndrome. However, unlike a typical 'Swiss Cheese' K-Syndrome presentation, CAT scans of the brains of those affected by the Trapezohedron show the growth of strange clusters of cells that appear to be communicating. It is as though a second, alien brain is growing within a subject's skull, repurposing the grey matter of the human victim for its own ends. To preserve the sanity of upper tier members, she decided that they could only use the Shining Trapezohedron twice a year.



The three lower tier cults all make use of it as often as four times a year. As a result, the Shining Trapezohedron is used at least once a month. Joanne Storch is personally present for all of the upper tier rituals, although she uses Entropy Manipulation to shield herself from the stone's influence. She opens the Shining Trapezohedron with great fanfare, after making a somewhat overblown speech.

In an attempt to prevent too much strain on her sanity, she is not present for lower tier rituals. Instead, she waits in an office just outside of the room with the podium. Ms Storch opens and closes the Shining Trapezohedron's box using controls at a small desk in this office. Whenever there is a



ritual, a trio of highly trained and well-armed security guards from Joanne Storch's private security force waits in this office too. This office also contains discreet metal detectors and chemical sniffers to make certain that no one can bring weapons to a ritual. Participants in the ritual must also leave all bags in this office, where the bags are also X-rayed for any evidence of weapons or other threats. The waiting guards brutally and efficiently interrogate anyone found to be attempting to either steal the Shining Trapezohedron or carry weapons into a ritual.

The Shining Trapezohedron allows limited contact between the Hunter of the Dark and anyone who is within 10 metres of the artefact, as long as there is a clear line of sight between the artefact and the person. However, the presence of light greatly reduces the depth of this contact. The contact is strongest if the person and the artefact are both in complete darkness, shielded from all visible light.

Being in the presence of the Shining Trapezohedron in high to moderate light levels causes characters to lose 0/1d4 SAN. If the target and the Shining Trapezohedron are in complete or nearly complete darkness, even for a few moments, then this SAN loss rises to 1/1d6+1. The target may then make an Idea roll.

- If this roll fails, the target is unable to make sense of the visions triggered by the stone.
- A success means the target has a useful vision, and may increase one of the following skills by 1d4%, chosen at random: Art, Cthulhu Mythos, Knowledge (Occult), Science (any) or Sorcery.
- A special success gives the character a sudden insight into some problem, or gives them a vision of some new invention or revelation. In game terms, the character may automatically gain a special success at an upcoming roll of Art, Cthulhu Mythos, Knowledge (Occult), Science (any), Technology Use (any) or Sorcery, or increase their INT or POW by 1 permanently.
- A fumble means the character must roll on the Mental Magic Side Effect table (*The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, page 132)

Exposure to the Shining Trapezohedron is disorientating. As long as the Shining Trapezohedron remains active, everyone within 10 metres of this artefact is strongly affected by the Hunter of the Dark's visions. Everyone affected by these visions is disoriented so that all of their rolls that would be *Average* are now *Difficult*, and all of their *Difficult* rolls become *Impossible*. Wearing a level four personal ward protects against these visions and the associated disorientation, but this ward will be burned out and useless at the end of the exposure.

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#### OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT Rituals

Both tiers of the cult regularly hold rituals to honour the Hunter of the Dark and partake of the visions it sends to worshippers. During rituals that do not include a human sacrifice, or after the sacrifice, the cultists stand in complete darkness. The Shining Trapezohedron seems to glow with a faint flickering light. This glow is the result of intense thaumic energy striking viewer's retinas and not actual light. In addition to seeing this light, anyone present first experiences almost indescribable sensations of motion and visions of alien landscapes and starscapes. After these sensations fade, viewers then have somewhat clearer visions. Some are of life on alien worlds or various bizarre and extremely cryptic requests from the Hunter of the Dark, others are either horrifying images of various possible futures or visions of strange technologies. The latter type of visions are considered to be by far the most important by the members of the upper tier, but are also the most difficult to understand. Frequently, the information about science and technology is either incomprehensible, or requires knowledge unknown to humanity to make use of it.

Among the upper tier, the aftermath of a ritual usually consists of a lengthy and eccentric brainstorming session. These discussions often become fairly intense, but most participants agree to not attempt to poach each other's ideas. Members of the cult share a competitive camaraderie, which each of them attempts to outdo one another in developing new and unusual technologies derived from the visions produced by the Shining Trapezohedron.

The major limitation to developing any of these inventions is the fact that most of the visions deal with radically new technologies that are difficult to implement and produce and even more difficult for even the most brilliant human to fully understand. These visions are incomplete and require intermediary technologies that are often poorly described. Occasionally, one or more visions produces information that can serve as the basis for a refinement or improvement on an existing piece of technology, but these visions are relatively rare. They are also always a cause for celebration. So far, the visions have provided several members of the cult with extremely lucrative insights into improving various technologies. New weapons or power generation technologies that can be mass produced have so far eluded all of the cultists. However, they have created a number of unique and dangerous devices, including teleportation gateways and disintegration rays.

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#### The Hunter of the Dark

The Hunter of the Dark is a puzzle, it appears both more active in our world than most extra-dimensional invaders and also far more interested in providing its worshippers with

advanced technologies. A few occultist security operatives have encountered the Hunter of the Dark, but most did not survive this experience and the very few that did could only report on its physical capabilities, not its motives.

The Hunter of the Dark supplies its cultists with a variety of strange visions, which both help ensure their devotion to it and also provides them with fragments of knowledge about sorcery and of various advanced scientific and technical information. However, all of the information it provides are related to weapons, powerful new energy sources that also have potential aggressive uses or new forms of advanced spacecraft propulsion that also have the capability of causing large-scale accidental destruction. Some of the more notable examples of this sort of technology include fusion bombs that require non-radioactive elements and a new method of producing antimatter that greatly reduces the energy and also the time needed to create it.

The truth about the Hunter of the Dark is that it is a sorcerously powerful hyper-intelligent autonomic entity from a distant star system, and perhaps even another galaxy. Its exact location does not matter, since it can communicate with and visit its worshippers using an extra-dimensional connection with the Shining Trapezohedron.



The Hunter of the Dark's reasons are as unknowable as those of any alien, but its immediate motives are clear. It

wants access to the Earth and to the life upon it. It is willing to accept most of humanity's destruction, but desires that some portion of humanity to survive. Possibly, it considers humanity to be a food source or pet project, or else it wants humans as slaves and worshippers, and intends to accelerate human development to a point where its worshippers can physically travel to its home world in order to serve it.

The Hunter of the Dark understands the danger of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, and is currently attempting to use the New Visions Institute to provide humanity with weapons that will allow humanity to survive, albeit in a much-reduced capacity. It is also providing limited information of space technologies to allow pockets of humanity to survive off of the Earth, waiting there until the Hunter of the Dark can come and collect them. the Hunter of the Dark wants to make certain that humanity wins the battle against CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, but also desires that this victory be largely pyrrhic to enable a much easier takeover on its part.

In addition to using the New Visions Institute to help prepare the world for its domination, the Hunter of the Dark must also feed. Using the Shining Trapezohedron to contact the cultists is difficult and exhausting, so the Hunter of the Dark must feed after several uses of this artefact. It feeds upon complex patterns of neural energies, and especially enjoys extreme human sensations, like fear, insanity and excruciating pain.

## The Manifest Hunter

To feed, the Hunter of the Dark must materialise a construct of thaumic energy that makes physical contact with its chosen victim. This projection is both difficult to create and highly unstable. The energy field collapses in the presence of any electromagnetic radiation in the visible spectrum or higher, including visible light, ultraviolet light, X-rays and gamma rays. The Hunter of the Dark can only materialise and feed upon a target in complete darkness. This materialisation only remains as long as both its location and the Shining Trapezohedron are shielded from light and other high frequency EM radiation. The touch of any such radiation instantly dispels the Hunter of the Dark's thaumic projection.

The Hunter of the Dark can cause this projection to reappear in another nearby area that is in darkness, but the energy field requires at least one minute to reform. As long as the Shining Trapezohedron remains both in the open and in complete darkness, the Hunter of the Dark's projection can rematerialise. However, the victim must be in complete darkness for the Hunter of the Dark to feed.

Physical contact with the Hunter of the Dark drains 1d3 points of POW from the target. If the target is reduced to



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

0 POW, they instantly die of fright. If the target survives, lost POW returns at a rate of 1 point per week. Also, each contact with the Hunter of the Dark causes the victim to lose 1d6/1d10 SAN. During the first stage of the process, the victim begins having deliriously intense visions and hallucinations, in the midst of these visions, the victim is filled with extreme terror, and then they die in terrified agony. The Hunter is a Class Four entity, so a Level Four ward offers temporary protection from its attacks.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the cultists learned that the Hunter of the Dark enjoyed their sacrifices even more if the victim was tortured first, since the victim's pain enhanced their neural energies. Members of the modern cult have discovered that victims who have been given various powerful hallucinogens like mescaline and LSD are even more highly regarded by the Hunter of the Dark. Half an hour prior to the sacrifice, victims are given both drugs.

Although rituals to gain visions from the Hunter of the Dark are always held in complete darkness, even the most devoted cultists find the prospect of setting out a human sacrifice in complete darkness and hoping that the Hunter of the Dark kills the sacrifice and not one of them to be somewhat daunting. Instead, the room is lit with exceedingly dim lights arranged so that the area immediately behind the central podium is in darkness. The victim's feet are chained to keep them within this area, while the rest of the cult stands in the gloom waiting for the Hunter of the Dark to appear and accept their sacrifice.

### Notable Members

The following are the three most important cultists that operatives might encounter.

#### Joanne Storch

Joanne Storch, aged 41, is a wealthy and charismatic individual who was previously a brilliant engineer and is now the CEO of Central Dynamics. Having made more than 40 million dollars developing remote controlled aerial drones for sale to the US, Canadian and UK military, Storch recently began pursuing grander visions involving controlled nuclear fusion and private space travel. Using recent advances in robotics and microprocessor technology, Central Dynamics has begun working on both autonomous drones that can operate independently of any human control if their communications are compromised, and on ground-based drones that can fight alongside, and eventually in place of, conventional soldiers.

Storch is a famous but also exceedingly private individual. Her face has been on the covers of several major magazines, but she keeps details of her personal life exceedingly private. She is a passionate advocate of advanced energy technologies, specially controlled nuclear fusion, as well as private space exploration. In addition to sponsoring work on private launch vehicles, Joanne Storch is also attempting to promote interest in large-scale launch systems using controlled detonation of small nuclear weapons.

She is widely known as someone who is exceptionally security conscious. She always travels with at least one bodyguard and her home and offices use advanced defence robots (see the security robot and autonomous security robot, *Laundry Files: Agent's Handbook*, pages 24-25). Joanne Storch is a skilled programmer, but her understanding of computational sorcery is quite limited.

**STR** 7    **CON** 10    **SIZ** 10    **INT** 17    **POW** 13  
**DEX** 13    **CHA** 14    **EDU** 14    **SAN** 0    **HP** 10

**Damage Bonus:** -1d4

**Weapons:** None.

**Skills:** Bureaucracy 40%, Computer Use (Design) 80%, Computer Use (Programming) 70%, Computer Use (Magic) 28%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Etiquette 50%, Friends in High Places 80%, Knowledge (Politics) 60%, Knowledge (Military-industrial complex) 70%, Perform (PowerPoint presentation) 50%, Repair 40%, Research 80%, Science (Astronomy beyond human understanding) 40%, Science (Mathematics) 70%, Science (Physics) 65%, Science (Thaumaturgy) 50%, Technology Use (Various specialities) 70%.



# THE STARRY WISDOM CULT

## Harriet McKinnis

Harriet McKinnis is the leader of the Edinburgh branch of the Starry Wisdom Cult. She grew up in the cult and her great, great, grandfather Ezekiel was a member of the original Church of Starry Wisdom in Providence, Rhode Island. McKinnis is 59 and vividly remembers when Joanne Storch joined her branch of the cult back in the early 1990s. At the time, McKinnis regarded Joanne Storch as yet another foolish young person desperately searching for meaning and transcendence. When Storch contacted Harriet McKinnis seven years ago and announced that she had recovered the Shining Trapezohedron and was attempting to reunify the various branches of the Starry Wisdom cult, Harriet was simultaneously overjoyed and outraged. She had grown up with stories and legends about the Shining Trapezohedron and was overjoyed at the chance to experience the visions it produces. However, she was also upset that it was now in the possession of someone she regarded as entirely unworthy of this great honour. Getting to know Joanne Storch and to observe the nature of the cult's inner circle has served to moderate McKinnis' low opinion, but she is an exceptionally ambitious woman, and is still convinced that her heritage and experience means that she should be the rightful owner of the Shining Trapezohedron. She is also aware of exactly how good the security on the Shining Trapezohedron is. In 2009, she persuaded a member of the cult's inner circle to attempt to steal the artefact. Since that time, McKinnis has been waiting for an opportunity to steal the Shining Trapezohedron, and understands that to do so she will almost certainly also have to kill Walter Todd and Joanne Storch. Harriet McKinnis is a skilled practitioner of traditional sorcery.



STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 13  
DEX 10 CHA 13 EDU 16 SAN 0 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: Handgun 30%, damage 1d10

Skills: Burning Jealousy 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Fast Talk 40%, Knowledge (Occult) 65%, Sorcery 50%, Plot Secretly 70%.

## Walter Todd

Walter Todd is Joanne Storch's advisor and another member of the cult's upper tier. Unlike most of the other members of the cult's inner tier, he is not the CEO of a successful corporation. Instead, he is the head of Central Dynamics' special projects division. While Storch manages the entire company, Mr. Todd is in charge of both the company's off the book operations related to the cult, and also of the more speculative and dangerous company projects. He is personally overseeing the creation of the quantum computer to upload the Haunter of the Dark's manifestation, as well as research into both controlled nuclear fusion and fusion bombs. Walter Todd is a charming sociopath in his late 30s who seems both interesting and charismatic, but who cares for nothing except results. He is deeply loyal to Ms Storch, because he is aware at how good she is at her job, and because his current position allows him to act with considerably autonomy and without fear of scrutiny. Mr. Todd is a skilled computational sorcerer capable of performing spells up to level four. He is also in charge of occult security for the cult. Todd also personally arranges and oversees all of the human sacrifices for the cult, which he performs with the same cheerful efficiency as he does all of his other duties.



STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 13  
DEX 8 CHA 10 EDU 20 SAN 0 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: None

Skills: Computer Use (Magic) 70%, Computer Use (Design) 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Heavy Weapon (Rocket launcher) 40%, Increasingly Alien Brain Chemistry 50%, Pilot (Drone) 65%, Science (Physics) 70%, Science (Thaumaturgy) 60%, Sorcery 30%, Technology Use (Various specialities) 70%



## Ongoing Operations

The following are some of the New Visions Institute's ongoing projects.

### Virtualising the Stone

Currently, the Haunter needs OBSIDIAN CRAPSHOOT to manifest on Earth, short of a computationally expensive level four gate (and the Haunter's home world makes conventional gate travel difficult). The stone bypasses these problems, but there's only one stone and its power is limited. Therefore, there's an ongoing project to either replicate or, better yet, create a virtual copy of the Shining Trapezohedron. Theoretically, any identical shape would have the same properties as it moved through space-time. Both the Haunter and the cult want this, but Joanne Storch doesn't; her control of the cult is based on her control of the stone. She is actively looking for ways to sabotage her own cult's research project, and has even considered leaking information about it to the Laundry.

### Conventional Weapons Technologies

The weapons engineers who are part of the institute are working on half a dozen different projects. The three most promising are chemical agents that only affect individuals with specific genetic traits, compact fusion bombs that do not require nuclear fission (or difficult to acquire fissionable materials) to explode, and long-range vehicle-mounted laser weapons, capable of knocking out missiles or aircraft up to several hundred kilometres away. Directed chemical agents would allow terrorists or assassins to target individuals or specific populations with a high degree of accuracy, and the completion of any of the latter two projects could revolutionise warfare. Compact fusion bombs could easily lead to both nuclear terrorism and nuclear weapons in the hands of almost any nation. All of these projects make extensive use of ideas and technologies derived from visions inspired by the Haunter of the Dark in the dark, which also means that even the engineers involved in the project do not fully understand any of them.

So far, most of these weapons are difficult to mass produce in the numbers necessary for military use, so members of the New Visions Institute are now debating the relative merits of continued research in order to develop weapons that can be sold to governments that the Institute favours or selling prototypes to terrorist groups interested in targeting nations and organisations that the cultists wish to destroy. The second approach has grown more popular, because several upper tier members believe that observing the results of full field tests would enable them to perfect their weapons.

### Nihil Bombs

These exotic weapons use controlled pulses of thaumic energy, similar to those released by a failed exorcism, to kill

and disintegrate targets over a large radius. These devices only affect living matter, leaving buildings and infrastructure completely intact. In addition, these weapons have another property known only to Joanne Storch, Walter Todd, and three other members of the cult's upper tier. In addition to destroying victims' bodies, this bomb also completely destroys the necromantic energies associated with the victims' deaths. Nihil bombs never create hauntings and could be safely used on a massive scale to reduce the human population below the level where CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN is an immediate risk. Their use would not trigger the necromantic backlash that conventional weapons of mass death would produce.

Each of these weapons require several grams of artificially produced radioactive elements, two level four sorcery spells, and several extremely difficult to produce electronic components. Even with the New Visions Institute's abundant resources, producing a sufficient number of these weapons to substantially reduce the human population is impossible. However, Joanne Storch is currently attempting a complex manipulation where she sells the secret of these weapons to the US government while making certain that the Black Chamber rapidly discovers that these weapons eliminate necromantic traces of their victims. Along with these plans, Ms Storch and Walter Todd are also attempting to make certain that the thaumic shielding they have developed is sufficient to protect anyone inside from these effects of these weapons.

### Energy & Space Projects

The most dangerous of these projects is one designed to drastically drop the cost and difficulty of manufacturing antimatter, allowing a large facility to potentially make as much as a gram of antimatter per year. Currently, creating a gram of antimatter would require many centuries and would cost at least \$25 billion, this process could reduce the cost of around \$50 million and would also include a device capable of (allegedly) safely storing this amount of antimatter. Naturally, the potential for this process to go drastically wrong is immense, a fact that the Haunter of the Dark is vividly aware of. The machinery used in this process requires a poorly understood level four Entropy Manipulation spell be embedded in its circuitry.

Further on the horizon, the cultists have created working teleportation gateways to Mars and another alien world in the Gliese 667 star system. Currently, these gateways are extremely unreliable, but they are planning to use these devices to set up bases on both worlds if the gateways can be made more stable. Unfortunately, the gateways occasionally flicker and briefly create level three summonings that transport physical extradimensional creatures into the vicinity of the gateway. So far, the cultists have so far managed to contain and eliminate the summoned creatures.

# THE HANDMAIDS OF ULTHAR - OVERVIEW -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

## CULT OVERVIEW

The Handmaids of Ulthar is a female-run cult devoted to cat worship. The cult started in continental Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, but its roots date back to systems of cat worship in ancient Egypt. The cult is powerful and disciplined, but their goals are not particularly malevolent. They are not regarded as a significant threat.

## BELIEFS

The Handmaids revere all cats, viewing them as avatars of divine spirits. Most of all, the Handmaids worship Bast, the Egyptian cat goddess whom they believe to be imprisoned on Saturn. Beyond this, the cult has three goals.

- **Freeing Bast:** The Handmaids' primary goal is to free the Egyptian cat goddess, Bast, from her prison.
- **Recreating Bubastis:** The Handmaids are intent on creating a second Bubastis – a holy city secretly dedicated to the worship of cats. The city would be clandestinely governed by the Handmaids and their familiars.
- **Feline Protection and Retribution:** The Handmaids want to safeguard cats and expand feline rights. They often extract vengeance for acts of feline cruelty and felicide.

## HISTORY

The cult started in Spain during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Handmaid legend states that the first coven was founded by a cat that learned to speak Spanish. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the cult grew and spread rapidly across continental Europe. In the early 1800s, the first coven was established in the United Kingdom. While governmental institutions have often run afoul of the Handmaids, the Laundry enjoys a largely positive relationship with several of the covens in the UK.

## MEMBERSHIP

Only females may become members of the Handmaids of Ulthar. There are three levels of membership.

- **Daughters of Ulthar:** These women are in training to become full Handmaids. They do not yet have familiars.

- **Handmaids of Ulthar:** These women are the centre of the coven and the leadership of the cult. Each Handmaid has a single familiar. Given that only Handmaids with living familiars are allowed to sit in the leadership circle, the Laundry believes it possible that the Handmaids are really figureheads and that the actual decision-making power lies with the familiars themselves.

- **Widows of Ulthar:** These women were once handmaids, but their familiars have died. They no longer sit with the Handmaids, but they are still treated with great respect.

Each coven has a scattering of male associates who are not actually members. The amount of trust, respect, and knowledge they are given varies from individual to individual. Most major European cities have a Handmaid coven. Coven size is kept deliberately small: around ten female members and another dozen male associates.

The covens rarely communicate with traditional methods; nevertheless, they have surprisingly centralised goals and a great consistency of information. It is suspected that much of the intra-coven communication is led by familiars and happens in dreams.

## ASSETS

Handmaids are often women who move in the highest levels of society. As a result, the cult enjoys moderate political and financial influence. In addition, each Handmaid has a familiar. Familiars are fully sentient and possess with vast stores of knowledge including occult and arcane learning. Finally, each coven controls hundreds of domestic cats. Some of these cats live with members, others are strays. All are ready to perform the Handmaids' bidding.

## ONGOING OPERATIONS

While the Handmaids of Ulthar are organised and intelligent, the Laundry does not consider them a high level threat. Their goals are not inherently destructive and their beliefs do not preclude the possibility of negotiation. The Laundry has even had occasion to call upon the Handmaids as allies.



## Beliefs

The core of the Handmaid's belief structure is the worship of cats. They believe cats to be divine beings. In particular they worship the ancient feline spirits that dwell in Ulthar and other cities of earth's dreamlands. Most of all, the Handmaids worship Bast, the Egyptian cat goddess now imprisoned on Saturn. Springing from this belief system, the cult has three main goals:

### Freeing Bast

The Handmaids' primary goal is the liberation of the Egyptian cat goddess, Bast, from her prison on Saturn. They are exploring three different avenues to achieve this.

First, they are interested in assembling a cat army to leap to Saturn from the rooftops of Ulthar. Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict what forces might be assembled to repel this invasion of earthly felines. The army might have to do battle with Zoogs, Moonbeasts and even Nyarlathotep himself in addition to the cats of Saturn currently guarding Bast. The Handmaids and their familiars have decided the assembled invasion force must be larger than anything they can presently assemble.

To grow their army, the Handmaids have started a secret feline breeding program. Using feral breeding stock and under the supervision of the familiars, the Handmaids have created carefully disguised breeding centres in Montreal, Newcastle and Jakarta. In these breeding centres, the Handmaids produce cats that are larger and fiercer while still being children of Bast. Of course, these animals are dangerous and unpredictable, but the familiars are confident that these new cats are still within their control. With twenty or thirty more generations of breeding, this army should be ready to invade Saturn.

Secondly, the Handmaids have given some thought to the possibility of actual space travel to Saturn. Obviously, this project would be decades off, but an actual physical trip to Saturn (as opposed to a dream leap) would have the advantage of total surprise. Though this idea is absurdly impractical, the Handmaids have channelled funds into embryonic private space programs such as the Russian Soyuz project.

Finally, the Handmaids are negotiating with an entity they identify as Nyarlathotep himself (or, if you prefer, a Level Five weakly godlike exonome designated GIZA DISORDER by the Laundry). The Handmaids believe that while the cats of Saturn currently imprison Bast, GIZA DISORDER is the real force standing between the cat goddess and freedom. If Nyarlathotep could be induced to act on Bast's behalf, the Handmaids are certain that no other force would stand in their way.

They have successfully contacted the alien god on two different occasions. They are presently searching for some sacrifice sufficient to regain Bast's freedom. The Handmaids believe their best offering would be a mass outbreak of a lethal toxoplasmosis in a major city like London or New York. The plan is ready, and the Handmaids are willing to live with the loss of human life, but negotiating with a god is ever-shifting terrain. They are not convinced that Nyarlathotep will honour their act or even recognise the purpose of the offering, but are attempting to contact him a third time seeking this assurance. Once they have it, the Handmaids are prepared to unleash thousands of cats, each carrying a deadly parasite.

### Recreating Bubastis

Located just a few miles north of present day Cairo, Bubastis was a holy city in ancient Egypt dedicated to the worship of Bast. After Bast was defeated around AD400, the city deteriorated and eventually crumbled. The Handmaids are intent on creating a new Bubastis – a holy city secretly dedicated to the worship of cats.

The city would be clandestinely governed by the Handmaids and their familiars. Killing a cat in this city would be a capital offence as it was in Bubastis and as it still is in the dreamland city of Ulthar.

The chosen city would meet the following qualifications:

- Large native feline population.
- Close spiritual connection to a Dreamland city – ideally Ulthar or Celephais.
- Weak current central government or leadership vacuum and faltering economy.
- Population with non-traditional values.

Cities that the Handmaids consider strong candidates include Athens, Tripoli, Dresden, New Orleans, Khartoum and Newcastle.

In the centre of this city will be a great temple of cat worship. Of course, the temple won't be known as such, as it will publicly serve as a courthouse or city hall. The lofty ambitions for this temple come from the words of Herodotus describing the original Egyptian temple.

*"Temples there are more spacious and costlier than that of Bubastis, but none so pleasant to behold. It is surrounded by water: for two canals branch off from the river, and run as far as the entrance to the temple. Each canal is a hundred feet wide, and its banks are lined with trees. The propylaea are sixty feet in height, and are adorned with sculptures nine feet high, and of excellent workmanship. Quite round the temple there goes a wall. Within the enclosure is a grove of fair tall trees, planted around a large building in which is the effigy (of Bast)."*



## Feline Protection and Retribution

The Handmaids are passionate about safeguarding cats and expanding feline rights. In the mundane, this expresses itself as a strong support of animal rights. More interestingly, though, the Handmaids have a mission to extract vengeance for acts of feline cruelty and felicide. They are guided by a simple maxim: "The death of a cat is no smaller cause for grief than that of a human."

The Handmaids of each community act as a kind of tribunal to examine and adjudicate cases of feline abuse and death. Obviously, they cannot police every instance. They try to focus on the cases involving malice or neglect. If a cat is seen to be suffering, the Handmaids will arrange for that suffering to be revisited upon the neglectful owner. If a man kills a cat and the Handmaids learn of it, he will be remembered. One night, the killer will receive a visit from the coven's cats, and he will never be seen again.

## History

*A Brief History of Ancient Egypt* describes the decline of Egyptian cat worship in two short sentences:

*"In AD390, Roman Emperor Theodosius decreed a ban on the Cult of Bast. Immediately thereafter, the centuries-long Egyptian practice of cat worship began to disappear."*

The truth is darker. According to the beliefs of the Handmaids, it's a tale of treachery and sorcery.

Since the days of Cleopatra, Roman Emperors had struggled with Egyptian independence. While other principalities and regions adjusted to Roman rule, the Egyptians proved problematic. The resistance was rarely military, and blood was not often shed, but the Egyptians consistently rejected Roman law and culture. More importantly, the Nile dwellers rejected Roman religion. For centuries they scoffed at the Roman pantheon, and after Theodosius proclaimed Christianity the official religion of the empire, their resistance only increased.

The source of this theological intransigence lay in the worship of the cat goddess, Bast. While Anubis, Osiris and even Ra gave way to modern deities, the Romans could not curtail the Egyptian observance of their cat goddess. Regardless of edicts, persuasion and even bribery, the Egyptians maintained their practices of feline reverence and mummification, their laws forbidding felicide and their holy pilgrimages to Bubastis.

Emperor Theodosius disliked the religious resistance from the Nile delta, but more important were the practical concerns. The Egyptians flatly refused to pay taxes that were levied for religious purposes. This loss of revenue was intolerable. Not willing to become personally involved, the emperor turned the matter over to Ghazwan ibn Fassad, an advisor of Syrian descent.

Versed in dark arts and occult studies, Ghazwan knew that to be rid of the cat worshippers, he would have to drive out Bast herself. Anxious to please the Emperor, Ghazwan reached beyond sanity and made a bargain with the a potent and mysterious god he knew only as 'The Black Man' who dwelt on the dark side of the moon.

For centuries – or so the cultists of Bast preached – the cats of earth had warred with those of Saturn and Uranus. Some long-forgotten transgression had occurred between the races and now the feline feud was endless. Ghazwan approached Bast as an intermediary sent by the cats of Saturn to make peace. "The cats of Uranus," he persuaded Bast, "are beyond truculent and will never make peace. But those of Saturn miss their goddess and want to offer fealty. United, the cats of Earth and Saturn will never again tremble before the monstrous Uranian felines."

The meeting was not easily won, but eventually the cunning advisor lured Bast out of her opalescent temple in Bubastis to a parley on the moon's dark side. As soon as the goddess's paw stepped on lunar dust, Ghazwan sprung his trap. Rather than conciliatory Saturnine felines, Bast was confronted by a hostile allegiance of cats from Saturn and Uranus as well as moon beasts, Zoogs, and all manner of



creatures unfriendly to the cats of Earth. Bast could have defeated or at least escaped even this vast army, but at the climax of the battle, the Black Man himself intervened in one of his many forms. Against this crawling chaos Bast could not stand. She was pulled down, bound and carried to Saturn to be sealed within the planet's icy rings.

Once Bast was gone, the spiritual underpinnings of cat worship began to unravel and the tradition quickly died. Eventually the holy city of Bubastis fell into ruin and the temple was plundered.

How much of this is true? Well, try reading 'alien entity from beyond our space-time that possesses feline vessels when taking physical form' for 'cat', 'a solution for an N-dimensional super-Minkowski space' for 'Saturn', and 'god' for 'god'.

