

# protodimension magazine



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Well here it is, six years of *Protodimension Magazine*. This 23rd issue represents Volume 6 of a love affair with horror role playing and small publishing, and I have learned a lot.

When Lee, Tad, and I started this magazine, we just wanted to provide a continuation of the *Dark Conspiracy* RPG. Its license had languished for several years. At the time Lee and I were winding down involvement with an attempt at rejuvenating the game with the *Gamer's Conglomerate*. We were also lamenting the loss of *Demonground*, still. We still do, Mike's crew put out a great magazine.

But here we are, trying to keep the flame alive.

While Lee, Tad, and I contribute written works to *Protodimension Magazine*, it is not just our stuff. That is by design. We rely on folks, burgeoning or accomplished writers (and artists) to lend us their works. *Protodimension Magazine* is a fan-based publication.

But I have learned a lot about volunteer contributors. They have lives that prevent them from writing down that great adventure that they ran over last weekend or that prevents them from redrawing the maps they passed out to their players. I get it. Lee has done a great job of beating the bushes and chasing down contributors, and I continue to be impressed at the quality you guys send us.

But compiling a sufficient selection of contributions for the large format we currently issue is challenging; one big issue every 3 months is demanding on contributors, editors, and the production team.

For this reason, Issue 23 will be the last quarterly issue of *Protodimension Magazine*.

But wait. We cannot simply give up. So we are switching to a monthly format that is lighter, featuring one or two main articles and a couple of smaller ones. The focus would be the same, but output would be more frequent. Instead of monolithic deadlines, contributors can send us their stuff whenever they finish it.

The submission email is the same. We still want your stuff. *Protodimension Magazine* will be smaller and more frequent. You guys make this publication what it is. Let's keep it working!

Cheers!  
Norm

# THE METAPLEX MALL INCIDENT

*A Spooky Story*

by Tim Bisailon

FOR LITTLE FEARS RPG

OVER THE YEARS strange things and mysterious disappearances have plagued the mall since it opened its doors in 1971. In 2001 when several children disappeared while on a school trip to see a movie at the theatre the mall didn't recover, and eventually it closed down less than a year later. Tales have been told about the boarded up mall and strange things are said to be still going on there...

The Metaplex Mall incident is a sand-box adventure for *Little Fears* (1<sup>st</sup> edition) Role Playing Game. The scenario is about Titania's minions: Goblins and Redcaps, who have been using the huge clock that hangs in the Metaplex Mall as a way to gather children for Titania's bath.

## WHAT'S BEEN SAID BEFORE

The Metaplex Mall is an enclosed mall located in the town near the highway. The mall opened up in 1971 on the site of an old farm. The cost of the Mall to open up was \$11,000,000. The Metaplex opened with 40+ stores on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Local celebrities hosted the opening, including Mary Watson from the soap opera "The Light and The Darkness". Mary Watson was found dead later on that evening with a needle in her arm.

The Metaplex had two anchor stores and a cineplex with 2 theatres inside, also a

food court with a half dozen of places to get something to munch on.

In November 1972 a young girl was lured away by a clown and was found dead in a nearby field the next day. The girl had her face painted in clown makeup.

March 1974 a fellow was shot and killed by a mall cop. The fellow tried to rob the bank inside.

In 1984 sections of the mall had a huge makeover and a state-of-the art arcade store was placed to attract more teens to the mall. It worked for a bit but then another young girl went missing. They found her three days later in a field nearby, with her face painted.

## SCENE: SOMETIMES THEY STICK AROUND

It's the last day of school and the kids are heading out of the door and on their way home, there is a trio of teen boys waiting outside by a hot rod. They wear leather jackets, wear ducktails and are listening to what appears to be rockabilly music.

If a child has the Visions Quality they can make a check to see that the trio of kids are Goblins using "Second Skin" to appear human.

They are picking on one kid in the schoolyard, apparently trying to drag

him off. If the players do not intervene, a teacher, Mrs. Peller, will emerge and the teens will back off. If the players are also involved in the fight a teacher will run out to stop it, chasing the thugs: Roy, Doyle and Jack (Thugs) off into the night.

Mrs. Peller suggests the kids all walk home as a group and by the sounds of it they should be getting home soon since a storm is approaching.

Roy, Doyle and Jack are Goblins, carrying switchblades and attempting to bring children to Titania. First they have to get the kid to the Mall and to the huge clock that is inside. The huge clock is how the Goblins enter the world from Closetland from their Kingdom of Pride.

*Goblins: Fists 3, Bite 2, Switchblade 3*

## SCENE: A DARKNESS APPROACHES

As the characters head home, leaving the school group they see that dark clouds are approaching; the dark clouds casting shadows over the land and with that bringing *A Second Skin* setting as Closetland merges with the real one.

The players must attempt a Spirit Quiz. If no kids are affected the rain will be a torrential downpour, obscuring vision and wetting the child.

If a child fails the quiz the rain falls and feels like acid burning away at the skin. This is the effect of the Second Skin.

The characters must seek shelter from the storm and the only place to do so is the "Metaplex Mall" which is in view.

## SCENE: THE MALL OF DARKNESS

The unnatural storm seems to get darker and gustier as the kids head for home. They see the Mall, which seems to offer a safe haven from the storm.

Crossing the park towards the Mall they can hear the sound of a hot rod revving up, and they see Doyle, Roy and Jack. The car itself is coming towards them. The kids must try a Smarts Quiz to notice that there are broken boards in one of the mall doors.

Once inside the Mall, the Goblins in the hot rod will keep guard making sure the kids stay inside the mall as the Redcaps and fellow Goblins gather the kids to the clock. If a child sees a door or an opening, they can rest assure that the hot rod will be there revving up the engine.

My Monster Hunting  
Guide  
By Abraham

This is a goblin



This is a redcap



they both work for Titania!

## Mall Stories

2D6	Stories
2	A group of teens disappeared in the mall many years ago.
3	Killer robots are unleashed at night to hurt anyone left on the premise.
4	Giant rats from the sewers rise and live in the mall.
5	Mannequins come alive at night and roam the corridors.
6	A giant spider lives in the rafters and comes out at night to feed.
7	Ghosts are said to roam the halls looking for someone to listen to them.
8	A television actress committed suicide in the mall.
9	A serial killer in a clown costume had lured children away.
10	A vending machine ate a boy's arm when he reached up inside and tried to steal a can of pop.
11-12	At the sound of midnight the huge clock that hangs in the main court of the mall, chimes.

The boarded up section leads into what once was Freddy's FoodMart, with long shelves and several items scattered along the floor.

### Stories Told About The Mall

Children with the following qualities: Bookworm, Internet Savvy, and/or Older Friend can make Quiz checks to see what they have heard about the Mall.

Roll 2d6 on the list below to see what the child has heard or read something about the Metaplex Mall.

Now, all these can be true or not. It is up to the Teacher on how he or she wants to keep the kids in line.

### SCENE: MALL RAT

Once inside and the children are looking around, they will hear the sound of stuff falling from a shelf and will catch the pink tail of a rat disappearing around the corner. Have the children make a Fear Check. If all children make their Fear Checks than the rat is just a rat and will scamper away.

If not, the rat will mutate as influenced by the Second Skin and become a giant ferocious meat eater!

*Giant Mutant Rat:* Bite 3, Claws 3, Tail Whip 2

### SCENE: SANDBOX MALL

The Mall is abandoned, so the kids can go exploring or look for another way out. But remember the Goblins outside are waiting for the players to leave. And there are also Goblins and Redcaps inside waiting to drag the kids to the huge clock at the food court.

As the players wander through the mall, they can always here a tick-ticking sound echoing throughout the abandoned halls.

Most of the mall shops (90%) are gutted and completely empty, except for shelves or an item or too that was left behind. The children will notice that graffiti lines the interior of the corridors as

taggers have left their mark, though Players who make their Smarts Quiz can see that several of the tags are unfinished.

If the players are going about exploring, roll 3d6 and check the following chart. Once an item has been found it cross it off the list.

3D6	Items Found
3	Flashlight with battery
4	Canvas bag with d6 spray cans
5	d2 sneakers, d3 rollerblades
6	1 motocross bike
7	1d3 Skateboards
8-13	Nothing
14	Baseball bat
15	Hockey Stick
16	A red baseball cap
17	d6 silver dollars
18	A police cap, badge and a revolver with 2 shots left

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## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Freddy's Food Mart:** The entrance area where the rat is encountered.

**The Novel Shoppe:** Lined with empty shelves, as the players pass they can hear the sound of someone crying. Here a Teen girl is wide-eyed with fear and mumbling the song "The itsy bitsy spider" song over and over and over. Her name is Misti McMann. If a child has Charmer or Faithful they can attempt to calm Misti down. She tells them a giant bug took her friends away in the Arcade.

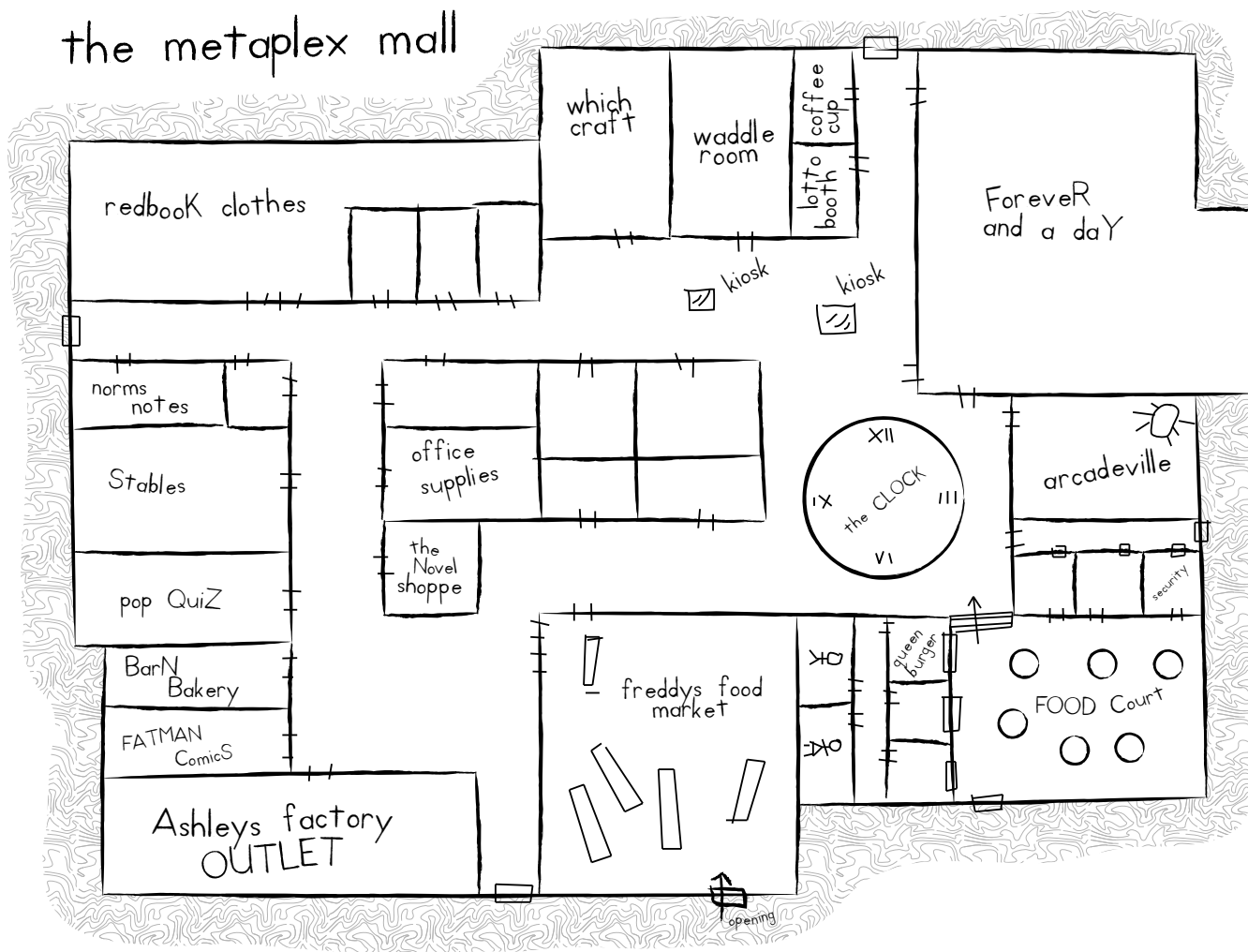
**ArcadeVille:** Is now dark and musty with webs covering the ceiling. A huge spider lives here and has three humanoid-shaped cocoons in its lair.

*Behemoth Spider:* Bite 3, Webbing 3

**The Food Court:** There is a huge clock built into the floor in one of the food courts. This is the portal the Goblins and Redcaps use to bring kids to Titania's realm so she can bathe in their blood.

**The Clock:** Even though it's covered with dust and dirt and some spray paint, the clock underneath the glass still works and the Goblins and Redcaps use it to enter this realm. The only way to close the portal is to smash the glass and destroy the hands. Once the clock is smashed the Second Skin will disappear, as well as the Redcaps, Goblins. The other critters will fade back to Closetland.

## the metaplex mall





## WANDERING MONSTERS:

Throughout the adventure a d6 will be rolled for each area. If a one is rolled than the players will have an encounter. Roll another d6 and check the chart below to see what happens.

1D6	Encounter
1-2	d6 Goblins are gnarled little creatures with dark greenish skin and twisted, gagged limbs.  <i>Goblins:</i> Fists 3, Bite 2, Pitchfork 3.
3-4	d3 Redcaps are skinny, pale imps whose bright costumes gave them their name. They are hyperactive psychopaths who would eat a child whole as soon as look at them.  <i>Redcaps:</i> Fists 2, Bite 4, Pole 3.
5	The Clockmaker, Morley Utterborne, is a homeless vet who lives inside the mall and works on the clock in the food court. He does not believe in Goblins, Redcaps or Closetland. He is crazy and will defend the clock at all costs.  <i>Morley:</i> Hands 4.  Note: This encounter will only happen once.
6	Flashing red lights from a police car pulling into the parking lot, although they will do a routine check, they will not stray too far from the car before getting a call that speedsters are tearing up a nearby street. They will then drive off.  Note: This encounter will only happen once.

## Agua

Hello my name is Marina Greyfeather.

My friends call me Agua.

I am a 7 year old girl. I am 4 feet and 3 inches. I have blonde hair and green eyes.

### This is Me:

Smarts	2
Muscles	3
Hands	4
Feet	2
Spirit	3

### These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

### I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Paid	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

### Things I Like about Me:

Athletic  
Fortunate  
Heavily  
Horror Puff



### Things I don't like about Me:

Bad Name  
Puffy  
Haunted  
Phobic - Spiders

### This is my Stuff:

T-shirt, cut off jeans

### But I Like This The Best:

Battle Gloves I Got For A Video Game system

# PROTODIMENSION MAGAZINE

## Darius

Hello my name is Darius Angellus.

My friends call me Altanboy.

I am a 7 year old boy. I am 4 feet and 5 inches. I have brown hair and brown eyes.

