



DARK MATTER™

Supernatural Conspiracy Roleplaying



Wolfgang Baur and Monte Cook



d20 DARK MATTER™
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WOLFGANG BAUR AND MONTE COOK





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This product requires the use of the d20 MODERN *Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, and Charles Ryan. Rules mechanics are based on the d20 MODERN *Roleplaying Game*, the original *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and the new *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

Sources for this product include the *ALTERNITY*® *Science Fiction Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicsek and Richard Baker, the *DARK•MATTER*™ *Campaign Setting* by Wolfgang Baur with Monte Cook, the *DARK•MATTER Arms and Equipment Guide* by Rich Redman and JD Wiker, and "DARK•MATTER: Shades of Grey" by Andy Collins in *Dungeon*® magazine (#108).

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U.S., CANADA,
ASIA, PACIFIC, and LATIN AMERICA
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton WA 98057-0707
(Questions?) 1-800-324-6496

ISBN-10 0-7869-4349-1



620-10769720-001-EN
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Printing: September 2006

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
Hasbro UK Ltd.
Caswell Way
Newport, Gwent NP9 0YH
GREAT BRITAIN

Please keep this address for your records

ISBN-13 978-0-7869-4349-4

d20, d20 MODERN, d20 *Menace Manual*, d20 *Future*, *Dungeon*, *URBAN ARCANA*, *ALTERNITY*, *DARK•MATTER*, *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, D&D, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the U.S.A. and other countries. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental. Printed in the U.S.A. ©2006 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.ffff

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Introduction

Think back to every story of alien visitors, psychic powers, occult lore, unexplained miracles, strange cults, and secret societies that you've ever heard . . . then imagine if they were all true, and your job was to investigate them.

d20 DARK•MATTER™ is a game about *terra incognita*, and about the part of the world ordinary people never see. It's a setting that assumes our world is anything but dull and predictable; that, in fact, we live in an occult world, full of secrets and invisible forces we can't readily understand. Deep mysteries and the unraveling of the truth are at the heart of *d20 DARK•MATTER*.

d20 DARK•MATTER is about like-minded people investigating that which lurks on the fringes of human understanding. These individuals seek to make a better world, to expose its secrets, and cast a very bright light on the things that hide in the dark. In short, these extraordinary people—let's call them heroes—crave anything but an ordinary life.

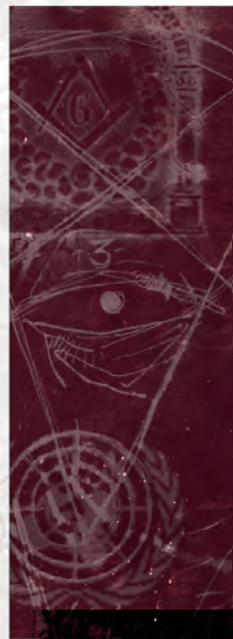
THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

d20 DARK•MATTER takes place in the real world . . . almost. It's about conspiracies and cover-ups, hidden truths and unfathomable mysteries, and monsters (some human and some not) that prey on humanity for their own ends. It's a modern world in which suspicion has displaced trust, a world where belief in the strange is replacing belief in the normal. When pressed, most laugh off such claims, or at least ignore the greater implications of such beliefs. But every now and then, something unexplainable occurs—something that shouldn't have happened the way it did, or that surely can't mean what it seems to suggest. It is at precisely those moments when the façade of comfort drops, and we can't help but wonder:

What if it's all true?

Welcome to a world of the peculiar and unexplainable, a world where the "can't be true" has been replaced by the "anything is possible," a world where mysterious players weave a drama of secrets and disinformation. A Dark Tide is rising, and danger and intrigue lurk in every shadow. The only weapon capable of holding back the darkness is knowledge: knowledge of what's out there, what it's trying to accomplish, and how to stop it.

Everything you know is wrong.
-The Firesign Theatre



TEN THINGS TO KNOW

d20 DARK•MATTER blends fantasy, horror, dreams, ghost stories, and science fiction into a potent brew of the paranormal and the paranoid. Call it “pseudo-science fiction,” if you will. Whatever you call it, *d20 DARK•MATTER* falls into the genre of things that might be, or at least ought to be, true. Television shows such as *The X-Files* popularized this genre in the 1990s, and popular novels such as *The DaVinci Code* keep the genre alive in the twenty-first century.

In keeping with the spirit of secrets revealed, here are ten basic truths about the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting you should know before you go off in search of werewolves, Elvis, or the Loch Ness Monster:

1. Leave the danger to the professionals! The heroes of *d20 DARK•MATTER* come from all walks of life, but they have one thing in common from the outset: the Hoffmann Institute. For reasons known only to itself, this private organization (detailed in Chapter 1) has sought out extraordinary individuals from around the globe and gathered them together to learn about the growing darkness and, if possible, to stem the tide.

2. It's about the real and the unreal. The heroes of *d20 DARK•MATTER* are normal people who have been awakened to the realities of their world and thrust into decidedly abnormal situations. In addition to dealing with ordinary life in the twenty-first century, they're facing conspiracies and horrors that would drive most humans mad. Yet for them, investigating the unexplainable is just another day at the office.

3. Truth is stranger than fiction. The unknown doesn't come in simple, easily digestible bits. It's not like a puzzle, because all the pieces don't fit together. Moving lights in the sky often exhibit properties that could be attributed to an alien spacecraft, but not always. Sometimes it just doesn't make sense, and no explanation can cover it. Why do frogs sometimes fall from the sky? No one's come up with a plausible guess. Not all of life's mysteries come with a ready explanation, which guarantees that examining the unknown never becomes routine. The more our heroes learn, the less they understand.

4. One investigation begets another. A *d20 DARK•MATTER* mission usually begins with a straightforward paranormal investigation. The weird thing is, once the heroes start looking into, say, Bigfoot, they learn that sasquatch sightings often occur in conjunction with UFO sightings. While looking into UFOs, they uncover government cover-up conspiracies. Suddenly, Bigfoot seems less important than a secret plot to sell the human race into slavery. Paranormal investigations have a way of becoming hopelessly entangled, and before long the heroes will be thoroughly wrapped up in all of it.

5. The only thing harder than keeping a secret is learning one. For all of their efforts, Hoffmann agents must resign themselves to the fact that much of what they're investigating is, by its very nature, unexplainable. Still, they can savor the sweet taste of success when they finally confront the truth and secure it for study . . . or blow it to pieces with automatic weapons.

6. The heroes become part of the conspiracy. As the heroes complete missions for the Hoffmann Institute, they begin to amass secrets of their own—secrets they're forced to keep from the general public, “for the good of humanity.” Simply put, there are some truths the world isn't ready for. Even if the heroes capture El Chupacabra or learn the truth about the Bermuda Triangle, the Hoffmann Institute doesn't approve of their agents speaking candidly to reporters or sending their memoirs to book publishers. Not that ordinary folk would be willing to except the truth anyway.

7. Knowledge is its own reward. The Hoffmann Institute provides its field agents with the equipment they need to complete their missions, and the work pays the bills. Heroes working for the Hoffmann Institute do not seek glory or money. They seek knowledge—the rarest of all treasures—and they take great satisfaction in attaining it.

8. No investigation is as straightforward as it seems. For this reason, heroes work in teams. The Hoffmann Institute assigns agents to “field teams,” usually numbering four (although smaller and larger teams are possible). Ideally, each member brings some unique talents to the team. The best field team is greater than the sum of its parts, and Hoffmann agents quickly learn that trust among teammates is vital for survival.

9. Heroes die. Although the Hoffmann Institute takes great pains to assign field agents to missions they can handle, it's difficult to predict what might go wrong during a field investigation. Sometimes heroes get killed in the pursuit of the truth. But at least they died doing something *important*.

10. The truth is worth dying for. When the Hoffmann Institute loses one or more of its agents, it recruits and trains new ones. Its quest to save humanity—from itself, if necessary—cannot be allowed to end in failure. New agents must learn from the mistakes and misfortunes of their predecessors. The future of the world depends on it!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To run or play in a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign, you need the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. Gamemasters (GMs) will find the *d20 Menace Manual™* supplement a valuable resource for ready-to-use *d20 DARK•MATTER* monsters and supporting characters.

Chapter 1:

The Hoffmann Institute

It is the responsibility of intellectuals to tell the truth and expose lies.

—Noam Chomsky

The *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign assumes that the heroes are recruited by the Hoffmann Institute, a private organization dedicated to investigating paranormal phenomena.

The heroes come from all walks of life—teachers, college students, dilettantes, detectives, librarians, you name it. However, these aren't your ordinary men and women. Their minds have been opened up to strange new possibilities, or perhaps they've survived encounters with the paranormal. In any event, the Institute devotes considerable time and resources to find and recruit them, in the hopes that their perceptions and experiences can help the organization face the terrible threats that conspire against human existence.

Heroes begin the campaign as raw recruits assigned to Department-7, which oversees investigations of paranormal phenomena. Their first assignment as field agents might seem mundane at the start, but the deeper the investigation goes, the more it spirals into the realm of the bizarre. Their first encounter with the paranormal is intended to test their teamwork skills and sanity. If both hold up, the agents are quickly promoted to full-fledged field operatives and handed stacks of paranormal case files to investigate.

The Institute provides resources and guidance to its field operatives. The degree of such help depends on the experience of the agents (and the players playing them). Veterans can expect less assistance from the powers-that-be than newbies. In any case, it's never a good idea for heroes to rely on outsiders to do the job for them.

OVERVIEW OF THE HOFFMANN INSTITUTE

The Hoffmann Institute is an independent “think-tank” organization ostensibly devoted to developing alternative, non-polluting energy sources. Under this veneer, however, the Hoffmann Institute is dedicated to preparing humanity for a cosmic shift due to occur in the year 2012—the end of the Mayan calendar. Institute operatives gather evidence of the paranormal and psychic phenomena in a desperate attempt to learn what is required to ensure that humankind survives after the cosmic shift concludes in 2013.

Bankrolled by former German diplomat Tomas Hoffmann, who was more interested in Nakami's access to the technology of Nikolai Tesla than to his political goals, the Hoffmann Insti-

tute was born in 1917. After Hoffmann's death, the organization used its mandate of investigating alternative energy sources to conceal a secret agenda—saving humanity from what Institute insiders call the “Dark Tide,” the steadily rising level of dark matter in the galaxy. The presence of dark matter “feeds” certain psychic and arcane entities, and the Institute expects their power to reach its zenith in December, 2012. Since such entities have traditionally used their abilities to menace humanity, it follows that this period will pose the worst threat to human survival since the last ice age. If humans aren't ready, they won't survive. Dr. Itohiro Nakami, Director of the Institute and Hoffmann's former associate, theorizes that any species capable of controlling dark matter might one day command one of the great forces of the universe, and he fears that if humanity fails to master dark matter, it will inevitably be overrun by other species that can.

One symptom of the rise of the Dark Tide has been a global increase in arcane and psychic phenomena. After Tomas Hoffmann passed away in the 1970s, Nakami used the trust fund that Hoffmann had set up to step up the Institute's investigations and operations. The Hoffmann Institute aggressively recruits anyone who displays supernatural abilities and shows an interest in learning to control them. It also attracts “normal” people adept at investigating and handling paranormal threats to the human race.

The Hoffmann Institute doesn't routinely engage in violent actions, but its mandate of collecting and studying alien and arcane artifacts sometimes brings it into conflict with other groups with a similar agenda. Institute operatives must sometimes destroy artifacts that would otherwise fall into the wrong hands.

In most instances, the Institute operates covertly, although certain members of various government agencies are aware of the Institute's true mandate and activities. Agents of the Hoffmann Institute frequently claim to work for one of these agencies, turning it around so that it seems like their positions within the Hoffmann Institute are their cover stories. However, even an agent captured and interrogated by enemy forces can do little to betray the Institute; every scrap of knowledge is given on a need-to-know basis. Only the highest echelons have a clear picture of just how much the Hoffmann Institute knows, and what it's keeping from the rest of humanity.

The Institute does not seek fame for its actions and takes great precautions to keep its more unusual activities from coming into the public eye. To the general populace, the Institute appears to be nothing more than a private think-tank engaged in research on such subjects as alternative energy sources and various fringe topics. A public website proclaims the Institute's mission as “Improving the Human Condition.” Teams in the field often pose as reporters or scientists involved in routine investigations of strange incidents.

Even those within the Institute are often kept from knowing too much about its activities. To ensure this, most department chiefs or field directors lead specific city branches for no more than five years. After this term, the Institute inevitably transfers the chief or director to another city. In addition, only Director Nakami himself knows the precise size of the organization; each division supervisor knows how many agents and researchers report to him or her, but not how many answer to the Institute as a whole. Conservative estimates put the size of the staff at

around 2,300 in the U.S. and 800 overseas (this estimate does not include part-time staff or contract employees).

Although the Institute doesn't appear to make a profit, its sources of funding elicit much speculation. In fact, the UN and certain departments within the U.S. government foot part of the bill for the Institute's operations, though the Institute's practice of occasionally working at cross-purposes with those groups makes the whole arrangement seem more than a little questionable.

Recruitment

The Hoffmann Institute recruits heroes for a variety of reasons. Whether it targets a specific individual based on her skills, her background, her paranormal abilities, or simply due to an encounter with the unusual, the process is generally the same.

First, the Institute researches the target's background. While criminal activity won't scare the recruiters off, they definitely want to know whether the hero can handle encounters with unexplainable phenomena. Sometimes a strong will and strong arm are enough for recruitment, but usually the Institute looks for more.

Assuming the background check passes (and most rejects won't ever know it happened), a member of the Institute approaches the hero, actively recruiting her assistance for some minor task. The job might be as simple as supplying a piece of information, or it might be as complicated as sheltering an

Allegiance to the Hoffmann Institute

All heroes gain an allegiance to the Hoffmann Institute as soon as they join the organization (see *Allegiances* on page 37 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*). The Institute need not be a hero's first and only allegiance. However, any hero who leaves the organization loses this allegiance and its benefits.

Heroes with an allegiance to the Hoffmann Institute gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with other members of the Institute, including auxiliary personnel. In theory, they should have an easier time acquiring information or resources from other Institute members. However, success isn't automatic; after all, staff members have their own jobs to do, regardless of whatever crisis the heroes might bring to them. In addition, some desk-bound Institute members resent the autonomy and authority of the field agents and take a certain perverse delight in denying them resources that they could just as well share. Sure, it's pathetic and petty, but sometimes that's just how people are.

injured agent. The Institute will most likely not even identify itself, instead posing as a private entity, or rarely, a government agency. The test involves the hero's trustworthiness and willingness to help.

Once these two hurdles have been negotiated, the Institute calls in the recruit for her first mission. Typically, she'll be teamed with three to five other recruits on a simple training mission—a straightforward investigation, a research trip, or some other job with a low potential for danger. Assuming the recruit completes the mission to the satisfaction of her supervisor, a promotion to agent is usually forthcoming. On rare instances, a second training mission may be required; however, if the hero fails to achieve full membership status after a second try, the Institute almost never extends a third offer.

Structure

As far as the public knows, the Hoffmann Institute has three divisions: the Administrative Division, the Analytical Division, and the Archiving Division. These divisions take care of the organization's day-to-day operations and serve as screens for more covert activities. Members know that the Institute has a fourth arm—the Intelligence Division. This division's job includes gathering data and retrieving evidence. Unbeknownst to all but the most highly placed members, the Institute also maintains a Special Division that deals with black ops, direct contact with alien beings, and other particularly messy situations.

A division supervisor leads each of the five divisions, and these individuals report directly to Director Nakami. Department chiefs and field directors (or facility chiefs, in the case of the Administrative Division) make up the bulk of "upper management" of the Institute. A single department chief oversees each department within the five divisions; for example, the Analytical Division has four department chiefs, one for each of its four subdivisions (see below). Field directors and facility chiefs supervise the day-to-day operations of their department at each Institute branch office, though every department is not necessarily represented at every facility. Typically, the Institute draws these individuals from the ranks of agents, fellows, and researchers; however, because turnover at high levels is relatively slow, such promotions are few and far between. These individuals have greatly increased responsibility, but also enjoy access to resources, materials, reports, and information that field agents simply don't ever see. Along with the perks come additional dangers: Department chiefs and even division supervisors sometimes disappear or are found dead, the victim of foul play by one of the Institute's many enemies.

The agents, researchers, and fellows that comprise the bulk of the Institute serve as the heart and soul of the organization. These brave men and women are sworn to secrecy and work in the most dangerous areas of espionage, paranormal research, and alien contact. Though many of them may never see the face of the enemy, all of them have a role to play in tackling conspiracies and alien infestations that have withstood the challenges of centuries.

Recruits are watched closely by a facility chief in the Personnel department (see below), who reviews their work and either recommends them for promotion or releases the recruit from employment.

At the bottom are the auxiliaries, specialists who provide expertise to the Institute on an occasional basis in exchange for information or a simple paycheck. Many of these associates are simply engineering, manufacturing, computer, or military specialists. A few know the truth about the Institute's mission but happen to work elsewhere (often in the U.S. government), and these auxiliaries actively support its goals.

Administrative Division

The "suits" make policy, prioritize cases, and authorize the use of force in particularly difficult cases. More often, however, they simply try to keep the rest of the Institute on track and under budget; most executives are equal parts bean counter and inspirational speaker.

The Administrative Division includes the following five departments:

Department-1: Facilities & Accounts. This department oversees dozens of offices, labs, warehouses, and remote-testing facilities owned or leased by the Institute. It also oversees payroll, disbursements, expense reports, and all the other financial minutiae of modern business.

Department-2: Legal. The Institute does not maintain a large internal legal department; instead, it retains the small but aggressive firm of Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen to supply its legal counsel. Based in Baltimore, the firm also has branches in New York, Houston, and Los Angeles.

Department-3: Personnel. Responsible for recruiting new staff from all areas of society, Personnel performs background checks, psychological and physical testing, and surveillance to determine who is mentally and physically capable of performing the often unusual work required by the Institute. Less well publicized is its role in assessing its current employees for loyalty, performance, and mental health. Problem staff members are referred to Security.

Department-4: Security. The Institute tries to keep its business to itself. This means that when things go wrong, the Institute security officers don't call the police. All break-ins, security breaches, firefights, murders, and so forth occurring on Institute property are investigated entirely by Department-4. Unlike the other departments in the Administrative Division, Security uses a title hierarchy identical to that used by the Intelligence and Special Divisions.

Department-5: Training. This department keeps Institute members current on research and technology trends. Its second (and less publicized, though more popular) responsibility is keeping operatives fresh. Toward this end, it often sends burned-out researchers or Special Division operatives on "training vacations" to warm, tropical locations where they can learn scuba diving and maybe even relax for a little while.

Administrative Division Hierarchy

- Division Supervisor
 - Department Chief
 - Facility Chief
 - Senior Fellow
 - Junior Fellow
 - Secretarial Member
 - Recruit
 - Auxiliary

The Hoffmann Institute



Intelligence Division

The “spooks” of the Intelligence Division operate out of Washington, D.C., where they have ample opportunity to work with or against members of the FBI, NSA, DOD, CIA, and other intelligence-gathering groups. They include code breakers as well as the more traditional cloak-and-camera spies.

The Intelligence Division includes the following five departments:

Department-6: Directorate. The Directorate operates almost entirely from a secure compound located somewhere in the Scottish Highlands. Its twelve members keep dossiers on Institute employees and enemies alike and file weekly intelligence reports and policy recommendations based on the information provided them by the rest of the division.

Department-7: Paranormal Investigations. Dr. Nakami is known to take a personal interest in the affairs of this department, which specializes in the hands-on investigation of paranormal cases. Unless the GM decides otherwise, all heroes are members of Department-7.

Department-8: Image Acquisition. IA staffers are primarily hackers and satellite communication engineers; they buy, beg, borrow, or steal images from national satellites as they are transmitted to receiving stations on the ground. These “eyespies” are joined by a small staff of Signal Intelligence Officers. The Institute usually recruits these fellows from the U.S. Army Signal Corps or the NSA. They concentrate on intercepting, decrypting, and translating TV, radio, digital, and telephone signals from around the world.

Department-9: Observation. The Observation department specializes in cultivating human contacts from other groups (what they refer to as “resources in position”) and in placing their own deep-cover agents in other groups. As a result, they are widely scattered, with field directors running operatives in almost every city where the Institute has a presence.

Department-10: Information Retrieval. This department of the Intelligence Division is small, mobile, and rarely mentioned by Institute members (its existence is classified). The I-Retrieval members are believed to be ex-CIA and ex-DEA interrogators with experience in extracting information from drug lords, terrorists, and other hardened criminals.

Intelligence Division Hierarchy

Division Supervisor

→ Department Chief

→ Field Director

→ Agent in Charge

→ Special Agent

→ Agent or Field Agent

→ Recruit

→ Auxiliary

Analytical Division

A mix of pure research and applied or engineering-oriented analysts makes up the “brains” of the Analytical Division. The division has different

strengths in different cities, but the primary labs are based in Flagstaff, Arizona.

The Analytical Division includes the following four departments:

Department-11: Ballistics. The Ballistics group does not have the vast firearms databases common to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms or the FBI, but it does know the patterns of most common firearms and can match a weapon to a particular bullet if both the weapon and the bullet are available for study. The Ballistics department also has some familiarity with advanced firearms and their effects.

Department-12: Biological and Chemical. A small group of researchers performs the Institute’s sample collecting, DNA analysis, and genetic research. They can match a genetic sample given a 24-hour turnaround and can identify individuals by blood type, semen, and even DNA samples taken from hair or saliva. Finally, they can determine whether a given person was poisoned or drugged from a small blood, hair, or urine sample. Given enough time, the chemical analysis team at the Institute can provide much more information, such as the likely source of fibers, the origin of particular forms of plastic or metal, and even a guess at the likely site of soil samples. Just as important, chemical analysts can use gunpowder residue to determine whether weapons were discharged in a given room, and can trace fingerprints even on rough surfaces.



Department-13: Engineering & Fabrication. The E&F staff is an odd mix of engineers and former white-collar criminals. The department reverse-engineers alien technology, but it also provides forged documents and specialized equipment for use by the Intelligence Division and the Special Division. Their work includes hidden weapons, tracking devices, surveillance gear, fake passports, and so forth.

Department-14: Computing Resources. The CR staff installs and services the Institute's computers and networks.

Analytical Division Hierarchy

- Division Supervisor
- Department Chief
 - Field Director
 - Senior Researcher or Team Lead
 - Researcher
 - Research Assistant
 - Recruit
 - Auxiliary

Archiving Division

While those in other divisions may derisively refer to those in this division as "the clerks," the Institute archivists control all of the data, research reports, patents, and classified information produced by the entire organization. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Archiving Division keeps many of its records secured in a proprietary format using an operating system developed within the Institute to provide maximum security.

The Archiving Division is split into two departments:

Department-15: Antiquities. This department maintains the most complete set of data on current and historical events. Its members also have better first-hand knowledge of alien artifacts and unfamiliar technology than perhaps anyone on Earth.

Department-16: Documentation. Institute researchers turn over recovered items to Department-15 for storage, but all letters, reports, case files, and photographs from agents eventually wind up with Department-16. Here, Archiving agents scan and compress files, then encrypt them for storage on the Institute's OSIRS computer network, colloquially referred to by the staff as the "Eye of God." Rumors circulate from time to time that the reason for the high degree of successful security within the Institute Archiving Division is the presence of an artificial intelligence that oversees every communication and exchange between the Case Report Server and the outside world. Even within the department, though, staffers are reasonably sure that this is just a rumor. Most of the time.

All reports, photographs, and affidavits resulting from an Institute investigation are transferred to digital media and stored in the Case Report Server. There is no access to the CRS from the outside world; the network can only be reached from an Institute terminal. Even then, each level of secured files requires a separate password. General public files require only a general Institute password. Each layer of successively more sensitive documents requires an additional password until the researcher reaches the level of compartmentalized information, where only a few people have access to certain documents relating to the most sensitive files. These compartmentalized data sectors include files on the Administrative Division and many of the

Special Division projects. The Case Report Server also logs each and every file access. Only the research directors and higher-ranking members of Department-14 (Computing Resources) have the codes to override this electronic tracking system.

Archiving Division Hierarchy

- Division Supervisor
- Department Chief
 - Field Director
 - Senior Researcher or Team Lead
 - Researcher
 - Research Assistant
 - Recruit
 - Auxiliary

Special Division

The Institute makes no effort to publicize the existence of the Special Division. The Institute's officers and supervisors don't acknowledge it, and its members never appear on an organizational chart or even on phone lists. Many Special Division members are passed off as members of the Administration Division's security teams or as special researchers or spooks. Questions about their work are usually answered with a curt "I can't talk about that." Regardless, stories of their activities periodically make the rounds among agents, and if even half of the rumors are true, the Institute is involved in a lot of very

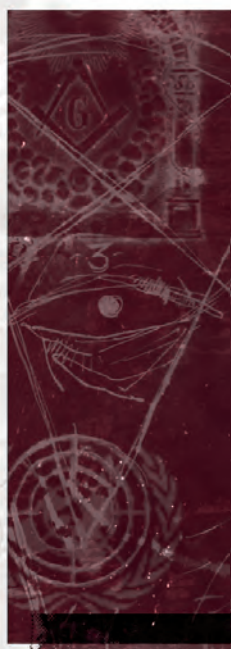
Institute Computer Security

The Hoffmann Institute uses a unique computer operating system designed by Institute employees many years ago, called the Operating System for Internal Real-time Security. Abbreviated OSIRS (and pronounced "Osiris"), this system is used throughout the organization.

OSIRS is a special operating system used nowhere else, simply to make it more difficult for outsiders to hack the Institute. This provides much better security at the root level than any commercial software; it enables real-time processing of video signals, quick verification of retinal scans, real-time encryption of all Institute messages, and much tighter tracking of who opens what files when.

Any Computer Use check made to hack OSIRS takes a -5 penalty. This penalty applies to checks made to gain access, find files, cover one's tracks, defeat security, or degrade programming. See the Computer Hacking sidebar on page 52 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for details.

The Hoffmann Institute



interesting activities, from black ops to wetwork to contact with alien beings.

Heroes may encounter Special Division operatives in the course of their own investigations, but such encounters are fleeting at best. The Special Division's agenda is inscrutable to outsiders, and it's debatable as to whether the Institute has any real control over its day-to-day activities.

Department-7's Mandate

The investigations of Department-7 fall into three main areas: isolating new technology, cataloging new species, and tracking signs of the changes that have been wrought on humans and on the Earth. Such projects are generally led by a field director, who in turn parcels out portions of the work to various teams. When this work is split over multiple teams of field operatives, it is always divided up and compartmentalized so that no single team can put all the pieces together.

Isolating New Technology: Department-7 agents are often charged with liberating alien technology wherever it is found—sometimes from government facilities. Retrieved items are quickly passed along to researchers in the Analytical Division for study. A few of the most dangerous of these items are simply examined, classified, and filed away. Others are subjected to reverse engineering or taken apart to study their internal construction and deduce the methods used in their manufacture. A few such items simply defy all attempts at understanding.

Cataloging New Xenofoms: The most obvious sign of the so-called "Dark Tide" is the appearance of new breeds of mutants and even entire new species of unknown origin. The Institute investigates all such appearances, takes samples when it can, and makes careful notes on the powers, weaknesses, and behavior of each species.

Tracking Signs of the Dark Tide: Finally, Department-7 agents routinely track new phenomena, including evidence of psychic powers, alleged incidents of magic, and reports of miracles (often dubbed as "operative faith" among Institute staff). While much of this is just statistical tracking of the general background level of weirdness, the Institute singles out the most unusual reports for further investigation.

Avoiding the Law

The Hoffmann Institute is not a government agency and has no authority whatsoever. Keeping its activities quiet takes some doing; fortunately, the Institute has many resources that allow its members to escape the consequences of their illicit (and sometimes illegal) activities.

Legal Cover

Any large organization operating in the United States needs an army of lawyers to fend off lawsuits, defend accused employees from various criminal charges and civil complaints, file the necessary paperwork for licenses and charitable tax status, and lobby for special privileges from the government. The Institute is no different, and it relies on the firm of Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen to provide these services and to advise Institute operatives when they move artifacts across national boundaries, become embroiled in customs disputes over import and export, and so on. The firm often settles disputes out of court, and its

lawyers are flexible enough to realize that bribery, extortion, and corruption of public officials are all valuable tools against the opposition's sometimes ruthless attempts at cover-ups and suppression.

While the law firm benefits from its close ties to government officials, it also seeks to retain a very low profile. So far, the attorneys at Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen have managed to put some favorable legislation into effect, granting the Institute the right to use extralegal measures in cases of extreme national need. In several cases, the firm has also provided government resources to facilitate witness protection or identity switch. However, gaining access to the Institute's high-powered lawyers is far from easy; the partners at Marshall, Wickham are reluctant to help out with schemes that don't come from the top of the Hoffmann Institute through normal channels. Normally, they'll work hard to help an operative in trouble, but heroes who want advice for other plans must make a successful Diplomacy check to gain the law firm's assistance, treating the firm as though its initial attitude is "indifferent" (see the Diplomacy skill description on page 57 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

If the heroes are captured by law enforcement, the Institute can usually pull strings to extricate them and have the incident removed from their record, but the process can take days depending on the crime, the local legal system, and in some cases what sort of money the heroes are prepared to spend on bribes. Left to their own devices, the attorneys of Marshall, Wickham, and Vanderdossen can get the heroes released after 1d6+1 days of legal wrangling.

Heroes should bear in mind that many individuals without a criminal record have some personal information on file with various agencies. For instance, if a hero has ever been arrested, belonged to the military, or worked in law enforcement or for a government agency, his fingerprints are on file somewhere. Though the Institute maintains resources to deal with extreme circumstances, it still pays to keep a clean record.

The Underground Railroad

In addition to its "above ground" legal options, the Institute has a chain of several dozen retired members who provide safe housing and resources to Institute staff on the run or otherwise in trouble. There are limits to what this "underground railroad" can provide, though, and many members are not exactly thrilled to have bloodied agents or wanted criminals showing up in their homes. Most of the time, the members of the network provide what help they can, then send the fugitives on their way. Sometimes they take extreme risks to help out their successors or even join them temporarily in their work. But nothing compels a retired Institute member to take anyone into his house, especially if they bring the threat of potentially lethal pursuit along with them. More than anything else, the heroes' reception depends on the nature of the group that presents itself at the safe house door and the result of a Diplomacy check.

Institute Allies

A number of groups are closely allied with the Institute, ranging from grassroots UFO watchers to sophisticated corporate sponsors to sympathetic government agents. Some of these ties are closer than others, but all bring something valuable in

exchange for the Institute's wealth of information, contacts, and experience.

The informal groups are in many ways the closest and the most valuable. They include a network of real phone psychics (the Clarity Network) who report current doings in the paranormal world in exchange for extended psychic seminars, UFO watchers who keep tabs on the skies in return for veiled hints about government projects and clues about power sources, and even many small but sincere pagan groups who ask for nothing in return for their aid but Institute intervention when diabolists or other dark arcane forces perturb their local places of worship.

The Institute keeps its corporate friends in the dark about many of the Institute's real goals, allies, and methods. However, in exchange for the patent rights to certain limited technological and manufacturing advances, these corporate groups provide the Institute with needed funds. Most are too smart to look a gift horse in the mouth; those that inquire too closely into the Institute's other affairs quickly find themselves cut off from further offers.

The United Nations and other governmental organizations often request help from the Institute when low-profile, high-risk operations need to be undertaken that can't stand the scrutiny of open debate, legislative wrangling over budgets, and an oversight committee. Indeed, many Institute operations are

UN-funded; the notoriously wasteful UN budget is in fact rather efficient. The supposedly wasted funds are usually transferred through a variety of financial shenanigans into the coffers of the Institute, the CDC quarantine teams, NASA, certain paramilitary organizations, and other groups the UN deems as useful to its mission.

Resources and Accountability

The Institute has an effective Wealth score of 35 (military), but that doesn't mean that the heroes can simply take whatever they want. Every field agent is equipped with an untraceable 9mm sidearm, a holster, 2 boxes of ammunition, a Hoffmann Institute ID card, and a cell phone. A field team also receives a vehicle, usually a Chevrolet Suburban SUV or a Dodge Caravan minivan. Agents may request other specific items to help them complete their mission. For particularly unusual requests, use the Requisitioning Equipment rules presented in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* (pages 93–94).

It's worth noting that the Institute isn't a bottomless pit of money with no accountability. Agents must meticulously track their use of Institute resources, right down to the last bullet fired at the raging yeti. Furthermore, abuse of Institute resources is a dire offense, punishable by censure, fines, or even suspension.

Specialized Equipment

The Hoffmann Institute benefits from a number of inventions and patents donated to the Institute over the years by anonymous "benefactors," so it never lacks for equipment. However, because Dr. Nakami wishes the Institute's activities kept secret, the Institute is not in the habit of doling out flashy or expensive equipment on a whim.

Not all of the equipment available for requisition was manufactured on Earth. In addition to some weapons of clearly alien design, the Institute has what appears to be an alien spacecraft stored in a hidden warehouse somewhere in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Gaining access to such equipment is possible only with Dr. Nakami's permission, and only requests from special agents (agents of 8th level or higher) will be given serious consideration.

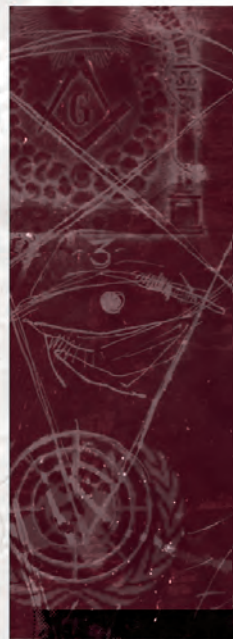
See Chapter 2 for specialized equipment available to agents.

Involving the Heroes

The Hoffmann Institute is eager to recruit new agents, especially those who have experienced some form of paranormal activity or alien encounter. (During the late 1980s and early 1990s, most of their recruits were approached within hours of their return from an alien abduction; how the Hoffmann Institute knew about these incidents has never been explained.) Hoffmann Institute agents are charged with investigating these same kinds of activities and encounters. Depending on their specific skill sets, teams of agents might be assigned to track down a cryptid in some remote location or interview alien abductees.

The Hoffmann Institute is not a sinister agency—but it might seem that way to some of its more paranoid agents. The Institute is highly secretive, and even within its ranks, the average agent might not know its true agenda. Surrounded by such secrecy, it's easy for an agent to believe that the Institute's motives might be somewhat less altruistic than its motto suggests. In addition, nothing is quite what it seems within the walls of the Institute. Putting aside the truth about Dr. Nakami, enemies determined to undermine the Institute's success might find a way to infiltrate it and expose its secrets. Although the Intelligence Division has ways of ferreting out the dedicated agents from the duplicitous ones, such investigations take time, and the damage wrought in the meantime could be catastrophic.

It's important for the long-term success of the campaign that the heroes feel like the Institute is their ally and has humanity's best interests at heart, even if select members of the agency are working at cross-purposes or seemingly doing their utmost to confound the heroes. Turning the Institute against the heroes is a surefire way to bring the campaign to an unpleasant end, particularly if the heroes feel like they have nowhere to go and nothing to do except fear for their lives.



AGENT'S GUIDE TO THE HOFFMANN INSTITUTE

You work for a quiet, private institution called the Hoffmann Institute. Those in the public who even know of the Institute's existence believe it to be a think-tank devoted to developing new technologies, particularly in the field of alternative energies. You know better.

The Hoffmann Institute's public face conceals a secret agenda: the investigation of paranormal phenomena ranging from back-alley psychics to rituals of dark magic to the illicit activities of honest-to-God alien creatures, right here on Mother Earth. The goal? Nothing less than the preservation of the human race.

You work as a field agent for Department-7, a branch of the Intelligence Division tasked with rooting out the truths behind urban legends, tabloid stories, and ancient myths alike. Following the truth isn't easy—you may find yourself in the back alleys of Istanbul one day and the sewers of Chicago the next. It isn't safe—just about every other government, corporation, or organization in the world would like to get its hands on what you know, and they're more than willing to break a lot of laws to do it.

And of course, it certainly isn't glamorous. You don't get any parades or medals. You don't get to read newspaper stories about how you and your team kept a team of saurian assassins from knocking off the vice president on his fact-finding trip to Egypt. You can't even tell your family that you missed last Thanksgiving dinner because you were chasing Men in Black through downtown Las Vegas while dressed as an Elvis impersonator.

But then, you didn't join the Hoffmann Institute to become a celebrity, or to be safe, or even to have it easy. You joined because of your special talents, your keen insight, and your driving need to know the truth.

Ah, the truth. Elusive prey, the truth. So many nasty realities getting in the way. It's surprising, really, how few people are actually interested in the truth. Oh, sure, they all say that's what they want—the media looking for your money, politicians looking for your votes and your money, and the general public because that's what the media and politicians tell them they should want (right before asking them for their money).

But show them a glimpse, just a tiny peek behind the tightly woven curtain of lies and self-deceit that hangs before their eyes, and what happens? They call you a troublemaker, a crackpot, or even a traitor. That's because they don't want the truth, they want their truth, and that's all the difference in the world.

Hearing their truth isn't enough for you, and that's why you're here—working side-by-side with those who share your thirst for what's real, rather than what's accepted. It's often a terrifying ride, but you wouldn't have it any other way.

The Dark Tide

If all this were just a search for the truth, though, you wouldn't be any different than the UFO-chasers who give your quest a bad name. No, it's far more serious than that. In fact, the fate of the entire human race may well be at stake.

Hoffmann researchers claim that the ebb and flow of psychic, arcane, and even cryptozoological phenomena throughout history is connected to the presence of a mysterious and undetectable substance known as "dark matter." As the level of dark matter in a particular region of the galaxy—dubbed "the Dark Tide" by Hoffmann scientists—rises, the occurrence of paranormal events increases dramatically, and vice versa. Some researchers claim that the Dark Tide's rise and fall also influences the pace of cultural and technological advances. Apparently, just as this Dark Tide unlocks previously hidden psychic talents, makes ancient magic rituals function once again, and triggers strange biological

mutations, it also enhances human creativity and ingenuity.

Unfortunately, these Dark Tides don't tend to end well. Without fail, they result in strife, natural disasters, and other catastrophic events before ebbing away into history. Hoffmann researchers suggest that the destruction of Atlantis, the fall of the last Egyptian dynasty, and the Crusades themselves can all be traced to high-water marks of the Dark Tide.

Of course, dark matter itself can't be measured, but its effects on the world can be tracked and theorized. After decades of painstaking investigations around the globe, the Hoffmann Institute has come to the conclusion that the latest rise of the Dark Tide, which began more than two centuries ago, threatens to reach the highest levels in recorded history. The explosion in unexplainable events, sightings of unidentified creatures, and sheer weirdness over the past few decades point to an inescapable conclusion: The world is heading for a catastrophe of titanic proportions.

Oh, and the Institute isn't the only group who saw this coming. Centuries ago, the Mayans asserted that the world that we knew was actually the fifth version that had existed. Four previous worlds had been created and destroyed, and indeed our fifth epoch also had an "expiration date" scheduled, when a terrible cataclysm would wipe out humanity. The date for this event? December 23, 2012.



The ultimate goal of the Institute, then, is a simple one: Ensure that humanity survives the cosmic shift due to occur in a mere handful of years.

That's a tall order, to be sure, and nobody expects you to accomplish it single-handed. Your job is to gather information, to retrieve important artifacts of ancient or alien origin, and to protect humanity from those forces who don't share the Institute's altruistic aim. Let the higher-ups worry about how it all fits together; that's their problem. You? You're on the front line of the battle, fighting to make sure they have the time and resources to win the war.

Working for the Hoffmann Institute

Obviously, working for the Hoffmann Institute isn't like your ordinary day job. That said, it can at times bear a striking resemblance to exactly that, with the obligatory paperwork, travel itineraries, meetings, videoconferences, and bureaucracy that comes with a sprawling organization. Indeed, most employees of the Institute work long hours not terribly dissimilar to a corporate executive or government researcher, whether chained to a desk or in a lab coat.

Thankfully, you don't have one of those jobs. You're a field agent, assigned to casework that sends you out of the office on a regular basis. Sometimes the job is as simple as picking up a report on the link between toxic waste disposal and mothfolk attacks; other cases may lead you into steaming tropical jungles in search of a heretofore unknown species of giant reptile. But whether tracking down alien artifacts in Antarctica, Bigfoot sightings in British Columbia, or crazed cultists in Calcutta, you go where the Institute needs you to go.

Recruitment

Nobody knows exactly how the Institute finds new members—it's not like it advertises job openings (at least not openly). There's no denying that it recruits a wide range of operatives, from wily street punks who've seen something unexplainable to staid librarians who spend their hours poring over dusty tomes of ancient lore. Starting occupations favored by the Institute in its would-be agents include academic, adventurer, criminal, dilettante, doctor, investigative, law enforcement, mercenary, military, paranormalist, psychic, religious, and technician. They recruit an equal mix of Charismatic, Dedicated, Fast, Smart, Strong, and Tough heroes, as well as heroes of advanced classes as befits the need of the missions. Soldiers, Martial Artists, and Bodyguards are recruited as "muscle" for a job in which the Institute is concerned about the potential for conflict. Infiltrators, Investigators, Negotiators, Telepaths (see the AGENTS OF PSI™ campaign model in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) and Field Guides (see Chapter 2) are all critical in getting the team of agents past the various obstacles standing in their way. The talents of Field Scientists, Techies, Occultists (see the SHADOW CHASERS™ campaign model in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) and Field Antiquarians (see Chapter 2) are needed in order to divide truth from fiction, and if things get bad, there's no telling how useful the talents of a Field Medic or Gunslinger might prove. While the Institute tends to shy away from the spotlights that follow high-Reputation characters such as Personalities or Daredevils, sometimes fame can be the perfect cover for an operative.

Two things all these recruits have in common is some experience with the paranormal, and the burning need to know more. The Institute has no interest in recruiting the simpleton who sells his alien-abduction story to cash in on the talk show circuit, nor does it have faith in the scientist who dismisses reports of strange occurrences without a second thought. These individuals lack the drive that sets a Hoffmann agent apart from the rest of humanity. Sure, the Institute might investigate that alien abductee's claim or consult the scientist on matters within her specialty, but they'll never be more than case numbers.

Secrecy and Rules of Conduct

The Hoffmann Institute depends on the discretion of its employees at all times. In essence, it has all the security problems of a multinational corporation combined with those of a government intelligence agency. All operatives, whether field agents or office workers, must swear an oath of secrecy concerning the Institute's true nature and activities. It's whispered that higher-ranking members must submit to periodic evaluations by a team of psychics to ensure loyalty.

Employees who don't take this oath seriously may find their security clearances within the Institute revoked, their pay docked, or their posting changed from downtown Chicago to Nome, Alaska without even a chance to pack a bag. The threat of "permanent debriefing" may well only be an urban legend within the walls of the Institute, but stories persist, passed down from senior agent to raw recruit, about rogue agents who were "disciplined" with lengthy sessions of psionic torture before being dumped in alleyways, virtually lobotomized by the experience. Regardless of the truth, the message is clear: You do not talk about the Institute with those outside the Institute.

To help prevent misunderstandings and to make each agent's duties absolutely clear, in 1955 the Hoffmann Institute adopted a code that still governs the behavior of its employees to this day. An oft-interpreted excerpt of that code follows:

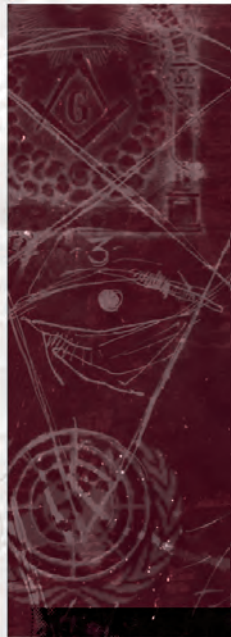
Promotions

The Hoffmann Institute rewards experience and good work in the field. All heroes begin play as recruits, but once they reach 2nd level, they are promoted to field agents (unless they are terminated). They also receive a one-time wealth bonus increase of +1. At 8th level, heroes are promoted to special agents and gain a one-time wealth bonus increase of +2.

d20 DARK MATTER heroes generally don't seek promotions beyond special agent. Sure, they can continue to climb the corporate ladder, but the thought of trading fieldwork for a desk job rarely sits well with them.

Class Level	Job Title	Wealth Bonus Increase
1st	Recruit	+0
2nd	Field Agent	+1
8th	Special Agent	+2

The Hoffmann Institute





304 (B). Discretion in Unusual Circumstances

- i. All members and recruits of the Institute are expected to keep their activities out of the public eye. The Institute is not a public agency, and it wishes to avoid legal and criminal entanglements. Any and all measures are approved to maintain that condition.
- ii. All members and recruits of the Institute should take precautions to prevent evidence or eyewitnesses from spreading knowledge of the Institute's research. At the same, all reasonable good-faith efforts should be made to provide the Institute with clear, complete records and documentation of unusual events.

In general, this has been interpreted since then as permission for members to violate the law of the land when keeping the Institute's existence quiet, preferably through the application of psionic FX powers or even simple bribery. Extreme sanctions are approved only when the Institute is in danger of being exposed to its enemies.

The "good-faith efforts" have been interpreted differently over the years; some members have engaged in trespassing, theft, and psionic espionage to obtain results. Others have resorted to murder, mind probes, and extortion of public officials. The middle ground shifts as each generation of agents tackles the new problems of the era, but the most recent trend is tacit approval of any measures necessary. Though the upper echelons never quite come right out and say so, it seems that Institute leadership feels the situation

is escalating rapidly, and heroic efforts and sacrifices may be necessary to keep the rising tides of darkness from overwhelming humanity.

Hoffmann Institute Standard Issue

The Hoffmann Institute provides you with the following equipment: an untraceable 9mm handgun (your choice of model) with holster, 2 boxes of 9mm ammunition, a cell phone (see below), and a Hoffmann Institute ID card (which is just that; it's not a badge, by any means). You can also request special resources for specific missions, from the obvious (security dossiers and surveillance gear) to the not so obvious (fake IDs, portable satellite telephones, demolitions kits, and bail money). In general, if the Institute thinks you'll need it, you'll get it, and usually without question.

In 1999, the Hoffmann Institute formed its own cellular service division. The Hoffmann Cellnet enables Institute employees to have conversations with their superiors and peers without fear of external eavesdropping. The cell phone is free to employees, and it includes a pager and two-way radio feature. The Institute covers the cost of basic service, and agents who resign or are terminated are quickly denied Hoffmann Cellnet access.

Finally, you and your team may requisition an appropriate vehicle from the Hoffmann Institute motor pool. In most cases, this will be a minivan or SUV, but the Institute is aware of special needs and may agree to just about any reasonable request for transportation.

The way of a superior man is three-fold;
virtuous, he is free from anxieties;
wise, he is free from perplexities;
bold, he is free from fear.

—Confucius



Chapter 2:

Heroic Options

The heroes of *d20 DARK•MATTER* are drawn from all walks of life. Though they seem no different from those who live alongside them, these heroes have skills, talents, and experiences that set them apart.

Players create heroes in the same way they would for any other *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* campaign, using the rules in the core rulebook. In addition, this chapter presents several new options for *d20 DARK•MATTER* heroes, including new starting occupations, species options, feats, advanced classes, prestige classes, FX abilities, and special equipment.

STARTING OCCUPATIONS

In addition to the starting occupations presented in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* core rulebook, heroes of *d20 DARK•MATTER* may choose from the new occupations presented below.

Mercenary

Mercenaries may have military training, but they typically sell their skills to the highest bidder. Mercenaries include soldiers of fortune and bounty hunters.

Prerequisite: Age 21+.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as a permanent class skill. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Disable Device, Drive, Intimidate, Jump, Navigate, Search, Survival, Swim.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Draw, Toughness.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

Paranormalist

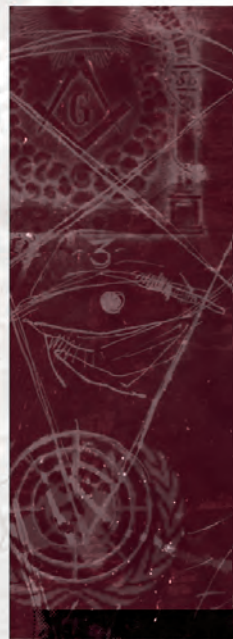
Paranormalists include UFOlogists, paranormal researchers, or abductees who are only able to pursue their goals part-time. They may work at New Age bookstores or in herbalist shops to pay the bills, but they are always motivated to learn on their own, shrugging off conventional wisdom. Over the years, they have gained a deep understanding of the paranormal because they care deeply about the field and about verifying their suspicions. Many traditional scientists don't give them any respect, so they're already used to being brushed off, but that doesn't deter them. They are relentlessly persistent.

Prerequisite: Age 21+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (writing), Knowledge (earth and life sciences, physical sciences, popular culture, technology), Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.



Psychic

Though there are plenty of frauds in the field, true psychics have real power. Of course, to the average observer, this individual appears no different than the majority of so-called “psychics.” Some psychics try to hide their gifts, while others use them to assist police investigations or simply to earn a living.

Prerequisite: Age 24+.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as a permanent class skill. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Investigate, Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Alertness, Attentive, Improved Initiative, Sixth Sense*, Wild Talent.

* New feat described in this chapter.

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

NONHUMAN HEROES

Not surprisingly, humans make up the vast majority of heroes in the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting. Human beings inhabit most of the globe, so by sheer weight of numbers, it’s up to humans to defend themselves. At the GM’s option, other species—including fraal, moreaus, sand slaves, and sasquatches—may be available to the players as heroes.

The Hoffmann Institute doesn’t have a “humans only” policy as far as its agents are concerned. In addition to employing agents with spellcasting and psionic abilities, it employs a small number of nonhuman agents as well. To protect themselves and the Institute, these operatives must take great pains to hide their true appearance from the bulk of humanity.

Rules for Nonhuman Heroes

If you want to play a hero who is nonhuman, and your GM allows it, the following rules apply regardless of which nonhuman species you choose:

Skill Points

Nonhuman characters get 4 fewer skill points than human characters at 1st level, and 1 fewer skill point than human characters each level thereafter.

Feats

A nonhuman character gets only one bonus feat at 1st level (humans get two bonus feats at 1st level).

Nonhuman Appearance

Unless noted otherwise, a nonhuman character clearly looks nonhuman. It can disguise itself to appear human but takes a –10 penalty on the Disguise check.

Covert moreaus and sand slaves are exceptions to this rule. They take no penalty on Disguise checks to appear human.

Height and Weight

A player or GM may use Table 2–1 to determine the height and weight of a character of a particular species. The table provides a range of heights and weights for typical heroes and gives average height and weight figures for each gender.

The die roll given in the Height Modifier column determines the character’s extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the die roll modifier in the Weight Modifier column determines the character’s extra weight beyond the base weight.

For example, Yurrek the male sasquatch has a height of 7 feet 3 inches plus 3d8 inches. Yurrek’s player rolls 3d6 and gets 14,

Strange Secrets

An agent who works for the Hoffmann Institute may be exceptional in more ways than one. Sure, he might cast spells or manifest psionic abilities, or he might be an alien in disguise. However, many agents also have secrets that are just plain *strange*. Strange secrets have no effect on game play or a hero’s abilities, but they help to define the heroes and make them feel like real (albeit weird) people.

A GM may require players to choose strange secrets for their characters, particularly if strange secrets are to have some bearing on the campaign. Otherwise, players may decide to give their characters strange secrets so that they have something to hide (or talk about).

This sidebar presents examples of strange secrets. A strange secret shouldn’t grant any sort of statistical benefit or game effect.

- You think you were abducted by aliens several times during childhood and/or young adulthood.
- You are occasionally visited by the silent ghost of a deceased relative. Only you can see it.
- Whenever someone takes a photograph of you, your image always looks out of focus.
- You have never had the flu, been sick with a cold, or suffered from any other common malady.
- You survived a horrendous vehicular accident unscathed.
- You occasionally hear whispered voices in your head speaking a language you don’t know.
- You wake up every morning at 3:14 A.M. but have no trouble getting back to sleep.
- Once in a while, you see a random person in black and white.
- You have a strange scar, but can’t remember how you got it.
- You can do complicated arithmetic calculations quickly and accurately in your head.
- You have an incessant craving for a particular kind of food or drink (pickled beets, for example).
- Every night, you dream that you’re a German soldier fighting in World War I.
- You get a lot of strange “wrong number” calls—at least one per day.
- The day you were born, two nurses claimed to see an angel watching over you in the hospital nursery.
- Whenever you see the word “the” in print or on screen, it appears to be spelled “eht.”
- You were struck by lightning as a child. Doctors described your recovery as “miraculous.”

TABLE 2-1: ALIEN HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Species and Gender	Base Height	Height Mod.	Base Weight	Weight Mod.
Fraal				
Male	2 ft. 10 in.	+2d4 in.	25 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Female	2 ft. 8 in.	+2d4 in.	20 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moreau, bat¹				
Covert	4 ft. 10 in.	+2d10 in.	100 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moderate	4 ft., 6 in.	+2d6 in.	80 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Overt	4 ft., 0 in.	+2d6 in.	70 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moreau, bear¹				
Covert	5 ft. 0 in.	+2d10 in.	120 lb.	×2d6 lb.
Moderate	5 ft. 2 in.	+2d12 in.	130 lb.	×2d8 lb.
Overt	6 ft. 10 in.	+4d8 in.	200 lb.	×2d8 lb.
Moreau, canine¹				
Covert	5 ft. 0 in.	+2d10 in.	120 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moderate	4 ft., 10 in.	+1d10 in.	100 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Overt	4 ft., 6 in.	+1d10 in.	90 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moreau, dolphin¹				
Covert	4 ft. 8 in.	+2d10 in.	85 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moderate	4 ft., 10 in.	+2d10 in.	130 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Overt	5 ft., 2 in.	+2d10 in.	170 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moreau, feline¹				
Covert	5 ft. 0 in.	+2d10 in.	120 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moderate	4 ft., 10 in.	+1d10 in.	100 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Overt	4 ft., 6 in.	+1d10 in.	90 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Moreau, rat¹				
Covert	4 ft. 8 in.	+2d10 in.	100 lb.	×1d6 lb.
Moderate	4 ft., 5 in.	+2d6 in.	85 lb.	×1d6 lb.
Overt	4 ft., 0 in.	+2d6 in.	75 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Sand slave				
Male	5 ft. 0 in.	+2d10 in.	120 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Female	4 ft. 7 in.	+2d10 in.	85 lb.	×2d4 lb.
Sasquatch				
Male	7 ft. 3 in.	+3d8 in.	300 lb.	×2d6 lb.
Female	7 ft. 0 in.	+3d6 in.	275 lb.	×2d6 lb.

1 Moreau males and females have similar heights and weights.

making Yurrek 8 feet 5 inches tall. Yurrek's play then multiplies the 14 by 2d6. Yurrek's player rolls 2d6 and gets 8, so he adds 112 (14 × 8) to the base weight of 300 pounds. Yurrek weighs 412 pounds.

TABLE 2-2: MAXIMUM AGES AND AGING EFFECTS

Species	Maximum Age					
	Child ¹	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age ²	Old ³	Venerable ⁴
Fraal	5 years	10 years	30 years	70 years	95 years	120 years
Moreau⁵						
Bat	—	—	14 years	30 years	48 years	66 years
Bear	—	—	14 years	30 years	48 years	66 years
Canine	—	—	14 years	30 years	48 years	66 years
Dolphin	—	—	17 years	25 years	53 years	71 years
Feline	—	—	14 years	30 years	48 years	66 years
Rat	—	—	12 years	25 years	42 years	59 years
Sand slave	11 years	15 years	40 years	60 years	80 years	120 years
Sasquatch	10 years	20 years	40 years	70 years	110 years	150 years

1 At child age, -3 to Str and Con; -1 to Dex, Int, Wis, and Cha.

2 At middle age, -1 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha.

3 At old age, -2 to Str, Dex, and Con; +2 to Int, Wis, and Cha.

4 At venerable age, -3 to Str, Dex, and Con; +3 to Int, Wis, and Cha.

5 Moreau characters begin play as adults.

Age

Most players create heroes within the young adult or adult range, although one can play a younger or older character if the GM permits. A hero must be at least the minimum age for the GM's campaign and the character's starting occupation.

As a character ages, her physical ability scores decrease and her mental ability scores increase, as detailed on Table 2-2. The effects of each aging step are cumulative.

Fraal (Grey)

A few fraal, like yourself, adopt human culture and live among humans, hiding in plain sight through a combination of technology and psionics. In disguised form, you can pass yourself off as a child or small adult. You use your psionic abilities to befuddle the minds of those who see you, and you use technology to order goods and services without ever seeing a human face. Among your own kind, you are considered a rogue, or "hesai." Consequently, you maintain almost no contact with other Greys. You belong to either the Ittan or Ziljir faction, and you should be familiar with at least some of the history detailed in Chapter 3

Species Traits

Fraal share the following species traits:

Type: Humanoid (fraal).

Size: Small. You gain a +1 size bonus to Defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks. You take a -4 penalty on grapple checks. Your lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium-size character.

You must use two hands to wield a Medium-size weapon, and light weapons for you are Tiny or smaller.

Ability Modifiers: -4 Strength, -4 Constitution, +4 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom, +4 Charisma. You are weak and frail, but your mental abilities far surpass those of most other sentient species.

Speed: 30 feet. Despite your short stature, you move with surprising speed.

Psionics (Sp): At will—lesser mindlink; 3/day—suggestion. Manifest level 10th; save DC 10 + the power's level + your key ability modifier.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Fraal, Speak Fraal.

Level Adjustment: +0.





Moreau

Moreaus are animal-human hybrids, created by grafting specific sequences of animal DNA to human DNA. The Hoffmann Institute secretly funds a subterranean laboratory and indoctrination center (reportedly located beneath a Mormon retreat west of Salt Lake City, Utah) where covert and moderate moreaus are created. These moreaus are sterile and cannot propagate. The Institute also recruits covert, moderate, and overt moreaus created in U.S. government labs. These moreaus are usually escapees wanted by the FBI, and they may or may not be sterilized.

The Institute doesn't normally let overt moreaus become field agents because their clearly nonhuman appearance. (They take a -20 penalty on Disguise checks when trying to appear human.) If you wish to play a moreau hero, you should strongly consider either a covert or moderate moreau.

Moreaus are described in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* (pages 247-251).

Sand Slave Outcast

Sand slaves (sometimes called sandmen or cyberslaves) are humans transformed into cybernetic minions of the etoile (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 35). Their bodies are infested with nanites that enhance their physical abilities while making them particularly difficult to kill or capture. A sand slave looks much like it did before its transformation, even though its biology has changed horrifically.

Sand slaves are, by definition, loyal soldiers of the etoile, so a sandman hero is a rare being indeed. The truth is, your transformation didn't quite "take" and, while you enjoy certain physical advantages of your new form, you lack many of the

traits common to other sand slaves and possess none of the innate loyalty to the etoile that comes with your new form. You also know that the etoile and their thralls would destroy you once they realized that you were defective. Consequently, you are a complete outcast and must survive without the support of the etoile and their advanced technology.

Species Traits

Sand slave outcasts share the following species traits:

Type: Humanoid (human).

Size: Medium-size. You have no special bonuses or penalties due to your size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Strength or +2 Dexterity (your choice).

Speed: 30 feet.

Action Point Reduction: The nanites infesting your body, while beneficial in many ways, have also reduced you to a shell of your former self. At 1st level and every level thereafter, you receive 2 fewer action points than normal.

Darkvision (Ex): You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and you can function with no light at all.

Human Appearance: You appear human and don't take any penalty on Disguise checks when impersonating a human.

Sand Slave Special Abilities: You gain three special abilities chosen from the following list: electricity resistance 10, fast ability healing, fast healing, fortification, fugue, hot running, stasis. Each of these abilities is described below. You can gain additional abilities from this list by taking the Nanite Mastery feat, as described on page 23

Electricity Resistance 10 (Ex): You ignore the first 10 points of damage dealt by any electricity attack.

Fast Ability Healing (Ex): You heal ability damage at a rate of 1 ability score point per damaged ability per hour, in addition to any ability score points you gain through natural healing.

Fast Healing (Ex): You heal 1 hit point per hour, in addition to any hit points you gain through natural healing. Fast healing stops working when you're reduced to -10 hit points (see Self-Destruct, below).

Fortification (Ex): You have a 50% chance to ignore the damage from a critical hit.

Fugue (Ex): Once per day as a free action, you can force your nanites into a hyperactive state, thereby gaining an extra attack or move action for 1d4 rounds.

Hot Running (Ex): Once per day as a free action, you can automatically negate all nonlethal damage you have sustained and reduce fatigue or exhaustion as though you'd rested for a full day.

Stasis (Ex): Once per day as a free action, you can slow your metabolism for up to 1 hour. During this time, you do not need to breathe, and you lack a heartbeat and normal body temperature. If you does not move, you appear dead to casual inspection, though a blood test or successful DC 20 Treat Injury check reveals that you are still alive. While in stasis, you do not take damage from prolonged exposure to environmental heat or cold, and the time spent in stasis does not count against the time limit you can go without food and water before taking damage. While in stasis, you can act normally, except that you cannot use your fugue or hot running abilities (if you have them; see above), and you do not heal hit point or ability point damage. You can end your stasis prematurely as a free action.

Self-Destruct (Ex): When reduced to -10 hit points, your body immediately turns to carbon and iron dust.

Level Adjustment: +0.

Sasquatch

Your people believe that they are the recipients not only of the ancient wisdom and traditions of the Templars, but also of a great destiny. They are a chosen people, brought forth from darkness by their patrons, the Greys, and sent into the wilderness to work among humans and Greys alike, protecting them from dangers that their frail bodies are incapable of withstanding. Your people take pride in their ability to take punishment, remain hidden in a hostile world, and gather the necessities of life quickly and unobtrusively.

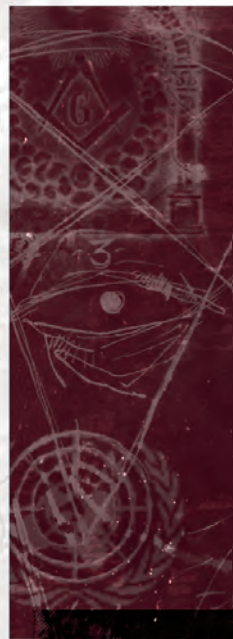
You are a physically imposing creature, standing over 8 feet tall and weighing 300 pounds or more. You have tawny fur, beady black eyes, and a bestial odor that frightens domestic animals.

Most sasquatches that reside on Earth today serve as soldiers and protectors in isolated Grey station-ships and communities. You are one of a handful of sasquatches "on loan" to the Hoffmann Institute. Although you enjoy the freedoms and privileges that the Institute provides, you can't shake the feeling that most of your human peers fear you. They see you as a monster or thug. You would like to prove them wrong, but on some level you also know that they're right.

Species Traits

Sasquatches share the following species traits:

Type: Giant.



Size: Large. You take a -1 size penalty to Defense, a -1 size penalty on attack rolls, and a -4 size penalty on Hide checks. You gain a +4 size bonus on grapple checks. Your lifting and carrying limits are twice those of a Medium-size character.

You must use two hands to wield a Huge weapon, and light weapons for you are Medium-size.

You occupy a 5-foot-by-5-foot fighting space and have a natural reach of 10 feet.

Ability Modifiers: +6 Strength, -2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence. You are incredibly strong and resilient, but not nearly as agile or bright.

Speed: 30 feet.

Armor and Weapon Restrictions: You cannot wear armor designed for other species. Sasquatch armor is larger and costs more than similar armor sized for a Medium-size character; increase the purchase DC of sasquatch armor by +2.

You cannot effectively wield Small or smaller weapons.

Inhuman Appearance: You can attempt to disguise yourself as a human giant. You take a -10 penalty on Disguise checks when impersonating a human.

Natural Weapons: You can make a slam attack with one of your fists as an attack action or both of your fists as a full-round action. When making slam attacks, you are considered armed and do not provoke attacks of opportunity, and each successful slam attack deals 1d4 points of lethal damage (plus your Strength modifier). Do not apply the effects of feats from the Brawl of Combat Martial Arts feat trees to these slam attacks.

Instead of making slam attacks with your fists, you can make normal unarmed strikes, following the rules for unarmed strikes in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* (page 135). Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 points of nonlethal damage (plus Strength modifier). However, certain feats increase your unarmed strike damage, as shown below:

Brawl: 2d6 + Strength modifier (nonlethal damage only)

Combat Martial Arts: 1d8 + Strength modifier (lethal or nonlethal damage)

Improved Brawl: 3d6 + Strength modifier (nonlethal damage only)

Low-Light Vision (Ex): You can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. You retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Skill Bonuses: Because of your size and ferocious appearance, you gain a +4 species bonus on Intimidate checks.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Weren, Speak Weren.

Level Adjustment: +1.

Playing a 1st-Level Sasquatch

Because of your Large size, great strength, and natural weapons, you have a level adjustment of +1. Consequently, when you take your first level in a basic class, you effectively become a 2nd-level character. Put another way, you become significantly more powerful than your 1st-level peers.

To stay balanced with nonsasquatch heroes, you must take a -1 penalty on all attack rolls, level checks, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws until you gain 1,000 XP (that is, enough XP to advance to 2nd level). At that time, the -1 penalties are lifted, your XP total automatically resets to 0, and you do not gain a new class level. From that point on, however, you advance normally. You will have one fewer class level than the other

heroes, but your effective character level (ECL) will be the same (taking into account the +1 level adjustment).

FEATS

All of the feats presented in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* core rulebook are appropriate for a *d20 DARK MATTER* campaign. Heroes may also select feats from the ones presented below.

Alien Craft Operation

The character is proficient at operating one type of spacecraft utilized by certain alien species. The GM will determine what types are available.

Prerequisite: Pilot 4 ranks.

Benefit: The character takes no penalty on Pilot checks or attack rolls made to operate a craft of the selected type.

Normal: A character without this feat takes a -4 penalty on Pilot checks made to operate a spacecraft that falls into any of these types, and on attack rolls made when using the weapons of such a spacecraft.

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time the feat is taken, select a different type of alien craft.

Alien Weapons Proficiency

The character is proficient with alien weapons.

Benefit: The character takes no penalty on attack rolls when using any kind of alien weapon.

Normal: A character without this feat takes the -4 nonproficient penalty when making attacks with an alien weapon.

Blood Magic

You can draw your own blood to cast spells.

Prerequisite: Wis 13, ability to cast arcane or divine spells.

Benefit: You can cast any spell you know without using up a spell slot, even if you don't have the spell prepared. To do so, you must draw your own blood with a slashing or piercing weapon; this is a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, and you take 2d6 points of damage per level of the spell you wish to cast (1d6 for a 0-level spell). If the self-inflicted damage is enough to reduce you to 0 hit points, you can still cast the spell, but you then drop to -1 hit points and are dying. If the self-inflicted damage is enough to drop you to -1 or fewer hit points, you do not cast the spell before you collapse.

When you use Blood Magic, your blood becomes a material component of the spell, and the act of drawing blood becomes a somatic component of the spell.

Closed Mind

Your mind is better able to resist psionics than normal.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all saving throws to resist psionic powers and psi-like abilities.

Special: You cannot take or use this feat if you have the ability to manifest psionic powers (if you have a power point reserve, psi-like abilities, or the Wild Talent feat).

TABLE 2-3: FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Alien Craft Operation	Pilot 4 ranks	Take no penalty on Pilot checks or attack rolls made to operate a type of alien craft.
Alien Weapons Proficiency	—	You are proficient with alien weapons.
Blood Magic	Wis 13, ability to cast arcane or divine spells	Cast a spell you know without using a spell slot, but take 2d6/spell level damage.
Closed Mind	—	+2 bonus on saves to resist psionic powers and psi-like abilities.
Disciple of Life	Ability to turn undead	Deal 1d6/level damage to undead within 60-ft. radius.
Greater Power Crystal	Ability to create power crystal	Imbue a power crystal you create with 8 power points.
Greater Psi-Blade	Ability to manifest psi-blade	Damage dealt by your psi-blade increases by one step.
Hurl Psi-Blade	Ability to manifest psi-blade	Make ranged attacks with your psi-blade.
Nanite Mastery	Sand slave outcast	Gain a new sand slave special ability.
Open Minded	—	Gain 5 skill points.
Power Focus	Manifest psionic powers	+2 on save DCs against a specific power.
Power Penetration	Manifest psionic powers	+2 bonus on manifester level checks to defeat power resistance.
Psi Mastery	Have power point reserve	Gain additional power points.
Psionic Surge	Have power point reserve	Spend 1 action point to regain 1d6 spent power points.
Sixth Sense	—	You can't be surprised.
Spell Focus	Cast arcane or divine spells	+1 on save DCs against specific school of magic.
Spell Penetration	Cast arcane or divine spells	+2 bonus on caster level checks to defeat spell resistance.
Spell Recall	Cast arcane or divine spells	Spend 1 action point to recall one previously cast spell.
Sudden Manifest	Manifest psionic powers	Spend 1 action point to manifest a 0-, 1st-, or 2nd-level power as a free action.

Disciple of Life

Instead of turning undead, you can blast them with positive energy.

Prerequisite: Ability to turn undead.

Benefit: You may spend one daily use of your turn undead ability to deal damage to undead creatures within a 60-foot radius area, centered on you. Undead within the area take 1d6 points of positive energy damage per Acolyte class level, or half damage if they succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your Acolyte class level + your Charisma modifier). Undead reduced to 0 hit points by this effect, including vampires, are destroyed.

Special: An Acolyte may select Disciple of Life as one of his Acolyte bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 325).

Mind over Body

Your ability damage heals more rapidly.

Prerequisite: Con 13.

Benefit: You heal ability damage more quickly than normal. You heal a number of ability points per day equal to 1 + your Constitution bonus.

Normal: You heal ability damage at a rate of 1 point per day.

Greater Power Crystal

You can create a power crystal that holds more psionic energy than normal.

Prerequisite: Ability to create a power crystal.

Benefit: Any power crystal that you create after taking this feat is imbued with 8 power points. You can use these power

points as if they were your own. Once the crystal is depleted, you can refill it using up to 8 power points from your own reserves.

You cannot use this feat to enhance a power crystal that you created before taking this feat.

Normal: A power crystal normally holds 5 power points.

Special: A Telepath may select Greater Power Crystal as one of his Telepath bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 307).

Greater Psi-Blade

Your psi-blade is more powerful than normal.

Prerequisite: Ability to manifest a psi-blade.

Benefit: Increase the damage dealt by your psi-blade by one step: 1d6, 1d8, 2d6, 3d6.

Special: A Battle Mind may select Greater Psi-Blade as one of his Battle Mind bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 309).

Hurl Psi-Blade

You can make ranged attacks with your psi-blade.

Prerequisite: Ability to manifest a psi-blade.

Benefit: You can hurl your psi-blade at a foe. With a successful ranged attack, you deal normal psi-blade damage (including Str modifier). A hurled psi-blade has a range increment of 30 feet and a maximum range of 150 feet. Whether the psi-blade hits or misses, it dissipates.

Special: A Battle Mind may select Hurl Psi-Blade as one of his Battle Mind bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 309).



Nanite Mastery

You learn to manipulate the nanites inside your body to gain a new extraordinary ability.

Prerequisites: Sand slave outcast.

Benefit: Choose an extraordinary ability from the list of sand slave special abilities (pages 19–20). You gain this new ability.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a different sand slave extraordinary ability. You cannot use this feat to improve an ability that you already possess.

Open Minded

You are naturally able to reroute your memory, mind, and skill expertise.

Benefit: You immediately gain an extra 5 skill points. You spend these skill points as normal. If you spend them on cross-class skills, they count as 1/2 ranks. You cannot exceed the normal maximum ranks for your level in any skill.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take this feat, you immediately gain 5 skill points.

Power Focus

One of your psionic powers becomes harder to resist.

Prerequisites: Ability to manifest psionic powers.

Benefit: Choose one psionic power you know. Add +2 to the DC for all saving throws against the chosen power.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a different psionic power that you know.

A Telepath or Battle Mind may select Power Focus as one of his class's bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 307 and 309 respectively).

Power Penetration

Your psionic powers are especially potent, breaking through power resistance more readily than normal.