## Post-Egyptian Feline Worship

In the centuries since the fall of Bast, cat worship has been less common, but not unheard of. Even locked in her icy prison, Bast has some influence. Beyond Bast, the feline spirits in the fabled dream cities of Ulthar and Celephais are able to touch and sway the human world.



Since Egypt, any form of cat worship has usually been labeled witchcraft. In 1233, for example, in response to the beginnings of a cult of ailurophiles, Pope Gregory IX denounced black cats as satanic. Thousands of the cats

were collected and drowned as their owners fed the flames of burning pyres.

In the early days of colonial America, too much feline attention was always seen as near-proof of witchcraft. A simple association with cats was enough to drag a Goodman or Goody into court. Once pronounced guilty of cat worship, the unfortunate defendant would usually be pressed to death with stones.

## The First Coven

In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, though, a new cult of cat worshippers surfaced called the Handmaids of Ulthar. What distinguished the Handmaids from previous cat worshippers was their cohesion, discipline and knowledge. The cult knew that Bast had been imprisoned by Nyarlathotep in league with extra-planetary felines. The Handmaids further understood that, while not wholly powerless, their goddess' ability to respond to prayer was greatly diminished, but the Handmaids found ways to take and hold power nevertheless.

The first known Handmaid coven was formed in Madrid in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century, but no individual person or people claim credit for it. Handmaid lore states that the cult was not started by humans, but by an exceptional cat named Dukinea. She was the pet of a young man named Memes who had spent his boyhood journeying through the cities of the Dreamlands. Memes was a singular youth. With people he was almost a mute, but he whispered countless tales and secrets to his beloved Dukinea. After hours of patient listening, Dukinea began to learn human speech – one of the few cats ever to accomplish this feat.

Dukinea believed that humans could serve for more than just companionship. If properly taught and guided, they could become valuable allies against the monstrous cats that dwelt beyond the earth. Once she had mastered human speech, she organised a handful of lonely merchant wives into the first coven of Handmaids with Memes as a pseudo-prophet.

From Madrid, the Handmaid cult spread quickly across Europe. The more patriarchal the society, the stronger the cult grew. It seemed that 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe was filled with gifted and intelligent women forced by social standards to knit purses and practice needlepoint. The Handmaid cult gave them a greater purpose on which to focus their talents.

At first, the Handmaids of Ulthar had goals and methods ranging from harmless to noble. They took the side of Bast and the earth cats against the forces of Nyarlathotep and the extra planetary cats. Gradually, though, the cult has taken a more malevolent turn. In seeking to free Bast, the Handmaids have necessarily made a study of the dark forces that imprisoned her – including the Black Man

himself. Many of the cultists have been seduced by the unwholesome power these otherworldly beings proffer. As the cult has spread, they have become more power-hungry and dangerous.

### The Cult in the Modern Day

The modern Handmaids of Ulthar comprise a widespread cult, with covens in hundreds of places across the globe. Few of the covens have any real power, and are likely to consist of four old retirees chanting spells before having a nice cup of tea and a slice of cake. The cult claims to run the world from behind the scenes, taking credit for everything from women's suffrage to the Internet, but most covens are relatively harmless, possessing only a little more occult power than the average Scout troop.

### Structure

In 1791, a London private investigator named Benjamin Goss was retained by Lord Harry Harcourt to track down a disappeared fiancée. Goss himself disappeared after accepting the case, but before he vanished, he sent his employer a single letter chronicling his efforts to recover the missing girl. Though rudimentary, Goss's letter remains one of the most concise descriptions of the membership of the Handmaids of Ulthar.

While lacking in detail, Goss' letter is fundamentally accurate in the structure of the Handmaids of Ulthar. Only women are ever asked to join the Handmaids, but each coven also boasts a collection of male supporters and agents. While these men are not true members, they are trusted associates.

Lord Harcourt,

After one week on your case, I am pleased to inform you that I have a reliable lead on the whereabouts of your fiancée. Further, I am assured she is unharmed. Regrettably, the rest of my news is less fortuitous.

My sources inform me that the girl has fallen in with a religious cult called The Handmaids of Ulthar. The group is a female coven devoted to the worship of cats. The women view themselves as servants to mythical feline figures. My lordship may find some comfort in knowing that your fiancée is not the first well-bred lady to be drawn into this confederacy of charlatans; to my surprise, many of these handmaids are of excellent birth.

The group has proven a troublesome prospect. The women are well protected and closely mind their secrets, but I believe I have found an in-road. Beyond the women who comprise the central membership is a coterie of male hangers-on. These lads are gypsies, performers, rent-boys and other deviants plucked from the lowest rung of society.

Last night, I tracked such an associate of theirs — a burlesque performer — to his rooms after a garish piece of foppery that he passed off as entertainment. I'll spare your lordship the sordid details, but I put the screws to him and his tongue loosened soon enough.

While not himself a true member of this Handmaid organisation, the boy yielded valuable information. Through him I have learned the signals and passwords the cult uses as assurances of trust among unfamiliar members. For example, if a cultist were to say to me, "The harbour at Brahana is treacherous," I know the expected reply would be, "but the jewels of Oriab are precious."

My lord, I know this sound like pitiful nonsense, and were the stakes any lower than the safety of your beloved, I might discard his words as cheap theatrics. But under the circumstances, I paid the closest of attention. The boy supplied me with half a dozen of these terms and signs for passage.

My present intent is to disguise myself as a gypsy attached to the Italian chapter of the same cult. The burlesque-boy will make introductions for me and with my knowledge of their codes and rituals, I will insinuate myself into the good graces of these Handmaids and find that which is precious to you.

I am enclosing the week's list of expenses. Within three days, you shall expect to hear from me to your full satisfaction.

Yours very truly,

*Benjamin Goss*



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

Among the actual members there are three levels of membership: the **Daughters of Ulthar**, the **Handmaids of Ulthar** and the **Widows of Ulthar**.

### Daughters of Ulthar

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A woman who is asked to join the coven but is not yet a Handmaid is called a Daughter of Ulthar. A Daughter serves a probationary period that will last a year or more. She must unquestioningly perform any task or command assigned to her by a Handmaid. In addition, the daughter must spend enormous time learning the 'language of cats'. An average coven will have only one or two daughters at any time.

The women asked to become Daughters come from many walks of life but certain qualities are always sought. First the woman must display poise, discipline and discretion. Second, the woman must bring something to the coven. This might be wealth, political influence, key property or any other asset the coven is lacking. Finally and most importantly, to be invited to become a Daughter, a woman must have an intense, overarching devotion to cats.

A Daughter that endures the trials of the probationary period, learns the cat tongue, and impresses the Handmaids will eventually be invited to become an equal. After a lengthy initiation ritual, the Daughter is given a final test. She must take her most precious cat and transform it into a familiar by making it a host for an immortal feline spirit from Ulthar or one of the other Dreamland cities. If the Daughter successfully conjures this spirit and creates her familiar then she becomes a Handmaid of Ulthar.

Sadly, many Daughters do not survive the probationary period. The work can be gruelling and degrading; the cat tongue is difficult to master; and many Daughters fail to conjure their familiar.

A Daughter who fails to become a Handmaid faces grim prospects. If she is exceptional in ability or greatly favoured by the Handmaids she may be allowed to continue as a daughter for another year or more before again attempting to become a Handmaid. Most, however, are not so fortunate. A rejected Daughter has too much knowledge to be allowed to walk away. Instead, the cats of the coven gather around the rejected Daughter to bid farewell. At first there is warmth in the process. They will purr and mew as she strokes them in tearful goodbyes. But as their numbers climb, their mewling gives way to atavistic growls and moans.

Eventually the cats reach a peak of hunger and excitement, and they strike. Hundreds of cats pounce as a single body. They pull the Daughter to pieces and feast until all that remains are white bones licked clean of marrow.

### The Language of Cats

In effect, the prospective Daughter spends a year building up her Sorcery skill, but is taught only a single spell: Summon Cat Spirit. Every daughter has a Sorcery skill of at least 15%. With experience or training, a Daughter can learn to apply the Language of Cats to other forms of magic.

### Handmaids of Ulthar

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Coven size varies from city to city, but a large coven might have half a dozen or more Handmaids. The Handmaids and their familiars are the heart of the coven. They sit together in a sacred council and make all the decisions for the coven. They are the most respected and powerful members of the cult, and the words handed down from them are law.

There is no hierarchy among the actual Handmaids. No one is higher or lower than another, and all their decisions reflect some kind of agreement or unanimity. Even if a particular Handmaid strongly disagrees with a decision, once the circle has decided, she will never speak against it.

### Widows of Ulthar

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The Handmaid's familiars are normal cats whose bodies have become hosts to immortal feline spirits. Each Handmaid has a single familiar. These cats have vast knowledge and abilities, but their bodies are still those of mortal cats. They may live long lives, but eventually their bodies will die. When this happens, the cultist is no longer a Handmaid, becoming a Widow of Ulthar.

While still held in great respect, the Widows of Ulthar no longer sit with the Handmaids to make decisions. They may be called upon for wisdom or advice, but they have no actual authority. The widows are often older women, but this is only coincidental. A familiar usually has a long life, but if one were to die untimely, it is quite possible for a Widow to be a younger woman.

A Widow would never be asked to perform the menial chores assigned to a Daughter, but the Widows are called upon to be feline caretakers. They house and feed many of the coven's house cats.

### The Cats

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Beyond the familiars, each coven attracts hundreds of normal housecats. Some of these cats are strays that move in with a Widow. Others are pets to some unknowing family in the town who are drawn to the coven whenever called.

## THE HANDMAIDS OF ULTHAR

These cats have no special abilities, but there are hundreds of them. When given the proper leadership, they become a dangerous weapon.

### The Men

Finally, every coven has a variety of male associates that are attached to the Handmaids. These men will never be members, but they are still devoted to the cult. Though pejorative, Goss's description of these men is not inaccurate. They tend to be men who live on the fringes of society. Often they feel lonely or lost in their daily lives. Their motives vary, but the cult often gives these cat loving men a sense of belonging and purpose.

The Handmaids have a natural distrust of men. Men are seen as part of the patriarchal structure that has consistently subjugated and oppressed cat worshippers. The men serve a variety of functions for the cult, and some are entrusted with important information and enormous responsibilities, but they are also closely watched. If he no longer seems trustworthy, removing a cat-loving male is simplicity itself. His own pet might even participate in the feast.



### Communication

Each city's coven functions with relative autonomy from other covens, but because all covens draw on traditions established in ancient Egypt, there is a surprising consistency

of belief and methodology from coven to coven. While the details vary, the rituals and procedures are very similar from coven to coven.

The Handmaids do not communicate through any normal traceable means. They do not use email, cell phones, snail mail, or any other conventional means for communication between covens. The Laundry suspects that all inter-coven communication is conducted by familiars in the Dreamlands, probably in Ulthar itself. Laundry remote viewers have attempted to observe and gain intelligence on these dream world meetings, but the familiars have proven too cunning to follow in the Dreamlands and always elude the Laundry dreamers.

### Important Figures

It is not always easy to identify a Handmaid or cultist. Not every cat lover is a Handmaid. Further, in some cases it is possible for a man to be connected to the cult and not know it. Winston Churchill, for example, was a famous cat lover. Further, it is thought that that his wife, Clementine Hozier, was a Handmaid, but that she kept it secret from the Prime Minister. Of course, she would have been in a position to exert enormous influence. Does this make Churchill a de facto member of the Handmaids of Ulthar? Obviously not, but he probably unwittingly acted on their behalf many times.

Some notable women of history who were known Handmaids include Florence Nightingale, Madame Curie, Vivien Leigh and Eleanor Roosevelt. Men of history who were known associates are harder to track but definitely include Raymond Chandler, Albert Schweitzer, Edgar Allen Poe, and the recently deceased Supreme Leader of Korea, Kim Jung Il.

In England, there is one other figure worth mentioning. Madison Tunney was an important member of the London Handmaid coven. She had a powerful familiar named Lord Rupert Grayflanks. Together Madison and Lord Grayflanks were extremely influential on the London leadership circle for more than a decade. Eventually, though, Grayflanks passed away — apparently run down by a lorry, though Madison has never accepted his death as an accident.

In an unprecedented act of defiance, Madison refused to leave the leadership circle and would not change her title from Handmaid to Widow. Her rebellion created a deep rift and she was ultimately forced out and banished.

Madison now lives somewhere in Wolverhampton. She has refused to live out her days as an emeritus figure for the cult. Against Handmaid law, she is pursuing another familiar. She knows she will not be accepted by any feline of Ulthar or



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

the Dreamlands, but Madison is both shrewd and desperate. She is now courting cats from Saturn and even Uranus to become her familiar. Such a thing has never happened in Handmaid history. If she were somehow to succeed, she could become a dangerous force in England.

### Assets and Tools

Traditionally, women selected to enter the Handmaids often come from the highest levels of society. In the modern era, the cult lacks a lot of its former cachet, but still enjoys considerable political and social influence. In a world where politics and business are both still dominated by men, women often have influence rather than direct power, but this is suits the Handmaids.

A politician's wife or a CEO's mistress often has access to power and information, whilst remaining out of the spotlight. They can attend 'charity events' or other Handmaid 'social functions' without attracting attention.

Beyond personal and financial influence, the Handmaids' most crucial assets are the felines that are loyal to them. These cats include the coven's mundane cats as well as each Handmaid's personal familiar.

### The Cats

Each coven controls hundreds of normal cats. These cats seem innocuous, but they are actually one of the coven's most potent assets. First, these cats act as spies. Cats are everywhere and their presence goes largely unnoticed. Of course, they do not have the ability to process and retain information at the level of a human, but they can still absorb emotions and images and communicate them to a familiar.

But beyond their function as spies, these mundane cats are a dangerous weapon. While an individual cat is little more than a nuisance, a coven controls hundreds at once. The Rome coven is said to have more than five thousand cats at its disposal. A coven will sometimes commission these cats to remove a target.

More than a few enemies and cat killers have disappeared in a parking garage or a front stoop or even out of their own bedroom. The befuddled police then find themselves searching for a kidnapper, never realising that the foe has been devoured by hundreds of cats – each carrying away a bone or joint from the scene of the crime.

Of course, getting hundreds of cats to act in unison away from the coven is no simple feat. There is a lengthy ritual in which the leadership of the assembled cats is given over to a single familiar. This familiar then prowls the city until it

finds the target. The familiar then marks the target with its scent. After the target is marked it is only a matter of time until the cats silently descend as one to consume the target and carry off the remains.

### House Cats

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	1d3	2
CON	2d6	7
SIZ	1	1
INT	1d6+3	4-9
POW	2d6+1	8
DEX	2d6+24	31

**Move:** 10      **HP:** 4

**Avg. Damage Bonus:** -1d6

**Weapons:** Bite 30%, damage 1d6-db

Claw 40%, damage 1d4-db

**Armor:** none

**Skills:** Climb 60%, Dodge 65%, Jump 60%, Listen 65%, Stealth 55%

**Sanity Loss:** None

### A Clowder of Cats

When moving in concert against a single target, a swarm of cats, called a clowder, is deadly. The attack begins with individual cats assaulting the target. Up to 1d3 cats may be added each round to the fight as long as there is egress for the cats to join.

Once the total number of cats is greater than twice their target's Size, the target is knocked prone. The clowder is then able to deal 1 point per round to their target without an attack roll. This damage may not be Dodged or Parried.

To defend against a clowder, a target has only two options:

- First, the target can flee. With a Movement of 10, cats are fast, but not impossibly so. A fleet-footed target might be able to get behind a closed door or some other space that prevents the clowder from forming.
- Second, the target can fight back. Each round the target is able to make a successful attack roll with any weapon, the total number of cats in the clowder is reduced by 1.

If the assembled cats can be reduced back below twice the target's Size, the target can regain their footing and escape.

### Familiars

The most important, powerful and beloved asset the Handmaids have are their familiars. Even the name 'Handmaid' reflects this: the cultists believe they are servants to these felines, not the other way around.

Familiars are normal cats whose bodies serve as hosts for exonomic spirits that are associated with (or aspects of) Bast. Each Handmaid has a single familiar, and the act of conjuring and bonding with this familiar is the final step for a Daughter to become a true Handmaid of Ulthar.

## Finding the Spirit

The process of finding and befriending a feline spirit can take years. There are several ways it can happen, but the most common is for the daughter to meet the spirit in a dream. Sometimes a Handmaid will guide a promising Daughter into a dream for the express purpose of creating such an introduction.

Once the Daughter has met the feline spirit, a lengthy courtship ensues. Much like a suitor, the Daughter hopes to charm and delight the feline. She will want to appear impressed and reverential while avoiding the smell of neediness or desperation. Over the course of weeks or months, a connection is established between the feline spirit and the Daughter.

Most spirits of this sort are Level One entities, but there are more potent cat-spirits out there, and a 'lucky' Handmaiden may attract the attention of a Level Two or Three exonyme.

## The Ritual

If the process of befriending the spirit is a courtship, then the ritual to conjure the spirit into a host is the actual proposal. Like many Handmaid rites, the conjuration must be performed on the night of a full moon. The rite must be performed in an open outdoor space – a woodland clearing is ideal. The Daughter performs the ritual with her cat while the rest of the coven looks on.

Candles are lit and shapes carefully inscribed on the earth. Then the daughter chants and sings at some length to attract the spirit. Finally she opens a vein and lets her own blood into a dish of raw milk to invite the feline spirit into the host.

If the conjuration was successful, the spirit will enter the host and the new familiar will hungrily lap up the bloody cream as the coven's cats howl in celebration. If unsuccessful, the unaffected pet will ignore the dish. Unless one of the present Handmaids intervenes, the rest of the cats will then slowly move in on the Daughter and her pet and bid farewell to the pair by devouring them.

## Communication

A Handmaid and her familiar have several options for communication. First, every Daughter must as a minimum learn the basics of cat speech before she is allowed to become a Handmaid. This enables the beginnings of communication and the familiar will continue to teach her as their relationship grows.

Second, a few special familiars actually learn a human language. For the most part, cat vocal chords cannot make the necessary sounds, but in rare cases a familiar will develop human speech. Since the first Handmaid Coven in the late 1700s, only nine familiars have mastered a human tongue, but it can happen.

Finally, though it is dangerous and costly, a few Handmaids join with their familiars in forming a Destiny Entanglement. This ritual can be performed several ways, but always involves calling upon capricious demons or other nefarious powers. If not performed perfectly, this kind of ritual can lead to the pair to madness, death or remakes of Cat People.

## Personality & Status

The cats of the Dreamlands have a sense of opulence and grandiosity. The Handmaids do nothing to discourage this and treat their familiars like royalty. The familiars are pampered and coddled to excess.

The cats' names reflect this sense of grandeur. They almost always carry a title and often a reference to a majestic city or magical land. Examples include Princess Nakiana of Oriab, the Grey Maltese of Celephais, Hera, Duchess of Ulthar, and Tom o' Dylath.

These names are a way of establishing status within the cult. While Handmaids are all of equal rank and status, this is not necessarily true of the familiars whom they serve. Each Handmaid believes her familiar to be the most majestic and noble.

When speaking with each other, the Handmaids use their familiars' full titles, and when introducing their familiars to cultists from other covens, a Handmaid will even add adornments to the title like a ring announcer introducing a boxer. "My ladies, may I present the rake of Cupar-Nobo and Golthoth, whose coat is praised in Aphorat, whose eyes are the song of Bubastis; once the consort of Bast herself, Tom of Dylath-Leen."

## The Familiar's Body

Physically, a familiar is not much different than the cat that serves as its host. It will live longer than a normal cat – sometimes as long as 20 years. They tend to run hotter, and feel unusually warm or even feverish to the touch. Otherwise, the familiar is fast and agile, but not unnaturally so. It has the natural gifts of a cat, augmented by a powerful and cunning mind.

Familiars are not intended to be combatants, but if their Handmaid is in imminent danger, they will attack.

The stats will vary from feline to feline, but typical familiars are as follows.



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### Familiar

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	1d3+1	3
CON	2d6+1	8
SIZ	1	1
INT	3d6+6	17
POW	3d6+3	14
DEX	2d6+12	19

Move: 10      HP: 5

**Avg. Damage Bonus:** -1d6

**Weapons:** Bite 45%, damage 1d6-db

Claw 60%, damage 1d4-db

**Armor:** none

**Spells:** Usually none, but having a Familiar present during traditional spellcasting gives an additional +1 POW bonus. More powerful familiars can cast spells or possess victims.

**Skills:** Climb 60%, Command 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 75%, Etiquette, 55%, Knowledge (Arcana) 40%, Knowledge (Dreamlands) 55%, Jump 70%, Listen 70%, Navigate 50%, Sense 50%, Stealth 65%, Strategy 40%, Teach 50%

**Sanity Loss:** None

### Ancient Knowledge

Familiars bring tremendous knowledge to the Handmaid cult. Many of these feline spirits have lived for thousands of years. Some date back to ancient Egypt, having fled to the dreamlands after the fall of Bubastis in the fourth century AD. These felines have explored fabled cities like Brahana and Celephais of the Dreamlands. Most have even been on the Moon. While not spellcasters themselves, familiars have stores of arcane knowledge. They can guide Handmaids through the casting of many potent rituals. The cats are not computer users. All their rituals are based on old-fashioned calculations and manual patterning. A Handmaid coven that could combine the ancient feline knowledge with modern computational sorcery would be an intimidating force (*I can haz world domination!*)

**Familiars as Dream Guides:** All cats are gifted at travelling in the realm of dreams, but familiars are true experts. They know the perils and pitfalls and can navigate past danger more deftly than the Laundry's most skilled dream operatives. With her familiar as a dream guide, a Handmaid can enter the Dreamlands, and even infiltrate the subconscious mind of a sleeping target. She can learn the target's darkest secrets and even plant ideas that will alter the target's waking behaviour.

#### What Do The Cats Want?

To sleep on your keyboard and eat your tuna.

Oh, you mean, what do the alien minds want? That's a wholly different ball of string.

Whatever the familiar-spirits are, they're fairly low on the cosmic totem pole. Even a low-level exonome could possess a human host, though, so there must be something more to the cats of Ulthar. The truth behind the Handmaids is left up to the GM, but here are some possible terrible revelations:

- **It's All True:** The Handmaids' beliefs are all correct. Bast is real and imprisoned on Saturn. The cats are working through humanity to effect her rescue, at which point they'll either leap off into the night sky and vanish, or our world will kneel before our feline overlords.
- **Agents of a Vanished Power:** It's mostly true. The thing called Bast is a powerful alien entity that wants to eat our brains. Unable to break through into our reality under its own power, it managed to send its servitors through. Cats being cats,

though, they got sidetracked from the whole 'summon Bast and eat humanity' plan.

- **Crazy Cat Ladies:** Take the magically augmented parasite out of your own brain first before trying to infect anyone else. The cultists are all victims of the original magical form of toxoplasmosis. When both cat and human are infected by the same disease, it creates a sympathetic magical bond between the two. The 'cat spirit' is just a fragment of the cultist's own consciousness projected into the animal. Bast, the space cats and all the rest are just delusions.
- **Far-Future Guides:** In the days before CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, humanity will be capable of astounding magical feats. If there is a way to safely navigate the turbulent years when the Stars Come Right and reality melts like an ice cube, then perhaps our future selves found some way to send back clues or helpful familiars. Of course, they'd have to take a form that we instinctively trust and cherish, and they'd have to operate with a very light touch...

## Feline Arcana

The Handmaids of Ulthar have access to a number of unique spells and rituals. Most of these have been taught to them by various familiars over the cult's history. While the battery of arcane knowledge the cult possesses is enormous, their techniques for sorcery are extremely antiquated. They know the rituals, but they have no ability to translate them into the mathematic formulas that would run on a laptop or smart phone.

The Handmaids have a number of rituals they regularly employ. Many of these rituals are hostile and must be transmitted through some kind of contact with a familiar.

### Thaumatic Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is a parasitic disease commonly caused by feline contact. The ailment can have symptoms ranging from fever to skin lesions to behavioural changes, but it is normally only dangerous for individuals with severely compromised immune systems such as HIV and chemotherapy patients. A person with a healthy immune system has little to fear from the illness.

The Handmaids of Ulthar, however, have learned to thaumatically enhance the *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite. This enhancement has two effects. First, it concentrates and focuses the illness so that it becomes effective against a healthy immune system. Second, the enhancement allows the Handmaid to intensify and even control the behaviour modification. The effect is not mind control or even hypnotic suggestion, but the Handmaid can trigger an array of unexpected and dangerous behaviours.

**Preparation:** The ritual to enhance toxoplasmosis is a level two spell, and it is unpleasant in the extreme. The *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite lives in cat faeces. The Handmaid and her familiar must work at length with the feline excrement on the night of a full moon. To a bystander, the ritual would probably look like a woman in a circle of candles praying to kitty poo for six hours then rubbing it on her cat.

**Exposure:** Once the familiar is carrying the thaumatically enhanced parasite on its body, it need only make some kind of contact with the target or their food. The parasite will not survive long on the familiar's fur, so the contact must be achieved within 24 hours of the ritual's completion. If another person happens to come in contact with the familiar, the parasite will attack them instead and the unintended target will suffer the toxoplasmodic effects.

It takes very little to transmit the parasite. If a person just reaches down to scratch what they see as a friendly stray, the exposure is complete, but this is still a significant risk. Only a familiar can communicate the thaumatically enhanced

toxoplasmosis. If the target has occult or arcane knowledge, they may be able to identify the hostile familiar and defend themselves by killing the animal.

If a character is exposed to the thaumatic toxoplasmosis, they should make a *Difficult* Endurance check. If the character has a ward of level one or two, this Endurance check becomes *Easy*. If the character has a ward of level three or higher, they may ignore the exposure entirely.

If the Endurance check is successful, the character shakes off the toxoplasmosis with only minimal effect. If the check is a failure, the parasite takes hold, and the character will begin to develop symptoms within about 48 hours.

**Physical Symptoms:** Once contracted, toxoplasmosis has both physical and behavioral effects. The physical effects are fairly straightforward. The character will experience flu like symptoms including fever, congestion, and nausea. These effects will increase as the parasite persists. If the toxoplasmosis goes a month uncured, the symptoms will become debilitating, and the character will be bedridden. In addition, the parasite does permanent damage to the character's constitution. After each week of illness, the character loses 1 permanent Hit Point. These Hit Points can recover but very slowly. With full-time medical care, the character will recover 1 of these permanent Hit Points per month.

**Behavioural Symptoms:** The behavioural effects of toxoplasmosis are more complex and dangerous. There are both short and long-term effects. While there is no actual Sanity loss associated with these changes, the effects mirror madness.

First, if the Handmaid or her familiar can establish line of sight to the infected character, she can silently trigger a sudden, often violent, behaviour shift. The Handmaid can attempt this once per day.

Once the shift is triggered, the character must make a *Difficult* Sanity roll. If this roll succeeds, the character stifles the behavioural shift. If the Sanity roll is a failure, the character suffers an immediate Short Temporary Insanity. The character should roll three times on the Short Temporary Insanity table on page 70 of *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, and the GM should choose the result that best fits the Handmaid's intention. This effect fades as per the normal rules of temporary insanity.

Second, the toxoplasmosis will cause longer term behavioural changes. After each week of infection, the character should roll on the Longer Term Insanity table on page 70 of *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*. This behavioural modification lasts until the toxoplasmosis is cured after which it will gradually fade over the course of about a month.



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

**Treatment and Recovery:** Even thaumically enhanced, toxoplasmosis may be treated with ordinary medical means. An infected character may be cured with a Medicine skill check. If the character is treated in a hospital or hospital grade clinic, this is an Easy check. This check may only be attempted once.

If untreated or if the Medicine check is unsuccessful, the character may still shake off the toxoplasmosis with their own immune system. Each week, after the character has lost the Hit Point and rolled for Longer Term Insanity, they should make a *Difficult* Endurance check. If successful, they recover from the parasite. If the check fails, they continue to be afflicted, but can roll again the following week.

### Contagio Disfortunata

This ritual is probably the source of the myth that being crossed by a black cat leads to bad luck. Like Thaumic Toxoplasmosis, this ritual involves a familiar being 'infected' by a familiar that is carrying a thaumic condition. Unlike toxoplasmosis, though, this ritual has no organic basis. The familiar is not carrying a parasite, but rather a simple hex. The cult knows the level one and level two versions of this spell. (If you've access to *License to Summon*, this is a horribly inefficient form of the Curse spell).

**Preparation:** The ritual to prepare Contagio Disfortunata takes a full night to perform, but may be accelerated with assistance from other Handmaids and familiars. Contagio Disfortunata is target specific. To prepare the ritual, the Handmaid must have access to some personal item from the intended target.

**Exposure:** To be affected by Contagio Disfortunata, the target does not have to actually come into physical contact with the familiar. Simply seeing the familiar is enough to trigger the hex. This is a delicate moment for the Handmaid. If the ritual was not perfectly performed, its ill effects often revert back to the Handmaid rather than the target.

**The Hex:** While not as dangerous as Thaumic Toxoplasmosis, the hexing effects of Contagio Disfortunata are not insignificant. The sorcery makes a target 'unlucky' for its duration, reducing their Luck by 20% (or 40% for the level two version). The spell also turns any Failure of a Luck check into a Fumble, or a Fumble into a complete disaster.

The level one version lasts until the victim fumbles once; the level two version degrades to level one after the first fumble, and vanishes after the second fumble.

### Extra Planetary Feline Summoning

In Cornwall, there are accounts of a monstrous cat called the Beast of Bodmin moor. In the early nineties, many

instances of livestock mutilation, pet disappearances, and even a few missing persons were attributed to the Bodmin cat. Local explanations ranged from an escaped tropical zoo animal like a leopard or panther to a phantom cat of magical origins, but the Handmaids of Ulthar knew the truth behind the legend.

Though dangerous and strictly forbidden by Handmaid law, the cultists and their familiars are capable of summoning the cats from either Uranus or Saturn. These monstrous felines are much greater in size and ferocity than their earthly counterparts. In fact, the Uranian cats are almost unrecognisable as felines.