### This is Me:

Smarts	3
Muscles	3
Hands	2
Feet	2
Spirit	5

### These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

### I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

### Things I Like about Me:

Bookworm  
Excellent Memory  
Faithful  
Guided



### Things I don't like about Me:

One Track Mind  
Phobic — Heights  
Picked On  
Slow poke

### This is my Stuff:

Shirt, pants, a long jacket, skateboard

### But I Like This The Best:

Rosary Beads

## Angst

Hello my name is Angelina St. John

My friends call me Angst

I am an 8 year old girl. I am 4 feet and 7 inches. I have brown hair and blue eyes.

### This is Me:

Smarts	2
Muscles	2
hands	3
Feet	3
Spirit	2

### These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

### I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

### Things I Like about Me:

Ambidextrous  
Athletic  
Compassionate  
Lucky



### Things I don't like about Me:

Scaredy Cat  
Square Peg

### This is my Stuff:

Cheerleader Outfit

### But I Like This The Best:

Uzi Water Pistols

## Frank

Hello my name is Frank.

My friends call me Frank.

I am a 9 year old boy. I am 4 feet and 5 inches. I have brown hair and brown eyes.

### This is Me:

Smarts	4
Muscles	2
Hands	4
Feet	2
Spirit	3

### These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

### I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

### Things I Like about Me:

Artistic  
Bookworm  
Honest Face  
Internet Savvy



### Things I don't like about Me:

I wear glasses  
I get Picked On  
I'm shy

### This is my Stuff:

School uniform, iData with Wifi

### But I Like This The Best:

\*Nup Pistol now with stealth mode.

## Dex

Hello my name is Dexter Washington Jr.

My friends call me Dex.

I am a 9 year old boy. I am 4 feet and 8 inches. I have black hair and brown eyes.

### This is Me:

Smarts	2
Muscles	3
Hands	2
Feet	4
Spirit	2

### These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

### I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

### Things I Like about Me:

Authority Figure  
Courageous  
Heavy  
Fleet of Foot



### Things I don't like about Me:

Curious  
Heavy Sleeper  
Picked On

### This is my Stuff:

Shirt, Pants

### But I Like This The Best:

Little League Softball Bat

# PROTODIMENSION MAGAZINE

Maggie

Hello my name is Magenta Magniel

My friends call me Maggie

I am a 10 year old girl. I am 4 feet and 10 inches. I have black hair and grey eyes.

This is Me:

Smarts	3
Muscles	3
Hands	3
Feet	2
Spirit	3

These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

Things I Like about Me:

Athletic  
 Fortunate  
 Guided  
 Charmer



Things I don't like about me:

Delinquent  
 One-track mind  
 Haunted

This is my Stuff:

Black shirt, canvas pants with lots of pockets

But I Like This The Best:

katana

Max

Hello my name is Max Cube.

My friends call me Max.

I am a 10 year old boy. I am 4 feet and 10 inches. I have blonde hair and green eyes.

This is Me:

Smarts	3
Muscles	3
Hands	3
Feet	3
Spirit	3

These are Important:

Soul	0000000000
Innocence	0000000000
Fear	0000000000

I Feel:

Fine	00000
Sore	00000
Bad	00000
Dizzy	00000
Nothing	00000

Things I Like about Me:

Ambidextrous  
 Athletic  
 Fleet of Foot  
 lucky



Things I don't like about Me:

Bad Name  
 Black Sheep  
 Haunted  
 Potty Mouth

This is my Stuff:

Comic books, yellow t-shirt that says Plex, brown canvas pants with lots of pockets.

But I Like This The Best:

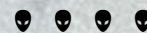
Two water pistols I call "Rain" and "Joy"

# A GOOD OLD FASHIONED DEATH

*The Price We Pay for a Free Cremation*

by Richard Hayden

DARK CONSPIRACY FICTION



“Maybe a month, Joe. At this stage, treatment isn’t even an option. I’m sorry, but the cancer is bad. Maybe if we would have caught it a year ago...” the doctor’s words trailed off. Joe held his face in his hands. He was shaking. “Joe, listen, we can get you into somewhere comfortable, make sure your last few weeks are-”

Joe took his hands away from his face. Doctor Montgomery was startled at the look of joy on the terminal cancer patient. “Cancer? That’s what is going to kill me, doc? Good old-fashioned cancer? That’s great!” Laughing, Joe shook the oncologist’s hand, “Thanks, doc, thank you so much!”

For the last few years, Joe had been facing death on a weekly basis. Death at the hands of cold vampiric creatures, death by ray gun from extraterrestrial beings, death from obscure legendary ghosts. His nightmares were filled with writhing tentacles and decomposing bodies and his days were a blur of checking the status of his firearms and researching arcane texts from long-dead cultures.

He smiled with warm affection at the attractive patient advocate who had been ushered into his hospital room. While she presented him with options

for hospice care, Joe mentally recounted his last career change and the many demons he had faced. Responding to internal stimuli, rather than what the advocate was saying, he began to cry.

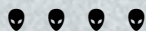
“I understand that this news can bring a rollercoaster of emotions, Mr. Morder,” she could not understand that he was recalling how his wife had been carried out of their home while he was left paralyzed by an unknown chemical agent. Carried out by things with trunks where their mouths should be and spiked bodies. Monsters. That was the night he found out monsters were real.

When the police interviewed him, they assumed drugs or alcohol. They blamed him, accused him, for her death. They kept asking what he had done with the blood because, “no person can drink all that without throwing it up...so what did you do with it?” His lawyer got him a psychologist to sign an affidavit that his claim of monsters were really just sleep paralysis and a nightmare and that he was perfectly sane. The cops had no real evidence so he was eventually released.

“Actually, ma’am, I know some people who owe me a big one. Let me call them and see if they can get me a good hospice, thanks for your time though.” Joe ignored whatever she was saying and departed the hospital. As soon as he

was outside he sought out a payphone and called Barb's Unisex Salon, telling the receptionist he needed a curl and dye, and would Frankie be available at six? She put him on hold and a moment later agreed that Frankie would be free at six today.

Frankie was actually a hair stylist. It was her day job. She was also co-owner of Barb's and, like Joe, had a separate hunting career. A few years ago Frankie and Joe saved the life of some corporate big-wig who had gotten in too deep. The guy was desperate to escape and actually paid cold hard cash to the pair to make it happen. While Joe reinvested his funds on some surplus military gear, Frankie had managed to turn the money into a small fortune. He was hoping she would be willing to part with some of it to ensure he got into a beautiful and comfortable hospice so he could enjoy nice surroundings and good drugs as the pain and cancer ate away at his core.



At six on the dot he walked into Barb's. A balding, middle-aged white man in an urban beauty salon meant everyone stopped their gossip immediately to stare at the intruder to their culture, but Frankie burst from the back room in a spray of color and clinking beads with a huge grin and shaking her auburn tinted curled weave.

"Joey! It has been just too damn long, son, look at you! Losing weight? That's no good! I got some leftover lake trout in the back," she kept on talking as she escorted him into the back of the shop. Joe didn't say a word. In fact she kept up the amiable small talk until they'd walked into the office and she locked the door and flipped the switch on a small fan-like device.

"Okay, you piece of human garbage," her tone shifted instantly, as though turning on the white noise generator had turned off a small talk generator, "I thought we were done after that glimmering deal last year?" Joe collapsed heavily into an old rolling chair

held together with frayed duct tape. "Shit, you look like you went ten rounds with a pale, what's wrong?"

"Stage IV liver cancer." He stated simply while catching his breath. She had no visible reaction he could perceive. "Just got the news this afternoon."

"How long?" She asked in a matter-of-fact tone while grabbing a menthol cigarette from her purse and offering one to him.

He accepted and let her light it before replying, "A month at the best. Probably just a few weeks. Frankie, I know we're supposed to be even now, but..."

"But, what? You want me to throw some of my money at giving you a few months instead of a few weeks?" She took a deep drag from her cigarette, shook her head and said, "Oh, hells no. What a waste that would be."

"Actually, I was hoping you'd be willing to trade me for hospice care." He took a short drag himself, coughed lightly, sat back in the chair and took a deeper one.

"Hmm, I see. What could you possibly have to trade with?" Despite her hard negotiating stance, Joe could tell she was interested.

"Well, you know I've got some surplus Russian vehicles buried in a cache near Lorton. They all go to you. My notes and maps, or course. A few names you might be interested in putting faces to. I think what will really catch your attention is the crate of XM-26s. A dozen of them and about a thousand rounds of ammo for them. Minus a few clips I needed last month, that is." He threw all his cards on the table.

Her mood changed again as though a switch had been flipped back to the pleasant side. "Your whole legacy? You want to give me your entire inheritance?"

"Not like my son would want any of it. He wouldn't know what to do with it."

"He still thinks you did your wife, huh?" Another drag as she appraised the dying man. She let the

smoke out in small perfect rings. One ring stayed coherent a moment and she stuck her index finger through it to break it up while muttering something about dying a virgin.

"Hospice care? A bunch of filipino nurses wiping your ass as you waste away?" she sat on the desk opposite him and snubbed out the cigarette.

"I was thinking something a little more high-class. I know you can afford it." He took his last drag and dropped it in the ashtray.

"Be better if they were some of those newer 210s, or hell, even just one of those coilguns, but let me make a few calls. I'll find you something nice, Joe. We don't really owe each other anything, but how many of our kind get a normal death? Between the karma this'll bring me and your legacy? I gotta help. Let me make a few calls. Meet me at Yums for lunch tomorrow."

Joe gradually lifted himself out of the chair. "Talk to you then. Were you serious about that lake trout? I'm starved."

"Just get out of here, I'll buy you a steak and cheese tomorrow."

"Pick it up before you get to Yums then, ha!" Joe left with a parting shot about the local cuisine.

If there was one thing Joe believed in, even back in his heaviest drinking days after his wife's murder, it was punctuality. Francesca Groff, on the other hand, believed in being fashionably late. While he had arrived promptly at noon and settled into a heavily defaced plastic chair that had at one time been a bright yellow, but was now more of a brown from grease and smoke, she didn't come into the tiny restaurant for a good fifteen or twenty minutes. Enough time for Joe to choke down a steak and cheese made from sub-par ingredients and refill his drink twice. Even before the Greater Depression, Yums wasn't exactly the sort of place that went farther than the local supermarket for processed and frozen foods you could make at home for half the price and a quarter of the grease. Joe was on the verge of calling

off the meeting when she strolled through the steel-grate reinforced glass doors and received a greeting from the chef and owner behind the counter.

Settling into the chair opposite Joe, she passed two flyers his way. Glossy with photos of happy nurses in clean pressed uniforms standing before a garden, the flyers were practically identical except for the names of the hospice care centers they represented.

“So, these are the second and third best in New Boswash. The top facility is technically outside of the ‘Wash on Martha’s Vineyard, and believe me, it is way beyond our price range. Just getting you credentials and travel to a Nome enclave would break the bank, sorry about that Joe.” She let him peruse the flyers while she walked over to the fridge to grab a beer and place an order with the guy at the counter.

He looked them over, but they weren’t very informative, so he just glanced at the pictures of the rooms and lists of amenities while waiting for Frankie to return. She came back to the table with a fried fish sandwich and soggy fries.

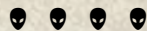
Taking a big bite out of the sandwich, she started to give him the laydown with a full mouth. “I think this is your place, Joe. Ellicott district, just around the corner from Baltimore.” Frankie pointed to one of the flyers. “The county is still pretty wealthy, even today, and the location is easy travel for you. This place here,” she indicated the other flyer, “is supposed to be just as good, but would mean a trip to Manhattan, and we know how that can go. What is the point of you getting killed on the way to the place where you’re going to die?” Frankie laughed at her own poor joke as Joe nodded silently. “I can book you today, if you want it. Once I’ve laid out a down payment, you’ll need to give me the coordinates for your BMP. After I dig it up, I’ll pay the rest and you’ll give me the locations of your other goods. After that, we’re through. I’ll say my goodbyes in person, I won’t be at the funeral.”

“Let’s do it,” Joe told her and snagged a fry from her plate.

“Hands off the fries, asshole,” she slapped his hand away when he went for a second french fry.

“You said you were going to buy me lunch...” He feigned disappointment.

“I’m buying you a comfortable death instead, now get out of here before some of the gangsta types decide you’re just a crazy white boy and not a well armed monster killer.”



A week later Joe was settled into the Howard Home for Peace. His vitals were checked twice daily and pretty, but poorly trained nurses attended to his every need. Joe had never been treated so well in his life. Even his late wife did not seem to care for him the way these paid airheads did. They seemed earnest in their affections. If it were not for the morphine substitute coursing through his veins, Joe might have noticed the odd twinkle of cruelty in their eyes or the way they seemed to smile out of the corner of their mouths when he was turned to avoid bedsores.

His health had continued to drop like Icarus. The drugs made him see the inevitable plummet into the Mediterranean like diving into a calm pool rather than disaster. They also gave him strange dreams and nightmares.

After a few days he began to have a recurring one at night. A man in a white mask entering his room with an oversized needle which looked like something you would see in a period movie about nineteenth century mental asylums in his blue gloved hands followed by a tall, gaunt man with fingers so long and thick that they resembled baby arms. First the doctor would inject him with the needle and Joe would feel a rush that reminded him of the first time he made love to his wife. Then the doctor would fade into the shadows and the gaunt man would touch his abdomen with those arm-digits.

In the morning, Joe would rationalize these dreams as a pair of doctors providing him some sort of treatment in the middle of the night. One keeping his medication levels steady, the other palpating the mass growing on his liver, checking the status of his cancer.

The days faded into a blur with the drugs and pain warring in his body. He lost track of the calendar completely, but became slowly aware that his health was leveling off. The wax had resolidified and Icarus was no longer in a nose-dive, but gliding above the sea circling Crete. He couldn’t seem to catch a thermal or flap his barely functional wings, but he no longer felt like death was a day or two away either.

“Frankie?” Joe woke up groggy from the drugs, but he could clearly make out her African features and the signature beaded necklace she wore. “I thought we were through?”

“Well, Joe, so did I. I also thought you said you had a month, ‘at the best’. You’ve been here nearly six weeks.” She leaned over with a washcloth and dabbed some sweat off his brow. Leaning close she whispered into his ear, “If I hadn’t found a buyer for that APC, they would have kicked you out of here. Selling that thing bought you



another month or so. Plus, I figure I owed you a visit since one of those pistols you gave me saved my life last night. Those things go through armor faster than Uncle Chang's steamed dumplings go through me."

Joe was confused. He did not feel like he had been stuck in this room that long and he was sure he should have expired by now. "Help me to the bathroom, please?"

"Ain't that what the nurses are for? Forget it, they give me the creeps anyway." She gingerly lifted him into a wheelchair and rolled him to the bathroom.

Joe was stunned to see his reflection. Almost all of his muscle and fat had melted away, as he would have expected, but his skin did not have that yellow jaundice look he had grown used to over the last few months. He hoped the fan noise would keep her from having to whisper in his ear.

"Six weeks? I feel like I died a month ago. Is this Hell?" Joe could not be sure if he was really thinking that or if the painkillers were just making him loopy.

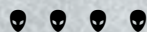
"Joe, you know this is Hell, just not the supernatural variety. It stinks in here, you know that?" Frankie grabbed another washcloth and some soap and helped wash his face and arms. "I can't keep paying for this place, I have other obligations. Were you like, I don't know, misdiagnosed or something?"