Prerequisites: Ability to manifest psionic powers.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on manifester level checks (1d20 + manifester level) made to overcome a creature's power resistance.

Special: A Telepath or Battle Mind may select Power Penetration as one of his class's bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 307 and 309 respectively).

Psi Mastery

You gain additional power points to supplement those you already had.

Prerequisites: Must have a power point reserve.

Benefit: When you take this feat for the first time, the number of power points you gain increases by 2.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times. Each time you take this feat after the first time, the number of power points you gain increases by 1.

A Telepath or Battle Mind may select Psi Mastery as one of his class's bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 307 and 309 respectively).

Psionic Surge

You can regain some of your spent psionic power.

Prerequisites: Must have a power point reserve.

Benefit: Once per day, you can spend an action point as a free action to instantly regain 1d6 power points. You can never have more power points than your maximum allowed.

Sixth Sense

Your precognitive ability enables you to sense imminent danger and react accordingly.

Benefit: You can't be surprised.

Spell Focus

Your spells of a particular school are more potent than normal.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane or divine spells.

Benefit: Choose a school of magic (such as illusion). Add +1 to the DC for all saving throws against spells from the school of magic you select.

Normal: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a new school of magic.

A Mage or Acolyte may select Spell Focus as one of his class's bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 321 and 325 respectively).

Spell Penetration

Your spells are especially potent, breaking through spell resistance more readily than normal.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane or divine spells.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on caster level checks (1d20 + caster level) made to overcome a creature's spell resistance.

A Mage or Acolyte may select Spell Penetration as one of his class's bonus feats (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 321 and 325 respectively).

Spell Recall

You can recall a spell that you have already cast.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane or divine spells.

Benefit: Once per day, you can spend an action point as a free action to instantly recall one spell that you had prepared and then cast. The spell is then prepared again, just as if it had not been cast.

Sudden Manifest

You can manifest a psionic power with a moment's thought.

Prerequisites: Ability to manifest psionic powers.

Benefit: You can spend an action point to manifest a 0-, 1st-, or 2nd-level psionic power you know as a free action. Manifesting a power as a free action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

ADVANCED CLASSES

The two new advanced classes described below are almost diametrically opposed in their tactics.

Field Antiquarian: The Field Antiquarian seeks to retrieve and preserve relics of the past, risking life and limb in the hopes of capturing a few dusty tomes of ancient lore.

Field Guide: Unlike the Field Antiquarian, the Field Guide is rather at his best in the thick of danger, surrounded by unfriendly locals.

Other Advanced Classes

All of the advanced classes from the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* core rulebook are suitable for use in a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign.

FIELD ANTIQUARIAN

When not traveling abroad in search of ancient lore for study, the Field Antiquarian lives in libraries, museums, and other storehouses of old knowledge, poring over every scrap of information she can find. Most Antiquarians prefer a life of quiet research and reflection, though many surprise themselves by getting into situations requiring much more bravery than they thought they had.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be a font of potentially useful lore, long-forgotten stories, and ancient secrets perhaps best left untold.

The fastest path into this advanced class is from the Smart hero basic class, although other paths are possible.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Field Antiquarian, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Decipher Script 6 ranks, Knowledge (arcane lore, history, or theology and philosophy) 6 ranks, Read/Write Language (any two), Research 6 ranks.

Qualifying for Advanced and Prestige Classes

The advanced classes and prestige classes described in this chapter are available to *d20 DARK•MATTER* heroes who qualify for them, with their GM's permission. In some cases, the GM may decide that entry is more difficult than merely meeting a set of numerical requirements—these classes may require access to secret knowledge, training by reclusive tutors, and the like.



Class Information

The following information pertains to the Field Antiquarian advanced class.

Hit Die

The Field Antiquarian gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Field Antiquarian gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Field Antiquarian's class skills are as follows.

Computer Use (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (arcane lore, history, theology and philosophy) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

TABLE 2-4: ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE

DC	Type of Knowledge	Examples
10	Common, known by at least a substantial minority of the local population	Common local legends or folk tales about a nearby location.
20	Uncommon but available, known by only a few people in the area	Century-old tales of a location or artifact.
25	Obscure, known by few, hard to come by	A dead culture's legends about a minor place or forgotten date of significance.
30	Extremely obscure, known by very few, possibly forgotten by most who once knew it, possibly known only by those who don't understand the significance of the knowledge	The history of an insignificant location or significance of a random date.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Field Antiquarian advanced class.

Ancient Knowledge

The Field Antiquarian has a storehouse of useful and not-so-useful knowledge in his brain. As a full-round action, he can spend an action point and make a special level check (1d20 + Field Antiquarian's class level + Intelligence modifier) to see if he knows something potentially helpful regarding a current dilemma. The result of this check will never simply solve the character's problem, but may give him a hint as to the significance of a place, time, or thing. The GM will determine the Difficulty Class of the check by referring to Table 2-4.

Bonus Languages

At 2nd level, the Field Antiquarian may add a language to those that he knows. He immediately gains the Speak Language and Read/Write Language skill for the chosen language.

The Field Antiquarian gains another bonus language at 5th level and again at 8th level.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Field Antiquarian gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Field Antiquarian must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Educated, Low Profile, Meticulous, Renown, Studious.

Contact

A Field Antiquarian of 4th level or higher cultivates contacts, usually (but not exclusively) within the academic world. Each time the Field Antiquarian gains a contact, the GM should develop a supporting character to represent the contact. The player can suggest the type of contact his or her character wants to gain, but the contact must be an ordinary character, not a heroic character.

Contacts appropriate to a Field Antiquarian include professors, librarians, museum curators, authors, grad students, reporters, truth-seekers, and others who focus on learning and knowledge who can provide limited aid and information pertaining to the Field Antiquarian's missions.

A contact will not accompany a Field Antiquarian on missions or risk his or her life. A contact can, however, provide information or render a service (make a specific skill check on your behalf).

At 4th level, the Field Antiquarian gains a low-level contact, at 7th level a mid-level contact, and at 10th level a high-level contact.

The Field Antiquarian can't call on the same contact more than once in a week, and when she does call on a contact, compensation may be required for the assistance her or she renders. In general, a professional associate won't be compensated monetarily, but instead will consider that the Field Antiquarian owes him or her a favor. The GM character will call on a favor in return when the opportunity arises. See the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* (pages 270-283) for sample contacts.

TABLE 2-5: THE FIELD ANTIQUARIAN

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Ancient knowledge	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus language	+1	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus feat	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Contact, low-level	+1	+1
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus language	+2	+1
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus feat	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Contact, mid-level	+2	+2
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus language	+3	+2
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Bonus feat	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Contact, high-level	+3	+3

TABLE 2-6: THE FIELD GUIDE

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+1	+0	Well traveled	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+3	+2	+0	Jury-rig +2	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+3	+2	+1	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+4	+2	+1	Skill mastery	+2	+1
5th	+3	+4	+3	+1	Renown or low profile	+3	+1
6th	+4	+5	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+5	+4	+2	Appraisal	+4	+2
8th	+6	+6	+4	+2	Jury-rig +4 (attack action)	+4	+2
9th	+6	+6	+4	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+7	+5	+3	Better lucky than good	+5	+3

FIELD GUIDE

The Field Guide is a logistical wizard, a master of getting into and out of dangerous places (usually far from friendly civilization). In addition to having keen survival instincts, the Field Guide's also an expert at dealing with the locals—a valuable asset when the natives decide you've been asking too many questions. Between gigs, a Field Guide might work as a smuggler or even a tour group operator to pay the bills, but he's really an adventurer at heart.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be the one who always knows what to do in a strange situation or foreign land.

The fastest path into this advanced class is from a combination of Smart hero with either Tough hero or Dedicated hero. Some would-be Field Guides take one or more levels in Charismatic hero to help deal with the interesting people they meet.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Field Guide, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Gather Information 4 ranks, Navigate 6 ranks, Speak Language (any three), Survival 6 ranks.

Feats: Aircraft Operation or Surface Vehicle Operation.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Field Guide advanced class.

Hit Die

The Field Guide gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Field Guide gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Field Guide's class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int),

Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Field Guide advanced class.

Well Traveled

A good Field Guide has a potential ally in every city, town, settlement, or encampment across the globe. By spending an action point, the Field Guide can attempt to track down an information contact, expert contact, or resource contact (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, pages 211–212) in virtually any locale. To determine if the attempt succeeds, the Field Guide rolls 1d20 and adds his class level and Charisma modifier, then consults the chart below. A Field Guide can use this ability once every 24 hours.



Location	DC
City	10
Town	15
Village	20
Middle of nowhere	30

Jury-Rig

For a Field Guide, it's often far more important that something work right now than it work later. At 2nd level, the Field Guide gains a +2 bonus to Repair checks made to attempt jury-rigged (temporary) repairs (see page 70 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*). At 8th level, this bonus increases to +4, and the Field Guide can make jury-rigged repairs as an attack action rather than a full-round action.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Field Guide gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Field Guide must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Athletic, Brawl, Endurance, Guide, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Trustworthy, Vehicle Expert.

Skill Mastery

At 4th level, a Field Guide selects a number of skills from his class list equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check using one of these skills, the Field Guide may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so. The Field Guide prides himself on his ability to accomplish difficult tasks under pressure.

Renown or Low Profile

Some Field Guides thrive on attention and recognition for their work, while others would prefer to remain as anonymous as possible. At 5th level, the Field Guide must decide whether her reputation becomes widespread or low-key by selecting either Renown or Low Profile as a bonus feat. She may select one of these feats even if she has already taken it (this is an exception to the normal rule that a feat can only be selected once).

Appraisal

By 7th level, the Field Guide has become accustomed to working with barter economies or in situations where cash isn't readily available. He may add his class level to any Knowledge checks made to appraise the value of an object (see the Knowledge skill description on pages 66–67 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*). He may make such Knowledge checks even if he has no ranks in the appropriate Knowledge skill. (He still can't make normal untrained Knowledge checks.)

Better Lucky Than Good

Once per day, a 10th-level Field Guide can elect to spend 2 action points to improve a single d20 roll (instead of the normal limit of one). Each action point is rolled separately to determine the bonus applied to the d20 roll. However, if any action point die rolled comes up as a one, no bonus is applied to the d20 roll for that action point (but the action point is still spent). If the Field Guide has already spent an action point this round, he can't use this ability.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

This game introduces three new prestige classes appropriate for the setting, all of which focus on harnessing supernatural power.

Alchemist: The Alchemist is a modern-day master of transmutation and guardian of magical secrets.

Diabolist: The Diabolist summons and bargains with fiends, using them to do his bidding.

Visionary: The Visionary believes in the power of a supreme being and can call upon that power to heal the injured and confound the wicked.

Other Prestige Classes

The prestige classes of the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* are inappropriate for the *d20 DARK•MATTER* game. They come from a world where magic is too prevalent, too accepted, and simply too mundane. It's possible that races with great familiarity to the magical arts might pursue such classes, but they aren't generally available to heroes.

ALCHEMIST

Hermetic magic—or alchemy, as it's also called—dates back to the time of Egyptian pharaohs. It combines astrology, philosophy, and Gnosticism. It works through the use of complex mystic formulae, rituals, and rare ingredients. Such formulae are typically encoded, requiring intense study to understand fully.

Select this prestige class if you want to master the magical arts of the ancient Arabic world, including illusions and even the secret of alchemical transmutation itself.

The fastest path into this prestige class is from Smart hero, though many would-be Alchemists take one or more levels in the Occultist advanced class to help qualify more quickly.

Requirements

To qualify to become an Alchemist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Craft (chemical) 10 ranks, Decipher Script 6 ranks, Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 ranks, Knowledge (history) 2 ranks, Research 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Alchemist prestige class.

Hit Die

The Alchemist gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Alchemist gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Alchemist's class skills are as follows.

Concentration (Con), Craft (chemical) (Int), Craft (pharmaceutical) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge



(arcane lore, history, physical sciences, theology and philosophy) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Speak Language (none), Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Alchemist prestige class.

Secret of Glamour

The 1st-level Alchemist can create the visual illusion of an object, creature, or force. The range of the effect is 100 feet, and the Alchemist must have line of sight to the illusion at all times. The illusion's size can be up to one 10-foot-cube per level. The illusion does not create sound, smell, texture, or temperature. He can move the image within the limits of the size of the effect, but must concentrate on the illusion to maintain it. If he ends concentration, the illusion fades. Any person interacting with the illusion may attempt a Will save (DC 10 + the Alchemist's class level + Intelligence modifier) to discern the illusion's nature (after which the person can still perceive the illusion as an ephemeral image).

At 3rd level, the Alchemist may add sound (including intelligible speech) to his illusion. At 5th level, he may also add smell and temperature to it.

At 1st level, the Alchemist also gains the ability to see through illusions. By spending an action point, the Alchemist can perceive all illusions for what they really are. This ability functions identically to the *true seeing* spell (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 358) except that it affects only the Alchemist.

Create Alchemical Homunculus

A 2nd-level Alchemist can magically grow a Tiny artificial life form that obeys his will. The process requires 10 consecutive days of work (8 hours per day) and uses an array of special rare materials such as a bear's gall bladder, mandrake root, shark cartilage, human growth hormones, and a small measure of the Alchemist's own blood. (The ritual materials have a purchase DC of 18 and include items restricted to those in the medical profession.)

At the end of the process, the alchemical homunculus is complete. It generally resembles an 18-inch-tall roughly formed humanoid figure. The homunculus is identical to a mage's familiar (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 320), except as follows:

- Double the Alchemist's class level to determine the homunculus's statistics and special abilities.
- The homunculus's natural attacks deal no damage (it can wield weapons, though it has no weapon proficiencies),

TABLE 2-7: THE ALCHEMIST

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Secret of glamour	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	Create alchemical homunculus	+1	+0
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+3	Sleep of Morpheus	+1	+1
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Flight of Daedalus	+1	+1
5th	+2	+3	+1	+4	Secret of transmutation	+2	+1



and it has no base save bonuses or skill ranks of its own (it uses its master's instead).

- Use the "Familiar's Intelligence" column to determine the homunculus's ability scores (except that, as a construct, it has no Constitution score).
- The homunculus has unbeatable damage reduction equal to its natural armor rating (for example, the homunculus of a 3rd-level Alchemist has DR 3/—). It has no ability to speak with animals.
- Unlike a familiar, a homunculus has no restriction on the skills that it can perform, and many Alchemists use their homunculi as lab assistants (despite their limited intellect).

The Alchemist can spend action points on behalf of his homunculus, though she still can't spend more than one action point per round. If the homunculus dies, the Alchemist takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage. If the Alchemist dies, the homunculus dissolves into muck 1 round later.

Sleep of Morpheus

Beginning at 3rd level, the Alchemist can put a single living creature into a deep sleep as a full-round action. This spell-like ability functions as the *sleep* spell (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 356) except that it only works on a single target and can affect any creature with HD equal to or less than twice the Alchemist's class level. The Will save DC to resist equals 10 + the Alchemist's class level + Intelligence modifier.

Flight of Daedalus

By spending an action point and concentrating upon complicated abstract mental equations, the 4th-level Alchemist can

fly through the air at a speed equal to his base land speed (at good maneuverability). The Alchemist must spend an attack action each round to remain airborne; otherwise, he falls from the air. If he suffers damage or might otherwise be distracted, he must make a Concentration check to stay airborne. He can remain aloft for a number of hours equal to his class level; after that, he must make a Concentration check (DC 15, +1 per hour thereafter) each hour to remain in flight. The Alchemist can carry up to a medium load while aloft.

Secret of Transmutation

The most well publicized, but also most well guarded, of the Alchemist's talents is the transmutation of material from one form to another. By spending an action point, the 5th-level Alchemist can attempt to transform one substance into another. He can transmute up to one pound of material per class level in a single attempt. Gases are easier to transmute than liquids, and liquids easier than solids. Also, it's easier to transmute something into the same type of matter (gas, liquid, or solid) than a different type. The Alchemist can't affect living tissue (animal or plant), nor can he create living matter. Mass is conserved in the transmutation, so the mass of the final object equals the mass of the original object. For instance, a Alchemist who successfully transmutes a 1-pound block of lead into gold finishes with a 1-pound block of gold.

The process of transmutation normally requires a 12-hour ritual and a successful Craft (chemical) skill check (see below for DCs). The Alchemist can't take 10 on this check, because the result is unpredictable. The ritual itself requires substances with a purchase DC of 20; these are expended in the ritual regardless of its success. The duration of the transmutation varies based on the original and final substance; see below for details.

Alternatively, the Alchemist can attempt to perform the transmutation without the ritual and expensive substances. This increases the DC of the check by 10 and requires a full-round action. If the check succeeds, the duration is only one-half normal. If the Alchemist fails this check by 5 or more, he suffers a backlash of energy and takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

Obviously, an unethical alchemist can use this ability to grant himself occasional boosts to his personal wealth. However, since the duration of the transmutation is impermanent, characters who go around paying for goods with gold that turns into lead a few hours later will quickly draw the attention of (admittedly confused) law enforcement officials, as well as other Alchemists eager to halt the character's misuse of this ability, steal the secret of transmutation from her, or both.



Transmutation	DC	Duration
Gas into gas	15	1 day/level
Gas into liquid	25	1 hour/level
Gas into solid	30	1 round/level
Liquid into gas	20	1 hour/level
Liquid into liquid	18	1 day/level
Liquid into solid	25	1 minute/level
Solid into gas	25	1 round/level
Solid into liquid	22	1 minute/level
Solid into solid	20	1 hour/level



Heroic Options

DIABOLIST

Diabolism, commonly called black magic, focuses on the summoning and controlling of malevolent extradimensional beings. Some diabolists claim to summon fiends, while others say they channel the power of Satan himself. While the art of diabolism could theoretically be used to further the cause of good, the corruptive influence of demonic power usually proves too strong for those who would seek to use it in that way. Of course, most diabolists don't have far to go in that direction.

Select this prestige class if you want to gain power by bargaining with fiends. Of course, keep in mind that all power has its costs.

The fastest path into this prestige class is from the Charismatic hero basic class, though Diabolists from other basic classes can dabble in the Occultist class to aid in qualifying.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Diabolist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Intimidate 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Diabolist prestige class.

Hit Die

The Diabolist gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Diabolist gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Diabolist class skills are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcane lore, theology and philosophy) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Speak Language (none), Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Diabolist prestige class.

Command

Three times per day, a Diabolist can bend a living creature's will, forcing the target to submit to a spoken command. This func-

TABLE 2-8: THE DIABOLIST

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+0	+1	Arcane skills, command	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+2	Summon fiend	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+2	Black warding	+2	+1
4th	+2	+4	+1	+2	Hellfire	+2	+2
5th	+2	+4	+1	+3	Call fiendish servant	+2	+2

tions identically to the *command* spell (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 341). The Will save to resist has a DC of 10 + the Diabolist's class level + Charisma modifier. If a target resists the Diabolist's command, he can't be targeted again by the same Diabolist's command ability for 24 hours.

At 3rd level, the Diabolist can spend a single use of the power to give the same command to a number of targets equal to 1 + her Charisma bonus simultaneously.

Summon Fiend

At 2nd level, the Diabolist gains the power to summon a fiend to Earth to do her bidding. The Diabolist must spend an action point and use a full-round action to complete the ritual of summoning. If the Diabolist desires a specific kind of fiend, she must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma check; otherwise, the Gamemaster determines what kind of creature is summoned. (If the Diabolist desires to summon a specific individual fiend, the Charisma check DC increases to 15.)

In general, the Diabolist can safely summon any fiend described in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* or *d20 Menace Manual* (or any other suitably horrific creature, at the GM's option) whose CR is equal to or less than the Diabolist's class level +2. For instance, a 2nd-level Diabolist could summon a rotlord (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 235), while a 5th-level Diabolist could summon a kwevencha (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 41). The player and the Gamemaster should work together to create a short list of appropriate creatures that the character can summon.

The Diabolist can attempt to increase her effective class level for purposes of summoning fiends by an amount up to her Charisma bonus; however, for every point added to her class level for this purpose, the DC of the Charisma check to get the desired fiend increases by +1. Also, a Diabolist who summons a fiend more powerful than she could normally summon must make an opposed Charisma check against the fiend each round or the fiend turns on her. For example, if a 3rd-level Diabolist attempts to summon a CR 7 kwevencha, the Charisma check DC would be 14, and each round she would have to succeed on an opposed Charisma check or the kwevencha would attack her. (If attacking the Diabolist would be useless or suicidal, the fiend merely flees the scene.) Once control over a summoned fiend is lost, it can never be regained, even with other magic.

The Diabolist may have a maximum number of summoned fiends present at any given time equal to one-half her class level. A summoned fiend remains for a number of minutes equal to the Diabolist's class level before returning to its horrible otherworldly home. A slain fiend disappears, along with any items it brought with it (but leaving behind anything from this world it might be carrying).

Black Warding

A 3rd-level Diabolist can spend an action point and sacrifice 1d4 hit points to surround herself with a faint field of shimmering dark purple light. This grants the Diabolist unbeatable damage reduction equal to her class level for a number of minutes equal to her Charisma bonus (minimum 1 minute). For example, a 3rd-level Diabolist with Charisma 18 who invokes black warding gains DR 3/— for 4 minutes.

Hellfire

At 4th level, the Diabolist learns to evoke blasts of hellfire. As an attack action, she can blast a single target within 60 feet with hellfire, dealing an amount of fire damage equal to 3d6 + her Charisma modifier. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + the Diabolist's class level + Charisma modifier) halves the damage. Each blast also deals 1 point of damage to the Diabolist—Hell's cost for calling upon its power; this damage can be healed only by rest, and the damage can't be restored by the Treat Injury skill (except as part of long-term care) or by magical means.

Call Fiendish Servant

A 5th-level Diabolist gains the power to call a demonic servant bodily to Earth to serve her as a bodyguard or other minion. The Diabolist must first summon the fiend (see Summon Fiend, above). A Diabolist can't have a demonic servant more powerful than she could control without a Charisma check.

After summoning the potential servant, the Diabolist must bind it to service. This costs an action point and requires a five-minute ritual culminating in an opposed Charisma check. If the check fails or if the Diabolist's concentration is interrupted, the ritual fails and the fiend returns to its home dimension.

If the ritual succeeds, the fiend is bound to the Diabolist's service. It now exists bodily on Earth (unlike a summoned creature), and thus doesn't disappear if slain. It must carry out the Diabolist's bidding, even to the point of self-sacrifice. The fiend is only freed from service with the Diabolist's death, and thus the Diabolist must take care that the fiend does not have the opportunity to scheme against her.

A Diabolist may only have one fiendish servant at any given time. The servant doesn't count against the Diabolist's normal limit of summoned fiends (see Summon Fiend, above).

VISIONARY

The Visionary believes in the power of faith and knowingly draws power from an all-powerful benevolent being. The object of the Visionary's belief can vary dramatically from one character to another, but the result is similar: the Visionary hero is blessed with great gifts of healing and protection from evil forces.

Select this prestige class if you want to use your faith to help others in need, and to battle the minions of evil.

The fastest path into this prestige class is from the Charismatic hero or Dedicated hero basic class.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Visionary, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Concentration 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 10 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

Allegiance: Any benevolent omnipotent divine being, or good.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Visionary prestige class.

Hit Die

The Visionary gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Visionary gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Visionary class skills are as follows.

Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (history, theology and philosophy) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the Visionary prestige class.

Divine Aura

As a standard action, the Visionary may spend one action point to surround himself with an invisible aura of divine energy. This aura provides the Visionary with a bonus on saving throws and Defense equal to his class level, as well as an equal bonus on Diplomacy checks. The aura lasts for 1 minute per class level. If the Visionary attacks while the aura is active, the aura is dismissed and the Visionary suffers a penalty to attack rolls for 1 hour equal to the bonus granted by the aura. The aura may be dismissed by the Visionary as an attack action.

At 3rd level, the Visionary's divine aura also protects any allies within 10 feet of him. If anyone protected by the aura attacks, the aura is dismissed and penalties are assigned both to the attacker and the Visionary as described above.

Signs and Portents

As a standard action, the 2nd-level Visionary can spend an action point to cause obvious signs of the divine to manifest in the area around him. Trees and flowers bloom in the heart of winter or from dead wood, lights shine in the sky or bathe the Visionary in a luminous glow, thunderclaps rattle the windows, and the like. These manifestations are perceived by any or all those within 100 feet of the Visionary, at his preference, and last for up to 1 minute per class level. No creature can be affected by signs and portents more than once in a 24-hour period.

The signs and portents can have one of three effects. The Visionary chooses which effect when spending the action point, and the same effect is visible to all those who perceive the signs and portents. In each case, the DC of the Will save is 10 + the Visionary's class level + Charisma modifier.



TABLE 2-9: THE VISIONARY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Divine aura (self)	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Signs and portents	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Demon ward	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Divine aura (allies)	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Healing touch	+2	+2

- **Terror:** All those who perceive the signs and portents cower in fear. A successful Will save reduces the effect to shaken. Creatures immune to fear or to mind-affecting effects are immune to this aspect of the ability.
- **Wonder:** All those who perceive the signs and portents are fascinated, standing or sitting quietly and taking no actions other than to pay attention to the effect. (A successful Will save negates the effect.) The fascinated creatures take a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat, such as a hostile creature approaching, allows the fascinated creature a new saving throw. Any obvious threat automatically breaks the effect. Creatures immune to mind-affecting effects are immune to this aspect of the ability.
- **Inspiration:** All those who perceive the signs and portents are inspired with courage. They gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls and Will saves.

Demon Ward

As a standard action, a 3rd-level Visionary can invoke divine power and spend an action point to create a warded area in a 10-foot radius around him. Any creature with an evil allegiance (or that has an allegiance to a creature with an evil allegiance) must make a successful Will save (DC = 15 + the Visionary's class level + Wisdom modifier) to enter this area. If already in the area when the ward is created, the creature must succeed at the same Will save or leave the area at its earliest opportunity.

Even if the creature succeeds at the Will save and is able to enter or remain within the warded area, it is shaken while in the area, suffering a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks.

The ward lasts for 10 minutes per class level, or until the Visionary dismisses the ward (an attack action). Unlike the divine aura (see above), the Visionary may attack freely while protected by the demon ward.

Healing Touch

At 5th level, the Visionary can use a full-round action to channel divine power into a healing touch. By spending an action point and placing his hand upon another character, the Visionary wipes away injury and afflictions. The healing touch immediately ends any and all of the following adverse conditions affecting the target: ability damage, blindness, daze, deafness, disease, exhaustion, fatigue, insanity, nausea, sickness, stun, and poison. It also cures 50 hit points of damage, as well as all nonlethal damage suffered by the character.

Using healing touch takes a physical toll on the Visionary, rendering him fatigued. If the Visionary is already fatigued, he becomes exhausted; if already exhausted, the Visionary is reduced to -1 hit points and begins dying. The Visionary cannot use healing touch on himself.

FX ABILITIES

FX abilities include arcane spells, divine spells, and psionic powers. They are available to characters with one or more levels in the Mage, Acolyte, Telepath, and Battle Mind advanced classes, all of which are described in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

Divine Spells

Acolytes cast divine spells. See pages 322–325 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for a description of the Acolyte advanced class.

1st-Level Acolyte Spells

- Black Karma Curse:** Subject damages self with melee attack.
- Degauss:** Erases electronic data from any data storage device.
- Steal Life:** Deal 1d6/level damage to target (max. 5d6) and heal a similar amount of damage.
- Trace Purge:** Removes physical traces of the subject's presence or passage.

2nd-Level Acolyte Spells

- Ayza's Jujū:** Touched creature can re-roll one saving throw.
- Blood Weapon:** Weapon deals +1d6 damage, or +3d6 if you take 5 points of damage.
- Dataread:** Access and read data stored in any machine-readable data source.

3rd-Level Acolyte Spells

- Erzuli's Fetish:** Creates a doll-like effigy that can be used to harm or hinder a specific creature.
- Secret Pocket:** Creates an extradimensional pocket in a garment.
- Shutdown:** Electrical devices in a 20-ft.-radius area cease to function for 1 min./level.

4th-Level Acolyte Spells

- Banish:** Banishes one outsider to its home plane, or deals 3d6 +1/level damage to creature.
- Gris-Gris^M:** Creates a magic bag that grants spell resistance or power resistance.

5th-Level Acolyte Spells

- Legba Rides^{XP}:** Summons a loa-spirit that answers up to three questions.
- Panacea:** Removes most afflictions and heals 1d8 +1/level points of damage.
- Revivify^M:** Restores recently slain creature to life with no level loss.

Arcane Spells

Mages cast arcane spells. See pages 318–322 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for a description of the Mage advanced class.

0-Level Mage Spells

- Magic ID:** Creates a false but visually accurate ID card.

1st-Level Mage Spells

- Alter Data:** Alters electronic data stored on a single device.
- Blood Weapon:** Weapon deals +1d6 damage, or +3d6 if you take 5 points of damage.
- Degauss:** Erases electronic data from any data storage device.
- Disguise Self:** Changes your appearance for 10 min./level.
- Trace Purge:** Removes physical traces of the subject's presence or passage.

2nd-Level Mage Spells

Curse of the Putrid Husk: Subject believes his flesh is rotting away and falls unconscious.

Dataread: Access and read data stored in any machine-readable data source.

Wings of Icarus: You can fly for 1 round.

Zap: Lightning strikes target for 1d6/level electricity damage (max. 5d6); target may be knocked prone.

3rd-Level Mage Spells

Breath of the Deep: Subject takes 2d6/round damage as seawater fills its lungs.

Effigy of Black Binding: Creates a doll-like effigy that protects you against a specific creature.

Secret Pocket: Creates an extradimensional pocket in a garment.

Shutdown: Electrical devices in a 20-ft.-radius area cease to function for 1 min./level.

4th-Level Mage Spells

Banish: Banishes one outsider to its home plane, or deals 3d6 +1/level damage to creature.

Blood to Acid: Subject takes acid damage over 3 rounds.

Gris-Gris^M: Creates a magic bag that grants spell resistance or power resistance.

5th-Level Mage Spells

Dreamwalk: Invisible, incorporeal floating eye moves 30 ft./round.

Summon Invisible Stalker^M: Summons an invisible stalker for 1 hour/level.

Spell Descriptions

The spells herein are presented in alphabetical order.

Alter Data

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Mage 1; **Components:** S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One data storage device touched; **Duration:** Permanent; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

You can alter some or all of the data on a CD, DVD, videocassette, cell phone, computer hard drive, floppy disk, or similar storage device so that it appears as some other kind of data. For instance, you could alter the digits of a phone number stored on a cell phone or make a surveillance videocassette play a pornographic movie. Anyone who interacts with the altered data gets a Will save to pierce the illusion.

Ayza's Juju

Abjuration

Level: Acolyte 2; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** Creature touched; **Duration:** 1 hour/level (see text); **Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

This spell invokes the watchful eye of Ayza, a protector spirit. The subject of *Ayza's juju* can re-roll one saving throw but must

accept the result of the re-roll, even if it is lower. Once the target has made the re-roll, the spell ends.

Material Component: A piece of sugar candy.

Banish

Abjuration

Level: Acolyte 4, Mage 4; **Components:** V, S, DF/M; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One outsider; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will partial; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell banishes one outsider back to its native dimension, where it must remain for at least one year. If the target succeeds on its Will save, it instead takes 3d6 points of damage + 1 point per caster level (maximum +10) as it is wracked with terrible pain.

Arcane Material Component: A piece of shattered mirror.

Black Karma Curse

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Acolyte 1; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

If the target creature's saving throw fails, it immediately takes damage as if it had hit itself with its currently wielded weapon (or natural weapon). If the creature has more than one eligible attack form, it uses the one that deals the most damage.

Blood to Acid

Transmutation [Acid]

Level: Mage 4; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature (see text); **Duration:** 3 rounds; **Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

The subject's blood turns into acid, dealing 1d6 points of acid damage per caster level on the first round, 1d6 points of acid damage per two caster levels on the second round, and 1d6 points of acid damage per three caster levels on the third and final round. Creatures that don't have blood are unaffected by this spell.

Material Component: A vial or flask of stomach acid.

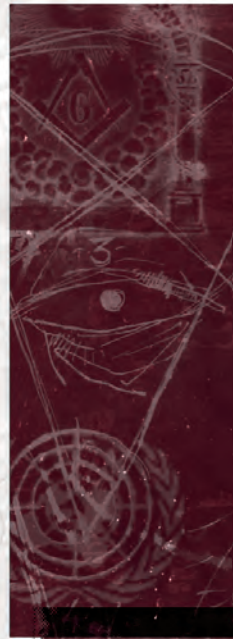
Blood Weapon

Necromancy

Level: Acolyte 2, Mage 1; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Move action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** Weapon touched; **Duration:** 1 round/level or until discharged; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

This spell infuses a melee or ranged weapon with baleful energy. The next time this weapon damages a living creature, the spell discharges. The spell deals an extra 1d6 points of damage against the target of the attack. If you are the wielder of the weapon, you can voluntarily take 5 points of damage when you cast this spell to empower the weapon to deal an extra 2d6 points of damage (for a total of 3d6 extra points of damage).

The weapon loses this property if its wielder drops it or otherwise loses contact with it.



Breath of the Deep

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Mage 3; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One living creature; **Duration:** 1 round/level; **Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates (see text); **Spell Resistance:** No

This spell causes the subject's lungs to fill with seawater. The subject takes 2d6 points of damage per round and can't do anything other than cough up water and take a single move action per turn. Each round at the end of its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect.

A winged creature affected by this spell is forced to land. Creatures that don't have respiratory systems and don't need to breathe (such as oozes and plants) are unaffected by this spell.

A creature slain by this spell appears to have drowned, although a DC 20 Investigate or Treat Injury check reveals that the death was, in fact, unnatural.

Material Component: Three ounces of seawater.

Curse of the Putrid Husk

Illusion (Figment)

Level: Mage 2; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One humanoid; **Duration:** See text; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

This illusion forces the subject to believe that his own flesh is rotting and falling off his body, and that his internal organs are spilling out. If the target fails his Will save, he faints at the start of his turn and falls unconscious for 1d12 minutes. The subject comes to and regains his senses if he takes any amount of damage while unconscious.

Dataread

Divination

Level: Acolyte 2, Mage 2; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One data storage device touched; **Duration:** 1 minute/level; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

You can run your finger over any machine-readable data source (a barcode, a computer disk, a CD, magnetic tape, or any similar record) to understand the content of the data. You experience the data as it would normally be experienced through an appropriate machine. For example, if reading a music CD, you hear the music in your head. If reading a word processor file, you visualize and read an image of the page. If reading a barcode, you see the serial number, pricing information, and other barcoded data.

The amount of time required to experience the data is the same as that required to read it by conventional means. You can normally read 2 pages of documents in 1 minute. This spell does not decode encrypted data. Without the encryption code, an encrypted document or file appears as a seemingly random string of characters. If you know the encryption code, however, you can read encrypted data normally with the spell.

Degauss

Transmutation

Level: Acolyte 1, Mage 1; **Components:** S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One data storage device touched; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

By touching a single device that contains electronic files, such as a computer, external hard drive, CD-ROM, or magnetic disk, you erase all files on that device. The device is rendered empty of data.

Famous Voodoo Practitioners

Spells such as *Ayza's jujū*, *Erzuli's fetish*, *gris-gris*, and *Legba rides* originated with the Voodoo practitioners of Haiti. By far the most famous of Haiti's Voodoo practitioners was François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, a small man with a commanding presence. Born in 1907, he attended the University of Haiti's school of medicine and then worked as a hospital staff physician. Duvalier's political career began in 1946, when he was appointed the director-general of the National Health Service. By 1957, he had been elected president of the island nation, a position he held for the remainder of his life. When elected, he was supported by the United States and other governments, who

believed he was a simple country doctor with good intentions. In fact, his reign became a dictatorial rule of terror, based on Voodoo principles and frequently employing ritual hexes and curses against his enemies. Papa Doc himself believed his patron was Baron Samedi, loa of graveyards, death, and powerful hexes. He died of cancer on April 21, 1971, and was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude, who became known as "Baby Doc."

In the United States, the most famous Voodoo practitioner was probably New Orleans' Marie Laveau (born in 1796 in either the French Quarter or on Hispaniola—accounts vary). By means of her magic, she quickly rose through the ranks of New Orleans society. One of her most famous feats, influencing a murder trial to provide a "not

guilty" verdict, even won her a house on Rue St. Anne from the accused man's grateful father. Stories of orgiastic festivals, the cooking of orphans or abandoned children, and other foul practices were common during her lifetime, but never proven; they may merely have been the result of jealousy at the success of a mulatto/African-American woman in white society.

Marie Laveau died in 1881, long after being deposed as Voodoo Queen. She left behind fifteen children and dozens of grandchildren. By the present day, her descendants number in the thousands. The direct scions of Marie Laveau's daughter—also named Marie and also a Voodoo mambo—are said to be the most powerful practitioners of the Art in the South.

Disguise Self

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Mage 1; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 10 minutes/level (D)

You make yourself—including clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment—look different. You can seem up to 1 foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot change your body type. For example, a human caster could look human, humanoid, or like any other human-shaped bipedal creature. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You could add or obscure a minor feature, such as a beard, or look like an entirely different person.

The spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form, nor does it alter the perceived tactile or audible (sound) properties of you or your equipment. A cane made to look like an assault rifle still functions as a cane.

If you use this spell to create a disguise, you get a +10 bonus on the Disguise check.

A creature that interacts with the glamer gets a Will save to recognize it as an illusion. For example, a creature that touched you and realized that the tactile sensation did not match the visual one would be entitled to such a save.

This spell does not conceal your true appearance from visual recording devices such as security surveillance cameras.

Dreamwalk

Divination

Level: Mage 5; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** 10 minutes; **Range:** Unlimited; **Effect:** Magical sensor; **Duration:** 1 minute/level (D); **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

When you cast this spell, you feel like you're stepping out of your own body and moving through space like a ghost. This spell is functionally identical *arcane eye* (d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game, page 339) except that the sensor can pass through solid objects as though it were incorporeal.

Effigy of Black Binding

Necromancy

Level: Mage 3; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** 1 day/level (see text); **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

You fashion a doll-like effigy of the target and call upon dark spirits to attune it to the subject. The target must be on the same plane of existence as you for the spell to work. If the target's Will save succeeds, the spell fails and the doll is rendered powerless forever. If the Will save fails, the target cannot cause you harm, either by physical or magical attacks, for the spell's duration. If you attack the target or if the doll leaves your possession, the spell ends.

An attuned doll has hardness 0 and 5 hit points. A damaged or destroyed doll cannot be repaired without ending the spell.

Material Component: A doll-like effigy containing materials of a personal nature belonging to the target, such as a few hairs or nail clippings. The doll requires a successful DC 10 Craft (visual art) check to create.

Erzuli's Fetish

Necromancy

Level: Acolyte 3; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** 1 hour; **Range:** See text; **Target:** One living creature; **Duration:** See text; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

As part of the casting of *Erzuli's fetish*, you create a doll-like effigy of the target. You also recite a litany of appeals to dark spirits to attune the doll to the target creature. The target must be on the same plane of existence as you for the spell to work. If the target's Will save succeeds, the spell fails and the doll is rendered powerless forever. If the save fails, the subject becomes attuned to the doll, at which point the doll can never be used to harm any creature other than the subject.

An attuned doll has hardness 0 and 5 hit points. For every point of damage you deal to the doll, the target takes 2d6 points of damage. If the doll is reduced to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and the spell ends. If the doll is damaged or destroyed by someone other than you, the target suffers no ill effects. A damaged or destroyed doll cannot be repaired without ending the spell.

You can pierce the doll with a silver pin without damaging it (an attack action). If you pierce the doll with as many pins as the target has character levels or Hit Dice, the target is shaken until one or more of the pins are removed from the doll.

The spell duration lasts for as long as the attuned doll has at least 1 hit point remaining.

Material Component: One or more silver pins, plus a hand-crafted doll-like effigy containing materials of a personal nature belonging to the target, such as a few hairs or nail clippings. The doll requires a DC 10 Craft (visual art) check to create.

Gris-gris

Abjuration

Level: Acolyte 4, Mage 4; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** 1 hour; **Range:** 0 ft.; **Effect:** One small bag (*gris-gris*); **Duration:** 1 day/level; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No

This spell is passed down among practitioners. As part of the casting of *gris-gris* (pronounced "gree gree"), you create a small bag of herbs and other ingredients (cayenne pepper, human hair, powdered brick, dried blood, John-the-Conqueror root, and alligator scales) that helps ward off foul magic. Any creature that keeps the bag in its possession gains spell resistance 10 + 1 per caster level for the spell's duration. A creature carrying multiple *gris-gris* only gains the benefits of the most powerful one. Destroying the bag (1 hp) ends the spell.

You may use this spell to create a variant *gris-gris* that grants its possessor power resistance 11 + 1 per caster level for the spell's duration (instead of spell resistance).

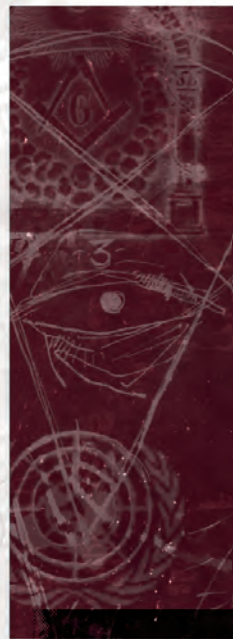
Material Components: Various herbs and ingredients (purchase DC 4).

Special: Fashioning a *gris-gris* requires a successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcane lore) check. If the check fails, you still cast the spell, but the *gris-gris* fails to impart any benefit.

Legba Rides

Divination

Level: Acolyte 5; **Components:** V, S, M, XP; **Casting Time:** 10 minutes; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 1 round/level



This spell asks Legba, the loa-spirit that watches over the crossroads between the spirit world and the real world, to possess you and answer your questions. Legba answers three questions, and the answers given are helpful and to the point (Legba is a busy spirit). “Unclear” is a legitimate answer, for even Legba is not omniscient.

This spell, at best, provides information to aid in making decisions. If you lag, discuss the answers, or go off to do anything else, the spell ends.

Material Component: A flask of rum or bowl of chicken blood.

XP Cost: 50 XP.

Magic ID

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Mage 0; **Components:** V, S, F; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Effect:** Personal identification card; **Duration:** see text; **Saving Throw:** Will disbelief (if interacted with); **Spell Resistance:** No

With this spell, you make a small card or slip of paper appear to be a valid identification card of your choosing. For example, you might make a business card look like a driver’s license, or a video club card look like an FBI identification card. The card bears your name, likeness, and all other data expected by anyone examining such a card. However, it is only visually accurate and does not contain any valid machine-readable data or electronic coding. You cannot use this spell to make an electronic passkey. The illusion lasts only as long as you touch the card, to a maximum of 5 rounds.

Focus: A small card or slip of paper.

Panacea

Conjuration (Healing)

Level: Acolyte 5; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** Creature touched; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will half (see text); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (see text)

With this spell, you remove any of the following debilitating conditions affecting the subject: blinded, *confused*, dazed, deafened, diseased, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, panicked, paralyzed, shaken, and stunned. It negates sleep effects and any additional effects from poison, as the *neutralize poison* spell (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 352). It also cures 1d8 points of damage + 1 point per caster level (maximum +10).

This spell does not remove ability damage, negative levels, or ability drain.

Used against an undead creature, this spell deals damage instead of curing the creature (which takes half damage if it succeeds on a Will saving throw), but it has no other effect.

Revivify

Conjuration (Healing)

Level: Acolyte 5; **Components:** V, S, M (see text); **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** Dead creature touched; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** None (see text); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You miraculously restore life to a recently deceased creature. However, the spell must be cast within 1 round of the victim’s

death. Before the soul of the deceased has completely left the body, this spell halts its journey while repairing some of the damage to the body. *Revivify* functions like *raise dead* (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 354), except that the raised creature receives no level loss, no Constitution loss, and no loss of spells. The creature has –1 hit points (but is stable).

Material Component: A diamond (purchase DC 20). You may spend an action point to cast the spell without the material component.

Secret Pocket

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Acolyte 3, Mage 3; **Components:** V, S, M/DF; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** Garment touched; **Duration:** 1 hour/level; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell creates an extradimensional space that only you can reach through a pocket in the target garment. The *secret pocket* can hold 1 pound per caster level, and you can put anything in it that will physically fit through the pocket opening. The opening can be up to 7 inches wide + 1 inch per 2 caster levels. An item can be of any length and isn’t otherwise restricted by the pocket’s actual dimensions—it just has to be able to fit through the opening. The contents of the extradimensional space never cause the pocket to bulge, and items inside the secret pocket have no weight once they’re placed inside (although the weight still counts against the capacity of the extradimensional space).

Whenever you reach into the pocket, you access the extradimensional space rather than the actual pocket. Anyone else who examines the pocket finds it completely ordinary (and empty). If someone else puts something in the pocket, you can’t reach it because your hand goes into the extradimensional space instead.

You can give the garment to someone else to wear if you like, but only you can access the extradimensional space through the pocket.

A single garment can have only one *secret pocket* spell cast upon it. Any objects inside the *secret pocket* when the spell effect ends simply fall out of the garment and land in your fighting space.

Arcane Material Component: A black handkerchief.

Shutdown

Transmutation

Level: Acolyte 3, Mage 3; **Components:** V, S, M/DF; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Area:** 20-ft.-radius emanation centered on a point in space; **Duration:** 1 minute/level (D); **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

All electrical devices within the spell’s area—lights, computers, cell phones, digital watches, and so forth—do not function for the duration of the spell. The spell does not prevent devices outside the area from operating normally, even if they are on the same electrical circuit as those affected. At the end of the spell’s duration, the devices operate normally again as if their operation had not been interrupted. (Computers do not need to be restarted, and digital clocks display the correct time.)

Many sophisticated mechanical devices, including automobiles and aircraft, rely on electrical components and so are usually affected by this spell.

Arcane Material Component: The control, alt, and delete keys from a computer keyboard.

Steal Life

Necromancy

Level: Acolyte 1; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One living creature touched; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell allows you to drain a foe's life energy and use that energy to heal yourself. If you succeed at a melee touch attack, you deal 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 5d6) to the target, and you heal yourself for the same amount of damage.

Summon Invisible Stalker

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Mage 5; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** 10 minutes; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Effect:** One summoned invisible stalker; **Duration:** 1 hour/level (D); **Saving Throw:** Special (see text); **Spell Resistance:** No

This spell summons an invisible stalker (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 241) and compels it to do your bidding. As part of the casting of this spell, you must inscribe a 10-foot-diameter circle or pentagram on the floor, into which the invisible stalker is summoned. Once summoned, it goes where you command it to go and attacks whom you command it to attack (but see below). The invisible stalker disappears when reduced to 0 hit points, when you dismiss it, or when the spell's duration expires.

At the end of each hour, the summoned invisible stalker gets to make a Will save. If it succeeds, it rebukes your control and becomes free-willed for the remainder of the spell's duration. A free-willed invisible stalker seeks to destroy its summoner and can't be dismissed, although it still disappears when reduced to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

Material Component: Powdered silver (purchase DC 7), which is used to inscribe of the summoning circle or pentagram.

Trace Purge

Transmutation

Level: Acolyte 1, Mage 1; **Components:** V, S, M/DF; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One creature touched; **Duration:** 1 minute/level; **Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

For the duration of the spell, any physical evidence left by the touched creature's body (fingerprints, fluids, hairs, and so forth) is eliminated. The spell also erases any evidentiary materials accidentally deposited by the subject's clothing (such as fibers, mud, dust, and so forth). The spell only removes materials no larger than a few strands of hair and few ounces of dirt. It does not change any disturbances the subject created (including tool marks, moved furniture, or broken items) or remove any object that the target deliberately left.

Arcane Material Component: A pair of tweezers.

Wings of Icarus

Transmutation

Level: Mage 2; **Components:** V; **Casting Time:** Move action; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 1 round

You can fly at a speed of 60 feet (or 40 feet if you're wearing medium or heavy armor) for 1 round. You can ascend at half speed and descend at double speed, and your maneuverability is good. Using this spell requires only as much concentration as walking, so you can attack and cast spells normally. You can charge but not run while under the effects of the spell, and you cannot carry aloft more weight than your maximum load, plus any armor worn.

Should the spell's duration expire while you are still aloft, you slowly float downward 60 feet per round for 1d6 rounds. If you touch the ground in that amount of time, you land safely. If not, you fall the rest of the distance. You also descend this way if the spell's effect is dispelled.

Zap

Evocation [Electricity]

Level: Mage 2; **Components:** V, S; **Casting Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature or object; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Reflex half (see text); **Spell Resistance:** Yes

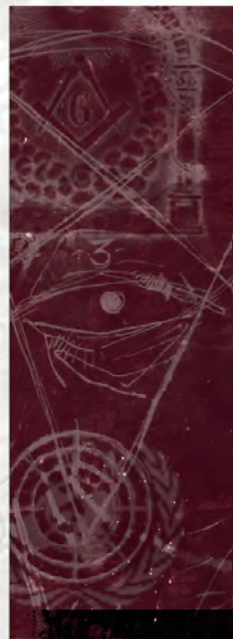
A lightning bolt from above strikes the target for 1d6 points of electricity damage per caster level (maximum 5d6). If the target is a creature, it is knocked prone if it fails its Reflex save. If the target succeeds on its Reflex save, it takes half damage and is not knocked prone.

You must cast this spell in an area with at least 20 feet of vertical space above the target. If you don't have 20 feet of space above the target, the spell fails.

Incantations

Incantations are powerful spells that require elaborate rituals to complete. Anyone can cast an incantation simply by performing the correct ritual gestures and phrases. However, there are drawbacks: Incantations take much longer to cast than normal spells, success with an incantation is never assured, and the consequences for failure can be dramatic. In addition, many incantations require rituals involving multiple participants as well as strange or expensive material components.

Although agents of the Hoffmann Institute may occasionally have cause to perform an incantation, it's more likely for GM characters to experiment with this kind of magic. Sample incantations include ones that allow one to control the weather, create powerful undead creatures, animate golems, subjugate powerful fiends, and cure supposedly incurable diseases. For more information on incantations, see the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* (pages 102–119).



Battle Mind Powers

Battle Minds primarily manifest psionic powers that improve their combat prowess. See pages 305–307 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for a description of the Battle Mind advanced class.

1st-Level Battle Mind Powers

Amplify Psi-Blade (Int): Your psi-blade deals $\times 3$ damage on a critical hit.

Black Shroud (Int): Deal 1d4 cold damage/round for 1 round/level to creatures within a 20-ft. radius.

Sharpen Psi-Blade (Int): Your psi-blade threatens on a roll of 19–20.

2nd-Level Battle Mind Powers

Hunter's Stare (Cha): One or more animals do not attack you.

Psi Wave (Con): Creatures within 20 ft. are nauseated for 1 round.

Pyrokinesis (Int): Creature or object bursts into flames.

3rd-Level Battle Mind Powers

Fortify Self (Con): Cannot be dazed, nauseated, shaken, or stunned; 50% chance to negate critical hit.

Incite Foe (Cha): Subject takes a -1 penalty/level on attack rolls except when attacking you.

Split Mind (Int): Roll two d20s and take the higher result when making a Will save.

4th-Level Battle Mind Powers

Ballistic Shield (Con): $+10$ deflection bonus to Defense against attacks that deal ballistic damage.

Power Resistance (Con): Subject gains power resistance $11 +$ caster level.

Telepath Powers

Telepaths primarily manifest psionic powers that enable them to read and attack the minds of others, as well as shield their own thoughts. See pages 305–307 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for a description of the Telepath advanced class.

0-Level Telepath Powers

Drop (Cha): Subject drops one object it is holding.

Whelm (Cha): Subject takes 1d6 nonlethal damage.

1st-Level Telepath Powers

Hunter's Stare (Cha): One or more animals do not attack you.

Masquerade (Cha): Change your appearance for 10 min./level.

Mute (Cha): Target can't speak for 1 round/level.

2nd-Level Telepath Powers

Evil Eye (Cha): Subject cowers for 1 round/level.

Psychic Puppet (Cha): Force subject to move where you want, up to 5 ft./level.

3rd-Level Telepath Powers

Psycholocate (Wis): Indicates direction of desired object.

Skillwipe (Cha): Target becomes untrained in one skill of your choice.

Whelming Blast (Cha): 30-ft. cone deals 1d6/2 levels nonlethal damage (max. 5d6).

4th-Level Telepath Powers

Power Resistance (Con): Subject gains power resistance $11 +$ caster level.

Split Mind (Int): Roll two d20s and take the higher result when making a Will save.

Whelm, Mass (Cha): One creature/level takes 1d6/level nonlethal damage (max. 10d6).

5th-Level Telepath Powers

Mindwipe (Cha): Subjects Int and Cha drop to 1.

Overwhelm (Cha): Nonlethal damage knocks out subject.

Restore Mind (Int): Removes all mind-affecting effects afflicting the subject.

Track Mind (Wis): Indicates direction to familiar intelligent creature.

Power Descriptions

The psionic powers herein are presented in alphabetical order.

Amplify Psi-Blade

Intelligence

Level: Battle Mind 1; **Display:** Auditory, Visual; **Manifestation**

Time: Move action; **Range:** 0 ft.; **Target:** Your psi-blade; **Dura-**

tion: See text; **Saving Throw:** None; **Power Resistance:** No;

Power Point Cost: 1

Your psi-blade deals $\times 3$ damage on a successful critical hit. This benefit lasts until the psi-blade dissipates.

Ballistic Shield

Constitution

Level: Battle Mind 4; **Display:** Auditory, Visual; **Manifestation**

Time: Attack action; **Range:** 0 ft.; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 1

round/level (D); **Power Point Cost:** 7

A rippling force field appears around you and deflects ballistic attacks. *Ballistic shield* gives you a $+10$ deflection bonus to Defense against attacks that deal ballistic damage.

Black Shroud

Intelligence [Cold]

Level: Battle Mind 1; **Display:** Visual; **Manifestation Time:**

Attack action; **Range:** 20 ft.; **Area:** 20-ft.-radius emanation,

centered on you; **Duration:** 1 round/level (D); **Saving Throw:**

Fortitude negates (see text); **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power**

Point Cost: 1

A shimmering aura of black energy surrounds you. You emanate waves of cold energy that deal 1d4 points of cold damage each round to all creatures within the area. Objects within the area become cold to the touch but are not otherwise affected.

Drop

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 0; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:**

Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:**

One creature; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will

negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 1

You cause the targeted creature to drop one object it is holding. If the creature is holding more than a single item, you choose which item it drops.

Evil Eye

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 2; **Display:** Mental, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** 1 round/level (D); **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 3

Your unsettling gaze leaves the target cowering (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 140) for the spell's duration. This is a fear effect.

Fortify Self

Constitution

Level: Battle Mind 3; **Display:** Auditory, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Move action; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 1 round/level (D); **Power Point Cost:** 5

For the power's duration, you cannot be dazed, nauseated, shaken, or stunned. In addition, you have a 50% chance of negating the extra damage from any critical hit made against you.

Hunter's Stare

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Battle Mind 2, Telepath 1; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** Up to one animal/level; **Duration:** 24 hours; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 1/animal targeted

Any animal affected by this spell will not attack or threaten you for the spell's duration. The animal's attitude toward you is indifferent. If you attack or harm the animal in any way, its attitude shifts to hostile and it attacks you.

Incite Foe

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Battle Mind 3; **Display:** Mental, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Move action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** 1 round/level (D); **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 5

With this power, you encourage a creature to attack you instead of one of your allies. The target takes a penalty on attack rolls equal to your Battle Mind class level whenever it attacks a creature other than you.

Masquerade

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 1; **Display:** Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 10 minutes/level (D); **Power Point Cost:** 3

You trick the minds of everyone around you, making them perceive you as someone else. This "psychic mask" makes others

see you as 1 foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot make yourself look like something that doesn't match your general body type; for example, if you're human, you could make yourself look human, humanoid, or like any other human-shaped bipedal creature. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You could add or obscure a minor feature, such as a beard, or look like an entirely different person.

The spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form, nor does it alter the perceived tactile or audible (sound) properties of you or your equipment. A cane made to look like an assault rifle still functions as a cane.

If you use this power to create a disguise, you get a +10 bonus on the Disguise check.

A creature that makes direct physical contact with you gets a Will save to pierce the illusion.

Masquerade makes you appear as a blurry, featureless gray shape on video recording devices such as security surveillance cameras.

Mindwipe

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 5; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One intelligent creature; **Duration:** Permanent; **Saving Throw:** Will negates (see text); **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 7

You empty the target's mind. If the target fails a Will save, its Intelligence and Charisma scores each drop to 1, giving it roughly the intellect of a lizard. The affected creature is unable to use Intelligence- and Charisma-based skills, cast spells, use psionic powers, understand language, or communicate coherently. Still, the subject knows who its friends are and can follow them and even protect them. The subject remains in this state until *restore mind* is used to cancel the effect of the *mindwipe*.

A creature that can manifest psionic powers takes a -4 penalty on its saving throw.

Mute

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 1; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** 1 round/level (D); **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 1

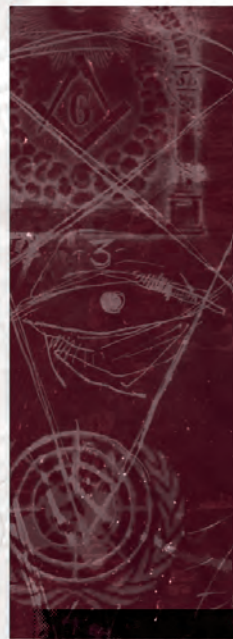
The target cannot speak (or cast spells with verbal components) for the power's duration.

Overwhelm

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 5; **Display:** Mental, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One living creature; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 7

A surge of psionic energy overwhelms the target's senses. Make a melee touch attack; if the attack hits, you deal nonlethal damage to the subject equal to the creature's current hit point total, knocking it unconscious.





Power Resistance

Constitution

Level: Battle Mind 4, Telepath 4; **Display:** Auditory, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One creature touched; **Duration:** 10 minutes/level; **Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); **Power Resistance:** Yes (harmless); **Power Point Cost:** 7

The target gains power resistance 11 + your caster level.

Psi Wave

Constitution

Level: Battle Mind 2; **Display:** Olfactory, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** 20 ft.; **Area:** 20-ft.-radius burst, centered on you; **Duration:** 1 round; **Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 3 (see text)

You project a heaving wave of psionic energy. All targets within the spell's area are nauseated for 1 round. You may choose to shield certain creatures in the area from the effect, but each creature you shield costs you an additional power point.

Psychic Puppet

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 2; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 3

You momentarily gain control of the target's body and can immediately move the target up to 5 feet per manifester level (maximum 30 feet) in any direction you choose. The target uses whichever mode of movement is most convenient; for example, if you use this power on a flying bird, it flies where you direct it to go. With this power, you can force the target to move into danger; for example, you could make the target walk off a cliff or through a threatened area.

Psycholocate

Wisdom

Level: Telepath 3; **Display:** Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level); **Area:** Circle, centered on you, with a radius of 400 ft. + 40 ft./level; **Duration:** 1 minute/level; **Saving Throw:** None; **Power Resistance:** No; **Power Point Cost:** 5

You sense the direction of a well-known or clearly visualized object. You can use this power to locate general items (such as a stairway, fire exit, or safe), in which case you locate the nearest one of its kind if more than one is within range. Attempting to find a particular item, such as a famous painting or a friend's stolen car, requires a specific and accurate mental image of the item (a photograph will suffice, if one is available). If the image is not close enough to the actual object, the spell fails.

This power doesn't tell you how far away the object is, relative to you. If the object you seek is outside your range, you get no reading until the object comes into range. Your ability to locate an object is blocked by even a thin sheet of lead.

You cannot locate creatures using this power.

Pyrokinesis

Intelligence [Fire]

Level: Battle Mind 2; **Display:** Auditory, Olfactory, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target:** One creature or object; **Duration:** Instantaneous (see text); **Saving Throw:** Fortitude half; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 3

The creature or object targeted by this power bursts into flames, taking 2d6 points of fire damage, or half damage if it succeeds on a Fortitude save. Whether or not the target makes the save, it catches on fire (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 213).

Restore Mind

Intelligence

Level: Telepath 5; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Touch; **Target:** One intelligent creature; **Duration:** Permanent; **Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); **Power Resistance:** Yes (harmless); **Power Point Cost:** 7

You remove all mind-affecting effects currently afflicting the subject.

Sharpen Psi-Blade

Intelligence

Level: Battle Mind 1; **Display:** Auditory, Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Move action; **Range:** 0 ft.; **Target:** Your psi-blade; **Duration:** See text; **Saving Throw:** None; **Power Resistance:** No; **Power Point Cost:** 1

Your psi-blade threatens a critical hit on a roll of 19–20. This benefit lasts until the psi-blade dissipates.

Skillwipe

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 3; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One creature; **Duration:** 1 day/level; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 5

This power makes the target forget a specific body of knowledge. When you manifest this power, you must select a specific skill. The target is considered untrained in the skill (as though he has 0 ranks in the skill) for the power's duration.

Split Mind

Intelligence

Level: Battle Mind 3, Telepath 4; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Personal; **Target:** You; **Duration:** 10 minutes/level; **Power Point Cost:** 5

You use both halves of your brain to resist mental attacks. Whenever you make a Will save, roll two d20s and take the higher result.

Track Mind

Wisdom

Level: Telepath 5; **Display:** Visual; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level); **Area:** Circle, centered on you, with a radius of 400 ft. + 40 ft./level; **Duration:**

10 minutes/level; **Saving Throw:** None; **Power Resistance:** No; **Power Point Cost:** 5

This power functions like *psycholocate*, except that it locates a known or familiar creature with an Intelligence score of 1 or higher. In addition to knowing the direction of the creature, you also know the direction it is moving (if any). You can locate a creature of a specific kind (such as a human or vampire) or a specific creature known to you. It cannot find a creature of a specific type (such as humanoid or animal). To find a kind of creature, you must have seen such a creature up close (within 30 feet) at least once.

This power cannot detect objects, nonintelligent creatures, or creatures warded against divinations. Lead sheeting blocks this power as well.

Whelm

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 0; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One living creature; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 1

You assault the target's mind, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage if it fails its saving throw.

Whelm, Mass

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 4; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Target:** One living creature/level; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 5

This spell functions like *whelm*, except that it affects multiple targets and it deals 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per caster level (maximum 10d6) to each subject.

Whelming Blast

Charisma [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Telepath 3; **Display:** Mental; **Manifestation Time:** Attack action; **Range:** 30 ft.; **Target:** 30-ft. cone-shaped burst; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Will negates; **Power Resistance:** Yes; **Power Point Cost:** 3

You unleash an invisible cone of psionic energy that assails the mental faculties of creatures in the area, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6) to each creature that fails its save.

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

The following items are things that the Hoffmann Institute routinely issues, modifies, and alters to meet the needs of its operatives in sensitive and dangerous assignments.

Ammunition

This section covers unique and exotic ammunition that agents might use during a mission. For more information on regular ammunition, see the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* (page 103).

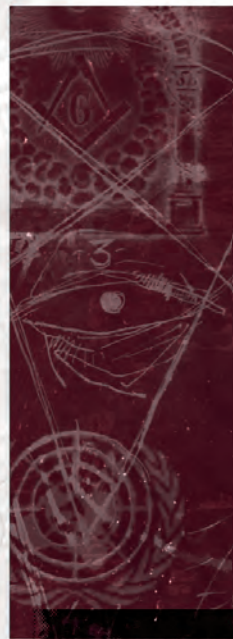


Table 2–10 lists purchase DC modifiers for each special type of ammunition; however, agents of the Hoffmann Institute who can justify the need for such ammunition may receive it at no cost.

TABLE 2–10: AMMUNITION

Ammunition Type	Purchase DC Modifier	Restriction
Blessed	+4	Res (+2)
High-explosive	+5	Mil (+3)
Rubber	+1	Res (+2)
Silvered	+6	—
Ultraviolet (UV)	+5	Mil (+3)
White phosphorous (WP)	+5	Mil (+3)

Blessed

Blessed ammunition is treated as having a +1 enhancement bonus for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of creatures with an affiliation to evil. In addition, all critical hit rolls against such targets are automatically successful, so every threat is a critical hit.

High-Explosive

High-explosive ammunition is used mostly in grenade launchers and occasionally shotguns, but can be used in other weapons. This type of ammunition deals 1 extra die of damage of the appropriate type for the weapon.

Rubber

Rubber rounds exist for all types of handguns and longarms. Rubber ammunition deals nonlethal damage.

Silvered

Silvered ammunition bypasses the damage reduction of any creature that is vulnerable to silver (such as werewolves). Department-11 (Ballistics) keeps enough in inventory to deal with infrequent outbreaks of lycanthropy, but generally speaking, silvered ammunition is not mass-produced (hence the high cost).

Ultraviolet (UV)

Ultraviolet ammunition releases an intense burst of UV light on impact, dealing an additional 2d6 points of damage to creatures that take damage from sunlight (such as vampires).

White Phosphorous (WP)

White phosphorous-tipped rounds inflict terrible burns on a target. Any target struck by a “Willie P” shot takes an additional 1d6 points of fire damage and risks catching on fire (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 213). WP rounds go off if they strike anything between the shooter and the target.

TABLE 2–11: GRENADES

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Burst Radius	Reflex DC	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Concussion grenade	4d6	—	Nonlethal	10 ft.	15	10 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	15	Mil (+3)
EMP grenade	5d6 ¹	—	Electricity	20 ft.	15	10 ft.	Small	2 lb.	16	Mil (+3)
Tangler grenade	Special ¹	—	—	15 ft.	15	10 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	15	Lic (+1)

¹ See weapon’s description for details.

Grenades

The Institute doesn’t usually equip its agents with grenades unless their assignment involves the capture or destruction of numerous xenofoms. Unless otherwise noted, the purchase DCs listed are for a box of 6 grenades.

Concussion Grenade

Living creatures within the concussion grenade’s 10-foot-radius burst radius take 4d6 points of nonlethal concussion damage, or half damage if a DC 15 Reflex save succeeds. Concussion grenades do not affect creatures immune to nonlethal or concussion damage.

EMP Grenade

This grenade releases an electromagnetic pulse that instantly shorts out all electronic devices (including computers) within a 20-foot-radius burst area. Affected devices remain nonfunctional until repaired (see the Repair skill description in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for details).

The EMP grenade deals no damage to most creatures. However, a robot or creature infected with nanites (such as a sand slave) takes 5d6 points of electricity damage; a successful DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage. A sand slave that fails its Reflex save must immediately succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Tangler Grenade

This grenade explodes in a 15-foot-radius burst, scattering sticky foam throughout the area. Any creature in the area must make a DC 15 Reflex save. If the save succeeds, the creature is merely entangled (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 140) for as long as it remains in the area. If the save fails, the creature is also immobilized and cannot move until the foam is dissolved or it breaks free with a successful DC 20 Strength check or DC 25 Escape Artist check (a full-round action).

If Hoffmann agents requisition tangler grenades from the Institute, they also receive an aerosol canister that contains foam solvent (enough to dissolve all of the foam from one grenade). Dissolving tangler foam in a 5-foot square requires a full-round action.

Paranormal Combat Gear

The Institute stocks special gear for missions involving contact with hostile xenofoms.

Fiend Hunter’s Kit

Fiends require extreme force and quick thinking to bring down. This kit consists of a duffel bag containing a blessed Beretta M3P shotgun (see below), 10 high-explosive rounds, 10 white phosphorous rounds, 2 fragmentation grenades, a pair of night vision goggles, a holy symbol, and 4 flasks of holy water.

TABLE 2-12: PARANORMAL COMBAT GEAR

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase	
			DC	Restriction
Fiend hunter's kit	Large	40 lb.	21	Res (+2)
Holy water (flask)	Tiny	1 lb.	15	—
Vampire hunter's kit	Large	20 lb.	19	Res (+2)
Werewolf hunter's kit	Med	6 lb.	18	Res (+2)

The blessed shotgun is treated as a +1 weapon for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of creatures with an affiliation to evil; in addition, all critical hit rolls against such targets are automatically successful, so every threat is a critical hit.

Holy Water

A flask of holy water can be thrown as a grenadelike weapon. The flask breaks if thrown against the body of a corporeal creature, but against an incorporeal creature it must be opened and its contents poured onto it. Thus, you can only douse an incorporeal creature with holy water if you are adjacent to it. Doing so is a ranged touch attack that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Holy water deals damage to outsiders with an allegiance to evil and to undead. A flask deals 2d4 points of damage on a direct hit plus 1 point of damage of splash damage to adjacent creatures. Holy water is also considered blessed, which means it has special effects on certain creatures.

Vampire Hunter's Kit

Aside from the obvious gear (a holy symbol and mirror) to weed out the deluded, this hard case contains 4 wooden stakes, 4 flasks of holy water, a blessed Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun (see below), 6 white phosphorous shotgun rounds, 6 silvered rounds, 6 ultraviolet rounds, and 4 tangler grenades.

The blessed Mossberg is treated as a +1 weapon for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of creatures with an affiliation to evil; in addition, all critical hit rolls against such targets are automatically successful, so every threat is a critical hit (although undead are immune to critical hits).

Werewolf Hunter's Kit

This small case contains an S&W M29 .44 Magnum revolver, 12 silvered rounds, a silver cleaver, and 2 cans of pepper spray.

Exotic Drugs

The drugs described below must be injected into a host creature to be effective. The Hoffmann Institute designed the syringe gun for this purpose (see below).

The purchase DCs given for the exotic drugs are per dose.

Syringe Gun

A syringe gun is a handheld device consisting of a needleless syringe holding a single dose of a particular substance, usually

a drug or serum. Succeeding at a melee attack with the syringe gun successfully injects the target creature with the contained substance, which immediately passes through the creature's skin and enters its bloodstream. The syringe gun delivers its payload painlessly and deals no damage to the target. Using a syringe gun does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Reloading a syringe gun is a move action, although character with the Quick Reload feat (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 86) can do so as a free action.

Anti-Etoile Nanites

While etoile nanites can turn an ordinary human being into a sand slave, the etoile aren't the only ones in the nanotechnology game. For years, the Hoffmann Institute has been financing the development of a variety of nanite programmed to seek out etoile nanites in an infected host and destroy them before the transformation is complete.

The anti-etoile nanites can cure a creature infected with etoile nanites, provided it has not yet been transformed into a sand slave. The anti-etoile nanites require 2d6 hours to do their work. Each hour, however, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude or take 1d6 points of damage as the anti-etoile nanites and etoile nanites wage war in its bloodstream.

A sand slave injected with anti-etoile nanites must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of damage. It must make a new save each round at the end of its turn or take an additional 1d6 points of damage. This continues until the sand slave is destroyed or until it succeeds at three consecutive Fortitude saving throws. A sand slave cannot be "cured" by anti-etoile nanites.

Courage

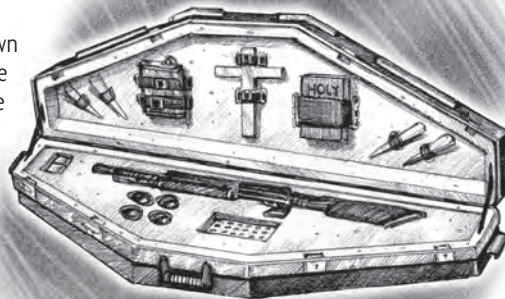
Institute researchers developed the drug they call "Courage" to help field agents overcome fear—a common emotion when faced with threats from beyond. This drug grants a +4 bonus on Will saves to resist fear effects for 2d6 hours. Because it induces mild euphoria, Courage is given only to agents who routinely confront terrifying xenofoms and frightful spirits.

Psi Blockers

The kinori apparently developed these dermal patches as a way of leveling the playing field with the Greys. Psi-blockers inhibit a creature's ability to expend psionic energy.