Summoning either of these creatures requires a level three gate. With the combined feline knowledge of a Handmaid and her familiar, she gains a +15% bonus to Sorcery checks when casting this spell.

### Cats from Saturn

The Cats from Saturn are shrewd predators. They are not as intelligent or learned as an earthly familiar, but they are cunning and some are even capable of lower level sorcery.

Physically, they might be described as a cat reimagined by a cubist painter – composed of bright colours with planes and angles that are hard to look upon in 3 dimensions. If summoned, it is possible for a familiar to negotiate temporary loyalty from a Saturnine Cat, but it is not easy.



# THE HANDMAIDS OF ULTHAR

## Saturnine Feline

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	3d6	11
CON	2d6	7
SIZ	3d6	11
INT	2d6+3	10
POW	4d6	14
DEX	2d6+10	17

Move: 9 HP: 11

**Avg. Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, damage 1d10+db

Paw 40%, damage 1d6+db, ignores armour

**Armor:** None, but impaling weapons do minimum damage.

**Skills:** Climb 60%, Dodge 40%, Knowledge (Arcana) 20%, Knowledge (Dreamlands) 40%, Jump 80%, Stealth 75%

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1d4

## Cats from Uranus

Uranian cats are less intelligent and more corporeal than their Saturnine cousins. They are huge atavistic predators with thick, ill-smelling flesh, six legs and deadly tails. They cannot be negotiated with. If summoned, it is very difficult for a Handmaid or her familiar to control or even predict their behaviour.

## Uranian Feline

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	4d6	14
CON	3d6	11
SIZ	4d6	14
INT	2d6	7
POW	3d6	11
DEX	2d6+10	17

Move: 9 HP: 14

**Avg. Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Tail Spine 50%, damage 1d12+db

Bite 40%, damage 1d10+db, Claw 50%, damage 1d8+2+db

**Armor:** 2 point leathery hide.

**Skills:** Climb 70%, Dodge 35%, Knowledge (Dreamlands) 30%, Jump 80%, Stealth 60%

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1d4

## Ongoing Operations

The Handmaids of Ulthar is a rare example of a powerful cult that the Laundry does not classify as a significant threat. In fact, the Laundry maintains a delicate but largely positive relationship with the London coven. (After all, the Laundry deals with far more nefarious threats than a clutch of overzealous cat ladies.) The Handmaids will often supply

the Laundry with valuable intelligence in exchange for a tolerance of cult operations.

Relationships between the Laundry and the Handmaids are sufficiently congenial that it would not be impossible for a female Laundry agent to become a Handmaid, though the divided loyalty would be problematic. This has not occurred to date, but it should not be considered impossible if a storyline heads in that direction.

Positive relations aside, the Handmaids have created several threats that the Laundry cannot overlook. First, when a neglectful cat owner disappears and the police can find no trace of the body, the Laundry knows the answer often points back to the Handmaids. Sometimes, to serve a greater good, an investigating Laundry agent will choose to ignore the disappearance, but when the victim is a person of influence or power, or when too many go missing in a short time, the Laundry is forced to take action.

Second and unknown to the Laundry, is the presence of Madison Tunney in Wolverhampton. Ms. Tunney has been totally disowned by the Handmaids, but she still represents a real danger. She has volumes of arcane knowledge and is actively trying to recruit a new familiar in the form of a cat from Saturn or Uranus. These cats are monstrous creatures and never move alone. If she is successful, she will be a potent sorceress with a terrifying familiar, but if she fails, it could be even worse. If her conjuration goes awry, she might open a gate allowing untold numbers of these extra-planetary feline terrors to begin prowling the West Midlands.

Finally, there's the Handmaids' relationship with certain potent entities, notably the GIZA DISORDER exome. The Handmaids are attempting to barter with the Crawling Chaos in exchange for Bast's freedom. This effort has been jointly spearheaded by the London coven and the Moscow coven as a coordinated effort. Each of these covens have successfully contacted GIZA DISORDER once, or so they claim. The cult now has a sense of their options and the magnitude of offering required. While it is unlikely they could actually gain Nyarlathotep's help freeing Bast, the Handmaids believe they can convince the Old One to remain neutral while the cats of earth battle those of Saturn.

The Laundry is aware of the cult's risky contacts with GIZA DISORDER. What the Laundry does not know, however, is that to placate the god, the Handmaids are considering a grim offering. They are putting plans in place to create a massive outbreak of a lethal form of toxoplasmosis on a major city like London or New York.



## THE RED SKULL CULT - OVERVIEW -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

### CULT OVERVIEW

The Red Skulls are a cult of sadomasochists whose worship pain. With new, ambitious leadership, the Red Skull Cult is one of the most dangerous groups confronting the Laundry today.

### HISTORY

The founder of the Red Skull Cult was Bishop Hernando de Valencia, a prominent member of the Spanish Inquisition. Hernando was a torturer who became obsessed not just with causing pain but also experiencing it. Hernando learned the rudiments of sorcery, and used these skills to contact NOMENCLATURE PENDING in a quest to experience supernatural pain. After his successful contact with the old one, Hernando organised the first cabal of the Red Skulls. After Hernando passed, the Skulls continued to thrive, expanding quickly across Europe and beyond.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the London chapter of the Skulls was almost entirely destroyed. Amateur sorcerer Gavin Hayes sought to impress his Skull superiors by forging contact with an alien force. The result was a small-scale apocalypse in the neighbourhood of Peckham. The cult recovered but was severely chastened, especially in the United Kingdom. In 2004, however, the Skulls chose Marc Sauvage as their new Grand Master. Sauvage is aggressively expanding the cult's operations.

### BELIEFS

Before all else, the Skulls worship pain. Like the Inuit with a dozen of words for snow, the Red Skull Cult recognises and categorises every form of physical pain. While the affliction of pain is important, they consider the experience of pain to be the highest devotion.

### STRUCTURE

The Skulls are an international cult boasting thousands of members. They have cells across Europe and the United Kingdom as well as in America, South Africa, Japan, India and Mexico.

The Skulls have a simple hierarchy. A member of the cult will always be either a pain creator or a pain Endurer. No cultist may be both. Pain Endurers enjoy a higher status in the cult, and only they may sit on its leadership council.

Internationally, the cult has a governing body called the Grand Council made up of representatives from the individual cells from around the globe. The Master of the Grand Council is the single most powerful member of the cult.

### NOTABLE MEMBERS

Since 2004, the Red Skull cult has had a new Grand Master, a Frenchman named Marc Sauvage who is much more ambitious than his recent predecessors. Sauvage is aggressively growing the cult's size and power.

### ASSETS

The cult has in membership some of the most ruthless and talented torturers on the globe. The cult has also learned how to use intense pain as an aid to sorcery. The Skulls have advanced techniques to create, harvest, and even store this pain.

### ONGOING OPERATIONS

The Red Skulls have always been a dangerous organisation, but since Marc Sauvage has taken over as Grand Master, they present a much more immediate threat. They are expanding relationships with a variety of groups and governments. They already provide torture services to several nations and organisations and are seeking out new clients.

## History

In 1486, Grand Inquisitor Tomas de Torquemada, overwhelmed with the duties of his post, appointed Bishop Hernando de Valencia as his right hand in Spain, naming him Practical Inquisitor General. At the ceremony, Torquemada offered these words:

*"Our beloved nation is like a beautiful but unfinished blade of Toledo: magnificent, but laced with imperfections. She may break when we need her most. Brother Hernando will be the white hot fire to purge these imperfections and secure the future of Spain."*

As Practical Inquisitor General, Hernando was spared issues of policy and administration. Instead, his duties were limited to trials and confessions. In a few short years, Hernando became the face of the Inquisition's brutality. He employed a phalanx of gifted torturers, and he personally presided over the extraction of dozens of confessions. Heretics, bigamists, Freemasons, and witches all lived in fear of Hernando's ministrations.

Torquemada prized Hernando's success. The bishop achieved unparalleled confession rates. In spite of his success, though, Hernando was a deeply troubled priest, and the more interrogations he conducted, the more troubled he became. A subject might be dangling in the strappado or stretching on the rack, when Hernando would explode at his subordinates and seize the hot irons to deliver the agony with his own hands.

Regardless of honours bestowed and assurances received, Hernando's spirit would not rest. The comforts of sleep abandoned him and his behaviour became increasingly erratic. Torquemada ordered Hernando to take a much-

needed respite to ease what he assumed was a guilt-ridden conscience, but the bishop would not hear of it. He redoubled his efforts and even began taking meals in the dingy cells of the Inquisition's dungeons.

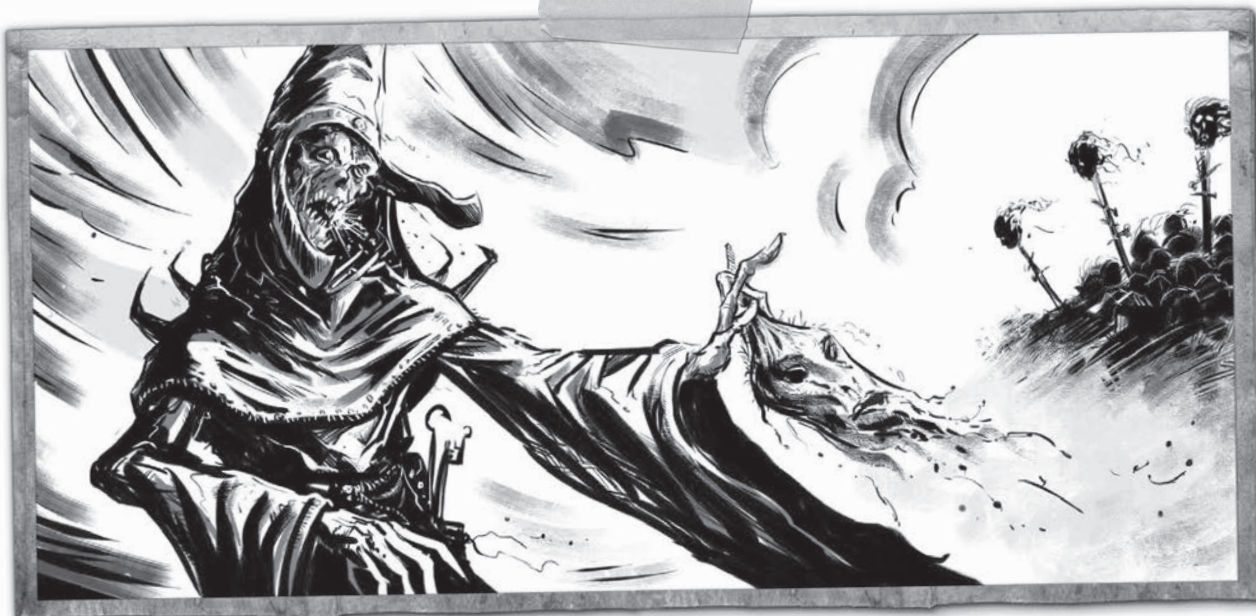
That August, in the dead hours of night, Hernando was supervising a confession. He and his most deft interrogator were leading an accused heretic to grace, but they discovered their object was a woman of great reserves. Try as they might, she would not break. They worked feverishly on the woman, bringing her to the height of agony while preserving life and consciousness.

Just as the session reached a crescendo of suffering, Hernando's eyes caught those of his servant, and an unspoken, insatiable understanding passed between them. At once, they smothered the heretic and cast her body from the table. Hernando bared his torso and strapped himself to the table, and the torturer started on him with renewed zeal. In that moment, Hernando's anxiety revealed itself. For months, Hernando had not lived with guilt, he had lived with jealousy. Every time he saw a subject in agony, he secretly wished it upon himself. And in this torturer, he had found a kindred spirit.

The torturer introduced Hernando to the seedy world of masochism and sadism that existed on Madrid's underside, and the bishop became an active participant. Of course, he had to be very cautious, but Hernando also had the power and resources to protect his secret when necessary.

## The Teachings of Ibn Ghazi

The story could easily have ended there: a zealous priest with a pain fetish discovers acceptance in the back alleys





and hidden salons of Madrid. But fate introduced another twist. Hernando was extracting a routine confession from an accused warlock, but unlike the scores of innocents before him, this particular unfortunate had real knowledge. He was a Moroccan scholar travelling in Europe named Muhammad Ibn Ghazi. Rumour had reached the scholar of his tormentor's preoccupation with pain. Desperate to be free of what would surely be torture and death, Ibn Ghazi made Hernando an offer:

*"There are beings that live beyond the stars. Powerful and mindless, they have ways of causing greater pain than has ever been endured on earth. Free me, and I will teach you to reach them."*

An expert at reading lies, Hernando knew this was not false. He ordered the Moroccan freed and set himself to learn what the scholar had to teach. After months of lessons, Ibn Ghazi had taught the bishop enough sorcery to open a gate to reach a Great Old One, but he pleaded with Hernando not to perform the ritual. Hernando would not be stopped, and Ghazi fled the city. The next night, the bishop performed the ritual and found himself... elsewhere, in the presence of an alien god. The bishop lay on the flagstones of a strange courtyard beneath a bleeding sky, prostrated before the living temple of a hungry god.

Normally, direct contact with such an entity results in madness, death or worse, but somehow Hernando fared better, perhaps because he was mad already. His wish was granted. The pain he endured while grovelling on the stones before that awful presence exceeded his greediest fantasy.

### The Skulls Form

Weeks later, the bishop was returned home. After recovering, he gathered his fellow fetishists about him and told his tale. In those few, unmeasured days in the alien courtyard, Hernando learned more about pain than in all his life before, and he was eager to share this knowledge with his fellows.

At that meeting, Hernando demanded an oath of the assembled fetishists. Those with the courage to learn and explore what the bishop had to teach pledged their loyalty. The few that refused vanished. The clandestine group called themselves Cráneos Rojos, The Red Skulls.

Bishop Hernando presided over the Skulls as long as he was able. In his late 40s he began to develop severe nervous disorders, probably as a result of the overwhelming doses of pain he had endured in his life. He died a few years later. Before he died, Hernando laid down clear statutes for the cult's governance as well as his 'Edicts of Pain' which has become a holy document for the cult.

After the Bishop's death, the Skulls faltered briefly but then they began to expand with renewed fervour. While the loss of the Bishop was an enormous blow, it also freed the cult to become its own entity. The new leadership discovered that population with a hidden desire to experience or inflict pain was greater than Hernando had ever envisioned.

The Skulls believe that all people have an innate desire to either inflict or experience pain. The key for survival and growth was to find ways to convince potential members to try the taboo experience. The Skulls targeted souls that were lonely or lost. They offered these individuals a sense of purpose and belonging. The new members found that emotional pains disappeared in the face of blinding physical pain. For the desperate and struggling, the Skulls created a community, belonging, and an addictive escape from the cares of life.

The Skulls also built on European Catholicism. While the cult does not accept Christianity, they do honour the physical suffering of Christ and revere him as a figure that experienced near-perfect pain. This convenient alignment allowed the Skulls to wear the trappings of piety and move in religious circles.

This recipe proved an effective combination for the cult. In a single century, the Skulls had spread far beyond Madrid, with cabals across Europe and in parts of colonised Africa. The next century brought the cult to the Americas, India, and Japan.

### The Hayes Catastrophe

Gavin Hayes joined the London cabal late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gifted with more ambition than ability, Gavin wanted to become part of the London Leadership Council. For years, he asked to show his worth by forging a connection with an alien power in the tradition of the cult's founder, but the Leadership Council repeatedly shut him down.

When the Boer War started, though, Hayes became Colonel Gavin Hayes and was placed in command of a prison camp on the remote plains of Rhodesia. Enjoying enormous autonomy as camp commandant, Gavin saw his opportunity. He turned the camp into a machine of suffering and harvested the psychic anguish to momentarily open a gate.

Gavin's experiment must have been at least partially successful. Immediately after the war, he arranged a demonstration for his Red Skull superiors in London, certain that this exhibition would solidify him as a power player in cult.

The result was catastrophic. He successfully opened a second gate, but on the other side was a force of unthinkable malevolence. Every cultist present, including Gavin, was reduced to a mummified husk. The only members of the cabal to survive were the few kept absent by circumstance. The horrors did not limit themselves to the cult. In the surrounding neighbourhood of Peckham, animals went mad and pregnant women miscarried. In a nearby orphanage, every child was stricken blind. 16 men working at a bakery across the street was found suffocated; the flesh of their faces had melted, sealing shut their mouths and noses.

After this disaster, the Skulls ordered the Hayes research sealed away. The Colonel's plans and calculations have remained locked in a vault in Madrid ever since. There has also been an unspoken cult policy forbidding any sorcery designed to reach alien entities.



## The Red Skulls Today

Because of the Hayes Catastrophe, the Skulls became more cautious and circumspect. In fact, the London cabal virtually disappeared and the cult was dwindling in its entirety until 2004 when Marc Sauvage took over as the new Grand Master. His aggressive leadership has given life and ambition to the cult. At present, they are rapidly expanding both their membership and their operations.

## Beliefs

Above all else, the Skulls worship pain. This is the central pillar on which the cult was founded. This is not some kinky fetish; they believe that pain is divinity itself and the only evidence of a higher purpose for humanity. Bishop de Valencia summarised this idea in one of his earliest writings.

*Without Pain, life can never be greater than the sum of its parts masquerading in the costumes of theology.*

The Red Skulls believe that every human being has a particular point of 'perfect excruciation.' This is the place where pain becomes so great that no other experience is possible. The precise quantity of pain is not measurable and is different for each individual, but in that moment of excruciation, time would lose meaning and the individual would achieve a sort of apotheosis. The Skulls today believe that Bishop de Valencia achieved this state in the court of Hastur, though the bishop was never clear on this point himself.

The cult are not sadomasochists. Well, many of them are, but officially the cult looks down on 'tawdry distractions' like desire, sex and love, even when bound up in pain. It is the purity of the experience that leads to enlightenment. Getting anything other than agony is missing the point.

## The Example of Christ

While the Skulls reject the Holy Trinity and Christianity, Jesus Christ is an important figure in their belief structure. The story of his crucifixion is both inspiration and cautionary tale.

According to the Skulls, the agony Christ experienced on the cross was so great that he began to approach his moment of perfect excruciation, but at the last moment, he lost the courage or will to see it through. With the words "It is finished", he gave up and accepted death. The cult believes that had he persevered another moment, he would have reached his place of perfect pain and achieved deification.

Similarly, the cult venerates those who practise flagellation, self-mutilation and mortification of the flesh, believing that they are all on the path to divinity.

## The Edicts of Pain

After Bishop Hernando de Valencia had formed the first cabal in Madrid, he wrote a series of documents that have served as the governing documents for the cult ever since. Foremost among these documents was the Bishop's first manifesto, *The Edicts of Pain*.



## THE EDICTS OF PAIN

BY BISHOP HERNANDO DE VALENCIA  
1493

Pain is itself. It needs no justification. Pain is.  
Pain will not be limited; it is both journey and destination.  
Pain must be honoured before all others.

Only pain is pain. Fear does not stand in for pain.  
Neither does fear of pain stand in for pain.

The creation of pain is noble, but the experience of pain is life itself.  
There is no greater nobility than agony endured.

The path of pain is available to all, but few find it.  
Those not on the path of pain are weak of heart and have clouded minds.  
They may be tolerated but must not be trusted.

One must either create pain or endure it. There is no third path.  
Those that endure must respect those that create, for their art is unsurpassed.  
Those that create must obey those that endure, for they are masters.

One who seeks not pain, but death, either in creation or endurance, shall not be abided.

One who refuses pain when offered shall not be abided.

One who creates pain but overmuch mars the body shall not be abided.

One who confides in someone not on the path of pain is an oath breaker.

They must be smothered until no more breath comes from them.

The greatest shame is death without pain.

These edicts are referred to with the same zeal that an ecumenical scholar might use when discussing the Catholic Dogma. Almost all the rules and laws that govern the cult can be tied back to this simple document.

The fifth edict, for example, is why only pain Endurers are allowed to achieve leadership positions in the cult. Pain creators may be respected, but they cannot lead. Similarly, those opposed to Sauvage and his bold reforms cite the fifth edict to discredit his right to be the cult's Grand Master. They argue that one must either be a pain creator or Endurer. Since Sauvage first approached the cult as a pain creator, they contend that he is not a true pain Endurer and is therefore ineligible to be the cult's Grand Master.

### The Hungry God

The cult does not directly worship the 'Hungry God' encountered by de Valencia, but that entity remains closely associated with the Red Skulls. Their ceremonies of pain excite the creature, feeding it, and in return it gives the cult its alien blessings. Members of the cult with a deeper understanding of sorcery can draw on the entity's power to fuel their spells.

### Structure

The Red Skull Cult is one of the largest cults in the world. They have cells (called cabals) across Europe as well as smaller presences in South Africa, Japan, India and the United States.

The two largest cabals are in Paris and Lisbon. They are also the centres of the two competing ideologies in the cult. The forward-looking reformers are led by Grand Master Marc Sauvage based in the Paris cabal. This cabal is vibrant with modern sensibilities. While a traditional cult might still use thumbscrews and iron maidens, the Paris cabal has a phone app to measure pain and delivers torture through electromagnets and microfilament devices. They are even experimenting with nanotechnology as a means of delivering precise levels of agony. This cabal is growing faster than any other.

The Lisbon cabal is the most traditional cult. They use the oldest interpretations of the writings of Bishop de Valencia and still adhere to the earliest cult rituals. The master of the Lisbon cabal is Adalberto Thais, but the most important figure in the cabal is Maria Pereira. Maria (or 'Mistress

Maria' as she is often called) is the centrepiece for the cult traditionalists. She is the cult's most skilled pain Artisan and is also a gifted sorcerer. The basic structure of the cult is simple. A cabal has three levels:

**Members:** Often simply called 'Skulls' the basic members are the vast majority of the cult. The size of each cabal varies greatly, but the largest boats over one hundred members. Members include both pain Endurers and creators. Theoretically the Endurers have higher status even among the rank and file, but this is not consistently observed.

**Leadership Council:** Each cabal has a council consisting of five members. In accordance with the Fifth Edict of Pain, only pain Endurers may sit on the Leadership Council. The Leadership Council is responsible for governing every aspect of the cabal. They also adjudicate in cases of cult disputes and rule violation.

**Master:** One member of the Leadership Council is chosen to be the Master. The Master has the same vote as every other member of the council, but is charged with keeping order in the council. The Master also has the crucial function of policing the cultists of the cabal and is given a clutch of loyal enforcers to fulfil this responsibility.

## Member Recruitment

The Skulls recruit new members from a variety of sources. Skull cabals may appear to be religious groups, BDSM clubs, medical facilities, sports clubs or virtually any other social institution. They target those who are emotionally vulnerable but physically resilient. During a police investigation in Atlanta into the disappearance of a 24-year-old woman named Anna Wolfe, digital forensics discovered several of her emails to her father related to her recruitment by the cult:

**May 2, 2008**

I think I messed up last night at the party. Reggie invited me to a thing and I said 'yes'. It's some sort of social club he calls the 'Redhead' club. I couldn't pin him down but he said it was 'Like improv, but not funny.'

God, Dad, I can just hear you!

"Improv but not funny? That means it's either gonna be Ren Faire types or religious nutjobs."

I don't know why I said yes, but I don't think I can get out of it now. Wish me luck!

**May 4, 2008**

Dad, it's like you always said: take a leap and let the world catch you!

I went to Reggie's Redheads party and it was really fun! The place, the people, everything! It was at a bar called Jack Russell's in Little Five Points. It reminded me of the Norfolk Inn back in Sausalito - kitschy with lava lamps and plastic dinosaurs, but not pretentious. There was a great jazz trio from Savannah in the back room. (Look at your daughter embracing southern culture!)

I have to admit, Reggie was pretty great too. He was smart enough to give me space, but he seemed to know to show up if I ever got bored or lonely. Not saying I feel differently about him, and don't worry, I'll be careful. But he was so... in his element.

Best of all, I found a running partner! Her name is Tara and she's a marathoner. Reggie introduced us and we really hit it off. We talked shoes and mileage for almost an hour, and we are supposed to do a 10k together on Tuesday!

OK, there was one weird thing. There was this door that people would go knock on. It would open and they'd slip inside. When I saw the people later, they always looked flushed and energised. I tried to open the door, but it was locked. I asked Reggie about it, but he just said 'It's no big deal, but you can't go in there your first time.' I mean, that's weird right?

Don't quite know what to make of it, but it was a great night anyway. Incidentally, I don't think I saw a single person with red hair.



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

**May 25, 2008**

Oh my god, what happened last night? I don't know where to begin, Dad. I've been in bed all morning. Everything feels different.

I went back to for another meeting of Reggie's Redheads, and I found out what was behind that door. There was a quiet little room with lots of heavy red curtains. I remember violin music. In the middle of the room there was a long table with five glass orbs about the size of tennis balls. They were lined up and sitting in velvet.

People would go up to the first orb, close their eyes and pick it up. They'd hold it for a while, then put it back and move on to the next one. Sometimes their hands would shake, and they'd hold each orb for less time than the one before. No one even touched the fifth orb.

Tara was in the room and she wanted me to try the orbs. I was nervous, but I remembered what you always said about taking a leap so I decided to do it.

I picked up the first orb and at first there was nothing. I was about to put it down when I felt a tiny pain. I don't know how to describe it – it wasn't heat or electricity – it was just pain. It was in my hands, but it was also inside me somehow. The pain got bigger and bigger and before long I didn't think I could stand it so I put the orb back on the table. I opened my eyes and Tara was smiling and offering me a glass of wine.

Dad, I don't quite know how to explain what happened next, but suddenly, I really wanted to try the next orb. I had to. And then the next, and the next. I don't know how long it took to get through them, but it must have been a long time because the room was crowded by the time I stepped up to the fifth orb. Everyone was staring at me, but nobody spoke. I picked up the fifth orb and the pain was... I've never felt anything even close. It was so big, I thought it would swallow me, but somehow I just kept holding that orb.

Thank god for Reggie. After I finally set the last orb down, he caught me and pretty much carried me to a couch. I stayed there for the rest of the night shaking and quivering. People kept coming up to me and saying the most incredible things – how they respected me and how I was an inspiration. I didn't know what to say! I mean, who am I? But it didn't matter. They just seemed to love me so much. At the end of the night an older woman I hadn't seen before came and sat down next to me. She didn't speak, just looked at me and then hugged me fiercely. After that, Reggie helped me get home.

I haven't felt this way in a long time, not since you left us. I know it all sounds strange, but I'm happy Dad. I'm really happy. I think I belong with these people.



The piece is regarded as an almost letter-perfect description of Red Skull recruitment. It showcases the sense of purpose and belonging that they offer and how seductive those things can be. It also tells an important story of the kind of person selected by the Skulls for recruitment. Anna appears to be young, fit, and disciplined. She's a distance runner and seems to have a stubborn streak. Most notably, she is new

to the region and seems to be a little adrift. Finally, the story illustrates a crucial Skull belief: the love of pain exists in all people and is waiting to be awakened.

Anna's decomposed body was discovered in an abandoned tenement in June of 2010. An autopsy discovered hundreds of scars and old wounds on her body, including evidence of more

than two dozen surgical procedures. The pathologist's notes were seized by the Black Chamber, but reportedly described how Anna's nerves were surgically manipulated to engender hyperalgesia (enhanced sensitivity to painful stimuli).

## Notable Members

Marc Sauvage is the most important figure in the Red Skull Cult today. When he accepted the title of Grand Master in early 2002, the Skulls were a fading organisation. Since Sauvage took the helm, the cult has grown and flourished as never before.

From his boyhood, Marc Sauvage had a cruel nature. The third child of four, Marc grew up in a middle class, Catholic family in Reims, France. Unlike other boys, Marc was not content to burn ants and pull the legs of spiders. He would catch and torture stray cats and even neighbourhood pets. Once he was even suspended from school for burning a fellow student. By the time Marc reached his late teens the incidents had stopped, but Marc had not outgrown his sadistic streak; he had learned to keep it hidden. Intelligent, but unfocused, Marc worked his way through university and graduated with a degree in Information Technology. He held a number of jobs after school, but had a pattern of altercations with his superiors. Then in 1996, Marc discovered the Skulls.

At first, the cult was a place where Marc could explore the limits of his sadism – a freedom he had never before enjoyed. But Marc quickly realised that a pain 'Artisan' could achieve very limited power. The cult's leaders were always 'Endurers.' Knowing he could never live with a pain creator's glass ceiling, Marc volunteered to become an Endurer. This was no small feat. The pledge and initiation ceremony for new Endurers is conducted by the cabal's most-gifted Artisan and is excruciating. It took every ounce of Marc's considerable will to ride the pain and stay conscious, but he did, and his plan was rewarded. He rose quickly in the flagging cult. By 2001, he was the Master of

the Paris cabal and three short years later, Marc was named Grand Master of the entire cult.

Marc's meteoric rise was not without damage. He encountered competition and opposition both within the cult and without, but he had knack for making his opposition back down or disappear entirely. Marc quickly gained a reputation for being a dangerous man to challenge.

Like most dynamic leaders, Sauvage is a study in contradictions. He is a dynamic public speaker, but is shy in small groups. He has few close relationships and no romantic life. He is devoted to the Skulls, but some of his rivals say that his real devotion is to power. Marc is the first Master ever to have made the switch from sadist to masochist. His detractors point to this swap as hypocrisy and question his commitment to the cult's fundamental beliefs.

Whatever the case, Sauvage is a shrewd and ruthless leader. He demands loyalty and does not suffer fools. He is quick to reward good behaviour but punishes an ineffective cultist with equal zeal.

### Competing Factions

To grow the cult, Marc is willing to dispense with honoured cult traditions. He is even rolling back the early requirements of pain infliction to make the cult more attractive to new membership. This has created a deep schism in the cult. On one side are those loyal to Sauvage and willing to embrace change. On the other are the fundamentalists determined to keep the cult's traditions unaltered.

The fundamentalists are led by one of the most influential figures of the Lisbon cabal, Maria Densmore Pereira. As a pain Artisan, Mistress Maria is not the leader of her cabal, but she is still an important voice in the cult. She is also heralded as the most gifted pain inflictor of her generation.