Joe knew that wasn't the case. He had felt the mass in his belly months before and knew something was wrong. At first his mind panicked and he thought he had been infected or impregnated with some new extradimensional entity. When no monster burst from it, he finally resigned himself to see a doctor. After a battery of tests the pronouncement was the Big C. He was confident that for once the doctors had gotten it right.

"No. There is something wrong. Or right, maybe. They give me all sorts of treatments, maybe something they're doing is prolonging my life. Hell, maybe they're curing the cancer behind the government's back. It wouldn't surprise me. Did you check out the company that owns this place?"

"Research hospice care? Why bother? I guess I never quite caught the same paranoia bug that your old friends had."

"Could you...could you call Cappy for me? I don't know that he'll take my calls anymore. Maybe they can do some research for me." Joe started to nod off again and Frankie merely nodded and helped him back to bed where he fell back into a hazy sleep.



"Wait, that can't be right, can it Beth? Isn't that the same parent company that owns that prison we checked out a few months ago?" Sean Ward, former Captain of the United States Army watched over the girl's shoulder as she hacked into a lightly guarded government database that tracked tax records of various corporations doing business in the New Boswash districts. Frankie called him a few days earlier to ask him for some help in investigating a hospice. She refused to disclose the details of why she wanted a deep background run on the Howard Home for Peace until they gave her a report, but he knew she didn't get involved in anything half-way.

"Yup. Both Howard and Arete are owned by Paragon. That's not all, Cap. Howard rakes in some big bucks. I guess dying is a profitable enterprise. I still have a machine trying to crack Howard's servers, but they're far more secure than anything the government uses. It is going to take some time to get through that encryption. And maybe Riley's help, too, Cap." Beth rubbed her temples and blinked her eyes.

"I think he's still feeling the effects of that booster drug he used a few days ago, and you know he doesn't do the computer thing all that well, Beth." Sean put a meaty hand on her shoulder and gave her a reassuring squeeze, "I know you can get in there."

"I can try a few other things before asking Riley to do the impossible. Check back in a few hours, okay?" Beth got up and went to search through a stack of banker's boxes filled with software in a variety of formats as Sean

headed out the door. Just outside stood Tennessee, a large caucasian of roughly the same size as Sean himself who never went anywhere, day or night, without a pair of wrap-around sunglasses that completely concealed his eyes.

"How about you, Ten? Find anything out?" Sean asked the human shaped bundle of muscle and sinew.

"Yeah, your idea did the trick. I had a buddy of mine fax them some faked data on a new patient and we've got an appointment to check the place out on behalf of dear old dad. Tomorrow about two, sound good?" Tennessee didn't wait for a reply, he simply paced off.



"Oh, aren't you two a lovely couple," the nurse in her pressed white uniform must have assumed that Sean and Tennessee were a couple. They shared a brief look of amusement but opted not to correct her. "So your father, Mr. Johnson, would be cared for in a room like this until his time comes," she showed them into a model room with better furnishings than either of them had seen in decades and gave her practiced speech as they began the nickel tour of the million dollar facility. For the most part, the tour was uninteresting, however the pair were able during the time to slip a few surveillance devices into the building, including a video camera with a light sensor that would track the loading dock area.

Two days later, Beth would download the video feed. The footage corroborated what she discovered on Howard's servers.

"Wait a minute, you mean to tell me that they're taking in dying people but not sending the corpses back out?" Sean's face scrunched up in confusion. "So what are they shipping out?"

"Okay, you see this?" Beth pointed to the grainy video feed. Two large men were using a pallet jack to move barrels onto a truck. "Not how you typically transport a corpse, right? My guess is that they're filled with...parts."



“And we’re sure they’re not cremating on-site or anything like that?” Riley squinted at the video display. “Of course, even cremations aren’t transported in industrial barrels, are they?”

“Oh, there is more. So after I finally got into Howard’s servers I checked on recent deaths. It is my belief that these two barrels in the video are,” she stopped and leafed through her notepad, “Mrs. Joyce Granger of Silver Spring and Mr. Mario Gonzalez of Bethesda. The records state they were shipped by coffin to the Mount Olivet Mortuary last night.”

“We better mount up, team,” Sean breathed a heavy sigh, “We don’t have the whole story, but Frankie was right to put us on to this.



Joe Morder, who should have expired three weeks earlier according to his diagnosis, was relatively sure he was in the throes of a nightmare until he heard a burst of gunfire and realized only the emergency floodlights were on. When the door to his room burst open the smell of cordite was fresh and the form of Captain Sean Ward was unmistakable.

“Joe? Of course, that’s how Frankie knew about this. Don’t worry, we’ve got it.” Cap turned to leave but Joe felt a surge of energy in his body.

“Wait, Cap! You guys shutting this place down?” He swung out of bed on hardly used legs and willed himself to stand. “I can help. Give me a gun.” Despite his condition, he felt strong and ready to fight.

Sean considered the rail thin man in a hospital gown a moment before pulling a pistol from his belt. He checked the weapon then handed it over to Joe. “You sure you can help?”

“I’ve got this.” Joe was resolved.

In the basement of the Howard Home for Peace, Joe, along with the team, killed several humans and one ugly creature none of them had seen before. While the last few weeks had been hell, he was now in paradise. He was also exsanguinating rapidly from a stab wound to the chest.

“Cap, charges are set and Riley says reinforcements are coming, it’s time to blow this taco stand and hoof it!” Tennessee shouted as a blond nurse charged him with a syringe. He fired twice, spinning the woman around and knocking her to the ground.

“Go,” Joe wheezed, “I’ve got the rest if you don’t mind handing me that AK.”

“No, Joe, we are bringing you with us,” Sean’s nobility was genuine, but futile.

“Cap, I’m dying. I was dying before I got here. This wasn’t me infiltrating a suspected den of horrors, this was supposed to be my comfortable death. Give me the damn rifle.” Sean obliged and Joe watched Tennessee yank him as though he were as tiny as Riley or Beth back through the stairwell door. He slid to the ground and steadied the gun as best as he could. Mentally, he began the countdown for the explosives placed by the building’s generator. More nurses came flying out of a door the team had not been able to breach and Joe fired over and over again until they stopped coming and he had only a few rounds left.

In his mind, he had maybe thirty seconds remaining and he told himself that the team had escaped by now. He looked at the ugly creature and recognized it as the thing which came to him at night. A stocky body, roughly humanoid, but with three arms placed asymmetrically around the torso. Each arm ended in a half-dozen pseudo-pods roughly three to four inches in diameter. Joe put a burst into the thing’s face despite it already being dead. “Screw you, whatever you are. You were supposed to let me die like a normal man. I suppose this is the way it was always supposed to be though. Live by the-”

Beth had the pedal to the firewall of the sports car the team had stolen for a speedy exit when the shockwave hit the light vehicle causing it to skid across the parking lot. “Any sign of pursuit?” she shouted after regaining control.

“No.” Captain Ward looked out the back window. His face was pensive.

Riley nudged him, “Sir...”

“What?” Sean asked.

“That’s what will happen to us one day too, sir.”



An Adventure Script

by Tim Bisailon

FOR HORROR RULES

## STORY

A rash of mysterious disappearances in the subway systems doesn't concern our players until a relative happens to be one of the latest disappearances.

## SETTING

A subway system in any city, anywhere in the world.

### *Hot Spot 1: Subway Platform*

The platform is the place where the recent disappearance occurred. It is nearly deserted except for a hobo who says he doesn't know what happened.

### *Hot Spot 2: Subway System*

In the tunnels that run underneath the city strange things are afoot. Though, those in the car do not see anything because the train passes by too fast. Also, the subway is where the party meets two officers patrolling for "terrorist" activity in the area and then encounters something more sinister.

### *Hot Spot 3: Hobotown*

Hobotown is a place to hold up and lick their wounds. It's also where the party discovers a child's drawing of what they might be up against.

### *Hot Spot 4: Arthropods Lair*

The Lair is an underground railway-turntable yard where trains used to be turned around. The turntable hasn't been used in centuries and is now the home of the Arthropods. A lot of old subway cars are here as well as the den where the queen resides.

#### **Goal:** Mystery

Players must solve the disappearance of a family member or friend (and others).

#### **Character Limits:**

Just like the *2 Unlimited* song says, "There's no limit"

#### **Style of Play:** Famous Last Words

This is a fun style to play if you have talkers in the group, if you enjoy colorful dialogue, or if you're just feeling mean. Before the game starts write out a couple of words or phrases someone is likely to say through out the session. Movie quotes like "Game over, man" "This is my boomstick" or "These are not the <insert noun here> you are looking for," or catch phrases like "Bazinga!" or whatever you know one of your players will blurt out during a session. Then during the game if anyone says the exact phrase (or close replica to it) spring a plot pusher on them.



## CAST

**Name:** Shoeless Sam  
**Character Type:** Action  
**Occupation:** Hobo With A Shotgun

**BLK:** 3  
**BRN:** 1  
**COR:** 4  
**WIL:** 3  
**Health:** 8  
**Grip:** 4  
**Move:** 4

### Skills

**Gun:** 4  
**Melee Wpn:** 3  
**Sneak:** 3

### Description

Shoeless Sam is a bum dressed in ragged clothes and his feet are wrapped up in rags. Although he is sneaky, his body reeks with a distinctive odor. He knows something weird is going on in the subway and he has armed himself with a shotgun he managed to acquire from a sporting goods store. Shoeless believes in a greater power and that he is on a quest.

### Weapons & Equipment:

Shotgun (he has named Holy Avenger), A Mickey Mantle baseball bat, a bottle of liquor in a paper bag, a roll of coins in a sock. In his various pockets he has 100 shotgun shells.

## WALK ONS

**Officer Winston Wesson:** Killed in event 3  
**Officer Kate Smith:** Killed in event 3

Various pedestrians, gang members, urban explorers that happen to arrive throughout the events when a player utters a "Famous Last Words"

## BAD GUYS

**Name:** One Huge Ass Arthropod

**COR:** 6  
**Fighting Skill:** Bite -10  
**Damage:** Moderate  
**Health:** 50  
**Weak Spot:** 6  
**Move:** 9  
**Grip:** Freak

**Description:** It's in the name. It's one Huge Ass Arthropod with the head of a beautiful woman. Standing 5 meters tall and has 8 limbs to hold you dearly.

**Vulnerabilities:** Fire. Kill it with fire!  
 All fire based attacks do double damage.

**Skills:** Sneak 12, Watchfulness 8, Melee 8

### Powers

**Poison Bite:** Successful bites inflict poison into the target. Difficulty -2 Light Damage if resisted. Sever Damage and paralysis if failed.

**Web Shooter:** Strands of silky, sticky webs to tie up lunch. Skill 9, range is short, attacks as a grapple with a BLK 5.

**Name:** Small Ass Arthropods  
*(as many as you can shake a stick at)*

**COR:** 3  
**Fighting Skill:** Bite 5  
**Damage:** Light  
**Health:** 4  
**Weak Spot:** 4  
**Move:** 9  
**Grip:** Scare

**Description:** These 3-meter minions live to serve their queen.

**Vulnerabilities:** Fire. Kill it with fire!  
 All fire based attacks do double damage.

**Skills:** Sneak 8, Watchfulness 5

### Powers

**Web Shooter:** Strands of silky, stick webs to tie up lunch for the mistress. Skill 6, range is short, attack as a grapple with a BLK 5.

## CHAIN OF EVENTS

### 1. WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS YOUR NAME

Our adventure opens in a bar where our heroes are sitting, sipping ale and watching a sporting event on the wide-screen television. There is a news update about mysterious disappearances in the subway system with full details on the News at 11. Players can make Brains checks to see if they have anything in the know about what is going on. If they make a check there is nothing of note but the disappearances have been going on for over a month now.

As this is going on, the brother of one of the PCs will call and chat he's at a subway platform waiting for a train to come and wants to know where they are at so he can hook up with them. Once the brother says, "I'll be right there..." he lets out a startled gasp and a cry of "WHAT THE HELL???"

Then the phone goes dead.

### 2. SUBWAY, NOT THE KIND WHERE JARED VISITS

Upon arrival at the nearly deserted platform, the players will discover the cellphone on the ground plus an icky substance on the wall. This is where Shoeless Joe appears. Although he's been sleeping on a bench and hasn't seen anything, he will tell the players that a lot of his friends have gone missing over the past several months.

### 3. THE TRACKS GO CLICKETY-CLACK

As the players investigate and wander deeper into the Subway tunnels they meet two officers who are on patrol who tell the players they are in a restricted place and should leave before they are arrested. The officers are looking for "terrorist" activity in the area. This is where the first wave of Small Ass Arthropods appears, and they are overwhelming.

If the players refuse to retreat, Shoeless Sam will appear with his Holy Avenger and plow a clearing for the party to retreat. He will take them to Hobotown to rest and lick their wounds.

### 4. WHO RUNS HOBOTOWN?

In an underground section of the tunnels is a series of makeshift shanties, lean-tos and other structures that look abandoned. Shoeless Sam will explain the reason it is empty is due to the mysterious disappearances. When the folks down here were disappearing on a frequent basis many of the homeless up and went top-side. Once Hobotown was deserted, ordinary citizens began disappearing from the subway platforms. Shoeless Sam will explain that there is a great evil at work here and that he has stayed behind to clean it up. Shoeless Sam has a child's drawing of what a little girl saw when she and her brother were venturing through the tunnels.

### 5. IT'S SPIDERS, MAN

Once the wounded have been tended too and no matter what the players decide they are set upon by another wave of Arthropods who come seeking more food for the den. It's only a small scouting party of 6.

### 6. THE EMPRESS OF ARTHROPODS

The lair of the Huge Ass Arthropods is in an abandoned section of the subway system, a huge train station where trains had once come to be turned around on the tracks and then sent off on their way once again. Her lair has several warrior arthropods and several victims cocooned and waiting to be dined on. Including the player's brother.



# LYSA LICKS SOME ZOMBIES

*Humor fiction*

by Bradley K. McDevitt

FOR LESBIAN NINJA VAMPIRE CHEERLEADERS...  
SAVE THE WORLD FROM ZOMBIES

*The following is a preview Incontinent Jellyfish Studios' upcoming tabletop role-playing game of NSFW Survival Horror comedy, produced in cooperation with Postmortem Studios.*

*Lesbian Ninja Vampire Cheerleaders With Chainsaws Save The World From Zombies is a satirical role-playing game for adults. Not that kind of role-playing... the tabletop kind. It borrows liberally from higher-education hijinks movies and shows, anime, hentai, kung-fu movies, classical horror literature, the Arthurian mythos, and a variety of exploitation movies, with a healthy dose of soft-core girl-on-girl action to add that extra jalapeno-pepper-sized kick.*

*In this game, players take the part of a very specific type of character: the eponymous cheerleaders of the title. Whereas in other games that will go unnamed for legal reasons, players get to choose they are a wizard, a warrior, a thief, a spy, etc., in this game, you play a vampire ninja cheerleader, and almost definitely a lesbian.*

*It is, to put it mildly, tackier than hell, and proud of that fact. So you have been warned: if you want to skip this story right now, our feelings will not be hurt. Honest.*

*We won't sit in a corner and cry.*

*Just hand us those Kleenex first, m'kay?*

*Assuming you're still reading, you might as well keep reading, so let's get on with the story...*



SOME TIME DURING the fight, Lysa Lyckz realized she had lost her panties, skirt, and somehow, even her favorite seven-inch spike heels. She had lost her shirt when the zombies had piled onto her: one had gotten hold of it and ripped it straight off, along with her bra. She had retaliated by ripping its head off and using it to bludgeon three of its comrades to a second, more final death before it fell apart. But that bit of improvised weaponry had given her time to gather her thoughts.