The kinori jealously guard their supply of psi blockers, but have been known to supply them to their human pawns. The Hoffmann Institute's Department-12 (Biological & Chemical) can also synthesize psi blockers. Psi blockers are otherwise available only on the black market (see The Black Market on page 93 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

A creature injected with psi blockers must make on a DC 15 Will save. If the save succeeds, the target suffers no ill effects for 1 minute. If the save fails, the target is unable to manifest psionic powers or psi-like abilities for 1d4 hours. One minute



Heroic Options



TABLE 2-13: EXOTIC DRUGS

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase	
			DC	Restriction
Syringe gun	Small	1 lb.	10	Lic (+1)
Anti-etoile nanites (dose)	Dim	—	20	Mil (+3)
Courage (dose)	Dim	—	15	Res (+2)
Psi blockers (dose)	Dim	—	18	Illegal (+4)
Vampiric essence (dose)	Dim	—	17	Illegal (+4)
Wolfsbane serum (dose)	Dim	—	16	Res (+2)
Zombinol (dose)	Dim	—	16	Illegal (+4)

after the initial injection, the target must make a second Will save. The effects are the same as above, although the effects of two failed Will saves are cumulative.

Vampiric Essence

Department-12 (Biological & Chemical) fashioned this serum from enzymes found in the blood of vampires. Any living creature injected with this thin black fluid gains fast healing 1 for 3d6 hours. Unfortunately, the serum has some unpleasant side effects. At the end of the duration, the creature must make a DC 18 Fortitude save. If the save succeeds, the creature is simply fatigued. If the save fails, the creature gains a negative level and is fatigued.

Wolfsbane Serum

This clear serum provides some protection against the “curse” of lycanthropy, and it also inhibits the shapechanging abilities of known lycanthropes.

Any non-lycanthrope injecting with the serum gains a +4 bonus on Fortitude saves made to resist lycanthropy for 12 hours. Meanwhile, any lycanthrope (such as a werewolf) that is injected with the serum takes a -4 penalty on Control Shape checks. In addition, it must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude or take 2d6 points of damage each time it uses its alternate form ability; it also does not regain hit points when it uses this ability, if it fails its save. These effects last for 12 hours.

Zombinol

The Hoffmann Institute doesn’t distribute this drug to its agents, although researchers in Department-12 have refined its effects for purely experimental reasons. Agents are more likely to encounter the drug in the field, although it’s quite rare (and illegal). The drug is derived from a powdered substance originally used by Voodoo practitioners to induce trances. Any living creature injected with Zombinol must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude or be nauseated for 1 minute as it succumbs to delirium. After 1 minute, whether the first save succeeds or fails, the creature must make a second Fortitude save. If the second save succeeds, the creature shakes off the drug’s effects. If the second save fails, the creature is paralyzed for 24 hours. The paralysis superficially resembles death, although a successful DC 15 Treat Injury check verifies that the creature is indeed alive.

Although its name implies otherwise, Zombinol does not transform creatures into zombies.



Though a good deal is too strange to be believed,
nothing is too strange to have happened.
-Thomas Hardy

Chapter 3:

The True History

Comprehending the world of *d20 DARK•MATTER* hinges on understanding that most things—no matter how seemingly unrelated—are connected. Furthermore, the screen of everyday life masks the real shapes of power and the true nature of important events from the unsuspecting mass of humanity. Deep in the shadows, alien creatures, powerful conspiracies, and forces from beyond Earth constantly work to take and hold power.

OVERVIEW

In cosmology and particle physics, “dark matter” is a technical term that refers to a class of particles we cannot detect. The mass of these invisible particles keeps the universe from expanding into infinity. In other words, dark matter literally holds the universe together.

In a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign, the presence of these particles also has a distinct effect on living beings. During periods of high dark matter, called “Dark Tides,” concentrated quantities of the strange substance pass through star systems, disrupting basic physical laws. Some species undergo significant physical alterations as their normal mutation rates increase exponentially. In addition, dark matter dramatically enhances the powers of the mind (psionics) in some species. At particularly high levels, dark matter even makes the impossible possible, and events consigned to legend become real. Miracles occur with greater frequency, strange beings from other worlds step through interdimensional doorways, and sorcerers wield magical abilities beyond scientific understanding.

The latest Dark Tide is the defining event of the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting. A wave of dark matter crashes through our local stellar cluster, irrevocably changing lives and altering the course of history. But this isn't the first time that dark matter has impacted human civilization. As this chapter explains, the Dark Tide has visited Earth before. In particular, the third millennium B.C. and Europe's Dark Ages mark two additional “high tide” points. But since most records from these times have been lost or simply disregarded, the human race has not yet become aware that the world underwent dramatic changes during those periods.

This time, however, the strange visitors arriving in the vanguard of the tide face serious opposition. Humanity has developed a global culture and powerful technology. Stalwart allies—both earthly and otherwise—stand at our side, prepared to help us survive. But this tide threatens to crest higher than ever.

d20 DARK MATTER Timeline

In this timeline, the Gamemaster will find relationships between important events, topics for further research, and numerous adventure hooks. Though many of the events on the timeline are not described elsewhere in this book, a Gamemaster can find out more about them through the bibliography at the end of the book and Internet research—or she can make it up herself. The timeline was created through consultation of many different sources, but particularly Neal Wilgus' excellent book, *The Illuminoids*.

Recent epoch of geology begins.

Neanderthals become extinct.

Most recent Ice Age begins.

Unknown builders construct Tiahuanaco (in modern-day Bolivia).

Qadan culture flourishes in upper Nile region; they practice advanced agriculture and ritual burial.

Kinori arrive on Earth through doorways in North Africa, immediately encounter Qadan civilization. Many battles occur before peace is declared. Qadan agricultural progress slows. Tiahuanacan civilization falls.

Approximate beginning of widespread agriculture. Estimated date of inscriptions on stone disks attributed to the Dropa tribe, a diminutive people of the Bayan-Kara-Ula Mountains on the border of China and Tibet; disks describe how the tribe came to Earth in flying machines; ancient Dropa graves contain human remains with huge heads and small bodies. Earliest estimated creation date of the Mitchell-Hedges Crystal Skull "found" at Lubaantun in the Yucatan. Hyborian Age in Europe. Earliest suspected construction date of the Sphinx at Giza and Osireion Temple at Abydos.

Ice Age retreats. North African crops fail as climate shifts. Proto-Atlanteans spread throughout Mediterranean and parts of Central America, settle island of Thera as capital.

Lubaantun founded in Yucatan by Atlantean settlers.

Greys arrive in solar system, begin observation of humanity.

Grey city-ship lands on Thera. Greys begin interacting with Atlanteans, who in turn spread knowledge throughout region.

Non-Atlanteans first develop an alphabet.

Atlantean-fostered culture rises to new heights worldwide. Approximate date of discovery of metals, birth of sophisticated cities and trade, and first recording of constellations. Egyptians begin placing small pieces of crystal on the foreheads of deceased persons prior to mummification.

Trephination (cutting a hole in the skull) practiced by people all over the world.

Lubaantun abandoned. First Egyptian dynasty founded.

Only time—and the actions of a few brave individuals—will tell whether humanity will stand or be washed away.

ANCIENT HISTORY

The strange happenings of the present are rooted in the past—often in those very periods about which information is murky at best. Powerful (often global) conspiracies fought secret wars that stretched, in many cases, over centuries or even millennia. Some conflicts date back to a time before recorded history, when aliens interacted with—and some say shaped—human civilization.

The following summary is necessarily expurgated and compressed, but more complete descriptions of these events are available to researchers of Top Secret clearance or better through the Hoffmann Institute archives located in Philadelphia. That organization still investigates (and sometimes actively opposes) several of the forces described in this rather more ancient history. Just as important, researchers connected with the Hoffmann Institute are constructing a more accurate account of historical events, drawing on records of both humans and other species.

The First Strangers

Sometime around 10,500 B.C., the first known Strangers (a collective term for any visitors who arrive via the Dark Tide) set foot on Earth. Dark matter concentrations in central and northern Africa created a number of interdimensional doorways, allowing the reptilian humanoids called kinori to step through from another world. Kinori legends are unclear as to whether these particular beings were colonists or refugees.

When they arrived, Earth was in the grip of an ice age. During this period (approximately 15,000 to 7000 B.C.), a miles-deep coating of ice covered Europe and North America, and the planet's weather patterns were far different than those we know today. However, the kinori found the warm lands of North Africa warm lands to their liking and their civilization flourished, spreading across the northern half of the continent.

At the same time, humanity was beginning to make its mark on the world, building great temples and monuments. In these early days, humans and kinori coexisted peacefully and interacted only rarely, as both races had plenty of room for expansion. One notable exception occurred soon after the kinori arrived, when they engaged in many battles with the Qadans—a relatively advanced civilization that flourished in the upper Nile region—before peace was declared. Some kinori even taught the arcane art of alchemy (Hermetic magic) to scholars and rulers and instructed them in some of the secrets of dark matter, including the concept of doorways.

The Arrival of the Greys

Around 6000 B.C., a massive starship arrived in our solar system bearing thousands of members of a humanoid alien race. Humanity later came to know these beings as the "Greys" (although the Greys call themselves "fraal"). Why they came to Earth is still a mystery; the Greys have always been remarkably silent about their homeworld and origins.

After two centuries of observation, the Greys made the decision to land on Earth. Drawn by a flux of energy, the aliens concentrated their attention on the volcanic island now known as Thera, where some humans had established a surprisingly advanced civilization. This island nation, which the inhabitants called Atlantis, appeared much more sophisticated than any other culture on Earth at the time. Indeed, the Atlanteans had already crossed the Atlantic Ocean, settling in Central America where they built the city of Lubaantun in about 7500 B.C.

It was not the culture that had drawn the Greys' attention, however. On Thera stood a set of huge, greenish stones arranged in an unusual pattern. These stones resembled machinery more than sculpture, and upon investigation, the aliens discovered that they were indeed part of some mechanism, the likes of which they had never seen anywhere else. (It did, however, bear some resemblance to stonework later seen in photographs of Mars.) Intrigued, the Greys tried to discover the secrets of this strange technology but it proved remarkably resistant to dissection and analysis. Obviously the stones were not of human creation.

The Theran device lacked an apparent power source and did not seem to be operational. Since it was clear that its builders had long since disappeared, the Greys decided that the stones were abandoned, unused and perhaps even unusable.

The Rise of Atlantis

Though they presented themselves to humanity as a united front, in fact there were three major factions of Greys aboard the city-ship, each of which favored a different approach to interaction with humans. The conservative (and majority) *Ahotti* faction preferred a cautious approach, doling out advanced technology slowly over time. The *Iltan* Greys pushed for an aggressive plan of open interaction and technological grants to the Atlanteans. The *Ziljir*, little more than a fringe splinter group, initially sided with the *Ahotti*'s plan. Indeed, for over five thousand years, this course of action proved effective in improving human understanding of science and scholarship.

The humans and aliens lived in peace on the island for many years, during which the humans benefited greatly from the Greys' technology and knowledge. Soon the Atlanteans began to interact with the growing Egyptian civilization, bringing advanced scientific disciplines and technology to northern Africa. The Greys hoped that this infusion of scientific knowledge might discourage the Egyptians from continuing their pursuit of arcane magic, which most Greys did not understand, and thus distrusted or even feared.

The Atlanteans founded colonies in Africa so that they could live among the Egyptians and help them progress. The first of these was the colony of Seyne, an astronomical observatory near the island of Elephantine, which now lies beneath the waters of the Aswan Dam in Egypt. The encroachment of Atlanteans on the Egyptian civilization concerned the kinori, but the saurian leaders chose a path of peaceful observation, preferring to remain in hiding and keep contact at a minimum. Later events would prove this plan deleterious to their interests.

As the Atlantean civilization expanded, it spread to other portions of the world. Trade was widespread; ships frequently sailed between Africa and the Americas, and some evidence even points to contact with settlements in Antarctica. At some point around 3100 B.C., The Yucatan city of Lubaantun was abandoned; interestingly, this date coincides closely with rise of the First Dynasty of the Egyptians.

In 2705 B.C., the mysterious Theran stones suddenly glowed. A series of devices somehow powered up, and a new group of aliens stepped through the doorway. The strange creatures were hostile, wielding fiery swords that blazed with the light of the sun. Though they were few in number, the humans and the Greys, working jointly to defend their island, barely managed to defeat them. Fearing that the ill-equipped Atlanteans would be unprepared to deal with future attacks of this nature, the *Iltan* reignited the controversy of technological sharing with the humans. This time, the *Ziljir* faction threw their lot in with the *Iltan*, tipping the balance away from the *Ahotti*. Despite strong dissent from the *Ahotti*, the Greys began to grant even greater technological advances with the Atlanteans.

3000 Indus Valley civilization develops complex government, writing, and well-planned cities. Minoan civilization flourishes in Crete. Earliest parts of the Bible written. Beginning date of Olmec calendar in Central America.

2700 Warlike Strangers step through Thera doorway and are defeated by Grey/human alliance.

2650 First Egyptian pyramid built at Saqqara by kinori-trained sorcerer-architect Imhotep. Commonly accepted construction time of the Sphinx and Great Pyramids.

2150 Approximate date for the destruction of Thera/Atlantis. Greys retreat across Atlantic to Central America.

2000 Stonehenge and other stone circles built in England.

2000-1200 Legendary Thule civilization in the Gobi region supposedly destroyed by a catastrophe, survivors migrate to Agharti and Shambhala.

1800 Huge Silbury Mound constructed near Stonehenge.

1700 Babylonian Enuma Anu Enlil, early roots of astrology based on celestial phenomena.

1500 China unified under Shang dynasty.

1360 Akhenaton's monotheistic sun worship in Egypt.

1350 Olmec "sacred almanac" initiated on August 13.

1341 Tutankhamen (Akhenaton's successor who revived polytheism) buried at Thebes; curse reading "Death comes on swift wings to he who opens this tomb" written on tomb doorway.

1290-1224 Rule of Ramesses II, pharaoh of Egypt during the Jewish Exodus.

1200 Height of Olmec culture.

1184 End of the Trojan War; Ilium falls to the Greeks.

1000 Huge sacrificial table built at Mystery Hill near North Salem, New Hampshire.

950 Approximate construction date of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, traditional origin of the Masonic fraternity; alleged assassination of Temple master-mason Hiram for refusing to reveal Masonic secrets.

900 Approximate time settlers from Europe and the Middle East established colonies in North America.

753 Legendary founding of Rome by Romulus.

700 Jordanian city of Petra carved out of sandstone by unknown culture.

600 Approximate beginning of money with first coins in Lydia.

600-500 Time of Buddha, Lao Tse, Confucius, Zarathustra, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Zachariah, and Daniel: an Illuminated century.

586 Temple of Solomon destroyed.

575 Nebuchadnezzar completes Tower of Babel in Babylon.

450 Development of the twelve constellations of the zodiac in Mesopotamia, recognizing the importance of the plane of the ecliptic through which the sun, moon, and planets move.



The True History



40 Druids active in England. Astrological ideas from Enuma Anu Enlil transmitted to India.

35 Plato's "Timaios" and "Kritias," earliest accounts of Atlantis.

33 Last native Egyptian dynasty falls; Ptolemaic dynasty founded. Companions of Horus flee to Himalayas.

32 Death of Alexander the Great.

30 Invention of Mayan calendar in Yucatan, based on advanced astronomy.

27 Rule of Asoka, king of India who allegedly founded the Nine Unknown.

25 Kinori settle in India.

25 Parthians construct liquid electrolyte batteries for an unknown purpose.

10 The Great Teacher of the Essenes. Essentials of modern astrology devised.

4 Much of the Library of Alexandria destroyed.

4 Assassination of Julius Caesar.

10 Last Greco-Egyptian dynasty falls; Egypt becomes province of Roman Empire.

4 Birth of Jesus of Nazareth, accompanied by various "high strangeness" trappings: three early Men In Black disguised as the Wise Men, strange lights in the sky, miracles such as visits from angels, prophecy, and suspension of time reported.

0 Carnation-Painted Eyebrows Society, Copper Horses, Iron Shins, and other secret societies active in China.

A.D. 20 Assassination of the radical Jesus, more "high strangeness" trappings: an eclipse, an earthquake, visitors from the sky roll away the stone from the sepulcher and liberate the crucified Jesus.

100 Hero of Alexandria devises primitive steam-engine.

120 Simon Magus, Menander, Valentinus, and others develop Gnostic religious doctrines of esoteric knowledge (illumination).

180 Approximate date Ptolemy records 1,022 stars in "Almagest"; also recorded astrological ideas from Enuma Anu Enlil in his "Apotelesmatika."

The kinori also reacted to this event. Reasoning that the opening of the Thera doorway was most likely tied to a rising Dark Tide, they instituted a long and complex building program designed to seal the existing doorways between this world and theirs. The reasoning behind this plan is unclear—perhaps the kinori feared pursuers from their own world—but the results were dramatic. In the case of the Two Kingdoms, the Egyptians buried the dark matter doorway under a great step pyramid at Saqqara, leaving future visitors who might use that doorway trapped inside a huge mound of stone. Later dynasties copied and improved upon these building techniques, but it is unlikely that these newer pyramids—including the Great Pyramids at Giza—served the same purpose. The kinori's precise plans for dealing with the other suspected African doorways is unknown, as are the results of any actions they took.

The First Conspiracy

Many humans, particularly the Egyptians and Mesoamericans, saw the Greys as gods. The aliens did not openly dispute this, entrusting the truth of their origins only to the elders of Atlantis, who would later take their secrets to a watery grave. Some of the aliens, particularly those of the Ziljir faction, even took advantage of their elevated status and reveled in the personal power it brought them.

The Greys of the Ahotti faction, however, continued to disagree with the actions of their people. They warned that humanity was not ready for the rapid technological advancement that their gifts and teachings had engendered. In addition, some Iltan also held different views on arcane magic, lacking the innate Grey bias against this practice. Eventually, these rogue Greys approached members of the Egyptian intellectual elite (including the kinori-taught sorcerers) and even made contact with the kinori themselves, who had largely retreated from human-controlled regions. Together, these disparate beings dedicated themselves to the continuing free trade of ideas and knowledge. For many years, this conspiracy between a select few members of Earth's three dominant species—humans, Greys, and kinori—remained hidden. Mankind would later come to know this group as the Companions of Horus.

Then, in 2150 B.C., disaster struck. The Greys had built a machine called a telluric generator on Thera, perhaps to close the doorway that opened in 2705 B.C. The device's cataclysmic failure (or sabotage) unleashed the pure power of the volcano, and the resulting explosion shattered Thera into three smaller islands, scattering ashes and stone over 75,000 square miles. Not much survived on these daughter islands—the eruption killed livestock, poisoned the soil, and ruined crops standing in the fields. In addition, accompanying earthquake raised tidal waves 300 feet high,

Telluric Generators

Several species from beyond the veil have attempted to create (or close) doorways between dimensions artificially through such diverse methods as mental powers, diabolic magic, and high-energy, reality-warping machinery. This last method requires a device capable of producing immense power—roughly equivalent to the current energy needs of North America for a year. To generate the

necessary energy levels, the Greys designed a device known as the telluric generator.

The generator achieves its high power output by tapping into the geomagnetic forces of a planet with a strong magnetic field and translating that power into electrical current. Enabling the device requires sinking a magma tap down through the planet's crust and raising a series of small antennae (about 65 feet high) perpendicular to the prevailing magnetic field.

Most such generators can operate continuously; a few built with weaker alloys require daily power-downs to allow for a cooling cycle. All operate almost silently except for a thrumming vibration.

Obviously, telluric generators cannot be installed on spaceships or other mobile platforms. The moon, which lacks a strong magnetic field, is also an unsuitable location.

washing away all coastal towns within a hundred miles and destroying the hard-won human gains on the north coast of Crete. Only the city-ship's durable construction saved the Greys from total disaster, though the damage would take decades to repair fully.

No one knows for certain who or what caused the disaster. Many Greys (particularly those of the Ahotti faction) blame the Egyptians or the kinori, believing that the arcanists felt threatened by the encroachment of Grey technology and sabotaged the generator. Still others suspect that Atlantean tampering with the standing stones triggered the explosion, or that the Ziljir, perhaps in conjunction with extradimensional beings later dubbed "demons," sought to lessen human reliance on technology. One of the more intriguing (and unverifiable) theories holds that the catastrophe was an Ahotti plot to weaken the Ittan's political power while at the same time painting the kinori and their allies as the enemies of humanity.

Regardless of the cause, the effects on human civilization in the region were devastating. With Atlantis destroyed, the growing human empire in Egypt—which had become dependent on the Atlanteans' ability to manipulate the weather—suffered serious setbacks. The conditions in northern Africa slowly deteriorated until desert once again claimed the land. Civil wars were common over the next ninety years or so, until the Eleventh-Dynasty king named Mentuhotep Nebhepetre reunited the land under his rule in 2040 B.C.

The Atlantean survivors didn't accept doom quietly. They struggled mightily to retain some of their high technology, to restore the arts they had learned and lost, and even to spread their knowledge beyond the Mediterranean basin. Some turned to magic as a potential replacement for their missing technology. However, as local concentrations of dark matter were declining during this period, even that desperate strategy proved untenable. Over time, the few remaining alien devices became worn and unworkable, and the fates themselves seemed to conspire against the Therans. Despite their best efforts, their civilization died.

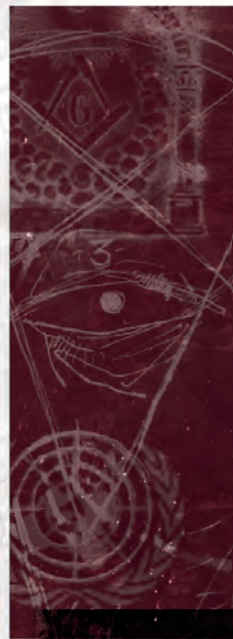
The Alien Retreat

After the fall of Atlantis, the Greys retreated to their massive city-ship. Perhaps stunned by the failure of their efforts, they departed quickly, abandoning technological items that humans continued to use as long as they could: gravitic induction devices, astounding weapons, and even power cells for simple electrical networks. In time, though, each of these wonders ran out of power or simply fell apart. Many of them were buried with kings or other leaders; others were simply destroyed when they wore out. Traditional archaeologists have since recovered a few of these relics and, unable to see them as technological constructs, labeled them "ooparts" (out-of-place artifacts).

This period also marked a time of political upheaval among the Greys. With the catastrophic end of their interaction with the Atlanteans, the Ittan faction lost standing among their people, becoming second in power behind the conservative Ahotti (who remain in control of the Greys to this day). Never again would the Greys work so openly and aggressively to improve humanity.

The cataclysm also forced the kinori to retreat further from human civilization, as most humans believed them responsible for the fall of Atlantis. Those kinori who had been working closely with humans lost their influence as new, more militant factions took control of the saurian people. Several small skirmishes occurred, conflicts escalated, and the kinori eventually turned from peaceful neighbors to blood-thirsty enemies of the humans. The Companions of Horus, once allies of the kinori, had no choice but to become the secret protectors of the humans in Egypt. Over time and in secret, they helped the people rebuild their nation, destroyed kinori mummies, and routed bands of

- 150 Roman Mithraism competes with Christianity. Yellow Turban Society subdues northern China, Triad cult formed in opposition.
- 200 First book of the Kabbalah, *Sepher Yetzirah*, compiled.
- 202 China reunified under the Han Dynasty.
- 216-276 Life of Mani the Illuminator, who founded Manicheism based on ideas from Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, and other religions.
- 272 Remainder of Library of Alexandria destroyed.
- 325 Council of Nicaea in which Christianity begins to rigidify.
- 400 Estimated carving date of stone statues found on Easter Island.
- 426-488 Kukulcan travels throughout Mesoamerica.
- 455 Vandals sack Rome.
- 500 Chinese first use gunpowder.
- 570-632 Life of Muhammad, founder of Islam.
- 670-735 Life of the Venerable Bede, the greatest scholar of Saxon England, whose *Ecclesiastical History of England* (published in 731) contained many occult and unexplained occurrences.
- c.700 Teotihuacan destroyed.
- 700 Sufi mysticism begins.
- 777 Charlemagne allegedly establishes Holy Secret Tribunal, which becomes the Holy Vehm.
- 900 Beginning of the Bogomils of Bulgaria, a Manicheian sect, roots of Cathari. Kinori spread throughout southeast Asia.
- 920-1000 Life of Pope Sylvester II, who allegedly visited the Nine Unknown in India.
- 1000 Spread of Cathari Manicheism throughout Europe. Leif Ericson explores North America.
- 1024-1124 Life of Hasan-e Sabbah, founder of the Assassins of Persia. Member of the Ismaili sect, Hasan seized fortress of Alamut in Daylam in 1090, split with Fatimid dynasty in 1094. Assassins flourished for next several centuries.
- 1050 Approximate date of founding of the Order of Hospitallers in Jerusalem.
- 1096 First Crusade.
- 1100 Approximate date Sufi Gilani founds Arabic school of illuminati, Kadiri Order of Sebil-el-ward, in Baghdad. Assassins infiltrate Thug cult of India. Bogomil leader Basil burned in Constantinople. Albigensian Cathari sect flourishes near Albi, France. Avengers and Beati Paoli active in Italy. Joachim of Floris founds primitive Christian sect, Illuminated Ones. Robin Hood active in England.
- 1119 Knights Templar founded in Palestine.
- 1140 Rapid growth of Cathari sect begins.
- 1170 Assassination of Thomas à Becket.
- 1170 English monks report seeing an explosion on the moon.



150

The True History

1200 House of Wisdom in Cairo, roots of the Afghan Roshaniya. Origin of the Mafia in Sicily.

1209 Albigensian Crusade begins suppression of Cathari heresy.

1217 The Children's Crusade. Genghis Khan invades China.

1234 Founding of the Inquisition to suppress Cathari and other heresies.

1250 Massacre of Cathari at Montsegur, France.

1258 Hulagu Khan defeats the Assassins.

1283 Assembly of traveling Mason guilds in Frankfurt. Zohar, second book of the Kabbalah, compiled by Moses de Leon in Spain.

1290 Roger Bacon, deviser of early eyeglasses, independently invents gunpowder.

1307 Hospitallers retreat to Cyprus.

1310 White Lotus Society founded in China. Inquisition begins suppression of witches and other pagan groups.

1312 Philip IV of France suppresses Knights Templar for witchcraft and heresies; de Molay imprisoned in the Temple in Paris.

1319 Hospitallers acquire the isle of Rhodes.

1312 Knights Templar dissolved by papal decree.

1320 De Molay and others burned in Paris.

1347 Outbreak of bubonic plague (Black Death) in China.

1347 Black Death reaches Europe, supposedly via Italian trading vessels returning from China.

1369 Approximate date of the earliest known Satanic cults; black masses celebrated in France.

1378 Alleged life of Christian Rosenkreuz, fictitious founder of Rosicrucianism.

1453 Constantinople falls to Mehmet II, renamed Istanbul.

1417 Abramelin's *Book of Sacred Magic* translated from Hebrew to French according to followers of the cult of the Guardian Angel.

1478 Spanish Inquisition begins.

1492 Rodrigo Borgia, head of the powerful Borgia family, becomes Pope Alexander VI. Columbus sails to North America.

1493 Life of Paracelsus, possible founder of Rosicrucianism; discovers zinc around 1530; model of the Faust legend.

1500 Approximate founding date of Roshaiya, Illuminated Ones, in Afghanistan. Beginning of Alumbados in Spain and Charcoal-Burners in Scotland. Cesare Borgia has his brother-in-law assassinated.

1500 Height of Aztec culture.

1504 Life of Nostradamus, visionary prophet.

1533 Hospitallers given Isle of Malta by Charles V, become Knights of Malta.

1533 Incan Empire falls to Pizarro; rulers flee to Machu Picchu.

the reptilian predators that haunted the Nile. Tales of the lizard folk gradually grew into the worship of Seth and Sebek, dark gods among the Egyptians.

During this time, rogue Greys (likely of the Ziljir faction) were active as well, working against the Companions from the shadows. It appears that they collaborated with the kinori, teaching the saurians certain aspects of alien technology in exchange for the secrets of mummy manufacture and other dark arts. Perhaps these rogues wished to advance knowledge for all, or perhaps they simply worked for their own benefit, seeking to influence pharaohs, build their own wealth and comfort, and remain the unifying power behind entire dynasties. In the end the Companions left, traveling to the East.

Passing into Legend: The Silent Epochs

With the collapse of the world-spanning Atlantean civilization and the exodus of the Greys from the area, humanity gradually forgot the aliens, or at best remembered them only as changelings, gods, and demons. Mediterranean and European cultures made significant progress on their own from 2000 B.C. to A.D. 500. As the Dark Tide receded, the Egyptians kept their high culture alive and continued the building program the kinori had begun long ago, constructing more pyramids at Giza and elsewhere (though these new sites had nothing to do with doorways).

Elsewhere, tribes of people influenced by the sophisticated Atlantean culture flourished, free of alien influence. In Britain, one such tribe finished the Stonehenge structure (which closely resembled the standing stones of Thera) that the Atlanteans had begun there long ago. Dedicating it to the memory of those lost days of prosperity, the Britons used Stonehenge as a temple for many years. On the continent, similar tributes and monuments arose as the locals attempted to re-establish their connection with the lost continent.

As time passed, so too did the memory of Atlantis. A sophisticated society eventually grew in Greece, but its people barely recalled those earlier times. Rome rose and fell, China unified, and the great world religions sprang up—all with little or no influence from the Greys or other Strangers. Technology advanced slowly, with occasional setbacks and dead ends, but knowledge grew and spread from place to place.

Of course, adversity still lurked in a world that remained largely unconquered. Indeed, many vast stretches of land on Earth were still free of human influence. Other species appeared among humans from time to time, inspiring legends of vampires, angels, demons, and other supernatural creatures. In most cases, these species were unable to establish any permanent presence, perhaps because humans actively tried to root them out.

Fragmentary records from this period mention not only the significant Grey presence in Central America (see Mesoamerica: A New Canvas), but also some new Grey colonies in the more thinly settled regions of the Earth: Australia, certain Pacific islands, and even portions of the high Tibetan plateau. In many cases, these sites seem to have had negative influences on nearby human populations. This is not to say that the Greys were hostile; humans may have tampered with dangerous alien technology or encountered Strangers from other worlds. Likewise, historians cannot definitively ascribe certain volcanic or meteoric events near Grey settlements to alien actions. The truth remains hidden from everyone but the Greys themselves, and they refuse to discuss their "past failures" with present-day acquaintances.

MESOAMERICA: A NEW CANVAS

The collapse of the world's oldest civilization didn't entirely end alien intervention in human culture. The Greys simply became more circumspect in their interference. Moving across the Atlantic in their city-ship, they found a new home in Central America, though its precise location is unknown today. The Greys had observed this region before, but it now became the center of their attention.

A few of the human successor cultures that arose in the following centuries—the Olmecs, Mayans, and Aztecs—kept devices, fragmentary stories, and other traces of the technology that the Greys had brought with them to Earth. However, the humans lacked the knowledge required to keep these machines operational. The Incas, on the other hand, copied the metallic machines in stone form and used them as ritual objects. Eventually the alien relics of the Aztecs were sacrificed to the greed of Spanish conquistadors, who melted down the machines and icons for the precious metals they contained (such as the gold and silver used in wiring) and sent them back to Madrid in the form of ingots.

As was often the case, a few individual Greys had a great deal of influence on humanity during this time. In particular, an alien emissary known as a nameless feathered serpent to the Olmecs, as Kukulcan to the Mayans, as Quetzalcoatl to the Aztecs, and as Viracocha to the Incas served as a great disseminator of knowledge. This mythic figure (or figures, as the time involved suggests multiple individuals) seems to have mentored humanity through the rise and fall of several cultures.

Olmecs

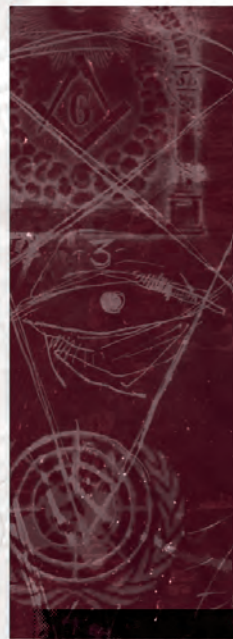
The Olmec civilization arose during the second millennium B.C., reaching its height around 1200 B.C. Like the Egyptians, the Olmecs commanded a large agricultural base that depended on flooding controlled by a sophisticated system of levees. However, the Greys apparently did not gift the Olmecs with any of the technology they had granted to the Atlanteans. Historians agree that the growing power of the Ahotti faction probably had a strong influence on the Greys' decision to establish a less intrusive presence here than they did in Atlantis.

Relics from this time consist primarily of jade carvings and basalt monuments, such as the huge heads carved between 900 and 400 B.C. at La Venta (see page 112). Indeed, the Olmecs were the first culture to produce art in Mesoamerica. Much of this related to their kings and gods, particularly the primary Olmec deity known as the "were-jaguar," who was represented over and over again in artwork of the period.

The Olmecs prized jade above all other stones, and some historians have suggested that their empire-building was largely a result of their continuous quests for this precious material. The Chinese also prized jade and even ascribed considerable arcane value to it. This cultural parallel may indicate that the Olmecs were sorcerers of no little ability, perhaps skilled in magic very like that used in ancient China. However, the Greys' stance against the arcane arts brings this hypothesis into serious question, and the coincidence may be just that—a coincidence.

The Olmec culture continued to flourish until about 400 B.C., when it went into steep decline and never recovered. The reasons for its sudden demise are unclear; nothing so catastrophic as the destruction of Atlantis occurred as far as historians can determine. The Olmec culture died out sometime between 400 and 200 B.C.

- 1542 Roman Inquisition founded.
- 1575 Approximate founding date of British Intelligence services.
- 1587 English colony established at Roanoke Island, Virginia; no trace of the "lost colony" found when supply ships returned three years later.
- 1592 A Spanish soldier apparently teleports 9,000 miles from the Philippines to Mexico.
- 1597 Anonymous alchemist seeks to start Rosicrucian-like society in Europe.
- 1603 Rosicrucian constitution published.
- 1614 Publication of "Fama Fraternitatis," fictional story of Rosenkreuz by Johann Valentin Andrea.
- 1622 Posters appear in Paris warning that the Rosicrucians are "amongst you . . . visibly and invisibly."
- 1649 Beginning of subliminal persuasion when Rembrandt embeds the word "sex" in a painting.
- 1645-1715 "Little Ice Age" freezes much of Europe.
- 1646 Earliest known Masonic Lodge to allow nonprofessional or "free" Masons in Warrington, England.
- 1689 Madame Le Voisin, innovator of modern Satanism, executed in Paris.
- 1689 William III of Orange becomes king of England, allegedly through the plotting of the Illuminati.
- 1692 Salem Witch Trials begin.
- 1694 Bank of England founded.
- 1701 Earliest record of "operative" or professional Masonic Lodge in Alnwick, England.
- 1717 Founding of modern Freemasonry with the establishment of the Grand Lodge of London by Desaguliers. Voltaire imprisoned in the Bastille.
- 1721 British King George I cracks down on the Hell Fire Clubs, popular Satanic cults.
- 1722 Anderson's "Constitutions of the Freemasons" published. "Ebrietatis Enconium" and other early anti-Masonic works published.
- 1724 Publication of the anti-Masonic "Grand Mysteries of the Freemasons Discovered."
- 1731 Benjamin Franklin initiated into Freemasonry.
- 1736 Death of the last leader of the Afghan Illuminated Ones.
- 1744 Grace Pett burns to death in her bed in a case of spontaneous human combustion.
- 1750 Hell Fire Clubs continue to flourish in Dublin and London.
- 1757 First year of Swedenborg's "New Era."
- 1769 St. Germain founds chemical dye factory in Holland, forerunner of I.G. Farben; disappears with 100,000 guilders. Franklin invents bifocals.



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The True History

1774 St. Germain discovered living in Russia. Chinese Emperor issues edict against secret societies.

1775 British Tea Tax on colonies leads to Boston Tea Party protest. Alleged meeting of Meyer Rothschild and others to plan a world revolution. Suppression of the Jesuits.

1776 First Continental Congress. Washington begins training troops. Louis XVI becomes king of France. Casanova becomes secret agent for the Inquisitors of Venice.

1777 Second Continental Congress authorizes naval warships, sets up secret committee to procure weapons, and names Washington commander-in-chief of the new American Army.

1778 Illuminati founded by Adam Weishaupt. Jefferson writes American Declaration of Independence, which is adopted by the Continental Congress. Franklin becomes ambassador to France and affiliates himself with French Masonic lodges. Opening of Freemasons' Hall, permanent headquarters of English Masonry. Cagliostro (a.k.a. Joseph Balsamo) initiated into Masonry.

1779 Weishaupt joins Munich Lodge of the Order of Good Council. Articles of Confederation adopted by Continental Congress. Washington has mystical vision of the future of the United States while at Valley Forge.

1780 Franklin assists in initiation of Voltaire into Masonic Lodge of Paris. Masonic Convention in Lyons organizes Knights of Beneficence.

1781 Illuminati begins rapid growth. First use of the title Odd Fellows. Order of the Brotherhood of Asia (Rosicrucian offshoot) founded.

1782 Commissioning of the "Eye in the Pyramid" Great Seal; Illuminati dominate European Masonry. Casanova retires as secret agent.

1784 Bavarian Monarch Carl Theodore outlaws secret societies. Cagliostro moves to Lyons from Bordeaux to found the Mother Lodge of Egyptian Masonry. Alleged death of Comte St.-Germain

1785 Weishaupt flees to Gotha; new edict outlaws Illuminati; lightning kills high-ranking Illuminatus Lanz and police find Illuminati papers found on the body. Rosicrucian Order suppressed in Austria. Anonymous pamphlet appears in Germany revealing secrets of ancient Egyptian ceremonies.

1786 Wisdom Lodge founded in Virginia. Secret congress in Frankfurt where Illuminati condemn Louis XVI and Gustavus III of Sweden to death. State authorities confiscate Italian Illuminatus Buonarroti's library of Masonic and subversive books.

1787 The anonymous "Vie de Joseph Balsamo," first recorded link of the Illuminati and the French Revolution, appears in several European countries. First performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, which contains Masonic elements.

1788 Louis XVI imprisoned in the Templars' Temple tower. Catherine II outlaws Masonry in Russia. "Life of Joseph Balsamo" translated into English in Dublin.

1789 Year One of the French Republic; the year of the Terror. Louis XVI found guilty of conspiracy, condemned to death. French government kills thousands of its citizens.

1790 Illuminati scare in New England. Knights of Malta lose their island to Napoleon. Rosetta Stone found.

Mayans

The Mayan civilization arose from the ashes of the Olmec culture and flourished from approximately 300 B.C. to A.D. 900, though the southern, highland Mayan culture collapsed somewhat earlier than its lowland cousin—around A.D. 800. Historians have dubbed the latter years of this period (from about A.D. 150 to 900) the "Classic period" of Mesoamerican civilizations. The linguistic and cultural ties between the Mayans and the Olmecs have led many to believe that the first Mayans were refugees from the older civilization.

The city of Tikal is probably the best-known purely Mayan site. Chichen Itza was Toltec-Mayan; although it was founded under the Mayans, it did not reach its ascendancy until well after that culture had fallen into decline. Regardless, filled as it was with temples, palaces, and plazas, the city of Teotihuacan (so named by the Aztecs, who came later) flourished as the region's cultural, religious, political, social, and economic center. (Some claim that Teotihuacan, with its pyramids of the Sun and Moon, dates back well before this period—perhaps as far back as 1000 or 1500 B.C.—but evidence is sketchy on this point.)

All the legends agree that a being known as Kukulcan traveled extensively in the region between the years A.D. 426 and 488, teaching astronomy, stonework, agriculture, and metalworking to scattered villagers. Perhaps this emissary had high ideals of progress and advancement, but once humans had mastered the agricultural and stoneworking arts, they quickly began to pursue their own interests.

The Fall of Teotihuacan

From A.D. 534 to 593, the Mayans built no new monuments, and Teotihuacan's influence over the region faltered. Its population dropped dramatically, and many other Mesoamerican cities were completely abandoned. Historians point to a climatic shift toward aridness, perhaps exacerbated by massive deforestation, as the probable cause. Then sometime between A.D. 650 and 700, a group of unknown invaders deliberately torched the city of Teotihuacan. With this loss, the unifying force of the region disappeared, and the days of great kingdoms gave way to an era of petty militarism. Never again would the cultures of this area attain such a high point.

But who was responsible for the fall of Teotihuacan? Was it the work of locals angered by the city's rulership of the region? Some stories from later years celebrated the event, claiming that the destruction of the city had "freed the people from the shackles of Teotihuacan." Perhaps one of the Grey factions, displeased with the course of Grey-human relations, orchestrated the destruction. Or it may have been the act of Strangers such as those who came through the ancient doorway at Thera, wielding weapons of destruction with a callous disregard for human civilization. The truth is lost to the depths of history.

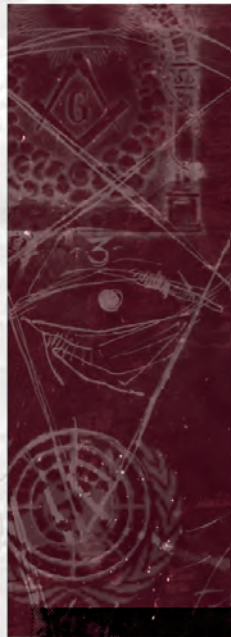
Aztecs

The Aztec Empire existed from about A.D. 1325 to 1550 in the area that is now Mexico. According to both versions of their own origin stories, the Aztecs burst onto the scene from elsewhere. In fulfillment of a prophecy, they founded their capital city Tenochtitlan (literally, the "place of the prickly-pear cactus") in 1325 on a site not far from the remains of the Mayan city they named Teotihuacan (meaning "place where gods are born").

The Aztecs had been notable mercenaries before this, and their experience with warfare enabled them to conquer their new neighbors almost immediately. Once they had established their empire, Aztec rulers began making annual pilgrimages to ruined Teotihuacan to pay homage to the older culture—but why? Perhaps Aztec legends hold the secret. According to these tales, the land was once a paradise—home



- 1800 Napoleon comes to power, allegedly through Illuminati manipulation.
- 1817 Formation of secret societies that eventually become the Decembrist Movement in Russian Masonic lodges.
- 1817 Suppression of the Lodge of Jupiter the Thunderer begins. Irish immigrants force entry into Tammany Society, changing its direction.
- 1819 American Independent Order of Odd Fellows founded. Founding of National Freemasonry, the most important of several Polish secret societies devoted to ousting the Russians from Poland.
- 1817 Decembrist movement suppressed in Russia after brief uprising. Founding of Vienna bank by Solomon Rothschild and Naples bank by Carl Rothschild.
- 1820 Anti-Masonic Party founded, first third-party in America.
- 1820 Illuminati decide to unite Atheists and Nihilists into Communist movement at an alleged meeting in New York.
- 1830 Anti-Masonic conventions in Massachusetts and Vermont find evidence linking Masonry with Illuminism. Weishaupt dies.
- 1837 Anti-Masonic Party runs Wirt for President, assuring the reelection of Mason Andrew Jackson.
- 1834 Spanish Inquisition officially suppressed.
- 1844 A luminous body descends on a field near Koblenz, Germany, leaving behind a strange gray gelatinous mass.
- 1848 Fall of monarchy in France. Marx and Engels publish the *Communist Manifesto* (allegedly commissioned by the Illuminati) and travel in France and Germany, encouraging discontent with the Establishment. Spiritualism born in Wayne County, New York, when the teenaged Fox sisters communicate with poltergeists. Fortean: moon turns "blood-red" during total eclipse; a great comet fails to return at the time predicted; visions and "phantom soldiers" seen in the skies of France and Scotland; Captain M'Quahae of H.M.S. *Daedalus* reports seeing a "huge, unknown creature" in the ocean.
- 1849-1856 Life of Sir Basil Zaharoff, "mystery man of Europe," who made a fortune as an armaments dealer and financier by selling weapons to both sides in World War I and other conflicts.
- 1856 Lightning strikes the ground in Kensington, New Hampshire, creating a 30-foot deep well that fills with fresh water.
- 1860 The sun is blotted out in Brazil at noon, making the day so dark that stars can be seen in the sky.
- 1861 Confederate states secede and elect Jefferson Davis president; Benjamin appointed Confederate Attorney General, later Secretary of War. American Civil War begins. Emancipation of serfs in Russia. Jacolliot writes about the Nine Unknown in Calcutta.
- 1865 Assassination of Lincoln; Andrew Johnson becomes president. "Booth" killed; coded message found among his effects; the code key later found in possession of Benjamin, alleged Rothschild agent. Civil War ends. Thirteenth amendment abolishes slavery.
- 1866 Ku Klux Klan founded as a social club in Pulaski, Tennessee.



1867 Ku Klux Klan reorganized along political and racial lines near Nashville, Tennessee. A shower of sulfur and fire falls upon Thames Ditton, England.

1869 St. Germain allegedly completes 85 years in the Himalayas after his "death."

1875 Madam Blavatsky founds Theosophy Society.

1877 Life of Aleister Crowley, the Great Beast, Golden Dawn leader and occult figure.

1878 First of seven wills in which Cecil Rhodes leaves his money to establish a secret society to expand British rule throughout the world.

1879 Life of Edgar Cayce, visionary and trance-channeler who spoke of reincarnation, Egyptian mysteries, and Atlantis.

1881 Garfield assassinated. Czar Alexander II assassinated by secret society.

1882 A huge chunk of ice falls upon Dubuque, Iowa; two frogs hop out of the ice as it melts.

1883 A giant, dinosaurlike saurian killed in Bolivia.

1884 Golden Dawn founded in London by Mathers and others.

1888 Unsolved murders of London prostitutes by "Jack the Ripper," suspected of being a nobleman implicated in the Cleveland Street Affair, a scandal involving high-society Victorians who patronized a brothel staffed by messenger boys.

1890 Biologist Yersin visits India, purportedly to receive plague and cholera serum from the Nine Unknown. Manna-like substance found on the ground in Turkey.

1891 Rhodes gains control of ninety percent of world's diamond supply; establishes Round Table Group. Rockefeller grant founds University of Chicago. Nikolai Tesla invents Tesla coil, becomes U.S. citizen. Astronomer Henry Hulbert observes a mysterious second shadow following behind Jupiter's moon Io (unexplained second shadow seen many times afterward).

1892 Rockefeller trust transferred to holding company: Standard Oil of New Jersey.

1896 Marconi's patent No. 7777 for radio. First "flap year" for UFOs: a wave of sightings of unidentified airships in the U.S.

1897 Tesla discovers terrestrial stationary waves that can produce electricity and reports receiving signals from another planet. Alleged meeting in England at which the Morgans, Rothschilds, and Warburgs become affiliated. Strange yellow worms found strewn across a glacier in Alaska. Billions of moths and flies invade Buenos Aires.

1900 Tesla suggests alien beings might be living "in the very midst of us." Approximate date that Adolf Lanz founds the Order of New Templars, a forerunner of the Nazi regime. One thousand die in a fire aboard a steamship near Manhattan.

1901 Assassination of McKinley. Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (Rockefeller University) founded in New York. Natives in Alaska repeatedly report the existence of a huge, skyborne city.

1902 "Protocols of Elders of Zion," alleged plan for Jewish world takeover, published in Russian newspaper.

to the gods and the ancestors of all humans. During this time, giants built Teotihuacan "to transform men into gods." The Toltecs (the Aztecs' name for their immediate predecessors in this region) then took up residence in that sacred city. These tales seem to be the foundation of the prophecy that helped the Aztecs decide where to found their capital.

Other Aztec stories asserted that the world had been created and destroyed four times, and that the fifth epoch (already in progress) was destined to come to an end on December 23, 2012 when a terrible earthquake would destroy humanity. The tales further insist that our present era exists only because the gods sacrificed themselves for humanity's benefit during a great meeting at Teotihuacan sometime in the distant past.

Could these legends describe a time when the Greys and humans interacted? If the Greys helped build Teotihuacan, what alien influence inspired such tales of earthly creation and destruction? Could there be a link between these stories and the fall of that city? The Greys are (perhaps surprisingly) silent on this matter. In any event, no definite evidence links the Greys to the Aztecs. This may explain why the latter were unable to stand against the Spaniards, whose horses, iron weapons, and superior armor brought them a quick triumph.

When Cortes arrived in 1519, two leaders descended from parallel royal lineages were ruling the Aztec Empire jointly. Montezuma (or more properly, Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin) was the "Speaker" (Tlatoani) who dealt strictly with the external relations of the city and empire. The "Female Serpent" (Cihuacoatl) directed internal city affairs. When Cortes eliminated the Tlatoani, resistance in the city actually increased due to the stronger control of the Cihuacoatl. In the end, even that wasn't enough, and the Aztec Empire fell to Spanish conquest.

One of the most interesting Aztec developments was a social group called the pochteca, which most conventional historians consider an economic institution. The pochteca was a hereditary guild of traveling merchants who often journeyed in disguise at night, ostensibly to avoid ambushes. But perhaps they traveled by night for another reason—they weren't human. It's impossible at this late date to determine who these merchants were, as almost no records of the period survive. It seems likely, however, that some of them worked with the Spanish conquerors. If this is the case, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory (page 75) may have records of them and their activities.

Incas

The Incan Empire arose very late in the pre-Columbian history of the Americas, in a location far from the Mesoamerican empires of the Mayans and Aztecs. As far as anyone can tell, the Incan state existed between A.D. 1440 and 1530, and its administrative heart was the mountain city of Cuzco. Its height came in the second half of that period, between A.D. 1490 and 1530. The empire undertook huge construction projects involving stones weighing easily as much as 200 tons. In a few short years, the Incas built a huge kingdom spanning the length of the Andes—an empire of a glory not seen since in those high peaks. Indeed, the cities of Cuzco and Machu Picchu are remarkable achievements for any culture, much less one that lasted just a few generations. How did such a brief flash in the parade of world events create so many lasting structures? Incan legends offer one explanation: The cities they ruled had stood long before the first Incan Emperor proclaimed himself the living embodiment of the sun god. Certainly this is true of Tiahuanaco (page 114 which predates even the Greys' arrival on Earth. What nation—or race—raised these cities?

The Greys almost certainly had some impact on the Incan civilization. With their preference for thinner air than is found at sea level, it

is reasonable to expect that they established at least one settlement (perhaps a station ship) in the Andes. In addition, humans living in the region transmitted the legends of a Grey named Viracocha (literally, the "Foam of the Sea") to their descendants. Over time, the Viracocha legend grew, and his influence remained centuries after the departure of the Grey settlers. Viracocha preached against human sacrifice and taught the civilized arts of agriculture, metalworking, and architecture; he seems to have been one of the Ittan (or perhaps a Ziljir) who defied the Speaker of the Greys to train humans in the higher arts of civilization. It's unclear what ultimately happened to Viracocha. The legends claim that he "returned to his home beyond the sea," but that statement could just as easily refer to his voluntary return to the Grey settlements as it could to an arrest and forced repatriation.

Incan society was unusual in other ways as well. The emperor ordered frequent rearrangements of the population to prevent the formation of revolutionary groups, yet the empire itself functioned as a form of primitive communistic society. The state gave all newlyweds a start on life. All citizens gave a third of their income or labor to the nation and a third to the gods, keeping only a third for themselves. All gold went to the emperor. Knotted cords called *quipu* preserved detailed information in their intricate patterns. Some Peruvians can still keep and interpret such records, but for the most part, the archives of the Incas are lost to modern investigators. Where did the quipu come from? Why did the elite of the empire need such meticulously kept records?

In the end, the Incas and all their knowledge vanished, and their links to the Greys disappeared with them. The conquistadors overran Peru in 1532 and looted its cities. Some of the golden treasures they took from the Incas may have been relics from an early era of contact with the relatively friendly and outgoing Greys of the Ittan faction, though by this point such artifacts were surely inoperable. The Spanish conquerors destroyed many of the Incan Empire's sacred writings in the invasion and took others back to the monasteries and priories of Spain. A select few however, may have been spirited away.

Unfortunately for later generations of researchers and scholars, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory arrived not far behind the conquerors. Appearing on the scene in 1567, its members collected as many of the remaining documents as possible from the ashes of the empire and took them to the Order's headquarters in St. Petersburg, where they presumably remain to this day.

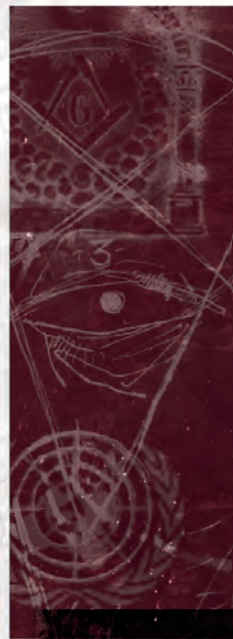
THE FALL AND RISE OF EUROPE

Historians use the term "Dark Ages" to describe the period of European history from A.D. 476 to about 1000. Though the name refers to the general decline of Western civilization, there was also a slow but steady rise in the level of dark matter throughout this period.

Led by the Pope, the Catholic Church spent these years shoring up power, much of which it still wields today. Even under the looming, omnipresent influence of the Church, however, secret groups branded as heresies operated at the fringe of society. Chief among these was the Cathari Heresy. The Cathars were Gnostic Christians heavily influenced by Manicheism (a Persian religion founded in the third century A.D.). Their organization existed only in secret, but they managed to establish a fortresslike community in southern France.

Although occultism and black magic appeared to gain footholds during this period, these had been popular practices long before Christianity arose. The Church, however, brought these arcane activities to light and branded them forms of Satanism. Ironically, this epithet changed the focus of some occult groups, which added Christian lore to their own beliefs to strengthen them and gain new followers. In

- 1904 Inexplicable darkness descends upon Wimbledon, England for ten minutes on April 17.
- 1907 Financial panic and depression, allegedly caused by J.P. Morgan to gain support for the central bank concept.
- 1908 FBI established. Founding of the Armanen Initiates, another proto-Nazi secret society. Gigantic explosion over Tunguska.
- 1909 New Zealand man reports seeing a torpedolike UFO with visible occupants who shouted at him in an unknown tongue.
- 1911 Exploding hailstones fall in Columbia, Missouri.
- 1912 An intensely black object, estimated to be 250 miles long and 50 miles wide, is seen upon the moon.
- 1913 Rockefeller Foundation founded.
- 1914 Attempted assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria by Masonic agents, followed an hour later by successful assassination; in Russia, Rasputin stabbed the same day but survives. World War I begins.
- 1915 Sinking of the *Lusitania* (allegedly carrying secret munitions for the Allies) by a German submarine; ship was supposedly sacrificed by British and American authorities to drum up war hysteria in U.S. Ku Klux Klan revived.
- 1916 Assassination of Rasputin.
- 1917 United States enters World War I. Russian Revolution begins; Cheka, secret police of Bolsheviks, founded. The "Miracle of Fatima" occurs in Portugal, as the Virgin Mary appears and gives three prophesies (one of which is kept secret by the Vatican even today). Hoffmann Institute founded.
- 1918 Assassination of Russian Czar Nicholas II and his family. Attempted assassination of Lenin.
- 1919 Founding of Thule Society in Germany; Hitler recruited. League of Nations founded at Paris Peace Conference. Meeting at the Majestic Hotel, Paris, between Wilsonian intellectuals (House, Dulles and Dulles, etc.) and "like-minded Englishmen" to discuss forming an organization "for the study of international affairs." Royal Institute of International Affairs founded. Freud draws attention to Austrian neurologist Poetzl's experiments with the tachistoscope, an early device for studying subliminal perception. Charles Fort's *The Book of the Damned* published. Hitler joins the German Workers' Party.
- 1920 Development of modern advertising techniques emphasizing manipulation rather than information.
- 1921 Council on Foreign Relations incorporated, founded by House, Dulles, and company with the help of the Round Table Group. Marconi states he believes mysterious V code on pre-WWI radio came from space. Tesla recalls seeing lights and vivid images when he was a boy. Hitler takes over the NSGWP. Millions of tiny frogs suddenly appear in London.
- 1922 Mussolini, alleged British Intelligence agent, comes to power in Italy and begins an attempt to eliminate the Mafia in Sicily. King Tutankhamen's tomb opened in Egypt, thus invoking "King Tut's Curse"; fourteen violent deaths in as many years linked to the curse. Rocks fall from the sky for weeks in Chico, California.
- 1923 Founding of Hitler's National-Socialist (Nazi) Party in Germany. International Police (Interpol) founded in Vienna. In the face of the Teapot Dome and other scandals, President Harding visits Alaska and receives a "long ciphered message" that visibly



upsets him, causing him to ask what a president could do when friends betrayed him; he died soon after among conflicting rumors about the cause of his death.

1917 J. Edgar Hoover takes over FBI. During the closest approach of Mars to Earth, radios around the world go off the air to allow interception of any possible messages from space; when translated onto photographic tape, signals received produced crudely drawn faces. Albert Ostman supposedly captured and held prisoner by four sasquatch in British Columbia.

1917 Lionel Curtis organizes the Institutes of Pacific Relations in at least ten countries for the Round Table Group. Edale, Derbyshire, England terrorized by a werewolf.

1917 Percy Expedition disappears without a trace in Brazil. Lightning starts a tremendous and deadly fire in a U.S. Naval ammunition dump in New Jersey.

1917 Rise of the CFR due to Rockefeller and other foundation funding. Crystal skull discovered in ruins of Lubaantun in British Honduras.

1917 Nomination of Catholic Al Smith sparks last spurt of growth for the KKK. Soviet-produced film shows conditioned reflex experiments on humans.

1917 CFR moves to Harold Pratt Building on 68th Street. Great Depression begins.

1917 Pavlov applies knowledge of conditioned reflex to human psychosis. Hoffmann Institute destroys kinori nest under Manhattan.

1917 Mafia becomes integral part of U.S. organized crime. Continuing political assassinations accompany Nazi rise to power. Dozens die and hundreds are stricken by a poisonous fog in Belgium. Pluto discovered.

1917 Series of haunting events in a remote farmhouse in Cashen's Gap on the Isle of Man includes ghostly singing, moving objects, and most important a talking mongoose. Foundation of the Fortean Society in New York.

1917 Fort dies after publishing his last book, *Wild Talents*.

1917 FDR orders use of the Great Seal of the U.S. on the reverse side of the dollar bill.

1917 Beginning of Hitler's Black Order. Unexplained "ghostflier" broadcasts in Sweden.

1917 Assassination of Senator Huey Long. First lobotomy performed by Egas Moniz in Lisbon.

1917 Beginning of Moscow Purge trials; numerous communist leaders brainwashed into false confessions and then executed.

1917 Spanish Civil War begins. First of forty-eight "Lost Colony" stones found in North Carolina; stones supposedly tell the story of lost Roanoke Island colony. Aviator Amelia Earhart Putnam disappears.

1917 Assassination of Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son; first assassination attempt against Trotsky. Nazi invasion of Austria. Interpol exiled or taken over by Nazis. German expedition to Antarctica stakes out 372,000 square miles, lands near the South Pole. Electroshock treatment discovered. Orson Welles' dramatization of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* scares American radio listeners.

short, they became Satanists because the Church labeled them as such. Others, however, rejected that tactic and continued their own unique occult practices. Primary among these were the Kabbalists and to a lesser extent the Druids and other, hidden cults. Still other groups did just the opposite, incorporating their own pagan or occult beliefs into Christianity. This gave rise to the followers of the Black Madonna (Isis as the Virgin Mary), the Green Man cults, hidden occult shrines within Christian churches, and other strange secrets. Reports of possession and demonic visitation became common in the Dark Ages. Sometimes these accounts were accurate, but more often they described alien and paranormal events for which no other explanations existed at the time.

An Age of War

While wars were not uncommon for the Roman Empire and its successors during the Dark Ages, most were brief flare-ups rather than protracted struggles. At the height of the medieval period, however, larger conflicts loomed—indeed, it can be said that the Crusades began the era of great national wars. Shortly after the Crusades, which lasted from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, came the Hundred Years War (from 1337 to 1453) and then the great Wars of Religion. Europe became known as a place where hundreds or even thousands could die in an afternoon of battle.

After reaching a relative high point near the turn of the millennium, dark matter levels began to drop during this period, as reports of strange occurrences decreased. The Church created a special tool for stamping out heretics like the Cathars and Satanic occultists: the Inquisition. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX initiated the Papal Inquisition in response to Cathari and other heresies. Later ecclesiastical tribunals included the Spanish Inquisition, authorized in 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV, which lasted until 1834. In 1542, Pope Paul III instituted the Office of Inquisition (also known as the Roman Inquisition or the Holy Office) in response to the rise of Protestantism.

The Black Death

After decimating India and China in the 1330s, the plague known as the Black Death began its sweep through Europe in 1347. Most scholars trace the spread of the contagion to Italian trading vessels returning from China. In fact, the disease may not have been of terrestrial origin at all.

In 1347, prelates of the Catholic Church found, opened, and walked through a doorway in the hinterland of the Black Sea. The monks quickly returned, discomfited by the strange greenish-yellow sky and the foul air of the abandoned world they found on the other side. Within weeks of this incident, Europe was caught in the relentless grip of the plague. Had the monks unwittingly opened a pathway for God's wrath? And if so, did some similar activity bring the plague to Asia? The resulting epidemic reduced Europe's population by a third, but any attempt Strangers might have made to capitalize on the chaos clearly failed.

The Black Death may also have alerted the Greys to the possibility that they themselves were vulnerable to contagion from alternate worlds. Perhaps with the aid of Grey intervention, medicine advanced by leaps and bounds after this time. Within a few hundred years, physicians developed the germ theory of disease, and medical science began winning more battles than it lost.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

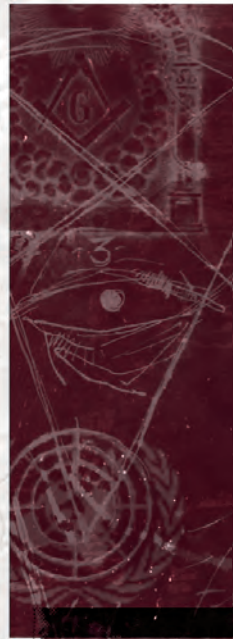
The Age of Enlightenment led to a rise in philosophy and advanced thinking. European civilization no longer regarded every paranormal event with suspicion. Some Enlightenment-era humanists and scholars sought knowledge from classical sources, other traditions of learning, and several strains of mysticism. Their rational inquiries led them in some unorthodox directions and yielded a number of surprising finds. Later occult groups combined these discoveries with secrets taken from Masonry (and thus the Templars). Spearheaded by orders including the Theosophists, the Golden Dawn, and the Ordo Templi Orientis, occultism rose to a crescendo in the modern era.

In fact, many of the political and philosophical thinkers of the time were Masonic agents, put in place to create a Masonic state by swaying public opinion and manipulating events. This clearly figured into the origin of a new nation: the United States. Influenced by these Masonic agents, the British colonists in America revolted against the King of

1929 Attorney Leon Cooke, friend of Jack Ruby and financial secretary of Ruby's union, killed by union president Jack Martin; union subsequently taken over by Mafia. League of Nations suspended. Germany invades Poland; World War II begins. CFR offers its services to U.S. State Department. Interpol grouped with Gestapo. Amateur radio astronomer Grote Reber receives dot-dash signal from space. Attempted assassination of Hitler.

1940 Nazis allegedly begin building Hitler's secret hideout in Antarctica. Roosevelt sends Gen. "Wild Bill" Donovan on intelligence gathering mission to Europe; Donovan recommends a central intelligence organization. U.S. State Department creates Division of Special Research headed by CFR member Pasbolsky.

1941 Japan attacks U.S. Fleet at Pearl Harbor, allegedly through the maneuvering of Roosevelt and his advisors to provide an excuse to enter the war. Donovan made head of new Office of Coordinator of Information.



Templars and Masons

During the Crusades, a secret society called the Priory of Zion created the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple, also known as the Templars. This monastic military order came forward at the end of the First Crusade, ostensibly to protect pilgrims traveling the route from Europe to the recently captured city of Jerusalem. Its members also guarded the secrets held within the Holy City and temple. Within a few decades the order became a formidable force, gaining the backing of both the Pope and the collective European monarchies.

Within two centuries, the Templars had become powerful enough to defy all but the Papal throne. Feared as warriors and respected for their piety and position, the Knights Templar were undeniably key players in Europe at the time. As a result of their vast wealth, the Templars essentially invented banking as we know it. Although the Church forbade usury, the Templars were able to skirt the issue and finance anyone they wished—even kings.

The clandestine meetings and rituals of the Templars would eventually cause their downfall, however. Philip the Fair, King of France, used the secrecy of the order to destroy it. (Perhaps he felt threatened by the knights' power and immunity, but no one can speak with certainty about his motivations.) On October 13th, 1307, King Philip had all the Templars arrested on the grounds of heresy,

since this was the only charge that would allow him to seize their money and assets. Under torture, the knights eventually confessed to acts such as trampling and spitting on the cross, homosexuality, and worshiping a diabolical entity known as Baphomet.

Once Philip had successfully stripped the Templars of their power and wealth, he urged his fellow Christian leaders to do the same thing. The last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake on March 19, 1314. As the fire claimed him, de Molay is said to have cursed King Philip and Pope Clement by asking both men to join him within a year. Clement died only one month later, and Philip IV seven months after that.

As a secret society, however, the greatest legacy of the Knights Templar may have been their influence on others and the lore that they passed on. While in the Middle East, the Templars came into contact with both Arabic learning and secret societies (such as the Assassins). This knowledge changed them, and the knights carried these secrets with them when they returned home to Europe. In southern France they intermingled with the Cathars, exchanging information and possibly occult secrets. After they were decimated in France, the surviving knights took shelter elsewhere. The Montesa, for instance, was a new order of knights created as a refuge for ex-Templars in Spain.

In Portugal they became the Knights of Christ, an exploring maritime order that lasted until the sixteenth century and included such luminaries as Vasco de Gama and Prince Henry the Navigator; indeed, Columbus himself sailed under the red Templar cross of the Knights of Christ. Those in Scotland communicated their secrets to the Freemasons there, imparting their own legacies and agendas before they supposedly died out in the late 1600s or early 1700s. The Templar secrets made the Scottish Masonic Lodge one of the most powerful and influential of the time. Their "brand" of Freemasonry spread throughout Europe and into the New World, eventually leading to the creation of the United States itself.

What were the Templar secrets? Reports vary, but it seems likely that they included powerful magical rituals, alien artifacts, knowledge regarding the nature of Christ, the secrets of God, the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, the secret locations of vast treasure hoards, obscure ancient histories, and fundamental knowledge regarding the nature of Man. Whatever the truth, the knowledge led to an increase in the power of the Freemasons as a whole, and especially to the growth of a small secret society within the order dedicated to the Inner Doctrine (see Chapter 4).



1945 Donovan's OCI evolves into the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

1945 LSD-25 discovered by Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann. Nazi Admiral Doenitz boasts the German submarine fleet built "in another part of the world, a Shangri-La on land, an impregnable fortress." Juan Peron and other pro-Nazi leaders take power in Argentina. Pilots on both sides of the war report seeing "foo-fighters," unexplained flying objects, while flying war missions.

1945 Attempted assassination of Hitler. Nazis begin sending millions of dollars worth of jewels, paintings, and cash to Argentina for safe keeping. Donovan prepares plan for Roosevelt to establish a central intelligence agency, which is pigeonholed and later reconsidered by Truman. American band leader Glenn Miller disappears on unarmed flight over the English Channel.

1945 Alleged assassination (suicide) of James Forrestal at Bethesda Hospital Neurological Ward, after his attempt to warn Roosevelt of Illuminati plot. Roosevelt dies, Truman becomes president. Mussolini killed. Hitler allegedly escapes from Berlin after arranging for a fake suicide cover story; Nazi leader Martin Bormann escapes Berlin without a trace after supervising Hitler's "suicide." First atomic bombs dropped. World War II ends. General Gehlen, Head of Nazi Intelligence, captured by U.S. Army. Interpol dissolved or reorganized with headquarters in Paris. OSS disbanded, agents move to military intelligence agencies and the State Department. CFR allegedly takes over State Department. United Nations founded. Flight 19, made up of five naval bombers, disappears off the coast of Florida in the Bermuda Triangle; another plane sent to investigate also disappears a total of six planes and twenty-seven men vanished. An Air Force plane's engines fail over Iwo Jima as foo-fighters maneuver around it.

1945 Truman's executive order creates the National Intelligence Authority and Central Intelligence Group. Gehlen returns to Germany to continue intelligence work for U.S. Army. Admiral Byrd allegedly leads Naval "research" expedition to Antarctica to attack Hitler's secret hideout; attempt supposedly fails and Hitler and his "UFO scientists" continue their activities. Waves of unexplained "ghost rockets" seen in Europe, especially Scandinavia.

1947 National Security Act establishes Department of Defense, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency. Second UFO flap year. "Flying disk" reportedly found near Roswell, New Mexico. Kenneth Arnold reports flying saucers near Yakima, Washington; other reports soon follow. Aleister Crowley dies.

1948 Beginning of CIA interest in UFOs as a "security" problem. Martin Bormann reported living in Argentina. New nation of Israel creates Central Institute for Intelligence and Security. World Council of Churches founded in Amsterdam.

1948 Report critical of CIA filed and forgotten, unread by Truman; Central Intelligence Act exempts CIA from disclosure laws. E. Howard Hunt becomes CIA agent; Clay Shaw becomes agent for CIA's Domestic Contact Service. The Gehlen Organization transferred to CIA control. U.S. Army begins twenty years of simulated germ warfare attacks against American cities, conducting at least 239 open air tests. Interpol granted consultative status by UN. Trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary following his brainwashing and confession of conspiracy. Falling toads accompany a heavy hail near Gallup, New Mexico.

1950 Attempted assassination of Truman by Puerto Rican nationalists. Korean War begins. Congress passes McCarran's Internal Security Act, instituting a program for detention of subversives. U.S. Army engages in "simulated" germ warfare in San Francisco

England, declaring their independence. The men who rose to lead the rebels in the ensuing conflict—Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, Hancock, and many others—were all high-ranking Masons. After the cause of independence won, Freemasons designed the U.S. Capital building and filled it with secret symbolism. The new nation's leaders adopted Masonry's Eye-and-Pyramid symbol as the Great Seal of the United States. (There are even rumors that George Washington was replaced by a striking lookalike—Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Masonic Illuminati—or that Washington had been an alternate identity of his in the first place.) Although Masonry's influence over American politics appeared to diminish in the years afterward, the infrastructure set in place early on has granted the organization a degree of control that remains even into the present day.

Soon after the American Revolution, Masonic manipulation spurred another in France. However, it appears that the Rosicrucians (a more modern version of the Companions of Horus, an organization that dates back to ancient Egypt) were also involved in inciting that revolt. Some evidence exists that these "enlightened" organizations have been waging a clandestine war with monarchist groups that have existed since the time of the Merovingian Kings (a Frankish dynasty in power from the fifth century A.D. to A.D. 751), and that secret societies like the Priory of Zion support the monarchists in that ongoing struggle. This covert war began before the revolutions in America and France, and it has continued ever since. However, this theory contradicts evidence indicating completely different interactions between these secret societies—for example, the Priory of Zion supporting the Templars, who in turn aided the Masons. For more information on these and other secret societies, see Chapter 4.

A Rising Tide

With the growth of industry, individuals and small groups became powerful based on nothing more than the fortunes they earned. Industrialists wielded their new power like a weapon, forging their own secret societies and powerful dynasties (the Rothschilds, the Rhodes, the Rockefeller, and others).

As communication improved and advanced, news of strange paranormal events begin to spread. Unusual astronomical and meteorological events, "airship" sightings, and ghost stories became more and more prevalent. People turned to religion and the occult looking for answers.

The truth was simple. Beginning around 1800 and continuing to the present day, the physical fabric of our solar system—indeed, of our arm of the galaxy—has been changing in a profound but subtle way. As the universe expanded along its normal pattern, our galaxy entered a region with a rich concentration of dark matter.

At first, the changes were barely detectable. Powers once consigned to legend manifested themselves, but only sporadically, and only for a few special people. Convincing anyone of their authenticity at the height of an age of reason and progress was a difficult task at best. Groups dedicated to fringe beliefs—such as the Spiritualists (who advised President Lincoln in the 1860s) and the Theosophists (occultists who revived theories of ancient Atlantis and the so-called Ascended Masters, foretelling great changes for humanity)—were among the first to figure out that something had changed. Some people who realized this, such as Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn movement dedicated to his teachings, used their newfound power to influence events, both socially and politically, well into the early twentieth century. But these changes were small compared with what was to come.