At first, Sauvage was able to manage this clash with Pereira and her followers, but the rift has grown irreconcilable. Further, Pereira has not simply disappeared in the

### Marc Sauvage, Prince of Pain

STR 15   CON 18   SIZ 12   INT 16   POW 20  
DEX 12   CHA 17   EDU 16   SAN 0   HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Handgun 70%, damage 1d10. If he expects trouble, then he loads his weapon with rounds dipped in Yuggoth oil. These magical bullets ignore magical protections like Defensive Bindings. On a successful hit, the victim suffers unimaginable agony until the bullet is removed (all actions become *Difficult*).

**Skills:** Animal Magnetism 60%, Athletics 50%, Command 60%, Craft (Torture) 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Fine Manipulation 80%, Insight 70%, Sorcery 60%, Spot 50%.





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

convenient manner of many of his prior rivals. She is cautious, disciplined and surrounded by loyal supporters. She is also a better-than-average sorceress.

Pereira and her traditionalists are the greatest challenge Sauvage has faced since he took over as Grand Master. He has already survived an attempt on his life that he is certain originated with her. She is too influential to have killed, and thus far Marc has not been able to assuage her objections. So Marc is exploring a third option. He has appointed the Lisbon cabal to spearhead the cult's efforts to forge an alliance with certain exnomes, possibly PLUTO KOBOLD. In the meantime, however, he has achieved his own contact with them through separate channels, and is 'poisoning the well' against the Lisbon faction. Within the year, Sauvage intends to orchestrate a collision. Of course, the Lisbon Skulls will probably not survive the conflict, but if he can be rid of Pereira, Sauvage is willing to pay the price.

### Torture

Some organisations use torture for interrogation; others use it to create a culture of fear and obedience. The Red Skulls have become experts at torture simply to accommodate their celebration of pain. Among the Skulls, torture is considered a fine art. They have perfected techniques of inflicting maximum pain on a subject without killing them. If a Red Skull Artisan kills a subject or causes them to lose consciousness during a session, it is considered extremely bad form. In fact, the most gifted torturers cause exquisite pain without leaving a mark.

### Uses of Torture

The Red Skulls use torture for three purposes.

- First, pain is at the heart of the Red Skull belief structure. From the most lavish soiree to the least formal Skull gathering, no meeting is complete without the pain Endurers suffering greatly at the hands of the cult's Artisans.

- Second, the Skulls use torture to augment sorcery. The psychic anguish created through intense physical suffering can greatly augment spellcasting. See *The Power of Pain* on page 80.

- Finally, since Sauvage has taken over as Grand Master, the cult has begun using torture for financial gain. In a few short years, the Skulls have established themselves as the preeminent providers of torture services on the globe. They are effective, discreet, and do not ask questions. Many agencies and governments will pay handsomely for the best. Mugabe's administration in Zimbabwe, for example, keeps two Red Skull Artisans on retainer year round to use as needed. Of course, the sophisticated techniques and devices employed by the Skull Artisan are proprietary intellectual property and are carefully safeguarded while the services are being rendered.

### The Mechanics

The ideal skill to employ for torture is Craft (Torture). However, outside of the Red Skull Cult and certain intelligence agencies, it is not easy to find someone practiced in torture as a trade. Other skills that can substitute for Torture (with a -10% modifier) include but are not limited to: First Aid, Medicine, and Fine Manipulation.

Torture is a crucial skill when using pain to augment sorcery. In these instances, the intensity of the torture is measured through the number of Hit Points the subject sustains as damage. A torturer may reduce the damage suffered by one step (turning a d6 into a d4, or a d4 into a d3 and so on) by making a *Difficult* check instead.

When a subject is being tortured as part of a Skulls celebration or to augment a spell, there is no opposing roll. If the subject is tortured as a form of interrogation, the Torture roll is opposed by an Endurance check. The final result of the Torture roll is described in the table below.

Being tortured costs 0/1d10 SAN.

Result	Interrogation	Spellcasting
Fumble	The subject loses consciousness or dies. If the torturer was using an advanced tool, it risks being broken.	The subject dies. This is also true if the subject is the sorcerer. If torturer was using an advanced tool, it may be damaged or broken.
Normal Failure	The subject is not compelled to reveal anything.	The subject loses consciousness and yields no pain to augment the spell.
Normal Success	The subject is compelled to reveal any information, truthful or otherwise, that stops the torture, except for information protected by geases.	The subject yields enough pain to augment the spell by providing the listed POW bonus.
Special Success	The subject reveals what they know, even if this breaches a geas.	The subject yields enough pain to augment the spell by providing the listed POW bonus +1.

## Tools of the Trade

The Skulls have access to amazing torture implements. Some of these are the creation of twisted human minds; others are otherworldly in origin. Only their most deft Artisans are trusted with these tools. A few examples:

**Rhodesian Wires:** The wires were developed during the Boer War by Colonel Gavin Hayes. They look like normal wires, but they end in needles of such incredibly narrow gauge that they are almost invisible. The needles are carefully inserted into the nerve at the base of the spine and near the pituitary gland. Electricity is then pulsed through the wires directly stimulating the brain's pain centre. Rhodesian Wires are very difficult to manufacture without some kind of demonic or arcane assistance. They grant a +10% bonus to the wielder's Torture roll. If a torturer fumbles while using Rhodesian Wires, they are broken.

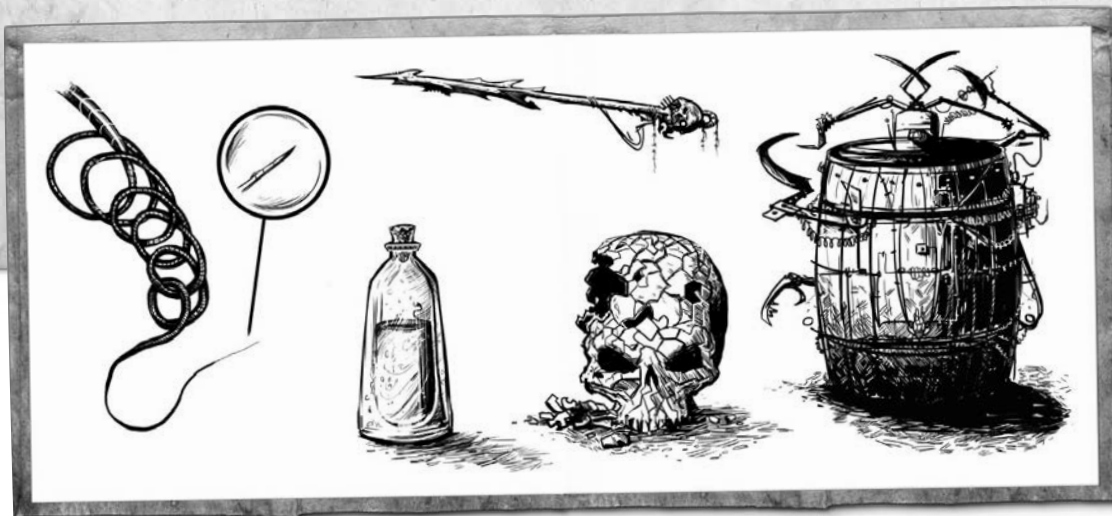
**Yuggoth Oil:** Obtained from mysterious sources, this clear liquid alters perceptions of both pain and time, causing even a small injury to seem like a lifetime of agony. The oil is injected directly into the spinal column, and leaves recognisable traces in the spinal fluid (including radioactive isotopes of unnamed elements) that last for the rest of the victim's life. Both the Lisbon and Paris Red Skull cabals have quantities of the oil. The oil grants a +20% bonus to the wielder's Torture roll, and increases the SAN loss from torture to 1/2d6. It also reduces the damage of torture by 1 Hit Point. Yuggoth Oil cannot be 'broken' but if a torturer fumbles with it, the GM may rule that the remaining supply is spilled or wasted.

**The Needle of the Unspeakable:** The needle was, according to legend, given to Bishop Hernando de Valencia on the alien world. It is charged with malevolence. When slid under a subject's skin, the needle triggers the memory of all pain ever suffered by the victim. It grants a 30% bonus to the wielder's Torture roll. Using this needle has a SAN cost of 0/1d4; suffering the needle causes a SAN loss of 1d4/2d10. The Needle of the Unspeakable is virtually indestructible. If a torturer fumbles with it, it remains undamaged.

**Rawhead:** This relic is a model of a human skull. It is made from an unidentified substance that resembles bone, but is much stronger and hot to the touch. The skull can be broken down into 512 small fragments like a three-dimensional jigsaw.

To use the Rawhead, the user's skull must be replaced - piece by piece - with the alien fragments. The user's face and head is flayed, then the human skull is removed in sections. The alien substance triggers cell regrowth, so it is possible, if extremely difficult, to keep someone alive during the conversion process. Doing so is a Difficult Craft (Torture) check, and the 'recipient' must also succeed at a *Difficult* Endurance check to remain alive.

If the process is successful - and there hasn't been a successful Rawhead in the last century - then the skull's wearer gains the power of the Rawhead. They incarnate the hungry god in human form, which is very bad news for anyone who doesn't like hell on earth.





## The Power of Pain

The thaumic power that can be gained from pain is an established tool of sorcerers. The psychic anguish released when a person experiences intense pain can be an even more significant fuel for sorcery than would be their death. Not surprisingly, the Skulls are intimately aware of this and frequently call upon torture to increase the power of sorcery.

### Masochistic Sorcery

Attempting sorcery while experiencing debilitating pain is a dangerous proposition, but a spellcaster willing to risk it can gain significant power. The Power a spellcaster can gain is based on the severity of pain they are willing to tolerate during the casting process. This severity is measured two ways. First, the sorcerer takes Hit Point damage from the torture. Second, the pain is distracting to the sorcerer resulting in a penalty to the Sorcery roll to cast the spell.

Power	Hit Points Taken	Sorcery
+1	1d4	-5%
+2	1d6	-10%
+3	1d10	-15%
+4	2d10	-20%

In addition, the act of enduring great pain to facilitate a spell has a potential Sanity risk. After the sorcery is completed, the spellcaster must make a SAN check with a cost of 0/1d4. This cost is in addition to any other sanity cost for the spell or for experiencing torture.

### Sadistic Sorcery

Less potent than the sorcery of masochism, the sorcery of sadism has the advantage that it does not hurt the spellcaster. The pain must be inflicted during the ritual's performance.

The amount of POW available based on the number of victims and the severity of torture inflicted upon each per the table below.

Hit Points	Torture Subjects					
	1	2-3	6-10	12-20	<100	Hundreds
1d4	+0 Pow	+0 Pow	+0 Pow	+1 Pow	+2 Pow	+3 Pow
1d6	+0 Pow	+0 Pow	+1 Pow	+2 Pow	+3 Pow	+4 Pow
1d10	+0 Pow	+1 Pow	+2 Pow	+3 Pow	+4 Pow	+5 Pow
2d10	+1 Pow	+2 Pow	+3 Pow	+4 Pow	+5 Pow	+5 Pow

## The Casks of Anguish

Over the centuries the Skulls have actually come up with ways of harvesting and storing pain. The pain may then be used to augment sorcery long after it was actually inflicted. The idea of harvesting and storing pain was first posited by Bishop de Valencia, but it took almost two hundred years to come to fruition. Giuseppe Messina was an inventor of the Italian Renaissance and student of Galileo Galilei. Giuseppe had lost his entire family in a fire, and the grief drove him mad. Giuseppe became obsessed with the idea of capturing and using his pain. He developed a series of prototypes of a device that he called the Casks of Anguish.

Giuseppe actually deemed his invention a failure. The Casks were ineffective at capturing and storing emotional trauma like grief or sorrow. The inventor theorised that this kind of pain was too mercurial and delicate to capture. On a whim, he tested the casks' ability to capture the psychic emanations that resulted from physical pain and was surprised to learn that they were very effective for this purpose.

The Skulls learned of Giuseppe and his invention, and the inventor disappeared shortly thereafter. Since then, the Skulls have studied and augmented the Casks until they have become the tools which the cult uses today.

The Casks only barely resemble their namesake. Each has a small cask-like structure in the middle, but it is surrounded by a 'Rube Goldberg' like collection of wires, brackets and dishes to harvest and direct the waves of anguish caused by torture. At present, most Red Skull cabals have at least one Cask in their possession.

Using the Casks requires a Technology Use (Casks of Anguish) roll. This is a very specialised skill but is closely related to the skill set of a medical technician, and these skills can be substituted in a pinch. The Skulls have at least one expertly trained operator in each cabal. The Casks are extremely effective at capturing nearly all the psychic anguish released as a result of torture. Doing so takes an Easy Technology Use roll. The cask need only be set up in the presence of torture according to the rules of Sadistic Sorcery (described above). The capacity of a cask varies, but a typical cask can harvest and store up to 10 POW.

The application of the Casks during sorcery is much trickier. When the anguish is released from the Cask, it is very difficult to control. If the operator wishes to add +1 POW to the sorcery, they must make a normal Technology Use roll. For each additional +1 POW the operator wishes to supply, the roll takes a -10% modifier.

Technology Use	Result
Fumble	The POW is not channelled into the sorcery and is wasted. In addition, 1 POW of psychic anguish leaks from the Cask. All present are buffeted by the psychic anguish of the total POW released (the amount originally tapped +1). Anyone present must make a Sanity check with a cost of 1/1d4 per point of POW released.
Normal Failure	The POW is not channelled into the sorcery and is wasted. In addition, 1 POW of psychic anguish leaks from the Cask. All present for the sorcery must make a Sanity check with a cost of 1/1d4.
Normal Success	The POW is effectively channelled into the sorcery. In addition, 1 POW of psychic anguish leaks from the Cask. All present for the sorcery must make a Sanity check with a cost of 1/1d4.
Special Success	The POW is effectively channelled into the sorcery with no leak or Sanity loss.

## Pain & Possession

Extreme pain can trigger out-of-body experiences, as the conscious mind disengages to protect itself. Any lurking possessors see this as the equivalent of a free lunch – there's a living body right there with no mind to protect it. They can just walk right in. If the damage suffered from a torture session exceeds a character's POW, then he's temporarily vulnerable to possession by anything that happens to be nearby – there's no POW vs POW contest to resist.

For centuries, the cult assumed that when an Endurer's eyes started glowing and they began talking in tongues, they'd reached a higher level of spiritual enlightenment and should be obeyed. While demonic mysticism is still common in the more traditional cabals, Sauvage and his acolytes recognise that possession is not a revelation. They've even learned to use this possession to their advantage. Just summon up a tractable lesser entity – one that wouldn't normally be able to hold onto a human host, and one which can easily be compelled to obey commands – then torture someone until their mind takes a vacation. Your demon hops in the driver's seat, and you've got a mind-controlled victim that won't show up on most conventional screening spells.

## The Flayed

The cult has a traditional method for dealing with failures, traitors and intruders. It's called flaying. First, they remove your ability to feel pain. In the early years, they deliberately infected you with leprosy and guided the disease's development with magic; these days, they can do it with drugs. Then they remove the skin from your head, starting at the bottom of the jaw. They do it slowly, cauterising and disinfecting the wounds so you (probably) don't die. They dig deep in places, removing muscles so you can't speak ever again. In other places, they cut so shallowly that the skin folds off like the finest tissue paper. They draw sigils on your bloody skin and they make you eat it. By the end of the process, you're a skull-faced horror that can't feel pain, and you're magically geased to serve the cult. Flayed footsoldiers obviously cannot appear in public without drawing undue attention, but they serve as guards and assassins for the cult cabals.

## Flayed Thug

**STR** 16 **CON** 15 **SIZ** 15 **INT** 10 **POW** 14  
**DEX** 11 **CHA** 13 **EDU** 16 **SAN** 0 **HP** 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Handgun 55%, damage 1d10, Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1d3+DB

**Skills:** Disguise 30%, Listen 60%, Spot/Hidden 60%, Track 50%

Flayed Thugs ignore the effects of Major Wounds and cannot be knocked unconscious by damage.

## Ongoing Operations

Under Marc Sauvage, the Skulls sell torture as a commodity. They quickly garnered a reputation as being the most skilful and discreet torturers that money can buy. They do not question the uses of this torture. If a masochistic billionaire has a kinky fetish; or if a brutal dictator wants phenomenal cruelty visited on his prisoners; or even if a mad computational sorcerer wants to fuel his spells with harnessed agony; the Skulls do not object. If the customer can pay, they provide the pain.

## Inhuman Alliances

In Sauvage's quest to grow the cult's power, nothing is off the table. Sauvage has reopened the sealed research of Colonel Gavin Hayes's attempts to open a gate. So far, the cult has been able to contact alien patrons on three separate occasions. This effort has been led by the Parisian Cabal, but recently the Lisbon cabal has also been involved. Sauvage is quietly machinating a conflict between the entities and his main rivals in Lisbon. If a botched gate opening or some angry alien horror removes them, Sauvage considers any collateral damage worthwhile.



## THE NEW MODEL ARMY - OVERVIEW -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

On April 26th, 2010, joggers near Ely, Cambridge, discovered two headless bodies in the fens. The bodies were fresh, naked and covered in scars and inked letters that had the local constabulary escalate the matter as far up the chain as possible, as quickly as possible. The investigation was officially taken over by the Laundry three hours later. This document contains our initial findings and thoughts.

The victims (as yet unidentified) had been beheaded and drained of their blood. It is estimated that the majority of the scarification and body painting took place before the exsanguination. The remainder appears to be a botched glamour. If it had worked, it is likely the bodies would have sunk into the mud long before anyone had found them. From this it was assumed that the rest of the markings also had a deliberate purpose, rather than being the work of an occult-obsessed murderer. Analysis of the symbols suggests a form of 17<sup>th</sup> century biblically influenced magic, due to use of post-Dee Enochian and an updated version of formulae linked to the work of John Rogers, an English cleric who was an active member of a group known as the Fifth Monarchists.

This cult was active around the time of Cromwell and believed that the English Civil War and the execution of Charles I heralded a new millennium in 1666 and the return of Jesus Christ to Earth at the head of the fifth kingdom (the previous four being Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome). We know that a number of the group, including Rogers, were actively engaged in variations of the rituals practised by Dee, primarily to aid Cromwell, but the group was forcibly put down after the restoration of the monarchy.

It would appear now that someone in the Cambridge area has decided to modernise the Fifth Monarchist rituals and involve themselves in blood sacrifice. While Her Majesty's Government has no official position on the return of an alleged Messiah to Earth, it does frown on the possibility of an attempted coup d'état via ritualised murder. The nature of the killings suggests a small and relatively inexperienced group, likely linked to one of the colleges. They knew enough to leave no thaumic traces and sever any lingering psychic imprint, but they got the glamour wrong, further suggesting book learning rather than experience.

While there is no one in King's College on the Laundry watch list, a quasi-socialist group based on the Levellers have recently been set up in the college, splitting from the main Cambridge University Occupation movement. Given the similarity in period and cross-over in membership between the Fifth Monarchists and the Levellers in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, this is seen as the most obvious starting point for any investigation.



## Cult Overview

Born in 1599, noted first by history in 1628, military commander from 1643, ruler of a country by 1653 and dead by 1658, Oliver Cromwell's life had a slow start and an extremely eventful end. Hundreds of years after his time he is a controversial figure; honoured by some, hated by others and still a source of scholarly debate. What almost nobody knows, not even the Laundry, is that he is currently being impersonated by a Level Four Arneson-Crowley exome who is being worshipped by a growing English cult including Civil War reenactors, English pseudo-fascists and a minor member of the British Royal Family.

The cult has appeared on the Laundry watch list due to two recently discovered bodies that weren't cleaned up properly, but the initial conclusions reached in that document are very wrong.

The New Model Army is intended as a new cult, a group who hark back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, but who have been invented out of whole cloth in modern times. Their lore and beliefs are based on rumour and Wikipedia as much as real history and some of it only appears authentic when you're standing sufficiently far away. That's not to say they aren't dangerous, especially as right now they're flying under the radar. With nothing on file and a very small trail to follow, any group of agents trying to stop the plans of these Cromwellian cultists will have to find them first.

Of course the Laundry is not the only group in the dark about what exactly is going on. Unfortunately for the cultists, the group who refer to themselves as the New Model Army, their notion of what is going on is also completely wrong, but in their case it's likely to be fatal.

The group was founded in 2001 by English Civil War reenactor, amateur historian and computer programmer Russ Finchley, a man whose patriotism long ago went over the edge into the more dangerous areas of nationalism, Finchley is still the leader of a cult who believe in the primacy of England, the need for a strong leader and that the future of the British Isles can only be ensured by following every wish of the entity they truly believe to be Cromwell returned, which means killing a very large number of people.

The cult, numbering 140 (the amount fixed by Finchley's decree, based on the number of nominees to the first parliament Cromwell called in 1653), aren't your usual bunch of white supremacists. While some of them are drawn from the ranks of English pseudo-fascist groups, the cult as a whole is too permissive for a lot of the more hardcore far right. Following Cromwell's own beliefs they are of the opinion that many different groups, including the Jewish

community, can help strengthen a reborn Commonwealth. However that doesn't mean they want them as members, they just don't plan to expel them from the country the moment they take power. Nominally all of the members of the cult must be Christian (but explicitly not Roman Catholic), even if many of the things they do go against major tenets of Christian belief.

Finchley, supported by his 'Parliament of Saints', believes it his destiny to arrange for the true rebirth of Cromwell. This is to be achieved by a series of rituals and sacrifices, getting bigger and bigger over time, culminating in huge mass sacrifices numbering in the thousands. After that the details are a little fuzzy, but the communicated rhetoric includes some fairly predictable guff about England taking its rightful place as a leading nation of the world and the four nations of the British Isles being properly united once again.

Of course the entity currently claiming to be the spirit of Oliver Cromwell cares not a whit for England's rightful place, nor a strong united Commonwealth. It only cares about mass sacrifice, a transfer of power and an opportunity to reach properly into this dimension and gorge itself on the bill of fare. After contact was made it was happy to be subtle, taking its cues from Finchley's obsessions, telling the cultist what he wants to believe and helping where it can. Knowing nothing of human history and caring even less this exome has taken all of its information from the source that as right there in front of it when Finchley first made contact.

The source?

Oliver Cromwell's Wikipedia page.

The being, generally referred to by the cultists as the Lord Protector, has instructed its followers in some further magics and is slowly working up to a proper decent manifestation, via an increasing amount of blood sacrifice.

Finchley recruited some other reenactors first, then a few members of his local Masonic Lodge. After that he moved onto to some of the more enlightened members of the local EDL. Most recently he's managed a major coup: a minor member of the British Royal Family with a overly enlarged sense of national pride, who was looking for thrills and not really understanding the irony of attempting to bring a republic back to English soil.

With his magic number of 140 members reached now is the time for the New Model Army to move things up a gear and really start working towards bringing the Lord Protector over into this world. The dogma of the cult, detailed a little later, states that this will usher in a new Commonwealth, with the 140 as advisers to Cromwell reborn. A united



England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland will then resume their place at the centre of the world stage and an awful lot of people are likely to die, with the members of Her Majesty's Government first in line.

### History

Oliver Cromwell lived for 59 years, killed a king, ruled a country and left a very lasting impression on the UK and Ireland. He breathed his last in 1658 and his head is now buried in the grounds of a college in Cambridge. Like most dead people he is never coming back, but in 2003 a computer programmer named Russ Finchley made contact with something he really didn't mean to ever make contact with and the first steps were made on the path to the Lord Protector's return to this earth.

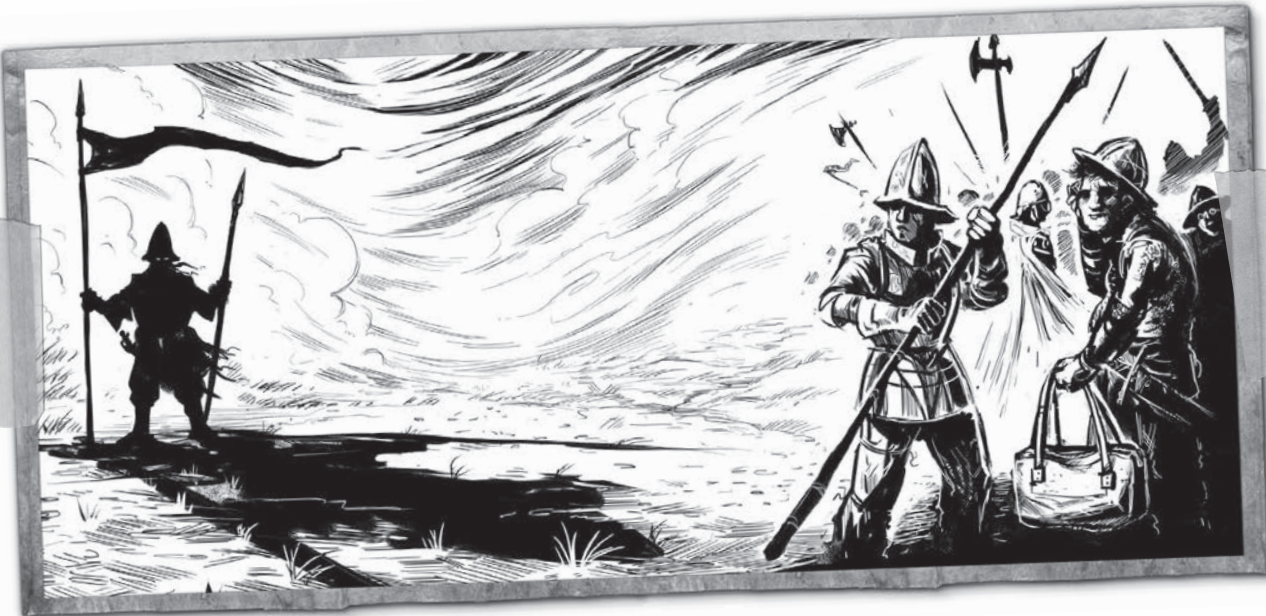
Finchley hadn't meant to summon anything, ever, but he was delving into things without any sort of knowledge of where they would lead. Obsessed with all things to do with Cromwell he had long ago exhausted the official histories and started looking into random pieces of lore and trivia that would never make it into a scholarly work. These investigations lead him to some of the less sane stories about the Fifth Monarchists, the group who believed that England after Charles I was the kingdom that would see the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

They drew heavily from the Book of Revelations and believed that 1666 would be the dawning of a new millennium. The notion of a parliament of religious men (or saints) was adopted by Cromwell (until he dismissed the group of 140 five months later) and for a short while they exerted significant influence. However religious these men may have been, they certainly weren't orthodox by the standards of the early modern Church of England.

The group was extremely interested in numerology and that interest was advanced by some members into the kind of mathematics that would generally lead to a stay in St Hilda's. The high point of this work was a ritual used to aid the Fifth Monarchists in their take-over of London in 1661. Thankfully for the citizens of the English capital, they failed and the sect was effectively wiped out in the fighting and the executions that followed. Of course, stories remained and fragments of the maths were handed down until, like all things, they found their way onto the Internet. Finchley found them, played with them, worked them into some of his programming and this time they proved a lot more effective.

The Level Four entity that Finchley accidentally contacted needed a hook, something to convince this human to talk to it, do its bidding and ultimately to make a big enough hole to squeeze through and let the fun start. That hook was the former Lord Protector of England. In truth the leader of the New Model Army doesn't remember much about that first conversation, or any of that night, but he awoke in the morning possessed of two things; an utter belief that he'd just spoken to the spirit of Cromwell and the beginnings of a plan.

Like any good cult leader planning the overthrow of his government he first looked for more recruits. Convinced that he was building a second Parliament of Saints to support the soon to be reborn Lord Protector Finchley decided that he really wanted 139 other people and he knew just where to start. The following weekend he turned up to his reenactment group a changed man; more charismatic, more passionate and with a renewed spring in his step. The first few converts came easily. They were similarly obsessed with Cromwell and after the first ritual when the Lord Protector spoke to them too they were eager to join up.



The next two years involved slow and steady recruitment. The entity impressed the need for secrecy upon all of the cult and it was made very clear what the price for being too obvious or betrayal would be. In 2004 the cult numbered 30 and the first sacrifice was made. Initially the members wouldn't have considered such things, but as the years went on and the Lord Protector's influence deepened, the notion became more palatable.

Finchley was still fighting wiki-wars over the lesser-known facts of Cromwell's history, his obsession over the facts and his hatred of those who would disagree with him had not dimmed. It was reasonably trivial to find one of his most hated online rivals and, dressed in full Roundhead regalia, the cult leader beheaded *cromwellfacts42* while surrounded by the most devoted members of the New Model Army.

The first big expansion of the cult came after this event. Realising that more muscle was needed Finchley made contact with the fringes of English pseudo-fascism. His contact Will Colbard was a deeply unpleasant man and a member of the EDL, but he'd also once been a reenactor and Finchley felt he would be a useful addition to the cause. Colbard was more of an accidental fascist, a man who would have been quite happy in the British army if they hadn't very sensibly discharged him a few years previously for being even more enthusiastically violent than his superiors wanted him to be during patrols and interrogations in Afghanistan.

After an impassioned sales-pitch from Finchley, promises of power and an introductory ritual, Colbard signed up with the New Model Army and brought a few of his EDL mates with him. None of them were too sure about the cult's views that some multiculturalism was good for the country or that Roman Catholics were a bigger problem than Jews, but as the indoctrination sunk in, they began to care less and less.

At this point there was nobody in the reenactment group who wasn't part of the cult. Finchley had perfected a ritual that allowed the weapons they used to pass muster on weekends away, while being deadly effective with a simple command phrase. While the New Model Army have never needed to really defend themselves on the battlefield, this turned them from being mostly harmless, to only seeming to be mostly harmless.

Another couple of years of quiet expansion followed and in 2005 the newly elected Conservative MP for Huntingdon, Rebecca Quilton, joined the 90-strong cult. This newly minted parliamentarian didn't join the cult out of her own free will, however. Using the connection to Cromwell's old constituency, some clever programming involving Google Maps and five very unwilling sacrifices, the New Model Army got themselves a seat in the House of Commons.