“Dean Lilith would rip my head off too for getting caught by surprise like this! Some ninja I am!”

Lysa knew she had committed the cardinal sin of life four years into the Zombie Apocalypse: letting her guard down. In her own defense though, Lysa argued with herself, she has been looking for a gift for her girlfriend Anna. Finding gifts for a woman that was turning 207, she mused, was pretty hard, especially when anything that valuable had been looted in the three years since the Zombie outbreak. Most of what was left in the ruins of this mall was ripped, bloodstained, or worse. She had miraculously found a nice, almost completely intact see-through nightie and was envisioning Anna posing for her in it when she was grabbed from behind.

© 2015, Bradley K. McDevitt

A group of zombies had gathered between her and the front of the store. As she could easily tell, all of them had been male before their deaths and resurrections: none of them had any clothes on, and at least one part of all their anatomies seemed to be almost too alive. Sometimes, she mused briefly, being able to see in the dark was not all that fun. Especially when looking entailed seeing a bunch of horny, stark-naked corpses. Tearing free of their claws and looking around for an escape route, Lysa could tell the debris towards the back of building was too high to get through before they tore her to pieces.

And she had dropped her chainsaw in surprise when they grabbed her. Not that that mattered that much.

Facing the horde of zombies, Lysa sneered.

“I may not be two hundred years old like my girlfriend, but I have learned a few tricks along the line! This little lesbian ninja vampire cheerleader is never completely unarmed! Let me show you rotten shit-heads why my friends call me Lysa Lyckz!”

With that, Lysa stuck her tongue out past the needle-sharp fangs adorning her mouth at the mass of zombies shuffling towards her. This was no juvenile act of defiance though. Her tongue instantly extended a dozen feet in length, hardening as it went to the density of quality steel. The point, now as sharp as a scalpel, plunged through the forehead of the closest zombie, killing it instantly.

Lysa’s tongue retracted and she spat rotten brain out. “Uggh. You taste worse than my last boyfriend after he’d done scrimmage!”

If her statement bothered the zombies, they showed no sign, stepping over their fallen comrade in their haste to get at Lysa’s body and brains... in that order, she noted, from the signs of excitement they were all showing. Her tongue snapped out again, catching one in the throat and slicing through its spinal cord. Unfortunately, that gave the rest of them time to pile onto Lysa, and she went down under a pile of ripping claws, biting mouths, and other body parts even more disgusting.

That would have been the end for her, if Lysa had still been human. It was sometime during this period

that she lost her clothes, but that was the least of her concerns at that moment.

“Dammit, get off of me!” One of the zombies was trying to take a bite out of her left breast. There was no time for finesse: Lysa unleashed her full strength, bringing her fist down on the top of its head, exploding it like a goo-filled water balloon hit by a sledgehammer. Another was trying to take a bite out of her calf: Lysa kicked it so hard in the chest its spine flew across the room to shatter against the perfume display counter, knocking a few intact bottles to the floor.

A weird mix of the smell of rotten flesh, lavender, and strawberries filled the air.

Another zombie managed to tear a chunk out of Lysa’s right thigh, causing her to snarl in pain. In addition, another had just ripped a healthy mouthful out of her left shoulder, which did not bother Lysa as much as the one that had managed to pry her legs apart and was trying to do something even more intimate than cannibalize her.

“Oh, hell no!” Unfortunately, Lysa had zombies holding onto both arms. Inspiration struck. Her tongue went snaking a dozen feet across the room towards her chainsaw to wrap around its handgrip, and then began retracting just as fast. Lysa felt a nearly blinding pain doing it, but a few seconds later, she had her chainsaw in hand. Her tongue let loose long enough to grab the choke and open it.

The zombie holding onto that arm stared in dim confusion as her chainsaw roared to life, then stared at nothing at all as she was able to wrench her arm free and chop its head in two at eye-level. The zombie trying to get frisky was next; as Lysa swung her chainsaw down to split him from skull to navel. Decaying internal organs sloshed out onto her stomach in doing so.

“I am so hitting the showers after this for, like, a WEEK!” That little bit of wanton slaughter was all that was needed. The other five zombies were quickly reduced to piles of something that looked hamburger a few weeks past its sell-by date. Lysa looked around

**LESBIAN NINJA VAMPIRE CHEERLEADERS WITH CHAINSAWS  
SAVE THE WORLD FROM ZOMBIES**



**THEY SAVE OUR ASSES. WE OGLE THEIRS.  
COMING SOON FROM POSTMORTEM STUDIOS  
THE ORIGINAL NSFW HORROR-COMEDY RPG**

*Politically correct it ain't...  
Remember Macho Women With Guns?  
It's like that...?*

for her clothing, saw that they had been shredded even worse than she has been, and shrugged.

“Won’t the first time I got back to campus *au naturel*.” She was relieved to see that Anna’s negligee had survived the fight unscathed. It took a few minutes to find a bag to carry it in, and she had to fight another three zombies exiting the mall, but an hour later, Lysa found herself trudging safely back into her dorm at Lickalottatatas.

Anna grimaced in disgust when Lysa came into their shared room naked and covered in zombie gore, then squealed with delight when she saw the nightie. After questioning her about what had happened and giving her a quick back rub, Anna hustled Lysa off to the showers, declining her invitation to join her under the spray. While she was soaking under the hot water, Anna called Amanda, a member of their shared Blood Harem, to come over to provide a quick healing snack.

An hour later, Amanda had departed, smiling woozily and a pint low, and Lysa was curled up in the doublewide coffin she shared with Anna. She was half-asleep, but woke up fast when Anna came into the bedroom, wearing her new negligee and nothing else.

She sat up, smiling. “Seeing you in that... makes fighting all those zombies worth the effort, lover.”

Anna let the negligee slide off her perfectly formed shoulders into a puddle of silk on the floor, then joined Lysa in their coffin.

“Lover,” Lysa whispered into Anna’s mouth as their lips met, “this is much more my idea of tongue action.”

And until dawn and the sun forced them to close their coffin to sleep the sleep of the undead in each other’s arms, she reminded Anna why all their friends called her Lysa Lyckz...

The End... for now!



BKM 2011



For more information and semi-regular updates of art and rules, including when this piece of trash finally gets published, join our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lesbian-Ninja-Vampire-Cheerleaders-With-Chainsaws-The-RPG/>



# A RED & PLEASANT LAND BY ZAK SMITH

A Review

by Eric Fabiaschi

FOR YOUR HORROR INSPIRATION



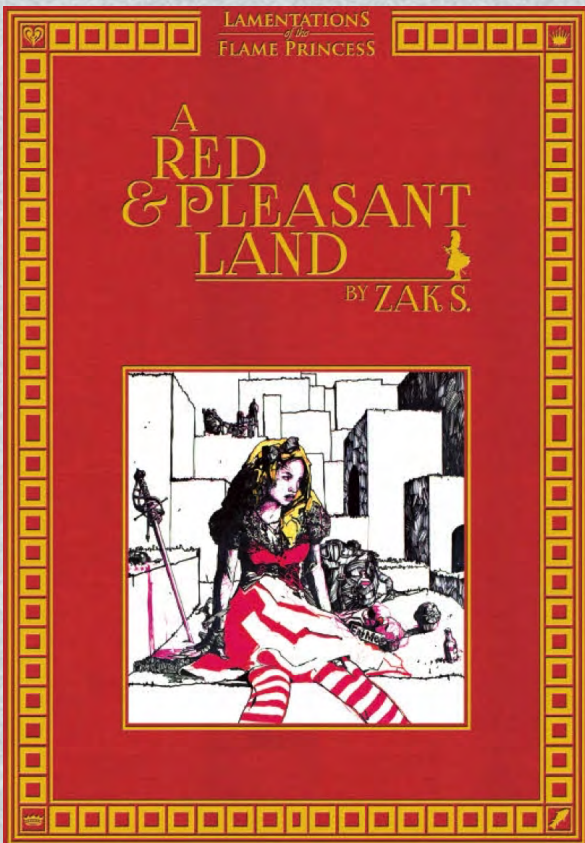
RECENTLY ASKED FOR a copy of *A Red & Pleasant Land* from James Raggi's *Lamentations Of The Flame Princess* after reading Tim Brannan's review of the book on his blog, **The Other Side** (<http://theotherside.timsbrannan.com/search?updated-max=2014-12-19T11:14:00-06:00&max-results=7>), and for the life of me I've been trying to process the whole of this book. It's part campaign setting, part art book, and part deep-end launch into Zak Smith's pick-up of the *Alice In Wonderland* stories tempered with legends and fairy tales surrounding Lewis Carroll's books shoved into a blender with classic *Dracula* set on nightmare and dream setting.

What's the book about? Well to be honest the back cover explanation doesn't convey half of the feel of the campaign kit/setting. It covers in broad strokes and artful descriptions a battle that has raged across time and space.

*A terrible Red King wars with an awful Queen, and together they battle into being a rigid, wrong world... and this book has everything you need to run it. (And any other place in your first, second, third, fourth or fifth edition game that might require intrigue, hidden gardens, inside-out-rooms, scheming monarchs, puzzles or beasts, liquid floors, labyrinths, growing, shrinking, dueling, broken time, Mome Raths, blasphemy, croquet, explanations for where players who missed sessions were, or the rotting arcades and parlors of a palace that was once the size of a nation.)*

*Zak S, game master on I Hit It With My Axe and author of the multi award-winning Vornheim: The Complete City Kit now brings the same do-it-yourself tables-and-toolkits approach and eerie magic to an entire distorted continent.*

Voivodja is an old land with its own all-encompassing setting: old, rotten to the core, and damned as well as dangerous. The place is thick with vampire courts, heroes, heroines, and things they get up to all bound within an unconventional book. Many of the characters of *Alice In Wonderland* and *Through The Looking Glass* have been re-imagined as ancient creatures out of European legend. A very old and very strange vampire royalty having their own agendas and viewpoints on the events surrounding a brand new character class that shapes the events within,



‘The Alice’. ‘The Alice’ is a new take on the ‘Specialist’ from *The Lamentations of the Flame Princess* as a heroine lightning rod for the adventure events surrounding Voivodja. The Alice plugs into every single heroine and princess of every dreamlike fairy tale and pop culture fantasy streaming through the collective unconscious.

Old School Rules (OSR) typically produce tons and tons of random tables and *A Red & Pleasant Land* has over thirty pages of them, but this book implements the tables as key parts of the setting narrative guiding the PC’s into the workings of the adventure setting. They range from the general encounter style ones, to spot adventure creation tables that happen on the fly; there are NPC generators and more all tied neatly back into the Voivodja setting. This happens over and over again tying the PC’s into the narrative of the dreamlike decayed fairy tale setting.

I’ve been reading reviews of *A Red & Pleasant Land* over and over the last few days then referencing back to the PDF. One thing that strikes me is how each person sees their own version of the setting of the Land of Unreason. This fact highlight’s the phantasmagorical nature of Voivodja as a campaign. The factions are at each other’s throats and warfare here can take the form of a game of croquet or the exploration of the setting’s adventure locations. These are not simple dungeons in the conventional sense nor are they mega dungeons with their own ecologies instead they’re almost artifacts of some old fairy tale echoing from older dreams as well as nightmares given a DIY D&D slant.

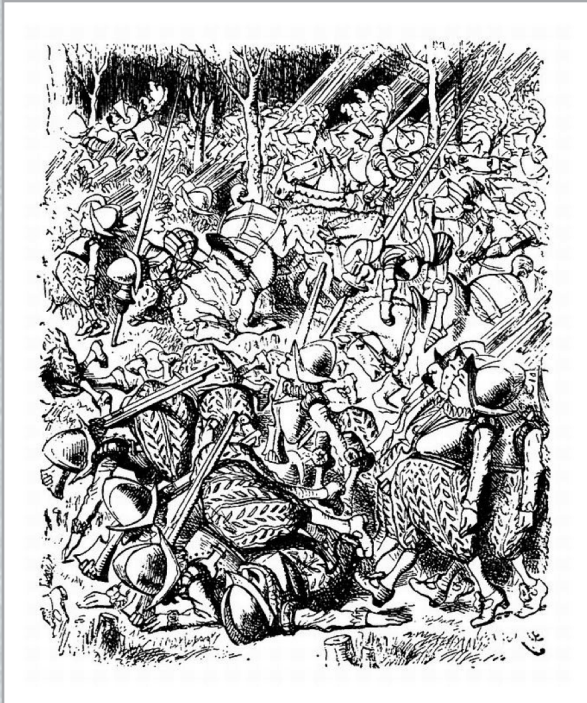
The book is filled top to bottom with Zak Smith’s artwork which set’s the tone for the entire book from top to bottom marking it as an art book as well as a roleplaying campaign setting. The book is very well done in the graphic’s regard. It’s a brutal art book and it takes no prisoners with its dark, decadent artwork reflecting the feel of the dreamlike Land of Unreason.

We’re given a tour of this setting with options to look into niches, crannies, and the dark spots, but there’s plenty of room to get into the deepest recesses



of the dreamlike realm. NPC’s have motives and reasons as well as complex chess-like takes on the state of things in the Land Of Unreason. Sometimes these goals and grudges stretch back centuries.

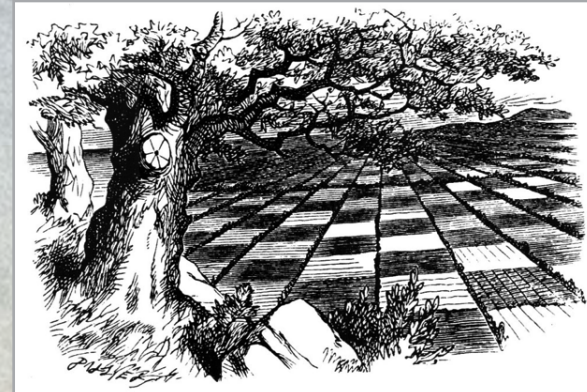
One thing about Voivodja, every single DM I showed this PDF in my circles of players and DM’s has a different view of the setting. Some see it as another classic take on the Alice novels and the vampire



literature. Still others have told me that it's a gateway-drug setting to a brand new take on using fairy tales as campaign settings. Still others have stated that this is a breath of fresh air for the *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* PRG system and boosts the powerful hero PC take that the game has had lurking in the backdrop since its release. *A Red & Pleasant Land* simply gives validation to this ideal with bells.

Voivodja is a mix of all of the above and then some. Does it break new ground? Yes and it does it with style as a campaign setting. Do I think that it will set the world on fire? Perhaps as a way to show other game companies that there is more than a few ways of creating graphic design as a gateway for presenting your game as a both an exhibit for your product ideals and as a character within the campaign setting. *A Red & Pleasant Land* is as much an RPG artifact as a campaign setting.

The longer I read *A Red & Pleasant Land* the more the setting plays and begs to be run. There are bits of horror, fairytale, and lurking spillage of a world that runs right below the mirrors and places of shadow



right behind our own world. The setting has as much of the modern running through its narrative as an alternative dimension as it is a D&D setting.