The Strangers returned sporadically at first, as the dark matter doorways flickered back into life. Unable to reach through these portals with any frequency or reliability since the Dark Tide began to ebb nearly

a thousand years earlier, the Strangers found their access growing easier as dark matter suffused the galaxy. The slow but continuous rise in dark matter over the past two centuries has resulted in a higher concentration of it today than ever before in recorded history. Now, no longer constrained by low background levels of dark matter, the Strangers can (and often do) pop through the doorways and rebuild their old territories almost at will.

Resembling aliens, monsters remembered from mythology, and creatures from humanity's darkest nightmares, the Strangers are an odd mix of the commonplace and the horrific. Few in number and cautious about attracting attention to themselves, they nevertheless have ambitious plans, ranging from the corruption of humanity to the establishment (or re-establishment) of a presence on Earth.

Their reappearance has not gone unnoticed. The crop circles they have made, the vessels a few of them have brought from their worlds, their bases in the desolate corners of the Earth, and their kidnapping and murder of humans have attracted attention—both from those who explore the paranormal out of a sense of wonder and discovery and from those who seek to control it.

Tesla's Advanced Tech

In 1856, Nikolai Tesla—the eccentric genius who gave humanity the AC induction engine, logic gates, and many seminal works on electrical power—was born in the small village of Smildjan in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He attended Graz Polytechnic Institute and worked for a telegraph office to put himself through school. Upon graduation, he obtained employment with the Continental Edison Company in Paris. In 1882, he

and the Pentagon. National Council of Churches founded in U.S. CIA organizes Pacific Corporation, a large holding company which was the first of many CIA "private" enterprises. CIA plot to introduce UFO contact ideas with "Little Green Men" stories and radio contact "from space." Malcolm X receives a visit from an MIB while in prison. Approximate starting date for construction of Mount Weather, a secret American government fortress.

1951 Army germ warfare project in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Approximate date CBS begins active cooperation with CIA. North Korean brainwashing of American prisoners begins. *Time* magazine popularizes the term "brainwashing." Mysterious "Lubbock Lights" increase in activity in Lubbock, Texas.

1952 Army germ warfare project in Key West, Florida and Ft. McClellan, Alabama. CIA agents Downey and Fecteau captured while on a spy mission in China. Third UFO flap year. Numerous UFOs swarm over Washington, D.C. First UFO "contact" case: George Adamski meets "Venusians" in California desert; alleged CIA plot to start UFO scare. The "Flatwoods Monster" terrorizes West Virginia.

1953 Numerous reports across the world of a strange mist that carries away people and cars, transporting them hundreds and thousands of miles away.

1953 Dr. Frank Olsen commits suicide after the CIA administers a secret dose of LSD to him, under the direction of the mysterious Dr. Sidney Gottlieb. CIA contemplates developing drugs to cause amnesia in retired agents. CIA's Robertson Panel views UFO reports as a national security threat. Army germ warfare project in Panama City, Florida. Return of Korean War prisoners, including some who underwent brainwashing. Twenty-one POWs defect. Mau Mau (Hidden Ones) formed in Kenya to overthrow white rule. UFOlogist Albert Bender closes down his International Flying Saucer Bureau after a visit from three Men In Black. Project MK-ULTRA created by the CIA. Watson, Crick, Wilkins, and Franklin identify deoxyribonucleic acid as the primary genetic material.

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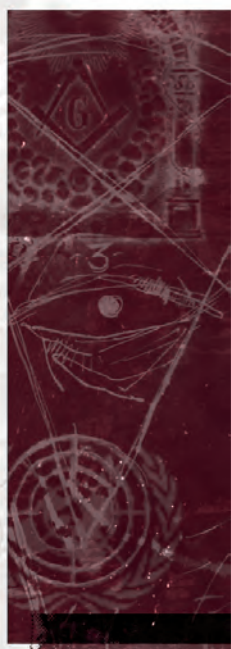
1954 Puerto Rican nationalists attempt assassinations of several U.S. Congressmen. First Bilderberger meeting takes place at the Bilderberg Hotel, Oosterbeek, Holland. Army germ warfare project in Point Mugu and Fort Hueneme, California. Russian KGB created to replace earlier secret police. Broadcaster Frank Edwards fired for discussing UFOs on the air. Strange voice "from space" speaks from turned-off radios in midwestern U.S. and London, warning against preparations for war. First hydrogen bomb detonated at Bikini.

1955 Office of Naval Research allegedly receives a copy of Morris Jessup's "The Case for the UFOs" with marginal notes in three different hands, supposedly written by "Gypsies" knowledgeable in UFOlogy; ONR reprints several hundred copies for internal use; MIB called "Carlos Allende" implicated in the affair.

1956 Assassination of Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua. Clay Shaw's CIA contact allegedly stopped. Oswald joins Marines. Durham receives special CIA training. UFOlogist Gray Barker publishes "They Knew Too

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The True History



DAMON -
I DUG THIS OUT OF
THE ARCHIVES.
ANYBODY LOOK
FAMILIAR HERE?
-DIETER

Much About Flying Saucers," a treatise that details numerous MIB incidents.

Alleged assassination of Joseph McCarthy at Bethesda Hospital Neurological Ward, after warning of Illuminati plot. CIA helps Iran form SAVAK, a secret police organization later accused of assassinating Iranian dissidents. Experiments in behavior modification by sleep-teaching take place at California penal institution called Woodland Road Camp. Fourth UFO flap year. Anti-atomic bomb propaganda disseminated by saucer clubs CIA plot? Unexplained short wave radio signals received worldwide. *Sputnik* launched into orbit.

Russia launches first space satellites. John Birch Society organized by Robert Welch. Nelson Rockefeller elected governor of New York. Ham radio operators pick up a male voice claiming to be Nacoma of Jupiter and warning of atomic bomb disaster in English, German, Norwegian, and his own unknown language.

Apparent suicide of UFO researcher Morris Jessup, who had received communications from MIB "Carlos Allende." Oswald released from Marines, defects to Russia. UFO sighting at CIA headquarters after Naval officer contacts "space people" while in CIA-observed trance. Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* published. *Lunik 1* reaches moon; *Lunik 3* photographs it.

Nixon, CIA agent Bissell, and others plan Bay of Pigs invasion, obtain permission to use Guatemala as launching point. Bernard Baker serves as conduit for Bay of Pigs funding. CIA buys Southern Air Transport, contemplates development of "recruitment pills" and other drugs, studies mysterious amnesia of Korean war prisoners moved through Manchuria, and contemplates giving truth serum to brainwashed American POWs. CIA spy Powers shot down in U-2 over Russia; summit conference cancelled. Project Ozma, searching for intelligent signals from another part of the universe, receives unexplained signals from space.

CIA invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs fails due to poor planning and cancellation of support by Kennedy; the CIA, the Mob, Cuban-exiles, right-wingers, and Nixonites supposedly vow revenge. Kennedy develops extracurricular relationship with Judith Campbell, Sam Giancana's girlfriend; Giancana and John Roselli enlisted by CIA to attempt Castro assassination. Unexplained transmissions from space monitored by ham radio operators worldwide; Bob Renaud, ham operator, allegedly makes contact with aliens. First known sighting of the mothfolk in West Virginia. Betty and Barney Hill kidnapped by a UFO in the first recorded abduction case. Yuri Gagarin becomes first man in space.

Suicide of Marilyn Monroe under questionable circumstances. Oswald returns to America with his Russian wife, an alleged KGB agent. Dr. Edgar Schein outlines behavior modification programs for U.S. prisons, based on Korean brainwashing techniques. Cuban missile crisis. UFOlogist Williamson disappears in South America.

Assassination of President John Kennedy. CIA begins weather modification project over Hue, Vietnam. Unexplained radio transmission in unidentified language interrupts astronaut Gordon Cooper during final orbit of Mercury 9 mission. Numerous MIBs spotted in Dealy Plaza. Merchant vessel near Gibraltar notes a strange patch of calm sea, about a mile wide and several miles long, surrounded on all sides by normal turbulent water.

Numerous deaths associated with Kennedy assassination. Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy released; Commission finds that Oswald, acting alone, killed JFK.

moved to the United States, settling on the east coast and working for a number of firms, primarily the Westinghouse Company. Able to move in the circles of the wealthy and always seeking money for his inventions, he established many important connections, even befriending Mark Twain at one point. Tesla worked for years at a lab on Houston Street in New York (where Twain often visited) and later in Colorado Springs. He eventually received more than seven hundred patents.

Though his work on wireless power transfer and electric charge weapons has largely been disregarded, Tesla's patents and other inventions include the x-ray machine, the radio, the fluorescent bulb, the vacuum tube amplifier, and the AC motor. Some of his lesser-known inventions may have included weapons capable of mass destruction and devices that could reshape the earth itself using the planet's magnetic field. Some researchers believe (incorrectly) that Tunguska explosion of 1908 in Siberia may have resulted from an accident while testing one such device (see Tunguska, page 121, for the truth behind this event).

Tesla claimed that much of his knowledge came from entities not of this world, who occasionally contacted him through dreams. A believer in extraterrestrials, he probably received visits from Strangers at more than one point in his career. Some doubtless gave him information; others may have come to learn from him—or at least to find out how he was developing such advanced technology. Some historians believe that Tesla was a time traveler from the future, or was in league with one. In truth, Tesla did receive substantial alien assistance from a Grey named Nakami (see below).

As Tesla became increasingly erratic in his later years, he lost his backers and funding. His career came to an end at last when he saw his Wardenclyffe laboratory dynamited. Tesla died at the age of eighty-seven, alone and penniless, in a New York hotel room.

After his death in 1943, the Office of Alien Property seized his papers and possessions at the FBI's instigation. As Tesla had been a U.S. citizen since 1891, this action was entirely illegal. Today, more than half of Tesla's patents remain classified by the U.S. government. Apparently he had gained a working knowledge of gravitics and electrogravitic motors, and the government wished to keep these secrets to itself.

Nakami and the Great War

Throughout the summer of 1916, citizens of the United States heard news about the Battle of the Somme. The battle itself lasted 142 days, from July 1 to November 18, with almost no concrete result; the English offensive advanced the trenches just 8 miles. When the death toll—more than 200,000 French, 420,000 from the British Empire, and 500,000 Germans—was reported to the War Department at the end of November, America was not yet involved in the conflict, but the figures gave a Grey named Nakami pause. Nakami, a member of the Iltan faction, had been moving about in American society disguised as a human for some time. He had worked as one of Tesla's lab assistants for a while, but although he telepathically "pushed" Tesla to develop several innovations, he never revealed his secret to the inventor.

"Doctor" Nakami had been on an extended trip to Crater Lake in Oregon that July, and he avoided the depressing war news for some time afterward. He began following the story a few months after returning to the east coast, but it seemed so improbable that he consulted friends of his in the War Department about it. When they confirmed the loss figures, Nakami began to wonder if he had misjudged humanity on the basis of its science. Perhaps the vestiges of older days spent fighting over hunting grounds had not yet faded entirely into the past.

The men fighting in France were supposedly the most enlightened of a generation of rational, elevated spirits. Yet they had just completed a summer of slaughter, killing thousands of their own kind. The British had unveiled a new "secret weapon"—the tank—and it had failed them,



Dieter -
Definitely him!
 Who knew he got
 around so much?
 -D. LeRoux

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bogging down in the muddy French fields. Despite this, the troops had fought on for months. They had learned nothing, gained nothing, and continued with an activity that could only be described as unthinking slaughter—a form of butchery usually applied only to farm animals in packing houses. Such senseless human warfare seemed a sure sign of madness. Nakami decided that something had to be done before his people's adopted planet destroyed itself in an orgy of mustard gas and machine guns.

In essence, Dr. Nakami believed that human aggression needed to be tempered by Grey wisdom. If the aliens could not reduce the intensity of human violence, they might find themselves crowded out of the solar system entirely. If human warfare spread into space, the Greys would have to find another planet, and that seemed too great a decision to make lightly. The doctor gathered a few confederates from among the younger aliens, and they all went out to live secretly among humankind and bring about what changes they could.

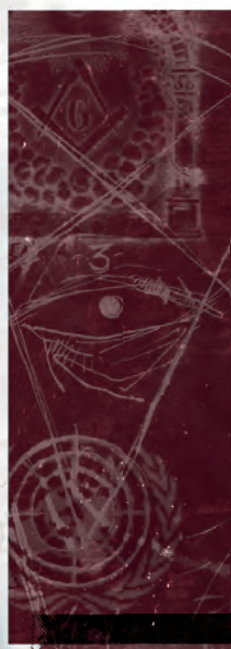
The Institute

In 1917, the Institute for the Advancement of Man was established on Third Avenue in the lower east side of New York City. It was an inauspicious beginning—tenement buildings surrounded the organization's run-down, single-room office. The Greys who founded the Institute began full of optimism and high ideals, but immediately ran into real trouble, for they had a very difficult time obtaining the mundane requirement known as money. Having a putatively "Japanese" director for a charitable institute didn't help much in petitioning funds from the white Anglo-Saxon upper crust of New York. Within six months, the Institute was behind on its rent, salaries, and utility bills.

1947 Assassination of Malcolm X. U.S. Army explores sites in the Middle East as potential locations for nuclear devices intended to set off earthquakes. Early prison behavior modification program, CASE, begins in Washington, D.C. boys' school. Fifth UFO flap year. Three Russian scientists receive unexplained signals from space. California highway inspector Rex Heflin takes pictures of UFOs, then receives a visit from MIBs supposedly from NORAD who take the original photographs and depart; NORAD denies involvement. Another ham radio operator, Sidney Padrick, makes contact with UFO aliens.

1946 CIA begins weather modification experiments over Cuba, technology is later used in an attempt to ruin Castro's sugar cane crop. Army conducts simulated germ warfare project in New York City. Numerous mothfolk sightings in West Virginia accompanied by UFOs, animal mutilations, poltergeist activity, crop circles, and Men In Black. Ancient bacteria (500 million years old) revived in a German laboratory.

1947 Rex Heflin again visited by MIBs in connection with his photos of UFOs; similar MIB incidents occur in New York and elsewhere. Another MIB, Mr. Dixsun, allegedly visits Colorado University UFO researcher Edward Condon and offers to help him contact the space people. China explodes its first hydrogen bomb. Tramp named Bailey found in an abandoned building in London, victim of spontaneous human combustion.



Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee and Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles, California. Sirhan Sirhan, Robert Kennedy's brainwashed "assassin," is proven to have shot Kennedy in the shoulder pad, but Kennedy had also been shot in the back of the head at close range a woman who earlier had been seen with Sirhan leaves the scene saying "We've shot him!" Approximate founding date of a group called The Kaisers sixty German-Americans allegedly planning to make Nixon a dictator. FBI begins secret Cointelpro campaign against New Left and black radicals. CIA penetrates the Students for a Democratic Society at Columbia College; National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) formed within the SDS. Mystery ship *Scheersberg* disappears between Antwerp and Genoa with 200 tons of uranium believed to have been taken to Israel. Astronauts circling the moon interrupted by unexplained voices. Radio stations receive mysterious distress signals from the mid-Pacific; no ships found during ensuing search. U.S. detonates hydrogen bomb 100 miles NW of Las Vegas in underground test.

Nixon issues Executive Order No. 11490, establishing plans for dictatorial control in the event of a "national emergency." Pentagon and Department of Interior researchers study methods of inducing earthquakes by injecting fluids into deep wells. Cuban government arrests alleged CIA spy Humberto Carrillo Colon, seizing his Very Low Frequency transceiver and coded messages describing strange lights, a minisubmarine, and other unexplained items. MIB "Carlos Allende" visits UFOlogists Jim and Coral Lorenzen in Tucson, giving them a copy of the ONR reprint of Jessup's "Case for the UFOs." Men first visit the moon. Reportedly, *Apollo* astronauts see a number of UFOs (which they identify as huge spaceships) across a lunar crater, apparently watching them. Followers of Charles Manson ritually slaughter Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring.

U.S. Army experts complete "mock assassination" project against the president and Congress, demonstrating that determined terrorists could wipe out U.S. leaders through use of chemical or germ warfare. Nixon staffers develop the Huston Plan and "Plumbers Unit" in a plot to use police and intelligence agencies at all levels for political purposes. Attorneys Lefcourt in New York and Gary in San Francisco subject to the first of over one hundred unsolved break-ins that take place over the next five years; valuables untouched but sensitive political

The whole enterprise was on the verge of bankruptcy when it gained an important patron: Tomas Friedrich Hoffmann. Mr. Hoffmann had heard of Tesla's work and knew that Nakami was his protégé. Hoping to hire some of Tesla's genius without having to deal with the notoriously eccentric inventor, Hoffmann offered to buy the Institute out of debt in exchange for expansion of its portfolio to include scientific research as well as political lobbying and charitable works. He named a series of technical topics—most dealing with astrophysics, particular electrical phenomena, Egyptology, and the pseudoscience of spiritualism—that the Institute would investigate in exchange for his patronage.

Nakami was only too happy to oblige; Hoffmann's connections to the German diplomatic corps were of no interest to him. The Institute changed its name and added a second director to its board. Soon thereafter, its researchers began a series of experiments building on Tesla's work. At least for the time being, political causes took a back seat to activities that would pay the bills. But the political causes near to Nakami's heart would later clash with the agenda of his new sponsor, for the Institute and Hoffmann had very different views on how the results of that research should be applied.

World War II

Even as the nineteenth-century occult organizations fell apart or disbanded, new, more sinister occult groups formed in mainland Europe. These secret societies combined lore from lost Atlantis with racist philosophies and Teutonic warriorlike ethics. Chief among these groups was the Thule Society, from which arose individuals who would become important political figures in the coming years: the Nazis.

The Nazis gained power in the 1930s, transforming an impoverished and downtrodden Germany into a motivated military juggernaut. At the heart of the Nazi regime was the Schutzstaffel (the SS). A special inner circle of the SS—the Order of the Death's Head—was an occult group based on Teutonic knightly orders before them.

As soon as they gained power, the Nazis banned other influential secret societies, like the Masons and the Golden Dawn. The Thule Society and the Order of the Death's Head—two groups with close ties—knew they must beware their true enemies, the Illuminati of Adam Weishaupt.

The Nazis Today

Martin Bormann, Hitler's right-hand man, had arranged a postwar contingency plan called Odessa. The details of that operation were seized in Berlin, and only its participants know exactly what remained. In theory, the plan would transfer Nazi funds abroad, keep part of the Nazi wartime spy network intact, and shelter high-ranking Nazi officers in Indonesia, Mexico, the Middle East, and South America.

Perhaps nothing came of Odessa beyond the escape of a few war criminals, but that seems unlikely. The U.S. government's involvement in Operation Paperclip aside, evidence suggests that Nazis and Neo-Nazis remain in hidden positions of power,

particularly in South America, even today. The mystical Thule Society still works in secret, attempting to retrieve ancient artifacts of importance and power, such as the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Spear of Destiny.

Conspiracy investigators should not rule out the possibility of old Nazis operating a secret military base in South America, dealing in guns and drugs to gather finances and power. Some claim that when the Allies took Berlin, they found plans detailing a plot to use a secret fleet of U-boats to take fleeing Nazis from Germany to a place of complete safety: Antarctica. In fact, two months after Germany surrendered in 1945, the submarines U-530 and U-977 (led by Admiral

Doenitz) gave themselves up in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Allegedly, these two vessels had become separated from the submarine convoy taking Hitler and others to their hideout in Antarctica. Those who finished the voyage continued their research into rocketry and anti-gravity. (Many UFO sightings, some say, were actually pieces of Nazi technology undergoing field tests.) Eventually, the stories claim, the remaining Nazis left Earth altogether, establishing a base on the moon and possibly even Mars.

One thing is certain: the Nazis were too powerful, too fanatical, and too devious to be completely gone.

Through the mystical rites and incantations of the Thule Society, high-ranking Nazis learned that in order to attain true power they would have to perform the largest and most bloody ritual ever conducted. Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Nazis sacrificed more than six million people in death camps as they carried out this black magic rite. Even as the Allies waged war against Germany, the Nazis, controlled by the secret inner circles of these occult groups, carried out their hideous plan. Fortunately, the rite was never completed.

During World War II, the scientists and engineers involved in the Nazi war effort invented dozens of new weapons and tools of war, from the jet engine to the V-2 ballistic rocket to VTOL aircraft. The U.S. government seized many of these weapons, as well as more shadowy and arcane knowledge, in the immediate postwar period. The top-secret effort to recruit and forcibly relocate the scientists and adepts responsible for these advances was called Operation Paperclip. As a direct result of this project, the U.S. gained hundreds of technical and scientific treasures. These included medical reports from concentration camp doctors, engineering data on jet propulsion and vertical take-off aircraft from the brothers Walter and Reimar Horten, intelligence on Soviet military strength from Hitler's spymaster Reinhard Gehlen, and the prototypes that eventually—in the hands of former SS major Werner von Braun—became the Saturn V rocket that took men to the moon.

What price did the U.S. pay for incorporating so many Nazis into the upper ranks of the CIA, NASA, the Army, and other branches of the government? What contacts did these men have with others who shared their beliefs? How did they guide postwar policy? Former Nazis helped to create both the Central Intelligence Agency and NASA. Since its beginnings in 1947, the CIA has played a major role in driving U.S. foreign policy. It has also exerted greater and greater control over the executive branch of the government—even to the extent, some say, of engineering the murder of a president who opposed them in 1963.

Roswell: The Greys Return

In 1947, a pilot flying near Mt. Rainier in western Washington state saw a number of flying crescents skipping like “saucers” across water. The name “flying saucer” stuck, and thus began the modern era of UFO sightings. Later that same year, an even more significant event in the history of UFOlogy occurred, although there are many versions of what actually happened. One story indicates that an alien spaceship developed a systems failure and crashed near Roswell, New Mexico on July 2, 1947. Another version claims that the U.S. government shot the craft down with an anti-aircraft battery, but immediately realized its terrible blunder. In either case, the government has kept the ship secret ever since. The craft and its dead occupants were taken to Groom Lake Air Force base in Nevada, also known as Area 51 and commonly called Dreamland.

A second ship—perhaps sent to rescue survivors from the first crash—met with equipment failure itself and fell to Earth not far away. Investigators discovered this vessel at San Augustine Flats near Magdalena, New Mexico on July 3, 1947.

This incident spurred the first organized contact between humans and Greys in modern times. Alien technology and physiology were now available for human scientists to study. Whether mankind was alone in the universe was no longer even a viable question, at least to those in the know. In response, the Greys contacted certain government officials and worked out a treaty. The humans who formed the committee that communicated with the aliens called themselves Majestic-12. Later, some members of M12 would join with covert agents of the Office of

information taken. Personality-altering Prolexin administered to 1,093 inmates at Vacaville; Special Programs Unit behavior mod program begins at Joliet, Illinois, under Dr. Martin Groder; Bureau of Prisons requests funds for Federal Center for Correctional Research in Butner, North Carolina. Approximate date of the “Korea-gate” scandal: Korean CIA undertakes massive influence-peddling campaign, fifty congressmen accept bribes, links made with Nixon Administration and the Unification Church, which has long been known to have ties with the intelligence community.

1971 FBI begins (or continues) illegal break-ins, mail-openings, and wiretaps, conducted by Squad 47 of the internal security division in search of Weather Underground fugitives. Cointelpro supposedly disbanded. U.S. Atomic Energy Commission detonates hydrogen bomb beneath Amchitka Island, Alaska. Faces of people buried in a cemetery appear on the floor of a house built over them in Belmez, Spain. Apparent suicide of James E. McDonald, well-known UFO researcher.

1972 Attempted assassination of George Wallace in Maryland by “loner” Art Bremer, who had more money than he should, plus alleged connections with CIA-types. Warren Commission dissident Hale Boggs disappears on flight to Alaska. Watergate break-in occurs; FBI official Charles Bates placed in charge of investigation. Numerous UFOs spotted over Puerto Rico.

1973 Trilateral Commission founded under the direction of David Rockefeller, Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale, among the founding members. Sidney Gottlieb, head of CIA's LSD and other drug programs, destroys records to hide details of program. Experiments with implanting electrodes in the brain carried out at Vacaville and elsewhere. Behavior mod unit started at El Reno, Oklahoma prison; START-type program introduced to Maryland public schools by Behavior Research Institute. Sixth UFO flap year. MK-ULTRA mind control experiments “concluded.” Numerous Bigfoot sightings.

1974 Jack Angel of Savannah Georgia taken to the hospital, where doctors diagnose a number of solely internal burn injuries caused by spontaneous human combustion. Numerous sightings of large unknown animals, mysterious explosions, apparitions of the Virgin Mary, religious icons that wept or bled, and mysterious disappearances plague Puerto Rico. (These continue until 1975.)

1975 Pilot Carlos de los Santos nearly collides with three UFOs over Mexico City; MIBs menace him on two different occasions afterward. Travis Walton's UFO abduction witnessed by numerous coworkers; he reappears five days later with vivid descriptions of the humanoids aboard the craft.

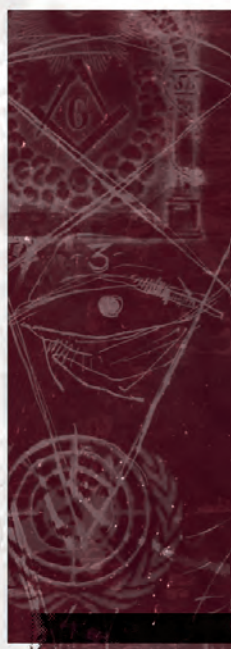
1976 Jimmy Carter (Council of Foreign Relations) elected. Six high-level members of president's staff are all members of CFR/TLC. CSICOP formed. A gigantic UFO that distorts electrical systems of surrounding aircraft appears over Tehran, Iran. Son of Sam killings begin in New York (and continue through 1977). Viking mission to Mars sends back pictures of pyramidlike and face-shaped structures on the Cydonia plateau.

1977 Carter signs UN charter removing U.S. sovereignty under UN military command. Space shuttle *Enterprise* makes its first manned flight. SETI reports a strong extraterrestrial transmission called the “WOW” signal, apparently not repeated. A Japanese fishing ship discovers the corpse of a 32-foot sea monster but tosses it overboard because of the stench. Radio Moscow reports a 50-foot long lake monster in Kazakhstan.

1978 Seventh UFO flap year. UFOs swarm over Honduras during power blackout, generating numerous sightings across U.S. and Australia. Australian pilot Frederick Valentich reports that



The True History



a mysterious craft is "playing some sort of game" with him; thereafter a metallic scraping sound (and then nothing else) comes over his radio; the pilot and plane are never recovered. Scientists in Albania warn residents not to drink stream water, as small humanlike creatures have been found there; the creatures spoke, but direct communication was never established and they eventually disappeared. Pope John Paul dies suddenly one month after his election. The prophecies of Nostradamus point to a church conspiracy to murder him, possibly with poison. Although Popes are normally buried in St. Peter, John Paul is cremated within a day without an autopsy. No cause of death is determined.

1980 John Lennon assassinated. Scientists report the growth of a virus as a crystalline structure. UFO steals 10,000 gallons of water from an open tank near Rosedale in Australia while a farmer watches. Ronald Reagan wins the presidential race, based at least in part on the fact that George Bush works out a secret deal with the Iranians to wait until after the election to free embassy hostages.

1981 Congressman Larry McDonald calls for comprehensive congressional investigation of the CFR and Trilateral Commission. McDonald dies along with 268 other passengers on Korean Air Lines (KAL) flight 007, shot down over Sakhalin Island in the Sea of Japan; all bodies recovered except those of the pilot and copilot.

1982 Giant snakelike creature seen swimming in Chesapeake Bay near Love Point, Maryland. Almost all the planets in the solar system align themselves on one side of the sun.

1983 An expedition in Africa spots the dinosaurlike *mokele-mbembe*.

1984 Hundreds of fish fall from the sky in Santa Monica, California.

1985 Gorbachev introduces *glasnost* and *perestroika* to USSR. A strange flash of light on the moon, like a huge explosion, is photographed. Scientists in China report the discovery of 30-foot-long reddish fish that eat even large mammals near the water's edge. Industrial-entertainment complex conspires to ensure successful sports franchise in New York City by fixing NBA draft.

1986 Chernobyl (Wormwood) nuclear disaster. Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes after liftoff. Iran-Contra trials begin. First element of Space Station *Mir* launched.

1987 Pink frogs fall from the sky in Gloucestershire, England. Well-documented Gulf Breeze Sightings UFOs and aliens encountered by Edward Walters begin. Snowflakes 3.5 inches across fall on Chepstow, England.

1988 George Bush (affiliated with CIA, CFR, Trilateral Commission, Freemasons, and Skull and Bones Society) elected president. High-atmosphere explosion occurs over Indonesia, believed to be meteor or asteroid fragment impacting with atmosphere. Moonbase Plato established by United Nations.

1989 Berlin Wall falls. Robert Lazar comes forward publicly with testimony regarding reverse-engineering of captured alien spacecraft at Area 51. Mars probe *Phobos II* disappears after an encounter with a UFO.

1990 UN starts Gulf War. President Bush verbally announces a "New World Order" on TV. The space shuttle recovers the LDEF orbiting platform, on which a strange brown growth is discovered. Hubble Space Telescope put into orbit.



Naval Intelligence to form a secret group called COM-12, which exists to combat a covert (possibly alien-backed) organization within the government. This conspiracy, which goes by the codename Aquarius, may be working with forces in the United Nations to establish a one-world government—the New World Order (see page 89 for more information).

Within 6 months of the UFO crashes, high-ups in Washington, D.C. ordered numerous government agency reorganizations and many personnel reassignments. The intense security and the smokescreen around the incident provided an opportunity for government scientists to analyze the ships and attempt to duplicate the saucer technologies. The world would never be the same.

The Secret War

The U.S. isn't the only nation to find Strangers in its backyard. Just after taking power in the early 1950s, the Chinese government was fortunate enough to capture an alien craft during the invasion of Tibet. Indeed, some believe that the Chinese had received information about an alien ship anchored in a mountainside near Shambhala, and that they invaded Tibet primarily to grab as much alien technology as possible—plus a few hostages. It was too good an opportunity to miss.

1991 Sony Corporation establishes ESPER lab where scientists study psychic phenomena, UFOs, and the paranormal. Eighth UFO flap year. UFOs gather over Mexico City. End of the Fifth Sun, according to the Mayan Dresde Codex. Strange underwater lights seen surrounding a ship in the Straits of Hormuz. Soviet news agency TASS reports numerous sightings of a giant snake-like monster in the Siberian town of Sharipovo.

1992 President Clinton (CFR/TLC) elected president. Government proposes "Clipper" chip on computers to allow data tracking. UFO reportedly shot down over Long Island. Los Angeles riots: many buildings professionally torched in a very logical, military-style action; National Guard called out. Citizens introduced to FEMA organization as a friend and ally to the public. Gang leaders claim no responsibility for building torchings, a fact the media chooses not to publicize.

1993 Russian and Nepalese Gurkha combat troops begin military maneuvers and training exercises on U.S. soil. Clinton proposes National Health Care, including national ID card requirement. Congress passes H.R. 666, allowing illegal search and seizure. Branch Davidian cult compound raided by ATF and FBI agents. After mysterious glitches, Hubble Space Telescope repaired and operational. Contact lost with the Mars *Observer* probe.

Men in Black

Throughout history, enigmatic men dressed in black clothing have appeared whenever something strange or paranormal occurred. This curious phenomenon and the individuals themselves are known today as Men In Black, or MIBs. Most modern reports recount their appearance during or after UFO encounters, although well-documented cases also place them in West Virginia at the site of the mothfolk visitations in the late 1960s. Tales from the Middle Ages, however—long before the modern UFO era—equate strangers dressed in black with servitors of Satan.

In all accounts, these mysterious figures appear and observe strange phenomena, ask questions, and often attempt to silence other witnesses who might talk about what they have seen. Paranormalists have three prevailing (and contradictory) theories about their nature.

The first theory holds that they are simply government agents. Many modern-day MIBs certainly claim that they work for various government agencies, ranging from the military—usually the Air Force—to the FBI to government agencies that don't exist, at least publicly. These MIBs try to cover up paranormal occurrences (particularly UFO

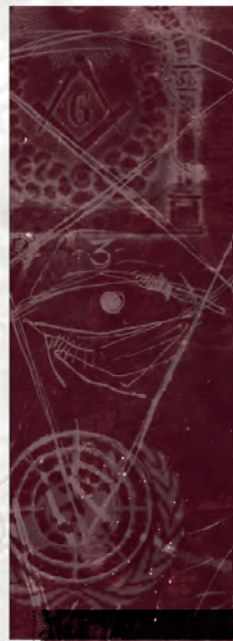
sightings), ostensibly to keep the facts from the public. They threaten witnesses and their families to keep them silent. They typically utilize strange devices and travel in black sedans or black helicopters.

The second theory states that the Men In Black are aliens themselves. While many MIBs claim to work for the government, some don't seem to know much about government procedure. In fact, many of them seem not to possess knowledge about some of the most basic topics (what a ball point pen is, what substances are edible to humans, and so forth). Some use out-of-date slang, modes of dress, and vehicles, although their clothes and cars always look brand new. Sometimes what they say makes no sense, and they often repeat themselves as if they were stuck in a mechanical loop. Proponents of this theory point out that many witnesses say MIBs do not look entirely human—their skin is sallow, their features are gaunt, and their eyes (when not hidden by dark sunglasses) are either strangely bulbous or eerily narrow. If these strange traits suggest that the Men In Black are aliens (perhaps even Greys), then their insistence that UFO witnesses keep quiet

must be a part of their own cover-up agenda.

The third theory claims that the MIBs are something else entirely. Neither aliens or government agents, these inexplicable figures are drawn toward paranormal events and the people that witness them. Those who believe this explanation point out that sometimes the Men In Black don't want to silence witnesses at all—instead, they encourage people to talk about what they've seen. By this logic, the threats made against witnesses are some sort of reverse-psychology mind-game meant to ensure that they will talk. Even the proponents of this theory, however, can't guess at the true nature of these beings or their motives for wanting to spread awareness of paranormal evidence.

Of course, it's altogether possible that two or even all three of the above explanations are correct. Some MIBs are government agents, some are aliens impersonating such agents (sometimes not very well) to accomplish their own goals, and others pose as agents to encourage the spread of rumor and hearsay regarding paranormal events.



Various right-wing militia groups formed in USA. Militia of Montana distributes tapes and literature regarding New World Order movement. "American Justice Federation" distributes literature and videos showing Russian military equipment on U.S. soil and UN-controlled "concentration camps," complete with gas chambers, under construction in Indiana. NASA lunar probe *Clementine* lost. The presence of secret, unopened chambers within the Great Pyramid and under the Sphinx confirmed.

UN black helicopters spotted in many states and all over California. InfoPet injectable transponder introduced as a way to monitor pets. Federal building in Oklahoma City bombed: government suggests possible link to patriot militia groups, while militia groups claim government conspiracy relating to bombing; government discredits reports and begins media assault on patriot organizations and militia groups. Unabomber strikes two days after the Oklahoma City bombing. President Clinton and Senator Bob Dole sign bills enabling an additional one thousand federal anti-terrorist agents and implementing tough new "anti-terrorist" legislation. Some patriot groups claim both bombings were engineered by the New World Order movement to scare the U.S. public into accepting greater anti-gun control and greater "anti-terrorist" federal control. First sightings of El Chupacabra in Puerto Rico; reportedly, two captured by the U.S. military and brought to the states. Members of the Solar Temple cult in Switzerland commit mass suicide. CIA officially closes Project Stargate, which used psychic remote viewers as spies. The Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo cult releases poison gas into Tokyo's subways, killing twelve and sickening thousands.

Brazilian military captures aliens in Varginha. Scientists announce the possibility of bacterial life in a Martian rock found in Antarctica. Heaven's Gate cult commits mass suicide to join spiritual brethren aboard a spaceship following the appearance of comet Hale-Bopp. Frogs all across North America found inexplicably mutated. TWA Flight 800 crashes off Long Island; evidence implicates a military action, while others believe a UFO is involved.

Despite the active and persistent resistance of many native Tibetans, the Red Army triumphed easily over the poorly trained troops of the mountain kingdom. Within days, members of Chairman Mao's inner circle oversaw the recovery and seclusion of a Grey ship near the remote mountain village of Lungdo, as well as the capture and interrogation of one of its crew. Now the Communist world could also claim (in covert circles, at least) a victory for the March of World Socialism on a par with America's retrieval of the saucers at Roswell. Both governments have kept their finds under wraps for decades as they dealt with their newfound treasures. For the Chinese, keeping the lid on the story was relatively easy—they simply eliminated anyone who knew too much.

Chinese dominance of Tibet is a great loss for yet another reason: It is now much more difficult for the rest of the world to collaborate with or even contact the Ascended Masters—the leaders of the group known as the Rosicrucians (see page 74)—whose primary base of operations lies hidden in the high mountains of that region.

The Lunar Landings

Carried to the moon by technology originating from Nazi scientists and reverse-engineered Grey saucers, Neil Armstrong stepped out of the *Apollo 11* lunar lander on July 21, 1969. The *Apollo 12*, 14, 15, 16, and 17 lunar missions followed between 1969 and 1972, but after that interest quickly tapered off. The government destroyed the plans for the Saturn V after the inception of the space shuttle program in the 1970s, obliterating an enormous engineering legacy ostensibly so that NASA would embrace the new technology wholeheartedly. After all, there was no turning back.

In reality, it appears that the destruction of the Saturn V rocket plans and the adoption of the space shuttle technology were carefully engineered by those who wanted to ensure that humans did not return to the moon or plan a trip to Mars. Whether this effort

Famous Sightings

In the wake of increased Grey activity after 1945 and the rise of human aviation technology, modern fighter jets have had a number of run-ins with Grey and other alien craft. Likewise, scouting by Greys, sasquatches, kinori, and other species has led to sightings in or near human settlements. A few of these are quite famous and well documented; they are presented here as examples of the incidents that occur every few years and are then hushed up.

The first and best reported is the Starfire dogfight of 1952. On May 26, 1952, a U.S. Air Force F-94C Starfire fighter jet encountered a UFO over North Korea and gave chase. Both the pilot and his radar observer (R/O) wrote up the sighting as Air Intelligence Information Report No. 52-85, which subsequently appeared in Project Blue Book.

Nearly forty years later, during the early stages of the Gulf War in 1991, F-117 stealth fighters spotted a tight grouping of seven aircraft moving in formation at about 600 mph. Thinking this was an Iraqi sortie, the AWACs scrambled Combat Air Patrol (CAP) planes to the area to restore air superiority. It didn't happen; the craft accelerated away at an incredible speed, covering 20,000 yards in 15 seconds, according to both the onboard and the AWACs' instrumentation. (This corresponds to an airspeed of over 5,000 mph.) The incident went on record as an "Iraqi sortie (unsuccessful)," and the pilots involved were quickly reassigned from the front. The Air Forces involved authorized no further investigation.

In January 1996, the Brazilian military allegedly captured several humanoid aliens—possibly Greys whose undercover work had some-

how been exposed—in Varginha, a good-sized city about 200 miles northwest of Rio de Janeiro. Several civilian witnesses claimed to have seen the aliens, and the military moved into the areas of the sightings shortly thereafter. Eyewitnesses to the military action heard gunfire, then saw police carrying two body bags away from the scene—one unmoving, the other still squirming. Reports indicate that the soldiers loaded these bags onto a military truck and drove away (perhaps to the large army base at Tres Coracoes, just east of Varginha). Sightings continued over the next few days—perhaps the new aliens were part of the same alien group, or perhaps they were rescuers sent to retrieve the missing scouts. Neither the Brazilian government nor the ministry of defense ever made any statement regarding the incident.



was spearheaded by M12 as part of the negotiated settlement with the Greys (who had relocated their city-ship from the moon to Mars just before this time), by the U.S. government out of fear of what astronauts had found on the moon, or by alien agents who wanted to see the human drive to settle the solar system crippled for their own reasons, is unknown. Regardless of its origin, this scheme has for the most part kept human space research in Earth orbit. The only exceptions are robot explorers sent to visit, view, and examine other planets, and many of those have suffered mechanical failures. The lunar landings of 1969 to 1972 remain the high-water mark in the commonly accepted history of human space exploration. Everything else relies on the video footage sent back by robotic proxies.

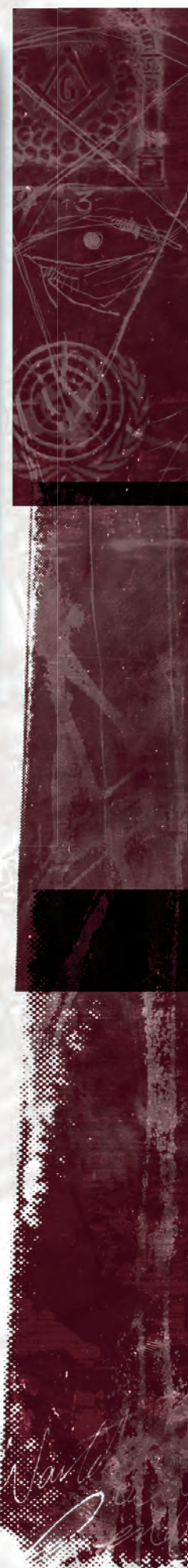
The New World Order

In the 1960s, a number of key social and political figures—President John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.—were assassinated. Evidence in all these cases points to the involvement of a government conspiracy. Reports have implicated both the CIA and the Mafia not only with the assassinations, but with the murders (often in the form of “suicides”) of dozens, if not hundreds, of others to cover up the truth. Of course, these murders may just be a small portion of a much larger conspiracy involving the Freemasons, the Nazis, or even aliens. (For example, some evidence suggests that JFK and his lover Marilyn Monroe were killed because he planned to reveal the existence of a government collusion with aliens after the Roswell crash.)

1997 Princess Diana killed in Paris, possibly by assassination. Using powerful magnetic fields, scientists levitate a living frog. Two teams of scientists teleport sets of photons up to 3 feet in laboratories. Numerous Bigfoot sightings along the east coast of the U.S. China takes over Hong Kong from Great Britain. HAARP initialization completed and underway in Alaska.

1998 Pakistan and India demonstrate nuclear capability. Hailstones 3+ inches wide fall in China, killing twelve and injuring one thousand. Numerous UFOs spotted over Mexico City and Phoenix, Arizona. Mars *Global Surveyor* specifically revisits “Cydonian Face” for additional imagery. Discovery of an ancient (4,000–10,000-year-old) sunken structure the size of the Great Pyramid off the coast of Japan. First element of International Space Station launched. William Jefferson Clinton becomes second U.S. president to be impeached by the House of Representatives, though the Senate does not remove him from office. First human embryo cloned in Korea.

1999 European Union issues its own currency. U.S. government admits it planted spies in U.N. arms inspection team in Iraq. Vatican issues first new exorcism guidelines since 1614. NASA launches x-ray telescope. NATO forces engage in limited warfare in Yugoslavia. Partial planetary alignment occurs on August 19. Suicide rate rises dramatically in United States as end of millennium approaches. Mars *Climate Orbiter* and *Polar Lander* reach Mars. Several dozen gray whales beach themselves along northern California coast. Astronomers discover first planet outside our solar system.



Media coverage of "Y2K" foments mass panic in cities around the globe. Riots ensue as the world is gripped with millennial fever.

On July 15, a colossal UFO is sighted over Carteret, New Jersey. Hundreds of witnesses, including Carteret's mayor, observe the pulsating lights of the UFO as it moves southeast over the city. The FAA confirms that there were no aircraft in the area at the time. On September 10, a fifth-grade schoolboy in Dallas predicts the start of World War III. One day later, Al-Qaida terrorists hijack four American passenger jets, flying two of them into the towers of the World Trade Center and a third into the Pentagon. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashes in Pennsylvania after passengers confront the hijackers. Reports that Flight 93 was shot down by the U.S. Air Force or a UFO are debunked. A photo of the WTC attack circulated on the Internet reveals what appears to be the face of a demon in the billowing smoke of the Twin Towers.

A wild, feral child dubbed the Romanian Wolf Boy by the press is found in a Romanian forest and is believed to have lived there for years; he is eventually returned home to his mother. A low-pitched rumbling noise in Kokomo, Indiana causes citizens headaches and nosebleeds. Strange, one-eyed human skulls are found in a limestone cave in the Philippines.

In New Square, north of Manhattan, two fish-cutters are startled when a 20-pound carp shouts apocalyptic warnings in Hebrew. Some members of the resident Jewish sect in New Square believe the carp was channeling the soul of a revered community leader who recently died; others say it was a warning from God about some impending turmoil in the Middle East. Days later, President Bush declares that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" is underway, heralding the beginning of the second Gulf War.

Motion-detecting cameras at Mendocino County Courthouse in Ukiah, California capture a ghostly apparition on film. A vacationer at Okanagan Lake in British Columbia captures moving images of Ogoopogo, an elusive, 45-foot-long dinosaur-like creature. A house in Limpopo, South Africa, is bombarded by showers of stones every night for a month. A 15-year-old girl in Jharkhand, India is taken to the hospital after she cries stones instead of tears.

Jürgen Bröther, a German inventor, unveils the Phone Angel, a cell phone that enables the mourning to contact the recently deceased. Catholic officials acknowledge the sharp rise in the number of reports of demonic possession worldwide. Joseph Ratzinger, 78, becomes Pope Benedict XVI. According to St. Malachy, an Irish bishop and seer who predicted the entire lineage of the papacy before his death in 1148, Benedict XVI will be the second-to-last Pope, to be followed by "Peter the Roman, who will feed the sheep through many tribulations, at the term of which the city of seven hills will be destroyed, and the formidable Judge will judge the people."

On January 8, the Earth stops wobbling on its polar axis. Prophets and scientists believe the event foreshadows a radical pole shift that may have catastrophic consequences for human civilization. A monstrous "winter wolf" terrorizes travelers at a small rest stop along I-90 in Idaho. The *d20 DARK MATTER* campaign begins.

After World War II, the newly formed United Nations established real power throughout much of the world. UN troops moved into war-torn areas to enforce peace on their terms. Black helicopters equipped with surprisingly high technology allowed UN agents to move undetected and advance their agenda of global dominion even into the United States. Working with allies inside world governments, the UN and other groups (the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Bilderberg Society) continue to gather more and more influence, so that one day all countries of the world will willingly welcome its control.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has paved the way in the United States for the creation of a New World Order through what amounts to an indefinite state of martial law. This agency has constructed vast underground bases and shelters and trained military forces in techniques to combat "dissidents" and "radical extremists" among the nation's populace. Although its exact motives are unknown, FEMA has constructed a number of containment camps throughout the midwestern United States.

Another, completely different form of control in the hands of the New World Order is the High-Altitude Atmospheric Research Project (HAARP). Although the project supposedly studies various conditions in the upper atmosphere, it seems that the signals it sends up into these high levels come back down. In fact, they may be a way to control the weather, or the mental impulses of the human brain, or both. Employing devices and processes patented by Tesla, the New World Order uses HAARP (based in Alaska) to test its ability to control the world.

Also in the twentieth century, the UN founded the World Health Organization, and the United States established the Centers for Disease Control. Who inspired these moves? Despite their earlier efforts to quash dangerous plagues (see The Black Death, above), the Greys seem to have had no hand in these developments. Did the humans suddenly have allies against a new plague? Sand slaves (nanite-infected servants of the alien species known as the etoile) seem likely suspects, with their mastery of biotechnological weapons and close links to human biology, but so far captured sand slaves have yielded nothing to interrogation. Most simply dissolve into dust when questioned, and those who don't destroy themselves deny all knowledge of such a biowarfare agent. Surely another species of Strangers capable of making such a disease might exist, but with humanity's defenses strengthened by the CDC and the World Health Organization, the odds of another global pandemic seem remote.

TODAY

The world of today is a complicated place indeed. Various agencies, covert and otherwise, vie for power within the government. Secret societies, some with knowledge or lineages that date back thousands of years, exercise control over segments of the population. Strangely familiar alien beings walk the planet, with objectives ranging from the bizarre to the mundane. And sitting above (or behind) it all are the Greys, hiding deep in a Martian valley in their city-ship, where they continue to weave intricate plots for the future of humanity.

It is through this delicate maze that the heroes must walk, gaining knowledge and even allies along the way. Many legends foretell what may come to pass, but it is the Gamemaster and players of the campaign who will ultimately decide the future.

Learned a terrible truth. If you investigate deeply enough, sometimes you become part of the conspiracy... You start out paranoid about them, and the next thing you know, you're one of them.
- Rev. Ivan Stang

Chapter 4:

The Illuminati

In 1776, Adam Weishaupt formed a group of high-ranking Freemasons in Ingolstadt called the Illuminati. The name comes from the idea that those who become enlightened are illuminated. Thus, the illuminated ones were people who saw things more clearly and had reached some higher, superior level than that of normal men. Weishaupt's group is shrouded in mystery, but many believe that this secret cabal was interested in controlling the world through economic and political manipulation. Some even claim that the group was much older than Weishaupt, stretching back into the misty reaches of time. Whatever the truth, the paranoia arising from the idea of the Illuminati—a secret society that might be altering and controlling our lives from the shadows—still carries a great deal of weight today. Although the Illuminati supposedly disbanded a dozen or so years after its creation, many researchers either believe that it still exists in secret or use the term to refer to any such group or conspiracy seeking to fulfill an agenda by covert means.

In the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting, the term “illuminati” applies as a general label for secret societies. That's not to say that in an individual campaign, Weishaupt's Illuminati might not still be a viable and powerful group. It might be, for example, that this elite group secretly took over the Masons from the inside. Or, using occult powers often attributed to them, they infiltrated the Final Church. Perhaps the Illuminati control all the organizations mentioned here—the secret masters' secret masters.

In any case, the illuminati of the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting all believe themselves to be enlightened on some level. Possessing secret knowledge unknown to most people, these illuminated ones seek to control or manipulate events. Sometimes their machinations operate on a grand scale. A group the size of the Masons, for example, might not stop at anything short of total world domination. The frightening thing about conspiracies, of course, is that these illuminati might have already achieved the control that they seek—and the rest of the world would never even know.

THE ILLUMINATI

At its heart, the *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign is about secrets. Knowledge is power, after all, and that truth isn't lost on those who would shape world events. Seeing themselves as enlightened, at least on some level, those who hold knowledge gather together to use that power. In some cases, such secret societies may even mean well, but ultimately that power must, by necessity, become a corruptive influence.

Perhaps the most famous secret society of history was (is?) Adam Weishaupt's Illuminati, formed of a number of high-ranking Freemasons (see below) in 1776. Though supposedly disbanded only a handful of years later, the name has come to be synonymous with the idea of a secret society of enlightened, knowledgeable individuals.

The Hoffmann Institute holds many secrets, of course, but when it comes to keeping secrets, the Institute is a rank amateur. After all, it doesn't even have a century of experience under its belt, which marks it as one of the "new guys" in this area. Most of the illuminati detailed here have been around for a very long time indeed, and those that don't have as much experience make up for it with determination and manpower.

This section describes a few illuminati groups present in the world of *d20 DARK•MATTER*. The descriptions are brief, giving just enough information for the Gamemaster to get a taste of the group's history and goals. Obviously, these are sketchy descriptions only. Some are more fully described in the *d20 Menace Manual*, while others are drawn from real-world conspiracy lore. For more information on these, consult your local library or bookstore or—better yet—visit the Internet. You can't beat the Internet for the truly weird.

What Do Players Know?

d20 DARK•MATTER players should avoid reading these descriptions. Instead, they should content themselves with the Conspiracy Hunter sidebars scattered throughout this chapter. Each one briefly describes a particular conspiracy, illuminati group, or other threat that Hoffmann agents might face, and includes a few clues to alert wary agents of what they might be up against. Feel free to let players read these sidebars, particularly those playing characters knowledgeable of conspiracy theories. It's up to you to decide how much of the information is true, of course.

Using Illuminati

Conspiracies form the backbone of a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign. They are the faceless "them" that plots against the heroes, or even against the entire human race. They are everywhere, their arms reaching into all areas of society. They can see and hear anything they want, anywhere on the planet, at all times of the day and night.

Or at least that's what they'd like you to think. It's all well and good to portray a conspiracy as having a terrifying reach, but don't forget that no matter how well-funded and well-organized an illuminati group may be, it's still composed of fallible beings. Maybe the heroes can't conceive of stopping the Freemasons' plan of taking over the United States, but they can certainly thwart elements of it, and in doing so perhaps stop (or at least delay) the overall plan. Even the grandest operation is made up of small parts, and competent heroes can and should be able to

deal with those small parts. Allow the players to break down their objectives into smaller, readily accomplishable tasks, and they'll feel capable of taking on even the most terrifying illuminati group. In order to put their puppet in power, the illuminati must get a friendly governor elected, organize ballot fraud, and even replace an unfriendly Supreme Court justice. If the heroes foil any one of these plans, the operation may well fail entirely—or at least be delayed for another day.

Also, it's best when the heroes don't exactly know who they're facing. While it might be easier to just say, "The Neo-Scientologists are at it again, and you have to stop them," that takes away from the mystery of the game. Let the heroes work to discover their enemy—it makes the game more compelling, and makes the discovery more fulfilling.

There should also come times when the heroes get to see a different side of a potential foe. Sure, the U.S. government may have nefarious plans, but that doesn't mean that every FBI agent is an enemy of the people. Let the heroes join forces with illuminati groups (or at least with particular individuals within such groups), either for individual missions or as a long-term story arc. It helps remind the players that these groups aren't monolithic entities, but rather collections of individuals.

Hidden Agendas

Perhaps the most important aspect of a conspiracy or secret organization is its agenda. Each group (or alien species, or whatever) listed below has at least one noted agenda, and in most cases optional, alternative (or additional) agendas and goals as well. The Gamemaster always has the right to change the agenda of these organizations. If a change conflicts with what's printed here, don't worry. Even if future published adventures reveal goals for these organizations other than the one the GM has been using, the GM always has final say. For instance, the GM may decree that the other source reflects a lower-order goal of the conspiracy, or the goals of a splinter group of the larger organization. Remember that illuminati groups are often separated into different cells, degrees, or orders, and these subgroups may have different goals—and they might not even be aware of the other goals within their own secret society!

In general, there is no such thing as a "typical" hidden goal or doctrine, but a few are listed here as examples to inspire the GM. Some possibilities include such political goals as the restoration

Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: Sidebars

These sidebars appear throughout the chapter. Each one briefly describes a particular conspiracy, illuminati group, or other threat that Hoffmann agents might face, and includes a few clues to alert wary agents of what they might be up against. Feel free to let players read these sidebars, particularly those playing heroes who are knowledgeable of conspiracy theories. It's up to you to decide how much of the information is true, of course.

of a dethroned dynasty, revenge against another conspiracy, establishment of a theocratic state, seizing control of an existing country, or the violent overthrow of a nation. The hidden agenda may be biological, such as the genetic perfection of a species (and the corresponding destruction of impure members of the species), the eradication of a species or race (either human or alien), or the creation of a new form of life. Occult goals could involve releasing of a trapped demon or spirit, gathering together important artifacts of power, or completing a ritual of destruction or immortality. Finally, mercenary goals such as the acquisition of wealth, secret knowledge, or other status symbols might make the conspiracy a way of keeping score among privileged dilettantes.

Many secret societies see mastery of the world as their ultimate agenda. This is, of course, a high goal for any organization, even a global conspiracy. Keep in mind that while this may indeed be the final goal, few if any of the secret societies detailed here believe that, like some hackneyed villain's plot from a pulp novel, it can be achieved in one fell swoop. In fact, most members of such organizations probably never even consider the possibility of global domination on a day-to-day level (although the most visionary or fanatic might). Much more frequently, these illuminati groups have far smaller, shorter-term goals and activities that may one day lead to world control.

Some groups, of course, are closer to this ultimate goal than others. Some may be closer than anyone actually realizes. . . .

Organization

Each illuminati group entry includes information on what the organization does, who its key members are, and how the group interacts with the campaign world. Each entry begins with a one-sentence summary of the group's agenda, then presents summaries of the following:

Headquarters: The home of the group, when known.

Followers: The total number of followers and the most prominent among them.

Secret Knowledge: Any secret technology, arcana, or psionic powers possessed by members of the conspiracy.

Common Missions: Each group's areas of interest determine where and how it chooses to deploy its agents. This entry lists a few of the tasks that members commonly attempt.

Requisition Limit: The group's effective Wealth score for purposes of members requisitioning equipment (and any limitations placed on such requisitions).

What follows are notes on the illuminati group's origins, activities, and enemies, as well as a general description of how the conspiracy functions.

The exclusion of any conspiracy from these listings doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, but merely that it does not rest at the heart of the setting's darkest plots. Any GM should feel free to add new conspiracies to the campaign—there are more conspiracies active at any given time than anyone can perceive.

THIRTY-THREE DEGREES: THE FREEMASONS

The Freemasons seek to craft a perfect world from the current imperfect one.

Headquarters: Although certain lodges are more influential than others, Masonry has no single headquarters but rather cell-like lodges scattered all over the globe, most of which are found in the western world. If Freemasonry had a single headquarters, it would probably be the Grand Lodge Alpina in Switzerland. That speculation is the source of the theory regarding the Gnomes of Zurich, a group of bankers who supposedly rule the world through their vast wealth.

Followers: Millions. Prominent members have included Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur, Joseph Smith, Oscar Wilde, Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, Henry Ford, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Hancock, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Buzz Aldrin, George Bush, and innumerable others.

Secret Knowledge: FX abilities and occult knowledge, as well as secret technology developed in hidden laboratories funded by the organization's near-limitless funds.

Common Missions: Freemasonry's overall goals lead its agents on all manner of tasks, including infiltrating organizations (such as NASA, a corporation, or the city council of a major city), stealing objects important to occult rituals (such as moon rocks), contacting aliens, and obtaining reverse-engineered technology.

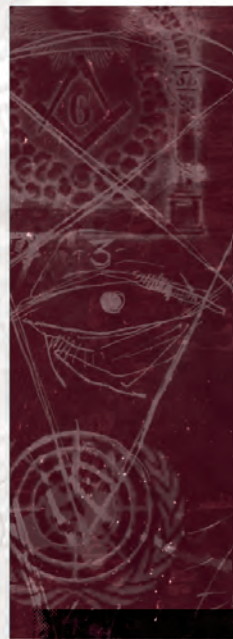
Requisition Limit: 45 (illegal).

The largest of the world's secret societies is the Free and Accepted Order of Masons, a group with enigmatic origins that first came to public attention in the 1600s and 1700s. At that time Masons were recognized publicly, though the order had been founded many years earlier—some claim thousands of years earlier.

Tradition has it that the Masons began as the group of builders commissioned by King Nimrod of Babylon to build the Tower of Babel, designed to reach the Kingdom of God. Thereafter they constructed the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, a building often thought to be a repository of occult knowledge and symbolism. Influenced by Egyptian occultism, Masonic ideals are based on the ancient teachings that the Templars learned from the Ismaili Muslims during the Crusades, and that the Ismaili Assassins learned from the Egyptians before them. This legacy of secret societies suggests that the secrets of Freemasonry may be as old as humanity itself.

The Masons have always been a politically savvy and motivated group, able to influence events on a grand scale. One of the earliest examples is the Peasants' Rebellion of 1381, when the people throughout England rose up against the king and demanded freedom—and also sought out and destroyed leaders, strongholds, and temples of the Order of the Knights of St. John (the Hospitallers, the Templars' ancient foes). The Masons' more recent work includes the founding of—and some would say the virtual control of—the government of the United States. There and elsewhere they continue to work to promote a Utopian vision of human progress and achievement—but their goals reflect their vision, overseen by them.

During the American Revolution, a high-water mark of Masonic scheming, most of the figures involved on both sides were Masons.



The Illuminati

Several clues (such as Howe's failure to support Burgoyne's march down the Hudson River Valley) indicate that Masonic agendas may have affected the outcome of the war, as well as the shape of the United States that rose in its wake. (Thirteen signers of the Constitution and fifteen presidents were Masons.) Masons hold high positions throughout the government, particularly in NASA. Even Washington, D.C., itself is filled with Masonic symbols and architecture. The most striking of these Masonic symbols include the Washington Monument and the Pentagon, as the obelisk and the pentagon are both important Masonic occult symbols. Even the eye-and-pyramid symbol found on every American \$1 bill is a potent Masonic symbol, demonstrating the pervasiveness of the group's influence on the government and society of the United States.

The first strength of Masonry is in its numbers. With millions of lodge members, a Mason can be assured of a friendly reception anywhere in the world—and often of preferential treatment by fellow Masons at work, in the government, and in positions of authority.

Masonry's shell-like structure provides its second source of power; only a few of its millions of members know the true origins of the group or its true goals. The vast majority of Masons are slowly initiated into the higher degrees but never told the organization's actual intent. Instead, they are told to respect the bonds of Masonic fellowship and support their fellow Masons, then foisted off on charitable works and back-room politicking. Most do know of the Masonic signal of distress—a secret hand sign that compels any member to help one in need. This commitment extends beyond the bounds of friendship, religion, and law. A Mason, particularly a high-ranking Mason, will do anything to help a fellow Mason.

A tiny minority of Masons knows what the group is truly looking for, objectives that its rituals and declared goals only hint at. Important and influential lodges such as the Italians of P2, members of the Grand Lodge of the Potomac, the Scottish 33rd Degree Master Masons of the Ancient Rite, and certain members

of the French Lodge known as the Grand Orient are instrumental in pursuing the group's original goals.

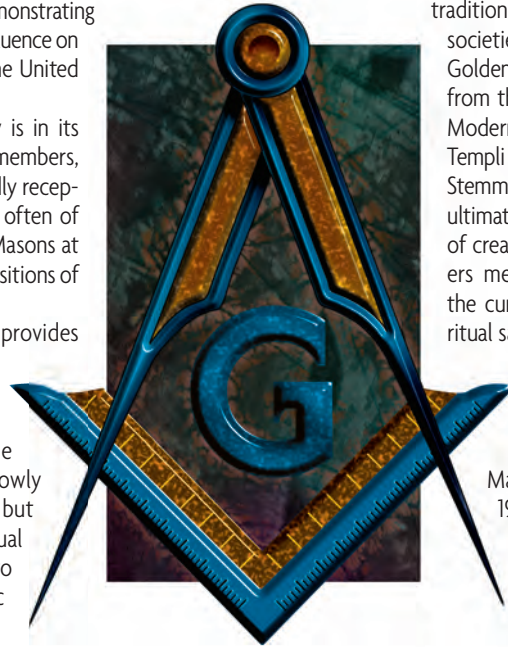
The Grand Lodge of the Potomac, for example, heads up a conspiracy to control American society through religious and quasi-religious groups ranging from small, seemingly innocuous cults to various right-wing fundamentalist organizations and certain evangelical cable television networks. Religion—specifically Christianity—has always been an element of the Masonic tradition. Or, at the least, part of the façade put forth to disguise the order's true roots and goals.

In fact, at the heart of Masonry lies a deep-seated occult tradition. Throughout the ages, important occult societies such as the Theosophists and the Golden Dawn drew their membership entirely from the Freemasons (at least to begin with). Modern magical societies such as the Ordo Templi Orientis claim ties to the Masonic Order. Stemming from an ancient occult tradition, the ultimate goal of the Masons is the "perfection of creation," which after the manner of builders means crafting a perfect universe from the current imperfect one. This has involved ritual sacrifice (evidence suggests that the Jack the Ripper murders may have been related to Masonic traditions), linking them eerily with the Final Church and their rituals—and even to Charles Manson and the Son of Sam killings in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to ancient traditions, three goals must be accomplished for the "perfection of creation" to be complete. These three important requirements include the creation and

destruction of primordial matter; the sacrificial killing of the divine king; and the joining of *prima materia* and *prima terra*.

How these can be accomplished is open to speculation, but some scholars believe they have already been achieved by the following three events: detonation of the first atomic bomb, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the bringing of moon rocks (*prima materia*) to Earth (*prima terra*). Both the bomb blast and the assassination occurred at locales very close to 33 degrees North latitude, 33 degrees being significant to the Masons. Gamemasters may want to devise alternate methods of accomplishing these goals, creating an ongoing campaign in



Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Freemasons

Perhaps the most widely accepted conspiracy in the world today, the Free and Accepted Order of Masons has countless headquarters around the globe. It poses as a fraternal organization dating back only a few hundred years, but legend holds that its higher-ranking members

have access to vast storehouses of occult information that stretch back into the ancient past.

Regardless of its actual age, the Masons have had a distinct hand on shaping the modern world. Many of the Founding Fathers of the United States were Masons. The Washington Monument, the Pentagon, and even the eye-and-pyramid logo on the dollar bill itself are all Masonic symbols.

Clues: Symbols associated with the Masons include the pyramid, the pentagon, and the obelisk. The numbers 5 and 33 are both very significant to Masons. They often hold Utopian ideals, and though they ally themselves with religious groups, are suspected of having more of a mercenary need for such organizations.

which the heroes attempt to stop the order before it completes its mystical agenda and gains complete control.

Masonry's most bitter rivals include the Rosicrucians (see below), a much smaller but still potent group of influential men and women of learning. According to the doctrines of the Rosicrucians, the earliest Masons shared secrets given to them in confidence (and this, the Rosicrucians claim, explains their own compulsive secrecy). The Rosicrucians have never forgiven the betrayals, but the sheer size of the Masonic organization prevents them from doing much against the majority of its members. The Rosicrucians confine their efforts to undoing the work of Masonry's inner circles, those who know and pursue its secret Inner Doctrine.

Or . . .

Over the years, other theories regarding the secret goal of Masonry have ranged from control of world banking to the destruction of the Catholic Church to avenging the destruction of the Templars. Given the amount of noise and speculation about Masons, finding the truth is difficult at best. The theories may all be correct.

KEEPERS OF KNOWLEDGE: THE ROSICRUCIANS

The Rosicrucians promote enlightenment and the spread of knowledge.

Headquarters: Somewhere in the Himalayas.

Followers: Unknown, but thought to number in the hundreds.

Secret Knowledge: FX abilities and occult knowledge, secret documents of ancient human history.

Common Missions: Maintain their secrecy, find and recruit others with FX abilities, seize positions of influence, and subtly promote the fall of totalitarian, oppressive regimes (almost to the point of promoting anarchism).

Requisition Limit: 40 (illegal).

According to their own legends, the Rosicrucians were founded by Thothmes III of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1587 to 1375 B.C.) as the Companions of Horus (or "Shemsu Hor"), a group of initiates who were allowed access to secret tomes of learning passed down from prior contacts with alien beings (specifically, the Greys and the kinori). Some believe that rogue Greys and even human-Grey crossbreeds walked among the Companions.

Thothmes (literally, "born of Thoth," the Egyptian god of wisdom) assumed the throne and ruled as pharaoh after his sister Hatshepsut died in 1480 B.C. While pharaoh, he led Egyptian armies on campaigns that conquered Palestine, Syria, and Nubia, and under his reign Egyptian influence reached to the Euphrates, expanding the empire and filling Egypt's coffers.

In truth, the Companions had their beginnings nearly a thousand years before the reign of Thothmes III, when rogue Greys worked alongside Egyptian scholars and (it is rumored) kinori alchemists to spread knowledge and learning throughout northern Africa and the Mediterranean. However, Thothmes III did greatly expand their activities, so the legends aren't far off.

With the destruction of the library at Alexandria, the body of Greek, Eastern, and pagan literature shrank. Since their order was founded on knowledge and learning, this was a major blow to the Companions of Horus. It's unknown how many scrolls were saved from the flames, but nontraditional historians have always assumed that any documents that survived did so in the hands of the Companions.

After this tragedy, the Companions lay low and almost disappeared as an organization until around the twelfth century, when they changed their order's name to the Rosicrucians. The name was derived from the fictitious character Christian Rosenkreuz (Rosy Cross), used by the Companions in literature to disseminate important, "subversive" information to the general public. Their books and tracts spoke of radical concepts such as free thought



Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Rosicrucians

The Rosicrucians are dedicated to collecting and protecting knowledge of all sorts. They date back about a thousand years, and while they take pains to maintain secrecy about their organization, plenty of public references to the group exist. Charlemagne founded a Rosicrucian lodge in the ninth century, and despite official opposition to the order from the Church, a

group of Catholic monks founded a Rosicrucian college that flourished throughout the first half of the second millennium. Some claim that the Rosicrucians themselves are only an arm of the Freemasons.

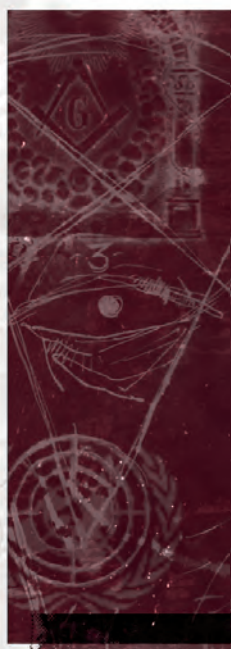
Whether or not any link between the two organizations exists, the Rosicrucians (like the Freemasons) have access to a great deal of knowledge, including occult secrets and perhaps even evidence of early interactions between humans and

otherdimensional (or otherworldly) creatures.

Clues: Both the Egyptian ankh and the rose-and-cross are used as identifying marks by Rosicrucians. The group has allies in Switzerland and the mountainous regions near China and India, so references to altitude or "ascension" are common. They occasionally supply resources to anarchic groups, but never reveal the origin of the support.

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and enlightened thinking. In these later centuries, the documents from the library at Alexandria became the wellspring of all Rosicrucian knowledge. The society promoted the beliefs of the mystery religions and Gnostic Christianity as well as human rights and individual freedoms. Over the centuries, the Rosicrucians kept an extremely low profile, avoiding attention. Membership in the society was illegal throughout much of Europe, and the Church believed them to be a subversive, Satanic enemy.

Unlike with other secret societies, nonmembers frequently claim (privately or publicly) to be members. Charlemagne founded a Rosicrucian lodge at Toulouse in the ninth century, and in the year 1000 a group of Catholic monks founded the first Rosicrucian college, which flourished in secret until the sixteenth century (and which may have actually been linked with the real order on some level). Freemasons attempted to convince others that the Rosicrucians were subsumed into their own brotherhood. Even in modern society, the AMORC (the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis) claims to be the current incarnation of the Rosy Cross. Meanwhile, the Ascended Masters—the ancient and secret rulers of the Companions of Horus—watch quietly from Tibet.

After thousands of years, a small central core of wise men and women still comprise the true Companions of Horus. They carry on a legacy passed down after the collapse of the First Kingdom, when aliens and humans worked briefly side by side. The Companions have gone to great lengths to hide the origins of their knowledge and retain special arcane locations and rituals. At present, they seek to retain control over many paranormal sites, including Cairo, Ankara, Orenburg, and Gorakhpur. Their small numbers and scant resources make it difficult for them to survive when their holdings are discovered, and a number of their strongholds have been overrun.

A secret subgroup of the Companions known as the Great Builders is composed exclusively of human-Grey crossbreeds.

These individuals seek to find doorways and other access points from which Strangers can arrive on Earth, with the ultimate goal of sealing off and isolating the Earth. By closing gates one by one, the Builders hope to preserve humanity for some special destiny. In the long run, they hope to prevent the Strangers from ever visiting Earth again. In the short run, they'll settle for preventing the current influx from growing worse.

Since the Builders' goals also include the prohibition of any spacefaring alien influence on Earth—including the Greys—it is likely that they seek to oppose the Greys and their agents however they can.

Or . . .

Gamemasters may choose to make the Rosicrucian Order a more sinister, corruptive influence. In league with evil extraterrestrials, the secretive, subversive order attempts to alter or manipulate events from the shadows in order to bring humankind to ruin, allowing the aliens to more easily control or conquer it.

SECRETS OF GOD: THE HIDDEN ORDER OF ST. GREGORY

The Hidden Order of St. Gregory seeks to rid the Earth of the minions of Satan.

Headquarters: St. Petersburg, Russia.

Followers: Unknown, but believed to number at least three hundred ordained priests and two hundred knights who have taken full vows.

Secret Knowledge: Sacred relics, recovered Grey technology, FX abilities.

Common Missions: Relic recovery, doorway examination and closure, “exorcism” of Strangers, gathering sacred texts from secular locations, destruction of non-Christian or occult groups or individuals.

Requisition Limit: 20 (restricted).