Quilton's loyalty was ensured by a further ritual and a brief interview with the Lord Protector. Her involvement has brought further resources and contacts to the cult. She feeds every piece of information she has back to Finchley and after he felt her loyalty had been sufficiently tested she earned her place on the cult's ruling Council of State.

Recruiting an MP gave the cult access to places and people previously out of reach, but Finchley, guided by the Lord Protector, guarded by it, didn't overreach. He knew that secrecy remained the cult's most powerful weapon and while he knew nothing of the Laundry, he was pretty sure that he couldn't be the only person in the world who had figured out how to perform magic by algorithm. Their impressive level of secrecy hasn't been achieved just by hiding the bodies; a lot of magic has also gone into making sure nobody knows what they're up to yet. The Lord Protector's growing influence on this reality has helped as it manages to cloud minds and bend light during the rituals carried out in its name.

By 2006 Finchley, in coordination with the Lord Protector, came up with a plan to finally bring a reborn Cromwell into the world. The occasional sacrifice simply wasn't enough; this required something very big and special. The sacrifice of at least 20 people, more if possible, during the right ritual, would finally open the way but something else was needed. Patched together from old texts, nonsense theories and some of the crazier parts of Usenet, the ritual called for a participant of royal blood to be killed and possessed, as a perfect symbol of Cromwell's republican return, mixed with regicide and the Fifth Monarchist millennial madness.

This new plan didn't remove the need for further rituals and sacrifices. While the Lord Protector enjoyed the energy release of a properly prepared victim, Finchley was relishing the power of life and death and neither of them were prepared to give it up. The cult leader had long ago quit his job and was living on the funds provided by members, preparing new rituals, obsessing over the most minor details of Cromwell's life and the surrounding time period, going to reenactment events, researching further Fifth Monarchist mysticism and arguing with people on the Internet. A couple of those arguments also ended badly for the people who disagreed with Finchley, but so far no link has been made.

The cult's numbers steadily grew and as the years passed the chance of discovery grew and grew. At the same time their welcome amongst other reenactment groups waned as Finchley became too obsessive and Colbard proved far too enthusiastic with his pike. Like all true groups on the fringes, this was taken as a sign that the New Model Army was on the right track and names were noted to add to the list of those who had given their lives for the Lord Protector.



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

Recently, as secrecy has become more and more difficult, the missing piece of the puzzle has been found. Rebecca Quellton met a minor member of the Royal Family at a party, a young man who expressed a belief in Britain's need to reassert itself in the world. Like many of his family and generation he holds a romantic view of Cromwell. Quellton arranged for him to meet Finchley and after a few conversations, mixed with Roundhead ceremony and a ritual designed to cloud the young man's mind, he agreed to join the cult. Full of jingoism and a disappointment that he'll never even be close to being king, he was an easy mark and now he believes that in a few short months his new friends will propel him to the top of a new Britain, all in return for seats in parliament and a new constitution.

Operations have stepped up significantly since his recruitment and inevitably haste and enthusiasm has brought mistakes. Two recent victims of a ritual have been found, their bodies inscribed with Bible verse and mathematical symbols. Unfortunately for the ritualists they didn't properly complete the spell to hide the bodies, which made for a very unpleasant surprise for two early morning joggers. The case caught the attention of the Laundry and an official, if very misleading, dossier has been compiled on a group currently being referred to as the Fifth Monarchists.

Like so many investigations the race is now on, between the plans of the New Model Army and Her Majesty's Occult Secret Service. The final ritual can't be planned and executed overnight, but the pace can be increased again and will be the moment Finchley realises someone is on to them. The question is, can the Laundry prevent the sacrifice of a group of people whose only crime is dressing up as Cavaliers at weekends, or will they end up dealing with a Level Four possession in a quiet corner of Cambridge?

### Beliefs

There are cults in the world that have one, solid, unshakeable core belief, there are others whose tenets are wide and varied, changing due to dogmatic argument or bloody schism. The New Model Army is the first cult whose belief system is at the mercy of editors on Wikipedia. When Russ Finchley first accidentally summoned the being he now knows as the Lord Protector the two Wikipedia articles open on his desktop became an integral part of the spell. All of the information the Level Four entity had about the world and how to communicate was contained within and even now those articles, one on Oliver Cromwell, the other on the Fifth Monarchists, are embedded into its manifested consciousness.

Everything the cult believes is derived from what the Lord Protector communicates via Finchley's thaumically infused 2003 PC and so an edit to either of the two Wikipedia pieces

will trigger a change in those beliefs. While the information, both of these sources has been reasonably consistent over the years, complications and confusion have arisen from precarious link between data and dogma. The members of the New Model Army, deeply under the thrall of the Lord Protector, have not noticed this link.

While Finchley himself still spends time editing Cromwell's page, he himself is also caught in a strange feedback loop. If a change is made that is significant enough for the Lord Protector to communicate, then Finchley will take it as truth.



This quirk of this mutable, née editable, belief system creates two major flaws for the New Model Army. The first is that changes to the page can cause edicts to come from the Lord Protector that violently jar with a cultist's own beliefs, so much so that the mental control weakens. The second is far more harmful to the cult, but would require someone to figure out what is going on. A directed edit to one or both pages, could throw the cult into disarray very quickly. Subtle, incremental, changes may well be more effective in the long term, but a correctly timed change saying that Cromwell was a passive monarchist who never led men into battle would massively disrupt cult operations.

The nature of Wikipedia means that the lifespan of any such change would be brief indeed, but it might be enough. Of course actually figuring out what is going on would

be a complicated investigation in and of itself, but likely preferable to having to burst into the cult HQ, all guns blazing.

Even when the belief structure of the New Model Army is being tweaked due to a late night flurry of edits, there are a few points of dogma that have remained reasonably consistent. The core point is that the Lord Protector is Oliver Cromwell reborn, a leader who will raise the cult high and bring a new and glorious dawn to the British Isles. The words that emanate from the old and glowing computer in Finchley's extensive basement are law and those who brook them are given only one chance to recant their heresy before they become the next in line for ritual and computationally interesting sacrifice. This has only happened a handful of times over the lifetime of the cult, they're a very well controlled little group.

Out of these words, born of Cromwell's past, mixed with the pre-millennial craziness of the Fifth Monarchists, flow the rest of the core beliefs:

- England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales should be a united Commonwealth, a republic, ruled over by a Protestant elite.
- The current constitutional monarchy must be eliminated and the monarch beheaded.
- Roman Catholicism is evil.
- A bloodthirsty interpretation of the Bible is the only correct view of life.
- Force of arms and the murder of innocents is a perfectly acceptable way to achieve your aims.
- This pre-ordained Commonwealth is either the precursor to, or the earthly incarnation, of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- The Lord Protector will be supported by a Parliament of Saints, a group numbering no more than 140.
- Parliaments do not work.
- The Lord Protector will rule alone, supported by his Council of State.
- The people of the Earth need the Lord Protector to save them from sin and flame.
- A successful Commonwealth requires controlled immigration.
- Those not of the faith must be subjugated.

A number of these beliefs are clearly contradictory and without the controlling influence of the Lord Protector it would be slightly more difficult to convince a group of people to join a cult whose beliefs clearly state that once power is achieved the number of people involved in ruling will reduce dramatically. However like the notion that the Christian God can both loves all people and be OK with his followers killing those who oppose them, many fundamentalists are very good at believing multiple distinct things at the same time.

In addition to the core beliefs there are a number of additional pieces of dogma, largely influenced by the Council of State (Finchley, Colbard and Quellton). These revolve around racism, reenactment and right-wing conservative politics. This mix of beliefs manifests itself in a number of ways. The cult is extremely homophobic, for instance. Despite Wikipedia saying that Cromwell felt a British Commonwealth would need Jewish immigration due to a perceived economic benefit, the EDL influence of Colbard has pushed the cult into a far more racist position. All of the members are white and it is highly unlikely that any non-Caucasians would be looked upon as anything other than a threat. The New Model Army also firmly believe in the primacy of capitalism and of the notion that might makes right. They are deeply suspicious of the EU and especially France and believe that the entire world secretly longs to be English. The USA is commonly referred to as "the Colonies" and part of the long-term plan is the reclamation of those lands that were once part of Cromwell's domain.

Finally there is the cult's hobby: reenactment. It is expected that new members will take part in Civil War reenaction, as Roundheads, of course. Cult funds are made available for costume and regular trips are organised. These events are the closest thing the cult comes to worship in public, but it also gives them an opportunity to find targets for sacrifice and to defeat their opponents in mock battle, which will have to do until the real thing comes to pass. Only an English cult could sacrifice an innocent on a Friday night and get dressed up in 17<sup>th</sup> Century armour to replay the Battle of Naseby the following morning.

The British tend to mistrust fundamentalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and while nobody yet knows why the New Model Army are so strange, the fact that they are strange has not gone unnoticed. The passion for reenactment does bleed into other areas of cult activity, specifically their rituals. While the spells are real and the life-force of the victims is fed to the Lord Protector, they're in reality cobbled together from various different sources. With only their imagination and the Internet to go on, the cult worship their Lord Protector with zeal and fervour, but half of them are only mouthing the words and at least one of them is probably wearing a wrist watch.



# CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

## Notable Members

### Russ Finchley

Russ Finchley was born in 1959 into a perfectly normal and very boring English family in Huntingdon, Cambridge. He grew up interested in two things; electronics and history. As the computer revolution began to get going that interest in electronics shifted towards programming, but the deep interest in history remained. Finchley, like many members of his generation, grew up in a Britain they felt was lacking in many things. World War II and Indian independence had ended any last notions of Empire and while London was still hugely important in the financial world, it seemed that everything was drab and grey across the country, especially compared to the technicolor USA. It would have been so very easy for this young man to get involved in some of the darker areas of British life, but education kept him from the path of violence and hatred, leading him instead to try and find ways to relive past glories.



At university, while studying computer science, he discovered a group of English Civil War reenactors and got hooked. Pretending to be a Roundhead made his weekends much more enjoyable and he even managed to meet women. After some twenty years of quietly working in a variety of computer jobs, spending as many weekends as possible fighting the Cavaliers and occasionally delving into some of the weirder parts of 17<sup>th</sup> century history and mysticism, his life changed when his computer started to talk to him and claim it was the spirit of Oliver Cromwell reborn.

Since then, Finchley has been doing everything he can to grow the cult and prepare for the day when his greatest hero will return to earth. He's learned a lot in that time about politics, persuasion, theatre and computational demonology; the latter being the real way of getting and holding people's attention these days. With the Lord Protector's help he's grown substantially more confident and infinitely more insane. His mind is filled with the glory of the reborn Commonwealth and nothing is unthinkable if it advances the cult towards that goal.

Due to all this, Finchley is a man who holds no enmity towards anyone, but can happily order human sacrifice. It lets him hold the notion that all people should be free to believe what they wish and determine their own future, as long as it is a future following the Lord Protector and living inside an ever-expanding British Commonwealth. To him, anyone should be happy to die for the cause and those who survive will be far, far happier living under a reborn Cromwell. Finchley will never rant or rave, he is utterly calm now, utterly convinced of the virtue of his path and while he is not possessed, in many respects he may as well be, the madness of dealing with a Level Four exnome has driven the sanity and humanity out of his once peaceful, educated mind.

**STR** 12    **CON** 12    **SIZ** 12    **INT** 17    **POW** 17  
**DEX** 12    **CHA** 17    **EDU** 16    **SAN** 0    **HP** 12

**Damage Bonus:** 0

**Weapons:** Broadsword, 80%, 1d8 + 1

**Skills:** Brawl 25%, Dodge 50%, Drive 50%, Knowledge (Cromwell) 90%, Knowledge (Occult) 30%, Knowledge (Reenactment) 65%, Melee (Sword) 50%, Sorcery 30%, Spot 50%, Strategy 50%

**Will Colbard - Cult Enforcer and Occasional Fascist**

Will Colbard grew up in a working-class British home with a brain he never used. He listened to the wrong people: his unemployed father, the kids at school, the tabloid press and eventually a man who told him that England needed to be reclaimed by the English. He was frequently bored in his teenage years and that boredom led to violence against people who weren't like him. When he was old enough he dropped out of school and joined the British Army, a seemingly perfect place for a bored kid who liked the notion of hurting people. Her Majesty's Armed Forces were never quite happy with Private Colbard. He was clearly a good soldier and he seemed to react well to discipline, but there was a look in his eye when he went into combat that made all those around him very uneasy. After too many questionable incidents and one too many dead enemy who had probably already dropped his weapons, he was discharged under unfavourable circumstances.



From there fate led Colbard into the arms of two very distinct groups of people, military reenactors and the English Defence League. He really had enjoyed the military discipline and dressing up in uniform and some of his old friends convinced him to try pretending to be a Roundhead at the weekends. Joining the EDL was an even more natural fit and he quickly found himself in a prominent position on the more violent end of the pseudo-fascist spectrum. In 2004 Russ Finchley came calling.

The cult leader needed someone who could take command of the more aggressive members of the growing New Model Army and the activities needed to supply candidates for sacrifice. Initially he was sceptical, especially as the convoluted belief system of the cult was a far cry from the simple jingoism of the EDL. However, he was certainly interested and Colbard was only the second cult member to talk directly (or as directly as is possible) to the Lord Protector, an encounter that ensured his loyalty and pushed his already cruel personality over the edge. Now he holds the title of General of the New Model Army and is rarely far from Finchley, overseeing the equally important areas of the cult's reenactment activities, the acquisition of sacrifices and the disposal of any remains. And he really doesn't like Cavaliers.

**STR** 16    **CON** 16    **SIZ** 16    **INT** 12    **POW** 10  
**DEX** 15    **CHA** 12    **EDU** 12    **SAN** 0    **HP** 16

**Damage Bonus:** 1d4

**Weapons:** 12-gauge Shotgun, 70%, 4d6/2d6/1d6

Dagger, 80%, 1d4 + 1d4

Pike, 80%, 1d10 + 2 + 1d4

**Skills:** Brawl 60%, Dodge 50%, Drive 50%, Firearms (Pistol) 55% & (Shotgun) 70%, Grapple 65%, Intimidate 75%, Knowledge (Reenactment) 75%, Knowledge (British Fascism) 75%, Melee (Dagger) 80% & (Pike) 80% & (Sword) 50%, Spot 50%, Strategy 50%



## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

### Rebecca Quellton - Conservative MP

It is certainly theoretically possible to be MP for Huntingdon in Cambridge without anyone talking to you about Cromwell, but Rebecca Quellton never wanted it any other way. One of the bright young stars of the Conservative party, she took over a very safe seat and had her career path all mapped out. Of course no plan survives contact with the enemy, especially when that enemy is an entity from another dimension who wishes to rule humanity.

She met Russ Finchley at a garden party in the constituency shortly after her election. On first meeting she wasn't quite sure what he did or why he was there, but they got involved in a conversation about their mutual hero and he certainly came across as a man of influence. They agreed to meet that week and in her constituency office Finchley laid out a path to a glory far beyond No 10 Downing Street and that, added to a little glamour, sealed the young MP's fate. Quellton had always been a driven woman, but her zeal redoubled.



Old friends were discarded and only those who were useful to the cult or could open doors were entertained at all. She became even more conservative, her voice raised in support of leaving the EU, of a smaller, less representative parliament and a return to proper Church of England values, ignoring the fact that most of the Church of England no longer held the beliefs she was discussing. She remained quick witted and convincing, friendly to those who could do her favours and popular with the more senior members of the party who felt young women MPs were a vital part of any Tory election plan. She's recruited several useful people to the New Model Army and pointed out a couple of candidates for sacrifice, but she remains the only MP to become trapped in the orbit of the Lord Protector. While she has no sorcerous ability herself, she is more of a politician than even Finchley has become and she's secured money and resources for the cult, without which it would have found it difficult to expand at the rate that it has. Like many MPs she is friendly and seemingly open on first meeting, but the main difference with the Honourable Member from Huntingdon is that if someone ceases to be useful or if they cross her, then the knife in their back may well be literal.

However as the cult has started to become more active, Quellton has begun to wonder if Russ Finchley is the best person to lead the New Model Army and the United Kingdom into the future. Every time she's near Finchley's computer now she hears a voice in her head, whispering her name, mixing it with that of Elizabeth Claypole, Cromwell's favourite daughter. Notions of ruling at the right hand of the Lord Protector are becoming more and more appealing and Quellton is beginning to investigate ways of removing the head of the New Model Army without hampering the mission.

**STR** 10    **CON** 9    **SIZ** 8    **INT** 14    **POW** 13  
**DEX** 11    **CHA** 16    **EDU** 18    **SAN** 30    **HP** 9

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Skills:** Bargain 45%, Bureaucracy 55%, Command 20%, Etiquette 50%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (politics) 75%, Perform 55%, Persuade 70%, Sense 40%, Sorcery 30%, Strategy 25%.

### The Lord Protector

Stern, driven, Bible quoting and willing to do anything it needs to gain dominion over as much of the world as it can, the entity that calls itself the Lord Protector remains trapped within Finchley's old computer. Its rhetoric revolves around the need for change, for Britain to return to adherence to the word of God, for people to be pious and bow before their lord. Of course as far as the entity is concerned it means itself.

While still trapped in the computer the Lord Protector's influence is bounded to one room, but anyone within that room must possess at least a level three ward to avoid falling under the entity's power to some degree, leaving them confused and open to very easy capture. There are more details on the computer in the Assets section.

Should the ritual succeed and the Lord Protector manifest, it will be substantially more difficult to deal with. It will manifest as an idealised, almost messianic, version of Cromwell. A tall, imposing, glowing figure, dressed in the kind of plate armour depicted in portraits. Unfortunately, for the royal aspirant at least, there will be nothing left of the original host body. While a level three ward will still be sufficient to guard against most of the entity's orders, a level four ward will be required where those orders relate to the murder of any "innocents". This could lead to Laundry agents being able to say no to shooting their fellows, but not being able to stop themselves opening fire on a local high street.

Ultimately heavy firepower and a powerful exorcism will be required to push the Lord Protector back to whence it came (or wipe it out entirely), leaving the Royal Family a member short, but with their throne intact.

#### INT 15 POW 15

Cast Level Three Geas at Will 95%, Other Sorcery 70%, Bluff Cromwellian Trivia 65%, Spout Puritanical Wrath 90%

If manifested, it's got **STR 25, CON 25, SIZ 16, DEX 12**, with a Damage Bonus of + 2d6 and 40 hit points. Oh, and Sword 100%, hitting for 2d6 + damage bonus. And it ignores non-magical armour. And possesses you if you get hit. Or reanimates you as a Roundhead-themed zombie if it kills you.

## Assets

As a cult of 140 members, some of whom are wealthy and influential, the New Model Army is not lacking for funds. Russ Finchley's house in Huntingdon is quite large (with a very substantial basement) and he hasn't had to undertake paying work in years. However in addition to mundane funds, the cult has a few notable assets.

### The Lord Protector's Computer

In 2001 Russ Finchley's computer was state of the art. These days, the technology is fit only for a museum or the civil service, but the clunky desktop is likely one of the most powerful home computers in the world. The beige tower and 19-inch CRT monitor sit on an altar in the centre of the

New Model Army's HQ, glowing with an eerie green light. The machine hasn't been connected to the mains in many years, nor does it access the Internet via any human ISP. It is, however, still perfectly functioning, if the user doesn't mind being subjected to exonomic influence every moment they're at the keyboard. None of the software or hardware have been updated since the night the Lord Protector made contact, so the operating system is still Windows 2000 and the permanently open Wikipedia page for Cromwell is proudly displayed via Internet Explorer 6. The full Office suite is in place, along with Visual C++ and a host of other 'vintage' software that Finchley was using at the time of his revelation.

Powered by an alien intelligence the machine is a very powerful tool, acting as a supercomputer with a POW of 15



for the purposes of sorcery. For more mundane purposes a hacker could use the computer to slide past any mundane firewalls they might come across. The machine should also be considered to have level four wards. As mentioned elsewhere anyone in the same room as the computer requires a level three ward to avoid the Lord Protector's influence. If a non-cult member attempts to actually use the computer they enter into a contest against the resident entity. The PC should roll Computer Use (Magic) or Sorcery versus the Lord Protector's POW x 5 (75%). Success will allow the PC to undertake one of three actions. They must roll again if they wish to continue using the computer after taking one of these actions. None of these will be stated explicitly, they must be discovered:

- Ask the Lord Protector three questions and receive three true answers.
- Make a magical attack against another computer.
- Make an automatically successful mundane hacking attempt against another system.

If the PC fails then they must immediately make a roll vs their POW x 5. Success on this roll means they are knocked unconscious. Failure means they come under the control of the Lord Protector until they are removed from the room.

The computer is guarded at all times by two cultists outside the room and two inside. Only Finchley, Colbard or Quellton are allowed inside unaccompanied. Needless to say, the cultists will give their lives to protect the machine.

Destroying the computer will not exorcise the Lord Protector, but it would be possible to render the device unusable.

### The Arsenal of the New Model Army

As far as most of the world is concerned the modern incarnation of the New Model Army is just a bunch of hugely over enthusiastic and somewhat creepy reenactors. As part of this reenactment fervour the cult has amassed a large collection of both real Civil War weaponry and reenactment suitable fakes. The real weaponry adorns the walls of Finchley's home and the HQ and while using any of the firearms would be very dangerous, all of the melee weapons work just fine. The reenactment stock is a very different matter.

After a number of rituals these weapons look suitable for a weekend away, but they can turn deadly very quickly. With one code phrase, known by all of the cultists, the dull blades become razor sharp and the muskets start firing real shot. Each musket can fire 6 shots at 2d6 damage before the cultist must take 2 rounds to reload (an action involving only gunpowder and sympathetic magic). Another use of the code phrase can return the weapons to their harmless state. All cultists are issued with a musket and pike, with a proportion also wielding broadswords.

Some of the more trusted cultists have had their destinies entangled with the dead of the original New Model Army, allowing them to raise up regiments of armed ghost soldiers with the right influx of thaumic energy. The results are briefly impressive (hundreds of uniformed spectres fading into existence) before being abruptly fatal (on average, the cultist lasts less than five minutes before spontaneously combusting, or dying of 300 cases of dysentery, simultaneously).



## THE FRATERNITY OF NAGALU - O V E R V I E W -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

The Fraternity of Nagalu is a small, active and extremely affluent affiliation of upper-class socialites, land-owners and business leaders drawn together in worship of what they describe as a 'Snake God' known as Nagalu (hereby classified GLOVEPUPPET).

The cult itself was founded in France in the early 1800s, with the Fraternity rumoured to subsequently aid Napoleon's ascension to the title of Emperor. Following the end of the Napoleonic wars, however, the cult vanished, only to reappear in London during the 1850s. Rumours of another cell in Berlin during the birth of the German Empire in 1870 have, to date, proven unsubstantiated, as have stories of the cell being destroyed during the days of the Weimar Republic.

Whilst leader after successive leader has, obviously, failed to elevate GLOVEPUPPET to world supremacy, the Fraternity has managed to amass a level of financial influence to make some countries green with envy. Past members, which include nobility, members of parliament, generals and captains of industry, are believed to have donated vast quantities of cash and exercised their influence to enable the Fraternity to scour the globe searching for Nagalu, all the while hoping – as their leaders claimed – they would aid his dominion over the planet and consolidate the Fraternity's position as his most favoured servants.

But just how dangerous are the Fraternity? To date no real leads have been discovered as to whether or not this Nagalu is a bona fide entity or just a myth, or the identities of almost any of their current members. The two individuals we are aware of – via a letter intercepted in a routine mail sweep – are Kensington resident and retired barrister Judith Russell and a field agent known as Crispin. This Russell appears to be part of the Fraternity's leadership, and Crispin some sort of field agent entrusted with the search for Nagalu. Whispers would also have us believe the Fraternity is not above hiring middlemen and thieves like our old friend Hans Volrath to procure relics.

Threat assessment: Low. The Fraternity is wealthy, and probably has a few genuine artefacts stuffed in a back room somewhere, but their occult ability is limited and their failure to locate GLOVEPUPPET despite two centuries of effort suggests they're chasing a legend.





## Cult Overview

The Laundry's view is mostly accurate. Indeed, a sober-minded cultist would probably agree with it (before feeding you to his pet python). As the dossier indicates, the Fraternity have spent the past few centuries searching for an entity known only as Nagalu, who they maintain is imprisoned in an ancient tomb. They wish to find him and free him, allowing his elevation to a state of domination over the Earth, whereupon he will rule from a position of omnipotence and fearful majesty. This belief is enforced with orgiastic ceremonies centring on the worship of Nagalu and the consumption of a hallucinogenic referred to as the 'Love of Nagalu'.

The first record of the Fraternity appears during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign of 1798. At that time an amateur archaeologist and gentleman adventurer called Christien Deneuve – one of the many savants that accompanied Napoleon's forces at the behest of the French Academy of Sciences – discovered a previously unknown sequence of tombs near Hermopolis. Therein he found the first in a series of artefacts that are whispered to have aided Napoleon in his campaign, and, perhaps, even stalled its eventual lack of success.

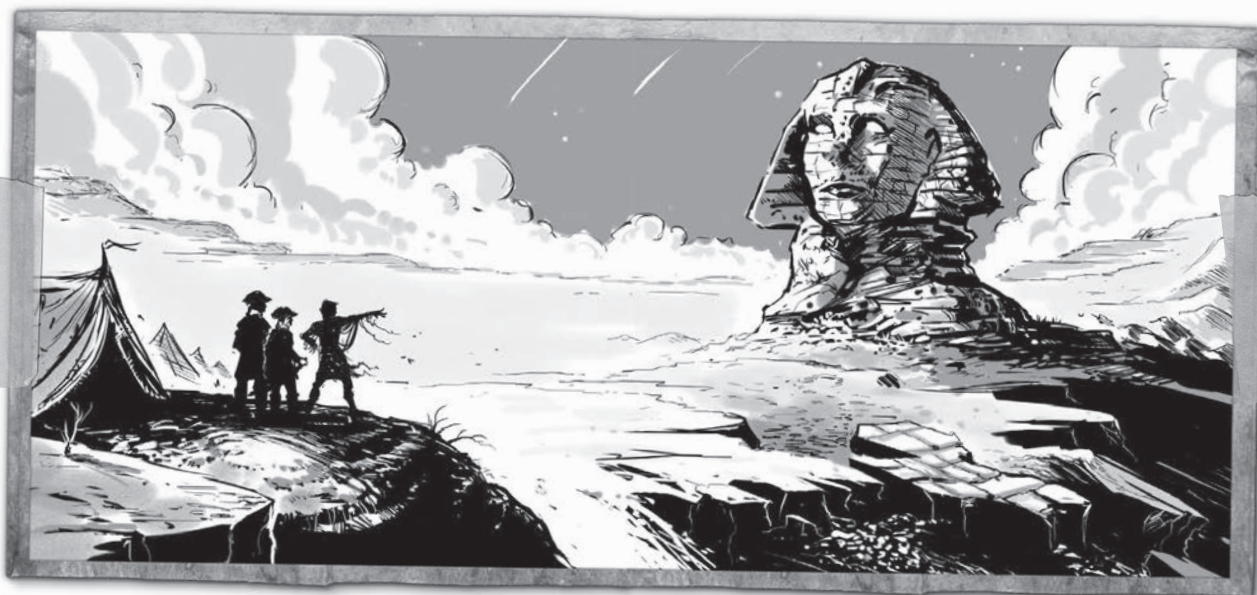
Despite the failure of the Egyptian enterprise, Deneuve appears to have remained a trusted aide to Napoleon and enjoyed opulent riches and a string of courtesans. This lasted until Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, whereupon the deposed dictator openly denounced Deneuve as a sorcerer, and Deneuve was hunted like a dog. He managed to escape and relocate to London, where he established the Fraternity as a means to not only fund his continuing expeditions, but as a way of snaring impressionable female followers. The stories of an off-shoot in Germany are incorrect. A rival cult

– the Circle of the Mongoose – was established in Berlin in 1866, but instead the Fraternity proved instrumental in the Circle's destruction.

The Fraternity structure is ordered and simple. There is a leader, a Chosen Enclave that runs and over sees operations, and an Outer Enclave of fringe members who make handsome fiscal contributions. Some, but not all, are sorcerers, demonologists or lunatics converted from other cults, but most are just greedy men and women who want to buy their place in the New World Order the Fraternity promises them.

The leading lights in the current incarnation are cult leader Judith Russell and Crispin Dacre, an explorer and occult expert who has contributed handsomely to the Fraternity's stockpile of goodies discovered during the search for Nagalu. Based in London, the Fraternity draws its membership almost exclusively from England, and centres around the home of Russell. A retired barrister, Russell has a long history of recruiting her members whilst helping them out of sticky legal situations. The current nest of vipers and backsliders the cult calls its 'Chosen Enclave' is composed of various Lords, Baronesses and bankers almost all recruited by Russell in her time on the bench. These snakes continue in the cult's tradition of donating copious amounts to the Fraternity's coffers to aid Crispin in his search for Nagalu.

The Fraternity has a considerable collection of occult artefacts. Almost all of these artefacts were obtained via Crispin's work with the Fraternity's cover organisation, a registered charity called Histoire sans Frontières. Aimed ostensibly at helping countries reconnect with their heritage by helping them fund and conduct archaeological digs, sans Frontières in actuality, conducts the digs under Crispin's



direction as he searches for the location of Nagalu's prison. As sans Frontières is a registered charity, the Fraternity make their donations via the charity, thereby entitling both parties to all those nice little tax-breaks.

Going beyond these assets, the Fraternity is extremely cash-rich by virtue of donations from its members, the resale of surplus artefacts and incomes from properties and street level sales of a derivative of the Love of Nagalu (known simply as Love); it also has large investment portfolios of bullion and securities, as well as pockets full of various judges, DCIs and MPs. Suffice to say, the Laundry's more likely to run out of money before these guys, so a direct approach (like shooting them in the head) is likely to more successful than any sort of lawsuit or Cease and Desist letter...