There are so many hooks lurking in the backdrop of the book that it begs to be connected with the rest of the *Lamentations of The Flame Princess* system but it could really be used with a great variety of other retroclones as well.

There are so many ways that this book could be plugged into games as a horror setting or as a completely different take on fairy tales. The author gives the DM everything he needs to take this setting and use it as everything from tool kit to complete campaign. The book can be dipped into a bit at a time or taken as a whole and used completely. My advice is to take the PC's there for a short visit and let them kick the tires of the setting and then see where this book takes them.

There is enough conflict for several years' worth of play at least here with plenty to deal with if not more.

I don't think that *A Red & Pleasant Land* is a perfect role-playing book but I do think that it's one of the best to come out in 2014. It's a good and solid hit for the *Lamentations of The Flame Princess*.

Do I think that you should buy this book? Yes and I'm going to purchase a physical copy as soon as possible.



# THE KAIJU CONSPIRACY

*A Gigantic Beastie*

by Tim Bisailon

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

*Below the thunders of the upper deep,  
Far far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep,  
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee.*

–Alfred, Lord Tennyson,  
The Kraken

*If it bleeds, we can kill it.*

–Dutch,  
The Predator

## KAIJU

# Appear:	1 (2)	Initiative:	3	Agility:	5
Attack:	95%	Strength:	30	Skill/Dam.:	5/20D6
Move:	10/15/20	Constitution:	45	Hits:	90/220

No one knows where or when these gigantic beasties first appeared but they presume that in one of the deepest trenches in the sea a proto-dimensional portal opened up allowing these huge monsters to escape and roam the earth. There is a word for them and it is tagged, *Kaiju*.

Kaiju is a Japanese word for “strange creature” but is often translated into big monster. The Kaiju stands 15-20 meters and have a spotted history on our Earth as well. Records have shown that there was an incident in Tokyo in the 1950’s but the devastation it wrought has been covered up as a natural disaster. Though tales have been cropping up over history of gigantic sea serpents taking out ships and eating sailors and passengers.

Huge beasts lived on the earth before but they were known as dinosaurs. Kaiju come in any size and any form but appear mainly as a bipedal beast.

**Game Master Notes:** In my games, the Kaiju is a biological brand of war machine created by an ancient and forgotten race now long dead. Their advance technology allows a huge robotic factory on the alien world of Kr’Ikan to produce these genetically altered “war machines” every few years and to send it out on orders to “destroy” the enemy at all costs.



# GEORGE WASHINGTON FOLKTALE

*Familial fiction*

by Marissa Severson with Herb Severson

FOR AN ALTERNATE TAKE

Its face, caked in mud and dripping at the chin with drool, glared up at me as I stood towering over it. It could not fight, nor could it communicate. Its only way of expressing any emotion at all involved a series of strangled growls and moans, and even that was brainless. Its eyes, olive and bloodshot, looked dirty as they watched my movements with lightning, paranoid speed. I applied pressure to the bleeding wound I had given it seconds prior, grinding the heel of my shoe into the bullet-burnt, bleeding flesh. Its arms waved raggedly and hungrily, almost desperately, and despite the fact it kept trying to draw blood its efforts were for naught. I watched the brainless work of the devil watching me, and as I pulled my hatchet from my belt, I felt a sense of pity for the groveling beast beneath me. For it was not its intention to become a monster; yet here it was, hours ago, eating away at the heart of a sheep while trying to break through the doors of a local family barn. It did not find what it was searching for, (thank heavens) but I suppose when all you can think about is your next meal, anything will do.

“George! George. More of these things are coming!” My partner and brother shouts in the distance. I look up from the demon, and raise a hand to shade my eyes from the burning summer sun. And alas, I find Percy waving his gun in the distant

fields and with a nod, recognize that as his symbol to join him, and move on.

Wasting no more time, I raise the hatchet I had drawn a moment before and in one swift movement, swing. The sound of the weapon taking its victim fills the quiet air and I bow my head as blood spills into the breeze, tainting everything in its sight. This is who I am; I am George Washington, Zombie Exterminator.

~4 Years Later~

*December 1, 1799*

Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, Virginia—about twenty miles from Alexandria—is the beautiful place I call home. My great-grandfather John Washington, migrated here from England and my father, Augustine Washington acquired land and slaves, built mills and grew tobacco. For a time, he had an interest in opening iron mines. Father married his first wife, Jane Butler and when she died in 1729, he married again to my mother, Mary Ball in 1731. I was the eldest of six children, who all except one other—my brother Percy—had died due to tuberculosis. At the young age of 16, my father died, leaving me the heir to the Washington land and ward for Percy, whom I'd done everything possible to give a



Production still from *Zombi 2* (detail) 1978 / Director: Lucio Fulci / Image courtesy: Arrow Films. Used without permission.

good upbringing. And to sum up the years since then, I had done my hardest to do my father proud and if I may say so myself, I have. 1786, At the Constitutional Convention, I was unanimously chosen as President. My patriotism, and sheer will to serve and protect my country guarantees me as an able and superior leader. But although Fairfax County, Virginia is beautiful place, it harbors a dark secret. Zombies lurk through the woods at night, limping and growling as they search, hungry for brains, human brains.



“Nonsense,” Percy tells me and shakes his head as he piles wood into the fireplace. “You’re mad.”

“What?” I ask him. “I can do it.” My brother insists that I can’t just kill all of the disgusting creatures. He’s wrong.

“What are you going to accomplish by doing this?” He drops the wood harshly into the fireplace. “Killing all of our men? And that’s if they even want to go.” He wipes his hands on his vest before standing and brushing off his crisp, black pants.

“*Our men?*” I scoff. “They follow *me* into war. Not you.” I sit on the smooth leather chair beside Percy as he lights the fire. I place my fingers on either side of my chin and slowly rub while pondering what I could possibly do. Gathering men able enough *and* brave

enough could take time. But I would get men, whether it be from my continuity as a fearless leader or from my reputation as a friend of the people. They all respect me, look up to me even. And they love me, adore me as a brother, a friend, a father.

“You realize this is quite possibly the stupidest idea you have ever had, correct?” My brother asks. His voice is quiet now, showing that despite his disapproval he cannot stop me. “You’ll kill dozens. Hell, we may not even make a dent in the population of those things.”

We have never truly discovered how and when the infection truly started, but we only know that anywhere past the woods on the far side of town is infected, covered with those things. We have fought them off for years, the best we can, but if we don’t take some drastic action then we stand no chance against the horde.

Wait that’s good, I better write that down.

I stand to grab my pen and journal when my brother taps my arm. Annoyance is clear in his eyes as he follows my fast pace to my desk.

“Are you even listening to me, George?” He angrily questions as I grab my things. I offer a nod as I hurriedly flip through the worn-out book, desperate to hold on to my train of thought. “I told you we need to think about this, the people will be afraid. ‘With fear comes chaos,’ remember? Father always said that. We need to listen to him, we need to think before we take such drastic action,” Percy glances

over my shoulder, curiosity sparking in his olive green eyes. “What are you writing?”

He snatches my journal. “Hey!” I don’t steal back my journal, but instead watch him as he begins to read. He scans each line carefully, assessing my words in almost a scientific way. That’s what Percy does; he analyzes things, sometimes too much. And he even acts as my conscience, always telling me when he thinks I’m going too far. I suppose these are one of those times.

“...these are tense times for the people of Fairfax County, Virginia. And we must work together as one people to defend ourselves and become a peaceful place again...” He reads aloud. I smile confidently. Hearing him read it makes it feel more real. More possible. My brother looks up from my journal, a look of inspiration covers his face and he watches me with a small smile.

“Let’s get to work.”



*December 13, 1799*

It takes weeks- two to be exact, before Percy and I gather enough men. 600 brave soldiers, able men sat out in the fields, bustling and cleaning weapons. Tonight’s the night we prepare to fight.

“At dawn we will head out,” Percy says to the group of men gathered around a long table. A large oil lamp sits in the middle, illuminating the assorted maps and planned strategies. The tent we are sitting in shakes softly from the winter breeze and I place my hands against my mouth, breathing heavily into the cold skin of my palms. “Unlike those creatures, we’re going to need the light. Going in now would just be suicide, we would be blind as bats.”

“Will we be flanking?” A gruff man asks while puffing lightly into a cherry-colored pipe. “Where are the beasts now? I don’t want to be snuck up on.”

I drop my hands from my face after getting them sufficiently warm. “They stand no chance against us. We are armed with guns, they have nothing but their dull claws and rotting teeth.”

“You sound *confident*,” The man replies.

I smile. “I am indeed confident.”

The heavyset man snorts. “Sounds foolish, you are naïve to think in such a manner. These zombies are unpredictable, dangerous and for all we know there could be thousands. They could far outnumber our men!” A chorus of whispers sounds across the table, men echoing their agreement.



“There is nothing to fear, there is no need for chaos. We are handling the problem and we will soon return to the peaceful place we were meant to be.” I raise a hand to silence the hushed conversations. “We are trained men- soldiers! Those creatures are nothing more than brain-dead pigs. There is nothing to fear.” I repeat, hoping that they will calm their petty worries and get back to business. It’s almost time to fight.

Sure enough, the pompous pipe-smoker nods, approving of my answer. But when I glance at Percy to assess his reaction he seems to be less convinced. His head is angled and his eyes are cast down, looking toward the floor. I had seen this before, he is afraid. Upon arriving here, a mile from the woods filled with zombies, my brother has expressed his uncertainty about the whole endeavor. “Are you sure?” He had asked me on many occasions. “You are too confident, brother.” He would say. I do not believe that I am overconfident but I am fairly certain we will be victorious. These beasts cannot beat men far more experienced and trained in combat with nothing but spoiled teeth and dull claws. My eyes venture away from my brother and toward the sky. Patches of blue begin to fill the sky and light the snow, reflecting and giving off a sparkling, diamond-like image. Dawn.

Clearing my throat over the still-evident whispers, I gather the attention of my brother and other men in the room.

“Suit up men, it is time to fight.”



*December 14, 1799*

The woods are darker than I had imagined, shadows is all that could be seen. We stop yards from the edge of the woods and anxiously await the zombies. No sooner than we had stopped and loaded our Flintlocks and Brown Bess’, the familiar scratchy moans and growls had begun to fill the air with an eerie foreboding. In the distance a faint shadow emerges from the darkness, emerging into a full, limping silhouette. And then the first shot was fired.

Boom.

And then another.

And another.

And another.

Shots were fired consistently. Men were firing and reloading, firing and reloading, firing and reloading until the skin on their hands began to burn. Confidence brewed in my stomach in the form of butterflies as I continued to shoot my brass pistols, consistently reloading

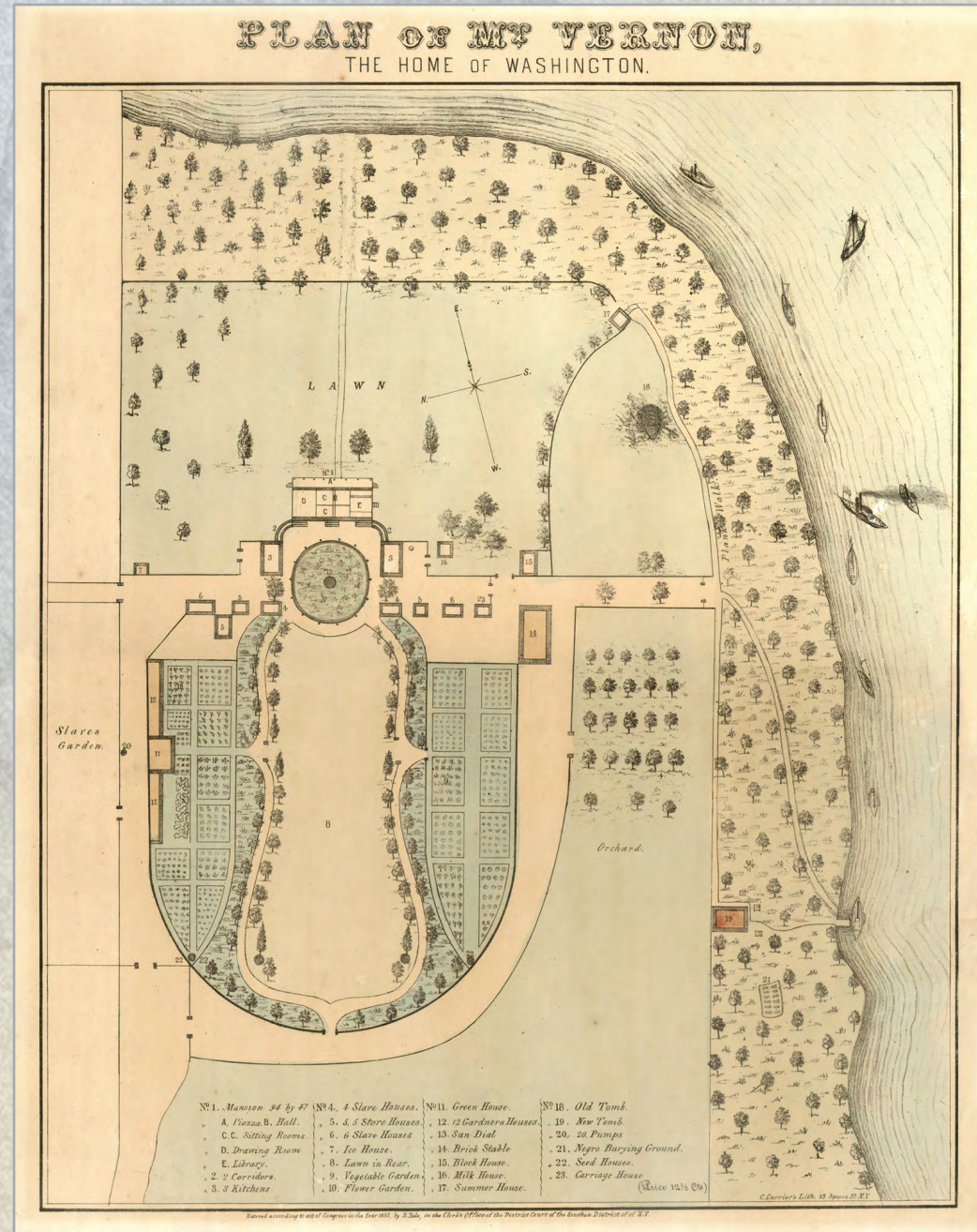
those as well. The zombies were advancing in bigger numbers but were still no match for us. Far ahead my brother shot his weapon before retreating back beside me.

The zombies had begun advancing even quicker. It was becoming harder to shoot them down, especially in the head, every time 20-40 of them came out of the darkness. We were getting slower. Men at the front of the fight were being picked off, slowly - one by one being dragged away and eaten; mutilated. Our consistent, efficient loading had stopped and men began shaking violently, dropping their ammo into the snow and being dragged away by their targets. I felt my own heart begin to pick up as I struggled to load my guns, resulting in one being dropped into the snow as a zombie approached me. Reaching behind to place my remaining gun back into my belt, I pulled out my sabre and swung, knocking the head clean off the beast. Breathing heavily, I continued to use the sword as more of my men were being picked off, screaming as they were being dragged away like rag dolls. My confidence from moments before had faded, being replaced by a familiar ache growing in my chest. Percy was right. At the thought of my brother I immediately killed another drooling zombie before scanning the field for him. And at last I found him, surrounded with another man by the creatures. He swung his own sabre as well as he could but when his co-fighter was overwhelmed, he halted his attacks to aid his fellow soldier.