The Order of St. Gregory is one of the oldest secret societies that still retains both its influence and its anonymity; unlike the Masons, the Rosicrucians, or the CIA, virtually no one outside its own membership has ever heard of the order, and that’s the way its members prefer to keep it. Reputed to have been founded in A.D. 958 by the Patriarch of Constantinople at a time when that city was still the greatest bastion of Christendom, the order is still nominally answerable to both Orthodox and Catholic church authorities. In practice, it answers to neither.

The order’s independence results from a combination of historical accidents and canny planning. The conflict between the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch on the one hand and the patriarch of Rome—the so-called *primus inter pares*—on the other began under Pope Leo I (440–461). Ultimately it led to the final schism between the Catholic and Orthodox branches of the church in 1054, when legates of the Roman

patriarch Leo IX excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople. Suddenly finding itself owing loyalty to both the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the Hidden Order chose to continue on its own path, answering to the Pope in Rome and the patriarchs everywhere else while staying very quiet about its activities against demons, sorcerers, and other evils besetting the faithful. But the order was already planning a change. Its opportunity came in 1202 during the Fourth Crusade, when the Crusaders decided to plunder the Christians of Constantinople.

During the ensuing chaos, the order hid all traces of its foundation and membership by destroying church records during the sack. Suddenly, the order disappeared from Orthodox records. While some few manuscripts still alluded to its existence, these were removed in the chaos caused during the many years when the papacy abandoned Rome for Avignon from 1305 to 1415, and during the years of the Roman antipopes from 1378 to 1415. Many other such papers were destroyed (whether deliberately or accidentally, no one knows) during the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.

In the centuries since, the order has rarely numbered more than five hundred men (the group excludes women from its ranks), yet in every century it has been able to act to prevent paranormal disaster. None of its triumphs have made it into the



The Catholic Church and the Paranormal

There are indications that the Church has found, lost, and rediscovered paranormal evidence several times in its history. A doorway in Jerusalem was first unearthed by Prior Simon, a devout Parisian scholar and theologian, and reported to Pope Leo IX in A.D. 1052. In the early days of the Church’s investigation into the find, the Jerusalem site was thought to be a gateway that allowed humans to travel directly to heaven. Through prayer, ritual, and sacrifice, the priests assigned to investigate found that they could open the doorway once every 50 years, and these days became high holy days in the secret calendar of the Church’s feasts. Indeed, only the most fanatical priests and sometimes a particularly devout king were able to open the door. Sometimes they received a visitation in which a creature came through the doorway from

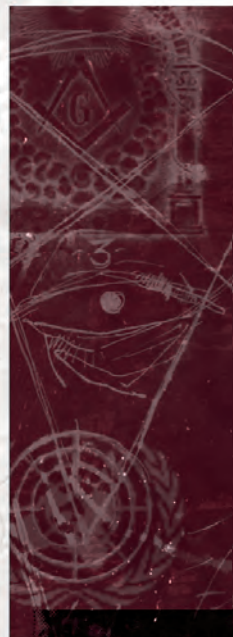
beyond to spread knowledge, take others bodily with it back beyond the veil, or—in a few cases—exact a terrible vengeance for the presumption of mankind in tampering with such holy mysteries.

In a sense, those who believed that the doorway was a path to heaven were right; those who left through the gate rarely returned. All those who did come back were profoundly changed, usually visionaries prone to fits, seizures, and prophetic trances and visions. A few were simply mad; others were mad in a powerful and precognitive way. The Church made saints of the ones whose personalities were still somewhat intact, since their abilities were impossible to categorize as anything but miracles.

The Church has encountered UFOs, poltergeists and ghosts, supernatural powers, and unnatural occurrences of all types throughout its history. While it often labels such

events as evil or Satanic (right-wing fundamentalist Protestants are even more likely to categorize these phenomena as demonic), it’s just as likely to dismiss such incidents outright—at least publicly.

Thus far, the Church has kept its knowledge of the paranormal a secret, buried deep in its records along with lists of the hosts of Hell, rites for blessing the crops, and feudal rights and obligations. A secret library in the Vatican is reportedly devoted to such records, as well as forbidden occult tomes and similar books. Any organization that has been around for millennia and keeps its records in Latin can keep a secret rather effectively. Only a small subset of the church, the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, is permitted access to these records and entrusted with seeking out and resisting efforts by dark forces to visit the Earth.





history books as anything more than the achievements of individuals: The witch hunts of the fifteenth century, the Inquisition of the sixteenth century, and the gradual suppression and settlement of the gypsies have all been the work of the order. It has also contributed to the destruction of pagan documents and shamanistic knowledge in the New World during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the imposition of colonial authorities against the Thuggee and Chinese mystic sects during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the more subtle “diplomatic pressures” of the twentieth century that led to the invasion of Tibet and destruction of its temples. Though ultimately these acts are all the order’s handiwork, nothing can be proven conclusively—it thrives on working indirectly. Since no one suspects its goals or methods, no one has bothered to try to uncover its mysteries.

The order has several key principles that keep its secrets tightly held. For one thing, the members of the order believe that they have been divinely appointed to fight against the instruments of

evil. They see all aliens as minions of Satan, worthy of nothing more than annihilation. For another, certain members of the order have amazing FX abilities and are often highly trained in the martial arts. They have no tolerance for any forms of magic other than their own, seeing them as tools of darkness, and they have no need for personal glory: they are humble enough to fight their crusade from the shadows.

The brethren of the order are primarily European or American men with access to FX abilities (see Chapter 10 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) and close contacts with the Knights of Malta.

Or . . .

According to some intelligence analysts, the story of the Hidden Order’s founding and its goals is bogus. By their theory, the order was founded at some point between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth century in the St. Petersburg area and has never

Conspiracy Hunter’s Guide: The Hidden Order of St. Gregory

The Hidden Order was reportedly founded in Constantinople in the tenth century. Precious little is known about its original purpose or agenda, since the order took great care to conceal its members and obscure its activities.

The Hidden Order served the Catholic and Orthodox churches,

but a schism between the two apparently caused the order to go its own way, waging a secret war against paranormal enemies of the church. The order all but vanished around the same time that the Crusaders sacked Constantinople, in 1202. Coincidentally or not, documents testifying to the order’s existence were destroyed during the sacking of the city, and few if any documents chronicle the order’s activities since.

If the Hidden Order survives to this day, it would have very few members—perhaps a couple hundred scattered around the globe. Assuming the order has not been corrupted, its members would almost certainly be working to stem the Dark Tide by hunting down and destroying enemies of God, including demons, evil spellcasters, and aliens.

been affiliated with a Christian denomination, Orthodox or otherwise: this is just a front. Instead, the order served the Russian czar and the Ascended Masters of Tibet, and trains its members in Orenburg and the hidden city of Shambhala. Its true goals further the agenda of the Great Builders of the Rosicrucians, finding and destroying doorways as their agents.

CREATIVE ANARCHISM: THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE

The Invisible College promotes individuality and freedom, usually through anarchy.

Headquarters: None known—each cell has its own base of operation.

Followers: Unknown even to its own members, but may number in the hundreds.

Secret Knowledge: FX abilities, occult knowledge, government secrets.

Common Missions: Maintain their secrecy, find and recruit others, promote the fall of all regimented societal or governmental infrastructures.

Requisition Limit: 40 (illegal).

According to some, anarchy has been burdened with an unfairly bad image. Philosophers and poets created the Invisible College in the 1500s and 1600s, and throughout the past few centuries this secretive group has existed just on the periphery of society to fight against totalitarian control and destabilize centralized power in general. Through subtle means, the group slowly spread its message of individual freedom and the evils of authority. This naturally brought it to the attention of the Rosicrucians, a vastly older organization with similar goals (at least on some level). The Rosicrucians (and their secret heart, the Ascended Masters) have been allies with the Invisible College ever since, although the anarchists have never made the relationship easy.

The Invisible College exists only in the dark, shadowy fringes of society. Operating in tiny cells of a dozen members or so (who don't always know all the others in their group, let alone those in other cells), this secret organization creates art and literature that carries their hidden message. Some of the more influential artists and writers throughout the last four centuries—including popular stars of today—have secretly belonged to the Invisible College. Members have included Galileo, Beethoven, John Keats, Pablo Picasso, William S.

Burroughs, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Salvador Dali, John Lennon, Steve Biko, and Robert Anton Wilson. Most members, of course, have a much lower profile.

Though the roots of the college lie within the creative arts, a good portion of the modern organization is devoted to action. The Invisible College supports (or actually operates as) tiny terrorist organizations, revolutionaries, and even certain “lone nuts” with agendas based on the downfall of some authoritarian structure. Sometimes the network of operatives works on modest levels against authority figures as small as university student governments. At other times, the Invisible College's schemes pit it against various law enforcement agencies or branches of government. The Invisible College has been responsible for political assassinations and bomb attacks, yet has organized peace rallies and freedom marches as well. It has put events in motion that have freed political prisoners and helped end apartheid. Amnesty International was created by the Invisible College, and some say even Greenpeace has its origins in an Invisible College cell.

The organization wages secret wars against groups such as the Freemasons and the Knights of Malta that attempt to use existing government structures to build their own totalitarian regimes. The very nature of the Bilderbergers and the Trilateral Commission label them as even greater evils than existing governments in the eyes of the Invisible College.

Each cell has its own means of operation. Some choose to work subtly, while others prefer more overt (and often violent) action. Still other cells explore the unknown frontiers, probing paranormal and mysterious phenomena looking for secrets and power. These latter activities have brought them into contact with the Hoffmann Institute. Usually their relationship with the Institute is at least somewhat friendly (if a little distant).

Because of their anarchistic and individualistic nature, the cells often have a rotating leadership position, or no leader at all. Even within a single cell, the members work as often as individuals as they do a team. Groups with looser structures consist of associates who know only one or two others in their cell. At the other extreme, no group of people in the world is as close as some of the tighter-than-family Invisible College cells.

Whether the group has a single, final goal is uncertain—even to most of its membership. Perhaps its only goal is to keep authoritarian structures from gaining a stranglehold on individuality. Perhaps its members cling to the seemingly impossible goal of instituting a completely free and anarchistic society throughout the world.

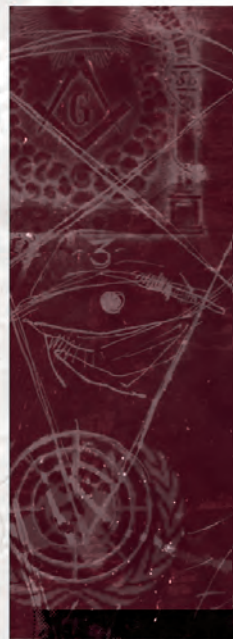
Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Invisible College

The Invisible College promotes individuality and freedom while striving to tear down totalitarian regimes and symbols of authority. Both Amnesty International and Greenpeace can trace their origins back to the Invisible College, and

some of the most outspoken anarchists in the world today were influenced by the art, music, and literature of early Invisible College members.

The Invisible Collage has small cells scattered throughout the world, each cell numbering no more than a couple dozen individuals. Its members work individually to spread anarchy and confound government

regimes, for the society lacks central leadership. Certain cells within the Invisible College are thought to have access to classified information about the Greys, but it's not known how the information serves the organization. More disturbing are rumors that the information was obtained from the Hoffmann Institute.



Rumor has it that Invisible College cells know a great deal more about alien activities on Earth than the general public does. Some say that a part of their agenda includes fighting against the alien Greys who hope to enslave humanity. Others claim that they work with the Greys, who support the College's goals of freedom and individuality. Whatever the truth, each cell probably knows a great many secrets beyond the ken of the rest of society—but due to the organization's nature, these secrets are often kept even from other members of the Invisible College.

Lastly, Invisible College members are actually encouraged to belong to other secret societies and illuminati organizations to gain knowledge and infiltrate power structures. They also like the idea of other organizations not being able to trust their own membership.

Or . . .

Bloodthirsty diabolists and mass murderers, these maniacs thrive on destruction and death. Reveling in chaos, they seek the complete downfall of civilization. They are the enemies of all other groups and of law-abiding people everywhere.

Or that's what they want you to think. Instead, they seek to undermine only the portions of human civilization that they disagree with. Their nigh-incomprehensible agenda involves carefully pruning away the factors they don't like by means of violence, manipulation, or the swaying of public opinion. For example, the Invisible College might detonate a bomb in a day-care facility to increase law enforcement's pressure on kooky right-wing militia groups so that they become more vocal about the right to bear arms, thus making legitimate gun lobbyists look bad. This in turn renders the lobbyists unable to stop legislation repealing the Second Amendment, making it easier for the Invisible College to facilitate the process of repealing Amendments to the Constitution that they really don't like. The Invisible College's motives are as difficult to decipher as their secretive structure and their bizarre plots.

A MODERN CRUSADE: KNIGHTS OF MALTA

The Knights of Malta strive to prevent the decay of society, by force if need be.

Headquarters: The Island of Malta.

Followers: Hundreds, with thousands of support personnel.

Secret Knowledge: Occult and religious knowledge, government secrets.

Common Missions: Foil plans of the Freemasons, protect the Western world ("Christendom") from threats from outside and within, manipulate government officials and church leaders to establish a network of near-absolute power.

Requisition Limit: 30 (restricted).



Formerly known as the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta, the Knights of Malta was founded during the Crusades as the Order of Knights Hospitaller. Since then it has been known by many other titles, such as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, and Knights of Rhodes. Today, its members are the inheritors of centuries of tradition and are rightfully proud of their contribution to protecting human interests against the dark forces that have threatened Europe over the millennium.

As a crusading order, the knights performed admirably for about a century, until Jerusalem fell to Saladin and the Muslim armies in 1187. From that day forward they have been an order in retreat, though as might be expected of military men, they retreated in good order. They fell back from Jerusalem to Acre, then to Cyprus. In 1310, they seized the island of Rhodes from the Turks and held it for two hundred years. The island was besieged in 1480 but held firm before falling back into Turkish hands in 1522. The knights retreated and were soon granted the island of Malta by Charles V of Germany.

From 1530 to 1798, the order ruled the island of Malta, though it also held the island of Gozo and the city of Tripoli. Malta was

Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Knights of Malta

The Knights of Malta, also known as the Order of the Knights Hospitaller, was founded during the Crusades. Although the influence of the knights has waned over the passing centuries, the order remains

to this day a symbol of martial discipline and spiritual devotion. Its members work to protect the Church and the western world from evil and corruption. However, much of their work is clandestine so that today, these champions of good are known more for their charitable enterprises than their effectiveness as a military force. Yet a military order they remain.

The Knights of Malta opposes "corrupt" organizations such as the Freemasons and the Bilderbergers. The order remains closely allied with the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, as both groups seek to destroy dark "Satanic menaces." The knights have no known ties to the Hoffmann Institute, but that doesn't mean there aren't any.

The Illuminati

presided over by a Grand Master who was answerable to the General Chapter, the eight leaders of each of the languages where the order was established. During those years the order was divided into eight languages, each led by a Conventual Bailiff. These dignitaries included the Grand Commander (Provençal), Grand Marshal (Auvergne), Grand Hospitaller (French), Grand Admiral (Italian), Grand Conservator (Aragonese), Grand Turcopolier (English), Grand Bailiff (German), and Grand Chancellor (Castillian). In every province were one or more Grand Pories presided over by Grand Priors, and beneath these were the Commanderies, over each of which was a Commander. At the order's height, 22 Grand Pories and 596 Commanderies were scattered throughout the countries of Europe. All members were required to show proof of noble birth before being sworn in at a simple and public ceremony.

The greatest battle of the order's career was not in the Holy Land, but in its adopted home when the knights struggled with the Turks for dominion over the Mediterranean during the sixteenth century. The Siege of Malta in 1565 ranks as one of the greatest offensives ever, and it provided a pivotal victory for the Christian realm at a time of Muslim strength. During the four-month siege, a force of four hundred knights and six thousand men-at-arms held off a Turkish army of a hundred thousand soldiers and two hundred galleys. The defenders inflicted horrible losses before the siege was lifted by the arrival of a relief force of Spaniards and Italians. The Knights of Malta put a final stop to Ottoman naval ambitions at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, when the Republic of Venice and its allies—including the Knights—sank most of the Turkish Navy.

Since that time, the Knights of Malta have maintained a vigil over the island and its secrets, a rulership that was not challenged again seriously until World War II, when the Nazi Luftwaffe contested the island. However, that attempt, like that of the Turks, failed.

Despite its successes against Islamic naval forces of the period, Henry VIII abolished the order in England, and though briefly reestablished by Mary, it was never restored to its place. By a decree of Charles IV of Spain, the languages of Aragon and Castillian were combined to become the Royal Order of St. John, and he declared himself the Grand Master. Much like the demise of the Templars, a monarch had usurped the order, though less violently and without papal authority. Most of the order dissolved shortly thereafter, and only the languages and Grand Pories of Germany and Italy remained. The order lost its German commanderies during the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century, and they were never recovered.

A decree of the Constituent Assembly abolished the order as a relic of the ancient regime in France in 1792. A further crippling blow to the military might of the knights came in 1798, when the island of Malta was surrendered to Napoleon Bonaparte by the cowardly Louis de Hompesch. Hompesch failed to prepare the island's defenses even after the French proclamations against the order in 1792 and 1797. In 1798, the armies of the Republic of France seized control of the island while on their way to Egypt. In 1800, the French lost possession of the island to the British Navy, and Great Britain held the island until 1964 despite various treaties, promises, and other schemes by the Knights to regain control.

It is a little-known fact that the Knights of Malta refused to surrender their hold on the Catholic states, even after the loss of their temporal base. Its loyalists re-formed the Spanish branch of

the order in Mexico in 1813, just after the country declared independence from Spanish rule. This branch of the knights was led by a new Grand Conservator and seems to have been especially zealous in its efforts to root out the works of Satan, putting the methods of the Inquisition back into practice and rousting dozens of small-time heretics. The Mexican branch of the knights soon spread throughout Central and South America, eventually reaching as far as Argentina.

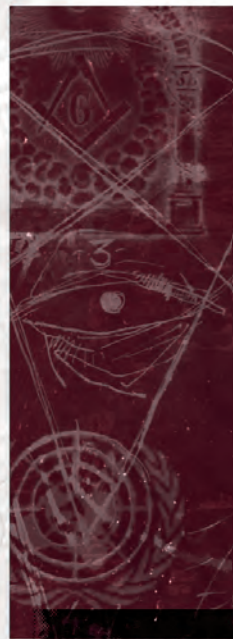
The order was reestablished in England after the Napoleonic wars by the Duke of Manchester in 1815 and was chartered in America exactly a hundred years later, in 1915. In addition, in 1907 a Brazilian branch was founded in Sao Paulo, led by a Grand Preceptor. Thus, though many people see only the ancient fading glories of the Knights of Malta in Catholic European countries, the order is just as strong, perhaps stronger, in the New World.

In modern times, the knights operate much more quietly than they did in the thirteenth century, with a greater emphasis on charitable works and caring for the sick than during their heyday as Crusaders. Behind the public façade they remain a military order, dedicated first and foremost to the literal defense of the Church and more broadly to the "defense of Christendom" in general. Though this seems a quaint or even archaic concept to many in the twenty-first century, the knights take their duties seriously. Of course, in doing so, they believe that the best way to protect their interests is to put themselves in control of as much of Western society as they can. The current director and Grand Master is a German of noble blood by the name of Marcus, Graf von Billengen, a middle-aged man going gray and running to fat but still capable of a malevolent swagger when called upon to act to crush his order's age-old enemies and chief rivals, the Freemasons.

The knights' remaining publicly acknowledged Grand Pories are those of Rome, Lombardy and Venice, Naples and Sicily, Bohemia, Austria, and England. Its secret Grand Pories include those of New England, Louisiana, Quebec, and Mexico. It's unclear what relationship remains between the Catholic rootstock of the order and its associated Lutheran branches in Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands; the two orders formed an association in 1961, but the exact details remain undisclosed.

The Knights of Malta remains the largest landowner in Italy, with all its properties exempted from certain Italian fiscal jurisdiction. The order's palaces in Rome on the Aventine Hill and in the Via Condotti enjoy extraterritorial status like that of the Vatican. Likewise, the order's palaces in Vienna and Prague have been restored to their former extraterritorial status, and thus are no longer subject to local law.

Currently, Grand Senator William Addington leads the New England Grand Priory. The order's agenda includes attempts to prevent the further decay of modern morality, and in so doing oppose most liberal and non-Christian groups. Yet the knights display many differences that distinguish them from their allies of the Hidden Order. While the latter is a religious group, the knights are more of a moralistic organization, basing their outlook on opinion rather than doctrine. The Knights of Malta think in terms of groups rather than individual souls, opposing what they see as non-Christian forces rather than working to teach or spread the faith. Many key figures in the religious right of the United States as well as conservative politicians throughout the West are members of the Knights of Malta.



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Or . . .

The Knights of Malta are actually an evil organization of occult masters working under the guise of Christian defenders. These dark, demonic priests seek total world domination, but they first want to eliminate their rivals, who range from the Freemasons to the Bilderbergers to many entire governments.

OCCULT MASTERS: THE FINAL CHURCH

The various groups that comprise “the Final Church” seek to destroy traditional religions and restore the worship of the dark gods.

Headquarters: The Bohemian Grove, California (near San Francisco).

Followers: Hundreds of thousands.

Secret Knowledge: FX abilities (particularly arcane magic) and occult knowledge.

Common Missions: Abduction and murder of humans and animals for sacrifice, spying upon the powerful and wealthy for blackmail purposes, drug trafficking, maintaining secrecy and control through intimidation and terror tactics.

Requisition Limit: 10–35 (illegal).

Although they give the incidences many different names, various researchers believe that the existence of numerous black magic cults, animal mutilation, and occult-related kidnappings and murders are actually evidence of a monolithic, global Satanic conspiracy. Unlike so many other organizations, this one seems to have no single name—which further obscures its global nature. The organization has been variously called the Church of Set, Novo Ordi Templi, the Hellfire Club, Order of the Shining Light,

the Brethren, the Children, the Family, and the Church of the Final Judgment.

In many ways, this gigantic, pervasive secret organization has its roots in prehistory, when men first began to recognize dark powers. Dark covens of evil priests and priestesses have kept this tradition alive—a tradition that includes black magic and human sacrifice. Much of the cult’s beliefs seem to have been codified in the occult writings of Eliphas Levi over a hundred years ago. Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn from the early 1900s also had a profound effect on modern black magic.

In other ways, however, the Final Church (for lack of a better comprehensive name) is a product of a more modern age. The followers of this cult have set their sights upon no less than control of the world. Using communication media such as music, television, movies, and the Internet, they proclaim and spread their subtle mission.

Despite their desire for new members, however, theirs is not a plot to convert, but to conquer. Through power gained from bloody rituals, the members of the cult hope to master the world and its people, most of whom they think of as mere sheep to be used or slaughtered.

The ranks of the cult swell not only with depraved maniacs and serial killers but also with the rich and famous, looking for a path to greater fame and power. Some of these influential members keep their association a secret (particularly those in political power), but others make it all too clear with visible Satanic symbols and imagery in their art, music, writing, or just in their wardrobe. Of course, this sort of activity has promoted a thriving “Satanic chic” culture. Not every heavy-metal musician sporting a pentagram belongs to this global organization. The vaudevillery and showmanship that exist in the popular view of Satanism are nothing more than attempts for publicity and attention. On the contrary, thousands of people



The Grimoire of Sebastian of Tyre

This book purports to be a compilation of drawings, rituals, invocations, and rules for safe operation of a number of artifacts of “fey” manufacture, as well as maps that are said to show the locations of the “burrows of the Fair Folk” throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and southern Europe. In addition, it claims to contain a lexicon of “faerie speech” and a discussion of faerie habits, customs,

and manners. Most of the secret societies aware of the presence of the Greys on Earth interpret this as a clear sign that the author of the Grimoire somehow gained the trust and confidence of a group of Greys stationed near Tyre. According to legend, all extant copies of the Grimoire were stolen away by the Fair Folk after the author’s death.

Anyone who reads the Grimoire (written in Latin and transliterated Fraal) can choose to pick up the Read/Write Fraal skill the next

time he has a skill point to spend on the skill. Whether any of the rumored Grey base sites still exist as shown on the maps or whether they have long since been stripped and abandoned is up to the GM. Certainly any group of heroes acquiring the Grimoire or a copy of it can expect attention from the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, the Knights of Malta, and possibly the Greys themselves.



today who call themselves Satanists in fact have nothing to do with the Final Church.

Like so many dark conspiracies, the Final Church has strong connections with the Nazis. Arcane occult groups such as the Thule Society fostered the growth of the Nazi Party in Germany and helped put men such as Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, both occult adepts, in power. These black magicians believed in the dark power of human sacrifice and attempted to practice it on a huge, terrifying scale through the ritual murder of millions.

Himmler led a powerful magical ritual conducted by the inner

circle of the SS, the Order of the Death's Head, in the North Tower of Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia. In a room specially fitted to absorb and focus the harmonics of the ceremony, the Order called forth a monstrous entity and discovered another means to power—the creation of a new, powerful race from a select group of humans. Although the idea of Aryan superiority was rooted in history, Himmler pioneered the idea of focusing a single magical ceremony to lift selected members of the human race and place them in a position of superiority over the rest. Racial superiority through magic fostered much Nazi activity from that point forward. (The Order of the Death's Head was also known as Novo

Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Final Church

The Hoffmann Institute uses the name "Final Church" to describe a global conspiracy dedicated to dark rituals and the service of fiendish masters. But whether one calls its practitioners demon worshipers, Satanists (a gross misuse of the term, actually), black magicians, minions of the elder gods, or simply murder cultists doesn't really matter—these people are dedicated, body and soul, to evil.

Unlike a traditional conspiracy, the Final Church has no organization, no standard methodology, and no unified leadership. Ultimately, the name itself is only a creation

of those who oppose the dark cultists—something to give the enemy an identity. Those who carry out the murderous wishes of the elder gods don't care what you call them—they just want you dead.

One might think that opposing a worldwide conspiracy of violent cultists would draw a measure of support from many organizations. Unfortunately, no one believes (or wants to believe) that such a conspiracy could possibly exist. Even the federal government disavows stories of widespread demonic cult activities, and the Vatican is remarkably silent on the issue. Those who battle the Final Church should know that they're on their own.

Clues: The most recognizable symbol of the Final Church is the pentacle—the five-pointed star—usually on a field of red (or even drawn in blood). Other icons associated with cultist activity include the goat's head, the trident (a symbol of the devil), the skull, and the bloody dagger. While thrill-killing cycle gangs cutting up hitchhikers and thrash-metal rock stars seducing youths with drug-fueled orgies fit the traditional profile of the devil-worshiper, the Final Church extends its tendrils into many far more innocent-looking activities as well.

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Ordi Templi, the New Templars, a group that remains part of the Final Church even now.)

Today, members of the Final Church revere the dark memories of men such as Hitler and seek to continue their work by fueling the black magic fires with more and more sacrifice. They refer to the political and social works of the Nazis as a different sort of magic. This political black sorcery takes the idea of the occult ritual beyond the individual level—it encourages a way of life that is, in fact, a singular, constant ritual itself. While not necessarily interested in Nazi racism, they follow the ideal that black magic will create a place for them as masters of the world.

Satanic death squads roam North America—and probably the world—looking for sacrificial victims. Controlled by the Final Church, these small bands roam in vans and without discernible pattern, sometimes setting up short-term isolated bases of operation. Their activities start with animals, usually dogs or cats but sometimes (in more rural areas) cattle, which are sacrificed and mutilated, often exsanguinated. Eventually, the killers move on to human targets, preying mostly upon loners or homeless drifters who are difficult to trace. Sometimes, however, they fall upon more public targets. Most of these killers are never caught, their victims never found.

Over recent years, a few Final Church-inspired killings have gained a great amount of attention. Charles Manson led a small group calling itself the Family, which followed the beliefs of the Final Church. The Family also had links to various music industry professionals and Hollywood celebrities. Although they committed a number of heinous acts undetected, in 1969 they conducted a brutal mass murder in California accompanied by an occult ritual that drew a great deal of public attention. Years later, one member of the Family attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford (a Freemason who was a part of the Warren Commission that investigated the death of JFK, and who would have been succeeded by Vice President Rockefeller—who has many links to many different illuminati groups).

In the mid to late 1970s, New York was terrorized by a serial killer known only as the Son of Sam. Black magic symbols often accompanied the murders and notes sent to the police from the killer. Although David Berkowitz was eventually arrested for the crimes, he claimed that he did not commit all of the murders. Instead, some evidence shows that a Final Church death squad had preyed upon New York City for many months. With Berkowitz as the patsy, the cultists simply moved on.

About ten years later, Richard Ramirez, dubbed as the Nightstalker, committed a number of ritualistic occult murders in California, leaving behind evidence and proclaiming himself a devotee of dark powers. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, he most likely worked for the Final Church.

The Final Church uses some of the same techniques practiced by the CIA in its MK-ULTRA program (drugs, sensory deprivation, hypnosis, harmonics and low-band frequencies, and subliminal communications) to control others. While many cultists follow eagerly, others are brainwashed and mind-controlled, their own wills beaten into submission until they become easily used tools of the Final Church. Some of this indoctrination starts at a very early age, as new members are “recruited” through kidnapping and abduction.

Some of the leaders of the Final Church, it is said, are not even human. While stories claim that they are vampires or demons,

still others (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive) state that alien creatures adept at black magic—perhaps kinori or even rogue Greys—actually lead or help direct the Final Church.

In short, while many conspiratorial groups demonstrate evil and ruthless qualities, the Final Church is probably the most merciless, despicable, and malevolent group of humans ever to walk the Earth's surface.

Or . . .

These occult adepts actually work for aliens. A malevolent alien presence has descended upon the Earth and seeks to subvert its people while feeding upon their fear, hatred, and other negative emotions. The Final Church worships and serves these dark alien gods, hoping not only to be spared from the final destruction of humanity brought about by the alien presence, but also to be exalted as faithful servants and rewarded with vast power.

Or there simply is no global Satanic conspiracy. Small, localized black magic cults exist, but they have no organized structure. In *d20 DARK MATTER* campaigns, this option allows the Final Church conspiracy to be used as a red herring for occult happenings or a network of allegedly evil organizations.

WEALTH OF NATIONS: THE BILDERBERGERS

The members of the Bilderberg Society—called Bilderbergers—seek to increase their wealth, maintain the status quo, and own the world.

Headquarters: New York (Manhattan) and Amsterdam.

Followers: About three hundred living members, plus approximately one thousand full-time agents, employees, and bodyguards.

Secret Knowledge: Financial and governmental secrets.

Common Missions: Manipulation of stocks, currencies, corporations, and governments, obtaining military, technological, or financial secrets, contact with aliens, manipulation of entire societies to prepare them for group-engineered events (financial collapse, famines, and other large-scale crises.)

Requisition Limit: 50 (illegal).

Each February, the members of the Bilderberg Society convene a business summit of the rich and powerful to set a course for humanity for the coming year. At this meeting, prime ministers, finance ministers, leaders of political parties, heads of great banks, economists, CEOs, academics, influential media figures, and permanent members of the group all gather to listen to financial and political briefings, set the group's economic agenda for the year, and determine a course with respect to other issues of policy and global development.

These summits are held at alternating locations each year with absolutely no publicity. After all, many of the participants are owners or leading members of the corporate media. The hotel or private estate where the meeting takes place is always ringed by security guards, so that uninvited journalists (which means all of them) are kept kilometers away. The members of the society always pledge not to repeat publicly any of the discussions. Every participant, from the great foreign ministers and heads of industrial companies down to the lowly professors and financiers,

is stripped of office as he or she enters the meetings. This allows everyone to say what they really think without fear of repercussions—and without fear of being called to answer for it as an officeholder. Every group member attends strictly as a private citizen for everyone's security, especially that of the group itself. Without public accountability, they need never elaborate on what goes on behind closed doors and can easily deflect close investigation. Indeed, such measures elevate the Bilderberg Society entirely above public scrutiny.

The Bilderbergers (who gained their name from the Bilderberg Hotel, where they held their first meeting in Oosterbeek, Holland, from May 29 to May 31, 1954) are really just the latest in a succession of international conclaves of the wealthy and powerful who attempt to manipulate global events. The idea stretches back at least as far as the Round Table groups created by Cecil Rhodes in 1891. The Bilderbergers work with the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations—in fact, they're really all a part of the same conspiracy. Each group shares members and manipulates world events in different ways. For the purposes of the discussion here, the name Bilderberg Society actually encompasses all of the world's elite who belong to these supragovernmental organizations.

This international syndicate devotes itself to the pursuit of wealth above all else, and this leads to occasional involvement with organized crime. The society's Financial Committee has

contacts among the American Mafia and the Russian mob alike, as well as the Colombian cocaine kingpins and the Southeast Asian heroin warlords of the Golden Triangle. More important, the Bilderberg Society has ties to several species of aliens and already does business with two of them. The sand slaves (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 79) send agents to buy and sell weaponry with the Russian *organizatsiya* and trade certain drugs and chemicals with the Camorra, the Naples mob. The Bilderbergers also work with certain rogue members of the Greys, whom they have—in several documented cases—employed as agents against both humans and fraal alike.

The Bilderberg Society hasn't just been using the aliens, though; the aliens have been using the syndicate as well, and a few of the group's members have been compromised or bought off. Both the group and other organizations that observe the Bilderbergers consider this a matter of the greatest concern. After all, the society has positioned itself into an enormously powerful player in human affairs. If group members no longer represented the interest of humanity—or even their version of humanity—how much damage could they do? And who could stop them?

The Bilderbergers see themselves as a supragovernmental agency. Indeed, one of the Bilderberg Society's founders once said, "Our duties are greater than those borne by any single nation." The Society coercively manipulates global finances to its own advantage and the benefit of its most important members.

The Carrying Capacity Working Group

The Bilderberg Society is divided into dozens of special interest groups that communicate with one another about selected topics such as currency rates, international trade, and even "population management" (controlling riots and rebellions). The members of these committees work together informally throughout the year, preparing for the Bilderbergers' annual meeting. These subgroups have dull, everyday titles such as the Currency Group, the Media Committee, the Financial Committee, and the Free Trade Policy Group—and their decisions can change the world. One of these groups has become a particular topic of concern in the last twenty years: the Carrying Capacity Working Group.

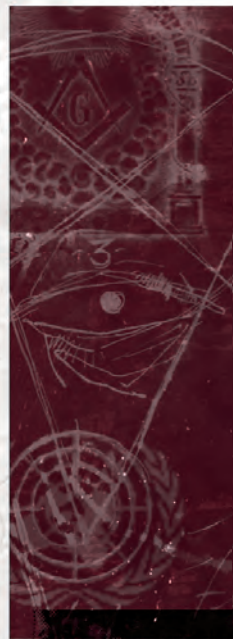
The term "carrying capacity" simply refers to the ability of an ecosystem (such as the Earth) to support life. A small but powerful segment of the Bilderberg Society has determined that the Earth

has already exceeded its carrying capacity, and that a crash of foodstocks, economies, and populations is inevitable. Indeed, the greatest accelerator of the oncoming crash results from the actions of the rich, industrialized countries. To reduce the severity of the environmental and resource collapse, the members of the CCWG concluded that they must destroy the economic order that they profit from. This has not proven to be a popular opinion among the group members, to put it mildly.

The majority of the Bilderbergers obviously wish to maintain the current order and delay this economic meltdown for as long as possible, because they profit so mightily from the present system. Furthermore, acknowledging that a resource collapse might be imminent would give others time to prepare for it and perhaps profit from the turmoil. Instead, the group's members have set their own contingencies in place, whether this involves investing in new forms

of energy production or simply buying up a large tract of arable land and peasant farmers in a remote but stable region of the world.

Despite the opposition within the group, the CCWG's council of radical leaders formed a small cabal-within-a-cabal dedicated to bringing about the destruction of current economic systems. Through careful positioning in the world's commodities and stock markets, they are entirely capable of engineering a panic. To prevent automatic safety measures from kicking in, they've hired mercenary sand slaves who can prevent the markets from closing by nullifying all the safety overrides. The gears will jam and the markets will crash, and crash hard. Indeed, if they must, the CCWG intends to hold the world leaders hostage at the annual meeting of the Bilderberg Society—and by holding the people at the fulcrum of power, they hope to change the world.



Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Bilderbergers

The Bilderberg Society is named after the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, Holland. Its founding members assembled for the first time at this hotel in 1954 and set in motion a plan to create a powerful global economy and chart a proper course for humanity. The Bilderbergers convene once per year in a location not open to the general public and off limits to the world press. Its key members stand on the highest rungs of the political and social ladders—prime ministers, finance ministers, leaders of politi-

cal parties, heads of great banks, economists, CEOs, academics, and influential media figures. In seclusion, they manipulate government policies, address world issues, and determine how and where to invest their capital wealth, nominally for humanity's betterment but more for their own gain.

The Bilderbergers have vast resources at their disposal and possess the power and leverage to overthrow any government that stands in their way. Fortunately, the most influential members of the society are so wary of their esteemed peers that they waste much of their time engaged in pointless Machiavellian

schemes to disgrace one another and gain even more control.

Tomas Hoffmann, the man who founded the Hoffmann Institute, had powerful associates within the Bilderberg Society. When he died, these associates became very interested in the Institute's activities, but Director Itohiro Nakami has kept them at arm's length, refusing to share information and resources. The Hoffmann Institute and the Bilderbergers are, at best, bitter rivals. Their interests have collided more than once, and such encounters usually end messily.

Junior members establish rigid and binding monetary rates around the world (often to their own nation's detriment) in the hopes of someday rising in the ranks and being able to turn the Society's resources to their own ends.

Most of all, the Bilderberg Society retains power by selecting politicians who the members determine should become heads of state, and targeting those who it wants removed from power. It has the resources—financial, media, and otherwise—to ensure that it usually gets its way in public elections and even in palace coups. Rather than pursue an agenda that would work to all mankind's benefit—perhaps by solving global health, energy, environmental, and agricultural problems—the group instead guarantees the propagation of its power and the enrichment of its members at the expense of human rights and ecosystem degradation worldwide.

As Director Nakami of the Hoffmann Institute wrote, "One cannot help but be suspicious of those who set priorities for the future of mankind in total secrecy."

Or . . .

The Bilderberg Society knows that the world will soon end. Global catastrophe in the form of a new Ice Age looms before the Earth like the Titanic heading inevitably toward an iceberg. The group is secretly clearing the Brazilian rain forests, since within the next decade the only habitable portion of the planet will be near the equator. Even now, the society spends its vast resources to build shelters and whole cities for itself while using its considerable media control and influence to keep its master plan a secret.

SEARCH FOR TRUTH: THE HOFFMANN INSTITUTE

The Hoffmann Institute seeks to understand and control the Dark Tide before it destroys humanity.

Headquarters: New York.

Followers: Over three thousand full-time employees.

Secret Knowledge: Paranormal phenomena, the occult, psionics, ancient history, detailed knowledge of aliens of all types.

Common Missions: Investigation of paranormal events and alien encounters.

Requisition Limit: 35 (military).

Founded in 1917, the Hoffmann Institute is an established fixture in the ranks of human politics and history, created as a response to changes on Earth and especially to alterations resulting from dark matter tides. However, it remains a relatively independent force, not advancing any particular national agenda. Instead, it derives funding from a series of crucial patents and by farming out its technical expertise to certain well-placed government agencies. The Institute strives for peaceful coexistence between humans and for the steady advancement of scientific knowledge about the shadow world of the paranormal.

Founded by Dr. Itohiro Nakami, a rogue Grey disguised as a Japanese man, the Institute was created to investigate the rising Dark Tide and help humanity survive alien infiltration and paranormal occurrences. Although the Institute was originally funded by Tomas Hoffmann (hence its name), Hoffmann's view of what the Institute should be doing and Dr. Nakami's more idealistic goals finally collided in the 1970s. Hoffmann was interested in deploying the Institute's resources to exploit technologies that might turn a profit or provide leverage in global power politics. Nakami was more interested in providing alternative energy sources, parapsychology and psychic research, and a deeper understanding of how pollution affected human health and agricultural fertility.



Hoffmann died before the split became irreparable, but the Institute had come to the attention of Hoffmann's friends and political associates in the Bilderberg Society. The Institute's funds didn't disappear, as about half of the Hoffmann fortune was set up as a trust for the Institute's operating expenses, but suddenly the eyes of the Bilderbergers were focused on the Institute's activities. Ever since, the two organizations have been rivals or outright enemies, fighting for access to a limited supply of alien artifacts and information.

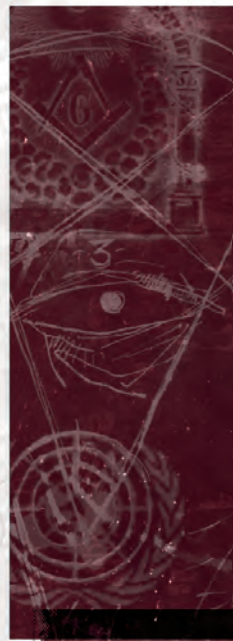
The Institute's first and foremost goal is the suppression and control of alien organisms, and the discovery of alien technology, arcane lore, and psionic abilities before this information reaches the public. On one hand, this strategy allows the Institute to broaden its own knowledge of the threats humanity faces. On the other, it permits the Institute to keep one step ahead of other groups that might use such information for less benign purposes.

If necessary, Institute researchers are expected to destroy such evidence to prevent it from falling into the hands of rival organizations. Under no circumstances may the materials be released to public groups (even to UFO-watching societies, for example); they must always be turned over to the Archives.

The Institute has no wish to draw attention to itself, as its sometimes-fringe researches could easily become a scapegoat for human fears, government investigation, and public outcry. As a result, it keeps its activities quiet. In cases where Institute operatives are captured by hostile governments, conspiracies, or secret societies, they are trained to deflect suspicion from themselves onto other groups, supported by surprising knowledge of other groups and false credentials. An Institute field agent may claim to be a member of the CIA, a right-wing paramilitary group, or even a secretive group such as the Bilderbergers rather than admitting his true allegiance. In many cases, this deception successfully confuses the trail of suspicion and prevents others from tracing an operation back to the Institute.

From time to time, agents become liabilities to the Institute. Whether this occurrence stems from repeated failures, security breaches, or general incompetence, the ultimate expression of this failure is the "permanent debriefing." This procedure, invariably carried out by the Director himself, can last as long as eight hours, after which the agent is cast out of the Director's office with only jumbled memories of his or her time at the Institute and the work done there. Any further contact between the former agent and enemies of the Institute results in immediate arrest and deportation. Rumor has it that the agent is simply "disappeared," gangland-style, perhaps buried in wet concrete somewhere in the foundation of some new construction. Even wilder rumors claim that the agent is taken off-planet, turned over to the Greys, or imprisoned on a secret lunar base, but since none of these agents has ever returned, no one is really sure where they wind up.

At the forefront of the Institute's scientific efforts are laboratory studies on the nature of dark matter, specifically its interaction with other forms of matter and with the basic forces of the universe. The Institute knows that this medium is somehow responsible for a wide range of paranormal phenomena, but no one really knows how it operates. The Hoffmann researchers try to weave together a sort of Unified Theory of the Paranormal.



Dr. Itohiro Nakami

The Director of the Hoffmann Institute is Dr. Itohiro Nakami, grandson of the man who helped Tomas Hoffmann found the Institute in 1917, also named Itohiro Nakami. In truth, grandfather and grandson are the same creature.

Nakami is a rogue fraal (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 45) who uses a psionic artifact to conceal his true appearance. Horrified by the slaughter of World War I and worried that continued warfare would threaten the Greys' presence on Earth, Nakami felt it necessary to step in and take an active role in guiding the future of humanity. He believes that if humanity can survive the Dark Tide, humans can emerge as a maturer species ready to join the galactic community, at least in the role of students. He has taken it upon himself to ensure that humanity has the chance to achieve its potential, and Nakami is willing to accept the consequences if he fails. While not all members of his species agree with him, they do respect his determination, and some even work to help him in whatever ways they can. In return, Nakami supplies the fraal with reports from Institute operatives regarding alien visitations, to assist the "Greys" in their self-appointed duty to protect humanity from the more ruthless alien species that periodically visit Earth.

ITOHIRO NAKAMI

CR 20

Fraal Smart Hero 6/Charismatic Hero 6/Telepath 8
Small humanoid (fraal)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages "Aztec," Egyptian (ancient form), English, Fraal, Greek, Japanese, Latin, "Sanskrit"

Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 18; Defensive Martial Arts (+1 size, +1 Dex, +7 class)

hp 55 (20 HD); **Mas** 9

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +15

Action Points 10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +10/+5 (1d3-1)

Ranged neural pistol +12/+7 touch (see below)

Space 5 ft. by 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Disarm

Special Actions combat manifestation, *psionics*, trigger power

Power Points 32

Telepath Powers Known (ML 8th):

4th (1/day)—*tailor memory* (DC 17)

3rd (2/day)—*false sensory input* (DC 16), *mindlink*

2nd (3/day)—*brain lock** (DC 15), *detect thoughts** (DC 15), *sensitivity to psychic impressions*

1st (4/day)—*charm person** (DC 14), *control object*, *lesser body adjustment*, *object reading*

0 (5/day)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect psionics*, *distract* (DC 13), *far hand*, *missive* (DC 13)

Psionics (ML 10th, no power point cost):

At will—*lesser mindlink*

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 15)

* *Nakami can attempt to manifest this power without paying its cost in power points (see Trigger Power below).*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 19, Wis 15, Cha 16

AL Hoffmann Institute, good; **Rep** +8

Feats Alien Weapon Proficiency*, Attentive, Combat Expertise, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated (Knowledge [arcane lore], Knowledge [current events], Knowledge [earth and life sciences], Knowledge [history], Knowledge [physical sciences], Knowledge [theology and philosophy]), Improved Disarm, Iron Will, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Trustworthy, Wild Talent (*detect psionics*), Windfall (3)

Skills Autohypnosis +13, Bluff +22, Computer Use +13, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +22, Disguise +14, Gather Information +14, Hide +5, Investigate +15, Knowledge (arcane lore) +26, Knowledge (art) +7, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +9, Knowledge (civics) +9, Knowledge (current events) +19, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +13, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (physical sciences) +13, Knowledge (popular culture) +7, Knowledge (technology) +15, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) +18, Navigate +8, Psicraft +15, Read/Write Aztec (hieroglyphs), Read/Write Egyptian (hieroglyphs), Read/Write English, Read/Write Fraal, Read/Write Greek, Read/Write Japanese, Read/Write Latin, Read/Write Sanskrit, Research +23, Sense Motive +15, Speak "Aztec," Speak Egyptian (ancient form), Speak English, Speak Fraal, Speak Greek, Speak Japanese, Speak Latin, Speak "Sanskrit"

Talents (Smart Hero): linguist, plan, savant (Research)

Talents (Charismatic Hero): coordinate, inspiration, greater inspiration

Possessions neural pistol (ranged touch attack; invisible ray paralyzes the target for 1d4 minutes, DC 20 Fortitude save negates), psionic illusion stabilizer (allows Nakami to appear as a slight Japanese man and even projects this image onto film and electronic video media), power crystal (contains 5 power points)

* *New feat described in Chapter 2.*

Combat Manifestation (Ex) Nakami gets a +4 bonus on Concentration checks to manifest a psionic power while on the defense.

Trigger Power (Ex) Nakami can attempt to manifest any of the following powers without paying the normal power point cost, provided he succeeds on a Charisma check: *brain lock* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 13), *detect thoughts* (DC 15). If the Charisma check fails, he must pay the normal cost for manifesting the power.

Most of the theoretical work on the exact particles and formulae involved in dark matter itself is left to physicists, but Hoffmann researchers take those results into the field to fine-tune new materials, methods, and approaches to paranormal investigations. All this research occurs under the impetus of one simple, if terrifying, theory: A species that can control dark matter can control one of the great forces of the universe. A species that fails to master dark matter can be overrun by those species that do control it.

All forms of occult and paranormal activity fall under the province of the Institute's investigation of the changes wrought by dark matter, and all of its researchers are expected to apply their results. Such experiments are kept on a need-to-know basis even within the Institute. Nevertheless, a few members of the Institute clearly have greater and more focused powers than the vast majority of the independent paranormalists on Earth.

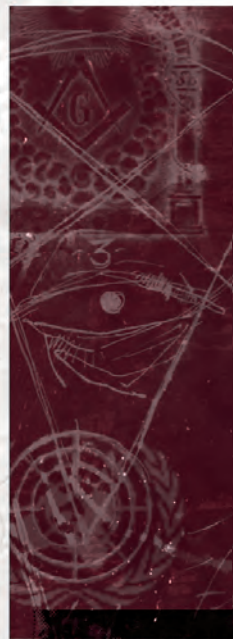
In this time of avalanching technology and changing physical laws, mysterious new abilities manifest themselves among humanity every year. The expression of these abilities—psychic, miraculous, and otherwise—is still erratic and poorly understood by scientists. Skeptics discredit and mock most attempts to study the phenomena, and government agencies discredit the rest.

Institute research fellows are expected to remain much more open to these phenomena. Indeed, many of the most successful experimental and curious researchers now tackle exactly those problems and phenomena with renewed seriousness. After all, if something lies beyond our accepted beliefs and explanations, it is more likely to yield rich rewards of new knowledge if it can be captured, analyzed, or explained.

The result of over eighty years of dogged research has been a deep understanding of several types of psychic ability, as well as at least a surface knowledge of the principles, forms, and materials of arcane magic. While the category of "operative religion" remains beyond the Institute's ability to explain, a large body of eyewitness accounts and other evidence clearly indicates that miracles are real and have been occurring more frequently every year since 1860 (with the notable exception of a brief, unexplained period in the 1950s).

While the Institute has powerful enemies, it also has alliances—some more tenuous than others. Among human organizations, the Institute sees the United Nations as a friendly group, sharing the vision of a united humanity defending Earth against a global threat; while the methods the two groups use differ markedly, both feel that they are better served by actively engaging their opposite number and working to change it from the inside. In addition, the Agency for Foreign Technology has shared information with the Institute, though the Institute currently suspects that group's infiltration by the sand slaves and therefore limits their access to sensitive data.

The Institute has ties to certain alien groups as well. Many of the Itan faction of the Greys sympathize with Nakami's efforts, and some rogues occasionally provide resources, equipment, and other assistance (quietly, of course). The Institute has an on-again, off-again route of contact with the sand slaves (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 79) through its researchers at the University of Illinois. While the sand slaves distrust the Greys, they are unaware of the Institute's ties to that ancient species. The diplomatic ties are very delicate, but are the closest to a positive contact that



the Institute has had with any species other than the Greys. The Institute has also made unsuccessful attempts at contact with several other alien species, including the elohim (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 33), kinori (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 56), and luciferans (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 61).

At the directive of Nakami himself, the Institute actively recruits agents who have experience with the strange or supernatural, seeking to tap into their knowledge and abilities. Some have wondered if the Institute has expanded too fast over the past two decades, opening offices in a dozen cities worldwide. Though the Institute seems to have maintained its cover so far, it's entirely possible that rogue agents or fifth columnists may have infiltrated its ranks. An inter-organizational conspiracy seems inevitable, and if heroes hunting down rogue agents discover the truth about Nakami, they may wonder if they're on the wrong side after all.

Or . . .

The Institute has come a long way since its founding; it now frequently serves as a conduit for the alien Greys to learn about humans, and for humans to prepare to meet the Strangers. To those ends, its goals serve the aliens as much as they do the humans, and many aliens are actually members of the Institute. The Institute also strives to foster global human cooperation with an eye toward world government, thus making humanity as a whole easier for the Greys to deal with. No one really knows the exact motives of the Greys or the Institute. At best, they work toward contact and cooperation between humans and aliens. At worst, they prepare to infiltrate, conquer, or exploit mankind. Whichever (if either) is the truth, the Hoffmann Institute serves as the Greys' chief means of direct interaction with humanity. All "investigation of the paranormal" and other activities are mostly a front, designed to study the reactions of the investigators as much as the subject being examined.

Special Division

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Special Division's existence and activities are kept secret from the bulk of the Institute's membership. Special Division agents generally carry out the most sensitive operations. Four sections of the Special Division exist (Blue, Green, Red, and White); these are described below.

Heroes may encounter Special Division operatives from time to time (sometimes without realizing it), but shouldn't become members of the division until they've impressed someone in a position of authority.

Blue Section. Blue Section is responsible for all black ops carried out on the Institute's behalf: breaking and entering, surveillance, extractions from hostile territory, and even "arrests" to bring wanted figures back to an Institute safe house for interrogation or for hand off to Red Section. Blue Section often cooperates with the Intelligence Division. Its members are sometimes recruited from among white-collar criminals recently released from jail, and sometimes from the ranks of disaffected NSA or CIA agents.

Green Section. Green Section contains a large number of linguists, engineers, and medical specialists. While some rumors claim that Green is the section responsible for making and maintaining contact with the various species of Strangers, others claim that its work is more in the line of dissection than discussion. Since

all their work is classified, only Green Section members know for sure.

Red Section. Red Section is only discussed quietly, and its existence is not acknowledged by those "in the know." Its work is quite simple: eliminate threats to the Institute or to humanity. All Red Section members are experienced killers, with Special Forces or CIA experience in wetwork (assassinations). Though they occasionally pull dull assignments (such as helping out with security concerns), for the most part they are seen as the Institute's most glamorous cutthroats, leading lives of action and mayhem.

White Section. Based in a compound known as Temple Cascadia set in the remote Cascade Mountains of Washington, members of White Section are rarely seen in the offices and research parks of the Institute's more conventional facilities. Here, the Institute trains its own paramilitary force. Over 120 troops live here, including more than 30 sasquatches (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 80). Members of White Section are often assigned as bodyguards to Institute executives or as muscle on a dangerous mission.

NEW WORLD ORDER: THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN) seeks to establish a single world government, called the New World Order.

Headquarters: New York.

Followers: Well over 100,000 troops, agents, and employees.

Secret Knowledge: Governmental and alien secrets.

Common Missions: Investigating and concealing any alien presence or appearance, manipulating governments and societies to gain power over them, secretly building bases within national borders, and creating events to further bolster the apparent need for a single governmental body. UN forces also work to maintain, supply, and staff Moonbase Plato while keeping its existence a secret.

Requisition Limit: 40 (illegal).

The founding of the United Nations on October 24, 1945, was more than an attempt to streamline international diplomacy; it also established a forum for global concerns best kept out of the public eye. As a result, the UN chartered several organizations with international reach, including the Davos Commission, the World Health Organization, and a Quick Response Force that could be deployed via helicopter to trouble spots around the globe. On the surface, the UN seems like nothing more than an idealistic but relatively naive effort at internationalism. In truth, the everyday bureaucracy, bungling, petty infighting, and nepotism that characterizes the United Nations provides a perfect cover for much deeper plans. Underneath the façade of wasted funds and policy wrangles, a few conferences have helped shape the human response to the rising tide of dark matter paranormalism. More significant, however, is the fact that the UN intends to position itself as a true global governmental body for the new millennium—the New World Order.

The phrase "New World Order" comes from the works of H. G. Wells, who published *The New World Order* nonfiction volume and *The Open Conspiracy*. Following in his footsteps decades later, in 1991 the Brandt Commission—including President George Bush, Robert McNamara, and many others—met in Germany to

outline the New World Order. They defined the NWO as “a supra-national authority to regulate world commerce and industry; an international organization that would control the production and consumption of oil; an international currency that would replace the dollar; a world development fund that would make funds available to free and Communist nations alike; an international police force to enforce the edicts of the New World Order.”

This effort hasn't gone entirely unnoticed. Though they are often dismissed as crackpots, a few people have kept careful records of strange black helicopters moving through the skies of United States, Canada, and Europe. A few journalists and politicians have seen the dim outlines of the New World Order, the world government that many regard as a crucial step toward opposing the encroachment of dictators, military rulership, and alien infestation. Indeed, it seems that the world population will finally see the end of polynationalism and the beginning of mononationalism, just as polytheism was replaced by monotheism. Entrenched power groups each seek to put the entire world under their control. But how do they intend to shape a response to the Greys, the ever-increasing number of paranormal events, and the rising population of psionically gifted humans?

Part of the answer is clearly military. The UN's standing army numbers more than half a million, in addition to a rapid response force of 100,000 crack troops and scattered peacekeeping forces totaling 275,000. These regiments have been deployed on the orders of the

Secretary General to suppress the kinori in Africa, the sasquatches in the U.S., and the alien invaders just about everywhere. They answer to the Office of External Affairs, a small bureau of the UN that occasionally cooperates with the Hoffmann Institute in investigating alien activities.

Project Glacier

Kept hidden by layer after layer of financial minutiae, this UN-funded operation has a far-reaching, even audacious goal: to settle the Moon. It's a one-way ticket; those who go are not allowed to return. Within the upper echelons of the UN, those who take the trip to the Moon are euphemistically said to have “gone up onto the glacier.” No one ever comes off the glacier—or at least, if they do, they keep very, very quiet about it. From the moonbase, it is hoped, humanity will have a launch pad to explore the solar system and perhaps the stars.

Although it is officially named Hammar skjöld Base after the second Secretary General of the UN, the site has been nicknamed Moonbase Plato for its location. The base is a fairly extensive site built in the shadow of the Plato crater wall near the lunar north pole. Work on the site was begun in 1988 under the authority of UN Security Council Directive AR771-1988, issued by Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on February 28

of that year. Reconstructing the paper trail or eyewitness accounts of the original treaty, agreement, or goals of the base is virtually impossible; all diplomats who were present at the



Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The New World Order

The rise of the Dark Tide during the 20th century has mirrored a very different kind of tide: the rise of globalization. From multinational corporations to the World Trade Organization, from the World Bank to the United Nations, the power of the individual nation-state has weakened dramatically in the last handful of decades. Proponents of these trends claim it's a natural evolution of civilization, no different than mammals succeeding dinosaurs as rulers of the Earth.

Hogwash.

Globalization isn't some random event that happens to be occurring, it's the result of a massive conspiracy to establish a single world government to rule every last human being on the planet: the New World Order. The UN's just a “front organization” for the efforts of the New World Order, and the U.S. is one of its biggest patsies.

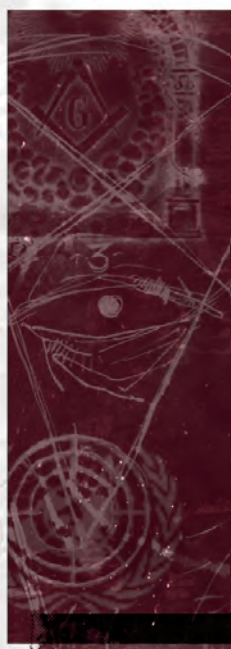
Lately, the New World Order has become particularly interested in near-space operations, including sponsorship of the International Space Station. Whether this is intended to establish a permanent “upper hand” in negotiations with vulnerable nations below,

or the first step toward widening humanity's reach to other worlds, is unclear.

Clues: Any time that a global concern takes precedence over a single nation's sense of self-preservation or self-government, it's likely that the New World Order has stepped in. From the manipulation of oil prices to multinational strike forces taking down despotic governments, the New World Order seeks to preserve stability and establish control on all fronts. And of course, if you happen to spot some black helicopters in the vicinity...

The Illuminati

9:01



meeting have since retired, died of natural causes, or met with serious accidents.

Ultimately, the UN sees Project Glacier as a way to provide firsthand training in space exploration and colonization, perhaps eventually leading to the launch of a human generation ship. The base's existence also provides a convenient bolt-hole for the UN's leaders if the state of affairs on Earth ever deteriorates into something as horrible as a nuclear winter, a plague resulting from a manmade or natural biological meltdown, or even just a collapse of social norms and worldwide infrastructure in the wake of a public first contact. More information on Moonbase Plato is given on page 129.

The Elite Security Force (ESF)

The Elite Security Force of the United Nations exists to solidify the New World Order by quelling terrestrial and extraterrestrial threats to global unity. The ESF is a military organization trained to resolve issues using brute force, and its soldiers can deal with anything from crowd control to counter-terrorism.

For more information on the ESF and its members, see the *d20 Menace Manual* (pages 218–223).

Or . . .

The UN exists to unite mankind against a common foe: the alien threat. Although it operates in secret and sometimes illegally, the organization has the best of intentions. Working with the Hoffmann Institute, UN scientists study the rise of dark matter and attempt to investigate and conceal the aliens and their presence on Earth. Project Glacier is one additional way that the UN can monitor and study alien activity while attempting to bring about a peaceful united global government, allied for the protection of Earth.

THE LAND OF THE FREE: THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Engineered by the Freemasons (perhaps manipulated by the Rosicrucians), the United States of America was born in conspiracy. More a collection of conspiracies than a single monolithic illuminati group itself, the U.S. government holds enough secrets to keep a conspiracy hunter busy for multiple lifetimes. The trouble is, no one department has access to all the secrets, making for a muddled mess of tangled plots and not-so-friendly rivalries. Law enforcement agencies, intelligence agencies, military organizations, and more all compete for tax dollars and other resources, inevitably pitting them against one another.

Just look at some of the conspiracies carried out by the U.S. government over the last half-century: The CIA's MK-ULTRA program tested brainwashing programs. NASA's SETI program may or may not be a front for a human-Grey program keeping watch for some other alien species feared by the Greys. The CDC and National Institutes of Health are working together on a eugenics program designed to test psychic abilities in alien-human hybrids. The Agency for Foreign Technology continues its secret genetic experiments aimed at perfecting the process of creating moreaus (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 247). The Federal

Emergency Management Agency exists purely to take control of the nation in a time of dire "emergency."

Ultimately, "the government" isn't a single powerful entity, but a collection of warring illuminati. Heroes may rightly fear what "the government" is likely to do, but what they're really worried about is how the FBI, CIA, or other agencies are going to react. In some cases, the heroes might simultaneously have enemies and allies within the government. (The CIA, Department of Defense, FBI, and FEMA are all described in the *d20 Menace Manual*.)

Not surprisingly, Freemasons fill many ranks and positions within the government. Other illuminati groups are present as well, including Bilderbergers, Knights of Malta, Satanists, and members of smaller groups. Even the Mafia and other organized crime syndicates have a grip on some facet of the government.

The United Nations' affiliated architects of the New World Order within the U.S. government secretly refer to themselves as Aquarius (some call the anticipated new age the Age of Aquarius). This secret, intra-agency organization dedicates itself to bringing about a one-world government—and, its opponents fear, a totalitarian regime. Particularly powerful members of Aquarius within the CIA orchestrated Operation Paperclip, in which Nazi scientists and spies were given protection after World War II in exchange for valuable information.

The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) is the oldest intelligence organization in the U.S. government. Within its ranks lurks a secret group of conspirators known as COM-12. These conspirators consider themselves American patriots and present the Aquarius conspiracy with its greatest obstacle. Using psychic remote viewers as spies, COM-12 struggles to uphold the constitutional government. They strike in secret, doing what they can to keep illuminati groups from gaining power in the government or from keeping compromised agencies (such as the CIA) from proceeding with their nefarious deeds unhindered. While some romantics might consider them near-mystical "knights," it should be remembered that the agents of COM-12 display utter ruthlessness in carrying out their goals.

But What Are They Doing?

More than other groups, the governments of the world are interested in keeping the presence of aliens a secret. Their existence is a threat to national power and human authority; worse, the people of those nations might demand that the government do something about the aliens rather than simply standing idly by (or worse, cooperating with them). Nowhere is that more true than in the United States.

Plots entangle in other plots as humans try to manipulate aliens and vice versa, and in the end, it's not always clear who is winning the fight. To many human leaders, lying low and letting the aliens fight among themselves is more than just cowardice—it's a smart move to buy time. Time for humans to overcome prejudice, advance our technological level to be on a par with that of the aliens, overcome our innate prejudices, and learn about our psionic and arcane potential. That way, when the governments do confess to what's really going on, they'll be able to speak with power and authority and can negotiate with the aliens from a position of strength rather than weakness.

Given all that, what is the U.S. government doing to even the odds? First of all, it has one ace in the hole: a captured alien spaceship that landed near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

Officials have repeatedly denied having this ship, but anyone looking at the larger pattern of government activity quickly notices that in 1948 the government formed the first panel to undertake a serious investigation into the UFO phenomenon, a group called Project Sign. This project was quickly followed by Project Grudge and Project Blue Book, both of which claimed to find little or nothing about the nature of UFO activity and dismissed 99% of all accounts as the results of eyewitness error.

By the early 1950s, DNA had been identified as the human genetic material, and serious efforts were being made to categorize and even engineer that material. Geneticists and eugenics specialists brought over from occupied Germany by the CIA, NSA, and other branches of government began working on vaccines, directed mutation, and other schemes to improve human potential and strengthen human ability.

In 1966, the Greys and the U.S. government had their first meeting, as the aliens attempted to recover their lost ship by diplomatic means. The meeting failed spectacularly when understandably suspicious Pentagon officials made demands of the Greys that the aliens were unwilling to meet. The Greys memory-wiped most of the human participants. In 1969 the government published the Condon Report, asserting that there was no credible evidence of

UFOs and that no further study was required. Project Blue Book was shut down.

Years later, Chinese biowarfare labs isolated a strain of bacteria lethal to the Greys and seemed to be making progress in psi research, though at an enormous cost in human lives. Rumors of forced breeding programs cannot be confirmed, but the U.S. made several efforts to gain access to a genetic line called the *jin niao*, or "Golden Bird," said to be the most powerful set of human psychic abilities ever documented. Combined with U.S. cloning techniques of the 1980s, this genetic line is becoming a first line of defense against alien infiltration into the upper echelons of government.

Finally, the secret UN moonbase (see Project Glacier, page 90) was established in 1988 with U.S. assistance; to this day, the UN manipulates the U.S.'s space program by offering to serve as a new channel of contact to the aliens.

Black Agencies

Within the government thrive agencies and departments that do not officially exist. These secret operations gain funding through circuitous (and often illegal) routes. Until fairly recently, the NRO (National Reconnaissance Office—a department specializing in the use of spy satellites) was just such an agency.

Some conspiracy theorists speculate that an "assassination bureau" black agency exists. Others claim that a special agency



Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: The Federal Government

Born from a conspiracy among rebellious colonists (many of them Freemasons), it's only natural that the U.S. government is now one of the most sprawling and labyrinthine conspiracies of them all. Ironically, even though this conspiracy thrives on bureaucracy, it's one of the worst-organized illuminati in history. Rival organizations within the government struggle for control over power and influence, sometimes without even realizing it. Various arms work at cross-purposes, or on redundant activities, resulting in gross waste of resources.

Just take a look at a small sampling of the branches of the U.S. gov-

ernment, each of which supposedly works for the same goal: the protection of American citizens worldwide. Everyone knows about the FBI, of course, and the CIA. Despite having supposedly differing purviews, the two organizations frequently clash over jurisdictions. Throw in the ATF, the NSA, the Secret Service, the NRO, as well as various other military intelligence-gathering organizations, and you have alphabet soup—as well as a situation ripe for corruption and back-room dealings. Even supposedly benevolent, "friendly" arms such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and NASA have their own agendas, which may or may not match the marching orders handed down from the Oval Office.

Confused yet? You should be. But here's the scariest part:

Even the government itself doesn't know everything it's doing. The line-item budgets for every one of these organizations could be public record and you still wouldn't be able to figure out what's going on—there's that much information. And maybe that's intentional—if even they don't know what they're doing, the government reasons, nobody else can figure it out either.

Clues: You can always spot a federal agent—he's the one in the dark suit hiding behind the sunglasses. He might display the bulge of a gun in a shoulder holster, or maybe you'll notice the earpiece keeping him connected with home base. Of course, if they're that easy to spot, maybe they want you to see them, so that you think you'll know when they're doing something.

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dedicated to the cover-up of the paranormal (particularly aliens and UFOs) works in secret with agents traveling in black sedans who coerce witnesses to forget what they've seen (see the Men In Black sidebar on page 66).

Agency for Foreign Technology (AFT)

The AFT seeks to understand the alien presence on Earth while suppressing knowledge of alien activities on native soil and abroad.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Followers: About 1,200 agents working throughout the U.S.

Secret Knowledge: Detailed anatomical and linguistic information on all major alien species.

Common Missions: Soft kill, disinformation, technology recovery, extraction.

Requisition Limit: 40 (illegal).

The Agency for Foreign Technology (AFT) is the leading bureaucratic element in the government's efforts to understand and contain the growing alien presence on Earth. At the agency's direction, U.S. military, paramilitary, and intelligence groups capture and fabricate items of alien technology, seize and interrogate aliens, and attempt to discern alien strengths and weaknesses. But the organization's efforts to protect U.S. interests have backfired: The agency has been infiltrated and compromised by sand slaves (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 79) and now operates as a paramilitary effort to suppress all other groups with any knowledge of the true extent of the sand slave incursion in America and throughout the world.

The AFT's infiltration began with a single incident in 1967, when an etoile (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 35) found an open doorway in the city of Houston. The sand slave infection started there (and was later classified as the Houston Virus by epidemiologists at the CDC) but quickly spread to smaller towns in the Houston area, especially those near refineries and chemical processing plants.

The town of Sandy Point disappeared from Houston-area maps entirely after 1996, presumably as a direct result of U.S. government action against the problem. The public story claimed that the town had been the site of a terrible toxic gas leak; however, most of the people who supposedly died in that leak "just happened" to be U.S. government employees.

Somehow, the AFT has continued to operate as a conduit between the U.S. government and alien species (primarily the Greys), but since all communications pass through its staff and are stored in its records, it has become clear that the agency is hopelessly compromised. Outside observers are uncertain if any new agency has yet been created to take over the AFT's tasks. It appears that the higher echelons of the U.S. administration are either using the AFT as a source of information on the etoile, looking for weaknesses and studying them as they operate, or that those officials have somehow been co-opted by the etoile and are willfully ignoring the infiltration.

The Greys seem unaware of the sand slave infiltration into the AFT, and even those members of the human government who know about it think that the problem is much less severe than it actually is. With little opposition, the sand slaves' hold on Fillmore Metals, Lone Star Precision Machine Works, and the Westmark Petrochemical Co. grows stronger. What they are doing with those firms is still a mystery, and all attempts to investigate have resulted in the death or infection of the investigators.

Project Iota

Project Iota is a scientific research think tank and materials-analysis group created as an integral part of the AFT shortly after its founding in 1998. However, to say that details are sketchy is a colossal understatement. The project is wrapped in layers of security so tight and so seemingly redundant that it attracts attention and suspicion. For example, in papers and electronic files obtained by the Hoffmann Institute, the things not said about Iota are just as interesting as the vaguely futuristic clichés that pepper the

Fightin' the Man

Although *d20 DARK MATTER* is about being paranoid, and paranoia means that you think everyone's out to get you, if everyone is really out to get the heroes, they don't have much of a chance and it won't make for a very fun game. If the entire government is a single powerful entity with evil (or at least amoral) intentions and no concern for laws or rights, and it conspires against the heroes, the heroes lose, case closed. Thus, it is best that within a *d20 DARK MATTER* campaign, the government is something less than a monolithic entity—yet something more, as well. The government itself isn't a conspiracy—it's a medium for conspiracy. The government becomes a lumbering behemoth

for conspiracies to manipulate and even infiltrate, but always remain hidden from and never completely control.

It's important for the GM to realize that "the government" isn't the president, or Congress, or the CIA. It's not a singular entity at all. The president, congressmen, and the CIA can be controlled. They can also be opposed. The government is a vast network of departments and agencies that purport to work together but really only sometimes do. Agency duties overlap and create redundancies while other tasks slip through the cracks (because the system is too big to see all the cracks). Even setting any malicious intentions aside, the government doesn't work cohesively in any manner resembling perfection.

Now, if one assumes that the various departments within the government often work in secret, keeping information from other agencies or even actively working against other portions of the government, it becomes obvious how a hero can have enemies in the government and still make it out okay.

It's fine for people to say "the government is covering up alien abductions," or "the government's black helicopters are spraying experimental chemicals on the livestock," but GMs should always keep one detail in mind. Forces within the government may take such actions—and such forces, being limited, can be combated—but the government as a whole does not.

project's "Public Documentation." Public and media figures who show too much interest in the topic seem to have a curious habit of dying in plane or automobile crashes.