## Beliefs

A more thorough examination of the Fraternity's beliefs reveals their *raison d'être* is the elevation of a creature they refer to as 'Nagalu' to a position of world supremacy. They believe Nagalu is a 'serpent god' (cognate to the biblical Satan) who will, in simplistic terms, take advantage of an increasingly secular western world to replace God and lead the west on a final triumphant crusade to conquer the planet. He will rule, and will bestow great power and riches upon the Fraternity as his most favoured servants. Once elevated to his true and rightful place, he will rule the planet forever and ever, amen and pass the temple wine.

To enable this to happen, however, the Fraternity must free Nagalu from his subterranean prison, and to do that, they must first find the prison itself (cult mythology insists that Nagalu was bound beneath the Earth by jealous spirits who feared that he favoured humanity over them.) For the past two centuries the Fraternity has promised its members that, by giving generously to the cult, they will be aiding both the search and Nagalu's subsequent ascension. This is taken as gospel truth by nearly all members of the Fraternity, but not those at the top.

The Fraternity has three levels of initiation – the rank-and-file ordinary members, the Outer Enclave, and the inner Chosen Enclave. Those in the Outer Enclave are led to believe Nagalu is already at large, and that Russell and her Chosen Enclave are his agents on this corporeal plane. This serves a two-fold purpose: by promoting Nagalu as an omnipotent entity that watches over the entire Fraternity the Chosen Enclave discourages any thoughts other members may have of betraying the cult, and, should the Fraternity learn a member of the cult has gone astray, they can have the Fangs of Nagalu (see page 98) deal with said member, enforcing the mystique of Nagalu and inducing more donations from their fearful/enthusiastic brethren.

This mystique is further enforced by the ceremonial use of the aforementioned Love of Nagalu – a hallucinogenic derived from a combination of thebaine, diphenhydramine and an unknown type of snake venom similar to that produced by the Colubridae family of snakes. The effects of this drug include increased arousal, suggestibility and hallucinations. These ceremonies take place during orgies in a dedicated snake-themed temple in the Fraternity's base of operations, and the hallucinations induced by the Love of Nagalu usually revolve around snakes and 'visitations' by Nagalu himself.

The street level version of Love has been adjusted to make it more addictive by affecting the mesolimbic reward pathway, and is garnering an (un)healthy customer base across the whole of the UK.

Those in the Chosen Enclave are painfully aware they have no idea where Nagalu actually is. They do, however, hope that Histoire sans Frontières and Crispin's continuing expeditions around the globe will rectify this. They fervently believe that, by pumping more and more money into the Fraternity and its operations, they can find Nagalu, release him from his prison, and then reap the spoils of his reign over the world.

The only exception to this ideology is Chosen Enclave member Francis Granger. Granger doesn't believe all this Nagalu tosh for one minute and, what's more, she's more than happy to dismiss any magics Russell and the other sorcerers in the Fraternity can conjure up as little more than neurolinguistic programming, sleight-of-hand and the use of proverbial smoke and mirrors. However, as Russell's financial advisor, she does believe Russell is embezzling a significant portion of the Fraternity's funds, and wants some of that for herself. With this in mind, she has her eyes on the top spot, and is awaiting her chance to kill Russell.

At the very centre of the Fraternity is Russell herself. Unlike Granger she does believe in the existence of Nagalu, but she also has her doubts that, even if he does exist, they'll ever find him. After all, the Fraternity's been looking for over two centuries, right? They're not just going to trip over him in a quarry in Papua New Guinea, are they? Regardless, she's more than happy to carry on fulfilling the fervent wishes of her father (the previous leader of the Fraternity) that she should serve as the fulcrum of the organisation and carry on the search. Especially if it means – as Granger suspects – she can carry on pocketing large chunks of cash.

All of which leaves Crispin... the real power behind the Fraternity.

What nobody other than Crispin knows is that 'Nagalu' is than a conceit created by a Serpent Person outcast by the name of Cynabesh, and this Cynabesh has decided it is



better to be a self-appointed king of the human monkeys than a furtive sorcerer from a dying race hiding his light under a bushel. Therefore, under the guise of Christien Deneuve, Cynabesh created the Fraternity as a means to separate gullible followers from their cash. With this cash he aimed to fund his search not for the fictional Nagalu, but for relics of past Serpent People cities and their pre-eminence over the world. Here he hoped to find the means to ascend to supremacy over the world.

He also uses the Fraternity's funds to hunt down and kill other Serpent People – partly because they might expose his retirement plan to the monkeys, but mainly out of *embarrassment* for having gone native. He also used this cash to indulge his voracious appetite for human sex, culinary delights, expensive clothes and the increasingly diverse range of drugs the stupid humans have created (at least, those that work on reptiles). What the other Fraternity members also don't know is that Cynabesh has been the only constant presence in the Fraternity since its inception, albeit in a number of different identities. His current guise is that of the Fraternity's chief archaeologist Crispin Dacre.

The Fraternity, therefore, is a money-making scheme by Cynabesh, and one he still perpetuates in his guise of Crispin. To him Russell and the Chosen Enclave are little more than walking wallets whom he intends to keep on plundering to fund his passions for their women, fashions, food and narcotics.

Life is good when you're a god in waiting.

## History

The origins of the Fraternity proper (but not Crispin/Cynabesh himself) date back to 1798 Napoleon's campaign in Egypt, where Christien Deneuve accompanied the expedition as part of the retinue of savants sent by the French Academy of Sciences.

Whilst it's common knowledge these savants discovered the Rosetta Stone and other objects of only mundane and/or academic interest, what is less well known is Deneuve's discovery of an artefact known as Unut's Tears in a previously unknown tomb west of what we now identify as Hermopolis. This discovery was quickly followed by those of the Eye of Wadjet and the Scales of Apep; all of which have since been revealed to be pre-human artefacts from a lost society of Serpent People based in what would become Egypt. These artefacts – and a handful of others that the Laundry are ignorant of at present – are said to have aided Napoleon's success when the dictator aborted his Egyptian campaign and returned to France to overthrow the Directory in 1799.



What's not known to anyone except Cynabesh is that Deneuve also found a Serpent Man sorcerer in magically suspended animation. The archaeologist woke up the Serpent Man; the Serpent Man ate the archaeologist, consumed the contents of his brain and wore his skin as a mask for the next two decades.

The alliance between Deneuve and Napoleon lasted until 1814, during which time Deneuve and his 'Talismans' helped the French win the War of the Second Coalition as well as secure spectacular victories at Austerlitz in 1805, and Jena in 1806. Things soured when Napoleon ordered Deneuve to accompany the ill-fated invasion of Russia; a rash adventure even Deneuve couldn't bring to a successful end.

Things went from bad to worse for Napoleon, and, with the eventual loss of the Peninsular Wars, he finally denounced Deneuve as a 'warlock', and the adventurer was forced to flee Paris. Whilst popular French legend maintains he was subsequently captured and burnt at the stake, this is categorically not the case. Whilst his small group of lackeys were caught and killed, Cynabesh escaped. He then resurfaced – assuming the identity of a banker by the name of Cecil D'Oliveira – in London in 1818.

From here the nucleus of the Fraternity was born. At first it contained only the smallest handful of gullible investors, but it grew as, using monies solicited from the Fraternity,

'D'Oliveira' made substantial and successful investments in both the British Empire's burgeoning exports industry and ventures in the likes of India, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Naturally, having portrayed himself as a 'hands on' man, he would make regular visits to these exotic locations... and always come back with a little 'something' for the Fraternity's growing collection of weird and wonderful objects (almost all Serpent Person relics obtained from various bazaars or occult dealers situated on the colonial frontier, or looted from caches only he could find). He also began to nurture a growing interest in medicines and pharmacy, combining it with his knowledge of sorcery to create the first in a long series of narcotic compounds that would become the Love of Nagalu.

All the while he continued to slowly indoctrinate and intoxicate his investors, adding more and more enthusiastic capitalists with money to spare. Bit by bit, drop by drop, he seduced them, made them ready, and introduced them to the concept of Nagalu. Then he faked D'Oliveira's death to allow a new 'leader' to take over such tiresome chores as managing money and keeping errant members in line. Assuming a new identity as retired opium trader Constantine Drake, he 'joined' the Fraternity, and continued dredging the globe. At that point, the Fraternity proper was born, and it has grown ever since, with Cynabesh at its core, manipulating leader after successive leader. It has gradually picked over site after site, dig after dig, acquiring more and more relics and clues as to the location of other Serpent People, all of which met a sticky end.

Almost two centuries of members have since been bled dry, and just as many years' worth of investments have continued to reap rewards. Rivals have come and gone, each one opposing either the Fraternity itself, or Cynabesh's search for relics of the Serpent People's belle epoch. Cynabesh has either removed them in person, or paid somebody to do it for him. There have been no challenges he has not overcome with ease – with two notable exceptions.

The first was the Circle of the Mongoose. Founded in Berlin in 1866 by Romain Sarrazin, Cynabesh's closest Parisian lieutenant – and most accomplished student – from Napoleon's glory days. As the only survivor of the lynch mobs to which Cynabesh had abandoned his other lackeys, Sarrazin was determined to find and destroy his former mentor. By this time a gifted sorcerer and learned scholar, the vengeful Sarrazin devoted all his powers of divination into discovering Cynabesh's true identity, his location, and his plans. By taking a leaf from Cynabesh's book and selling his sorcerous skills to the Prussian Imperial Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Sarrazin was then able to use all the resulting funds to nurture the Circle: a cult created to warn the world of a race of deadly and devious man-snakes that walked amongst men and plotted against civilisation. Using the

contributions, manpower and skills of his growing flock, Sarrazin was thus able to continually trouble, complicate and sometimes even thwart Cynabesh's plans. In time he was even able to mount his own expeditions in search of relics and secrets he thought might be of use in any forthcoming conflict with this race of man-snakes.

Things came to a head in when, having been inconvenienced by Sarrazin and his upstarts once too often, Cynabesh – in his persona as Constantine Drake – tracked Sarrazin to a sizeable archaeological dig in Morocco in the summer of 1889. The two faced one another in the Moroccan capital of Marrakech, and their first and final battle saw a badly wounded Cynabesh emerge victorious.

The Fraternity's second setback has been suffered far more recently. When the Laundry's 'friends' in the Black Chamber embarked on their post-war shopping spree, it is believed they pulled in Cynabesh (or WWI veteran and merchant seaman turned occult investigator Corky Drummond, as he was then known) whilst he was on business in Oklahoma. The Chamber initially had no idea what they had; they assumed Drummond was a well-connected cultist and collector, not an immortal alien. The Chamber's interrogators broke Cynabesh's disguises – and then he vanished from the holding facility in Texas. Either he escaped via a gate spell, or the Chamber let him go, but either way, he was forced to drop the Drummond identity and vanished for forty years.

Deprived of its secret master, the Fraternity nearly collapsed. Squabbling between rival factions tore the society apart, and a series of weak leaders proved unable to stop the rot. Things came to a head in 1956 when one member – a foreign office advisor to British PM Anthony Eden – convinced Eden to send British forces into Egypt. Whilst Eden wished to protect Britain's interests vis-à-vis the Suez Canal, Budgie's hidden agenda centred on the safety of the Fraternity's continuing search for Nagalu in Egypt in the face of Gamal Abdul Nasser's new Egyptian revolutionary government. When Britain's intervention went horribly wrong, almost caused the UK's international ostracism and necessitated a humiliating withdrawal of British troops, Fraternity member Richmond Russell (the father of current leader Judith) realised enough was enough. He engineered the removal of both the incumbent leader and the Whitehall mole (neither corpses was found), and installed himself as the new head of the Fraternity.

Richmond proved to be an effective leader, and he transformed the Fraternity from a playpen of bickering neo-Nomenklatura into the organised Fraternity of today. From then on the Fraternity ran itself very well. After the disappearance of Corky Drummond, the Fraternity relied on freelancers and occult dealers to locate new clues to Nagalu's location. Its wealth and collection of relics grew.



Russell established Histoire sans Frontières, trained his daughter to be his successor, and began the gradual induction of a whole new breed of Fraternity member: moneyed cultists with real skills not just in the Old Sorceries, but also in the emerging field of computational magics. A skilled practitioner himself, he recognised the value of such abilities, not least if the Fraternity was to avoid any further bullying by the OCCINTEL Big Boys; and to prove itself as loyal and effective servants to Nagalu, should he ever be found. Thus, when Cynabesh eventually returned and joined the Fraternity as Crispin Dacre, he found a very different Fraternity with a leader far too accomplished – and far less pliable – for his tastes. Naturally, Richmond had to die. The old man's protective spells and wards were excellent work for a human, but Cynabesh easily bypassed them. The death looked like natural causes.

Within a month Richmond's daughter Judith had been elected, but that suited Cynabesh's plans. Not only was she nowhere near as good a sorcerer as her father, she also much more suggestible, and completely ignorant to the fact Cynabesh/Crispin had killed Richmond. All of which brings us to the present day. The Fraternity rolls on, with Judith Russell happily bleeding its members of their cash, and Cynabesh spending it on an unceasing quest to become a god amongst men, exterminate his own kind, uncover the relics of their glorious past, and indulge in just about every human vice he can.

## Structure

The structure of the Fraternity has been essentially unaltered since Richmond Russell seized the leadership in the fifties and implemented a clean and logical structure.

At the Fraternity's centre lies the leader, naturally (the current incumbent being Judith Russell). This leader has the power of veto over all issues and votes placed before the Chosen Enclave, and whichever majority they return. The leader (supposedly) is the most powerful – and most highly remunerated – member of the Fraternity, but the role comes with lots of paperwork, which is why Cynabesh is happy to let a compliant monkey do it. At the leader's side stand four of the Chosen known as the Four Serpents. In return for a handsome financial incentive, these four elite members control the four main sections of the Fraternity, namely...

## The Fangs of Nagalu

These guys are essentially the secret police and enforcers of the Fraternity, perhaps equitable to a political party's Whips, only with guns and geases. Those who defy cult orders get a visit from the Fangs. And, yes, it's one of those visits during which you're likely to lose, at the very least, bladder control.

Or a finger. Or your soul. The Fangs are run by ex-Home Office and Tory party bully-boy Douglas Brunswick.

## The Tongue of Nagalu

The section of the Fraternity charged with the gathering of clues concerning the possible location, Nagalu and/or artefacts of use to the Fraternity. The Tongue of Nagalu have contacts in most major cities, governments, and even a few intelligence services, which comes in handy for gathering all those interesting little snippets of information and other leads. The Tongue is run by an ex-MI6 spy, Clarence Atherton-Wheeler.

## The Coils of Nagalu

The collective name for the teams of field agents entrusted with the procurement of items, the investigation of leads, and the operation of Histoire sans Frontières digs. Run by Cynabesh himself in his role as Crispin Dacre, this is a relatively small section of the Fraternity, as 'Crispin' remains so insistent on either overseeing the sans Frontières digs himself, or only hiring a small cadre of trusted sub-contractors to carry out any excavations he cannot attend. All members of the Coils of Nagalu are either experienced archaeologists or outright thieves with an unhealthy interest in the occult.

## The Scales of Nagalu

The accountants and smooth-talkers entrusted with the raising of donations and control of finances. The Scales are run by Francis Granger, an ex-derivatives broker who knows about embezzling money just as well as she does making it. As such she, and the Scales, guide the Fraternity's investments, monitor its spending and collect its donations.

## The Chosen Enclave

Beyond these elite members lay the other eight members of the Chosen Enclave. A motley assortment of ex-MPs, bankers, landed gentry and filthy rich bastards, almost all were Judith Russell's former clients and all have skeletons buried under the patio. They range from fraudsters, rapists, sex-pests and, in at least one case, murderers. Each – along with the Four Serpents – has a vote on the Fraternity's committee, and, as such, a say in its operations, recruitment and spending. Most are conversant with the basics of ritual sorcery. They're also as bent as a dog's hind leg and are all waiting for an opportunity to work their way up the ladder. With this in mind they orbit the Four Serpents with a smile on their lips and a knife behind their backs.

## The Outer Enclave

Propping up this hive of scum and villainy is the Outer Enclave. A select but enthusiastic collection of believers,

# THE FRATERNITY OF NAGALU

these Fraternity members fervently believe in the existence of Nagalu and his forthcoming ascendancy. As such they are more than happy to donate copious amounts of money to his cause, more out of fear of either his immediate wrath, or being one of the billions who will suffer when he arises to power. Each and every one of these members is bound together by the Love of Nagalu, the narcotic administered during the Fraternity's regular ceremonies of debauchery, fornication and worship of their beloved 'snake god'. Sometimes, if they're lucky, Cynabesh (in the guise of Nagalu) will grace them with a vision of his presence, and others they just have to make do with lucid hallucinations. Either way, they're very, very happy and very, very high. The Outer Enclave membership is around 50, but only a handful of these moneyed elite are in England at any time.

## Ordinary Members

Beyond the Outer Enclave are the ordinary members, who are here just for the sex and the social connections. The Fraternity has the resources to be extraordinarily discreet, so if you've got money and somewhat questionable tastes, they can ensure the media never finds out about your filthy little habits. The ordinary members know little about the Nagalu Mythos, and assume it's either a joke or a metaphor. There are roughly 250 ordinary members, plus another hundred staff/bodyguards/thugs who are considered initiates of the cult.

## Notable Members

### Doug Brunswick

One of the Four Serpents, Brunswick is an ex-Home Office and Tory party bully-boy forced to resign after accusations of beating a prostitute (naturally Russell got him off scot free). He now runs the Fangs of Nagalu, the Fraternity's secret police. Not only is Brunswick an extremely unpleasant individual, but he is also a zealot. As such he is possibly the most enthusiastic of Nagalu's followers, and - although a mere dabbler in the occult arts himself - he maintains his watching brief over the other members of the Fraternity with great skill and an unwholesome enjoyment. Brunswick is a corpulent and physically powerful man. He is also brutal and unlikely to go down without a fight.

**AGE:** 49

**OCCUPATION:** Former politician. Now head of the Fangs of Nagalu.

**STR** 16    **CON** 17    **SIZ** 17    **INT** 12    **POW** 12  
**DEX** 7    **CHA** 6    **EDU** 16    **SAN** 60    **HP** 17

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6

**Skills:** Brawl 55%, Bureaucracy 70%, Command 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Grapple 40%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (Law) 65%, Knowledge (Occult) 30%, Listen 30%, Persuade 70%, Research 60%, Sense 40%, Sorcery 15%, Throw 20%

### Occult Archaeology

Humanity's not the first species to call this lump of rock home. We share this planet with the Deep Ones and the Cthonians. Specifically, we've got the bit they didn't want, the achingly cold, dry heights of the surface. In the grand scheme of things, we're the mould growing in the corner.

Civilisation's been around for about 10,000 years, and before that you've got about two million years of cavemen and flint tools. All human archaeology comes from that narrow window, and very little of it survives. The pre-human civilisations are so far removed from us in time that it is a miracle anything of them survived at all.

It's not like *Tomb Raider*. Anything that survived this long was either buried very deep, or protected with magic. 99% of archaeological expeditions don't find anything of significance, and 99% of those just find old human stuff. Genuine pre-human relics turn up once a century at most - unless you know where to look.





## Cynabesh / "Crispin Augustus Dacre"

Supposedly the Fraternity's second-in-command, Crispin is, actually, a Serpent Person called Cynabesh. Disguised as a mid-sixties flamboyant and somewhat worn rock 'n' roller (think a forked-tongued Mick Jagger in snake-skin pants), he is drenched in vice, high as a kite on narcotics (most of which he's invented) and possessed by a thirst for human women and luxuries. He also believes he's seen it all, and the primitive peons that surround him can teach him nothing. Certainly, some are useful, but nothing more. Supremely manipulative, he has been playing on humanity's innate xenophobia since the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and has now preyed on western fears of Islam - and good old fashioned British xenophobia - to make the Fraternity believe Nagalu will lead the west on a victorious crusade against the Muslim world.



To date, he is said to have personally killed over a dozen other Serpent People he has encountered on his travels (after all, where do you think he gets all those snake-skin clothes and boots from?) Arrogant beyond belief and possessing a wealth of occult knowledge and insight into the existence of the Old Gods, he believes that he can subvert humanity humans and rule them for centuries to come.

Naturally, as a Serpent Person of some experience and sorcerous ability, Cynabesh is not to be taken lightly. In his guise as the Fraternity's chief field operative, he is also the Fraternity member whom Laundry case-workers are most likely to encounter. They are advised to proceed with care, as he can prove to be quite the hand full.

**AGE:** 200+

**OCCUPATION:** Archaeologist and chief field operative for the Fraternity of Nagalu

**STR** 10    **CON** 12    **SIZ** 11    **INT** 19    **POW** 17  
**DEX** 10    **CHA** 14    **EDU** 23    **SAN** 39    **HP** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Claws 50%, damage 1d8. 1-point armour from scales.

Bite 35%, damage 1d8 + POT 12 Poison

**Artefacts:** Level Four Personal Ward, Level Four Bullet Ward. May also be equipped with any number of artefacts listed under 'Assets' if confronted in the Fraternity's headquarters.

**Skills:** Appraise 80%, Bargain 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 60%, Disguise 95%, Fast Talk 65%, Firearms (Pistol) 30%, Firearms (Rifle) 20%, Insight 50%, Knowledge (Archaeology) 80%, Knowledge (History) 70%, Knowledge (Occult) 75%, Language (English) 60%, Language (French) 50%, Listen 45%, Research 80%, Science (Pharmacy) 80%, Science (Chemistry) 70%, Science (Thaumaturgy) 85%, Sense 60%, Sorcery 85%, Spot 60%, Stealth 55%

As the cult's main man in the field, Crispin is always accompanied by bodyguards. That's not to say he can't look after himself, of course, but ... well, you know how it is; when you've a busy schedule ahead of you, having to take time out to kill troublesome meddlers from Her Majesty's Occult Service is really rather wearisome. All cult bodyguards are ex-military/special forces who aren't known for either their patience or good humour.

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## BODYGUARD

STR 16   CON 16   SIZ 14   INT 13   POW 12  
DEX 14   CHA 11   EDU 16   SAN 50   HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Sig P232 9mm pistol 30%, 1d8  
H&KMP5 65%, damage 1d10

**Skills:** Brawl 65%, Climb 60%, Command 45%, Demolition 50%, Hide 60%, Stealth 65%, Strategy 55%, Track 50%

## Judith Russell

A semi-retired barrister of a certain age who has worked her way up the cult's elite since being inducted by her father Richmond Russell in the 1970s. Like her father - who trained her in the dark arts since she could walk and talk - Russell is a sorceress of some acumen, but she has allowed her skills to lapse since becoming a barrister and, subsequently, leader of the Fraternity. Her real prowess now lies in her extensive network of shady, upper-class clients she's saved from jail during her career, most of which are unsavoury cultists and nut-bags she's since converted to the cult's course.

Not content with the handsome stipend she receives as the leader of the Fraternity, Russell is quietly pocketing a percentage of the donations that roll into the cult, and is well on the way from escaping the stigma of being merely 'rich' by becoming 'stinking rich'. She's also well aware that leading the Fraternity is a dangerous occupation, and has begun to consider some sort of exit strategy that results in her leaving the country with both her fortune intact, and her life. If offered any sort of deal by any sort of OCCINTEL agency that meets these requirements, she's likely to bite their hand off and swallow it whole. But, like most rats, if she's backed into a corner and faced with what looks like imminent death, she will fight for her life.

**AGE:** 58

**OCCUPATION:** Retired barrister and current leader of the Fraternity of Nagalu

STR 8   CON 7   SIZ 8   INT 17   POW 15  
DEX 8   CHA 15   EDU 18   SAN 75   HP 8

**Damage Bonus:** -1d4

**Weapons:** Walther PPK pistol 10%, damage 1d8

**Skills:** Bargain 65%, Bureaucracy 50%, Fast Talk 45%, Firearms (Pistol) 10%, Insight 60%, Knowledge (Law) 85%, Knowledge (Occult) 50%, Perform (Oratory) 65%, Persuade 55%, Research 60%, Sorcery 45%





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

### Clarence Atherton-Wheeler

Atherton-Wheeler is an old-school cold-war spy turned Nagalu acolyte. As an MI6 officer operating in Moscow in the seventies and eighties, it is understood he learnt more about the likes of the Thirteenth Bureau, its psychotronic experimentations and their fabled library than the Laundry would have liked. Whatever the case, something spiked his curiosity and he went about learning more. Two years later he handed in his resignation and walked away from the secret service. The Laundry attempted to pull him in under Section III, but he had enough influence in MI6 to get away into the private sector without being geased or memory wiped.

The next time he appeared on the Laundry's radar was as part of the Fraternity. It seems whatever he learnt in Russia convinced him the real enemy wasn't to be found on Earth, but somewhere he'd previously never imagined, and the Fraternity/Nagalu offered him some form of protection from this new threat. Whatever the case, he is one of the Fraternity's the most devout and dedicated members. He has also become immersed in the occult, sorcery, and the Cthulhu Mythos, and what little family he has are convinced he is losing his mind.

Now, as the head of the Tongue of Nagalu, he coordinates a network of domestic and overseas contacts seeking leads and snippets of intel that may point to the location of Nagalu's prison. These contacts are as diverse as government officials, museum curators, archaeologists, generals, journalists and secret service operatives. Rumours he also has select OCCINTEL agents in his pocket are, at this juncture, unsubstantiated.

With no friends or close family to speak of, Atherton-Wheeler has little more than the Fraternity in his life. As such he will fight tooth and claw to protect it. Should it become apparent he is fighting for a lost cause, however, he will not hesitate to take his own life.

**AGE:** 62

**OCCUPATION:** Retired spy and current head of the Tongue of Nagalu.

<b>STR</b> 9	<b>CON</b> 10	<b>SIZ</b> 12	<b>INT</b> 16	<b>POW</b> 13
<b>DEX</b> 9	<b>CHA</b> 8	<b>EDU</b> 19	<b>SAN</b> 15	<b>HP</b> 11

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** Walther PPK pistol 55%, damage 1d8

**Artefacts:** Level Two Personal Ward, Level Two Bullet Ward.

**Skills:** Appraise 30%, Bargain 40%, Command 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Fast Talk 45%, Firearms (Pistol) 55%, Insight 35%, Knowledge (Espionage) 60%, Knowledge (Occult) 45%, Knowledge (Politics) 60%, Language (French) 35%, Language (German) 55%, Language (Russian) 65%, Listen 40%, Persuade 30%, Research 60%, Sense 40%, Sorcery 45%, Technology Use (Surveillance) 70%



## Francis Granger

A derivatives broker with a taste for reckless and unauthorised speculative trading, Francis Granger heads the Scales of Nagalu. As such she is entrusted with monitoring its balance sheet and delivering detailed reports to the Chosen Enclave every month.

A glamorous fifty-something woman, Granger maintains her trim physique and looks with aplomb. A no-nonsense, level-headed sort, she has no time for all this supposed 'sorcery' rubbish or, if truth be told, the whole Nagalu myth nor the Fraternity's sordid little orgies. She's in the Fraternity for one reason and one reason only: money.

She knows full well Russell has her hand in the till, so to speak, and she wants some of that action for herself. So she waits and watches, schemes and dreams, and when the time is right, she'll kill Russell. She has little talent for sorcery, and finds the cult's religious and mystical elements to be a bit of nonsense, although she is aware that some members have genuine magical powers.

Granger, for all her ambition, is also a realist, and if confronted by Laundry case-workers will not put up a fight. She will, instead, seek some form of deal in the pursuance of her freedom and/or her life.



## Assets

The Fraternity has a huge pile of cash and sound investments in bullion and securities. Some of this money is diverted into ongoing bribes that keep many European and Russian judges, police-chiefs, MPs and MEPs sweet, as well as more than a handful of Saudi princes and African government officials, generals and, in the case of the Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Somalia, Syria and the Sudan, whole tribes and militias. All this serves to give the Fraternity a rich and constant stream of intelligence, as well as a high degree of manoeuvrability when it comes to permits/permission for digs and "protection".

In terms of property, the Fraternity owns a house in London's Kensington Square. It is, however, little more than a glorified PO Box. Officially, it's the headquarters of Histoire sans Frontières, but it's also used for Fraternity business.

The Fraternity's real base of operations is a mansion in the London suburb of Hampstead Gardens. Set in two acres of private gardens stalked by armed guards, this mansion – known to the Fraternity as the Nest – serves as the fulcrum for all the Fraternity's operations. All meetings of the Chosen Enclave are held here, as are Love of Nagalu ceremonies. Also all the operational centres for the Four Serpents are contained within the Nest. Judith Russell calls this place her home, and Nagalu/Crispin has a suite here for the rare occasions he is England.

Of greater importance to the Laundry, and the wider OCCINTEL community, are the goodies locked away in what amounts to a nuclear bomb-proof bunker beneath the mansion. Here are gathered the Serpent People relics the Fraternity has collected across the decades (minus those sold off or traded with the likes of the Black Chamber), plus a few more stolen from various black museums and dealers along the way.



## The Scales of Apep

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An over-jacket of lizard-like scales, worn like chainmail, said to taken from the hide of the titular Egyptian deity. The hide grants the wearer near-immunity to physical damage (20 points of Armour) and, in the unlikely event he/she should be killed, a level four possession spell will attempt to transport the wearer's mind into the nearest foe. Should possession be successful, the host will gradually transform into a doppelganger of the possessor (see *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, page 144).

In the event the incumbent is banished from the target, the host's own personality will resurface, but the physical effects will not be reversed. In terms of sanity loss, treat the consequences on the host as per a possession by a Level Three or Four entity.

## The Hazor Skins

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Thought to have been recovered from a lost temple in Israel, the Hazor Skins are exactly that: the skins of some bizarre snake/human half-breed believed to have been temple guardians for a Caananite cult. They are now kept in the vault, safe inside a pentacle. Naturally, the skins can be activated and released upon any unwelcome intruders in the vault. Once free, the skins will animate as paper-thin zombified snake-men.