"Percy!" I shouted as he was pulled from the man and thrown into an open piece of field. His weapon was sent soaring across the snow, so hard it nearly reached the edge of the woods. I wanted to run but my feet wouldn't dare move an inch. I was paralyzed not only in fear for myself but fear for my younger brother. Percy squirmed back, desperately trying to escape the beasts stalking after him and his face filled with fear of his approaching doom. He looked around the field, pleading for help when his eyes locked with mine. He must have seen, seen the way I was being surrounded myself. Seen they guilt I had began to feel full force. Yet all he did was nod, offering me the same small smile he had all the times before I had thought I was right, but no.

*Percy was right.* He tried to warn me that this would happen and I didn't listen, I had neglected any chance this could happen. And it's because I didn't listen that I am about to be killed along with my baby brother; a brother I was trusted by my mother and father to protect. My men were frightened in their final moments, causing them to make petty mistakes and reminding me of an old saying my father used to tell my brother and I.

"With fear comes chaos."





# END OF THE LINE

*An Adventure*

by CW Kelson III (Tad)

FOR LITTLE FEARS: NIGHTMARE EDITION

## INTRODUCTION

*End of the Line* is an adventure intended for the **Little Fears: Nightmare Edition** RPG created by Jason L. Blair, inspired by a single line from a song as well as a sighting of a possum late one night driving along.

*End of the Line* is a single-line adventure with a variety of circumstances to also investigate. There is no fixed location, city-wise, making it suitable for almost any campaign or series of gaming sessions. Instead it has a hybrid generic suburban feeling to it. There is a single entry point to the adventure with several potential branchings to add variety and difference to each game. This should provide a flow to the adventure, while still leading to the single end point.

One presumption made in the adventure is that all of the player characters live within a few blocks of a cul-de-sac. If that will not fit into an existing campaign then some of the locations will exist a little farther away than perhaps an actual child might wander away towards. Just adjust as necessary to make it work. Ideally behind the cul-de-sac will be some woods, a stretch of forest that somehow has been overlooked by developers. Perhaps an old family owns it and will not part with it, perhaps it is owned by the town or city and has been just forgotten, or the title and deed records have been lost or misplaced making it a legal limbo as to ownership. Whatever the reason might be, there are enough trees and forest like space to allow for wildlife to

exist as well as being expansive enough for a child to get lost in, and then the adventure can bleed over into other spaces and places allowing for total loss.

This is actually where the main monster, Mr. Accoon, has his lair. Inside the woods is a wooden shack, somewhat rundown and looking more like a refugee from a cheap horror flick than a functional structure. This is where those things and people he takes a fancy to obtaining end up. This is the location called The End of the Line.

(I admit I like the idea of Closetland and making monsters the most of this game)

## OPENINGS

Close to end of the school year, the days are lengthening and getting hotter and hotter. The teachers all seem a little more frazzled as tests are coming up, preparations for those events intensify as parents are all starting to secretly dread the upcoming summer vacation.

Standing there one day waiting for the school bus to arrive, several friends are all talking to each other, picking on each other, boys trying to gross out each other, when a lone dirty white sock is seen blowing along the street. There is no real breeze to speak of, so how

the sock is rolling and bouncing along is something of a mystery. Most of the children waiting for the bus will glance at it and then it will flee their minds. Of course those kids who know about monsters and such will have a strange ugly fluttering in the bellies. Like something unwholesome is watching them. If any of them look about, there is nothing too obvious to note, no strangers, no unknown cars slowly cruising, just a dirty white sock.

It stops moving, the sock, just exactly where the bus always pulls up at. So either everyone will have to step over it, or someone will have to reach down and pick it up and move it out of the way. This is the starting point to the adventure and is also the first branching that can occur.

Any adults at the bus stop, waiting with their children to depart on the bus, will be unable to visually see the solitary sock. Even if a child were to pick it up and hand it to their parent or another adult, that individual would not conceptually realize what it is. They will look at it, in disbelief or perhaps confusion, and then toss it away as if nothing had happened, as if it had never been given to them. Then they will go back to whatever they had been doing, talking, reading, texting, checking their social media, whatever it was. The incident effectively never existed in their adult perception.

Details on the monster *One Sock* are located in the monsters write-up section.

### **First Branching: Stepping over the Sock**

For most of the children, stepping over the sock will provoke nothing. If one child in the group happens to only have a single sock on, then they are in danger. Otherwise there is a random chance that one of the children, aware or not, of being noticed by the monster attached to the sock, One Sock. If it seems suitable to the GM to have one child over another be noticed then skip random determination. Otherwise presume a 1 - 10 chance of a child being noticed and then randomly determine which one it would be.

If a child is noticed by One Sock, then it will start to move towards the child. Over the course of the next few days of time it will lurk and wait for an opportunity to use the power it has to cause a sock to disappear. Once this happens then it will wait for the chance to use its main power of Disappearance to cause the child to disappear, like the sock.

This will result in a missing child report on the news and police interviewing and patrolling at school. All anyone will know is that night the child went to sleep in his or her bed and in the AM was missing. No



sign of foul play with windows and doors locked, no suspicions like lurkers being spotted. It was more like the child just snuck out and ran away. The incident seems to die down in a few days. GMs are encouraged to play up the grief, crying teachers, parents holding their children a little tighter, all signs of fear conveyed to the children in the area (including player characters).

### **Second Branching: Picking up the Sock**

If one or more of the children present at the bus stop decide to pick up and move the sock, or just toss it into their backpack, then the following starts to unfold with whichever one ended up with the sock. The sock is a lure sent out by One Sock (A Regular Monster) as a sort of test. If someone suitable or susceptible picks

it up then One Sock can establish a link to follow and find the target. It will find out immediately once the sock is touched and if the target is suitable (GM Decision) then One Sock will arrive in 1 to 3 days and begin looking for opportunities to steal a sock away from the character, or to find them out in public with only a single sock on, so then it can utilize its main power against them. There are so few targets anymore for poor One Sock, with the rise in flip-flops and a lack of shoes in the summer time that it is getting both lonely and, more importantly, hungry.

If the child that picks it up is not a PC then follow what happens in the first branching as far as time frames and when the child disappears. If it is a PC then in 3 to 4 days One Sock will come to visit them in their bed at night with a conflict between them. In a case like that even if the child should lose, the monster will retreat at the last moment (summoned by Mr. Accoon in fact to deal with another matter) leaving a confused youngster wondering what just went on in their home.

## TRANSITIONS

A few days after a disappearance occurs, making it about 8 to 9 days from the start of the adventure (where the sock was first sighted), the second phase begins. This is the prelude to the meat of the whole thing. In this section the characters should come to discover Mr. Dillo and Mrs. Ossum as well as hints of their main 'employer' Mr. Accoon.

From that point on it will move along rather swiftly, as the scary monsters are concerned with what the main one wants to have happen, and patience and planning are not their strong points.

### **Introducing the Supporting Lead Role**

If One Sock has latched onto a character then it will have to let either Mr. Dillo or Mrs. Ossum know about it. They are the ones tasked with keeping tabs on the regular monsters and they take their work very serious, much more serious than anyone or thing else would

or perhaps should. Mrs. Ossum treats other monsters like wayward children and Mr. Dillo as if they are a nuisance seemingly always in his way.

The two will be encountered in public as a pair calling each other Mr. and Mrs. leading adults that see them to consider them, indeed mentally file them, as a homeless married couple. Often times this will lead to gifts of cash or food as a result. Which suits the two of them fine, allowing them more time usually to observe potential targets for larceny which is what Mr. Accoon has them scouting for normally.

Of course if characters need to look about to find who is following them, they could lurk about the abandoned parking lot and the left over playground areas in the regular world. Other likely spots to look for clues or monsters could be behind any old packing plant or food processing area, including pet foods, that is located in the campaign city. Lastly likely spots to find monsters could be abandoned factories, textile mills, and empty shopping centers, places where clothing/fabric/textiles are present or used to be. The pair are mostly about in case the players need more adventure or to nudge them along, with strategic comments and clues potentially left about where other monsters might be hidden. The main monster to be encountered though would be One Sock.

## TRANSITIONS PART 2

So during this portion of the adventure the characters come into contact with other monsters and begin to see that they are out there, taking things and stealing items, identities, people, as well as actual places.

Mr. Accoon has a penchant to take things. When it was still an actual animal it was bright and shiny things, like trinkets and bits of broken metal. Once it came into contact with what caused it to change it took to taking larger things as well as other less tangible items like childhood, emotions such as joy and fun, as well as family connections. On occasion he will find someone or something so tempting that he will take

it and put it into his Trash Can sending it to a special place all his own in Closetland.

Just spending too much time in his presence and vicinity can make locations fade away from adult sight and records. This is how he has set up his location in the wooden shack out behind the cul-de-sac area. This is where he keeps many treasures, his beloved trash can and lid, as well as keys that allow for entry to his private location in Closetland using many doors scattered about the city.

One Sock will make a sock disappear as many times as necessary to get a child to be out and about all alone with only a single sock on. Then One Sock will strike, making the child disappear as well. Mr. Accoon will have taken an interest in that child based on the reports that come back to him through Mr. Dillo and Mrs. Ossum.

Mr. Accoon then directs those two to stay closer to the child in question, which is when, as the GM, you should report them lurking about always seen when the child gets on and off the school bus, out in public with their parents, at the mall, etc. This is the main clue that there is something going on.

Now should the character be out and about and alone where One Sock can use its real power, then the poor character, if it loses the struggle (which when one-on-one is what most likely will happen) then the adventure will shift to the characters striving to find out what happened and how to find the missing child. Of course if an NPC was the one that has disappeared the characters will look for signs of the one missing.

In that case then Mr. Dillo and Mrs. Ossum have been lurking about, looking for other likely larcenous opportunities for Mr. Accoon. This is when the characters could get wind of their strange nature. When they are close to children still in touch, still able to deal with monsters, they will be able to tell and of course will relay this information to Mr. Accoon, who will act depending on what is seen and relayed. The pair of monsters will let Accoon decide whether or not to pursue acquisition. If the characters are picked for the

taking, the monsters with their catch will be directed back to the cul-de-sac into the woods on to the shack known as the End of the Line (from a sign taken from a forgotten bus line hung over the door), to be put into The Trash Can and sent to Closetland.

At the base of it this adventure is about avarice and the taking of things that do not belong to those doing the taking. Be it a place, a building, an item, a piece of someone's stuff, or even an individual.

### **Sightings All Around**

There is a Mr. and Mrs. sighting along a common city street or location. At some point over the next few days of game time the two major monsters will start following the tagged character. This is because they are ordered to follow up on anything the regular monsters are doing. They are more like parents following around errant children than anything else.

They take these duties very seriously. So seriously that in fact they will be almost stalkerish once on the trail of something or someone. They will report back to Mr. Accoon at every change and turn in what is happening. They of course cannot remotely contact Accoon so one or the other will ferry messages and information as they feel it is necessary.

So as time passes, the characters are still attending classes as the school year starts to wind down, taking state mandated assessment tests, standardized tests all around, the two scary monsters are now following and tracking down the friends of the character or NPC that has become the focus of One Sock's attention.

So as the GM, make sure the characters keep seeing a pair of strange homeless people on the street, along odd corners, several blocks away from the school grounds, etc. All the while the scary monsters are relaying each sighting and what the characters are doing and where they are going, who their friends are, etc.

This is building up a picture for Mr. Accoon so he can decide when and whom he may add to his

collection of bright and shiny. Of course he may decide to take a particular child's stuff, or something inconsequential to anyone other than himself, or even a child. Unfortunately he is a main source of missing and lost children.

The characters will need to start following the homeless people they keep seeing out and about. Of course the scary monsters are not very observant of things that happen around them. They can pay attention on a single subject, but they also have to head back and relay what is going on. So this results in large gaps in what they see, what they know, what is going on around them. An enterprising kid could easily follow one or the other of the two main scary monsters, either Mr. Dillo or Mrs. Ossum, to the cul-de-sac or even the empty lot, both locations of which can lead to where the wooden shack known as the End of the Line.

Of course if the characters, or a single one, shows up there, then it will be a difficult fight as it might be a one PC versus 2 or 3 scary monsters, leading to almost inevitable defeat of the character and another missing kid to find.

Of course if this happens then the remaining characters should have incentive to find their missing friend.

## CLOSINGS TO THE END OF THE LINE

This is the End of the Line where the primary adversary, Mr. Accoon, has his main residence. It is situated in plain sight, while having been slipped just out of step with the majority of the buildings and locations around it. There are several ways that the characters can reach the End of the Line. First is a faint trail in the forest area behind the cul-de-sac, then there is the old forgotten central bus terminal downtown, or if they have some means of finding lost or forgotten items or locations that could easily lead to the location. They could as well reach the End of the Line by following one of the other two main monsters to where it is located. Perhaps a child could receive advice from somewhere that would point to a likely location of the place. Worst case is someone has been captured and is about to become either a main course or to be sent to the Trash Can, which then ends up at a mostly deserted portion of the Playground in Closetland. But that would entail an entirely new adventure to escape or be rescued from.

It is naturally all right if more than one method is used to arrive there. The important thing is to make it and at least send Mr. Accoon

packing off into the woods, hopefully to never be seen again (which is not very likely actually).

Once the characters think to follow the other monsters, or figure some other way to locate the main lair of Mr. Accoon, then they will find out where he is at, which is also where any missing children from earlier in the adventure will be found.

Eventually characters should find the woods, and either venture into them to find the shack or they will be able to follow one of the other monsters to the location. Without using Belief or Stuff, or by following, characters will not be able to find the End of the Line.

Of course ad lib and elaborate on the woods, remarking on how empty of sound they are, the forgotten feeling to them, a sense of no longer being in the world anymore. Instead the characters are now someplace more like a scene from Grimm's Fairytales than a portion of trees just on the outskirts of where they all ride their bikes and play, that they seem to have gone to somewhere else, not still in their world at all. Of course feel free to have odd sounds, strange creaking noises, sounds not natural to a suburban landscape all just barely audible.

Whatever steps they take to find the place, once there the characters will encounter at least Mr. Accoon. Depending on how it is pursued, the other scary monsters could easily have been sent away leaving only the main one. However if it seems appropriate then there could be up to four total monsters there, Mr. Accoon, Mr. Dillo, Mrs. Ossum, and One Sock.

Odds are the characters will be able to defeat any one of the monsters. If they work it to make sure only Mr. Accoon is in there, then once he is nearly defeated he will dive into his own Trash Can and escape.

That would mark the end of the adventure. The shack will remain hidden away. However once it is found then the characters would be able to find it again in the future, always giving them a way to reach Closetland if necessary.

## LOCATIONS

Following is a list of different locations within this adventure. Some will directly apply to the events that are possible in the adventure, while others are there to provide backdrop, background, or potential flavor and filler, expanding on the overall concepts of this scenario. They are presented to allow the GM flexibility and additional options without constraints.