Curiously absent from the AFT's description of this top-secret project is any explanation of its goals, facilities, schedules, and chain of command and oversight—only its budget and staff are discussed, while all other related materials remain highly classified. Outside observers believe that the project is a thin cover for the AFT's collaboration with sand slaves, or at least of *quid pro quo* cooperation with the etoile. The truth may be just the opposite: The "project" may be a front to hide the AFT's complete subjugation from outside interests, in which case Project Iota serves to advance the sandman agenda rather than any human goal.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC seeks to control the spread of terrestrial and extraterrestrial diseases.

Headquarters: Atlanta.

Followers: Eight thousand researchers, about two thousand of them overseas.

Secret Knowledge: Familiar with most of the bioweapons tested on U.S. citizens. Aware of the existence of new disease strains brought to Earth by doorways (though many believe these are merely new terrestrial diseases).

Common Missions: Track public health risks, monitor disease outbreaks, identify new strains of bacteria and viruses, counter threats to water supply, enforce public vaccination programs.

Requisition Limit: 45 (military).

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the only government organization that understands the true possibility of a major, humanity-threatening epidemic. It is also one of the few groups that knows about the alien origin of the Houston Virus, the CDC's name for the disease vector that turns humans into sand slaves (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 79). While most CDC employees are in the dark about the real reason for its army of more than 10,000 public-health watchdogs, the directors at the top know that the CDC is one of the front-line agencies in the fight against extraterrestrial invasion.

The sense of urgency at the agency has led to some ethically shaky research in the last few years. In theory, the government and the private sector alike erect tight safeguards to ensure ethical and sane conduct surrounding the investigations funded in their labs. In practice, doctors and scientists are often able to fund side projects that may be anything but conventional. These include testing bioweapons on unsuspecting human populations, validating critical vaccines in the field rather than in the lab, and even sterilizing entire villages in certain parts of the world to prevent larger outbreaks of Ebola virus, Hanta virus, Houston virus, and worse.

Epidemics and Quarantines

Among the greatest dangers to Earth is the threat of an alien microorganism that can inhabit a human host. Cases of disease caused by extraterrestrial viruses, bacteria, or other microscopic organisms are

difficult to verify, but experts suspect that the Spanish influenza viral outbreak of 1918 and 1919—an epidemic that killed 20 million people—may have been caused by an alien organism. Going back much farther, researchers believe that the Black Death, a bacterial plague that reduced the population of Europe by a third in the 1300s, did not originate on Earth. The idea of a mutant or hybrid organism entering the biosphere—or worse, full-blown bacterial warfare through deliberately engineered pathogens—is even more horrifying. Humans have no immunity to such organisms, since they come from a completely different ecosystem.

Given the level of threat posed to human health by any alien interaction with native populations, the governments of the world have undertaken strong measures to prevent the possibility of an outbreak. Two primary organizations lead the charge to reduce the risks: the CDC, which monitors epidemics, and the World Health Organization, which provides public health enforcement for nations unable or unwilling to undertake the arduous work of creating and enforcing quarantines on their own people.

This threat runs in both directions, of course. Just as alien diseases could wipe out millions of humans, human diseases may slow down, cripple, or wipe out an alien colony. Some human pathogens can infect yeti, sand slaves, and kinori hosts. Just as smallpox took advantage of the lack of the natives' resistance in the Americas, local disease could be extremely deadly to a visiting species unprepared for it.

Finally, although the CDC and WHO usually deal with bacterial or viral threats, larger organisms pose just as much of a potential hazard. A plant species that displaced corn, rice, or wheat fields and was immune to ordinary herbicides would be devastating to world food supplies. A weed that clogged beaches and harbors could hinder shipping. And any insect able to eat and digest plastics could destroy our society, devouring power lines, auto parts, phones, and computers with equal abandon.

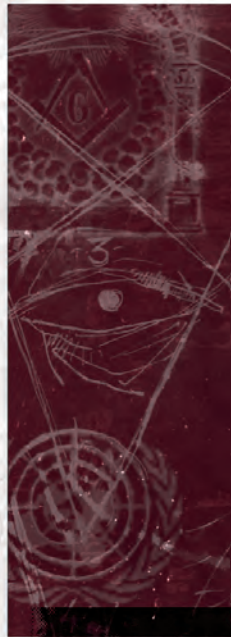
All because a doorway allowed a few extra seeds, germs, or eggs through.

Genotype ID Centers

Genetic knowledge has advanced considerably over the past few decades, due in no small part to the Human Genome Project begun in 1988. The project—led by the Dutch anthropogenic specialist Dr. Gerrit Jan van Ommen—will finish sequencing the entire set of 80,000 human genes in 2005. Once the genes on all forty-six chromosomes are mapped, a complete genetic map of the human genome can be constructed. With this information, tailor-made viruses developed to wipe out "unwanted" portions of the population become entirely possible. (In fact, the intradepartmental conspiracy known as Aquarius may be using the Human Genome Project as part of its plan to usher in its new order.)

Physicians can already identify a limited set of genetic abnormalities and diseases, though there's relatively little they can do to correct them directly. Soon, genetic screening of infants will be both relatively inexpensive and commonplace. Some say that such examinations already take place without the general public's knowledge. With or without consent, a person's genetic imprint could be compressed and stored in a regional or national database for future use by medical doctors—or anyone else with access to the information. These genetic fingerprints could also, of course, be used as identification in criminal cases.

The Illuminati



DNA Fingerprint Center

The use of DNA fingerprinting is becoming more and more routine among the police and in the courts. Criminals are often caught because of the hair, blood, or semen they leave at the scene of the crime—and the FBI and National Institutes of Health both maintain databases of DNA fingerprints, just as the FBI keeps regular fingerprint files. When police leads in a case run cold, likely suspects, checkpoint travelers, or even residents of entire neighborhoods are sometimes asked to provide DNA samples in the form of saliva. Though a case handled this way may involve tens of thousands of samples and just as many hours of lab work, the resulting DNA fingerprint is unmistakable, and the culprit can be traced with an extremely high degree of confidence. Once DNA establishes the culprit, supporting evidence or a confession usually seals the case before the courts ever hear it.

Over time, these techniques have been used more extensively. Though prints are kept on file primarily for convicted criminals, security personnel, and government employees, many other citizens may be represented in the DNA fingerprint archives. Naturally, in a few cases someone has been framed through the simple method of obtaining hair or skin cells and then leaving the materials behind at a crime scene, but these incidents are by far the exception.

The Ghost Train

The National Institutes of Health work with the CDC on a special project known only at the highest levels and generally referred to as the Ghost Train. The exact nature of the operation isn't clear, but the hypotheses include a careful eugenics program using government employees as volunteers; a system of code words, alien sympathizers, and safe havens for an unidentified species of aliens, much like the Underground Railroad of the days before the Civil War; or an operation that keeps a psychic research facility aboard a moving train, using people who travel the route as guinea pigs. That last seems the most likely, though the project may include aspects of the other two theories. The entire program maintains heavy security, and agents who attempt to obtain additional information about it variously disappear, are warned off, or come up empty.

In any case, a self-proclaimed psychic named Glen Collier (male human Charismatic Hero 3/Telepath 5) has argued forcefully on the Usenet and elsewhere that he is a product of that program. According to Collier, he escaped from the program in 1999 and has been on the run ever since, but his testimony cannot be traced through the Internet, much less corroborated.

As Collier describes it, the Ghost Train uses a coercive system of observation and experimentation to optimize extrasensory ability in humans. Test subjects wear radio anklets or are implanted with transmitters, and their homes and workplaces are outfitted with surveillance cameras to observe and record people's reactions to various forms of preternatural stimuli. A few experiments have even been conducted in public places to measure general reactions to the extreme abilities of Ghost Train psychics. In most cases, tabloid or other reports that discredit witnesses and obscure the facts follow these experiments.

Center for Xenological Studies (CXs)

The Center for Xenological Studies seeks to amass knowledge on alien life forms and technology.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Followers: Approximately thirty-five full-time staff.

Secret Knowledge: The most complete alien database in humanity's possession.

Common Missions: Find and claim alien artifacts, capture aliens from the wild, test reproductions of alien devices, test alien artifacts, and reconstruct alien power sources, biological processes, and cultures.

Requisition Limit: 35 (restricted).

On a quiet street not far from Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C., a well-kept brownstone stands in a row of similarly pristine buildings, all quiet and unassuming, their window shades discreetly drawn during daylight hours. A closer look shows that the building's façade is marred by a profusion of security measures. Barbed wire is strung carefully along the inside of each bar of its iron fence, a security camera oversees the entrance, and at night, steel shutters cover the windows.

Though it doesn't advertise and the sign on the building reads simply "Xenogen Labs," the Center for Xenological Studies is a hotbed of activity in the shadowy world of alien biology. Often simply referred to as the CXs or "the Center," it is the U.S. government's repository for many of its alien tissue samples and the home base of the finest government researchers. While this black agency lacks both funding and authority, it does have the advantage of being the end of the line for the many bodies, objects, and samples collected by the CDC, the army, and other forces throughout the world. It has amassed a greater body of evidence, more useful fragments of the larger puzzle, and a greater number of unique samples of otherworldly creatures than any other organization.

Sadly, most of this trove is never catalogued, much less taken out of the packaging used to submit it to the Center. The entire science staff of the CXs numbers eight full-timers and three part-time assistants, not nearly enough to give more than a cursory examination to the bounty of materials turned over to it every year. The CXs research lead, Alexander Dorizas, considers the lack of resources a personal affront and petitions for more staff at every opportunity. Unfortunately, CXs Chief Administrator Hector Sanjuro is a political appointee more concerned with protocol, proper procedures, and tight security than with uncovering anything useful. In fact, he finds that his position makes him very uncomfortable (maybe it's the mandatory bodyguards that came with the job).

The CXs publishes the semirespectable *Annals of Xenology*, a scholarly journal that at different times has covered alien biology, botany, microbiology, archaeology, engineering, and linguistics. Founded in 1999, circulation of the journal is limited to an elite circle of roughly 350 subscribers worldwide, all of whom have elevated security clearances and are expected to be contributors as well as readers. The Hoffmann Institute has twelve subscribers, including the head of the Archiving Division. The Institute has naturally been careful to keep its own larger investigations hidden from the government agents who come to investigate the security clearances for those subscribers.

National Air and Space Administration (NASA)

NASA oversees all U.S. space activity.

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Followers: Approximately 21,000 personnel.

Secret Knowledge: A detailed analysis of alien spacecraft encounters on Earth and particularly in space.

Primary Goal: Oversee all U.S. space activity.

Common Missions: Find and claim alien artifacts, cover up alien encounters, study alien technologies for use in human endeavors, build the International Space Station, probe the solar system (publicly and in secret), and conduct secret trade and communication with Moonbase Plato.

Requisition Limit: 45 (military).

As the agency ostensibly responsible for all extraterrestrial travel undertaken by the U.S. government, NASA has a shining past and a much murkier present. While public projects such as the Apollo missions, the Mariner and Voyager robot explorers, and the shuttle work on the International Space Station (see Earth Orbit, page 127) all earned the agency a good reputation, its work on more covert tasks has been less than satisfactory.

NASA's greatest source of embarrassment at the highest levels of government lies in the fact that it had missed the alien presence for so long. Most of the agency still doesn't know about the presence of alien crafts, though once in a while a large ship shows up on the radar screens as an unregistered orbital object. To insure that NASA remains within the loop for secret knowledge about alien contact and other classified information, Lew Allen was appointed head of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Previously, the well-connected Allen had been deputy director of the CIA.

NASA is firmly in the control of the Freemasons. Many of the administration's directors and high-ranking officials have been Masons, as have many astronauts—particularly those who went to the Moon (see page 73 regarding the importance of *prima materia* to the Masons). Buzz Aldrin even carried a Masonic banner on the Apollo 11 mission. Now that the Masons have their Moon rocks, however, it's possible that they don't care about NASA any more—thus the relative (and disappointing) inactivity of the organization for so long.

Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI)

There are an estimated 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. It's not unreasonable to assume that life exists near some of them. That's the simple premise behind a complicated global undertaking: the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, or SETI.

Astronomers began small-scale efforts to determine the presence of extraterrestrials in 1959, but the first serious work under the SETI name was accomplished as part of NASA in 1971, when the Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California, proposed Project Cyclops. Using radio telescopes, Cyclops was supposed to scan the sky for microwave signals emitted by transmitters on other worlds. The project was delayed and delayed again, as government funds were promised and then mysteriously disappeared from the budget. Finally, in 1992, private investors in Silicon Valley funded the High Resolution Microwave Survey.

The resulting effort, renamed Project Phoenix, searched the airwaves using a supercomputer to examine millions of frequencies from the one thousand closest stars. The search

couldn't be stopped by either the apathy or antipathy of the U.S. government or hostile senators such as Richard Bryan of Nevada, who consistently ridiculed the notion of finding "little green men" with public money. Since then, the search has expanded globally. SETI programs run at UC-Berkeley and Harvard, as well as in Italy and Australia. Even amateur astronomers tune in via backyard satellite dishes. The silence and static between the stars has so far revealed nothing.

Additional Government Agencies

A few other government agencies may play a part in *d20 DARK MATTER* campaigns, including the following authorities.

ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms): This agency monitors the possession of the three controlled substances mentioned in its name. Famous mostly for its involvement in the Waco debacle (a raid on an armed cult compound that ended in death and disaster), many believe this organization oversteps its bounds and violates constitutional rights in its monitoring and control of dangerous materials.

CIA (Central Intelligence Agency): The CIA was founded after World War II to gather data on foreign powers and conduct U.S. espionage and covert operations overseas. It has operatives and offices in every major country around the globe. Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the agency has dedicated most of its resources to counter-terrorism. See pages 148–151 of *d20 Menace Manual* for more information about the CIA.

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation): The FBI's jurisdiction covers interstate crime, drug trafficking, and possible threats against the government from within. Although it has thousands of field agents and a vast network of field offices, the Bureau has been known to employ citizens to spy upon each other. The FBI is the one U.S. intelligence agency that does not open its database to the CIA. See pages 164–167 of *d20 Menace Manual* for more information about the FBI.

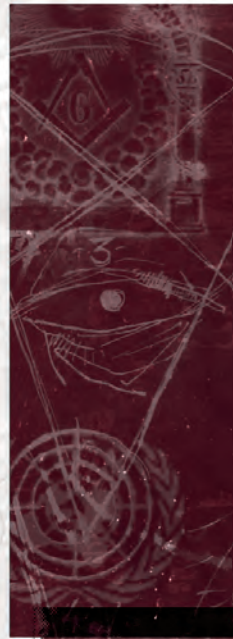
FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency): FEMA works to prepare for and respond to major civil emergencies and disasters throughout the United States. It also provides stability in case of government collapse. See pages 168–170 of *d20 Menace Manual* for more information about FEMA.

Military Intelligence: Although some claim "military intelligence" is an oxymoron, the army's highly efficient intelligence corps has a long history of sometimes less than scrupulous behavior. A new agency, INSCOM, now carries out all Army intelligence duties. AFI (Air Force Intelligence) and OSI (Air Force Office of Special Investigations) are much newer and may play a part in UFO disinformation. The ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) is the oldest of all.

NRO (National Reconnaissance Office): A secret, "black" agency until recently, the NRO monitors spy satellites and interprets the data. The technology used on the spy satellites and their degree of accuracy is classified, but is said by some to be good enough to read a book from orbit. The NRO uses satellites to view activities within U.S. borders as well as without.

NSA (National Security Agency): Sometimes referred to as "No Such Agency," this supersecret organization is responsible for intelligence gathering and other activities surrounding communications and communications technology.

NSC (National Security Council): Made up of the president, the vice-president, and other high-ranking officials, the NSC exists



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to be the central recipient of all intelligence gathered by other agencies. At shown by its position at the center of the Iran-Contra affair, the NSC may engage in illegal covert actions of its own.

Secret Service: Best known for its protection of the White House and the president, the Secret Service (a branch of the Treasury Department) was created to fight counterfeiters and aided the Justice Department throughout the early twentieth century. The Secret Service also provides security at foreign embassies as well as for special visitors such as the Pope.

U.S. Space Command: This group was created to oversee all space-related research and activity. Operating out of the Crystal Palace within NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain complex in Colorado, USSPACECOM monitors space (near to Earth and deep space) and administers the supposedly defunct Star Wars defense program that placed armed satellites in earth orbit.

VISITORS FROM THE STARS: THE GREYS

The Greys seek to observe humanity. A few seek to "improve" the human species.

Headquarters: Martian city-ship in Valles Marineris.

Followers: Nearly a million on Mars; several thousand on Earth.

Secret Knowledge: Advanced technology, psionic FX abilities.

Common Missions: Abduction of humans, observation of humans and other species.

Requisition Limit: Unknown.

In 1947, Kenneth Arnold coined the term "flying saucer" as he reported his sighting of strange unidentified flying objects. Later that same year, reports came from Roswell, New Mexico, that the military had recovered a crashed extraterrestrial craft. Alien encounters, however, are much older than these events. Although most of modern society does not realize or believe it, aliens have almost always been among us. Visitors from other planets visit, observe, and even interact with humans, and

have done so since before recorded history. Ancient humans knew of them, although they did not always know exactly how to describe or categorize the aliens correctly. In fact, it may be that modern humanity is as incapable of truly understanding them as our primitive forefathers were.

The Greys (which call themselves fraal) are the most prevalent and significant alien presence on the Earth today. Their spaceships are seen flying over military bases, cities, and desolate areas alike. They are seen landing on Earth and the Moon, and their handiwork may be witnessed even farther out, on Mars.

Small in stature, they have incredibly advanced technology and impressive psionic FX abilities. Their ships cross interstellar distances, and they have the ability to deceive and even erase human minds. The Greys can manipulate energy and matter in startling displays of power.

Their agenda is unknown. The Greys mutilate animals. They abduct and study humans. They observe military bases and activities and follow air and spacecraft. Are they sinister or friendly? Are they something else entirely? No one knows for sure, although many claim to have the answers.

The mighty city-ship of the Greys is settled into the Valles Marineris, the great rift on Mars. It often sends scout ships to Earth; most of the time these scouts simply pick up atmospheric, marine, and biological samples for later examination, but occasionally they drop off an agent to investigate human cities, paranormal sites, or regions of known alien presence firsthand. In the most extreme cases, they send a retrieval or eradication team to remove traces of their presence. With their superior technology, psionic abilities, and command of gravity itself, the Greys find it relatively easy to keep these trips hidden.



SEELEY/99

Uneasy sentiment accompanied the Greys' settlement of the Sol system. The decision that determined the aliens would settle Earth was controversial even in its own time, and it has continued to be debated ever since, with views and counterarguments changing from generation to generation. Was it ethical to settle an inhabited planet? Was it right to attempt to aid humans? To what extent should the Greys attempt to moderate the human proclivity to violence? The issues have only become more urgent as humans have grown more and more technologically savvy. Indeed, in the last century humanity has surpassed Grey achievements in some areas of technological endeavor, primarily chemistry and micromanufacturing. More important, the Greys now have a much harder time gathering raw materials for their own industrial enterprises: Humans have laid claim to most of the terrestrial sources of petroleum, metals, and chemical feedstocks.

Humans have no idea of what the Greys' true goals are. Indeed, why do they have such an interest in humanity? They are presently observers, interfering very rarely and discreetly. A few are exceptions to the rule, preferring to adventure and see the world, but even those few are rather secretive.

Certain Greys even accost witnesses while posing as Men In Black; they adopt something like human form through telepathic illusions. Their mental abilities allow them to eliminate their tracks, or at least reduce the traces of their presence to a level that can easily be denied by human governments.

A few Greys believe that it is possible to "improve" the human species, reducing its penchant for violence and vulnerability to a wide range of alien pathogens, and addressing its lamentable lack of appreciation for—indeed, fear and hostility to—alien advancement, culture, art, and technology. These Greys abduct humans, use viral and physical tools to change their physical and genetic makeup, and release them to the wild, where they are tracked and studied. For the most part, they carefully choose victims most likely to pass on their legacy—that is, humans of childbearing age—but occasionally they take victims for gerontological studies as well.

The Greys who fear humans as a potential reservoir of disease and violence are fully in favor of continuing this program, but many others oppose it as too little, too late. In order for them to have had a large impact on the human gene pool, the changes would have had to be implemented long ago when the city-ship

first arrived. Now, with a human population in the billions, no more than a few thousand can be altered by the limited number of scientists available for such research.

More cynical Greys suspect that the genetic tinkering may have other goals entirely. These scientists suspect that a faction among the Greys seeks to gather genetic samples to gauge human strengths and weaknesses for some dire plot.

A few Greys live among humans but keep their presence secret. The most trusted and skilled reconnaissance agents drift into human society under cover of psionic illusions or memory wipes that keep their presence a secret. These close-contact agents speak human languages fluently, understand human technology in detail, and always live in safe houses bought by the aliens through blinds, holding companies, and layers of lawyers.

More often, reconnaissance parties simply monitor radio, TV, and Internet topics. They collect data, may briefly question a human subject or two, and commission further research through third parties such as private investigators, polling agencies, and market research firms. Primarily, they seem interested in human beliefs, adaptability, and ability to cope with stressful or even lethal situations, as if they are testing the psychological profile of various human populations over time. In addition, they sometimes track obscure economic and medical indicators. What is ultimately done with all this data is unclear, but the Greys take it quite seriously.

Although many purport to know something of the history of the Greys before they came to Earth, such facts are always suspect. In truth, we know nothing of these aliens before they first contacted humans in prehistory, and precious little after that.

The ancients saw the Greys as gods. However, they could also be the source of many demon myths. In fact, no one agenda rules the Greys (see Grey Politics, below). Certainly the political war fought among the aliens in the days of ancient Thera (see page 47) shows that they are not always a harmonious group.

Modern knowledge of these aliens comes post-Roswell, when the Greys formed a relationship (even if it was short-lived) with the U.S. government. Evidence exists that in the southwestern U.S., the government (or some part of the government) is working hand in hand with the Greys, performing sinister experiments or preparing for a dire plot. Some abductees report that human military personnel not only know about alien abductions, they assist the

Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: Aliens from Outer Space

Perhaps no "conspiracy" sends a shudder down the spine of an average human like the thought that alien creatures are observing us from space, periodically abducting innocent civilians for arcane medical experiments. Certainly, the idea of "little green (or gray) men from outer space" captured the minds of those living in the second half of the twentieth century like few other sto-

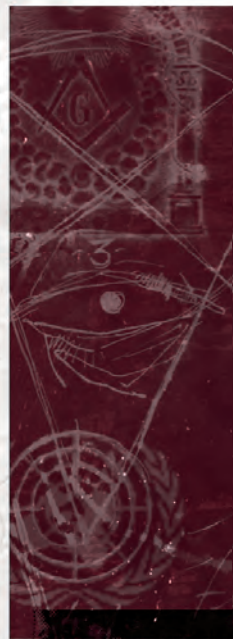
ries. After a while, though, it became comical; a trite, hackneyed cliché used as a punch line rather than a warning to look to the skies.

But isn't that just what the Greys would want? If there really are bug-eyed monsters peering down on us from orbit, wouldn't they want us to laugh them off as a joke? After all, it wasn't always a joke. Air Force pilots really reported sighting unidentified flying objects before "seeing a UFO" became a code-word for going crazy. And something crashed to earth near Roswell, New Mexico, even if the

area's current economic dependence on flying-saucer nuts makes the whole thing seem a little too convenient.

The truth is up there.

Clues: Aliens are "known" to perform abductions of humans, so unexplainable disappearances can often signal alien intervention. There are the inevitable sightings of flying saucers or lights in the sky, not to mention the ubiquitous crop circles. Even cattle mutilations are often blamed on curious aliens.



aliens in conducting them. Perhaps the government sold some of its people to the Greys in exchange for technology?

Other Greys seem interested in helping humans. In ancient times, they assisted people in building projects, taught them about the stars, and gave them limited amounts of technology. Even today, some humans who report encounters or communication with the Greys claim that they are benevolent creatures sent here to watch over us, help us, and in fact protect us from the rising Dark Tide.

The fraal are described in the *d20 Menace Manual* (page 45).

Fraal Politics

The fraal are far from a unified political body. Instead, no fewer than three distinct political factions exist—the Ahotti, the Iltan, and the Ziljir—with no doubt many smaller splinter groups.

Considered the most powerful of the Grey factions, the Ahotti (which translates roughly as “our people”) have shaped most Grey policies for the past eight thousand years. For the first three thousand years of the Greys’ presence on Earth, the Ahotti limited humanity’s access to Grey technology, doling new advances out sparingly over time. In this way, they believed that humans could be brought up to the Greys’ level without irrevocably harming human culture.

The activation of the standing stones of Thera, and the ensuing attack by the otherworldly beings that stepped through the doorway, encouraged the Iltan (literally, “free mind”) to propose a dramatic increase in the rate of technology sharing. Fearing additional future encounters with the extradimensional invaders, the Iltan lobbied the current Grey Speaker to approve the granting of additional scientific advances to the Atlanteans. Despite their minority status, an alliance with the Ziljir faction—along with an agreement to allow the Ahotti to increase efforts to quash the growing Egyptian reliance on arcane arts—allowed the Iltan to sway the Speaker.

For their part, the Ziljir were content to act as “kingmakers” in fraal politics. Generally considered a fringe group, the Ziljir are often seen as troublemakers; their name is derived from the Fraal term for “chaos-bringer.” Most Ziljir were more interested in personal gain than in improving the humans’ lot in life, and enjoyed taking advantage of their status as revered beings among the lesser humans.

During this time, many Iltan moved secretly within Egyptian society, working to undermine the Ahotti’s efforts to discourage certain intellectual pursuits (such as the Hermetic arts). A few among them helped form the Companions of Horus, a human society dedicated to the free sharing of ideas and learning. Some even worked to open friendly relations with the kinori (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 56).

The destruction of Thera forced a major shift in fraal politics. Many Ahotti blamed the Iltan’s new policies for the catastrophe. The humans could no longer be seen as equals, claimed the Ahotti, nor could they be allowed to continue the studies of arcane magic. A political firestorm arose, during which the Speaker (perhaps egged on by Ziljir extremists) was pressured to denounce the policies of both the Ahotti and the Iltan, restricting Grey development to single cities and leaving humans to form their own civilizations in certain preserved districts.

Though later fraal historians feel this decision prevented a civil war, the decision was not a popular one. Reasoning that the Egyptian culture was too poisoned against the Greys to continue

efforts in this region, the fraal moved across the Atlantic to Central America.

There, the fraal pursued a more conservative plan, remaining separate from the young Olmec civilization. Despite the Speaker’s prohibition, some Greys walked among the humans, spreading information and teaching the humans in the ways of agriculture and other sciences. These teachers entered Mesoamerican lore under such names as Kukulcan, Quetzalcoatl, and Viracocha. However, the Grey presence in Central America was shorter-lived than on Thera, and the city-ship left around A.D. 700 and made the Moon its new home. In the mid-twentieth century, when humanity seemed poised to leap across the gulf of space from Earth to the Moon, the city-ship moved to Mars, where it rests today in Valles Marineris.

Leaving the Earth did not end fraal interference in human affairs, however. Members of the Iltan faction are believed to have been in contact with the Knights Templar for about 100 years, teaching them secrets of psionics and learning what the knights had discovered about dark matter and arcane in return. In fact, certain records—such as the Migashi Tablet, discovered in the Sahara by an Institute expedition in 1951—seems to indicate that Iltan efforts to share information with humans have continued into the present, despite the Speaker’s prohibitions against it.

Rogue Fraal

From time to time, individual fraal display personalities that diverge greatly from those of their fellows. The fraal call these rogues, or *hesai*, and target them for reeducation or elimination as appropriate.

Some rogues follow selfish or evil agendas, preying on humans with their powerful psionic abilities. Their activities often result in cases that humans are at a loss to solve. In general, they try to keep their activities low-profile, as they are often the targets of alien trackers, strikers, and elimination teams if their activities become publicly known. The most notorious example currently operating on Earth is Eenevar jil Tan, a Telepath who controls a criminal empire in southeast Asia and traffics in heroin. Marooned after a surveillance operation went wrong, Eenevar has turned his psionic gifts into a profitable tool to control the Shan arcanists. To them, he is simply “The White Ghost” and is revered as a supernatural figure. His compound in the jungle is heavily fortified and extremely isolated; it can be reached only by air.

Other rogues live among humanity quietly, without attracting attention and without using their mental powers to manipulate and abuse humans. These are often simply deserters from recon expeditions, and they are fascinated by human foibles and behaviors. Some, such as Itohiro Nakami, director of the Hoffmann Institute, seek to help humans. In a few cases, *hesai* desert because they seek to master the arcane arts found among humans, generally without success.

Sasquatches

Although tales of Bigfoot, the yeti, momo, almas, skunk-apes, and other mysterious humanoids have been around for centuries, it wasn’t until 1973 that humans first stumbled upon the truth. In September of that year, three women in Pennsylvania not only saw what appeared to be alien craft land on the ground, but three creatures emerge—“apelike, hair-covered creatures,” according to

the women. That year, 245 witnesses reported 118 sightings of hairy humanoid creatures in the area. There were also over six hundred UFO reports. Researchers can now match together areas of Bigfoot sightings along with UFO “flaps” before and since 1973.

According to biological and forensic studies, the sasquatches are believed to be creatures from early in Earth’s history (or perhaps another planet altogether) genetically reproduced by the Greys to serve as servants and warriors. It seems likely that some of the creatures have escaped from their masters and now live in the wild on their own.

One of the greatest arguments against the existence of Bigfoot has always been no one had ever found a carcass or bones. The reason is that the Greys monitor and take away dead or dying specimens to continue to keep their presence a secret. Some sasquatch reports note their having equipment in their possession (tools given to them by their masters?), including devices that make them nearly invisible—most likely a further attempt to keep their secret.

Or . . .

The Greys are not extraterrestrials, but ultraterrestrials, coming from an entirely different dimension or reality. Their spaceships are devices that allow them to travel not only through space but also through the dimensional barriers. They come from some alternate Earthlike world (hence their ability to create human-alien crossbreeds), and their agenda is too alien and bizarre for us to ever truly comprehend, at least until we ascend beyond this level of awareness. (Perhaps that is what the illuminati have been actually been after all along.)

Or the Greys are time travelers, come to us from our own distant future. They are, in fact, humans who have genetically altered their appearance. They seek to study the past, and reclaim some “pure” human genetic samples while they are here, but they also may be manipulating their past—our present—to accomplish some unknown goal.

THEY WALK AMONG US: THE SAND SLAVES

The sand slaves seek to take over the world by infecting all humans with transformative nanites.

Headquarters: Unknown.

Followers: Unknown, but estimates claim that they command at least 5,000 sand slaves.

Secret Knowledge: Advanced cybernetic equipment, biological expertise.

Common Missions: Acquire special metal ores or alloys, construct new machine tools, infiltrate chip-manufacturing plants, modify operating system source codes, hack government and military computer systems.

Requisition Limit: 40 (illegal).

Among the creatures that have arrived on Earth carried by the tide of dark matter, the sand slaves (sometimes called sandmen) and their cybernetic masters, the etoile (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 35), are perhaps the most dangerous. They seek to establish themselves quietly before proclaiming their rulership. In a few decades, perhaps a century at most, when their numbers have had time to

increase and their understanding of human society is greater, they will make their move. This species of cybernetic parasites long ago adjusted to a consistently high level of environmental dark matter. Today, the etoile coming to Earth hold a strong position every way but numerically. The etoile have superior technology. They understand the consequences of dark matter. They have mastered biological processes that humanity can barely hope to understand. They have the initiative, and, unlike the bulk of humanity, they know that the war has already started.

To win that war, the sand slaves seek to infiltrate positions of power and gather strategic resources. They have set watchers over strategic locations, corrupted generals and politicians, and prepared themselves with safe houses, networks of spies, and carefully concealed research programs that slowly are uncovering the extent of human technology, stamina, and methods. While the etoile gather intelligence on humanity, only the upper echelons of the political classes are even willing to admit that there is a real threat. Most of humanity remains blissfully ignorant.

Fortunately for us, several forces keep the etoile from taking over completely. For one thing, they are opposed by the Greys, who fear the etoile will ruin their efforts to “improve” humanity. Also, they must work in secrecy until they can gather enough strength to show their hand and seize everything they want.

Since 1991, the sand slaves have made a large push to move significant numbers of scouts and stalkers onto Earth, but the vagaries of travel through the gateways keep their numbers relatively low. Nevertheless, their infection teams have slowly built a set of beachheads in North America and central Asia, two reasonably industrialized regions of the globe and thus—to the sand slaves, anyway—valuable.

As far as anyone has been able to determine, the sand slave presence in Asia is centered in the old Soviet city of Magnitogorsk, a heavy-industrial hellhole founded under Stalin

Conspiracy Hunter’s Guide: Sand Slaves

How many versions of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* do you have to see to realize that “pod people” are just plain creepy? Almost as frightening as death itself is the concept of losing one’s individuality, and that’s what sand slaves represent. Sand slaves superficially resemble the humans they once were, and they can still pretend to have feelings, but they’re more like machines than people. They retain the knowledge they had as humans, and they communicate with one another like computers on a network. But they belong to something else now—something that plots to enslave humanity one human at a time.

Clues: Most people never realize that they have encountered a sand slave until they kill or capture it, at which point it turns to carbon and iron dust. Whatever turns a person into a sand slave also makes them stronger, faster, and healthier than before.

The Illuminati

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in 1929, and in the Caucasus, where open warfare has raged for years under the cover of an “ethnic rebellion.” Reports from the region are sketchy at best.

In North America, the sand slave infiltration point seems to be somewhere near the Houston Ship Canal, in a zone rich in refineries not too terribly far from the Mississippi River traffic. Throughout Texas, small towns have become homes to entire families of sand slave troops, medics, and technical experts. They have made great progress in cracking human computer systems, and all sand slaves are in frequent communication with others of their kind and with their etoile makers. They work together to cover up any discovery of their activities, and have been quite successful so far. Most Texans know of their towns as “kind of quiet, kind of creepy,” but anyone who actually finds out the truth behind their isolation and secrecy is quickly silenced.

From these infiltration points, the etoile and their sand slaves seem to be spreading out slowly, gathering around industrial sites. Reports have made it back to the Intelligence Division of the Hoffmann Institute about heavy machinery, loads of petrochemicals, and truckloads of specialized metal alloys being shipped to sand slave sites (which the Institute has taken to calling “sandhills”). Since these goods are all legitimately ordered, paid for, and delivered, there’s really nothing that can be done to stop them publicly without revealing that entire Texan towns are being subverted to someone else’s ends. That’s something the Institute

is unwilling to do until it knows more about what the sand slaves hope to accomplish with all of these materials, their hosts of human agents, and their advanced technology. At the same time, the sand slaves seem quite willing to keep their designs hidden until, presumably, their plans are so far advanced that they cannot be stopped.

Sand slaves are described in the *d20 Menace Manual* (page 79).

Or . . .

The sand slaves are visitors from our own future, a time when humanity has given up pure organic freedom to take up the banner of cybernetic coexistence with machines. These half-human, half-mechanical beings seek to change the course of history itself to ensure that their species will control Earth in the centuries to come.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Obviously, there are influential and important organizations beyond those mentioned above. Not all are secret societies—some are quite public, or secret only because they are so small or seemingly insignificant. The descriptions of the few mentioned below include a single adventure seed tied to each in order to work them quickly into a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign.

Aum Shinri Kyo

The rough English translation of the name of this group is "Supreme Truth." Based in Japan, this doomsday cult is led by the self-proclaimed "Holy Pope" Shoko Asahara. In 1995, Aum agents released poisonous gas in the Tokyo subway. At the same time, Aum labs cultivated botulism and other biological weapons for use in destabilizing the country, making it ripe for takeover. Aum paramilitary units have training from Russian military units. Those who oppose the cult disappear, their bodies reportedly dissolved in acid so they will never be found.

Aum has connections with Yeltsin's administration in Russia (three quarters of the Aum cultists are Russian, in fact), the Unification Church in Korea (which has links to the CIA), and the yakuza (which has links to the right-wing portion of Japanese government). Aum may be only one arm of a much larger conspiracy, or the middleman in huge illegal deals made between the Russians, the yakuza, and even the U.S. (The cult certainly has more money than it should based on its own resources.) But even if it sells arms or biological hazards or drugs between the Russians, the yakuza, and/or the Unification Church, that still doesn't rule out the fact that the leaders of the cult are doomsday nihilists interested in bringing about the apocalypse with the money from these illegal endeavors.

Adventure Seed: Aum members have been seen in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, at the Nikolai Tesla Museum. Internal group publications indicate that they are studying Tesla's theory that earthquakes could be produced artificially through electromagnetic pulses. Further research uncovers other cultists in Moscow, buying

vast amounts of surplus electronic equipment, including lasers. Investigation reveals that they are hatching yet another doomsday plot for Japan, and it also brings to the forefront their questionable sources of funding.

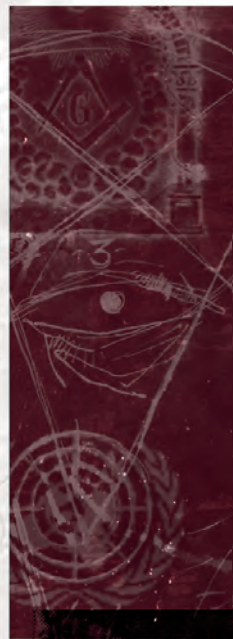
The Kinori

Unknown to most people, humans have long shared Earth with the reptilian humanoids known as kinori. Although their existence remains a secret, the high-ranking Freemasons have forged a pact with these creatures to help them in the construction of secret, subterranean bases in exchange for arcane secrets. The best known of these projects lies underneath the Denver airport—a secret Masonic stronghold as well as a kinori underground base. Tales of the Masonic masters providing the kinori with human meat while they work may or may not be true—no one has lived to bring back conclusive proof.

The kinori have long been constructing underground cities, perhaps as an expansion of earthen dens they lived in early in their evolution. According to some, these subterranean cities may be the inspiration behind the human legends of Hades and Hell. They are said to be packed with thousands of kinori mummies (*d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, page 251) and tens of thousands of fighters kept in stasis awaiting a great war.

Kinori are described in the *d20 Menace Manual* (page 56).

Adventure Seed: Not far from Cairo, a team of student archaeologists led by Professor Darryl Stevens has unearthed a strange tomb. When they tried to remove the stone plug sealing the tomb, it triggered some sort of arcane glyph that exploded



into flame. Several of the diggers had to be hospitalized with third-degree burns. Mystified, Stevens contacted a colleague in New York who has connections to the Hoffmann Institute. Department-7 decides to send the heroes to help Professor Stevens open and explore the tomb. Further investigation reveals that the “tomb” is a secret kinori stronghold populated by kinori mummies. If the heroes dispatch the mummies, they find a teleportation device in the heart of the stronghold that, when activated, leads them to another underground complex in the Congo inhabited by living kinori. Similar gateways in the Congo stronghold lead to other kinori redoubts, a few of which are uninhabited.

Knights of Unity

Mildred Fife broke away from the White Aryan Resistance in 1987 to form this militia group. Based outside Billings, Montana, the Knights of Unity claim to be a Christian community without links to racist societies. In reality, however, the Knights of Unity gain most of their membership from the Aryan Nations, the KKK, and the Posse Comitatus, so while they may not have an agenda of racial superiority, most of their members still harbor their prejudices. The Knights of Unity stockpile food, supplies, weapons, and explosives to prepare for the inevitable coming war against the “Satanic” government.

The Knights of Unity maintain a visible presence on the Internet, preaching their take on Christian theology and the evils of government. Like the Posse Comitatus, they insist on not carrying any licenses (driving, hunting, gun, or marriage), holding Social Security cards, or paying taxes. They hope to eventually become a fully self-sufficient community, but until that time they make money by selling (mostly over the Internet) their own publications on survival techniques, conspiracy theories, the government, and religion.

Adventure Seed: The Knights of Unity are known to have links to the violent skinhead band KWM (Knights of White Might). Through clues in the lyrics of the band’s distasteful music, it has become clear that the Knights of Unity know a great deal more about the government conspiracy known as Aquarius than would be expected. Although the group’s beliefs may repulse investigators, interested parties may wish to contact the group and attempt to gain this information—and find out how they got it.

The Mafia

Although organized crime is in the public eye, it nevertheless fits the definition of a secret society. The Mafia is very old, coming originally from Sicily. A number of Swiss and Italian Masonic lodges (primarily the infamous P2 Lodge; see page 125) have connections with the Mafia. In the United States, the CIA and other intelligence organizations have worked with the crime syndicate to gain information and carry out assassinations. The CIA hired the Mafia to kill Fidel Castro in the 1960s (although it obviously didn’t work). It may have been involved (again, at the CIA’s behest?) with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The crime syndicate was certainly no friend of JFK’s crime-fighting brother Robert Kennedy who was also—perhaps not coincidentally—assassinated.

The Mafia has vast monetary resources and followers skilled in infiltration, robbery, and murder. Its connections are international and extensive. While the organization usually doesn’t have a stake

in the paranormal or the earthshaking conspiracies of a *d20 DARK MATTER* campaign, it is often involved on the periphery as a go-between or hired muscle.

Adventure Seed: Influential Mafia boss Victor Mirabelli disappears while on retreat in upstate New York. Violence breaks out in New York City as his subordinates blame rival crime families. Investigation proves, however, that he was actually abducted by the Greys. Coincidence, or does Mirabelli have information (or something else) that the aliens want?

MUFON

The Mutual UFO Network is a public organization dedicated to studying UFOs and cataloguing sightings. Members live throughout the U.S. and a few other countries and communicate through newsletters, an information hotline, and, of course, the Internet. Not all UFOlogists belong to MUFON, or even agree with its methods or conclusions, and—as is true with any type of science or pseudoscience—there is great dissension among those in the know.

Adventure Seed: While searching through secret government files obtained for an entirely different purpose, investigators discover that MUFON was created by the paranoid NSA to catalogue the people in the United States interested in information regarding UFOs and aliens. It also suggests that the upper ranks of the organization have access to great secrets involving alien contacts in the past. When confronted, however, MUFON denies everything, claiming it to be disinformation. If it’s true, what was the government planning on doing with the list of names, and if not, why is the government so keen on discrediting the network?

The Neo-Scientologists

This quasi-religious organization was born from a schism within the Church of Scientology. Led by the charismatic William Kwouk, thousands of members left the Church of Scientology in the year 2002 to form their own organization. The Neo-Scientologists seem harmless enough to the average person, offering free personality tests in malls and airports, but this façade conceals a group working diligently to explore and develop psychic powers. This, they believe, will open up a new state of mind capable of tapping into humanity’s collective subconscious. Members of the group also tend to turn up investigating UFO sightings, though they have a more sinister purpose than mere curiosity—Kwouk hopes that human-alien contact may help his agenda move along even more quickly.

This organization is described in greater detail in the *d20 Menace Manual* (pages 200–203).

Adventure Seed: Two recruiters working for the Hoffmann Institute are assigned to observe Jeri Douglas, a young college student rumored to possess psionic abilities. They pose as friendly neighbors in her apartment complex, and after several weeks of observation, they determine that she would make an ideal operative for the Analytical Division. The subject, however, has disappeared. Six nights ago, she went out on a date and never returned. By analyzing the woman’s phone records, Institute agents learn the identity of the man she was dating, and the heroes are assigned to observe him. The man, a professional surfer named Jason Mowery, pretends to know nothing of Jeri’s disappearance. Heroes eventually learn that he and his “tribe” are connected to the Neo-Scientologists, at which point the investigation is called off. Why doesn’t the Institute want to investigate the Neo-Scientologists, and what are their plans concerning Jeri Douglas?

Odessa

When Nazi Germany fell at the end of World War II, the Odessa Plan went into effect, smuggling high-ranking Nazis out of Germany. Most fled to South America with stolen money and seized works of art worth millions. They used this money to forge a new empire—a new Reich—of drug smugglers and terrorist training camps.

Adventure Seed: Researchers have discovered a number of sites (most prominent the so-called Omicron site in New Zealand, but also the La Venta site in Mexico) that contain both telluric generators (similar to those built by the Greys) and other machines, dubbed resonance generators. While the telluric generators are relatively easily identified, the resonance generators present much more of a puzzle. The Omicron site machines have resisted categorization for years.

However, their identification isn't entirely hopeless. The Tesla documents seized by the U.S. government in 1943 show a remarkable level of familiarity with the presumed functions, moving parts, and manufacture of such a generator. Hints in those documents indicate that the telluric generators can easily generate a continuous level of power up to 2 gigawatts, and bursts of up to 20 gigawatts for short periods. A device such as the resonance generator creates a standing electrical field that seems to enable—or at least alter—psychic abilities in nearby creatures. What other purposes these devices might serve remains a mystery, as do the secret of their construction and the identity of their makers. Investigation suggests human manufacture, but the entire appearance seems to indicate alien design. Parts can be traced to companies owned by the ex-Nazis of Odessa. But what are they trying to do?

Opus Dei

Opus Dei (“Work of God” in Latin) was founded in Spain in 1928 with the aim of finding God in everyday life. It exists today as a controversial, self-regulating entity within the Catholic Church that is overseen by a prelate (currently Bishop Javier Echevarria) who reports directly to the Pope.

Many Opus Dei priests hold important positions in the Vatican, although the bulk of its 80,000-strong worldwide membership consists of lay members and priests. Numerary members of Opus Dei commit their entire salaries to the organization, submit all incoming and outgoing mail to superiors, and practice various forms of corporal mortification, including use of the *cilice* (a spiked chain worn around the thigh for two hours every day) and ritualistic self-flagellation (using a cordlike whip called a *discipline*). Other rituals of penance include sleeping on the floor and periodic fasting.

Opus Dei expands its membership by targeting idealistic youths through programs aimed largely at universities and Catholic schools. Some human rights organizations are incensed by Opus Dei's unorthodox recruitment practices, which include alienating new members from their families and friends, controlling their reading material and television viewing, and brainwashing.

Adventure Seed: Opus Dei's newest headquarters is a seventeen-floor high-rise at the corner of E. 34th Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. The building is open to the public, and flyers distributed throughout Yeshiva University's midtown campus promise enlightening seminars about life, marriage, and fellowship under God. The Hoffmann Institute suspects that the new headquarters is using Telepaths to locate other individuals with psionic ability and indoctrinate them. The Institute was investigating a potential recruit (a psionic “wild talent”) named Skylar King before Opus Dei got to him. The heroes are assigned to infiltrate the Opus Dei headquarters and learn what they can about its psionic indoctrination program. What they may discover is that the top floor of the building is actually a secret surveillance center for an Opus Dei spy satellite that has the ability to pinpoint psionic activity. Opus Dei employs no Telepaths; the satellite is part of a program to identify, isolate, and eventually eliminate a segment of the world population that the Church secretly views as a growing threat.

Conspiracy Hunter's Guide: Neo-Scientology

This splinter faction of the Church of Scientology was formed in the early days of the 21st century by William Kwouk. Once a prominent Scientologist, Kwouk broke away from the teachings of that organization and took thousands of other members with him to found the Neo-Scientologists. Though the two groups appear to share many beliefs, the parent organization is engaged in a legal battle with the younger group (ostensibly over the use of the name, but many believe it goes deeper than that).

The Neo-Scientologists work

diligently to spread their faith, but in addition to that are quite interested in UFO sightings. This makes them a natural rival of the Hoffmann Institute, though the Institute prefers to play down any competition between the two groups. However, it's a poorly kept secret that the Institute's director, Itohiro Nakami, doesn't trust the Neo-Scientologists, though he's been unable to say exactly why.

For now, Hoffmann agents are instructed to avoid conflict with the Neo-Scientologists, and for that matter to avoid any appearance of competition for the secrets that both organizations apparently pursue. Let the Neo-Scientologists

grab their headlines, agents hear, while we work quietly behind the scenes.

Clues: The Neo-Scientologists don't have any secret symbology, though they do use certain terms of jargon that can help to identify them. The group is divided into two orders, called Signs (the training arm) and Voices (the recruitment arm). Members speak of the “analytical mind versus the reactive mind,” and of mental states called “Clear”—the shedding of the reactive mind in favor of the analytical, or rational mind—and “Aware,” the ability to tap into humanity's collective subconscious.



The Priory of Zion

The Priory of Zion is the ancient group of secretive religious leaders who manipulated events in Palestine to create the Knights Templar. They instructed the Templars in their sacred duties and urged them to investigate the Temple of Solomon for lost religious treasures such as the Ark of the Covenant, the Spear of Destiny, and even the Holy Grail. They also concentrated their attention around a small church in a village in the south of France called Renes le Chateau. It is here, they claimed, that Christ and his wife Mary Magdalene escaped after faking his death on the cross. In the church lies the evidence, and not far away is the grave where he was finally buried.

The Priory of Zion still exists to watch over the lineage of Christ and Mary. The Merovingian kings were among the first prominent heirs to this dynasty, and even today many of the members of existing royal families can trace their lineage back to the south of France and the “holy bloodline.” This semioccult group’s mysterious membership is purportedly composed of influential European figures and—not surprisingly—royalty. Whether or not its beliefs are true, the Priory of Zion is a powerful group with odd traditions based on Christian, Judaic, and pagan sources.

Adventure Seed: An anonymous tip indicates that Princess Diana was murdered in Paris in 1997, not the victim of a simple car accident. Further, the tip says that the murder took place at a place sacred to the Merovingian kings. She was a sacrifice, they say, to sanctify the existing holy bloodline. Investigation shows that a young supposed member of the bloodline, Thomas Plantard de Saint-Clair, has been groomed for years to be a leader. Even now, Priory members within the United Nations manipulate events to raise him through the ranks and one day make him the leader of the New World Order, even if they have to lie, murder, and steal to get him there.

Skull and Bones Society

If the Masons are the largest conspiracy in the world, the Skull and Bones Society may be the smallest. Choosing from the student body of Yale University, this society selects a very small number of members to join their elite ranks. Their headquarters (located on campus, in the public eye) is called the Tomb. No nonmember has ever been within, but supposedly the society keeps macabre trophies, including skulls of famous people (Pancho Villa among them).

Skull and Bones members often graduate to careers in politics, law, and in particular, the intelligence community. In fact, some speculate that the group is nothing more than a recruiting agency for the CIA.

The Skull and Bones Society is almost certainly linked—at least historically—to the identically named secretive occult lodge based in Germany of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This lodge can trace its own origins to the Bavarian Illuminati themselves. With such an illustrious pedigree, it is difficult to believe that Skull and Bones does not possess some important secrets or agendas.

Adventure Seed: On a mission to determine what exactly the Skull and Bones Society does, the heroes are assigned to infiltrate the Tomb. Penetrating surprisingly sophisticated defenses and alarms, they discover that the group lives up to its name—it’s a cabal of necromancers and their animated, undead servants. Potential members are tested for their occult abilities, and if they

are found lacking, they are killed, reanimated, and placed forever under the power of the remaining membership. These undead servants can operate in normal society fairly well, and over time even seem to age. However, they are supernatural beings of great strength and other abilities, completely under the sway of Skull and Bones. The heroes must decide what to do with this information, particularly in light of some of the group’s more famous members, such as George Bush and William F. Buckley, Jr. (undead servitors or necromantic masters?).

The Vril Society

Late in the 1800’s, the concept of vril, an energy source unknown to conventional science, was widely disseminated. Furthered by the study of groups such as the Golden Dawn and the Theosophists (with whom the Vril Society had a great deal of contact), vril was thought to be an energy that could transform a mortal into a god. Apparently, a superhuman race of subterranean people in an underground kingdom called Agharti first discovered and exploited vril, although there is evidence that the people of Atlantis knew of and used vril or something like it. The theory says that some people can store vril better than others can, allowing them to use the energy to manipulate objects and people to one degree or another.

In 1930s Germany, the Luminous Lodge—or the Vril Society—was formed from an occult group that (at least originally) had links to the Masons. These occultists had racist, Aryan notions that vril would allow their race to achieve their rightful place as masters of the Earth. Hermann Goering was a member of the Vril Society and believed in both the vril and the idea that accompanied that theory, which was that the world was hollow and that humans lived on the inside.

(A related German occult group of the time, the racist Thule Group, also believed in a superhuman society. Instead of an underground kingdom, however, their mysterious lost realm was a now-sunken island called Thule, which resembled Thera/Atlantis in almost every respect. The Thulists also attempted to tap into the vril, and their philosophies and beliefs may have greatly influenced Adolf Hitler.)

The occultists of the Vril Society claim to be able to mentally contact distant sources. While they spend most of their time attempting to communicate with and locate Agharti, they also channel information from extraterrestrial sources. According to some, they used information obtained in this way to help the German military reverse engineer a crashed alien starship before and during World War II. The Vril Society of today has only moderately fascist connections and is located in small lodges throughout Europe and North America. Members still maintain their racist beliefs that only those of Aryan blood can utilize vril.

Adventure Seed: A deep-drilling operation in Central Asia uncovers what appears to be—via seismic tests—a vast underground network of large caverns. Although the reports are vague, these caverns appear to have buildings and structures within them. Is this ancient Agharti? No one knows, because the crew and everyone associated with the drilling operation died or disappeared mysteriously over the course of a single month. When the heroes investigate, they learn—as they are racing to discover if Agharti has indeed been found—that the Vril Society kills anyone who gets too close to the site.



Chapter 5:

Places of Power

In numerous locations throughout the world, various factions conduct secret research or perform rituals, and the hidden work of governments and corporations flourishes. Most such places remain far from the public eye, but the Hoffmann Institute makes them its business, infiltrating some and simply keeping an eye on others.

d20 DARK•MATTER adventures can unfold in urban centers and wildernesses all over the Earth, from Machu Picchu to Sri Lanka, Crater Lake to Tunguska. Most campaigns will probably begin in a small, familiar area but inevitably branch out from there; such phenomena as the Institute investigates rarely situate themselves conveniently close to home.

AFRICA: BIRTHPLACE OF A SPECIES


The human species can trace its origins to the continent of Africa, where our first upright and sentient ancestors scratched a living from the red earth. Humans have spent more time living in and evolving in Africa than anywhere else; the African gene pool shows more variation and more extremes of morphology than any other branch of the human family tree. Who knows what wonders remain hidden in the jungles, savannas, and bloodlines of this, our Garden of Eden?

Well, primarily the French.

France has long had close ties to North Africa, and held many colonies here throughout the height of the imperial age of the nineteenth century. Indeed, French is still a unifying language in much of Africa, and France still commands some influence (and just as much resentment) in its dozens of former colonial possessions. These former colonies include Algeria, Benin, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, the Malagasy Republic, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Togo. The only colony still administered by France is Mayotte, an island that lies between Africa proper and the Malagasy Republic near the Comoro Islands.

The Congo

Long thought to be home to a small population of large, rare reptiles, the Congo is densely inhabited near the coast and



The Earth is a farm.
We are someone else's property.
-Charles Fort

much less settled in the interior. Its legends of gigantic lizards such as the mokele-mbembe have attracted cryptozoologists, but no definitive evidence of a large dinosaurian species has ever come to light. It is entirely likely that one or more enclaves of kinori exist in these jungles as well.

King Leopold's Mines

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Belgians entered a brief colonial phase and held the Congo as a colony. In fact, they treated the natives more like feudal serfs or slaves than as citizens, and the tales of Belgian atrocities in the Congo are notorious. Most such stories revolve around murdered Congolese, about five to ten million of whom died during that period. Many died of starvation, disease, and overwork, all in the name of harvesting rubber. Whippings, murder, rape, and other crimes by King Leopold's colonial administrators were commonplace. The worst of the abuses stopped in 1909, when King Leopold died (warm in his bed and rich from the suffering of distant millions). Now, with dark matter levels rising, the old feeling of injustice has resurfaced, together with the ghosts of the millions of victims that have risen in anger. Shamans and witch doctors are performing record business putting these unruly ghosts to rest throughout the country. Even so, the number of angry spirits is climbing, and many attempt to visit their vengeance on modern-day Belgians, especially descendants of the royal house.

These abuses went unchecked for several reasons, not the least of which was the sheer remoteness of the Congo. The first Westerner to see the interior was Henry Stanley in 1874. Though the country is more accessible now than then, it is still rather loosely tied into international transportation links. Many of the activities taking place in the hinterland go entirely unreported to the wider world.

Egypt

Despite centuries of study and museums full of books and artifacts on the topic, the land of Egypt remains a great mystery. Though much is written on topics such as the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the pharaohs, far more remains in the realm of rumor and legend.

The Companions of Horus

The Shemsu Hor, or "Companions of Horus," is an ancient and secret order begun in Egypt during the time of the pharaohs. Though most of the Companions abandoned Egypt for Tibet long millennia ago, a few dedicated inheritors of the original wisdom of the Greys remain in Egypt, posing as professors of archaeology and Egyptology and guiding government policy on which research proposals to approve and which to deny. No sanctioned dig in Egypt happens without the Companions knowing about it. There are simply too many things better left buried.

Today, the Companions of Horus are known as the Rosicrucians (see page 74).

The Pyramids of Giza

Still mysterious, still capable of evoking wonder among humans, the pyramids of Giza are hardly the only pyramids in Egypt. Other, lesser pyramids were built both before and after the Great Pyramids; oddly enough, none of these are nearly as well designed, and all have suffered far more from the ravages of time. The great mystery of the pyramids, of course, is the reason for their existence. Most Egyptologists claim that they are merely the tombs of ancient kings, meant to shepherd them into the afterlife. This is clearly nothing but a Big Lie. The pyramids had some other purpose; their role as tombs was secondary.

Proposed explanations include the pyramids' use as gigantic planetary clocks monitoring and warning against earth-crust displacements, landing sites for UFOs, storage batteries for mystic energies, or monuments to alien gods. Whether their precise geometrical alignments were meant to measure the precession of the equinoxes or the distance from the Earth to the Sun, the sheer simplicity and colossal scale of the pyramids remain impressive. The Companions of Horus and others who presumably know their true function have remained remarkably silent.

In one case, the truth is simple: The pyramid of Saqqara (the first to be built) was constructed to entomb a doorway between Earth and the world whence the kinori came fourteen thousand years ago. The doorway has slipped out from under the pyramid, and now opens and closes a few hundred feet away.

Yamoussoukro

Near Abidjan, the principal city of Côte d'Ivoire, lies a strange relic of human endeavor: the oddest ghost town in Africa, Yamoussoukro. Yamoussoukro has been the official capital of the country since 1983, but it exists primarily as an embodiment of the will and delusions of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who led the country to independence in 1960. The president decided to spend much of the nation's treasury to turn his native village into a city that resembles one of the metropoli of modern France, with deserted Parisian-style boulevards, empty eight-lane highways (complete with more than 10,000 streetlights), and—towering over the city—Christendom's tallest church. But the city is a largely uninhabited wreck, built without a thought for its potential inhabitants.



The church—the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, to use its full name—cost \$300 million to build and was thrown together in an awful hurry. Whereas St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome took a century to build, Our Lady of Peace was finished in just three years. Its dome is slightly lower than St. Peter's, but only because the Pope himself intervened. The gigantic cross on top makes it the tallest church in the world. It is surrounded by a seven-acre outdoor plaza, with room for 300,000 people (in this nation of 14 million, only 1.2 million of them are Catholic). Despite its lavish scale, the cathedral is rarely visited by more than a dozen people at a time; the granite and marble plaza looks out over jungle and coffee plantations.

What possessed the president to build such a monument, and to beggar the country doing it? Rumors floating around Abidjan claim that Houphouët-Boigny saw a vision, a creature so terrifying that he built a cathedral to create the largest possible amount of holy ground he could. The rituals to sanctify the new structure were extensive and thorough. What did he see? The most common story declares "a demon," though in West Africa, that could mean a number of things. Even now, the residents of Yamoussoukro maintain that the basilica was built on haunted ground, and that something possesses the souls of those who worship here. Perhaps that accounts for the low attendance at the weekly High Mass.

THE AMERICAS: A NEW WORLD

North, South, and Central America were home to amazing civilizations before the arrival of Columbus, but their secrets have been largely lost to us due to the conquistadors' destructive efforts. Remnants of these cultures' legacies survive in the form of ancient artifacts, several functioning doorways, and a small network of Grey sympathizers.

The U.S. government is one of the primary forces behind the current cover-up of alien activities on Earth. The government doesn't like what it can't control, and the Greys have made it very clear that they don't intend to play by the government's rules. On the contrary, they expect the government to continue to do as they direct: keeping the space program to a minimum, leaving certain portions of the globe unsettled and unexplored, and generally staying out of Grey business.

Alaska

The largest and least settled state in the Union has always been a great place for booms and busts, for rotten weather and lying low from the law. Not surprisingly, a number of crazed speculators and outlaws have made their way to Alaska and accustomed themselves to its bright summers and bitter winters. A number of groups that prefer to operate in secrecy have also made Alaska their home, including the Order of St. Gregory and the CIA. As a halfway point on the Great Circle route between the U.S. and Japan, the Aleutian Islands also retain their strategic importance. Finally, Alaska remains the gateway from the U.S. to Japan and Siberia.

Dutch Harbor

The Order of St. Gregory is remarkably entrenched in the Aleutian Islands; it may have arrived here with the first Russian

Orthodox missionaries. Certainly many of the order's agents spend some of their time posing as priests of the Orthodox churches found throughout Alaska.

A recent and classified U.S. Air Force report indicates that an unknown object crashed on one of the more remote Aleutians. According to an informant, the Hidden Order was very quick to respond to the scene, commandeering a Coast Guard cutter to arrive there just hours after the crash despite foul weather.

Alcatraz

Settled by Spaniards in 1573, the San Francisco bay area—specifically, the San Jose/Silicon Valley corridor—is home to the highest concentration of high-technology companies in the U.S., narrowly outstripping the Microsoft/Boeing technocenter of Seattle and the tech corridors of Boston and Texas. It is also home to a small rocky island about two miles offshore that was the site of a remarkably famous high-tech prison: Alcatraz.

The island was first explored and described in 1775 by the Spanish Lieutenant Juan Manuel de Ayala, who gave it the name Isla de los Alcatrazes (Island of the Pelicans) for the many seabirds that roosted there.

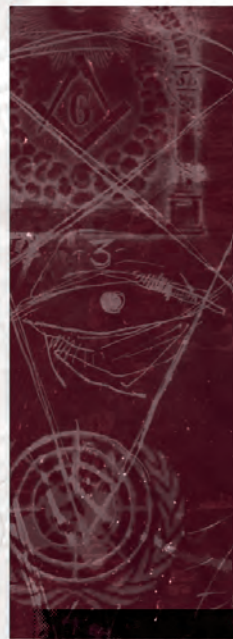
In 1850, the island was commissioned as a fortress, though the first garrison didn't arrive until 1859. In 1854, the island became home to the first lighthouse on the California coast. By 1868, it was both a fortress and a military prison. It was turned over to the Bureau of Prisons in 1933.

In 1934, a new, modern facility was constructed. The goal of the prison was to isolate the most intractable and dangerous criminals from their usual channels of communication, thereby preventing them from running their criminal organizations from the inside. The best-known example, Al Capone, was transferred to Alcatraz in 1934. Five years later, Capone was clinically insane, driven mad by a combination of syphilis, incarceration, and the dark spirits of the Rock.

Alcatraz cells are just 10 feet deep by 5 feet wide, and the cell doors are remote-controlled by a series of levers. The worst offenders were kept in the Treatment Unit, or "TU," a windowless, lightless cell where prisoners sat in complete darkness for days. Returning to the outside world was extremely painful. Voices, chills, clanging sounds, whistling, running feet, and other apparitions still haunt D Block.

The Rock was usually described as escape-proof in the press, but several attempts were made to evade the guards, the sharks, and the currents to reach the mainland. In all, thirty-six prisoners were involved in escape attempts. Most were recaptured, but seven were shot and killed, two are known to have drowned, and five remain unaccounted for. The prison shut down in 1963 when maintenance costs grew prohibitive.

The island was seized by a group of eighty-nine Sioux Indians in 1969 (under treaty rights granted to them in 1868 and largely forgotten by the U.S.), who recognized the site's potential for spirit summoning. They remained there until 1971. The lighthouse and four other buildings burned in 1970. The site became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972 and is still open to the public.



Since 1997, a group of diabolists calling themselves the Children of Satan have taken to meeting at Alcatraz once each year, at the winter solstice. The nature of the spirits or demons they summon is unknown. The diabolists are believed to spend the remainder of the year in a compound somewhere in the mountains to the east, though the Hoffmann Institute has also investigated claims of occult activity in wealthy Marin County to the north.

The Black Hills

Long sacred to the Lakota and Oglala Sioux Indians, the Black Hills of South Dakota in modern times have been an intersection of greed, motorcycles, and magic. In the frontier days, the famous lawman Will Bill Hickock died holding aces and eights (the "Dead Man's Hand") in the Black Hills casino town of Deadwood, and Calamity Jane spent wild years living here as well. Not long after the Indians were given the Black Hills by treaty, the Hills became the site of a gold rush at the misnamed (or alchemically accurate!) town of Lead.

In the twentieth century, the region was abandoned to roadside attractions, mammoth carvings such as Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse monument, scrounging for tourist dollars, and ranching on government dole. Recent reports indicate that a number of strange groups and creatures are active in the region. Both critters and cultists may be hiding in the region's caverns: Wind Cave, Rushmore, Jewel Cave, and Crystal Cave are only the well-known, public caverns in the Black Hills. Many others lie undiscovered in the hinterlands—perfect refuges for a hidden base, an alien hideout, or a paramilitary compound.

Devil's Tower

Long a UFO-associated site, Devil's Tower is a freestanding set of hundreds of hexagonal basalt columns, 1,260 feet tall. Northern Plains tribes referred to it as Bear's Lodge, and Kiowa Indian legends tell the story of its origins: Once upon a time, seven little girls were playing in the woods far from home when they came upon a family of bears that chased after them. The girls found refuge on a great rock, and the rock rose into the sky with them on it, making them into stars. The signs of the bears' struggles to reach the girls are the claw marks in the rock that makes up Devil's Tower.

Cahokia

The central U.S. was once home to a huge and thriving culture, which extended from Wisconsin down to the Gulf of Mexico and the farthest edge of what is now Florida. Known variously as the Temple Mound Builders or as the Mississippian culture, these people flourished from about A.D. 700 to about 1400 and were centered in the Mississippi Valley bottomlands, between the southern tip of Illinois and the northern edge of Louisiana.

Cahokian Mounds

Built between A.D. 900 and 1150, a huge earthen pyramid called Monk's Mound stands at Cahokia—just across the river and about 20 miles southeast of modern St. Louis. The terraced pyramid stands 100 feet high and covers 16 acres. This central mound was just the center of a village stretching

ten kilometers long along the river, and served as home to about 80,000 people and eighty-five other temple and burial mounds. Most of these mounds have never been subjected to archaeological scrutiny, and the causes behind the collapse of the city are poorly understood. Something drove the Mississippians away, but no one is quite sure what.

Regardless, many mysteries remain to be unearthed at the mounds. On a cold, windy Saturday morning in January 1998, workers drilling to construct a drainage system within Monk's Mound revealed a 10-meter-long stone about 40 feet below one of the western terraces. Since stone doesn't occur naturally at the mounds, the slab had to have been imported with painstaking effort from elsewhere. Who brought it, and why? Oddly, the modern drill bit broke after cutting through a portion of the rock. Later investigation with seismic waves, drilling, and electron-magnetic impulses revealed that the slab was part of a structure made of large stones placed together. A temple? A tomb? Something the Cahokia dwellers feared and buried deliberately?

There may be an answer in the obsession of the entire Temple Mound Builder culture with death that took hold after A.D. 1200. After that date, their sculpture, pottery, masks, copper sheets, and other art forms become filled with representations of human sacrifice, stylized skulls, bones, and weeping eyes covering any ornamental object. This period is variously referred to as the time of the Southern Cult, Death Cult, or Buzzard Cult.

The Natchez Indians

The legends of the Natchez Indians (the successors of the Mississippians, and the last surviving remnant of that once-great culture) tell that their branch of the Temple Mound empire "escaped" during the last years of the reign of a dark god, a bloodthirsty figure with some similarities to the wendigo legends of southwestern tribes such as the Anasazi. According to the Natchez, this great sorcerer and prophet demanded constant sacrifice and sought to build a "gateway to the ancient mysteries." Whether he succeeded is unknown; perhaps the Natchez knew, but their culture died out after the Natchez Revolt of 1729.

The revolt was initially successful, with the death or capture of hundreds of French settlers at Fort Rosalie and throughout the Mississippi Valley. The Yazoo tribe joined the uprising, killing a French missionary and the mission's entire garrison. The French soon recovered and retaliated, launching two great strikes from the city of New Orleans that crushed the rebellion. The first of these retaliatory strikes included a strange lieutenant, a French-Indian half-breed named Bernard Lemerrier. According to accounts of the time, Lemerrier was recognized among the Natchez as one of their own. They made warding signs against his presence, and he seemed much hated for having betrayed his people to the French. Lemerrier's response to the Natchez's charges of witchcraft and consorting with evil spirits is not known; certainly the accusations seem to have carried no weight with French colonial authorities.

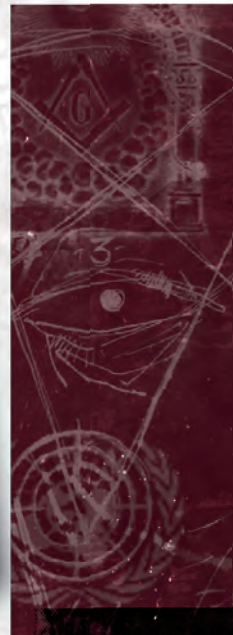
The tribe as a whole was shattered. Only a few small bands remained to carry on the fight, and these were snuffed out one by one over the following years. The captured Indians were sold into slavery in Santo Domingo, but a few survivors settled

among the neighboring tribes—primarily the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, all of which survive today. Those immigrants soon gained reputations as mystics and wise folk because of their mastery of the Southern Cult, which survives among those tribes to the present.

The later whereabouts and final grave of the half-breed Bernard Lemerrier remain unknown. Some believe he may still walk the Earth.



SELLEY/99



Cape Hatteras

Known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic, this cape off of the North Carolina coast has long been a scene of nautical misadventures. In one of the more famous incidents of the region, the cape became the final resting-place of the Queen Anne's Revenge, a French warship captured by the pirate Blackbeard in 1717 and immediately converted for use as a pirate flagship. Using the Revenge, Blackbeard conducted a reign of terror along the American coast, including a weeklong blockade of the port of Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1718. The reign of Queen Anne's Revenge ended just one week later, when she ran aground while trying to enter the harbor of Topsail (now Beaumont Inlet).

The Wrecks

Blackbeard's flagship is only the most famous of hundreds or even thousands of ships that have run aground, foundered, or otherwise wrecked on the shifting sandbars of the cape. After every major hurricane, bits of wrack and wreckage wash ashore. Many of these are from recent wrecks of coal barges, oil tankers, and freighters, but occasionally the remnants of a sailing ship wash up from the deep onto the shore.

The Locals

The locals of places such as Kitty Hawk and Jacksonville are normal enough, though they speak with an unusual dialect that outsiders sometimes have trouble understanding. The locals of Queenshead are a different kettle of fish entirely; their town lies right where the East Dismal Swamp meets Pamlico Sound, and a single two-lane road barely connects Queenshead with the rest of the world. The swamp is home to many small shacks, and negotiating the waterways is difficult at times. The locals certainly don't help; no guide service exists.

The residents of Queenshead are descended from ship-breakers, scavengers who collected the wrack and flotsam of ships and who—in hard times when wrecks were infrequent—lit bonfires to create the illusion of a friendly harbor's lighthouse, thus leading ships to run ashore nearby. The

present citizens display a marked hostility to outsiders and keep their own counsel about their work, their heritage, and any crimes and misdemeanors among their own kind.

Rumors of cannibalism, diabolism, and mutant bloodlines remain unsubstantiated, but even the Marines of Camp Lejeune tend to avoid the place. Tourist brochures certainly never mention it. To all appearances, it is an insular small town that hopes to stay that way.

Cheyenne Mountain

Just outside Colorado Springs lies an incredibly secure military installation, perhaps the most important purely military base in the nation. It is home to the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the U.S. Space Command, and the Air Force Space Command. Built in the 1950s, the base was literally constructed within a mountain by removing 700,000 tons of rock. The more than 4.5 acres of space inside can be sealed off from the outside world by 20-ton steel blast doors 3 feet thick, and the air inside can be maintained from within, preventing contamination by external radiation, bacteria, or poison gas. The Cheyenne Mountain base is meant to withstand a direct 10-kiloton nuclear strike.