Should the vault be breached the skins will be activated by a similar system described in *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, page 202. Once set free, the skins' statistics are as follows:

## THE SKINS OF HAZOR

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
<b>STR</b>	4d6	14
<b>CON</b>	4d6	14
<b>SIZ</b>	3d6+6	16-17
<b>INT</b>	1	1
<b>POW</b>	1	1
<b>DEX</b>	2d6	7

**Move:** 10      **HP:** 16

**Avg. Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Claw 60%, damage 1d8

Spit Acid 50%, damage 1d10

Engulf 70%, damage none, but if the skin's SIZ exceeds that of the victim, it wraps around the victim's body and seizes control of his movements. The skin uses the victim's weapons to attack those nearby while the victim begins to suffocate within the skin.

**Armor:** None, but impaling weapons do one point of damage and all others do half damage.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1d4

## The Ningishzida Stone

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Standing at approximately seven feet tall and half as wide, the Ningishzida Stone is fixed against a wall in its own secure room with one door sealed by a key-coded lock (the code for which is only known to the current leader of the Fraternity and the Four Serpents). Upon its surface is carved a depiction of the Mesopotamian deities Ningishzida and Dumuzi – depicted as snakes with human heads – grasping an axial rod and protecting the entrance to the underworld.

The Stone is a level three gate to a fixed dimension the Mesopotamians mistook as the Underworld. It is, in fact, a pocket dimension used by a deceased Serpent Person as a 'safe house' of some variety. It has, over the years, become unstable, and now possesses a level four thaumic resonance. The gate is activated by a very particular incantation now known only to Cynabesh (who killed the original owner of the pocket dimension). To all intents and purposes it serves as an 'escape hatch' for Cynabesh should the Nest be compromised beyond salvation.

Once safely transported to the other side of the gate, the slab's twin (known as the Dumuzi Stone) is waiting to send Cynabesh back to an undisclosed location.

## Object 4

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Cynabesh, it seems, hasn't only collected Serpent People relics on his travels, and Object 4 is, in one sense of the word, living proof. Locked in a vault, it can only be accessed through an armoured door secured by a voice-activated

## THE FRATERNITY OF NAGALU

locking mechanism. This mechanism can only be triggered by the phrase "Open" in the ancient tongue of the Serpent People. Inside, Object 4 is a canopic jar filled with sand and marked with odd silver runes of much more recent origin. Buried in the sand is the dried brain of Cynabesh's erstwhile rival, Romain Sarrazin. The runes on the jar keep Sarrazin's consciousness trapped in the disembodied jar, and the right spell causes the sand to shape itself into a facsimile of his face.

Lips of dust can still scream.

Whilst not an artefact of significant power, per se, Object 4 will, should it fall into the Laundry's hands, enable case workers to discover the truth behind Crispin's identity and the lies at the centre of the Fraternity of Nagalu. All they have to do is separate fact from Sarrazin's deranged babble...

### Unut's Tears

A potion contained within an earthenware tube, Unut's Tears are said to grant any individual who swallows a mouthful of the liquid therein almost preternatural speed. Unut's Tears doubles a character's Dexterity score upon consumption. This effect lasts for 1d6 minutes. The tube contains enough liquid for five doses.

### The Eye of Wadjet

One of the very first Serpent People relics uncovered by Cynabesh whilst accompanying Napoleon's Egyptian

campaign, the Eye of Wadjet is believed to date back to an ancient Serpent People society in what would become Egypt. In keeping with Cynabesh's sense of nostalgia for the Serpent People's lost glories, it still occupies pride of place in the bunker. A small stone suspended on a leather thong, the Eye allows the user to divine the location of Serpent People artefacts, weapons, archaeology and other Serpent People.

### Ongoing Operations

After the latest in a series of digs in Saudi Arabia, the Fraternity's bigoted Inner Enclave have flatly denied entry to Al-Sattam bin Malik, a Saudi prince – and dabbler in the Mythos – who has continually granted the Fraternity permissions to conduct their digs.

Angered by the Fraternity's snub, he has made it known he will sell the identities of the Four Serpents to the highest bidder (and, having been wine and dined by Russell and the Four Serpents, he's not bluffing). Naturally, the Laundry would love to get their hands on him before the Fangs of Nagalu do.

Cynabesh recently learned of rumours that the fabled Shining Trapezohedron was found by humans and is in the possession of a rival cult. This artefact could finally provide him with the power he needs to make his dreams of domination a reality. All he has to do is get his claws on it...





## THE SODALITY OF SAINT BENEDICT - O V E R V I E W -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

The following report is an assessment of the threat posed by the Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia, code named EGGS HEIRLOOM. Upon review of all available materials, it appears that EGGS HEIRLOOM represents a significant threat to both Capital Laundry Services and humanity in general. Field work should be implemented immediately, absorbing discretionary budgets from other departments if necessary to fund a team capable of the full SIDE protocol.

### OVERVIEW

EGGS HEIRLOOM is a cult within a cult, pretending to be a secret Catholic order to mask their real intent: steal as many magical artefacts and sorcerous formulae as possible to become the world's most powerful occult organisation, eclipsing other cults and even occult intelligence agencies such as our own. They have a sizeable collection of artefacts, including technology from non-native species as well as magic relics.. There is a significant risk that they will accidentally start CASE BROWNING REPEAT or even hasten CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

### HISTORY

The Sodality dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, where it began by collecting books from suspected witches and warlocks during the Inquisition. The order turned from fighting the supernatural to using supernatural powers, and its aims became increasingly orthogonal to those of organised religion.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Sodality had arrived at its current form: a secret society of sorcerers and occultists who practised magic for its own sake. The Sodality never adapted to modern computational methods, but their mastery of traditional sorcery is second to none. With the approach of CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, their powers are expected to increase several-fold as dimensional barriers collapse and invocation of exonomic entities becomes easier.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

We need to immediately start round-the-clock surveillance with the ultimate goal of infiltrating and dismantling the cult. If necessary, outside agencies and even the military should be called upon for logistical support. Given their magical resources, a military campaign will likely be ultimately required to end their threat. All of this is pending a sufficient budget allocation, so funding so our officers to address this issue is a priority before it grows out of control.

## Cult Overview

The Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia is a multi-layered, international cult focusing primarily on the acquisition of magical power and non-human technology in order to gain enough power to survive CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. However, this is not apparent to all members.

There are three distinct levels of membership within the Sodality, each with its own belief structure and version of the truth. EGGS HEIRLOOM does not use any labels for these divisions but GMs can refer to them as Levels One, Two and Three for clarity:

- Level One consists of the bulk of the cultists. Most believe the Sodality is a secret arm of the Catholic Church tasked with collecting 'Satanic' items so they may be destroyed. Using these artefacts, even to further the Sodality's goals, is strictly forbidden. They must turn over all artefacts to their leaders for proper disposal.
- Level Two consists of a smaller group of trusted members. They have license to use the artefacts in question to help the Sodality gain more artefacts and fight those who are reluctant to part with them or try to get them back. The "fight fire with fire" logic is used to explain away the hypocrisy. Acquired artefacts are still turned over to leadership as with Level One.
- Level Three consists of an unknown number of members, no doubtfully smaller than Level Two. These understand CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN is coming and, rather than worshipping entities like many cults, they are trying to become powerful enough to survive on their own. This does not mean they want to help humanity; they only want to help themselves. Level Three members understand the cult has little connection with the Catholic Church, and that they are on their own against the darkness.

The Sodality has an extensive array of relics, including items stolen from OCCINTEL agencies. They are not openly antagonistic and lack the 'world domination' meme common to similar cults. Strictly speaking, their goal is similar to that of the UK government – survive CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN. However, members of the Sodality have a callous disregard for life and property in their quest to gain more artefacts. In some ways, the Sodality can be considered a rogue intelligence organisation with well-meaning but selfish goals.

A quick note on names: the Sodality always uses their full name in their rituals and correspondence ("The Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia") but they sometimes refer to themselves as "Benedictine Knights" despite not being knighted in the true sense of the term. Historical references

favour the full name but can have both or either. The Laundry, of course, prefers EGGS HEIRLOOM despite the slight pun.

## History

Heinrich Kramer, a Dominican friar and Inquisitor of the Church in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Germany, was obsessed with fighting witchcraft. He led several persecutions against witches (or at least supposed witches) in Tyrol and Bohemia, often earning the ire of local Church officials for his heavy-handed and indiscriminate approach.

In 1486, he wrote a treatise on witchcraft called the *Malleus Maleficarum*. This book explains how to find witches and convict them, and became very popular in his day. However, the Catholic Church condemned the book for being unethical, illegal, and against Catholic doctrine. Perhaps in response to this, Kramer founded the Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia later that same year.

A sodality is an organisation within the Catholic Church that is centred around a particular task, such as the veneration of a saint or works of mercy for the poor. Unlike a parish, It does not have a geographic boundary and it has both religious and lay members in leadership positions. Kramer gave the Sodality the singular goal of locating, convicting, and executing witches. He died in 1505, but by then the Sodality had grown to over 60 priests and lay people in several Austrian and North Italian cities. Church records from that time include references to "Benedictine Knights" travelling around Europe rooting out heresy and witchcraft.

During the Reformation, Pope Paul III closed many religious orders and sodalities under efforts to reform the Church and combat heresy. The Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia received an edict from Paul III to disband in 1550 and all branches shut their doors.

The Sodality either never really disbanded or another group appeared and began using the name, as a "Sodality of St. Benedict of Nursia" bought a large manor outside of Marseilles in 1568. Further references to the Sodality can be found in Germany, Italy and Spain over the next hundred years, all connected with the Sodality rooting out some coven, cult or heresy. In 1571, Pope Pius V even issued an invitation to the Sodality to reform under the Catholic Church but no record of a response is noted.

Records stolen from the organisation tell a different story. They claim Pope Paul III did not shut down the group. Instead, Paul III wanted the Sodality to continue their efforts at fighting witchcraft but realised that would be difficult given the political climate of the time. Therefore, at



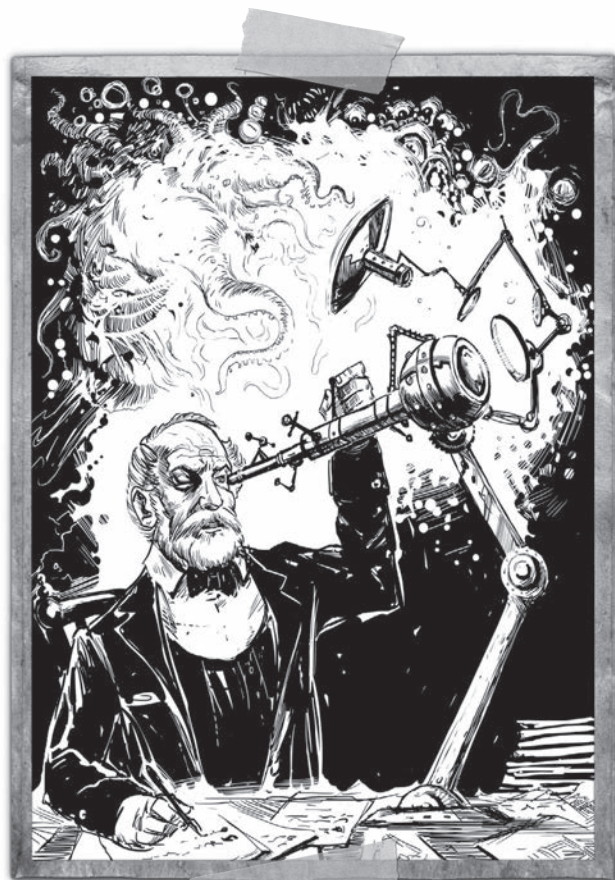
## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

least according to the cult, Paul III merely drove the group underground, publicly disbanding the Sodality but secretly remaining as their head and supporter.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the Sodality continued persecutions of suspected witches across Europe but saw a steady decline in convictions and executions. The Age of Reason took hold of Europe and witchcraft disappeared as a criminal offence in country after country, making it harder for the Sodality to get the support of local governments. The last successful witch-hunt by the Sodality was in 1782 in Switzerland.

A pair of European industrialists, Carl Zeiss of Germany and Zenobe Gramme of Belgium, were recruited primarily because of their wealth. Zeiss and Gramme became fast friends and quickly rose to leadership of the Sodality, more through judicious application of bribes than anything else.

They were obsessed with magic from an industrialist's point of view: how does it work? What powers these artefacts? Can we create more, or at least take them apart without blowing up or summoning some horror with dripping fangs and too many tentacles? To this end, they redirected efforts away from hunting witches to hunting books and devices used in witchcraft.



To quote Zeiss:

*"...The modern man does not believe in witches or warlocks. If we continue in our traditional way, we shall be branded fools or worse. Because our countrymen believe instead in the importance and permanence of objects, we shall focus our efforts to destroy the Satanic relics used by witches. We shall starve them of their rites and they shall wither on the vine."*

Under the leadership of Zeiss and Gramme, the Sodality began to amass an impressive collection of artefacts including PLUTO KOBOLD technology, DANUBE CROSSING translations of magical texts, some excerpts from the Mad Arab's book, and even TORCH ENTERPRISE. It is here that the Sodality changed from being an earnest, anti-witchcraft Catholic organisation into a true cult. Zeiss and Gramme were products of the industrial age and they examined magic artefacts with scientific zeal. They quickly became convinced that the artefacts did not need to be destroyed; they could be used by those who were morally and spiritually strong enough. Their research led down the paths that ultimately led to the Turing Theorem, had they got that far. Instead, the Sodality developed a semi-scientific theory of traditional sorcery, cataloguing incantations and occult formulae, like botanists categorise new plants.

As Zeiss and Gramme pushed for less persecution and more acquisition, they also demanded members turn over their records and relics to them for research. The term 'research' changed to 'disposal' over the years, calming members' fears that the artefacts were being used. They were, of course, but Zeiss and Gramme wanted the membership to focus on obeying orders, not questioning them.

The two industrialists helped the Sodality grow in size and resources as well. Zeiss and Gramme invested heavily in industry and shared these investments with the Sodality. This paid for a rapid expansion throughout Europe, North America and many of the European colonial possessions such as Egypt and Australia, which further aided their quest for more magical relic and non-human technologies.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw an end to its growth, although this was intentional. Instead of opening secret branches in new countries, the Sodality began sending expeditions around the world to collect occult books and items. In other words, instead of going to where the artefacts were, they sent people to bring the artefacts to them. Knights became fixtures at book auctions, museums and archaeological digs across the world. This period of hungry acquisition brought the cult into conflict with other collectors, including other sects and intelligence agencies. Sodality members usually retreated from direct conflict but there were incidents of violence.

# THE SODALITY OF SAINT BENEDICT

Today finds the Knights with considerable wealth and power, despite the impact of the recent global recession cut on their finances and capital.

## Structure

The traditional cover for the Sodality of St. Benedict was as a Catholic organisation, akin to branches of Opus Dei or the Salvation Army. While this cover is still widely used, branches are increasingly using secular covers, often academic ones. A group of researchers and linguists working to translate ancient Sumerian texts are as likely to be part of the Sodality as a group of priests. While the mid-echelons of the cult are still dominated by Catholics, since 1953 the cult's rules on religious observance have relaxed considerably.

The cult is organised into two distinct tiers: branches and chapters. Branches are inferior to chapters while chapters act independently of each other for the most part.

## Branches

Almost all Level One members operate out of branches, similar in concept to a congregation or parish. Branches are often in large cities but they can be found anywhere. Most branches are in continental Europe but the UK, the USA, North Africa and Australia have their fair share as well. A branch can theoretically have any number of members but the smallest is five and the largest is 70. There are approximately 700 members worldwide, and the largest branch is in Marseilles, which is the headquarters of EGGS HEIRLOOM.

One individual in each branch serves as its leader and is called the Brother Superior. His authority is absolute and no member may challenge a Brother Superior's decisions. Obedience is not just a virtue; it is a requirement. Regular members have no official title but are often called 'brothers' or 'sisters'. There are often a few new Level One members who chafe at this rigid structure, but these are quickly drummed out or meet an unfortunate accident.

Branches meet wherever they have enough room and security. In Europe, where the branches are older and more established, they usually have a church or old house to meet in. Some branches meet at a member's home, rotating so no one hosts a meeting twice in a row, while others meet at the same place regularly. Regardless of locale, privacy and security are high.

Branch meetings are often highly religious affairs, closer to mass than anything else. They outwardly worship the Christian god at these proceedings, which are in Latin for at least the rituals and sometimes for the whole event. They

also practise ritual magic, usually in exceedingly simple forms. This is presented as 'divine power', not sorcery.

The most common rite is a ritual of transference that collects small amounts of psychic energy from participants and transmits it to the cult leaders for use in rituals. (Effectively, it's parallel processing, as per the rules on page 133 of *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, only hideously inefficient). Some branch Superiors try their hand at 'angel summoning' and call up lesser entities, or just ensure their followers' loyalty with glammers and geases.

Within each branch, there are three councils or subdivisions of membership: Admin, Search, and Acquisition.

- Admin councils run the day-to-day affairs of the branch, including recruitment of new members, monitoring current members for signs they are ready to advance, paying the bills, checking security, and the like. Most branches have a single admin council headed by the Brother Superior but larger branches can have specialised admin councils. All three levels of membership participate in these councils, though Level One members do not monitor others for advancement.
- Search councils scour libraries, websites, news, and police reports for possible useful lore. Many in the search councils are Level Two but not all. However, they all have some understanding of the occult so they know what signs to look for. They look for signs of other cults, for supernatural activity, for haunted houses, for rare book shops or mysterious relics. Very few are trained in espionage, and while there have been Sodality spies in various occult intelligence agencies, these are extremely rare and usually easy to catch before any harm is done. EGGS HEIRLOOM search councils are to Laundry officers what amateur astronomers are to Oxford University: 99% of the time there is no competition but sometimes the amateurs will make a lucky find.
- Acquisition councils head into the field to physically collect whatever the search team found. This involves some combination of stealth, speed, and violence. Members are usually all Level One with a single Level Two or Level Three supervisor but this varies depending on the varying importance put on the object in question. The Sodality provides a modicum of training for these councils but, as with search councils, the training is amateurish and weak. Acquisition councils have a high attrition rate and low-success rate, but they can still be dangerous as they are usually armed and have little knowledge of how to safely work with magic. At least two councils have crossed into summoning grids during an active summoning, resulting in mass possession.



## Chapters

Branches are organised into geographic zones called chapters. For example, most UK branches are part of the British Chapter of the Sodality. These are run by a Chapter Superior, who wields much authority over the branches in his care. Artefacts collected by branch members are sent to chapters for proper disposal (or so the party line goes). Agents of Chapter Superiors visit branches to collect the items instead of branch members coming to them, keeping branches ignorant of the chapter's headquarters.

Each chapter also maintains a disciplinary council, reporting directly to the chapter head. This council monitors the various branches for security leaks, weakness, treachery or other undesirable behaviour. The worst breach of trust, from the Sodality's perspective, is worshipping 'false gods'. Cast all the spells you can, summon up whatever horrors you dare – but never bow before them. Any Sodality member who venerates alien entities or their works must be put down.

## Leadership

Unlike most cults, there is not a single, charismatic individual in charge. Instead, leadership is provided by a meeting of all Chapter Superiors. When circumstances dictate organisation-wide decisions, all Chapter Superiors travel to the Chateau des Caumontes in France (see Assets on page 112) and debate until decisions are reached.

All Level Three members are, as part of their initiation, required to swear magical oaths that bind them to each other and the society. These oaths forbid the cult leaders from ever betraying the ideals of the Sodality, from worshipping any gods (false, true or alien horror with tentacles) or from ever having loyalty to anything other than the Sodality.

## Communication

The Sodality, like the Catholic Church it purports to work for, has a strict, male-dominated hierarchy. Orders are passed down from Chapter Superiors to Branch Superiors and then onto the rest of the membership. Communication from individual members up to a Chapter Superior happens only if the Brother Superior can be convinced it is necessary.

Given the disparate beliefs of the membership levels, all branch and chapter leaders are part of Level Three. Written communication within wax-sealed envelopes is used for official correspondence to branches, as it lends an air of pomp and secrecy, but the leaders usually just use phone calls or email. Their communication structure is unsecured and easily hacked.

## Recruitment and Beliefs

One needs to discuss the cult's recruitment and beliefs in terms of its three internal levels.

### Level One Recruitment

Sodality members usually remain active in churches and religious organisations, so new recruits are often chosen from there. Specifically, the Sodality looks for individuals who are more attracted to fighting evil than worshipping God and who firmly believe modern society has more in common with Satan than The Lord, or those with useful skills (in the fields of linguistics, archaeology, folklore and so on.) There is no preference towards marital status, race, or economic status but there is a definite preference for men.

Geases and glamours may be employed if the potential recruit is unwilling to join. The cult employs such methods only when the recruit is especially valuable.

### Level One Beliefs

- God and Satan exist, and the Roman Catholic Church is the true agent of Jesus Christ on Earth. (No other entities are mentioned at this level.)
- Magic is witchcraft, which is granted by Satan to spread evil throughout the world and corrupt God's creatures.
- The Pope is our leader, who meets secretly with Chapter Superiors to direct our actions. However, we must remain a secret.
- People are basically good, so they won't use magic if they can avoid it. However, Satan has created a number of evil artefacts and books that tempt people into using them.
- It is the Sodality's job to collect these and destroy them so less people will go to Hell and strengthen Satan's armies.
- Because people are basically good, all care must be taken to prevent the loss of life. Even the most tainted person can be redeemed, especially once the evil is taken away from them.
- Members cannot and will not use evil to combat evil. They are to be acquired discretely and sent to the Chapter Superior for disposal.
- Members should not attempt to dispose of evil artefacts and books themselves. Without proper precautions and prayers, doing so could cause more harm than good.

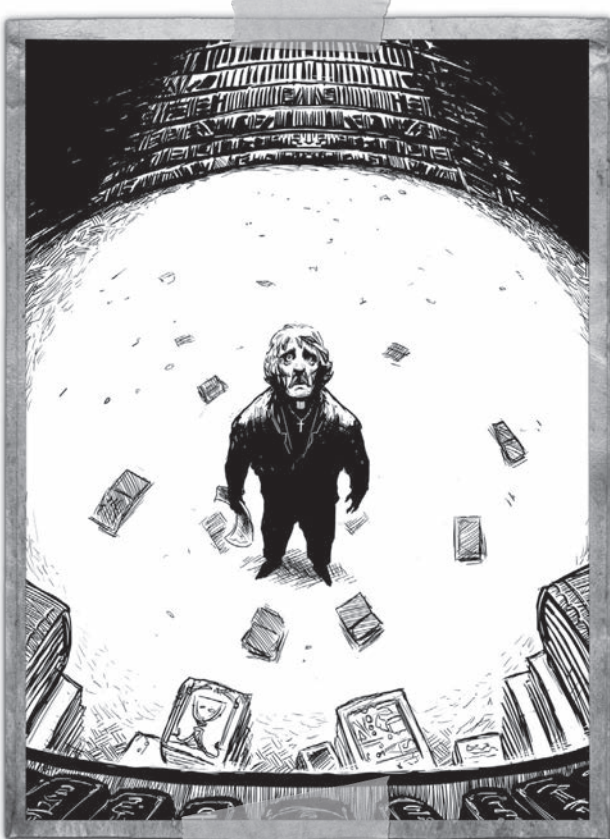
# THE SODALITY OF SAINT BENEDICT

- Despite rumours to the contrary, there is no “inner circle” of Sodality members. We have our hierarchy just like the Church but all members are treated equally.
- We do not know when the End Times is coming, but they are coming soon, so we need to work hard and collect all the Satanic artefacts that we can.

## Level Two Recruitment

Brother Superiors (and sometimes Chapter Superiors) keep a close watch on the rank-and-file members. Those who display some or all of the following characteristics are tapped for Level Two membership: willingness to bend or break laws and Sodality rules to gain more power; questioning their Christian faith; strong curiosity about relics; disagreements with Sodality rules about not using artefacts against their enemies; questioning the Sodality's policies in a constructive fashion (usually along the lines of “why don't we use these spells on the bad guys”).

Level One members who show these traits are taken aside and told that, contrary to what they were promised earlier, there really is an inner circle of members and that most Sodality brothers and sisters aren't strong enough to use these artefacts and survive; only a few members (like the recruit, of course) have the faith and inner strength to face temptation and remain pure.



In other words, promising members are told that they are special, strong and better than the others, a tactic many find hard to resist.

Level Two members are encouraged to study sorcery if they have the talent for it. Others are entrusted with magical items.

## Level Two Beliefs

- God and Satan are real, but Satan has many forms and is much more active on Earth. This is because God trusts us to make the right choices and fight as his champions.
- The Pope no longer guides the Sodality. In fact, most of the Roman Catholic Church (or any church for that matter) has fallen to Satan and work for his benefit, even if they don't realise it. The Sodality is alone in its battle against Satan.
- Evil spirits and demons rule the world from behind the scenes. Other cults, religions, governments and institutions are secretly run by demons. Only magic can defeat them.
- Magic is evil but it can be used by those who are strong enough to resist temptation and remain true to Jesus Christ. Most members aren't strong enough, making our deception about the inner circle's existence necessary.
- It is still the Sodality's job to collect artefacts and protect people from them. However, we may use the artefacts if it helps us collect even more or protect the ones we currently have.
- Those outside the Sodality are weak and sinful. Protect them if you can, but God will know his own.
- Despite rumours to the contrary, there is no inner circle within this inner circle. Such paranoia is natural given our deception and secrecy, but this is it.

## Level Three Recruitment

Brother Superiors and Chapter Superiors watch Level Two members just like Brother Superiors watch Level One members. Recruits for Level Three must show a willingness to sacrifice people to acquire more relics; a continued loss of Christian faith; the belief that Sodality members are better than the rest of humanity; a questioning of whether humanity as a whole deserves to be saved; and the acceptance of humanity's isolation in the universe.

Those that do are reviewed and vetted by a meeting of all Chapter Superiors and, if they meet all requirements, and invited to join the “true inner circle”.



## Level Three Beliefs

- If God exists, he is either testing us or has abandoned us. Many things like Satan exists, and they are planning to destroy us soon.
- Regardless of names or labels, we are besieged and alone. We need to take care of ourselves in order to survive.
- Magic is like a gun; it can be good or evil, depending on how it is used. More importantly, it can be very effective in protecting us from those who would do us harm.
- It is the Sodality's job to amass as much power as possible: Artefacts, spells, technology, money, whatever will help us become stronger.
- The End Times are close. We cannot save most of humanity, and trying to do so will only eliminate our chances. Besides, most people are not worth saving as they are too weak or insignificant. Instead, we shall focus solely on our survival.
- We cannot hope to defeat the coming forces, but we shall become powerful enough to warrant being skipped in favour of weaker targets. This is our best chance at survival.
- After the End Times, we shall begin anew and build a better world, a world we rule.

## Assets

Most members hail from Western Europe (France, Germany, and Italy most heavily), but there is little discrimination beyond gender and there are African, Asian and even American members. Latin is the lingua franca of the Sodality, allowing members from disparate nations to communicate clearly. The Sodality's financial reserves are in the tens of millions, managed through conservative investment funds and real estate.

## Chateau des Caumontes

Set just outside of Marseilles on 4,700 square metres of land, this Medieval manor house serves as the headquarters for EGGS HEIRLOOM. Chapter Superior meetings are held here but there is no regular schedule; meetings are held when necessary. The house itself is a four-storey, 12-bedroom manor with barred windows and high-tech but cheap security. Hellhounds and human guards walk the grounds and watch the cold-iron gate isolating the manor's drive from the local road.

At first glance, the chateau is tastefully but religiously decorated and devoid of anything that would betray the cult's true purpose. Beneath the chateau is a maze of tunnels and chambers that house the majority (but not all) of the cult's collection of artefacts as well as guardian shoggoths. The entrance to the basement is always locked and guarded, and work is underway to turn the whole complex into the occult equivalent of a fall-out shelter.

One potential CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN endgame for the cult is for the Level Three members to retreat to the Chateau and ride out the end of the world in safety.

## London Office

A series of offices in the Canary Wharf section of London house the London branch's records, relics, and administration. The offices are rented to Bell Investments, a venture capital firm owned by the London Brother Superior Daniel Bell. The Laundry conducted a simple fact-gathering investigation at these offices and thaumometric readings were very high. Bell conducts all London branch business here, but this is a legitimate business that earns a tidy profit for Bell and the Sodality.

The building itself has standard security for a corporate establishment in Canary Wharf, but the entire 31st floor is awash in wards and occult security. Merely pressing the elevator button for the 31st floor will send a warning to Bell's offices that someone is coming; the lift is inscribed with a gate symbol under the carpet that can plunge the occupants into a very unpleasant pocket dimension if Bell speaks a word of power. He's gambling that no Laundry investigator will take the stairs.

## Relics

Level One members may not use magic but, when they are organised into teams to acquire artefacts, they usually carry two pieces of magic gear: the Benedictine Cross and the Devil's Reliquary. Level One members are told both are blessed by the Pope himself and are charged with the Power of Christ, not magic.

- The Benedictine Cross is a crucifix worn on a gold necklace. It protects the wearer with a level two personal ward and a level two kinetic impact defensive binding. The crosses are not bound to the member who owns it, and if dropped, anyone can benefit from the ward/binding. Making a Benedictine Cross involves trapping the soul of a previous member of the cult in a binding spell, so supplies are limited.

## THE SODALITY OF SAINT BENEDICT

- The Devil's Reliquary is a wooden box that comes in a variety of sizes big enough to hold whatever artefact is being sought, made to order by the cult. Regardless of the size, the outer surface is decorated with artwork of Christ, St. Michael and other angels fighting against Satan and his demons. Inside, the box is lined with symbols of banishing and binding. Any magical item placed within a Devil's Reliquary is rendered temporarily inert; thaumometers will not detect anything once the lid is shut, and any ongoing effects related to the item are immediately suspended. The effects will return once the lid is re-opened; they were suspended, not ended. This also does not include effects that have technically finished before the object was placed inside, such as injuries or possession. Anything too powerful for the box to handle (depending on the power of the box) causes the reliquary to explode.