## Single Street

Single Street is a residential street that runs close by where the cul-de-sac sits. This is a street where kids will end up walking up and down. There is a playground and another school farther down the road. Harris Lake Elementary School sits on this street with some shopping farther towards the downtown area. This is, for the adventure, the main street that connects most of the locations. GMs should detail it out as they wish to add flavor or leave it mundane for contrast.

## End of the Line

The End of the Line is an old wooden shack found in a chunk of woods located within the city limits. It is surrounded by woods and brambles, overgrowth, and scattered debris from trash heaps, street side debris, what looks like stuff that might have come from a demolished house. It is the size of a large wooden storage shed, about 15 feet long and perhaps 10 feet wide with a slanted roof that looks like it would not support any weight at all.

There is a single wooden door, very beat up looking, more like a cast off re-used one than the original fixture. Around the back of the shack is a small pile of wood that could be crawled or stood on to allow for looking into the single dirty pane of glass that is back there. Otherwise it is all overgrown with vines and weeds, the area around it is littered and trashed, with the rusted out skeletons of a couple of old cars sitting about 50 feet away just visible from the door.

A single metal sign, rusty, is nailed roughly by the door and it states:

### END OF THE LINE

This sign was taken from an old bus station and has become the motto as well as descriptive of the place's function. The shack is the main piece of Stuff that Mr. Accoon has and is the link to his space in Closetland on the inside. This is where he lives, he brings his treasures, and how he travels from the woods to Closetland and back.

Inside there are several old moth eaten ratty chairs, a rickety wooden table, a couple of rusted-over patio chairs (the kind you find on sale at big box discount stores in their lawn and patio sections) along with a large white-ceramic deep-sink that is rusted and filthy, and a huge beat up metal trashcan with a cinder brick sitting on top of the lid (which seems to be holding the lid down). There are cobwebs everywhere, a single futon with obvious mold growing on it against one corner, all serves as the main furnishings to the shack.



*End of the Line*

One other feature of the shack is that there is a door that opens into the old bus station. If someone at the bus station finds it and opens it expecting to go somewhere else, the door instead will take them to the outside of the shack in the back. The door is one-way only, leading from the station to the shack. Once the door closes on this side, it disappears and there is no opening available to head back. Instead a person or monster has to make their way back to the bus station by other means.

## Central Bus Station

This is the old abandoned bus station. It has been closed off with a new open one opened up a few blocks away. The central bus station was boarded up but occasionally squatters and homeless people will sneak in via loose boards to escape from the winter cold or violent storms. There is no electricity, no running water, a lot of trash, and urine stains over the interior area.



This is one location where monsters can be found on a regular basis. One Sock has been known to hide in here when it does not want to deal with either Mr. Dillo or Mrs. Ossum. The homeless that will hide here in inclement weather are usually too far-gone to even notice what is happening around them. If a child were to spend the night here odds are it would end up a captive or worse of one of the monsters. In that case the best result is for them to be taken to Closetland as a part of Mr. Accoon's treasures.

There are several deserted offices in there, a large area for buses to pull in and pick up passengers and then pull out the other side, as well as a very run down former lounge-like area with cracked hard plastic chairs still bolted to the floor.

There is a door out of sight far in the back of a closet that if opened with intent to go somewhere, will open onto the shack known as the End of the Line.

### **Harris Lake Elementary School**

This is the local elementary school in the area closest to the characters homes. It is a typical school, with a single storey, multiple portable buildings used as additional classrooms, and a tall chain-link fence all around the property. Use any local Elementary School as inspiration for layout and description.

### **An abandoned parking lot**

This parking lot sits behind an old strip mall. There are weeds, trash, debris, and other similar objects like

broken bottles and rusty cans that once had beans in them. The old strip mall has more stores closed than open and is a great hiding place for people on the lam or kids on the run. It is a rundown place. An old dumpster, in the middle back section, if someone crawls into it, will crawl out of a hole in the bottom of the structure and come out of a hole a dozen or so feet away from the shack.

### **An abandoned row of derelict houses**

This row of houses stretches about five blocks long. Most of the houses were foreclosed on, while others were just abandoned and never take care of. In the wintertime some of them will house squatters, especially at night or in heavy snowstorms or blizzards. Adolescents and similar types have taken over one or more for clandestine underage parties. There is a surprising lack of damage or vandalism in this area. It is more a very run down than crime ridden in area. Another excellent series of locations for kids to hide out at or to encounter monsters just prowling about.

## ENCOUNTERS

### **Scary Monsters**

These three are the main threats in this adventure. Mr. Accoon is the toughest of the three, being the one causing the blight to fall across the playgrounds and school grounds, that authorities have incorrectly blamed neighborhood decay on.

Each of the three has physical similarities to the animals they are modeled after.

(Note: The author did see, driving from work heading home, a Possum in the road snacking on some sort of road kill. It was about 3 or 4 feet into the street and I did swerve to ensure I missed it. The little critter only seemed to glare at me for the intrusion. This led to the character Mrs Ossum that led to this adventure.)

Remember a Scary Monster will always add One Dice to any roll they make.

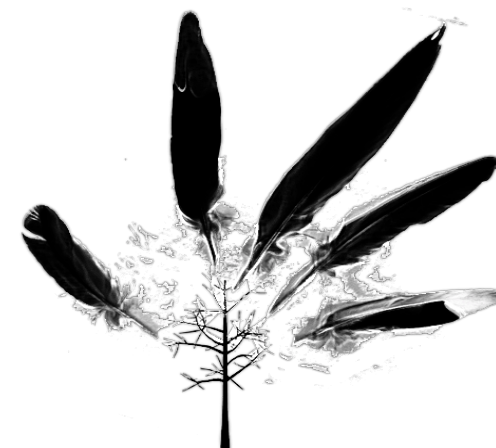
## Mr Accoon is Scary Monster

Standing a good 6 feet tall, if he would stand up straight that is, Mr. Accoon is heavy in the body with dainty, delicate looking hands. Think in anthropomorphic terms for the appearance. On the inside Mr. Accoon is a raccoon at heart and soul, made manifest as a monster of stealing things as well as pretending to be more human than it could ever be.

This monster was a raccoon that was so greedy and obsessed with shiny objects, it so wanted to be like a person it eventually took on a human form and now seeks to steal more and more and stash it all away in its space in Closetland.

This monster is scary when it is pulling something into its grasp

It wants to steal everything it finds interesting and shiny.



### Abilities

**Fight:** ØØØØØØ

**Grab:** ØØØØØØ

**Chase:** ØØØØØ

**Scare:** ØØØØØØ

### Qualities

*It is a Raccoon turned into a Monster (+3 Dice)*

*It moves silently in the darkness (+3 Dice)*

*It holds on tight to anything it has in its grasp (+3 Dice)*

*It is istracted by anything shiny (-3 Dice)*

### Virtues

**Health:** 40

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ØØØØØ	ØØØØØ

**Terror:** 8

### Stuff

**The End of The Line Shack** ØØØØØØ

Door into Closetland by way of his Trash Can (+2 Grab)

The Trashcan (If a character ends up in it they will be transported to Closetland)

Makes things in the area fade from memory (Think -2)

Lots of shadows to hide in (+1 Scare)

Too much stuff inside (Move -1)

**What Long Sharp Claws those are** ØØ (+1 Fight)

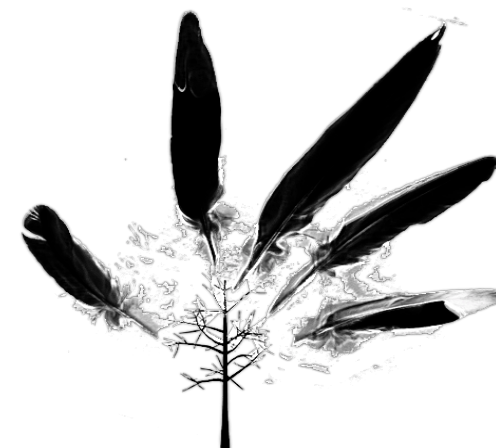
**What Large Eyes that make it hard to evade** ØØ (+1 Grab)

## Mrs Ossum is a Scary Monster

Mrs. Ossum is always hunched over, dressed in stained rags and hand me downs, wearing a brown coat appearing darker for having never been washed, and pushing her old rusty metal supermarket shopping cart. She wears a variety of old hats with flies about them at times. She moves very slowly with a strange sideways look to her, always cocking her head to look at anyone. Never faces them directly if at all possible. She and Mr. Dillo are just barely into the scary monster category.

This monster is scary when she cackles and rubs her pasty paw like hands together

It wants to be human



### Abilities

**Fight:** ØØØØØØ

**Grab:** ØØØØØØ

**Chase:** ØØØØØØ

**Scare:** ØØØØØØ

### Virtues

**Health:** 40

OOOOO	OOOOO
OOOOO	OOOOO
OOOOO	OOOOO
OOOOO	OOOOO

**Terror:** 9

### Qualities

*Is a Possum turned into an old lady like shape (+3 Dice)*

*Eats anything rotted and doesn't get sick (+3 Dice)*

*Hides in a tree (+3 Dice)*

*Can't stand the daylight (-3 Dice)*

### Stuff

**Really old clothing** ØØØ

Makes her look homeless (+2 Dice to hide, evade, run away, etc.)

**Long Nails and Sharp Teeth** ØØØ (+1 Fight and Grab)

**Really Big Feet** ØØ (Able to run twice as fast when trying to get somewhere)



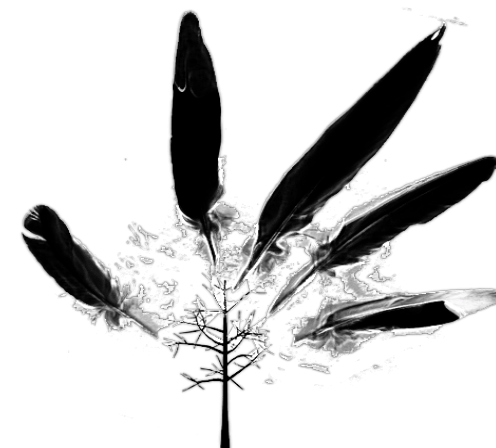
## Mr Dillo is a Scary Monster

Much like Mr. Accoon and Mrs. Ossum, Mr. Dillo is short, stooped over, with no patience for children. In appearance he is a short, stooped over, hunched back looking man. Dressed in multiple layers of rags and dirty clothing, as if hiding, or perhaps is using them as protection. This monster is scary when she cackles and rubs her pasty paw like hands together.

He and Mrs Ossum are just barely into the scary monster category.

This monster is scary when it hunches over and starts running right at you

It wants to become human



### Abilities

**Fight:** ØØØØØØ

**Grab:** ØØØØØØ

**Chase:** ØØØØØØ

**Scare:** ØØØØØØ

### Qualities

*Is an Armadillo that is turning into an old scary man (+3 Dice)*

*Hunches up to make itself harder to hurt (+3 Dice, Fight only to avoid being hurt)*

*Hides in the woods, ready to pounce if needed, or to watch and report back (+3 Dice to evade, etc.)*

*Loses heart and hides when outnumbered or outgunned (-3 Dice Fight)*

### Virtues

**Health:** 40

OOOOO		OOOOO
OOOOO		OOOOO
OOOOO		OOOOO
OOOOO		OOOOO

**Terror:** 8

### Stuff

**Like an Armadillo** ØØØØØØ (+2 Fight, defensive only)

**What Long Sharp Claws those are** ØØ (+1 Fight)

**Old Stinky Clothing** (+2 Dice to hide and run away)

## One Sock is a Regular Monster

When a child first sights One Sock the eye is immediately drawn to the lack of shoes, and only one dirty, very dirty, white sock on a single foot. Sometimes it is the left foot, sometimes the right. Mechanically it should make no difference, but the appearance of the rest of the monster differs if it is the left or the right sock that is on.

When the sock is on the left foot it has a humanoid-like appearance of a washing machine. The stomach is a front load round circular area with dirty washing always sloshing about. The color is like a rusted piece of steel when in this appearance mode.

When the sock is on the right foot, then it is more like a shiny dryer, still with a front opening spot, with what appears to be a white and black socks all endlessly, soundlessly, spinning around.

The face is the same in both circumstances, like a metallic, tin foil-like, hairless mannequin with hands made of hard green plastic and feet that are almost human looking, but with only a single sock on. At all times it wears a heavy woolen coat that can be buttoned up to conceal its nature. Oftentimes One Sock will also have on a grungy baseball style cap that changes from time to time to reflect local sports teams, legends, urban myths, etc. Basically things that might end up on a tee shirt that would go into a wash, could be on the front of the baseball style cap.

One Sock is very close to becoming a Scary Monster with potential to be more.

Whenever it is close to other people there is the sound of a dryer going around and around. This is the sound that signals it is able to make something disappear. If someone cannot hear it, due to deafness, ear buds, too much background noise, then One Sock cannot utilize the Disappearance Power. The dryer sound changes to a washing sound when in the washer appearance mode. Again if someone is not able to hear the sounds, then the Disappearance Power cannot be applied to that character.

Made up of the frustration of losing a sock in the washer or dryer, it came to life when one too many socks disappeared. Now all it wants is to add to the sock collection, along with the occasional child to sort out all the solitary socks it has accumulated, and to keep them all washed and dried.

This monster is scary when you can hear the washer/dryer sounds

It wants to steal socks and children

### Abilities

**Fight:** ○○○○○○

**Grab:** ○○○○○○

**Chase:** ○○○○○○

**Scare:** ○○○○○○

### Virtues

**Health:** 30

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○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○

**Terror:** 6

### Qualities

*Is a Washer/dryer come to life (+3 Dice)*

*Steals away things that are solitary (only one of them) (+3 Dice)*

*Can't go out in the rain (-3 Dice)*

### Stuff

**Dirty White Sock** ○○ (+3 to track a child)

**Laundry Appliance Body** ○ (+1 Grab, +2 Fight when stuffed inside)

**Makes it go away** (Spirit Drain 1 Pt and -1 Think, only if they have a single sock on their feet)

### REGULAR MONSTERS

These are additional encounters that can be used to either bring home a point, to soften the characters up before another encounter, or to provide a sense of futility and struggle to this adventure. None of the monsters in this adventure might be called a conventional sort of monster by *Little Fears: Nightmare Edition* standards. Instead they are more manifestations of the influences around them, more products of the environment than anything else.

## FLAVOR TEXTS AND RANDOM THINGS THAT WENT INTO THIS ADVENTURE

- ☛ Gazebos
- ☛ Coffee House
- ☛ Wall Hugging
- ☛ Overgrown Weeds
- ☛ Homelessness (or the semblance of)
- ☛ Abandoned Homes
- ☛ Foreclosures
- ☛ A whole couple of blocks basically forgotten about
- ☛ Living for a short while on the edge of a cul-de-sac growing up and the two bike accidents that happened on it
- ☛ Obscura Atlas Web Site
- ☛ Things forgotten old, discarded, lost, thrown away
- ☛ An old empty schoolground: Hints that it might lead to someplace else
- ☛ Rubble
- ☛ Falling out of touch / Growing Distant
- ☛ Bad Breath
- ☛ Buses
- ☛ Bus Lines
- ☛ Central Bus Terminals

## INSPIRATIONS

- ☛ Signal To Noise Mailing List (Long Defunct)
- ☛ Cats Laughing Music Group
- ☛ The Flash Girls Music Group
- ☛ Urban Fantasy
- ☛ Gerry Rafferty's Song *Baker Street*
- ☛ Al Stewart's Song *The Year of The Cat*
- ☛ The Movie *The City of Lost Children*
- ☛ Song *13 on High* by a group called Why? (Unable to locate online anywhere, only heard part of it once, where the title comes from in fact)

## AFTERWORD

This is the second adventure for LF:NE that the author has created and shared in PDM. He would like to thank the creator of the game, Jason L. Blair, for allowing others to play in the setting he has created.