Inside the mountain, 1,500 soldiers and airmen collect intelligence from the world's largest network of satellites, radar tracking stations, airplanes, and radio-intercept stations. They know where every object orbiting the earth is at any given time. They know whenever a missile is launched, anywhere on the globe. The staff of Cheyenne Mountain has the highest levels of security clearance, and they know more about the global positioning of power than any other monitoring station. Many of them also suspect a great deal more than they can confirm.

The workers are split up among fifteen different buildings on three separate levels, each lined with hallways painted a standard slate gray. Halls are monitored by video cameras, and every door is guarded by a combination lock. The base has its own generators, water reservoirs, lodgings, and cafeterias. If all life on Earth were wiped out, Cheyenne Mountain would still be self-sustaining for at least a month.



Many of the mountain's levels are completely sealed and classified; the work done here may be on biowarfare agents, on documents that even the president never gets to see—or on the living Greys, kinori, and other aliens captured by U.S. military forces throughout the globe and shipped back to North America. Tissue dissection, probing for biological and chemical weaknesses, and basic anatomy work are routine here, as are genetic testing, weapons testing, and interrogation. Aliens who check into the Cheyenne Mountain test facilities are never released.

Chicago

Long a manufacturing hub and commodities brokering center, Chicago is also a major transportation center and home to an enormous population of hardworking, no-nonsense people with no time for the frivolous pretensions of the coasts. It is both more pragmatic and more devoted to work than the coastal cities, and justly proud of its strong work ethic. Chicagoans take a perverse pride in their town's ability to weather political, social, and climatic storms. So far, the tides of dark matter have left the city largely alone, and this has led the Hoffmann Institute to store some of its most important assets here in the Chicago Specimen Collection.

Chicago Specimen Collection

Begun in 1931 after the Sewer War, the Hoffmann Institute Serological and Type Specimen Collection (generally called simply the Chicago Specimen Collection) has collected, analyzed, and stored more than 400,000 specimens of paranormal, mutant, and otherwise unusual biological entities—from alien bodies to ichor recovered at crash sites, blood samples to viruses, and sea monsters to noncancerous but regenerative human cell lines. If it needs storage in deep freeze or in formaldehyde, the field agents send it here.

In addition to preserving physical samples, the collection does a great deal of genetic research. The work includes compilation of known mutations and known instances of human bioengineering, as well as medical testing of vaccines, diagnostic techniques, and antigens that may help fight epidemics of various alien diseases. Because much of this work is classified, the site has been largely kept a secret from the government. What the Institute knows about the U.S. Army's biowarfare experiments, cloning studies, and continuation of Nazi eugenics studies wouldn't be healthy for Institute staff if it were more widely known at the Pentagon.

Greenland

While Greenland has always been a site of marginal human settlements, it has never been a place of prosperous ones. The Inuit and the Vikings both carved out a living along its rocky shores, but the cold interior remains both inaccessible and uninhabited, buried under miles of glacial ice. What lies there? Things best left alone. However, as is the way of modern man, that doesn't mean that they are left alone.

Scientists digging for ice cores to measure the history of Earth's atmosphere and oil company geologists hunting for new deposits of oil, shale, and natural gas measure the bounce from seismometers, combing over tough terrain that

might yield up a fortune in natural resources. For the most part, Denmark—whose government administers Greenland politics, such as they are—discourages such prospecting in the interior.

The Balserk Glacier

Buried under the pure ice of Greenland's Balserk Glacier lies a Grey scout ship (the *Vidunas*) lost since the final days of Atlantis. A testament to Grey engineering, its generators still function, its computers and machines humming silently until the day when they are called upon again.

The ship either crashed or was abandoned here at around the time of the cataclysmic explosion that destroyed Atlantis. The Greys knew of the ship's location, but more pressing matters prevented them from recovering it at the time. They abandoned hope of recovering the ship immediately, planning to send an expedition in a hundred years or so when the Theran debacle had been forgotten. By then it was too late: The snows had turned to ice, and the glacier itself had carried the ship many feet from its original resting spot. Extracting the ship would have required drilling through the ice and thus carving the ship free, but the Greys abandoned the project, reasoning that the ship had likely already been destroyed by the moving glacial ice.

The truth of the ship's disappearance is not discussed openly, but rumors of sabotage—perhaps by rogues of the Iltan or Ziljir faction—persist.

The Ice People

The Inuit tell many legends of the whale, the seal, and the ice people. These ice people are generally described in terms resembling the Bigfoot of the North American continent. Could there be a species of ice-bound sasquatches roaming the Greenland ice sheets?

The Lost Viking Cavern

Somewhere under the coastal cliffs, legend says, lies a sea cave that holds an ancient treasure of Norse myth: the Spear of Destiny, supposedly wielded by Odin himself. This relic is surrounded by a number of legends, from the tales that it was responsible for the success of Viking raids against Christian monasteries in the ninth century A.D., to fragmented stories that it was sought by certain occult-savvy elements of the Nazi Party during WWII.

Little verifiable information exists about the spear's powers, guardians, or exact resting place, but many clues to its location and history are scattered throughout the Norse sagas. These were compiled in a Nazi-era research document called *Der Stahl des Nordens* (literally, Steel of the North). According to legend, it is reportedly guarded both by a "serpent mage" (perhaps a kinori, but more likely something else entirely) and by an ancient curse, which demands that anyone seeking to use the spear must pluck out his own eye. According to writings of the old Norse religion, the spear is variously said to double or triple the magical power of an adept holding it, to shoot a blood-red shaft of fire against the wielder's foes, or even to grant visions of the future and guarantee victory in battle.

Groom Lake (Area 51)

The desert north of Las Vegas is a hallucination of the American West, an odd mixture of barren rock, radioactive testing grounds, and small towns. In an isolated part of the state lies the top-secret testing ground known as Groom Lake, better known as Area 51.

Groom Lake is a dry lakebed in Nevada that serves as home to the U.S. government's "skunk works," its site for developing high-security military projects. Area 51 (a name taken from its designation on Nevada test site maps) is also the government's best-known "secret" base. Though it obviously exists, and photos of it have been taken with telephoto lenses by aircraft magazines, it never appears on government documents or military budgets.

But frankly, despite all that, Area 51 isn't much of a secret any more, though security remains airtight. The reasons are simple; the base has been a big employer since the 1950s, with more than 3,000 employees working on the site, about one-third of them civilian. Furthermore, until access to a nearby ridge was restricted in the late 1990s, Groom Lake's runways, radar towers, and many of its two hundred buildings could be seen by anyone who cared to look.

Area 51 is isolated from any populated area, surrounded by inhospitable desert terrain, and watched over by both armed guards and electronic sensors. Among the desert scrub and Joshua trees, ominous warning signs are scattered everywhere within miles of the base. Some ask the visitor to turn around, others prohibit photography, and still others inform that only "Authorized Personnel" are allowed onto the base. The most direct and to-the-point signs are quite straightforward and simply say, "Use of deadly force authorized." In many ways, all these precautions to deter visitors just draw more attention to the base.

To reach the base, a visitor simply travels along Highway 375—the UFO Highway—toward Groom Lake Road. This road appears flat but actually slopes up very gently as it climbs toward Campfire Hill, a lookout point near Area 51. From that hill, visitors can watch the security patrols, who use binoculars, motion sensors, and a variety of other equipment to keep tabs on anyone within miles of the base. Most of the time, the only living creatures nearby are cattle, allowed to graze on the thin forage of the area.

The only real landmark is a white (formerly black) mailbox that marks the intersection of Highway 375 and Mailbox Road; it belongs to a nearby ranch. West from that intersection, one can see Bald Mountain and the radar installation on top. The most fanatical say that the mountain itself resembles a Grey, but the resemblance is difficult to see in full sunlight. It helps to squint.

Security at Groom Lake is very tight. Access is only granted to U.S. government employees and special civilian contractors with top-secret security clearance. In fact, hundreds of its civilian employees are flown in each morning on unmarked planes from McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas and flown out each evening, free of charge. Those with access to the most sensitive materials live at the facility until their employment ends. Nothing is allowed to leave the premises except the workers themselves; furniture, trash, automobiles, and even toxic waste is either buried or burned on-site to reduce the risk of espionage. All employees are required to

sign an oath to keep all information about the base confidential, and the workers and retired workers take that oath seriously.

Among other things, Groom Lake is the site of extensive flight-testing of advanced military aircraft. The U-2 spy plane, the F-117A stealth bomber, and the F-22 fighter were all developed and flight-tested here; likewise, many captured Soviet aircraft were tested and assessed here during the Cold War. According to rumor, the government still tests its latest and greatest "black projects" here, such as the Aurora, a spy plane said to be able to sustain speeds of Mach 6 or more. More infamous is the alien aircraft recovered from Roswell in 1947 and hidden here.

Site 4

Site 4 (usually abbreviated S4 in official documents) began as a site for reverse engineering the Grey scout ship captured at Roswell in 1947. During the Cold War, it also doubled as the major location for testing and evaluating captured Soviet equipment. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet empire, S4's work on evaluating human technology declined, and increasing amounts of the workload have been devoted to deconstructing captured technological artifacts and material from Strangers such as the sand slaves, kinori, and etoile. The primary work project at Groom Lake continues to center on reproducing Grey gravitic technology.

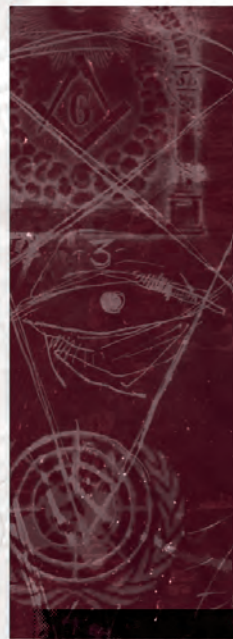
Site 4 appears as a series of barracks and bunkers, but much of the working area of the site is actually underground. The buses on the compound all have blacked-out windows to protect those within from unwanted attention—and to keep passengers from seeing portions of the compound they aren't cleared for. Guards patrol the compound, some with canine partners.

La Venta

Though influential in a small regional way, the Olmec civilization (see page 52) never reached the sheer scale of the Egyptian empire. The largest Olmec settlement ever found is that at La Venta, Mexico. The site was founded around 1100 B.C. and thrived for about 700 years before being abandoned. Archaeologist Matthew Stirling rediscovered the site in 1939 and published his findings even as the site was being transformed around him. Most archaeologists believe that La Venta was the wellspring of Olmec culture, which in turn was the source of Mayan, Aztec, and other cultures in later centuries.

The inhabitants of La Venta produced the largest pyramid of its time, but the surrounding area was home to just 18,000 people at its height. The pyramid itself was built to resemble a volcano oriented 8 degrees west of true north, complete with ridges and gullies. All the materials used to build it were brought from elsewhere, primarily basalt stones from the Tuxtla Mountains about 60 miles away.

In addition to its huge centerpiece, the site yielded hundreds of jade figurines as well as three large "pavement" masks made of 485 blocks (now covered over by an airstrip). Though many tombs were dug at La Venta, no bones have ever been recovered because of the acidic soil.



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Places of Power

The La Venta pyramid and the entire surrounding site were destroyed in the 1940s by oil corporations, which built a refinery and an airstrip on the site, starting with a wildcat oil rig placed there in 1940 by PEMEX, the Mexican national petrochemical company. Supposedly, all the items of archaeological interest were removed from the La Venta site before it was bulldozed, but in fact only the items of academic interest were moved. The most important and most secret finds of the site stayed right where they had always been: beneath the new chemical plant. These finds included a huge ceramic and alloy machine beneath the main pyramid as well as a wide array of associated artifacts, in total an astounding array of copper, gold, and iron relics without parallel in Mesoamerica, or indeed the world. The oil company scientists determined that the largest of the items—a power generator dated at roughly 600 B.C.—was probably not of human manufacture. A few scientists believe that it was an Olmec or Atlantean device, but most are convinced the machine was not built by human hands.

It is in fact a largely intact Grey telluric generator, still hooked into the Earth's magnetic lines of force but no longer capable of generating power. The oil company has made considerable progress in determining how it works (despite the fact that several critical components are missing), but the work slowed considerably when it became clear that this generator could put the entire company out of business. A few trusted oil company scientists and technicians continue to work on the generator, restoring it and documenting its parts. Whether it can be made to function again is anyone's guess.

Los Alamos

The Los Alamos research facility rests in a secluded valley between the Jemez and the San Pedro mountains, about 18 miles northeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, as the crow flies, but easily double or triple that by the best available roads. Nearby are the Puye cliff dwellings of the ancient Anasazi and the Jemez Pueblo. What goes on at the National Labs is often classified, but much of it is weapons research.

The area's major highways form a large, vaguely triangular area that marks the "off-limits" area. It stays off-limits because some areas are still radioactive from aboveground testing, because the Air Force still bombs the crap out of the place on a fairly regular basis, and because the site is a powerful center of paranormal phenomena created by the bomb blasts.

Most of all, this land of desert solitude is the birthplace of the atom bomb in the Los Alamos National Labs, where from 1942 to 1945 a team of hundreds of scientists worked on the Manhattan Project under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer. The Trinity Test site is not far from the Los Alamos research facility, about 150 miles due south past Albuquerque. The theoretical and prototype work to build the weapons tested here occurs farther north, in the greener territory near Santa Fe. The Trinity Test site was designated a historic landmark in 1975. It retains a level of radioactivity ten times the natural local background radiation.

The Anasazi and the Mothfolk

Of course, not every meeting between humans and Strangers results in warfare. In at least one case, humans allied with a race of Strangers against a greater enemy. These people, the Anasazi (a Navajo word translated variously as "Ancient Ones," "Ancient Ancestors," or even "Ancient Enemies"), lived in the region now known as the American Southwest for over twelve hundred years, beginning in the first century A.D. The Anasazi had a high culture of learning and agriculture and resided in large cliff dwellings throughout that region.

The alliance began during the late twelfth century when a tribe of mothfolk (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 68) came through a doorway called the Speaking Stone, which connected their home world to the sunny, dry, rocky lands of the American Southwest. Though early meetings between the Anasazi and the mothfolk didn't go well—including a skirmish at Chaco Canyon—cooler heads prevailed as the mothfolk convinced the Anasazi that they came in peace. Indeed, they sought help against the evil spirits they called the wendigo.

Evil spirits that possess sentient beings and transform their hosts into cannibals had followed the mothfolk through the doorway and now began to haunt the Anasazi. Together, the two races worked together against these evil spirits. It's believed that both races shared similar religious views, and their shamans shared knowledge in an effort to find a way to defeat the spirits. Over time, flying mothfolk patrols grew ever more daring in their attempts to shield their human friends from harm.

Around 1275, the Anasazi died out. Three main theories seek to explain the disappearance of this tribe. The first claims that the Anasazi or mothfolk learned how to close the doorway allowing the evil spirits access to Earth, but the humans were driven away from their homes by the spirits already present. A simpler explanation claims that the spirits destroyed the Anasazi utterly. The most interesting theory claims that the Anasazi disappeared through that (or another) doorway and are now living elsewhere, perhaps with the mothfolk, perhaps in another place entirely—and might return at any time, now that the doorways are again opening. It's unclear how any of these theories can be confirmed or disproved, short of questioning a mothman for its version of events, or finding a descendant of the Anasazi stumbling around the American Southwest.

Some legends of existing tribes of that region claim that the Anasazi possessed evil powers. Whether this points to encounters with possessed Anasazi or suggests that some may have practiced dark magic (perhaps learned from rogue mothfolk?) is unclear.

Machu Picchu

When the Incan Empire fell, the conquistadors didn't find everything. Many of the Inca nobles fled to a great city in the mountains above the Urubamba River, practically at the headwaters of the Amazon. This city was Machu Picchu, and the conquistadors never found it, nor did their descendants.

The city lies in a remarkable position, high on a terraced hill with a spectacular view. The Urubamba River that runs hundreds of feet below it was sacred to the Incas, and the city on the hill became their great retreat where the wisdom



of the Greys was kept safe. Just as important to the Incas, the city also kept alive the bloodline of the Inca kings until about 1820, when the last member of the bloodline was killed in an internal struggle with members of the Inca elite, leaving no acknowledged heirs. When he died, he was buried with great ceremony and dignity, and the city was abandoned.

The great explorer Hiram Bingham rediscovered the city in July 1911, eight years before his discovery of the Incan fortress of Sacsayhuaman at Cuzco, Peru. Since that time, it has become a remote tourist site and the site of arcane or hidden battles between those who seek to preserve the site's mysteries and those who want to plunder its few remaining treasures.

The works left behind by Viracocha (see page 56) and his human followers remain impressive and may include a number of sites that have yet to be fully excavated. The stonework of the city of Machu Picchu superficially resembles that found at Sacsayhuaman. Both sites contain many stones weighing 200 tons or more, and the constructions may date as far back as 7000 B.C.

To unenlightened archaeologists the stones themselves are mute, and their relatively crude, blocky construction offers few clues to the identity of their makers. Those aware of alien influence on Earth believe that this was a site of early Grey colonization—though why it wasn't destroyed as per later Grey policy is unclear.

New York City

Founded as New Amsterdam by the Dutch in 1626, this city at the mouth of the Hudson River is America's largest. New York City is the financial center of the country and a fashion, banking, transportation, shipping, and communications powerhouse as well. Despite its huge population, it is home to at least two not-quite-human species: A large conclave of grimlocks (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 49) lives in many of its depths, sewers, and subway tunnels, as do a small number of kinori (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 56).

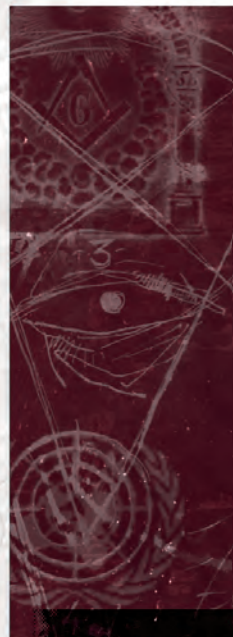
Tiahuanaco

Located on the high plateau of Bolivia/Peru, Tiahuanaco is the oldest city on Earth, older than Babylon, older than the Pyramids of Giza. It was built 15,000 years ago by an unknown species, before humans arrived in the Americas and long before the Greys arrived. The builders may have been elohim (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 33), mothfolk (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 68), or perhaps some other species entirely. At the time, mankind was still a dispersed population of hunters and gatherers in the most fertile and tropical regions of the globe. The city was constructed on the shore of a rich lake, or perhaps even on an island. In the intervening millennia, the continuing rise of the Andes mountain chain tilted the land that made up the lakebed, slowly increasing the distance between the city and the lake until today, when Lake Titicaca is more than 12 miles away. Perhaps this subsidence caused its inhabitants to abandon the city, or perhaps a wave of preternatural creatures capable of traveling between worlds swallowed it up.

In any event, at some point around 10,000 years ago, humans found the site and took it for their own use. At first this went well; a small village sprang up by the lake, and the nobles lived in the huge, imposing buildings of enormous stone blocks. Over time, these were carved with decorations to gods now long forgotten. But eventually the climate changed as well, and the soil acquired too much salinity for agriculture, the heritage of thousands of years of irrigation. Humans slowly abandoned the city, and today the land around Tiahuanaco is a desert. Few people live here, but perhaps someday its original owners will come to reclaim it.

Gateway of the Sun

At the heart of the remaining complex is the Gateway of the Sun, an enormous stone that stood at the center of the Kalasasaya, the Place of Upright Standing Stones. The gateway is carved of gray-green andesite, is covered with hundreds of symbols, and weighs about 10 tons. Parts of its lettering serve as a calendar; other portions are decorative, such as images of Cuvieronius and Toxodon, large South American mammals that became extinct 11,000 years ago. More than anything else, it resembles a doorway in a 10-foot-high and 15-foot-wide arch—a doorway that doesn't connect rooms but connects dimensions. The ceremonies or machinery that once controlled the doorway, however, are long since forgotten or lost.



Washington, D.C.

As the center of U.S. power, Washington presents a strangely schizophrenic face to the world. On one hand, it is home to the largest concentration of government power, bureaucracy, intelligence, analysis, and money in the world. On the other hand, it is a decaying, squalid capital with a higher violent-crime rate than most of the U.S., not to mention any other wealthy industrialized country.

The city was built according to plans drawn up by French architect Pierre L'Enfant. British diplomats once earned hazard duty pay when stationed here, due to the pestilential, even malarial air of the city's swamp-side location. The environs of the District of Columbia retain their aura of genteel rot even now, but the ferment created by so much money and so many agendas all sharing the same space has given rise to some very strange places indeed. A chunk of the Moon is embedded in the stained glass windows of the National Cathedral. Tens of thousands of soldiers and statesmen lie buried in Arlington Cemetery under endless rows of white crosses. Slums lie abandoned, and the earth still bears marks from the siege trenches that cut up the ground between Washington and Richmond during the Civil War. Ghosts haunt the White House, the Smithsonian Museum, the Capitol Building, and the house called the Octagon. As the focus of political power among the democracies of the twenty-first century, Washington remains a feverish dream of the rational, the occult, and the political. Sometimes the lines between the three become quite blurred.

The Pentagon

Built in a shape having occult significance, the Pentagon nevertheless is a thoroughly modern building that was built on wasteland, swamps, and dumps during World War II. Much of the huge building is open to the public, civilian workers, and members of the armed forces with little or no security clearance. It is subdivided into five concentric pentagons connected by ten spokes. The layout is so efficient that despite its 16 miles of corridors, it doesn't take more than seven minutes to walk between any two points in the building. The building has its own bus and taxi terminals, and its own heliport. But with a 29-acre footprint and 583 acres in the surrounding compound, there's plenty of room to hide things that the military would rather keep concealed. More than 23,000 employees work here each weekday, about half of them civilians.

The Pentagon is said to contain the digital files of every person ever to have entered the U.S. armed forces, as well as medical histories, actions, and reports. In addition, intelligence reports dating back to the Civil War are stored here, many still stamped with the label "War Department," the name of the Department of Defense before politicians attempted to whitewash the organization's basic purpose.

Periodic tales claim that the building's shape is meant to contain powerful occult energies, perhaps even a demon of some kind. Despite the success of most U.S. military adventures, the presence of a demon under the Pentagon's cornerstone or at its heart has always been dismissed as merely wild speculation. The existence of five chapels within the building and the employment of a full-time staff of ten military chaplains don't necessarily support this claim.

Washington Monument

Begun in 1848 as a monument to the first president, this stark obelisk was originally designed to be surrounded by a temple and colonnade at its base. Events intervened; funds ran out in 1854 when the Washington National Monument Society was taken over by the Know-Nothing Party. Construction halted at the 150-foot level for the next 25 years.

However, the Monument is anything but a simple memorial. Its cornerstone is a 12-ton block of Maryland marble shipped to Washington on the B&O Railroad, then laid down with full Masonic ceremonies on the July 4, 1848, under the auspices of the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. The monument was to remain closely tied to the purposes of the Freemasons throughout its construction. From 1851 to 1855, Masons across the U.S. contributed commemorative stones and plaques to the column's construction; more than a hundred such stones are incorporated into the Monument. A second wave of Masonic contributions came in 1874 and 1875.

Finally, in 1876, Ulysses S. Grant's administration took control of the project and convinced Congress to appropriate funds. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restarted construction in 1878 and completed the exterior work in 1884. There is still a visible line between the earlier and the later stonework. The dedication ceremony was held in February 1885 and again the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia presided, repeating the rituals of 1848.

In fact, the Monument is part of a larger Masonic plan for the city, as laid down by French architect Pierre L'Enfant when the city was surveyed, planned out, and founded in the 1790s. The monument stands 551.7 feet tall and is topped by a capstone and a small aluminum pyramid. The aluminum pyramid is engraved with the names of those who built it, as well as the Latin motto *Laus Deo* (literally, "Glory to God").

Yucatan

The Yucatan peninsula is a geographically distinct region of Central America that includes some of the poorest regions of Mexico, as well as the entire nation of Belize and part of Guatemala. It is also the cradle of Central American civilizations, including the Olmecs and the Mayans. The region is positively littered with lost cities and recently restored pyramids and religious centers, such as Chichen Itza. The Greys also had a settlement somewhere in the Yucatan, where their city-ship took refuge after the Theran cataclysm.

It is a remarkably dry region for a jungle. Little surface water exists, and few rivers. For millennia, most of the area's human inhabitants drew their water from *cenotes*, large sinkholes up to 130 feet deep that allow access to the region's low water table. All of the lost cities of the Yucatan are built near these cenotes, and many offerings to the gods were left within them, including human sacrifices.

The Yucatan limestone that allows such large sinkholes also forms many large caverns and underground rivers. In some of the caverns, natives still hold to the ancient ways and offer corn and blood to the old gods. What else might live in these caverns is unknown, as most have been only partially explored.

The Mitchell-Hedges Skull

This crystal artifact is a perfect replica of a female human skull. Though the skull's owner, Anna Mitchell-Hedges, claims that she discovered it on her seventeenth birthday, during her father's 1924 archaeological expedition in the Lubaantun, Belize, this claim soon collapsed under scrutiny. No documentation or even references in the family's own writings and conversations refer to the skull prior to the mid-1940s—and records show that Anna's father bought the skull at auction from Sotheby's in London for 400 pounds in 1943. Today, the skull remains in the possession of Anna Mitchell-Hedges, who lives in Canada and displays the skull on tours.

Despite the fabrication of its origin, the skull's manufacture remains a mystery. It is remarkably similar in form to a real skull, down to the detached mandible. Most other crystal skulls (see below) are much less precise and formed of a single block. Furthermore, no one has been able to put forward a reasonable explanation of how the skull was made: The crystal was carved against the natural axis of the stone, a process that should have shattered it, even if modern tools or even lasers had been used. In addition, experts could find no scratches on it that would show the use of metal instruments. The best theory going is that it was roughly carved with diamonds, then the detail carving painstakingly done with sand and water—a process that could have taken decades or centuries of labor. The skull's existence seems to imply the existence of a stonemasonry trick or techniques unavailable to anyone today. As one researcher remarked, "The damned thing simply shouldn't be."

Other crystal skulls exist, including the British Skull and the Paris Skull, both said to have been brought from Mexico by mercenaries sometime in the 1890s. They are similar in size and shape, and one may well be a copy made of the other. Their workmanship is far poorer than that of the Mitchell-Hedges skull. The same can be said of both the Mayan Skull and the Amethyst Skull, found in the early 1900s in Guatemala and Mexico respectively, and "Max" the Texas Skull, also from Guatemala, said to have been brought to Texas by a Tibetan holy man.

All these skulls are credited with the ability to cure cancers and infections, just as other crystals are said to have healing powers. Others say that all crystal skulls are able to transmit and absorb mystic vibrations and serve as conduits of psychic energy. Some claim that the skulls are repositories of hidden information, which can be extracted by psychic abilities or simply by shining light on or through the skulls.

It's impossible to carbon-date the skulls, since they contain no organic material, so their exact age can't be determined. Theories put forward include manufacture by Atlanteans, by extraterrestrials, and even by an advanced human society living at Earth's hollow center. Others speculate that they were originally hollow, human-bone skulls that were transformed into solid blocks of crystal through the use of psychic or arcane powers. The most obvious answer is that they were made where they were found, by Mayans, Mixtecs, or Aztecs (the most likely of the three, due to their wide use of skull imagery and skill in carving crystal). Others claim the skulls weren't made in Central America at all, but in Germany as recently as the 1840s; indeed, electron microscopy has revealed the presence of straight, evenly spaced surface

markings—made by a modern polishing wheel—on one of the crystal skulls, which supports this theory. Other level-headed speculation places the skulls as objects of Quing Dynasty China, based on the sheer size of the blocks of crystal used. The truth behind the skulls remains elusive; their manufacture is the least of their enigmas.

ASIA: LAND OF ANCIENT WISDOM

The wisdom and the vast distances of Asia have long captured the Western imagination, but its ancient knowledge and valuable insights into the practical application of dark matter tides have made it a hotbed for paranormal research. From Chinese herbal medicine to ancient Indian Vedas filled with clues about the past, Asia remains a place where the Hoffmann Institute hopes to gather information that will shed light on the gateways, the Strangers, and their relationship to the cyclical history that Asia understands so well.

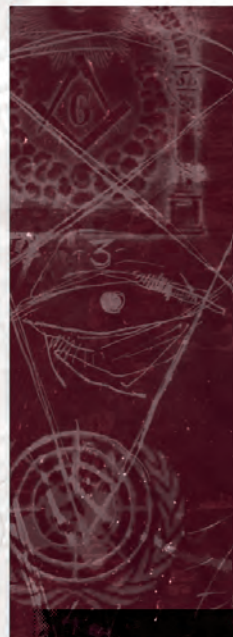
But work in this region remains difficult. Those who hold esoteric knowledge in Asia are reluctant to share it with outsiders, however noble their intentions. Tradition and xenophobia combine to create a great wall of silence around the monasteries of Tibet, the most sacred temples of India, and the hidden records of Japan's history as a host of the Greys.

Angkor Wat

The archaeological site of Angkor in present-day Cambodia was the capital of the Khmer empire that reigned over most of Indochina from the ninth to fifteenth centuries; it lies near the modern town of Siemreab. Angkor Wat was a temple in its capital, built as a model of the universe.

The temple portion of the capital, Angkor Wat itself, was built in the twelfth century by King Suryavarman II, who ruled from 1113 to about 1150. A second temple, Angkor Thom, was built around 1200 by King Jayavarman VII. The religious focus at Angkor began with temples to the Hindu god Shiva, then to Vishnu, and ended with temples of the Mahayana Buddhist cults devoted to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The temples built by the divine monarchs of the Khmer were also means to godhood. Angkor Wat, for example, was built as a funerary temple; King Suryavarman II's remains were deposited here, symbolically linking him forever with the god Shiva.

The city itself lay at the heart of an empire that reached from the Bay of Bengal to Vietnam and all the way south to the tip of the Indochina peninsula. It was at the center of the largest and most powerful kingdoms in the history of the region. Over the years, the city was planned to be a symbolic universe matching Indian ideas of the cosmos, with a central pyramid temple representing the mountain at the heart of the universe. In addition, it included reservoirs, canals, and other implements of irrigation and water control. These tools of irrigation were also tools of political control at the time, allowing the lords to claim control over the fertility of the land. While these moats and canals were part of a lavish and thriving metropolis in the late thirteenth century, in time they and the city fell into decline. Thai invaders sacked the city





in 1431, enslaved the inhabitants, and destroyed the Khmer culture. The city was subsequently abandoned except by a group of Theravada Buddhist monks, who maintained the Angkor Wat temple as an important site for pilgrimages.

The city remained "lost" for centuries (except for the temples and pilgrims) until the creation of the French colonial regime in the 1860s. A French explorer named Henri Mouhot rediscovered Angkor Wat around 1860. At that point, French archaeologists began unearthing and investigating the ruins, and reconstructing its fallen walls, statuary, canals, and other wonders. Much of this work was undone in the second half of the twentieth century, when warfare, thieves, and neglect combined to erode and engulf the ruins. The continued decline in the fortunes of the region has led to further decay; today, the city is considered haunted by many of the region's inhabitants.

The Khmer Rouge

From the Khmer Rouge's seizure of power in 1975 until the Vietnamese invasion of 1979, more than two million Cambodians died in the killing fields around Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge shot anyone who opposed them, anyone with ties to the outside world, anyone with education, anyone wearing glasses, anyone who might know too much. Why torture millions? Why the forced disease, famine, and executions? It seems to defy rational explanation.

The Khmer Rouge tactics of depopulating cities and forcing people to work the fields at gunpoint were, in fact, an attempt to completely remodel Cambodian society as a medieval system of peasant agricultural society. What

induced this genocidal madness? Perhaps it was nothing more than a particularly grotesque form of political hysteria during the height of the Cold War. Perhaps it was related to the ancient ruins of Angkor, and the spirits of the restless Khmer kings long thought dead and gone.

Regardless of the source of the tragedy, one in five Cambodians paid the price. The danger of a similar outbreak elsewhere cannot be ignored.

The Golden Triangle

The origin of 60% of the U.S. heroin supply is a relatively small corner of Southeast Asia known as the Golden Triangle, which sits at the intersection of Burma, Laos, and Thailand. Though the area is technically subject to the government of those nations, the real rulers of the Triangle are a small group of warlords whose only master is money. The most famous of these outside the triangle itself was Changi Chi-fu, also known as Khun Sa. Wanted by the U.S. and with a \$2 million price tag on his head, he escaped capture for decades, though he often "negotiated the terms of his surrender" to Burmese authorities when the U.S. put pressure on local government. Burma has no extradition treaty with the U.S., and Khun Sa effectively ruled his own kingdom within Hmong territory, only nominally answerable to any outside authority. In 1998, Khun Sa stepped down as leader of the Shan United Army, the force he had built up over several decades. Then all hell really broke loose.

Though the Shan United Army had always been a rather frightening and ruthless group, willing to sell narcotics to further its cause, it had never been accused of trafficking

with dark powers until after Khun Sa left. Almost immediately, stories began to circulate in international intelligence circles that the general's departure had released a number of ghosts or demons, spirits that he had tied to the army and used to ensure its success in combat. These spirits, it was said, hungered for human blood and had begun consuming the army from within. A few soldiers deserted, but most were destroyed. Only a tiny core of women and children survived.

Today, the mothers have disappeared and only the youngest children remain faithful to the Shan cause, having formed a children's army still fighting the Burmese government. Their time spent being tutored by the Shan spirits seems to have warped them in horrible ways: Stories claim they are werewolves or demons in human form. In fact, most are adolescent diabolists who act without remorse and have no compunction about taking human lives. They have recently begun reasserting their control over the heroin trade in the U.S., Japan, and Europe, in part by executing the competition, in part by simply sending demons to possess the competition. The summoned demons seem entirely willing to dabble in the drug trade and have not yet turned on their masters. Either the Shan spirit summoners are very, very careful, or they can provide the demons with something that keeps them loyal.

The Himalayas

The Himalayas (a Sanskrit word meaning "Abode of Snow") comprise the tallest mountain range in the world. The vast chain is settled by entire nations, many of them Buddhist and all of them relatively backward technologically. Its greatest peaks lie within the borders of Nepal, Tibet, China, and India. Indeed, this area was not well known before the British popularized it with exploration and mountaineering campaigns.

Yeti Sightings and the Pangboche Hand

The yeti were first noted by British explorer L. A. Waddell, who saw the footprint of one in the snows of Nepal. However, his report received little notice at the time; not until 1921 would an expedition led by Charles Kenneth Howard-Bury make the yeti a household word. His team found footprints on Everest and, using binoculars, sighted dark figures. The Sherpas called the creatures he sighted the *metoh-kangmi* (a word applied to many mountain beasts). The term was mistranslated into "abominable snowman," and suddenly the newspapers were filled with the story. The news stories often misreported the color of the creatures, describing them as white when most eyewitnesses stated

they were black or brown.

The next major find was made in 1951, when an Everest expedition found a perfectly preserved giant footprint at an altitude of about 18,000 feet. The print was 17.5 inches long and about 11.7 inches wide. The footprint was photographed by Eric Shipton, the expedition leader, but no sightings of the creature that made them were reported during the rest of the trip.

All the publicity surrounding the yeti led Tom Slick, an aptly named Texas oil millionaire, to launch his own expedition in 1957 just to find and bring an abominable snowman into captivity. The expedition failed, but the 1958 follow-up led to the discovery of a set of yeti hand bones. The bones were relics kept at a Buddhist monastery in Pang-

boche, Nepal. While the expedition wanted to take the hand, the monks refused. In 1959, expedition member Peter Byrne substituted human bones for the yeti bones and smuggled the originals out of the country (with the help of actor Jimmy Stewart).

Even so, the heights remain remote and inaccessible even in the twenty-first century. Many of its peaks are yet unclimbed, and many of its mysteries remain hidden from outsiders.

Lhasa and the Potala

The city of Lhasa is the capital of Tibet, situated on a large, level plateau at an elevation of about 11,800 feet along the banks of the Lhasa He, or Lhasa River. Europeans were banned from the city for hundreds of years until 1904, when a British expedition fought its way to Lhasa from India. The leader of the expedition, Colonel Francis Younghusband, promptly bargained with the Dalai Lama and secured special privileges for the British in Tibet.

The Potala was a great monastery and the winter palace of the Dalai Lama from the seventeenth century to 1959. In 1959, the Tibetans rebelled against the Chinese occupation, and the Dalai Lama was forced to flee. The palace was built during the reign of the Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-rgyamtscho (1617–1682), better known to posterity as the "Great Fifth." The monastery's name means "Palace of the Gods." It stands more than thirteen stories tall, towering over the city and visible from literally miles away. Its gilded roof covers more than one thousand rooms, including audience chambers, reception halls, and throne rooms. At its center lies the area called the Red Palace, where the bodies of past Dalai Lamas are enshrined.

However, the Potala is not the only great palace in the city of Lhasa: the Nor-bu-gling-ka, or "Jewel Palace," was the summer palace of the Dalai Lama. The Jewel Palace has been renamed the People's Pleasure Park and has been open to the public since the Chinese invasion.

In addition, Lhasa is home to the Jokang, the holiest temple in Lhasa. It stands near an open marketplace in the center of



town and was built in A.D. 652 by King Songtsen Gampo. While it is unimpressive from the outside, it contains gold and silver altar vessels and a jeweled image of the young Buddha brought to Tibet by King Gampo's wife, Tang princess Wen-Cheng. The temple has the characteristic gilded roof common to many Tibetan monasteries and temples, and it stands three stories tall. Because it is especially holy ground, no woman is allowed to stay on the temple grounds overnight.

The Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are each an incarnation of a particularly famous and important tulku—a holy spirit that is reincarnated over and over—but there are literally thousands of these holy lines of reincarnation. Are the tulkus the same spirits, returning to earth again and again to watch over the Tibetan people, guiding their spiritual development? Or are they something else?

Monastery of Inner Light

Near Thimphu, high in the mountains near the Tibetan border with Bhutan, is a monastery that few ever see: the Monastery of Inner Light, home of the Ascended Masters. Like the Potala, it is an enormous building, but it is better hidden from contact with the modern world. The monastery is surrounded by high mountains, and its pass is closed by snow and storms about ten months of the year.

Within the monastery's walls lives an order of psychics and mystics who know much of the history of the Greys, from their landing in the Mediterranean basin to their departure from the region. The monks, called the Kha-glor, are members of the secret group known as the Companions of Horus. Indeed, they are the remnants of that group, which fled from Egypt to Tibet after the departure of the Greys from that region. They were pursued by the armies of Alexander the Great, who followed them as far as the Indus River. Alexander died in 323 B.C. at a feast in Babylon, perhaps after being poisoned. After his death, his armies dispersed and no one else seems to have had contact with the Companions of Horus until the eighteenth century, when they first began sending emissaries out into the world. In the 1930s and 1940s, many influential Nazis visited—and later, fled to—Tibet and Nepal. The influence they may have had on the Companions of Horus is unclear; it may well be that certain advanced technologies of the Reich were derived from Tibetan sources.

The Kha-glor monks have psionic abilities, and many of them are also martial arts experts. In addition, Sherpas and people of other native ethnic groups have reported a few scattered contacts between the Kha-glor and the yeti. But for the most part, the monks keep their mysteries to themselves.

Named after the British explorer who first described it, the Kretchenmore Mandala—an elaborate sand painting—is an object of veneration and fear among the natives of the high Himalayas. It is said to allow one to see behind the veil of illusion that cloaks the world to the truth beyond it, in a form of induced enlightenment. What happens to those so enlightened afterward is unclear; certainly no one has ever returned to his or her former life from Tibet claiming to have seen the Mandala and been transformed.

Finally, the Monastery has befriended a small group of yeti. These yeti make occasional appearances bearing gifts from the Greys, and a few have acted as tutors to the wisest,

the youngest, or sometimes simply the most courageous of the monks. These apprenticeships always take the same form: A yeti comes down from the mountains and invades a monastery, taking up residence in a meditation hall. After a few hours or sometimes days, the yeti chooses a pupil who then follows the yeti back into the mountains, or, in the case of elderly monks, is carried off. Those monks who return (and not all do) tell tales of the yeti's marvelous caverns, and of the difficulty in learning their languages and their martial arts. No such "kidnapped apprentice" has been reported in Tibet since the Chinese invasion. However, two cases have been reported in neighboring Nepal.

Shambhala

To many, the real mystery of Tibet is why the Chinese invaded in the first place. The country is poor, with few natural resources and a devoutly Buddhist population that has steadfastly resisted the imposition of Communism. What did the Chinese hope to find here? What impelled them to loot the monasteries, torture monks, and plunder the cities and palaces? The answer remains hidden at Shambhala.

This legendary kingdom of enlightenment has hidden from the world for centuries. Lying deep within the Tibetan Himalayas, the refuge has been a goal of mystics and truth-seekers from the earliest times. Its name is a Sanskrit word meaning "the Source of Happiness," and it first appears in Western references in 1627, when a group of Catholic missionaries from Istanbul traveled to Tibet and heard about a place they wrote about as "Xembala." Legend does not tell us whether they found it, but it may well have been the first meeting of the Order of St. Gregory and the Great White Brotherhood (a.k.a. the Companions of Horus or the Rosicrucians), whose headquarters are said to have been in Shambhala since roughly 500 B.C. The monks are hardly the last Westerners to have visited it; St.-Germain claims to have learned from the Brothers, and indeed Shambhala served as the headquarters of the Ascended Masters who instructed Madame Blavatsky in occult and mystic lore during the nineteenth century. Since then, few others have been allowed to visit, though many have sought it.

To the ordinary Tibetans, Shambhala is a heaven where the gods live; to the lamas, it is a Pure Land, a sacred place of spiritual significance. Within its walls lie sacred, secret spiritual teachings that formed the foundation of Buddhism, including the Kalacakra ("Wheel of Time"), a set of teachings long limited to the Tibetan Buddhist canon. The Kalacakra texts are known outside Shambhala, but the true symbolic meaning of their paths of wisdom provide a path to enlightenment, astronomy, medicine, and alchemy. Unfortunately, the texts' hidden wisdom cannot be understood with oral teachings. According to legend, only enlightened yogis—able to fly over the mountains and see through the illusion that is the world—can find Shambhala.

The reality behind the legend is relatively simple: *Shambhala* is one of the Grey station-ships currently moored on Earth. The monks of the Monastery of Inner Light know the way to the ship's hiding place, but they rarely share the secret with outsiders. When the Red Army invaded, they sought this ship. Though they didn't locate it, they did recover a scout ship near the village of Lungdo (see *The Secret War*, page 66).

Japan

The Japanese isolation of the Tokugawa period appealed to the Greys, and a few of the most daring scouts sometimes appeared in rich watered silk, wearing masks and offering advice to favored warlords. A station-ship is believed to have settled in Japan for a period roughly matching the Tokugawa period (1600–1854), and the more adventurous members of its crew sought to modify Japanese culture to match Grey sensibilities. Even today, the Greys retain contacts in Japan among the yakuza and among the ruling class, and have a web of special relationships with a few of the manufacturing conglomerates. As long as the Greys pay in gold for their purchases, no one asks too many questions.

Ena

On the island of Honshu, Japan, on a forest hillside near the town of Ena, stands a series of three beautiful stone monoliths, each of them a pyramid about 6.5 feet tall and 13 feet wide at the base. Each pyramid was cut from a single block of stone. In size and shape, any one of them might well be the missing capstone of the Great Pyramid or one of its cousins. Even in the twenty-first century, locals often leave offerings at the Ena pyramids, putting flowers or burning incense at their bases.

The pyramids are the source of many legends and a few enduring mysteries. The most common concerns a white serpent that is said to dwell within or underneath them. Local Shinto worshipers sometimes place eggs near the pyramids for the snake to consume; doing so allegedly fosters human and plant fertility in the region.

The region surrounding Ena harbors many clues to an ancient culture that may have flourished here in prehistoric times. It is rich in petroglyphs, some of which have been incorporated into the gardens and courtyards of local homes. These petroglyphs contain human and geometric forms, but their precise meaning and date of origin is a mystery that will probably never be unlocked. The nearby pine forest also features a set of standing stones oriented to the winter solstice, just like the stones at Avebury, the woodhenge at Cahokia, and other astronomical calendars.

The region's rice is farmed in an ancient manner that has led the Japanese government to declare it a national treasure, preserving the local way of life on hundreds of terrace-farms. However, this system of terraced farming is strangely familiar to anyone who has visited the ancient Andean sites of Ollantaytambo or Machu Picchu. This similarity leads to the speculation that Ena was the site of a visitation by a Grey station-ship believed to have also visited the Andes (around 1500). The similarity between the serpent legend of the Ena site and the Great Serpent Mound of the mound-builder culture is another tenuous but suggestive link between the sites, since it clearly shows a serpent disgorging or swallowing an egg. Was there influence from an alien culture at both sites?

Russia

Winston Churchill once said that Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. He was right. Even after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia and its territories cover almost one-sixth of the Earth's land surface. Most of this

vast area is the Siberian wilderness—a sweeping expanse of deserts, mountains, plains, and boreal forests stretching for thousands of miles across northern Asia.

For centuries, the tsars exiled their enemies to wretched villages hidden in this bitter wasteland; the Soviets continued the tradition for decades more, incarcerating hundreds of thousands of people in isolated gulags. Few were ever heard from again. Today, no one can say for certain what secrets might be buried in the forests of Siberia.

In the mid-Soviet era, a small facility known as the Gagarin Science Village was built to facilitate contained, secret testing of psionic powers. The results were kept secret, and many of the participants became part of a secret program of controlled breeding and training of psychics. Unfortunately, just about the time that the program began to see solid results, the Soviet empire collapsed. As a result, the first (and last) generation of participants was cast out into the world. Since then, many have been snatched up and put to work for new masters.

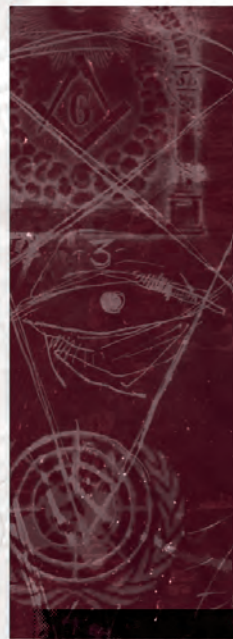
Magnitogorsk

Founded in 1929 by Stalin, this industrial city in the Russian heartland was deliberately built on the eastern slope of the Southern Urals to prevent its capture by any invading army from Western Europe. A set of metallurgical, metalworking, and machine plants comprise its core, and its population stands at over half a million, many of them working in heavy industry. Its steel and iron production are colossal, but Magnitogorsk has long been haunted by a secret history of human sacrifices made during the city's founding, and dark powers invoked to grant strength to its furnaces. A few investigators point to strange, non-Cyrillic inscriptions on the inside of the blast furnaces, but the flames make these "inscriptions" very hard to see, and the furnaces are never shut down. Many dissidents were incinerated in these furnaces during Stalin's great purges. Their ghosts are said to still haunt the ovens and are infused into every steel girder and every roll of sheet metal that comes off the factory lines.

In addition to the tales of hauntings, occasional reports surface of children deliberately thrown into the 24-hour fires. These sacrifices in many ways resemble those made to the deity Baal in ancient times by the Phoenicians and other people of Judea. It may well be that a fire spirit of some kind commands the sacrifices in Magnitogorsk, or it may be that Baal itself has resurfaced.

The steel mills here are said to be as antiquated as the fires of hell; indeed, every account of conditions in the city makes it sound like an utterly polluted hellhole, complete with children deformed at birth, mutants, and cancers running rampant through the population. What is the source of so much biological destruction? Arsenic, lead, PCBs, petroleum in the water, soot everywhere, uranium and plutonium dust, and air that verges on the toxic—the better question might well be, why don't the inhabitants die even sooner than they do? The average life expectancy in Magnitogorsk is just 31 years for men, 35 for women. Most visitors require days to adjust to the noxious atmosphere.

According to reports from the Russian Ministry of Industry, Magnitogorsk is among the most efficient and productive of all the Stalin-era cities. Of course, this same ministry claims



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Places of Power

the Five-Year Plans were being met during the Communist era, so perhaps its figures are best viewed with extreme skepticism.

Recently, Magnitogorsk has been revealed to be a center of sand slave activity (see page 100).

Trinity Chapterhouse

This small enclave of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory is located in a forest near Vladivostok, far from the prying eyes that sometimes plague the order in Moscow, Cyprus, Rome, and St. Petersburg.

Tunguska

The swampy, mosquito-infested taiga near the Tunguska River in Siberia is a sorry, soggy remnant of an important Grey settlement: the former site of the station-ship *Znutirj*. The site fell prey to the Grey obsession with secrecy, and when the Czar's cartographers came a little too close in 1906, Issi ba Aan—the commander of the station-ship—decided to vacate the site in 1907. Following standard Grey policy for an abandoned settlement, the station-ship searched out and found a small comet, then changed the comet's trajectory to annihilate the former site of the settlement. As at many previous Grey sites, the comet was intended to blast any remnants of its presence into dust.

On June 30, 1908, the explosion hit the earth at 60 degrees, 55 minutes North, 101 degrees, 57 minutes East, and the result was quite impressive. It flattened hundreds of miles of pine forest, releasing energy estimated at roughly that of a 15-megaton bomb.

Unfortunately, the comet the Greys chose to cover their tracks was primarily ice rather than stone or nickel-iron, and the explosion at Tunguska was atmospheric rather than an asteroid impact with the ground. (Whether this was accidental or intentional has never been proven definitively.) Trees were knocked down, but there was no crater at the center of the event zone. Knowing that the site was remote and rarely traveled, the Grey captain decided to let time and the swampy ground finish the work the comet had started. But human persistence almost intervened. The site lay undisturbed for nineteen years before a scientific expedition led by Leonid Alekseyevich Kulik arrived and surveyed the site.

Rumors from the USSR after 1930 claimed that small bits of metal had been found, but nothing more was heard from the participants in that expedition; all evidence was either suppressed or simply stolen. A single report from an Institute double agent among the ranks of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory claims that a valuable sealed metal or stone cylinder has recently been detected by radar at the center of the site. Since this object lies beneath the permafrost and the water table, getting to it would pose quite a challenge. Perhaps the Order of St. Gregory knows more, but it certainly isn't telling.

AUSTRALIA: THE ISLAND CONTINENT

Settled in prehistoric times by small tribes island-hopping through the South Pacific, Australia was brought into the modern industrial world by British settlers, many of them

convicted felons deported from England. These unwilling colonists were sent to Australia to tame the wilderness or die. Since that time, Australia has joined the ranks of industrialized, developed nations, but it still retains traces of its roots: a fierce loyalty to one's friends, a certain stubbornness, and a relaxed attitude toward booze, sex, and the great outdoors.

Ayers Rock

Called the "Navel of the World" by the Australian aborigines, this large red stone formation in the middle of the continent has become a familiar tourist destination and the site of much New Age worship. In actuality, Ayers Rock is a powerful nexus of telluric currents and arcane energy and has, in times past, been the site of a doorway to another world.

Over the past several thousand years, the aborigines of Australia have been in direct contact with alien creatures called the Wandj (known today as the mothfolk). The Wandj visited the aborigines through one or more doorways (such as the one at Ayers Rock) many times over the centuries, so much so that some aboriginal shamans can speak a pidgin form of the mothfolk language.

In the 1700s, many members of the Final Church (see page 81) were deported from England to Australia. Soon after their arrival, they discovered the power inherent in Ayers Rock. For almost two hundred years, they had the site all to themselves. However, as tourism to the rock has increased, the members of the Final Church have had to be more careful about making their blood sacrifices and calling down their dark powers. Bloody knives or human remains have sometimes been found near Ayers Rock; the local authorities have helped cover these up to avoid frightening off the trekkers coming to the rock for spiritual reasons.

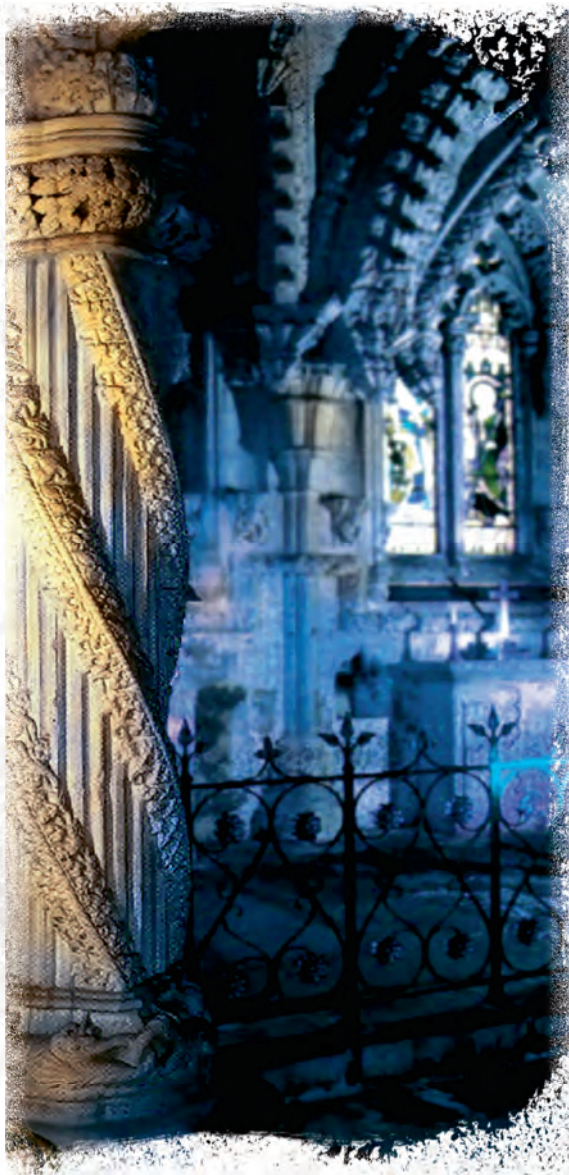
EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST: ARCHITECTS OF THE MODERN WORLD

As the home of four great religions that shaped the modern world—Christianity, Islam, capitalism, and communism—Europe and the Near East have always stood at the forefront of philosophy, arts, and sciences. During the huge push outward during the Age of Exploration, European attitudes were exported to the New World and imposed on the natives by their colonial masters. Origins of discoveries both mechanical and spiritual have deep roots here, and many of the oldest conspiracies have their home in Europe or the Mediterranean countries as well.

The British Isles

The British Isles have a great tradition of paranormal or occult stories, from the Sidhe of Celtic myths to Merlin and King Arthur to the crop circles of the late twentieth century. Fairies, druids, giants, UFOs, and more are commonplace in tales of this region.

In addition, as one of the preeminent powers for much of the last several hundred years, Great Britain is inextricably linked to many conspiracies and secret groups, such as the Templars and the Freemasons.



Avebury

Stonehenge is overrun with tourists, but it's hardly the only set of *menhir* (standing stones) in the British Isles, or in Europe for that matter. Almost as large and far more accessible to tourists, are the standing stones of Avebury, in the county of Wiltshire. The stones themselves stand out in the countryside and attract just enough tourists to support a single small restaurant and gift shop. The 1,380-foot-diameter circle is large enough to include part of the village of Avebury within it.

A ditch and bank surround the Outer Circle; within it are two inner circles, the Northern Circle and the Southern Circle. The Northern Circle still has the remains of two massive stones called "the Cove" at its heart, while the Southern Circle once contained an obelisk, now gone. In general, the Avebury stones consist of two different styles: pillars and diamonds, in alternating placement. Their meaning isn't entirely clear, but the pillars are thought to be symbols of male power, the diamonds of the female principle.

In prehistoric times, Avebury stood at the center of a large complex of ritual sites. About 0.9 miles south stands the mysterious Silbury Hill. On a hilltop not far away from Silbury is West Kennet Long Barrow. To the northwest, the round barrows of the Windmill Hill encampment overlook the village of Avebury and the stone circles. An avenue of megaliths leads out of the southern entrance to the Avebury circles and probably once went all the way to the stone circle on Overton Hill, long since demolished. And Stonehenge itself is just 19 miles to the south.

To date, druids and other neopagan groups have not made a great show of worshiping at Avebury as they do at Stonehenge, but it may just be a matter of time. What secrets does the site hold? Like all the sites of standing stones, they may have been constructed to serve as timepieces in order to measure the solstices and equinoxes and regulate planting and harvest times—or they may have a deeper meaning. Certainly setting multiton stones on end was no easy task for the technology of the time, so the people who built these sites all over Europe must have been powerfully motivated to do so. Furthermore, such stones are not restricted to Europe; similar sites have also been found in North America, such as at "America's Stonehenge" in North Salem, New Hampshire.

Institute researchers theorize that the stones mark locations where dark matter collects and can be used for powerful arcane magic. A competing theory claims that the stones simply mark doorways. The two theories are not mutually exclusive: Sites where dark matter gathers might well be the best sites to open interdimensional doorways.

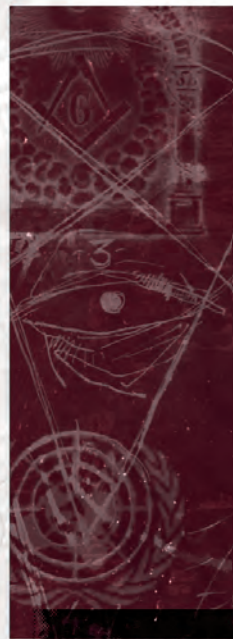
In recent years, Avebury has been home to a number of sightings involving small white men carrying silver wands. Though the eyewitness reports are contradictory, it's clear that sheep—and possibly a backpacker—have gone missing in the area. Whether these are Greys or something else is unclear.

Rosslyn Chapel

Near Edinburgh in Scotland lies this strange Gothic church, built in the fifteenth century and long a site with Templar and Masonic connections. However, even its origins are obscure: It is variously attributed to Earl William Sinclair and Prince Henry St. Clair, the third lord of Rosslyn. Regardless of who established it, it was built with the help of the Templars themselves. Not surprisingly, it has hundreds of Templar, Masonic, and Grail symbols etched into its stonework, including St. Clair's tombstone.

The St. Clair family still exists in the present day (as the Sinclairs), and members of the family claim that their ancestors attempted to found a new Jerusalem in Nova Scotia and in New England. These efforts (well before Columbus's time) led to the mystery of New Ross Oak Island, and the money pit. Indeed, some of the carvings within the Chapel are said to be encoded or symbolic representations of where the Templar treasure may be found. That treasure is thought to be a hoard of gold spirited away from King Phillip's looting, or perhaps even the treasure of King Herod, taken from Solomon's Temple during the founding years of the Templar order.

In Scotland, the Templars were the guardians of a portion of the True Cross, sacred scrolls, a holy stone, and other items, all of which are said to be hidden somewhere inside Rosslyn Chapel. It has been said that the chapel is a rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon, or that it was built as a chapel to the Holy



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Grail, which the Templars (and particularly the St. Clairs) were traditionally entrusted with guarding. Some people still believe that the Grail itself is hidden within the Apprentice Pillar, a richly carved pillar built especially to house it. Others claim that the chapel contains the severed head of Christ beneath an inscription which reads, "Here beneath this pillar lies the head of God." Still others maintain the chapel contains the Holy Rood of Scotland, a fragment of the True Cross supposedly brought to Scotland in 1086 by Queen Margaret and turned over to the Knights Templar. These relics are said to have fueled the Templars' remarkable ascent to power in Europe—and perhaps their loss was intertwined with the knights' even more rapid decline.

Finally, some of Rosslyn Chapel's tombstones are marked with the rosy cross, among the first instances of this symbol's use in Europe. The symbol may indicate a connection to the Rosicrucians (page 74).

The Shetlands

North of Scotland lie a number of small islands, including the Orkney, Faroe, and Shetland Islands. While the Shetlands are technically part of Great Britain, culturally they belong just as much to Scandinavia as they do to Britain. The islanders are a hardy breed, used to cold winters, gray skies, and difficult weather. The islands' economy is primarily based on tourism now, though they still produce wool, and fishermen and oilmen alike set sail from the Shetland ports.

On an abandoned rock on the Shetlands lies one of the sites mentioned in the sagas written in Old Norse in the seventh century: the grave of Magnus Gromdahl, a notorious Norwegian sorcerer who briefly held the islands as his fiefdom in the late fifth century. Few records survive from that time, but the gravesite is said to be haunted, and the locals never visit the place. Oddly enough, it isn't even mentioned in the glossy tourist brochures available at the ubiquitous B&Bs.

Cyprus

Cyprus has long been a site of contention and destruction. Long ago, its northern coast was washed by the tidal wave that destroyed Thera, later waves and earthquakes in A.D. 332 and 342 destroyed its cities of Paphos and Salamis, and both the Knights of Malta and the Templars retreated here after the fall of Jerusalem. It is justly famous for its beautifully painted Byzantine Churches and for the Troodos Mountains in the south and southwest. For many years the island was a possession of the Byzantine Empire, which gradually converted its people from paganism to Orthodox Christianity. Today, Cyprus remains a stronghold of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, and the island has legends that can be tracked back to the days of Grey settlement in the Mediterranean.

Stronghold of the Church

Overseen by a synod of the Archbishop of Nicosia and the bishops of Citium, Kyrenia, and Paphos, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus is a strange beast indeed from an ecclesiastical standpoint. It is one of the oldest autocephalous (ecclesiastically independent) churches of Eastern Christianity. Ecumenical councils confirmed those rights in 431 and 692. Though Roman Catholics occupied the island at various points in its history, the

Church of Cyprus has never lost its right to chart an independent course. What it does with that independence is of little concern to most of those outside Cyprus proper. Secretly, it keeps close contact with the Hidden Order, the Patriarch of Venice, and monks of the more distant east, and only a few theologians and occultists know many of its High Gospels.

Of unknown relationship to the church is the island's Islamic history. The lady Umm-Haram, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammed, died at Tekke near Larnaca in 649. Unconfirmed rumors after her death claimed that she sought knowledge held by the Cypriot monks.

Stavrovouni Monastery

This monastery near Larnaca is perched on a rocky peak whose name it bears. It is said to have been founded around A.D. 330 by Saint Helena, who left a fragment of the Holy Cross to the monastery. Even today, women are barred from visiting the monastery.

Istanbul

Though founded by Greeks and ruled by Persians as well as Romans, Istanbul's modern history begins in A.D. 1453, when Sultan Mehmet II and his Ottoman Turks captured it and killed the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI. Since that time it has variously been a crossroads of trade, capital of the most powerful empire of the Islamic world, the maritime rival of the Republic of Venice, the greatest sea power of the Mediterranean, a decaying city called the "Sick Man of Europe," and a reinvigorated, modern, secular metropolis as industrialized as any.

Old Istanbul proper lies within the ninety-six towers and the long miles of walls built in the fifth century by Emperor Theodosius, but the larger city now spills out for much farther in every direction. The old city is home to architectural marvels such as Topkapi Palace, the Hagia Sophia, and the Blue Mosque. It is also a crucial link between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as well as between Europe and the Middle East. Finally, the city acts as a bridge between the science and religion of the Arabs and the mysticism and conspiracies of Europe.

The Grand Bazaar and Street of Exports

The Grand Bazaar is a vast collection of thousands of shops in dome-vaulted halls, and it has been operating since 1461. It has been built and rebuilt many times because of fires, the most recent in 1954.

Anything and everything is for sale here, from rugs and coffee to books and cutlery. The entire complex is organized into streets (often enclosed) such as the Street of Rugs, Street of Jeans, Street of Jewelers, and even the Street of Knives. Many of these streets or sections of the bazaar have iron gates and guards who lock up the premises at night. Other subsidiary businesses operate near the bazaar in a series of surrounding buildings loosely connected to the bazaar itself, such as the courtyard of books that serves bibliophiles in the famed Sahaf-lar Çarşisi. Here, ancient volumes are sold next to paperback potboilers. Some of these businesses are legitimate, but just as many are suspect.

The Street of Exports (once the Street of Slaves) is technically a subsidiary market street unconnected to the bazaar. However,

its proximity to the bazaar makes it appear as part of the same complex to most visitors, even though the goods for sale here are markedly different. The Street of Exports is home to three unsavory trades: illegal drugs and narcotics, weapons and poison gas, and exotic materials.

First and foremost, heroin passes through Istanbul in great quantities, and much of the commerce happens here. The trade is a huge industry that the Turkish government would like to ignore, but the extensive money involved guarantees its survival. How much of that money funnels into the pockets of government and police officials depends on just how brazenly the dealers move their shipments. Most organized crime in Turkey is involved in the heroin trade one way or another, and Kurdish separatists traffic in it as well.

Second, deals for mustard gas, tear gas, sarin, nerve gas, and even less savory materials take place here over the cups of tea ubiquitous throughout the merchant district. The Street of Exports is an arms dealer's dream: Russian, Iraqi, Israeli, and other weapons are all for sale, though never publicly. Most dealers only show catalogues in their shops; the actual weapons appear when the buyer has been carefully vetted and his ability to buy has been confirmed. Many of these weapons are funneled to the rebellions brewing in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Muslim countries, and Africa.

Finally, the street houses a few merchants whose sole business is the acquisition and sale of exotic objects. Their stock includes religious icons and artifacts, precious objects stolen from archaeological sites, stolen statuary and paintings, human and animal mummies, books forbidden by mullahs and bishops alike, cadavers and bones taken from graveyards, and even records stolen from churches or government files.

Jerusalem

As a holy place for three major world religions (the primary center for Christians and Jews, a tertiary but still holy site for Muslims), every inch of Jerusalem is contested ground.

Solomon's Temple

The Templars are said to have unearthed an ancient treasure beneath the stables that the Muslims had made of this ancient temple. The treasures buried here may have included the Ark of the Covenant and other Judaic relics of great antiquity. Even if the treasures were simply mundane hoards of gold and precious stones, it's a well-known fact that the Templars quickly showed their wealth after their founding in the late 1100s.

According to the Talmud, King Solomon built the temple with the help of a demon, Asmodeus, whom the king had captured and pressed into slave labor. Indeed, some traditions maintain that the demon was friendly, and served Solomon willingly as a guardian and advisor. Other legends of Asmodeus present a much less beneficent figure.

Malta

Called Melita in ancient days, this small 250-square-mile island was ruled from A.D. 1530 to 1798 by the Knights Hospitaller, now called the Knights of Malta. Charles V granted it to them in 1530 as a gift in exchange for a yearly tribute of a trained falcon.

During World War II, Malta was a crucial way station between British airfields at Gibraltar and Egypt; it supplied the British

campaign against Rommel in North Africa. Not surprisingly, the island became the target of thousands of air raids by the Axis powers, beginning with two waves of bombers sent against it by Mussolini on June 11, 1940.

Order of Knights Hospitaller

Though the knights no longer rule Malta (it has an independent, democratically elected government), they still have considerable influence. Their holdings include many houses, an armory, and the Grand Magisterial Palace of Sant Angelo, restored to their use in the late twentieth century. Meetings of the entire order are held here annually.

Orenburg

The city of Orenburg, 360 miles east of Moscow just south of the Urals, has long been a stronghold of Orthodoxy and of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory. In the early 1800s, it was also the site of a series of strange UFO sightings.

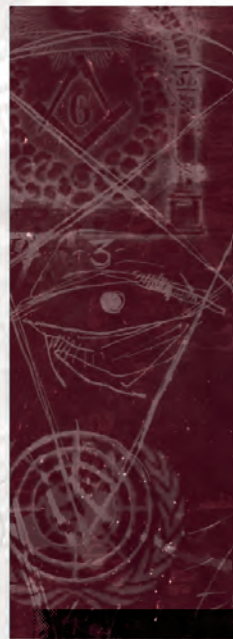
The first sighting occurred in September 1824, when small pieces of metal fell from a clear blue sky onto the roof of the local church. The following January, another fall of symmetrical metal pieces hit the church. Made of rusted, sulfurous iron combined with organic matter, the bits of metal were sent to St. Petersburg for further analysis.

In St. Petersburg, the manufactured bits of metal drew the attention of a number of dignitaries, including Prince Pavel Dolgoruky, a member of the order of mystics called the Brotherhood of the Inner Order. The Brotherhood was an offshoot of the Lodge Harmonia, a well-known front for the Hidden Order that Nikolai Novikov founded as a recruitment tool in St. Petersburg in 1780. Both the lodge and the brotherhood were direct results of the suppression of the Masonic orders by Empress Catherine II in 1792. Novikov, Dolgoruky, and others jailed at the time founded the lodge as a gathering place for books and knowledge of all kinds; they quickly collected a valuable set of mystic and esoteric texts. Their collection of banned books included a first-edition *Originalschriften des Illuminatenordensekte* by Adam Weishaupt, pamphlets by Eastern and Muslim mystics, and copies of the sacred texts of obscure Buddhist sects. The addition of the metal artifacts from Orenburg was a natural extension of the brotherhood's existing interests.

Dolgoruky died in 1838, and all the books, pamphlets, and metal artifacts passed to his daughter, Nadyezhda de Fadeyev. Her niece, Elena Petrovna von Hahn—better known in later life as Madame Blavatsky—read her grandfather's books in 1846. Perhaps coincidentally, in January of that same year papers from the Czarist Ministry of the Interior document the occurrence of an intense burst of light in Orenburg. The white-light vision was seen by dozens of witnesses.

In later years, when Blavatsky had founded the Theosophical Society and become the leading mystic of her time, she hinted that the origins of her esoteric wisdom were gained in Orenburg and Tibet. Indeed, Russian mystics (including, presumably, many members of the Hidden Order) traveled from St. Petersburg to Tibet seeking that knowledge. Perhaps it is just a coincidence that the road leads straight through Orenburg.

The collection of Orenburg metal vanished in the 1890s after Madame de Fadeyev's death and has not been seen since.



Prague

Historically, golden Prague has been a center of alchemy, Jewish culture and religious tolerance, and religious reform. More than that, it was a seat of power for the Hermetic and Enochian adepts of Europe. Finally and most notoriously, Prague is home to a particular Czech form of murder: defenestration, or assassination by throwing the victim out the nearest window.

The First Defenestration of Prague took place during the Reformation, when the reformers known as Hussites (followers of Jan Hus, a scholar at the university) rose up against the Church in the years after Hus had been burned at the stake in 1415. During the revolt of 1419, many of the city councilors were thrown from the windows of the New Town Hall. The following year the peasant rebels won an important victory over King Sigismund at Vitkov Hill, thus turning back the forces of Roman Catholicism.

The Second Defenestration of Prague began the Thirty Years War. In 1618, Roman Catholic officials closed Protestant churches, violating an agreement that had guaranteed religious freedom to the citizens. Rather than staging a revolt, the Protestants assembled in Prague and tried the Imperial regents responsible. Both they and their secretary were thrown from the windows of the Hradcany (a Prague castle) on May 23, 1618—and all of them survived relatively unscathed. This incident sparked the revolt against the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand II, and the ensuing war continued for decades.

The Third Defenestration of Prague took place in the closing days of the transitional government, just before the elections scheduled for 1948. Jan Masaryk, the foreign minister of the coalition government and an illustrious and tireless supporter of Czech causes, remained at his post when the Communist members of the government staged a violent coup. In March he either threw himself out a window of the Foreign Office or was murdered. In either case, the cause of Czech democracy would not recover for more than forty years.

The fourth and most mysterious defenestration of Prague occurred just a few months ago. A Hungarian priest named Janos Sarkany seems to have been thrown from an upper gallery window of St. Vitus Cathedral. While the Protestant Church had recovered a great deal of ground since the restoration of self-rule in the Czech Republic in 1989, it rarely got involved in politics. According to rumor, however, Sarkany learned something about the Catholic Church in Prague that led to his death. Since he was a popular priest, his death has caused some unrest, and theories circulate throughout the city that his murderers are planning further attacks or that their plot continues to unfold. Sarkany's last words, "the black angels," are widely considered to be a clue to either his murderers' identity or the nature of their scheme, but no one can agree on exactly what he meant.

Rome

With thousands of years of history, plots, and counterplots, it's impossible to summarize the many-layered intrigues of Rome. The most recent gossip includes a banking scandal involving the Vatican, the theft of seemingly unimportant statuary from St. Peter's Basilica, and a murder in the Vatican library. The Hidden Order, the Knights of Malta, the Bilderbergers, and the P2 branch of the Freemasons are all known to be active in Rome.