Each Level One member wears a Benedictine Cross. A single Devil's Reliquary is given to an acquisition council. More mundane items often found with Level One members include 9mm pistols, radios, digital cameras, fake IDs that would only withstand a cursory inspection and a poison pill (or 'death cookie') to take if captured.

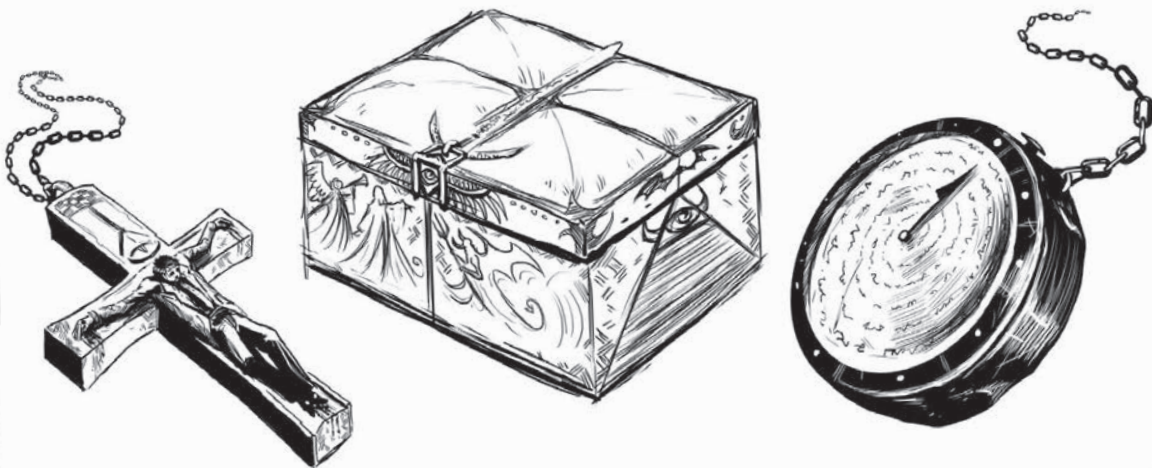
Level Two members carry Benedictine Crosses and a Devil's Reliquary (when necessary) but are given more magic, such as Hands of Glory (see *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, page 95), Zeissian Thaumometers or Spell Skulls.

- Zeissian Thaumometers are Industrial Age artefacts that look like thick, bronze pocket watches complete

with bronze chains. The face has no numbers, just the Lord's Prayer written in Latin circling inwards in a spiral, as well as a single black clock hand. Just like a compass arrow always points north, the Zeissian clock hand always points towards the largest source of thaumic resonance within 30 metres. It does not point to big sources, per se, just the largest in the 30 metre area, and it does not measure absolute levels. Level Two members use these to narrow in on an artefact to 'acquire'.

- Spell Skulls are human skulls taken from former cultists (either deceased knights or members of rival sects). At the moment of death, the cultist is 'encouraged' to concentrate on a magical incantation, either as an act of piety or through coercion. An alchemical concoction is then injected into the dying cultist's brain, preserving the final alien thought pattern caused by visualising a Dho-Nha curve and burning it into the bones of the skull. A few weeks' boiling, engraving and enchanting, and you've got a skull that chants a spell on command. It's not as portable or convenient as a smartphone, but just like an iphone, it comes in white.

Level Three members have access to all of the cult's collection of artefacts, although approval must be obtained by two-thirds of all Chapter Superiors. Since leaders communicate through email, this can be accomplished within a few hours. However, members are individually responsible for artefacts on loan to them.





## CULTISTS UNDER THE BED

### Notable Members

#### Monsignor Simon Carlisle, British Chapter Superior

Carlisle is a rather obese man who sweats no matter the temperature. His obesity and slightly pungent smell often make people underestimate him, which helped him become a Chapter Superior. He is still a member of the Catholic Church and serves a parish in Sutton, and his knowledge of the faith is so deep that he has been invited to the Vatican a number of times. Of course, his understanding of the occult is a close second and the Monsignor can even use mental magic. His sanity has begun to slip in recent years and his dislike of the rest of humanity, which he refers to as "bloated, drunken sheep", is pronounced. After speaking with him, one gets the sense that he is looking forward to CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN.

**STR** 13    **CON** 10    **SIZ** 16    **INT** 13    **POW** 11  
**DEX** 8    **CHA** 12    **EDU** 18    **SAN** 30    **HP** 13

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Firearm (Esoteric) 25%, Firearm (Pistol) 30%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (History) 40%, Knowledge (Religion) 70%, Knowledge (Occult) 65%, Language (Latin) 70%, Navigate 40%, Research 25%, Sorcery 40%, Spot 50%.



#### Daniel Bell, London Branch Brother Superior

Bell accidentally created a level three gate while experimenting with higher maths at City University London and was to be recruited into the Laundry as is usual in those circumstances. However, before he could take the Oath of Loyalty, the Sodality found him. Preying on his Catholic faith, they convinced him to join their organisation rather than the 'Satanic' Laundry. That was ten years ago, and many Laundry supervisors are still bitter over what they see as Bell's betrayal. For his part, Bell believed the Laundry really was evil and that the Sodality saved his soul. Now a Brother Superior and a Level Three member, Bell has lost his Catholic faith but still sees the Laundry as a rival and works hard to beat Laundry personnel to collect new-found artefacts. This has propelled him up the ladder within the Sodality, which in turn created friction between him and Simon Carlisle, his Chapter Superior. Carlisle is more traditional and does not like Bell's computer-aided magic.

**STR** 10    **CON** 12    **SIZ** 08    **INT** 13    **POW** 12  
**DEX** 10    **CHA** 13    **EDU** 15    **SAN** 20    **HP** 10

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Computer Use (Magic) 40%, Computer Use (Programming) 55%, Firearm (Pistol) 35%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Knowledge (Religion) 45%, Language (Latin) 25%, Navigate 30%, Research 25%, Science (Mathematics) 65%.



## Gordon Gilmour, Irish Chapter Superior

A former mercenary, Gilmour reached his position by combining a smattering of occult knowledge with intimidation and threats. In a group more into books than fists, this bruiser frightens his brothers and sisters with his size and affinity for violence. That doesn't mean he makes a poor Chapter Superior, however.

He is quite comfortable with sacrificing humanity for the Sodality's survival, and he knows enough about magic and otherworldly entities to fulfil his duties well enough to stay on the job for the past 10 years. Under his leadership, the Irish Chapter has become more violent and active. This is partially because he kills Brother Superiors who fail him.

**STR** 17    **CON** 16    **SIZ** 16    **INT** 13    **POW** 11  
**DEX** 8    **CHA** 12    **EDU** 16    **SAN** 20    **HP** 16

**Skills:** Brawl 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Firearms (Esoteric) 45%, Firearms (Pistol) 60%, Firearms (Rifle) 45%, Insight 40%, Knowledge (History) 30%, Knowledge (Religion) 35%, Knowledge (Occult) 35%, Language (Latin) 35%.



## Ongoing Operations

The Knights have many plans in the works:

- Daniel Bell is planning a raid on the Laundry's Stacks. At first glance, this sounds fatally misguided, never mind foolish. However, Bell is deadly serious. His plan is to break into the Stacks and steal as many books and dossiers as possible for the Sodality. Not only will this improve Bell's standing in the order, it will embarrass the Laundry, something that really appeals to Bell. He knows of the Stacks not by personal experience (he joined the Sodality before becoming part of the Laundry) but through a mole named Lawrence Timley, a new recruit planted by Bell.
- Losing track of weapons-grade plutonium isn't the only worry resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union. The relics and tomes owned by the Thirteenth Directorate have been slowly leaking onto the international black market, and the Sodality has made bids for every one. So far, the good guys have managed to prevent each sale. The Sodality plans to approach the Thirteenth Directorate directly in Moscow to demand either the sale of certain artefacts or just the artefacts themselves.
- An MI5 agent named Emily Trotter approached a Laundry officer in Edinburgh last year with evidence of BLUE HADES activity in the Firth of Forth. Since then, she has continued to serve as a source of intelligence regarding BLUE HADES and the Esoteric Order of Dagon's activities in Scotland. However, she is really another agent of Daniel Bell's. Instead of using her as a mole, Bell plans on using her to feed bad intelligence to the Laundry, tricking OCCULUS into thinking a large Anglican church group is really part of the Esoteric Order of Dagon with plenty of weapons and bombs. If the Laundry raids the place and kills innocent, church-going civilians, they will have some serious explaining to do.
- Monitoring picked up Black Chamber chatter of the theft of an object they call DEFEST to a Sodality Acquisition council. DEFEST is the Black Chamber's code for an alien relic that acts like a Gravedust rig (see *The Laundry Roleplaying Game*, page 94) that can reach back million years and present an image of the dead individual in question. The Knights want this to communicate with long dead races who lived on Earth before humans and may have left behind technology or magic. First on their agenda is communicating with dead Serpent People in their graves in the Welsh mountains, an activity that might bring them into conflict with the Fraternity of Nagalu.





## Lesser Cults

### WIDOWS OF THE PIT - - OVERVIEW - -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

#### CULT OVERVIEW

A small, matriarchal cult centred around Durham's suburban village of Pity Me. They practise the periodic sacrifice of infant children.

#### BELIEFS

Some form of evil spirit or bogey man inhabits Pity Me's abandoned mine. Only through the regular sacrifice of (stolen) infant children can they stop this creature from raiding Pity Me and taking their own children.

#### HISTORY

Established in 1948, when a small number of war widows came together in an attempt to stop the sporadic disappearance of infants from their home village of Pity Me, County Durham. Noting the disappearances mainly occurred at night, they began nocturnal patrols.

One night the leader elect of the Widows, Edith Collingwood – a dour woman embittered by the loss of her husband and sons in the war – chanced upon a bent figure stealing from the village with a sleeping infant held to its chest. Collingwood followed the figure out of the village and to the entrance of Pity Me's abandoned mine, whereupon the figure vanished into the mine. Upon Collingwood's reporting of her findings, the Widows elected to accompany Collingwood on nightly vigils to the mine and help her watch over it in an attempt to confront this mysterious figure. Their patience was ultimately rewarded when the figure finally emerged. The small group of Widows captured the figure, and discovered it to be a man named Billy Hutton. Hutton had vanished from the village twenty years earlier. He begged and snivelled for his life, explaining in broken English that he now served as an agent for a subterranean race who now inhabited the old mine. These creatures had raised him, and he now made periodic sorties into Pity Me to bring his masters new children to be used as food.

At this point Collingwood asked Hutton to convey an offer to his masters: the Widows would bring however many children they required, whenever they required them, and, in return, the creatures in the pit would leave the children of Pity Me untouched. The following

night Collingwood returned to the pit to meet Hutton, who conveyed the agreement of his masters.

For the next three years the Widows supplied the 'Pit Fiends', as Collingwood called them, with infants snatched from other villages and the city of Durham. Eventually, however, weighed down by guilt, one of the Widows – Gladys Harmison – confessed all to the police. The Widows were arrested, and the Laundry intervened to raid the pit. Therein they discovered and destroyed a colony of Ghouls, Hutton included. A small number of the stolen children – being raised to serve as the Ghouls' surface agents – were saved and taken into custody by the Laundry.

The children of the Widows, for the safety of whom the Widows had made their pact with the Ghouls – were relocated from Pity Me, and given fresh identities with foster families. Of the Widows themselves, most were sentenced to life imprisonment, with the exception of Edith Collingwood, who received the death penalty and became one of the last women to be hanged in the United Kingdom. Her ghost – labelled Cauld Widow Collingwood – still haunts the mineheads of Pity Me. The Laundry's Newcastle office makes regular visits to the mindheads to maintain a watching brief on the levels of thaumic energy.

#### STRUCTURE

The cult was limited to a mere ten women, with Collingwood as the leader. She would visit the mineheads nightly to meet Hutton and take whatever orders the 'Pit Fiends' had that night. These orders would then be conveyed to the appropriate number of her fellow Widows the following morning, and they would go forth to fulfil their instructions. The stolen infants would then be smuggled to the pit at nightfall.

#### ASSETS

None to speak of. All the Widows received a modest war widows pension, and nothing more.

#### ONGOING OPERATIONS

None.

# LA SOCIETE SAINT CRAPAUD -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

## CULT OVERVIEW

Bacchanalic socialites who worship Tsathoggua for even more excessive experiences.

## BELIEFS

We have money, power and beauty, so we deserve as much pleasure as possible.

## HISTORY

In 1976, a group of young, wealthy French came together to form a social club based on drinking, drugs, sex, and dancing. Only the rich and beautiful could join. They named it the Saint Toad Society, taking the name from a character in *The Golden Apple* by Robert Anton Wilson.

As their parties grew in both size and debauchery, they somehow attracted the attention of an entity described in Mythos lore as Tsathoggua, who turned one party into a truly animalistic event: members took on literal animal characteristics during the party and some were violently killed. Rather than be put off by the event, the society embraced it and began worshipping Tsathoggua to keep their parties "interesting". This required human sacrifice but led to untold levels of pleasure and release. Finding sacrifices was easy; they turned to members who have lost their fortunes or people who wished to join despite not meeting their lofty standards of wealth and beauty.

Today, the society has members across Europe, North America, and Asia. They have many parties but only a few of them each year, called 'les grande fetes du crapaud', include magic and sacrifice. The society bribes local officials into ignoring their events, and if a bribe doesn't work, they hire thugs or assassins to kill people until the trail goes cold.

It is improper to use anyone's real name at one of their parties. Masks are common but not required. However, everyone who attends is expected to drink, smoke, inject and fornicate to excess.

## STRUCTURE

There are three levels of membership. The leaders are called Maitre or Maitresse (Master or Mistress). They organise the parties, paying all the costs and deciding who to invite. Regular members are called Les Corps (the bodies) and may fall out of favour for not being uninhibited enough at the last event. The term Les Agneaux (the lambs) is used for new members recruited only to be sacrificed at the first party they attend.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

Martin and Liliane Gillet (brother and sister, not a married couple) are the most wealthy members and serve as leaders. They are in their late 20s, rich, attractive, and quite manipulative. They often force other members to host, leaving their estate free from any possible criminal activities. However, an Italian named Reggio Salvati is pushing to take over, quietly suggesting Martin and Liliane are too old to remain as leaders.

## ASSETS

Financially, this cult is beyond rich. Their parties have the best food, wine, drugs, escorts and security that money can buy. However, they are magic-poor and have no access to spells or relics beyond what is granted to them during their infamous parties.

## ONGOING OPERATIONS

The next 'grande fete du crapaud' is due to take place on a private estate in north Italy, outside of Brescia. Salvati is planning a coup then, hoping to sacrifice the Gillets and take control. Salvati wants the society to become more debauched and loyal to Tsathoggua.



## CULT OF THE BULL -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

### CULT OVERVIEW

A small but influential cult devoted to the concept that greed is good and money is the only score worth keeping.

### BELIEFS

There is no price too high to ensure profit and success.

### HISTORY

During the stock market boom and dot-com bubble of the nineties a group of stock market traders engaged in possession and ritual sacrifice in an attempt to maximise profit and ensure continued success. The cult leader was an investment manager named Royce Feldham, a man who used a combination of complex financial models and the Turing Theorem to contact an entity codenamed MONOLITH BULL. This contact gave Feldham limited prophetic powers, leading to huge success in a market that was just learning to love the Internet. The price for this was paid with the blood of illegal immigrants unlucky enough to be cleaning the wrong office building at the wrong time.

Feldham's success drew the attention of other traders, some of whom he admitted into the cult, and over the course of a few years they all amassed huge fortunes. This didn't show up against the background noise of the wealth being generated in the City of London at the time.

Despite his foresight, limited or not, Feldham did not react well to the dot-com bubble bursting. Interrogations with former cult members paint a picture of a man who believed he could keep things going and that the good times never needed to end; typical behaviour for on the edge traders. The sacrifices increased and two high profile financial analysts were possessed in a horribly botched attempt to persuade the world to buy, buy, buy.

It was at this point the cult came to the full attention of the Laundry and agents were sent in under the operational name BULL JÉRICO. Feldham could not be captured alive, the cult leader throwing himself from the roof of the Lloyd's Building when he realised there was no other escape. Several other cultists committed suicide, events that were easily masked as the stock market crashed, but three were arrested and underwent a series of interviews, before being interred. Only one, Cecilia Crawthorn, was successfully deprogrammed and now works in the Laundry's Financial Control department.

### STRUCTURE

The cult operated on a simple follow-the-leader principle. Feldham was the only one who received gifts from MONOLITH BULL, so the others acted on his instructions. All ten of the known cultists have been accounted for. Intensive analysis of the cult's financial activities and models have allowed us to check for other groups for similar behaviour and while other traders certainly copied Feldham's decisions, no other parts of the cult are believed to exist.

### ONGOING OPERATIONS

The Laundry has no reason to believe that any similar cult was operating during the pre-2008 boom. Monitoring of financial markets for evidence of Turing Theorem interaction is now part of standard operating procedure.

# ALT TEXT -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

## CULT OVERVIEW

A small but international cult spreading rumours about CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN via hacked webcomics.

## BELIEFS

It would seem that the cult is trying to both generate panic and hasten the return of the Old Gods, but so far purely with mundane means.

## HISTORY

Two years ago the alt text of several popular webcomics simultaneously read "The Stars Will Be Right." Given the popular nature of this phrase and the regularity of common jokes amongst web comic artists it was flagged by several agencies, but no immediate action was taken. A month later another phrase appeared on multiple comics, this time it was "They Are Coming Back." This raised further flags and cursory investigation showed that either the artists were playing a very long prank or someone was hacking multiple pages to send the messages.

The initial conclusion reached was that this was not the work of the webcomic artists, but nor was it directly connected to CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN, rather it was likely to simply be harmless fun and pop culture references. This was proved to be incorrect when the next hacked alt text appeared a month later. In a reference to a popular event on xkcd.org the text was a set of latitude and longitude coordinates in the USA and the word "Now". However on this occasion the first five people to show up didn't find a party. Their bodies were found on the spot a few hours later by other arrivals, murdered in what was clearly a ritual fashion.

Since that point the hacked alt text has shown up on six further occasions. So far there have been no leads on the origin of the hacking attempts, leading us to assume that computational demonology is involved. The five additional phrases are "Are You Ready?", "New Forms of Joy.", "You will see their Glory", "Are You Worthy?" and "Join Us, We Are Legion." The sixth alt text was a URL pointing at an anonymous pastebin upload containing an extract from the *Necronomicon*.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

We have no direct information about any of the cultists. It is estimated that at least three people would have been required to manage the ritual murders.

## ONGOING OPERATIONS

While there have been no further attacks, an intern has been assigned to monitor webcomics and related sites. Flags raised by monitoring are to be given priority status and escalated to an officer of no less than SSO 3 rank immediately.



## FOLLOWERS OF THE WYRM -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

### CULT OVERVIEW

The Followers of the Wyrms are a small cult that worships Dheodoha, a giant worm that sleeps beneath the ice floes of the Arctic Circle. They believe that Dheodoha communicates its sleeping will to the cult's leader. By pleasing Dheodoha, the cultists hope to receive power and centuries of life.

### HISTORY

In 1884, an archaeological expedition under the command of Rygar Helmskund was launched to the northern reaches of Greenland. The expedition hoped to find lost Viking treasure plundered from the British Isles. From the beginning, unexpected weather, poor planning and mercenary temperaments combined to turn the journey into a life-claiming disaster. By the time the survivors found an ice cave for shelter, ambitions for Viking treasure had been replaced by hopes for survival.

Seeking further protection, the explorers cracked through some ice near the back of the cave and disturbed a nest of pink worms. Woken from their hibernation and sensing warmth, the worms slithered into contact with the men and passed under their skin to possess the men.

Five of the men went mad and perished in the snow, but the expedition's leader was different. The worms entered Rygar's body like the others, but the worms were able to preserve his living body and reproduce inside him. In time, he came to believe that the worms were tendrils of the mighty Dheodoha who slept beneath the ice.

Decades later, when the next travellers hazarded into desolate upper Greenland, they found Rygar in his cave, healthy and eager to socialise. The newcomers sat down with him, and minutes later his body began disgorging scores of worms that possessed the strangers. Again, most perished in madness, but a handful survived, and the cult was born.

### BELIEFS

The followers believe that the pale worms are psychic tendrils of Dheodoha. If a cultist pleases Dheodoha, the cultist will be rewarded by becoming a host for one of

the worms. In return, the cultist will be granted health, power and immeasurable life.

### STRUCTURE

Rygar Helmskund, high priest of Dheodoha, is still the cult's sole leader. The worms that live and reproduce within him have granted him long life and incredible fortitude. In recent years, though, Rygar's body appears to be failing. It is becoming harder for him to communicate and birthing worm broods taxes him further each time. He is speaking more and more of the "Waking of the Great Wyrms." Rygar is constantly on the move, hiding in towns and settlements above the Arctic Circle.

The cult's innermost members are called the Children of Dheodoha. These are members that have knelt before Rygar to be infected by worms. Most who make this pilgrimage do not survive. Perhaps a dozen have lived to become Children.

Finally, the lowest level are those that have sworn fealty to Dheodoha but are still waiting for a chance to be infected. These followers total about a hundred.

### ASSETS

The cult relies entirely on its lowest members to provide resources. Those that have been infected by the worms quickly lose track of worldly concerns and become focused on less tangible goals. However, those infected by the worms do develop surprising abilities beyond long life and physical fortitude. They often acquire incredible charisma and forcefulness of personality. In some cases, this ability is so strong that it begins to resemble psychic influence.

### ONGOING OPERATIONS

The Laundry cannot confirm whether Dheodoha does or does not exist. Rygar claims to have seen the creature, but this is unverified. If Dheodoha is real, and if Rygar's intentions are shifting toward waking the creature, the cult poses a potentially apocalyptic threat. Rygar and the other cult leaders are attempting to grow the ranks of the cult like never before. The Laundry suspects that these naive initiates are being recruited not as servants but as a future mass sacrifice.

# CHURCH OF UNIVERSAL SCIENCES - - O V E R V I E W - -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

## CULT OVERVIEW

Based on the Cthunetics self-help movement, the Church of Universal Sciences is a religious group based in Wisconsin. The religion teaches that through a process called 'Reconciling' individuals can overcome their weaknesses and past failures to set their souls free in this life and in future incarnations.

## BELIEFS

The CoUS belief structure is based on a reincarnation cycle. The human soul is immortal and will continue to reincarnate attempting to live a successful life. By performing 'Reconciliations' the soul can shed its life baggage. If a member successfully performs all nine Reconciliations, their soul will have perfect clarity in future incarnations. The Reconciling process is always judged by Achiever-level or higher members to determine success or failure. Each attempt at reconciliation requires a substantial fiduciary gift to the church.

## HISTORY

In his 1939 essay, *Sauk Remembrances*, author August Derleth wrote, "If one wishes for wealth, one need only found a church." A decade later, this is exactly what he did. Derleth first created the Cthunetics self-help movement (its name based on the obscure Greek stems: Cthu, meaning 'submerged'; and Nous meaning 'thought'). Then, in the 1950s, he expanded the movement into an actual religion.

In 1967, Derleth was privately diagnosed with heart disease. After the diagnosis, he became obsessed with personal immortality. He added to CoUS a series of apparently benign rituals and practices designed at reaching and appealing to an outer god capable of granting Derleth life-everlasting. In spite of his best efforts, Derleth never made sufficient contact with an elder power to negotiate for immortality, and he died of a sudden heart attack in 1971. But the occult practices he had installed were and are still in place.

## STRUCTURE

CoUS membership is organized into five tiers.

- Explorers have successfully performed the First Reconciliation and have met the minimum donation requirement. CoUS has about 20,000 explorers.

- Pioneers have accomplished at least three Reconciliations and have made substantial donations. CoUS has about 5,000 Pioneers.
- *Achievers* have successfully completed the Final Reconciliation and made donations deemed significant enough to qualify – usually a massive total amount. CoUS has around 650 Achievers.
- Heroes are Achievers that have performed some special service for the church like legal services, political aid, or shrewd investment counselling. The Hero tier also includes most of the celebrities attached to CoUS. There are less than a hundred Heroes.
- Founders are the small circle that make the laws and doctrine for CoUS. Some were close associates of Derleth himself. While they have no personal wealth or income, they live bounteously through the church. The Laundry believes that some of the Founders are aware of the occult practices the church follows but allow them to continue. There are 6 Founders.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

Karl Smalls is the most powerful figure in the CoUS. He is one of the six founders and is actively involved in the wider ambitions of the church. The Laundry also believes that he has knowledge of and encourages the church's occult elements for his own purposes.

## ASSETS

The Church of Universal Sciences is a financial juggernaut. They are scrupulously organised, highly litigious, and rich. They have 'Learning Centres' in about a dozen countries around the globe. They boast broad political influence. This is especially true in America, but applies to any country where they operate.

## ONGOING OPERATIONS

The CoUS is currently under investigation in several countries for allegations of blackmail, brainwashing, financial manipulation, intimidation and cybercrime. Defending against these investigations through both legal and extra-legal means consumes much of the Church's energy at the moment.



## THE GLASSHOUSE RIFLES -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

PAGE ONE OF TWO

### CULT OVERVIEW

A growing brotherhood of ex-servicemen and serving military personnel who have witnessed paranormal and occult events, and offer one another support, guidance and counselling.

### BELIEFS

The Glasshouse Rifles believe in the existence of supernatural creatures and phenomenon. Most have first-hand experience of such, and are convinced that they must support each other whilst remaining silent so as not to attract unwanted government attention, or be mocked by society or their friends and family.

More recently, however, some members have begun to take a more pro-active approach by making tentative explorations of the dark reality they've witnessed. Meanwhile, another faction of the Rifles have gone one step further and taken a more militant stance with the formation of their own mercenary unit specialising in combating the evils they have seen.

### HISTORY

The Glasshouse Rifles were founded in 1880 by soldiers given short sentences in the infamous Aldershot military prison – colloquially referred to as 'The Glasshouse' due to its glass lantern roof. The Rifles were a collection of those who, in the service of their country, had witnessed various hauntings, inhuman creatures, sorcery and other supernatural activity. Fearing the mockery of their comrades and friends or, worse still, censure by their superiors, they banded together to share their experiences and offer one another support. The Rifles would maintain regular contact and share correspondence even beyond their terms in the Glasshouse and, in some cases, their service in the armed forces.

Membership of the Glasshouse Rifles has grown steadily since its inception, and more and more servicemen and woman have been exposed to an increasing amount of autonomes, possessions, thaumic activity and, in their own terms, "weird stuff that'll turn your shit white". Numbers rose dramatically during and after the First and Second World Wars, and many of the Rifles' alumni were veterans from these two conflicts. After a relative lull in recruitment in the sixties, seventies and eighties, it has picked up noticeably since the UK's involvement in Kosovo, the first and second Gulf Wars, and Afghanistan.

After coming to the attention of the Laundry in 1999 when one of its members – an ex-squaddie with terms of active service in Northern Ireland – was recruited as a Tasher and spilt the beans. Since then case workers have been planted inside the growing network of Glasshouse Rifles, and have discovered that, whilst the majority of the members are benign and the Rifle's mandate of support and counselling is to be applauded, there is a sinister underbelly to the organisation. Some members are convinced that the British government is working with 'monsters', or that they are the subject of illegal psychotropic experiments. Others have come to worship Mythos entities.

Perhaps more alarmingly, some members of the Glasshouse Rifles have come together to form their own squad of Private Military Company (or PMC), also known as the Glasshouse Rifles. Purporting to be specialists in combating the occult and supernatural, some have a neophytic understanding of the occult and the Mythos at best, whilst the majority are merely misinformed grunts and shit-kickers whose idea of an exorcism is to empty their clip into the unfortunate host. They now hire themselves out to private individuals as professional counter-occult forces.

# THE GLASSHOUSE RIFLES -- OVERVIEW --

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

PAGE TWO OF TWO

## STRUCTURE

Since its inception, the original Rifles have grown beyond the Glasshouse in Aldershot (which has now been closed down by the MOD), and its spiritual successor in Colchester. Whilst the name remains, the Rifles themselves are mainly connected by email and meetings at hired community centres and. It has no leader or organisation of any sort, but it does have a core group of veterans who are widely accepted as being the big hitters in the community, mainly down to the scary stories they can tell. Whether or not these stories are real is another matter.

The darker side of the Rifles that have begun to investigate the occult is, at present, nothing more than a kernel of 15 members scattered across the country. Like their cousins in the original Rifles, they stay connected by email and text, and stage regular meetings at one another's houses and flats. At present they warrant only cursory monitoring, and some may be candidates for recruitment into the Laundry.

The real cause for alarm may revolve around the Glass Rifles PMC. Whilst they have little or no actual idea of what really lurks on the darker side of reality, they do have guns and grenades, and a hard-core group of 30 veterans who aren't afraid to use them. Lacking expertise in the wider occult sphere, even a well-meaning group could imperil key Laundry projects like the Benthic Treaty.

## NOTABLE MEMBERS

Benny Meek, a veteran of Operation Desert Storm, was medically discharged after suffering head injuries, but not before he claimed to have seen "Djinns scampering amongst destroyed Iraqi tanks". Now in his fifties, he is slowly forming a kernel of followers who believe his assertions of a "world of shadows waiting to consume our own". The only way to survive in the face of this shadow world is to "arm ourselves. Not with pistols or machetes, but with pentacles and magic".

The Glasshouse Rifles PMC, meanwhile, is headed by former Sergeant Nathaniel Baxter. A recent returnee from Afghanistan, his unit came under attack from a creature the Laundry believes to be a Hunting Horror under the control of an Afghani warlord. Whilst the rest of his unit have been purged of the memory by the Laundry, something has gone wrong with Baxter, and he frequently plagued by flashbacks and nightmares of the attack. He's now itching to get even.

## ONGOING OPERATIONS

The Glasshouse Rifles PMC has just won a contract to bolster the bodyguards protecting Afghani president Hamid Karzai.





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