For more about the game visit the following links:

<http://www.littlefears.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/105593031044/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Little-Fears-Nightmare-Edition/200180022714?fref=ts>



# THE ERTURIU - THE WORM'S GRAIL

A Brand New Drug

by Eric Fabiaschi

FOR OVER THE EDGE

*"I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom."*

--- Edgar Allan Poe

SCIENTISTS WORKING FOR the Pharaohs created The Erturiu, a genetically-modified tape worm, at the end of the last Ice Age before the coming of 'The Floods'. The Erturiu has been in suspended animation beneath the Sea of Galilee all this time and has only recently been awakened from their hidden inner Earth temple by operatives of the Pharaohs who smuggled Erturiu holding chambers of steel and brass to the island of Al Maraja through a series of import and export companies.

The Erturiu appear completely human but share several small inner organs with the *retru*—a genetically modified tape worm—that extends their life spans and consciousness. The worms create enhanced senses enabling the priests to perceive nearby alternative dimensions and realities. Each worm passes on layers of itself, which the priests expel, which are dried and passed on as sacred 'gifts' to unsuspecting victims. These poor fools think that they are receiving a sacred sacrament and in point of fact they are. For other victims the *retru* is simply another drug of recreation and its reputation is growing. But what does the drug do? It passes along the larva form of the worm, which passes through its host's nervous system and modifies the poor fool's perceptions. A riot of sound, light, and alien vistas assault the victim day and night causing them to think that they are experiencing the effects of a mind-altering drug. In point of fact the worm is destroying the mind, spirit, and soul's defenses of the 'Outside'. The poor fool's brain is modified from within as the worm microscopically destroys parts of the brain that keep us from being completely overwhelmed by interdimensional stimuli. Those infected with the sacrament are completely under the domination and

**Type:** Drug Conspiracy  
**Rep:** New Drug Gang  
**Brief:** A conspiracy group with connections to the Pharaohs. This group has recently been awoken from the bottom of the ocean from their ancient vessels of brass, mystic steel, and inner world metals to share their sacred sacrament with the world. Al Maraja is the perfect venue for their blessed drug to be fed upon by the masses of humanity to bring them under the heel of their true masters the Pharaohs.

**Allies:** Monique D'Aubainne  
**Enemies:** Movers

unconscious control of the Erturiu. The priests use these victims as interdimensional 'lightning rods,' allowing these victims to be dangling dimensional apertures and naturally occurring dimensional fissures. Everything from astral parasites to internal demons is drawn to these victims, which are used by the priests to gather intelligence, forbidden knowledge, and much more. The priests have telepathic and Ur power over these victims up to a range of 700 miles as per their sacred number. They often serve the heads of the Pharaoh conspiracy by sharing their telepathic links and their valuable insights with their masters.

Victims of the worms can return to semi-normal lives by committing a series of cleansing exercises each day, which in fact is telepathic contact with their Euturiu masters. This allows the worm to bleed off memories, perceptions, and more, in what can be described as a telepathic off load. Many insights and key intelligence gained by the cabal's cults are shared with the D'Aubainne family.

The Erturiu pass themselves off as an offshoot of a sacred 'Grail' cult operating under the heading of a forgotten blood line of knights and monks passing on sacred knowledge and sacraments. On the street operatives of this group are known as 'Grailers' who offer a new high better than anything before seen. They pass themselves off as a simple street gang. So far their numbers are so small that they are more hearsay and many merely pass them off as nothing more than rumor and urban legend.

There have been several instances of the retru's mature form bursting forth from the skulls of unfortunates whose body chemistry has been incompatible to the worm. The Grailers have been able to buy off and cover up the four instances of this happening within the Edge's shantytowns and one instance within one of the wealthy mansions of Al Maraja. But agents from other rival conspiracies are growing wise to the presence of something new on the island and there have been several discreet inquiries into the details of these deaths.

## POSSIBLE USES FOR THE ERTURIU

The Erturiu represents a growing threat to many of the conspiracies and cabals upon Al Maraja. They are actively and selectively recruiting from among the rich and poor of the island nation. At the moment they are recruiting the 'invisibles' and 'not seen.' The janitors, cleaners, garbage men, etc. are all being slowly chosen and recruited through the island's clubs and social scene. The Grailers move among

the party atmosphere as sharks in deep water, unseen and silent. From among the rich they target secondary social elite: the best friends and companions of popular figures, as well as family. Many of these individuals fall for the self-improvement courses, and meditation workshops offered by The Erturiu under the 'Grail Fellowship' simply another harmless quasi-cult entity on an island nation filled with weird organizations.

The Erturiu are gathering strength and intelligence for now but several high profile assassinations of seemingly random individuals has attracted the ire of three of the better-known conspiracies. Which ones are up to the Game Master.

The Erturiu represent a priestly arm of the Pharaohs and a dagger in the night if used correctly by the DM. They operate near Al Maraja's waterfront and holiday areas. Being relatively new to the island nation, they are still getting their feel for the country. They are cautious, dangerous, and have access to several highly placed officials within the government of the island country. It is only a matter of time before there are dust-ups with agents and operatives of the conspiracies on Al Maraja.

## CONNECTIONS OF THE THE ERTURIU WITH OTHER CONSPIRACIES ON AL MARAJA

The Erturiu have some very deep agendas and dangerous goals on Al Maraja. Here are how some of the major factions react to discovering them.

The Glorious Lords would be absolutely furious to find a 'Holy Grail' gang on the island and the Satanists would see it as their holy mission to destroy this cabal merely on principle. The Erturiu are aware of the Glorious Lords but remain unimpressed at the moment and remain hidden.

The Glugs are actively searching for The Erturiu and know who as well as what they are. There have been clashes in the distant past and they are not happy that these monsters have awoken in the modern world. Page 125 has details on the Glugs.

The Kergellians accidentally contacted The Erturiu in a June 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 shoot out incident that was prompted by one of the Kergellian operatives being exposed by the The Erturiu's agents. The incident was quickly covered up by both sides and details remain sketchy.

The Mr. Lethuys want to destroy The Erturiu and operatives but are still not entirely sure who is a member of this dangerous

group. They are at the moment gathering intelligence and using their eyes to try and find this danger to the Lethuy's agendas.

The Movers are only vaguely aware of The Erturiu but not their origins. The Movers are trying to track down rumors and such. There have been several incidents of violence between operatives and details remain sketchy at best.

The Neutralizers are not happy at all. They are aware that a new threat has reared its head on Al Maraja and are actively working to destroy the new threat but details of them remain sketchy at best and several of their operatives have been eliminated. They are now trying to track down who eliminated some of the Neutralizer's operatives.

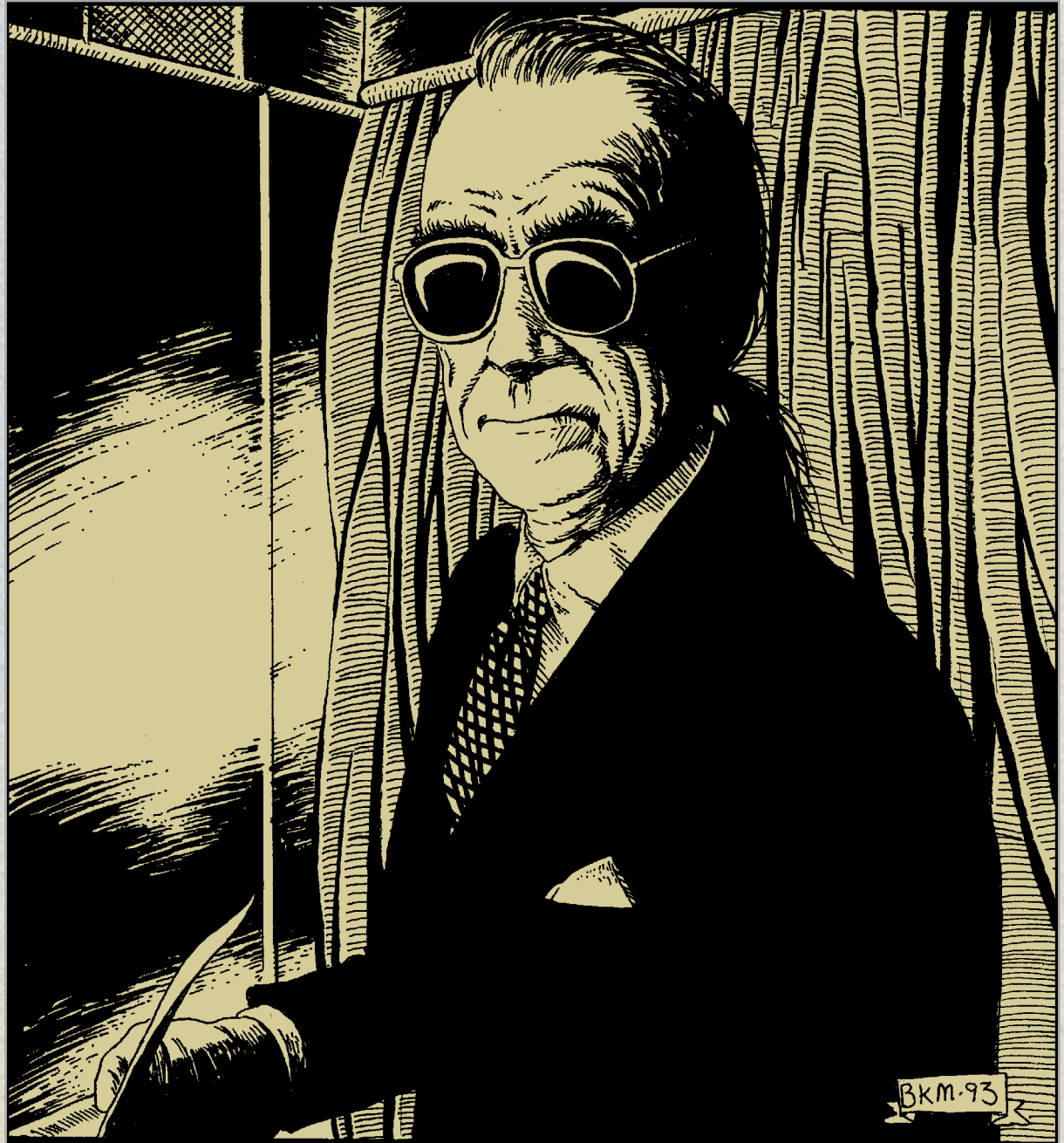
Otto's Men stumbled upon several of The Erturiu's drug sales and meetings. They beat the high holy hell out of The Erturiu's agents and killed one. But they are completely unaware of the group's agenda and couldn't care less.

The Sandmen have proven to be one of the greatest threats to The Erturiu offering nothing but destruction to them. Only time will tell what course relations will take. But now it seems that it can only end in blood.

Dr. Chris Severson has been made aware of several pieces of The Erturiu puzzle but is completely unaware of the extent or where the pieces fit. The good doctors may get around to dealing with the cabal but they have got their own hands full at the moment with events on Al Maraja.

The Erturiu have two operatives among the Sommerites at the moment.

Thockmorton operatives have clashed repeatedly with The Erturiu but so far it has been a stalemate and this bothers The Erturiu incredibly. Thockmorton operatives seem completely immune to the gifts of The Erturiu. The how or why of this is unknown and the priests of The Erturiu do not like unknown qualities. It makes conquest for their masters messy.



# FROM UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS

Acute Opinion

by Lee Williams

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## THE 23 ENIGMA

Taking into account our humble publication is largely inspired by, and often about, conspiracy weirdness it would be remiss of me to not cover the number 23 on the occasion of our twenty-third issue.

Some years ago in an interview in Fortean Times, Robert Anton Wilson recounted this tale:

“I first heard of the 23 enigma from William S Burroughs, author of *Naked Lunch*, *Nova Express*, etc. Burroughs had known a certain Captain Clark, around 1960 in Tangier, who once bragged that he had been sailing 23 years without an accident. That very day, Clark’s ship had an accident that killed him and everybody else aboard. Furthermore, while Burroughs was thinking about this crude example of the irony of the gods that evening, a bulletin on the radio announced the crash of an airliner in Florida, USA. The pilot was another Captain Clark and the flight was Flight 23.”

Wilson and co-author Robert Shea made the so-called 23 enigma a part of their discordian epic, the *Illuminatus Trilogy*. In the books the Discordians abide by the “Rule of Fives”, which 23 fits into somehow because two plus three equals five of course.

Another source of inspiration for several of the games we cover is the “Max Headroom” series from the mid-1980s. It has all the cyberpunk elements you could want: a dystopic corporate-ruled world, the birth of artificial intelligence, ineffective politicians, paranoid security goons, and the single largest television channel in the world which is called Network 23...coincidence?

Back in the real world, look at the amount of sportsmen from different sports who have worn 23. Basketball, ice hockey, soccer, baseball, some of the all-time very best players from those disciplines have used the number...coincidence?

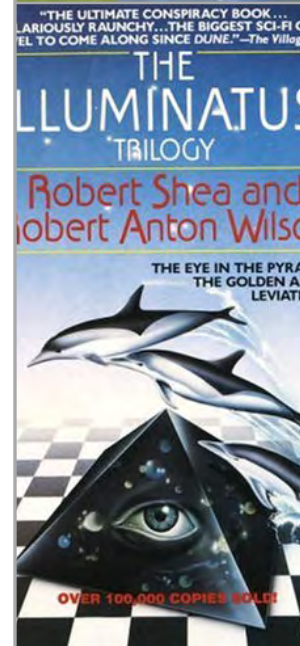
There have even been movies dealing directly with aspects of the 23 enigma. 1998’s “23” is a German movie based on the true story of a young man who started out back in the days of online bulletin boards swapping conspiracy theories inspired by his love of the previously mentioned *Illuminatus Trilogy*. This led eventually to some serious hacking and the involvement of the KGB and other agencies.

Not based on a true story, 2007’s “The Number 23” stars Jim Carrey as a guy who starts to fixate on a strange novel given to him by his wife. Apparently a murder-mystery story, the book is also full of strange numerology that twists around itself and eventually starts to twist his life. There might be some mileage in this one for an *Over The Edge* or *Unknown Armies* game.

Why not consider dropping strange numerical hints into your game some time, even if they aren’t actually clues? We all know how much players love chasing false leads after all.

That’s all from me, so I shall now 23-skidoo!

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# protodimension magazine



## CLIVE BARKER



<i>Born</i>	Clive Barker 5 October 1952 (age 62) Liverpool, England
<i>Occupation</i>	Author, film director, screenwriter, producer, actor, playwright, painter, illustrator and visual artist
<i>Nationality</i>	British
<i>Genre</i>	Horror, fantasy
<i>Known for</i>	Writer, film director, and visual artist best known for his work in both fantasy and horror fiction
<i>Website</i>	<a href="http://www.clivebarker.info">www.clivebarker.info</a>

Source: [Wikipedia](#)