Monastery of St. Cyril

A small compound at the outskirts of Rome, this monastery is one stronghold of the militant branch of the Knights of Malta and is closed to the public. It includes a gun range, an armory, and a small jail/interrogation chamber. The weapons stored at the monastery are believed to include an armored personnel carrier, anti-tank missiles, automatic assault rifles, and smoke grenades. Armed guards watch over the entire compound from the bell tower and the chapel's steeple.

P2

This inner circle of the Freemasons is known to be active only in Italy, and it seems to be especially interested in two topics: money and the Catholic Church. Its membership includes many members of Italy's banking community, highly placed Vatican officials, and a few archbishops. Whispered stories in Rome claim that the Pope himself is a member.

The Grand Lodge of the Capitoline Hill seems to function as P2's base, though private homes and even lodges on Church property have been verified. Nonmembers and even fellow Masons are excluded from P2 meetings and property. The lodge's records are likewise encoded and sealed.

The Vatican

This tiny patch of land is an independent ecclesiastical state, with authority over the souls and spiritual welfare of hundreds of millions of Catholics worldwide. In early 2001, a Church cardinal was found ritually murdered in the Vatican library, setting off a firestorm of rumor and speculation. According to the suppressed police reports, Cardinal Albertini was strangled by a garrote and found with the wafers of the Host in his mouth, his back mutilated with Latin scripture, and his eyes removed from their sockets. Traces of sulfurous iron were sprinkled around the scene. No suspects have been apprehended, and no motives have been put forward for the bizarre murder.

St. Petersburg

Originally the site of a Swedish fortress, this settlement between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga has often changed hands between Swedes and Russians. Peter the Great founded the last Russian fortress here in 1703, and it grew into a great city that tied Russia more tightly to Europe. In the twenty-first century, St. Petersburg lies on dozens of islands astride the Neva River and commands a vital strategic position as Russia's only port to the Baltic Sea. Though many of its architectural treasures were destroyed or fell into neglect during World War II and the Communist era, it is still a place of great charm. It is also the site of the headquarters of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory.

As a city of islands, St. Petersburg is a very appealing place for European tourists and artists. It was also a traditional place of espionage between East and West before the October Revolution in 1917, and the city is slowly regaining that status.

Palaces

The city is home to many palaces, including the Winter Palace (where the Revolution of 1917 finally undertook mob action), the Mikhailovsky Palace (full of secret passageways, now the Russian Museum), and the Hermitage. This last is perhaps the greatest museum in Europe, filled with art and occult treasures

first collected by Catherine the Great and later looted from the burnt-out husk that was the corpse of the Third Reich. In addition, the city is home to the Russian Admiralty building, which is topped with the distinctive frigate-shaped weathervane that serves as the city's emblem. Gorky Park lies next to it.

The Onion House

Built originally as an Orthodox monastery and church, the Church of St. Basil was abandoned by the faith from 1917 to 1991, during which time open worship was either discouraged or forbidden. But it was not deserted by the group of scholars who occupied it from 1952 to the present: Members of the Hidden Order of St. Gregory have turned the *dom luki* ("house of onions") into a repository of documents, books, and relics gathered over the preceding centuries. The fragments recovered from the Tunguska event are said to be stored here, as are a few important sutras recovered from Tibet (or stolen from the Chinese). It is likely that the strange metal fragments recovered from the Orenburg skyfall can be found here as well.

Tomar

Gualdim Pais, the master of the Temple in Portugal, built the castle of Tomar in Portugal in 1160. Here the Templars reformed themselves as the Knights of Christ and prospered for centuries, eventually finding their way to the Americas and making Portugal's fortune. Tomar served as their headquarters during the period when the exploration of the New World was at its most active.

The castle stands in several parts, each built in a different architectural period: Tomar's round chapel first served as a fortress in the twelfth century. The castle was rebuilt and extended throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Templar church at its center is octagonal like the Holy Sepulcher and is typical of churches and mosques built in Palestine.

Currently the castle is open to visitors, but a few sections are closed to public view. These areas are said to be the repository of materials from the Institute archives, ancient Kabbalist texts, medieval and Renaissance alchemical works, and many Templar records hidden from the Church. The degree to which any remnant of the Templars remains active in Portugal is unknown, but certainly this would be one place to find out.

Venice

Home to a republic that outlasted the great era of the Italian city-states and that extended its naval power from the Aegean Sea to the British Isles, the lagoon of Venice is now nothing more than a shell. The arsenal where the Republic's ships were built and the Doge's Palace where its plots were hatched both stand silent now. St. Mark's Square at the center of the town no longer bustles with trade, but only with tourists. The age of Venetian independence came to a crashing end in 1797, when the city was conquered by Napoleon. But the ghosts of Venice still have teeth.

St. Mark's Basilica

As the home of the remains of St. Mark (stolen from Egypt in A.D. 828), this cathedral is the spiritual heart of the city, next to the Doge's Palace and the famous bell tower. Built in the

Byzantine style and topped by four bronze horses stolen from Constantinople during the Crusades, St. Mark's is an odd mix of Orthodox and Catholic elements of Christianity, with icons and mosaics overseeing masses conducted in a variation of the Roman style. Indeed, for many years the patriarch of St. Mark's refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. St. Mark's has always been close to heterodoxy.

Besides the saint's bones, what relics and other holy bones lie in its catacombs? Surely the Crusaders brought home other treasures. The priests aren't saying what the sacristy contains, but the ties between the cathedral, the Republic of Venice, and the Venetian merchant fleets were always very close. At the height of its power, the city-state traded throughout the Mediterranean and north to the British Isles and the Netherlands. Perhaps its treasures were looted by Napoleon when the Republic was conquered and dissolved; perhaps they were hidden away on one of the many smaller islands of the lagoon.

As a major tourist destination, few secret activities can be expected at the basilica. Yet stories circulate of midnight masses on perfectly ordinary weekdays, of "closed for repairs" signs that stay up for weeks in the winter off-season, and of chanting that certainly isn't Latin. St. Mark's may well be the oldest part of the city, and it also keeps the city's oldest secrets. It still celebrates Carnival in the old style each February, complete with robes and masks; recent investigations by arcanists and adepts suspect that the night covers some greater ritual. Perhaps the glory of the Republic may yet somehow be restored.

THE POLES: LANDS OF DESOLATION

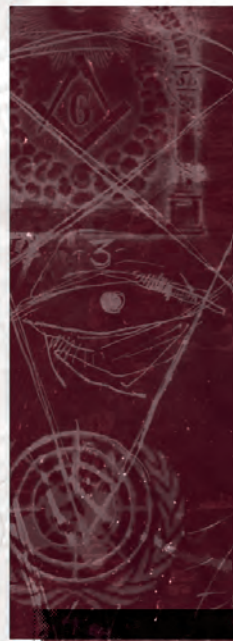
The greatest geographical extremes above water exist at the poles, where survival itself becomes an unlikely proposition. Nevertheless, the very harshness and isolation of these regions attracts a certain breed of explorers, human and otherwise.

Antarctica

This polar continent was not discovered by Europeans until 1818 and hardly explored until 1911, when Roald Amundsen led a Norwegian party of explorers to the pole. However, Antarctica shows up on maps as early as the fifteenth century (such as the Piri Reis map, which is based on much older documents), clearly indicating that some ancient civilization knew about it. Today, Antarctica contains over 90% of the world's permanent ice and snow, and average winter temperatures can drop below -21° C (-70° F). Summer temperatures rise above freezing, but only along the coasts; during the summer, icebergs frequently detach from the many ice sheets that run down into the ocean.

Antarctica hasn't always been a frozen hell. Given the fossils and even the frozen plant materials found on the continent, it evidently enjoyed relatively temperate periods before the continental drift.

The Greys occasionally construct atmospheric and heavy metal mining stations here; the atmospheric and water miners ship their cargoes to the Moon, while the metal miners send processed ore to Mars. These mines are always buried under hundreds of feet of ice or are hidden high in the mountains near the Vinson Massif (the highest Antarctic peak at nearly 16,000 feet).



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Station-Ship *Uulangti*

Atop 11,063-foot-high Blizzard Peak in the Queen Maud Mountains, sealed within an almost immobile glacier, a Grey station-ship watches over human activity. The site is so remote that it has never been visited by humans; the nearest settlements are Russian and American science stations at McMurdo, Amundsen-Scott, and Vostok stations. Even so, twenty sasquatch soldiers (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 80) armed with crossbows guard the ship's perimeter, though the weather alone would deter all but the most fanatical from visiting the trans-Antarctic mountains.

The 650-foot-diameter station-ship *Uulangti* keeps tabs on human ham radio traffic and atmospheric changes, and sends out agents to the various cities and towns that the Greys monitor. The ship's reports are filed every twenty years and contain comprehensive documentation of the changes humankind has wrought over the face of the Earth. Recently the aliens have had a great deal of trouble keeping up with the volume of data being generated, and the station-ship teems with almost six hundred overworked Greys.

According to long-standing Grey practice, every so often a few humans are brought aboard the station ship and dissected, to determine what genetic changes have taken place over the last human generation. These are the only humans permitted on the *Uulangti*; all others are gently steered away through the use of psionic suggestions and illusions.

The North Pole

The North Pole was not explored until 1909, when Robert Peary claims to have reached the top of the world. Only a few cold-adapted creatures have carved out a place for themselves within the Arctic Circle, soaking in the eternal summer sun or lurking in the months-long winter night. These include polar bears, caribou, arctic foxes, seals, a few species of gulls, and a scattering of Inuit and primitive sasquatches (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 80). Few other animals can survive for long in the brutal chill.

In addition, the pole is occasionally the site of Grey water mining. Grey scout craft carve out chunks of ice to refresh the water supplies of the settlements on the Moon and Mars.

THE OCEANS: TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD

Under the water and waves that cover most of the Earth lie the plankton and algae that cycle biomass from carbon dioxide to the top of the food chain. But what else waits buried beneath the oceans? Recent archaeological work has taken advantage of the fact that during the most recent Ice Age, human (or other) inhabitants had settled much of the Mediterranean and other coastal regions; the water that now covers those areas was locked into the polar ice caps of the period. So exactly what does lie under the water and behind the myths of cities-under-wave? Only dedicated and extensive surveying and exploration can answer the question with any certainty, but two great finds are likely: a lost culture, and creatures adapted to the depths.

Atlantis

Somewhere under the waves rests the remnants of a third culture—in addition to the proto-Egyptians and Olmecs—that benefited from Grey contact ten thousand years ago: the lost continent of Atlantis. The Greys are completely unwilling to discuss it; the whole episode is regarded as an embarrassing period from their past, a mistake they would just as soon forget.

Proposed sites for this sunken island include Bimini, the rocks of St. Peter and Paul (more properly, the Penedos de Sao Pedro e Paulo) between Brazil and West Africa, the Bahamas, the Azores, Greenland, the Canary Islands, Antarctica, and many others. However, the most likely site is Thera, a small volcanic island in the Aegean Sea about 72 miles north of Crete. This island shows clear traces of a volcanic eruption around 1470 B.C. that crippled the advanced Minoan civilization that existed there.

Ironically, this hypothesized location is correct, but not for the reasons stated. The Atlantean culture flourished on and around the Aegean island of Thera for several thousand years after the most recent Ice Age retreated. However, this culture was destroyed in 2150 B.C. by a cataclysmic explosion, perhaps linked to advanced alien technology being used on the island.

Mariana Trench

Far below the Pacific Ocean, south of Japan and north of New Guinea, lies the Mariana Trench, the lowest point on the globe. Its deepest point lies near Guam at a place called Challenger Deep, a full 35,798 feet deep. The trench is thousands of miles long, eventually joining up with the Kuril-Kamohatka Trench north of Hokkaido. What sort of creatures can survive at that depth? What lifeforms might thrive on a diet of hydrogen sulfides and waters heated by the earth's volcanic magma? No one knows: No human vessel has ever dived that deep, though sensors have been lowered to the bottom.

The Greys are reluctant to sink a scout ship into the depths; their ships are built to withstand the pressures of vacuum, not the external pressures of thousands of atmospheres of water pressing in on the hull. The mysteries at the bottom of the sea may remain mysteries for many years to come.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL SITES

Humanity has been reaching out beyond the atmosphere for decades, ever since the first *Sputnik* achieved orbit in 1957. In 1961, Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space, orbiting the Earth in a six-ton space capsule, soon followed by Alan Shepard. By 1969, humans were on the Moon, and soon robotic rovers visited Mars and Venus and deep-space probes flew past Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond—there was plenty of the solar system to explore. But the solar system was already inhabited: The Greys mapped it out eight thousand years ago and chose Earth as their primary colony, followed by Mars.

Earth Orbit

The most prominent human-controlled object in orbital space is the International Space Station, or ISS. The ISS is the product of cooperation between the European Space Agency (ESA), National Air and Space Administration (NASA), National Air and Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA), Russia, Canada, and Brazil. Its mission "to improve life on Earth and



extend life beyond our home planet.” Every April and October, a *Soyuz* spacecraft delivers a new crew of astronauts to the Space Station and takes the previous expedition crew back to Earth. Expedition 13, which arrived at the station in April 2006, is scheduled to conduct maintenance as well as experiments designed to gather information about the effects of long-duration spaceflight on the human body to help with planning future exploration missions to the Moon and Mars.

Meanwhile, a permanent Grey observation platform sits high above the North Pole, observing all that occurs below it and picking up information from every satellite in orbit. This station, called the *Haavisto*, is in constant contact with both the Grey lunar colony and the city-ship on Mars.

The Moon

The Moon in 2001 is still largely uninhabited, though two significant settlements exist: the UN's Hammar skjöld Base (nicknamed Moonbase Plato) and the Grey station-ship *Caluya*.

Moonbase Plato

Part of the United Nations' Project Glacier (see page 90), this secret human settlement is within the Plato crater, near the lunar north pole at the edge of Mare Imbrium. It has several agricultural and power-station domes (usually retracted when in view of Earth) and releases occasional clouds of water haze. These come from the small but important water deposits that the settlers mine from the lunar pole. The farms are kept under camouflaging domes, though at the height of the growing season a faint image of greenish growth can sometimes be seen from Earth. Fortunately, in 2001 not many people are watching

the Moon; astronomers are far more interested in what the Hubble telescope and other advanced research projects can tell them about distant stars and galaxies than they are in the comparatively mundane events in their own backyard.

Established in 1988, the colony has depended on the goodwill of a few friendly Greys from the start; Iltan engineers set up the dome using human blueprints (to assure that humans would feel comfortable with the architecture), and the colonists have access to a Grey scout ship to transport personnel from the surface to Earth-orbiting space shuttles.

In many ways, life on the Moon is highly regimented. Radio, laser, and other forms of communication are all jammed by the aliens or simply not available to the residents. The moonbase depends on supplies from secret shipments from Earth, as the base's own hydroponic gardens, algaeculture, and aquaculture provide only enough fish, grain, and other foodstuffs to feed about half the station personnel.

Currently, the Plato base is inhabited by 287 settlers: 190 working colonists, 78 scientists and doctors working on human adaptation to space and other UN-mandated research, and 19 children. All the residents serve as test subjects to a certain degree, with frequent blood and urine tests, treadmill tests of lung capacity, bone mass measurements, and tests of neurological function. All are experts in the use of vacuum suits and have some degree of zero-g training.

In addition, it has been discovered that humans born on the Moon are more likely to show traces of psionic ability than those born on Earth are. Admittedly, the sample size of the population is very small, so it may just be a statistical aberration; nevertheless, two of the nineteen children born on the moon display a psionic wild talent. By comparison, knowledgeable

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parapsychologists claim at least some psionic sensitivity in about one in every two hundred earthbound children.

Station-Ship *Caluya*

After their interaction with Mesoamerican cultures and until the early days of the space race, the Grey city-ship resided on the Moon. But then, as humanity took its first steps out into the solar system, the Greys moved the great spacecraft to Mars (see below). Now, only a station-ship remains on Luna, serving primarily as a staging and observation point for their surveillance and monitoring of conditions and activities on Earth. The station-ship *Caluya* houses a small population of Greys and has a few human prisoners/lab experiments. Kal ri Ulan, the captain of the station-ship, is a member of the Ittan faction and thus is more inclined to interact peacefully with humans (such as those of Moonbase Plato). Some Ahotti even whisper quietly that Ulan has a bit of the rogue in him.

Mars

Mars has been the center of an enormous effort by the Greys to mine enough metal ore, oxygen, water, and other resources to support their ships and their civilization. But the period of Martian industrialization may be nearing its end, for several reasons. One problem is the growing ability of humans to visit the red planet. However, that isn't the whole story.

A few Greys still cling to the story that the Speaker has put forward: The Grey efforts to terraform Mars are faltering, and the Greys must conserve their resources for a greater struggle against humanity, which is rapidly evolving both technological sophistication and a taste for mass destruction. Worse, the Greys may have to take on the fight against the invading Strangers personally, before they are in a position to take over Earth entirely. As a result, goes the official line, the Greys have scaled back their operations drastically in the past few years. In fact, other reasons have been just as influential in bringing about the shift in Grey efforts, though only the Speaker and a few residents of the highest echelons of Grey society are privy to these secrets.

Despite the rumors and the continuing threat of human observers, the Greys need access to the rich red soils of Mars for everything from batteries to mass pistols. The Greys can't do much to change the troubles at Olympus Mons, but they can do something about the threat of human discovery. To keep their access to Mars, the Greys have made sure that human efforts to visit locations near their bases have been stymied.

As a result of this policy of obscuring the true face of Mars, many space probes have not functioned as well as their human creators have hoped. Indeed, the satellites orbiting Mars have an abysmal performance record. Every time a satellite approaches the north or south pole it encounters what NASA calls the "Galactic Ghost." Every early pole satellite failed; by the time later satellites got there, the Greys had found ways to send false signals, thus preventing the discovery of their mine pits and tailings, their terraforming stations, and their city-ship.

Valles Marineris and the City Ship

This rift valley is incredibly deep, typically 2.4 miles or so, with unconfirmed areas thought to be up to 6 miles deep below the rim. The rift itself is up to 120 miles wide and about 2,400 miles

long, roughly as long from end to end as the distance from New York to Los Angeles and as wide as New York to Boston. Its depths are as deep as Mount McKinley is high. It lies near the Martian equator.

At the bottom of the rift canyon the atmosphere of Mars is almost heavy enough to breathe, around 5% that of Earth. But the air is more than 95% carbon dioxide, and thus provides no benefit to oxygen-breathing lungs. Most of Mars has an atmospheric pressure equal to about 1% of that on Earth, but the Valles is deep enough to collect more air and water than most places, and the rift itself provides shelter from the ferocious Martian sandstorms.

All of these factors make Marineris an almost perfect location for oxygen-breathing life to settle, and so it has. At the bottom of the Valles Marineris lie the Grey city-ship and an accompanying settlement. The ship has no parallel in the solar system; its population numbers nearly half a million, and it is capable of carrying more than half this number for generations with only occasional stops to replenish supplies.

The settlement contains an entire functioning society, including farms, factories, ships, data centers, hospitals, and entertainment complexes. It also carries the vast Grey gene banks, which contain ten of thousands of species from the Grey homeworld, thousands more from life-bearing planets the Greys have visited, and hundreds created through genetic experimentation.

The ship's interior architecture is smoothly flowing, with few of the hard edges of human spacecraft: all sharp edges and many of its metal surfaces have been polished by centuries of hands, each touching and wearing away the city-ship's metal core. Everything seems well used, ancient but not shabby. Interior temperature is a constant 13° C.

In addition to its contingent of Greys, the settlement is home to several thousand sasquatches (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 80) and a few dozen human prisoners and test subjects. All non-Greys are kept in separate quarters with appropriate environmental conditions.

Olympus Mons

This mountain is the highest not just on Mars or Earth—it is the highest peak in the solar system, fully 78,000 feet tall. Volcanic in origin, it has long been dormant and shows no sign of ever becoming active again.

A set of interesting rumors revolves around the great Olympus Mons. Informed sources speculate that the ruins within Olympus Mons have somehow grown active in the last two hundred years. The sculpture and machinery of the ancient Martians have somehow come alive, long-disused doorways to other dimensions have opened, and the Greys are as spooked by the reappearance of a culture long thought dead as humans would be by the sudden return of a tribe of ancient Neanderthals carrying superior technology.

More current rumors from the Grey city ship claim that several of the creatures have walked through the gates on Mars and wreaked great havoc in their mining operations. Other whispered stories say that the Greys annihilated the last of a dying race on Mars when they first arrived there millennia ago, and that they fear the ghosts of those their ancestors displaced.



Chapter 6:

Running the Campaign

This chapter is intended for Gamemasters only. Players who read this section risk their GM's wrath (as well as risk spoiling the secrets of the campaign). Besides, a little knowledge can often be more dangerous than none at all.

RUNNING A GAME

A good *d20 DARK•MATTER* game depends on the GM's ability to balance the real with the unreal. Remember, the world of *d20 DARK•MATTER* is the world we live in, just with the curtains of secrecy pulled back a bit. The players have to believe that this could all be happening right now, right here, if they only knew where (or how) to look for it.

In truth, running a *d20 DARK•MATTER* game is a lot like running a typical *d20 MODERN* game. Chapter 7 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* provides lots of helpful tips on running your game, and that information is just as helpful in *d20 DARK•MATTER*. The information below is intended to augment that material, helping the GM make his game feel special.

Starting the Campaign

The first step in creating your *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign is figuring out how to kick off the action. To help guide your thinking, think about why the heroes are together. Are they just a random assortment of agents pulled together for a mission, or is there some link that connects them? Perhaps they were recruited together, or they knew each other before joining the Institute. Or maybe there's no obvious link, but the Institute knows (or suspects) something that has led it to assign these agents to the same team.

Consider starting the campaign with a "recruitment" adventure in which the unsuspecting heroes have a brush with the unexplainable. (Chapter 7 presents such an adventure.) Assuming that they deal with their experiences in a positive manner, a representative of the Institute approaches the heroes afterward and invites them to learn more about such unusual occurrences. (Of course, in the meantime the Institute has already run background checks on the heroes to determine what risks, if any, they pose to the organization.)

This sort of starting point works best if even the players don't know the truth about the campaign setting. Just tell them that they're playing *d20 MODERN*, and let the truth slowly dawn on them over the course of a few adventures. Eventually, you'll have

All we know is still
infinitely less
than all that
still remains unknown.
- William Harvey

to let them read pages 13–15 of this book, but that can come after a couple levels' worth of missions.

Alternatively, you can assume that the characters begin the campaign as agents of the Hoffmann Institute. For veteran agents, you can even start play at a level above 1st. Third level works well for experienced field agents, allowing quick access to advanced or prestige classes. Such heroes are already familiar with the setting, including all information in Chapter 1.

Types of Missions

This book assumes that the heroes work for Department-7, the branch of the Hoffmann Institute's Intelligence Division charged with investigating paranormal phenomena. No two Department-7 assignments are ever the same, and any agent describing a mission as "typical" is misusing the word. Still, most tasks fall into a limited range of categories. Here are some sample investigations that Hoffmann agents might undertake. You can mix and match them as well to create interesting combinations.

Bug Hunt: The Institute dispatches the heroes to hunt down a potentially dangerous xenofom (see *Xenofoms*, page 110, for more ideas).

Extraction: The heroes must help a Hoffmann agent or ally escape from a dangerous location. The individual may be a hostage of an enemy organization, the target of a threat, or simply incapable of getting out of an otherwise sticky situation.

Infiltration: Agents must infiltrate an organization to learn its secrets, possibly in connection with a "recovery"-style mission (see below). They might have to go undercover, posing as members of the target organization, or merely sneak in on their own.

Investigation: The simplest of missions—the agents must merely look into some event, from a UFO sighting to a murder, and find out what really happened. Many other missions begin as simple investigations. This also includes surveillance-type missions, where the heroes must keep watch on a particular individual or location for an extended period of time.

Liquidation: Similar to an extraction or recovery, this type of mission doesn't have any of the difficulty of bringing back the individual or item. While it's true that Hoffmann prefers to avoid violent solutions to problems, it occasionally must resort to eliminating its enemies in a permanent manner. (Unless you want an especially callous group of agents, use this type of mission sparingly.) This also applies to missions in which agents must track down a particular item and destroy it (particularly true of items that can't easily be transported, such as a downed alien spacecraft).

Recovery: The agents must track down and recover a lost item of value, anything from an ancient relic to a sensitive data file to a piece of alien technology. If Hoffmann knows about the item, it's likely that at least one other illuminati group does as well, which may turn the chase into a race.

Of course, agents don't always know exactly what category a mission falls into when they take their assignment. (Sometimes, the Institute doesn't know either.) What begins as an investigation can easily become a bug hunt or recovery, and an extraction may require infiltration (or even change midway to become a liquidation).

The GM, on the other hand, should always know the true nature of the mission. Even if you don't decide beforehand on every little detail, have at least an outline of the expected course of events. Use the information in Chapter Seven: *Gamemastering of the d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* to help you build adventures.

Mixing Normal with Paranormal

It can be tempting to run a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign as never-ending "bug hunt," with heroes battling a new dark-matter-enhanced creature every week, but this undercuts the air of uncertainty upon which the game thrives. If the heroes know that every culprit is a telepathic alien, or a magic-wielding necromancer, or some hideously twisted mutant, then they come to expect such things, and they become commonplace.

Take care to blend normal and paranormal elements together carefully. The more "normality" that the heroes deal with on their missions, the more powerful the paranormal elements become. After wading through dusty libraries, contacting back-alley informants, and strongarming bodyguards, finding out that the target isn't entirely human comes as more of a shock.

Better still, mix in the paranormal in places the heroes might not expect it. Maybe the head honcho of the evil cult is all too human—instead, it's the evil cult's target who's actually an alien being.

It's also okay to run adventures that don't showcase paranormal elements. If your players have come to expect a supernatural twist in every session, keep them guessing by avoiding such themes. Even though the Institute focuses its investigations on the unusual, sometimes the heroes should find entirely usual explanations for otherwise weird events.

USING CONSPIRACIES

A *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign can take a thousand different forms, depending on which conspiracies the heroes choose to investigate—and which ones choose to investigate (or even recruit) them. Though this book assumes that heroes begin play as members of the Hoffmann Institute, they may find their allegiances drifting during the course of the campaign as they interact with various groups. Styles of play can differ as well. One group might burn an action-filled trail of violence across the land and end it all in a cataclysmic firefight against the forces of oppression. Another might peel apart mysteries like the layers of an onion, always finding another layer beneath. In either case, those who learn too much may have to go on the run to avoid becoming the next victims of a global conspiracy.

Conspiracy Campaigns

The dozens of different conspiracies that exist within the campaign setting tend to fall into five broad categories: government, Institute insiders, alien, secret society, and loose cannon. The following paragraphs describe each of these in more detail. Feel free to choose the type of conspiracy you prefer for your campaign, or mix and match them to suit your purposes.

Government

This type of campaign focuses on the corruption inherent in government and military organizations, and on uncovering research,



inventions, and discoveries hidden from the general public. A typical mission might involve retrieving technological tools from a government or joint alien-government base. Whether or not the heroes meet the Greys during such a mission is up to you the GM, but hints of the aliens' presence should crop up as often as saucer sightings. The heroes in a campaign based on government conspiracies may never encounter arcane magic; instead, they typically fight mutants spawned in test tubes and elite strike forces trained by the military machine.

Institute Insiders

Weird events take place within the Institute itself, and the heroes must investigate an increasing number of bizarre mysteries. Researchers and records disappear without a trace, and contacts are suddenly recalled by their superiors while new ones arrive to take their places. Aliens within the Institute's ranks may or may not choose to make their presence known. Both technological and arcane challenges present themselves in this type of campaign. Ultimately, the heroes will likely discover Dr. Nakami's true nature and the Institute's links to the Greys.

Alien

Although any of the conspiracy types can involve aliens, this one focuses particularly on their activities and agendas. Heroes gain insight into plots from a perspective other than their own—perhaps members of an alien race are slowly transforming the world to make it more to their liking, or perhaps they are stealing important resources (even organic ones!) from the Earth. Those opposing the aliens may have trouble gaining help, as few humans are inclined to accept their story, and the insidious alien infiltrators already have nearly airtight cover stories. Therefore, the

heroes must contend with advanced technology, otherworldly powers, and alien mindsets on their own.

Secret Society

The heroes stumble across evidence linking the ancient origins of certain modern-day groups with the arrival of Strangers. Some of these groups possess arcane knowledge of dark matter rituals; others utilize alien power sources and technology to their benefit. The heroes must uncover the plots of these secret societies and determine how great a threat they pose.

Loose Cannon

The heroes investigate a person who represents a danger to particular factions or to world stability in general. This individual has no alliance with a government, alien race, or secret society; he or she acts purely for personal interests—though these interests may coincide with those of one or more conspiracy groups. Adventures in this type of campaign can be extremely dangerous, as multiple rival groups may be investigating the same individual!

The Nature of Conspiracies

Because of their diverse interests and activities, measuring the influence of secret societies is problematical at best. Often, a member of one conspiracy actually works for another or is a member of two or more conspiratorial groups—either working for multiple organizations or using them all for his or her own ends.

An illuminati group may suddenly fade from view for years or even centuries, only to rise again to prominence. In fact, any secret society with a name and a creed is virtually assured of immortality. Somewhere, sometime, someone is bound to



resurrect the name of the defunct group at the very least and perhaps even its agenda.

Consider the octopus as a useful analogy for understanding the dealings of secret societies and conspiracies. Each such group has several arms, reaching in many directions at once. At the same time that the illuminati manipulate the Federal Reserve, they also take control of a television network and build illegal weapons in a hidden base under a Native American reservation—and simultaneously pursue numerous other plots. The octopus almost always has hidden arms that no one (even those working on vital tasks) knows about, allowing for surprise moves or sudden recoveries in the course of a campaign.

Conspiracies tend to work from the inside out—infiltrating, manipulating, and fabricating. Most would rather bribe, blackmail, control, or convert than attack, kill, or destroy. They kill when they must and destroy as needed, but they do so in the same way that a virus attacks an organism—slowly, secretly, and in such a way as to root themselves deeply into whatever they attack. Once they are integrated with their targets, no force can ever completely expunge them.

Anyone can become the target of a conspiracy; the contacts selected depend on what the particular group seeks to accomplish. A secret society might bribe the security guard of a major corporate headquarters to allow illuminati agents inside. A middle manager of the same corporation might be blackmailed into disclosing secrets. Members of the conspiracy could approach a corporate board member and convince him to join their ranks, or simply try to control his mind.

But you don't have to work for a corporation to draw the attention of those trying to infiltrate it. Policemen, janitors, teachers, sanitation engineers (the trash of one's enemies holds many secrets), writers, accountants, military personnel, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists—all these people and more may have information, items, or influence that one of the conspiracies in this book might want to know, control, subvert, or destroy.

Although some conspiracies use force, others reach their aims by winning the hearts and minds of others. For example, discrediting a well-known leader (and thus turning public opinion against him) is much more effective than assassinating him. Building a device whose low-frequency electromagnetic waves can subtly manipulate a population is much easier than trying to control thousands of people through military force.

“Them”

“They” are out to get us. “They” put fluoride in the water. “They” peer into our personnel files and credit records. “They” created the AIDS virus.

The *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting is all about being afraid of Them. It may be a different “Them” every time, but one can be sure that “They” are out to get us. “They” are in power (secretly or overtly), and we are not. “They” can be government officials, aliens, spiritual forces, or members of secret societies who manipulate events from the shadows.

Fighting Against a Conspiracy

So, how do you stop a group whose goals include taking over the U.S. Supreme Court while bringing two other nations to war? The answer is in the details. No group of heroes, no matter how intelligent, powerful, or talented, has a chance against a conspiracy with billions of dollars, hundreds (if not thousands) of followers, and established inroads into organizations vital to its plans. However through careful research they can discover how the conspiracy intends to achieve its goals and prevent those plans from coming to fruition.

For example, perhaps the secret society mentioned above schemes to take over the Supreme Court by assassinating one or more of its members. The heroes can foil the plan by preventing these assassinations. The conspiracy might attempt to use blackmail or even mind control to convince the president to appoint people of its choice to the cabinet. This again provides a concrete opportunity for the heroes to interfere constructively, this time by breaking the mind control.

In short, the goals of a *d20 DARK•MATTER* adventure may look insurmountable at first, but if the players learn to break down their ultimate objectives into smaller, readily accomplishable tasks, the result can be a game that's exciting for everyone. A good GM never lets the players (or their heroes) give up hope just because their enemy is bigger than they are.

USING THE PARANORMAL

A *d20 DARK•MATTER* game can be run without conspiracies as well. Instead of (or in addition to) investigating secret societies, the heroes can explore the paranormal. This too is a source of endless adventures, because the world of the paranormal is as big as . . . well, the entire world.

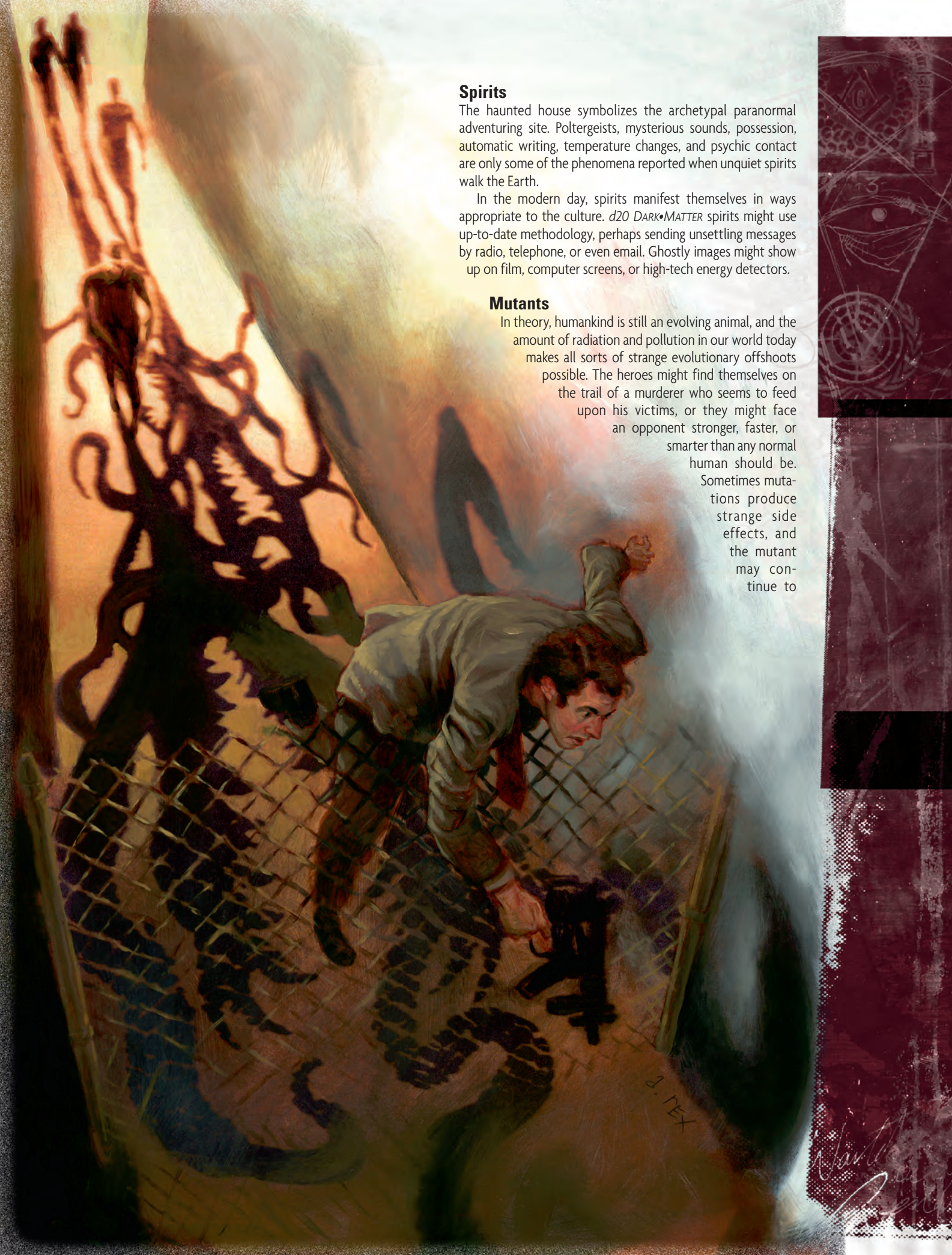
Paranormal Campaigns

As with conspiracies, paranormal events come in many categories. The six listed below represent the most “popular” types of such events, but they are only the tip of the iceberg.

UFOs/Aliens

Investigating UFO sightings or alien encounters in conjunction with Project Blue Book provided full-time employment for an entire U.S. Air Force department in the 1950s and 1960s. UFO reports have only increased since then, and this plethora of sightings can be the basis for countless adventures. Called in to speak with eyewitnesses, the heroes may learn more about the aliens who watch the Earth, or they might find themselves investigating a case that has nothing to do with aliens. People routinely mistake earth lights, strange weather, ghosts, secret government experiments, and even deliberate hoaxes for UFOs, but these other activities can lead to interesting adventures in themselves.

UFO and alien adventures often involve abductions, lost time, crop circles, psychic communication, UFO nuts (and cults), and technology far beyond the realm of humankind. Unlike conspiracy-related alien adventures, paranormal-based scenarios should be strange and inexplicable. The aliens involved should remain at a distance, their motivations invisible or unfathomable. Often, the adventure lies in finding them, or in dealing with those who claim to have seen them.



Spirits

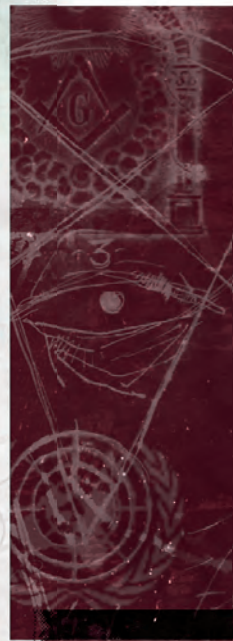
The haunted house symbolizes the archetypal paranormal adventuring site. Poltergeists, mysterious sounds, possession, automatic writing, temperature changes, and psychic contact are only some of the phenomena reported when unquiet spirits walk the Earth.

In the modern day, spirits manifest themselves in ways appropriate to the culture. *d20 DARK•MATTER* spirits might use up-to-date methodology, perhaps sending unsettling messages by radio, telephone, or even email. Ghostly images might show up on film, computer screens, or high-tech energy detectors.

Mutants

In theory, humankind is still an evolving animal, and the amount of radiation and pollution in our world today makes all sorts of strange evolutionary offshoots possible. The heroes might find themselves on the trail of a murderer who seems to feed upon his victims, or they might face an opponent stronger, faster, or smarter than any normal human should be.

Sometimes mutations produce strange side effects, and the mutant may continue to



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develop and evolve as the adventure progresses, displaying additional or enhanced traits as time goes on. In any event, each such case should prove unique—and often quite bizarre. Mutant investigations work particularly well in urban settings.

Weather and (Un)natural Phenomena

Often called Fortean weather or phenomena, this category includes all manner of strange occurrences. Heroes might investigate crop circles, reports of strange events (such as fish, gelatinous blobs, frogs, or odd-colored liquid) falling from the sky like rain, unexplained sounds, temporal discrepancies, energy-field aberrations, odd plants, appearances of religious figures . . . the list goes on and on.

In these cases, determining the cause of the strange happening is the stated goal of the adventure—but that's not always possible. Sometimes the mystery should remain a mystery. Even so, the investigation can still lead to important (or at least interesting) information. The GM should set up such adventures so that the cause of the unusual occurrences is not immediately obvious and could in fact be any number of things. In a best-case scenario, each hero can develop his or her own theory as to the nature of the events.

For example, the heroes follow up a report of strange lights sighted in a remote area. Right away, some members of the group suspect alien spacecraft. After speaking with witnesses, one hero concludes that a ghost is responsible, since several people claim

Close Encounters

Although reports of encounters with Greys and other alien beings often differ wildly, witnesses and abduction victims frequently report and re-report certain common elements. Remember that the term "UFO" suggests that the object is unidentified and is not automatically synonymous with an alien craft.

Sightings: Probably the most common UFO sighting involves nothing more than a moving light in the sky. More detailed witness reports include the ever-popular flying saucers or cigar-shaped craft. These lights and craft sometimes travel very slowly, but much more often move impossibly fast, their speed and complex (sometimes seemingly impossible) maneuverings distinguishing them from normal aircraft. During many encounters, electrical devices operate strangely or not at all, radios play only static, and metal objects shudder as if affected by a powerful magnetic field. Alien vessels are usually very quiet but often leave marks on the ground betraying their passing or landing. Such evidence includes snapped tree branches and scorched grass. People close to alien craft sightings often find themselves tanned or burned as though they had been out in the sun. Animals behave strangely (and usually uneasily or fearfully) in the presence of what appears to be an alien craft. Sometimes mutilated animals are found after UFO sightings.

UFO encounters are often accompanied by Fortean events (named for the researcher Charles Fort), including strange vibrations,

mysterious humming noises, and even bizarre weather such as fish, frogs, or unknown bits of goo falling from the sky. Paranormal events frequently occur together, so lights in the sky may occur in concert with a ghost sighting, a poltergeist haunting, or displays of mental powers.

Phony UFOs: Aside from just plain hoaxes, a number of occurrences are reported as UFOs that simply aren't. These include extremely low- or high-flying aircraft, satellites, ball lightning, and even, yes, the ever-popular government explanations: weather balloons, swamp gas, and the planet Venus. More controversially, some scientists blame the majority of UFO sightings on "earth lights" or "plasmas," which they claim are balls of energy created by geologic pressures deep within the earth. These earth lights occasionally discharge from the planet into the atmosphere and behave in what appears to be a very strange manner. Earth lights bob, move in erratic patterns, suddenly change course, and sometimes seem to be drawn to machines or even people.

Alien Abductions: Tens of thousands of people in the United States alone have reported that they believe they have been abducted by aliens. The archetypal case, that of Betty and Barney Hill in 1961, sets the standard for abduction stories that follow a remarkably similar pattern. Victims are overcome by a total paralysis as the aliens arrive. Alien abductors are cold and harsh,

although sometimes they later become friendly. In either case, the aliens examine the abductees, performing unknown medical tests upon them. Some reports say that women are impregnated or have eggs removed for experimentation with alien crossbreeding. Sometimes male sperm is also harvested for similar reasons. A few abductees even report seeing alien-human hybrids, either as children or adults.

Returned abductees experience a loss of time. Usually, events during the abduction are not immediately remembered, so the time loss is inexplicable. While this could be just an alien ability to erase memory (at least temporarily), it could also have something to do with the otherworldly nature of the aliens or their technology creating fluctuations in time itself.

Aliens often abduct the same victims repeatedly, creating great fear and anxiety in the abductee throughout his or her life. Sometimes, however, the aliens become "friendly" with their victims and the abductions become calm, peaceful experiences. Many abductees claim that the aliens implant some small device in their bodies. While some say that the implant is a tracking device (perhaps for further abductions), others suggest that it may be a receiver of some sort (possibly a mind-control device) or something else entirely.



that the lights follow people around in an area of desolate hills. Upon checking out the site, the investigators catch a glimpse of the lights themselves. One of the more scientifically minded team members then insists that the phenomenon is nothing more than ball lightning, while another suspects this to be an example of the earth lights theoretically produced by tectonic friction. Although they never actually discover the real nature of the lights, their investigation does reveal a secret government base where scientists conduct strange experiments (which may be the source of the lights after all).

Cryptozoology

Cryptozoology is the study and investigation of any animal or creature unknown to science. The category covers everything from out-of-place animals (big predatory cats outside London, for example) to near-mythical beasts such as Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster. Cryptozoologists commonly suspect that creatures labeled as extinct still walk (or swim or fly) upon the Earth. Mammals, birds, fish, dinosaurs, and other creatures long thought dead might still be living in remote areas. Heroes who discover any such beast have certainly accomplished something noteworthy.

Many *d20 DARK•MATTER* cryptozoology adventures deal with a dangerous creature that preys upon cattle, pets, or even people. In such adventures, ending the beast's threat is a much greater accomplishment than simply discovering the true nature of the disturbance.

FX Abilities (Magic and Psionics)

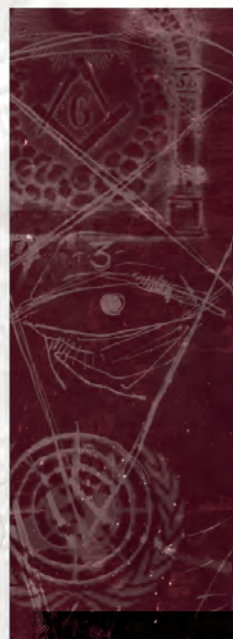
Throughout history, some individuals with magical or psionic powers have openly used them to perform miracles, often becoming important religious or cult figures either during their lifetimes or afterward. In other cases, miracles have just seemed to occur around gifted individuals inexplicably. Still others with such abilities have unquestionably been malevolent presences seeking to exploit their unusual abilities by harming others.

The heroes' job in an adventure based around such gifted individuals might involve investigating strange phenomena and isolating the person responsible after eliminating other possible causes. For example, they might have to stop an evil mage or telepath from hurting or manipulating others. The gifted person might be the leader of a fanatic cult or a serial killer using paranormal abilities to commit crimes or to hide from authorities. Only those acquainted with such powers (such as the heroes) can really deal with such a villain.

Like mutant adventures, these cases should vary in scope and content. At least some should focus on the source of the powers, which could be a secret occult society, alien experimentation, or something else altogether. (It might even turn out to be completely unexplainable.)

High Strangeness

No one can really classify or categorize the paranormal—by definition, it's indefinable. The above categories provide some guidance, but the careful reader has already noted considerable crossover between them, as well as omissions. The truth of the matter is that no single method of categorization can cover every strange event that the heroes might investigate.



In a successful *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign, the strange and mysterious should remain exactly that—strange and mysterious. Sometimes the heroes should be able to discover the true cause of a paranormal phenomenon (and it might really be paranormal, or it might be mundane), but sometimes they shouldn't. And if they do discover some secret regarding the unknown, it should raise as many questions as it answers. For example, the source of unexplained sounds in the canyon is found to be simply the wind whistling through holes drilled into a huge rock—but who made those ancient-looking holes, and how, and why?

High strangeness is a concept with which every GM should be familiar. The concept is simple: Some things are just so peculiar that one can't really even try to explain them. For example, Joseph Simonton of Eagle River, Wisconsin, once claimed that a weird spacecraft landed in his yard and that the aliens inside gave him some pancakes. Dr. J. Allen Hynek investigated the case and even had the pancakes analyzed. (They contained nothing more unusual than wheat germ.) He concluded that Simonton was not perpetrating a hoax and that there was no reason to believe he had been hallucinating.

But pancakes?

Who can even begin to guess what this could mean, if it were true? High strangeness is just that—the highest level of the absurd that one can imagine—yet such absurdities really seem to happen on occasion. Another example of high strangeness: an eyewitness report that a chunk of ice fell from the sky in the middle of Iowa, and that two live frogs hopped out of it as it melted. The fact that *Men In Black* use out-of-date slang and drive brand-new cars from the early 1960s also counts as high strangeness.

Another aspect of high strangeness—one that applies directly to the *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign—is that many weird paranormal occurrences are somehow related. Bigfoot sightings match up with UFO reports, the display of psychic powers, and tales of ghostly voices emanating from unused channels on TV sets. Mothfolk show up at the same time as fish fall from the sky, and these events coincide with appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And *Men In Black* show up during and after all of them. Coincidence? Are these events all linked in ways that we just don't yet understand? Or is some cosmic trickster just playing a huge joke?

More than anything else, a GM should take away from this discussion the concept that sometimes the inexplicable is perfectly acceptable. As long as there is high strangeness, everything seems mysterious and unknown.

GENERAL GM ADVICE

The golden rule of all *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaigns is simply this: Be very careful with information. Conspiracies and paranormal events work best when cloaked in an air of mystery. A secret society should remain unpredictable at some level; it's always more enjoyable to explore a mysterious membership and unknown plans. Hint at the danger and darkness surrounding those involved with a plot.

At the same time, provide plenty of familiar elements and solid evidence of reality. Nothing seems strange or frightening if the heroes can't compare it with something normal. The Institute itself can provide such grounding, and modern technology may serve the same purpose. Weapons and gear should be safe, familiar, and reliable—at least most of the

23

The writer William S. Burroughs once rode a ferry piloted by a Captain Clark, who claimed that he'd handled the craft for twenty-three years without incident. That day, it sank. Later the same day, Burroughs learned of an airliner crash. The pilot's name was Captain Clark, and the flight number was 23.

After that coincidence, Burroughs began keeping a record of odd incidents. The number twenty-three kept popping up. Other people followed suit and began noticing "twenty-three" incidents as well. Some called it "the number of coincidence."

Twenty-three shows up in the media with surprising regularity on everything from apartment numbers to jersey numbers to racing car numbers to building floors. Coincidence? Intentional?

An intentional coincidence?

Is twenty-three some cosmic number? In the *I Ching*, it means "Everything breaks apart." In Morse Code, it means "Break the line." Twenty-three male chromosomes match with twenty-three female chromosomes to create a human being. The sum of two and three is five, a number important to just about every occult belief system that exists. (The U.S. military doesn't maintain its headquarters in a pentagon for nothing.)

Of course, numerology is an easily manipulated "science"—there's always a way to add or subtract numbers to achieve whatever result you want. And it's always possible that twenty-three only appears often to those looking for it. Maybe, however, twenty-three is a code for those fighting (or at

least aware of) one or more illuminati groups. Maybe its appearance isn't a coincidence—maybe it's a signal. Regardless, if you start paying attention to TV, movies, and other media, you'll notice that it appears—a lot.

Whether it's all coincidence or just a matter of consciously noticing one number and not the rest, twenty-three has become a part of conspiracy culture. As a GM, don't fight it—let yourself become a part of it. When you need a number—for an apartment, a parking space, a bus, or a random date—use twenty-three. The players might notice this eventually and wonder why, but if they don't know the secret of twenty-three, don't let on.



time. There's nothing mysterious about taking a plane across country or making a telephone call, and that's as it should be. If the heroes' phones act unpredictably once, they may become intrigued. If it happens regularly, chances are they'll just get irritated. Be careful about taking away one of a hero's favorite pieces of equipment—doing so at random or too frequently just annoys the players. Doing so rarely and as part of a larger plot, however, can be very effective in motivating the group to seek revenge against the thieves. Oddly enough, the idea that some of their best cutting-edge technology may have been stolen from someone else never seems to occur to heroes. An interesting scenario might revolve around a villain's attempt to recover personal property appropriated by the Institute—and currently in the heroes' possession.

Finally, keep something in reserve. A conspiracy that starts out mysterious and intriguing tends to grow stale (or at least

familiar) as the players learn more about it. Even an ancient power group can come to seem mundane in time. To avoid this problem, make sure that some part of a conspiracy always remains unexplained, or that you have a second, new conspiracy already in place when the players' interest in the first one starts to flag.

Do Something!

Heroes in a *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign shouldn't be expected to spend all their time investigating conspiracies or strange phenomena. While that's always an important aspect, at some point they need to stop discovering and learning and do something, or boredom may ensue. Each adventure should be designed around some concrete task that the heroes must accomplish—be it retrieving the lost data disk from the

crashed satellite, stopping the aliens from controlling the young pyrokinetic, or keeping the Masonic serial killer from striking again.

Getting into the Frying Pan . . .

Most of the time, depositing heroes into serious trouble is easy. The first time the bad guys pull out guns and try to bully someone, the good guys usually find a way to resist violently—and at least one of the thugs winds up dead. Presto! The heroes have made an enemy, and the police may shortly be seeking them for questioning.

But this is kid stuff. Real heroes make much bigger enemies: rivals at the Institute, members of a secret society with a grudge, or even aliens harboring a special hatred for a hero who has foiled their plans in the past. Use these enemies to launch new adventures; after all, even when the heroes aren't thinking about their old nemesis, he or she may very well be thinking about them—and plotting revenge.

Finally, you can always consider beginning an adventure without a briefing scene (described below) and simply start *in media res* (in the middle of things).

. . . And Getting Out

Resist the urge to have supporting cast members save the heroes; if heroes get themselves into trouble, make them

responsible for finding the way out. A little advice from tagalong characters such as sidekicks or guides may be appropriate if players are stuck for more than fifteen minutes of real time, but more interference than this can be detrimental to player enjoyment and game balance.

Humor

Conspiracies and gunplay are pretty serious topics, and a scenario in which the heroes must fight and shoot their way through a tangle of liars and traitors can be just as grim. The players may provide their own comic relief in a too-serious game session by cracking a few jokes. If not, the GM may be able to alleviate the tension and lighten the mood by introducing some crackpot supporting cast members or high strangeness.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

No matter what they do, the heroes will eventually run afoul of the law. Perhaps they must break a law to accomplish their mission (jimmying the lock on the door of the Knights of Malta's headquarters is still breaking and entering, after all). Even if the heroes manage not to do anything illegal, their enemies may still frame them for a crime or manipulate the authorities into pursuing them.

Weapons Laws

As heroes travel the world on the Institute's behalf, they'll want to carry their weapons with them. Within the U.S., this is usually no big deal: a weapons permit, a permit to carry a concealed weapon, and even some heroes' status as "security guards" allows them to take their weapons anywhere in the U.S. Overseas, however, the situation changes.

In rich, industrialized countries such as Britain, Germany, or Japan, firearms may be carried only by police officers, soldiers, and a few closely regulated private citizens. Local practice varies: In the U.K., a majority of policemen don't even wear revolvers; in France, gendarmes openly carry submachine guns on the streets. However, private citizens cannot carry weapons in public, and carrying them concealed is generally a felony. Those citizens allowed to own firearms (hunters, sport marksmen, licensed bodyguards, or the Swiss national guard, for example) are expected to keep them at home under lock

and key when not in use. Travelers may not bring weapons into these countries, but the Hoffmann Institute can sometimes bypass customs procedures or provide basic weaponry within these areas. The sound of gunfire, however, brings police attention much faster than it does in the United States.

In the developing countries and the former East Bloc countries, weapons are much easier to come by: Tens of thousands of cheap AK-47s have flooded the market in Asia and Africa, for instance, and guns are widely available in Latin America. Though technically illegal, in practice they are unregulated; guns are only seized by the police when they catch a perpetrator. Military-issue weapons are most common and least noticed in nations currently or recently involved in a shooting war, such as Rwanda, Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Indonesia, or Angola. In such places, heroes carrying anything less than a rocket launcher will likely be ignored

unless they threaten the local armed forces. At worst, heroes can expect to be shaken down for a bribe or asked to "contribute" their weapons to a rebellion's cause.

In a few cases, strong central governments have clamped down on unregistered weapons owned by the public. Such nations include Singapore, Israel, South Korea, Turkey, and South Africa. Bringing weapons into the country is not permitted without a special military license or a sporting exemption. In these militarized but advanced nations, special forces, secret police, or even ordinary citizens with a special license frequently carry concealed weapons. Few people question anyone claiming to work for the government, if he carries a gun. On the other hand, impersonating a government official can lead to severe consequences, including confiscation of personal effects, interrogation, and deportation.

This eventuality can be handled in two ways. The simplest is not to worry about it. Assume that the Hoffmann Institute can pull strings in the background and cover up whatever the heroes have (or haven't) done. This method allows GMs to move the heroes into the next adventure without spending a lot of time on "real world" cleanup activities. Unfortunately, this can quickly destroy the players' ability to suspend disbelief. If heroes can run around and do whatever they want without suffering any realistic repercussions at all, the campaign setting begins to feel less and less like the real world.

The second method is a bit more realistic. This technique involves incorporating just enough contact with the law to convince the players that they must deal with the ramifications of their heroes' actions. For example, if they break into the home of a suspected secret society member, he calls the police. When the cops arrive (anywhere from five to forty-five minutes later), they arrest and jail any heroes still present. Sure, the Hoffmann Institute bails them out in the morning and arranges for charges involving minor crimes to be dropped, but the heroes have to endure the whole process: the reading of their rights, the ride downtown in a police cruiser, the fingerprinting and identification process, and a police interrogation. Investigating officers won't accept stories of UFOs, ghosts, or conspiracies very easily, and smart heroes won't say anything about such matters. (Those who do might expect psychiatric evaluations on top of everything else, assuming that their stories are strange enough—and given *d20 DARK•MATTER* adventures, they probably will be.)

Even if charges are dropped, however, the heroes now have police records and fingerprints on file. If any members of the group were carrying illegal substances or weapons at the time of arrest, the police impound these as evidence. The Institute's intervention on the heroes' behalf may or may not extend to retrieving such items, depending upon their importance to the mission. But even the Hoffmann Institute might not be able to secure the release of an agent arrested for a particularly serious crime (such as murder or breaking into a federal government facility)—or release could take months (at the very least) to accomplish.

Of course, a prison term might also serve as the basis for a new adventure. Maybe the heroes find a contact who knows something interesting among the inmates—or perhaps there's something odd going on in the jail itself.

Unless the trial or long-term incarceration is actually part of a planned adventure, however, it's best not to have the heroes actually serve prison sentences, or even go to trial. If jail time does come into play for some reason, the GM should consider glossing over the periods that aren't important and advancing time to a point when the heroes can take action.

XENOFORMS

Xenofom. The word conjures up thoughts of mystery and danger. Technically, it describes any lifeform of an alien or unknown origin, though it's generally applied to any creature whose existence isn't widely known (or believed) by the public, from little green (or Grey) men to the Loch Ness Monster.

Most xenofoms fall into one of three categories. Some are naturally existing creatures, more or less native to Earth. The second group is the opposite of the first: invaders from

another world or dimension, beings that by all rights shouldn't even exist on our globe. The third and final group is perhaps the most terrifying, for this category contains those horrors that humanity has created on its own—usually unintentionally, though not always so.

Of course, it isn't quite as cut-and-dried as that. Some creatures don't fit neatly into a single category—the Montauk monster, for example, is an otherworldly threat, but it only exists on Earth because of human experimentation. Many claim that the sasquatch is actually a non-native species, but regardless of origin, those on Earth know nothing of living on any other world and have adapted completely to terrestrial existence.

Using Xenofoms

At its heart, an encounter with a xenofom is a strange and terrifying brush with the unknown. At best, it's a wondrous and fascinating experience to be remembered until the end of your days. At worst...well, at worst you don't get to remember it for more than a few seconds.

Use xenofoms sparingly in your *d20 DARK•MATTER* game. It's easy for the campaign to become a "monster of the week" storyline, but that robs the encounters of their wonder and mystery. If every dark alley, sewer, or jungle holds another creature that doesn't appear in any zoology textbooks, the characters (and thus the players) are rightfully going to wonder what's so special about all these freaks of nature. If your players start to check off xenofoms like they're completing a scavenger hunt—"Bigfoot, check; mothfolk, check; alien probe, check"—then you've probably overdone it a bit.

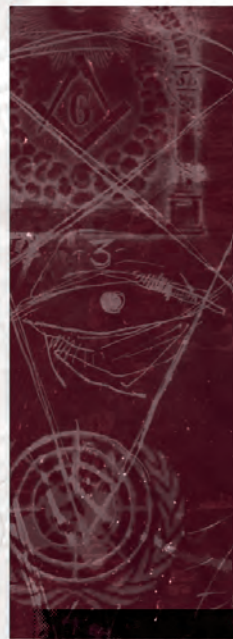
That said, the xenofom encounter doesn't have to be the climax of a long adventure. Sometimes, it can be the clue that something terrible is going on, starting the characters on a search to find out who or what is responsible for these horrific beasts.

Below is a breakdown of some of the xenofoms traditional to the horror/conspiracy genre, divided into the three categories described earlier. Each one includes a brief description of how you might use the creature in a *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting, as well as an adventure hook to get you started. By no means are these the only creatures appropriate to the setting. The *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, *d20 Menace Manual*, and the *URBAN ARCANA* campaign setting include many, many more creatures that might find a place in your game. (Unless stated otherwise, the creatures below are taken from the *d20 Menace Manual*.)

When selecting or creating a new xenofom for an encounter, avoid using overtly fantastic or mythological creatures. Encountering a group of ghouls or grimlocks in the Chicago sewers is one thing, but running into a unicorn or fire-breathing dragon in Central Park breaks the mood of eerie mystery. (That said, if you're running a more fantasy-themed game, perhaps incorporating elements of the *Urban Arcana* campaign setting, a higher fantasy tolerance is acceptable, even expected.) In a *d20 DARK•MATTER* game, xenofoms should inspire shock and revulsion in at least equal parts as awe and wonder.

Horrors of Nature

These creatures may be evolutionary dead ends, throwbacks to earlier ages, or simply as-yet uncatalogued denizens of our planet.



Breathsnatcher

The breathsnatcher, from the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*, makes a great lone killer. Whether preying on urban pub-crawlers, homeless winos, or comatose patients in local hospitals, the breathsnatcher combines unthinkable evil with an all-too-human appearance.

Adventure Hook: The mayor of a small city is getting accolades for clearing the streets of the homeless. But it's not the city's social policies that are doing the trick—it's a breathsnatcher who's been clearing the streets of human detritus. Worse still, the breathsnatcher's on the mayor's payroll!

Crawfordsville Monster

These amoebalike prehistoric throwbacks first came to the Institute's attention in the 1930s, when a pack of them devoured an entire town in rural Illinois.

Adventure Hook: Hikers have been disappearing along a stretch of the Appalachian Trail. The FBI suspects that a local Satanic cult has been kidnapping the hikers, but they've actually been feeding a Crawfordsville monster, which has grown to Gargantuan size.

Mapinguari

This enormous ground sloth roams through remote regions of South America, far from the predations of mankind.

Adventure Hook: An eccentric billionaire has dispatched a team of hunters to bring back a mapinguari for his private zoo. The institute sends a group of agents to follow the hunters and, if possible, prevent them from succeeding. Bringing back DNA samples of the mapinguari would be a bonus.

Sasquatch

Known more colloquially as Bigfoot, this creature may be the most iconic figure of the modern monster-hunter. Most are as savage as their reputation describes, but a few still cling to the culture of their ancestors—the alien race known as weren, brought to Earth by the fraal long ago.

Adventure Hook: Campers attacked in the Mount Rainier National Park claim that their assailant was "a big ape." Hunters and publicity hounds of all stripe immediately descend on the area, hoping for a picture (or a trophy) worth thousands of dollars. The Institute knows the truth—the culprit is a rogue weren soldier from their compound in the Pacific Northwest—and dispatches a team to bring back the runaway before he does more damage. Of course, the agents may not know the whole story beforehand...

Sea Serpent

Tales of great aquatic leviathans date back to the earliest sailors, as such creatures have roamed the world for millions of years. Despite humanity's best efforts, enough dark corners of the ocean remain to allow these beasts to remain "undiscovered," at least officially.

Adventure Hook: In the area of the Atlantic known as the Bermuda Triangle, three vessels have been lost in the past two weeks. Though the Institute's official stance is that the region has no paranormal links, it sends a few agents to check out the possibility of alien involvement. Instead, they find out to their horror that a great sea serpent is to blame—and is still hungry, to boot!



Running the Campaign

Skunk Ape

Another classic critter of modern legend, this one comes from the Urban Arcana campaign setting. Surprisingly intelligent, these hominids are generally peaceful and non-threatening unless attacked first.

Adventure Hook: Government agents brought into investigate poaching on federal land are discovered dead and half-eaten. Further investigation reveals a family of skunk apes living in the vicinity, and a few leftover scraps of government agent in their cave. Though these apes did indeed consume some of the dead agents, they aren't responsible for the murders; those were the work of a group of drugrunners growing opium on the federal land.

Yeti

Thought by many to be related to the sasquatch, the yeti may actually be some form of human-weren hybrid. Many are closely allied to the Ascended Masters, the ancient and secret rulers of the Rosicrucians (a.k.a. the Companions of Horus).

Adventure Hook: A patrol of Chinese soldiers in Tibet has killed a yeti, but a snowstorm prevents them from returning to base with the body. A team of Hoffmann agents must intercept the soldiers and steal the body, preferably without the soldiers even knowing they were there.

Otherworldly Threats

These frightening beings hail from dimensions or worlds far from our own. They don't belong here, but just try telling them that!

Alien Probe

These devices, utilized by the alien fraal (see below), are used to explore and collect data. They are often sent to areas that the fraal wouldn't dare go themselves.

Adventure Hook: While on another mission (such as any of those listed in this chapter), the heroes occasionally spot a fast-moving light in the air. The alien probe is investigating the same phenomenon as the agents, and is willing to use its powers to thwart them in their quest.

Elohim

These mighty beings of elemental fire are inextricably intertwined with human history, having been regarded at various times as kings, angels, or even gods. They destroy fiends and luciferans (see below) wherever they find them, but rarely pause to allow innocent bystanders to escape the scene.

Adventure Hook: A particularly charismatic evangelist has rallied a large group of followers to his fundamentalist (and quasi-apocalyptic) cause. Fearing either an ugly conflict with the feds or a mass suicide, Hoffmann sends a few agents to infiltrate the cult. When the agents try to stop the group from torching the headquarters of a local software company secretly run by a luciferan (see below), the elohim reveals himself in all his glory.

Etoile

These bizarre alien creatures seek to enslave the entire human race, transforming them into cybernetic minions (see the sand slave, below).

Adventure Hook: MUFON (a private group of UFO enthusiasts) has retrieved an unconscious (and dormant) etoile, which



they believe to be a machine of alien manufacture. The Hoffmann Institute seeks to retrieve the etoile before the group manages to repair (and thus reactivate) the creature.

Fiends

A wide variety of fiends exist, including those in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* and the *d20 Menace Manual*. Some are murderous monsters, while others are coldly ruthless killers, but regardless of form these otherdimensional beings are pure manifestations of corruption and evil, and find the world of the *d20 DARK•MATTER* setting to their liking.

Adventure Hook: A tumor fiend has taken up residence in the basement of a local hospital, where it feeds on the occasional cancer patient. The hospital does its best to cover up the unexplainable deaths, because its chief administrator (a necromancer) doesn't want any undue attention.

Fraal

These small humanoid aliens (nicknamed "Greys" for the hue of their skin) have meddled in human affairs for thousands of years. Sometimes they seem to be our allies; but in other cases, they have been willing to sacrifice human lives for their own needs.

Adventure Hook: A crashed fraal scout ship, long-buried under the ice of Greenland, has become uncovered due to seismic activity. Its emergency beacon is too weak to summon help from space, but has been picked up by the Hoffmann Institute (among other groups). Now it's a race between the Institute and its rivals to see who can reach the ship first and claim its secrets.

Gardhyi

These sinister aliens are often misidentified as government "Men in Black" due to their somber garb and marked interest in paranormal events. Worst of all, these creatures represent only the first contact with a larger alliance of alien creatures, feared even by the fraal.

Adventure Hook: Arriving on the scene of an unusual event (such as one of those listed here), the agents learn that they aren't the first to investigate—a pair of men in dark suits with dark sunglasses just left the scene. This happens a few times before the heroes spot the culprits: a pair of gardhyis gathering data for their alien masters.

Half-Fraal

Genetic experiments by the alien fraal (see above) created these half-human hybrids. Those that don't display alien features are typically unaware of their heritage, while those with visible mutations are shunned as freaks.

Adventure Hook: The carnival has come to town, including a full-fledged freak show. Since such gatherings often include paranormal beings, the agents are dispatched to investigate. While they're there, a pair of Men in Black show up in search of an alien hybrid who supposedly travels with the carnival. The obvious target, the alabaster-skinned, pink-eyed "Alien Boy," is their quarry, but he's just an albino: the real half-fraal is the hypnotist.

Kinori

Though the species has been present on Earth for millions of years, the dinosaurlike kinori are originally from another world or

dimension (no kinori truly remembers their original home). They have lived underground in secret for countless generations, but still hope to take back "their" world from the usurping humans.

Adventure Hook: Reports of alligator sightings in the New York City sewers are up 23% in the last six months. Hoffman sends in a team of agents to investigate, but neglects to warn them that these "gators" are more likely the intelligent and deadly kinori.

Luciferan

These secretive alien beings exist in secret among or on the outskirts of human civilization. Despite their devilish appearance, luciferans have no natural bent toward evil, though they often enjoy meddling in human affairs (sometimes with positive outcomes). They fear the elohim, but rarely discuss the origin of this antipathy.

Adventure Hook: The CEO of a local software company, a close ally of the Institute, fears for his safety. Apparently, some apocalyptic cult has marked him as an enemy of humanity and now threatens his business (as well as his personal well-being). A few Hoffmann agents are quietly added to his security detail, but when they learn along the way that he's actually a luciferan, they must quickly reassess which side they should be on.

Montauk Monster

Brought to Earth through scientific experiments in the mid-20th century, the Montauk monster is a thing of pure energy—and hatred.

Adventure Hook: Despite being fired from the Department of Defense, a scientist continues her work on teleportation on her own. She manages to open a dimensional rift for a split-second—just long enough to bring a Montauk monster into our world. The creature escapes the containment field of the device and begins its rampage through a quiet New Jersey suburb. Hoffmann agents must either destroy the monster or find the scientist and reverse the experiment that brought it here.

Mothfolk

These alien beings have migrated to Earth from an alternate dimension. No one knows why they have come—whether their original home is no longer habitable, or perhaps if they are fleeing some terrible threat.

Adventure Hook: Tourists at an out-of-the-way Mesoamerican pyramid report being chased away by an enormous winged creature with glowing red eyes. Some natives claim this is an avatar of Quetzalcoatl, returned to wreak vengeance upon those who despoiled the area. It's actually a mothfolk, trying to warn people away from the pyramid, which contains a recently activated portal to an unknown dimension.

Puppeteer

These psychic parasites, found in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, control living creatures to accomplish their nefarious schemes.

Adventure Hook: A local city councilwoman widely known as a tool of big business reverses her vote on a crucial issue that costs a noted corporation millions of dollars in environmental fees. Though lauded by many, the politician isn't operating of her own free will—she's being controlled by a puppeteer that doesn't

want the corporation's clearcutting to reveal a nest of more of its kind. The puppeteer itself isn't attached to the politician, but to a low-level functionary working in her office.

Sand Slave

Creations of the alien *etoile* (see above), sand slaves are cybernetically transformed humans. Loyal only to their *etoile* masters, these powerful minions can easily pass as human, infiltrating organizations in order to subvert them from within.

Adventure Hook: A group of missing women shares a single link—all took part in medical experiments involving antifertility implants. Unbeknownst to them, the experiment was tainted—the women were instead implanted with dormant *etoile* nanites which have accidentally been activated. The women are now sand slaves, and are traveling toward Houston to rendezvous with their new master. Agents are called in to track down the women before they fall under the control of the *etoile*.

Creations of Man

Throughout the course of history, humanity has often been its own worst enemy, giving birth to uncounted monsters of flesh, steel, or dream. Most horrifying are those that were once human themselves.

Flesh Golem

This creature, from the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, works well as the servant or bodyguard of a necromancer.

Adventure Hook: A flesh golem's master died unexpectedly. When creditors came to repossess the necromancer's laboratory equipment, the flesh golem went berserk. Now it haunts the slums, lashing out at anyone who comes near. Local gangs are terrified of the monster, as it's nigh invulnerable to their attacks. The twist: A resident has recognized the golem (well, the head anyway) as a loved one, and needs help "rescuing" him.

Ghoul

Victims of a horrible strain of virus, ghouls are human beings transformed into disease-ravaged corpses. No longer human, they survive on the fringe of society, taking what they need to survive.

Adventure Hook: The biohazard disposal fees incurred by a local hospital have dropped dramatically during a new administrator's tenure. The savings aren't due to any diligent attention to cost-cutting, but rather to a bargain cut between the administrator and a local pack of ghouls. When the administrator becomes the victim of a layoff, the ghouls' food supply disappears...with predictable results.

Maniac

Though insanity rarely needs a supernatural push, the rising tide of dark matter has also led to increased mental instability. Some of these poor souls, particularly those confronted by the hidden horrors of the world, are pushed over the edge into homicidal mania.

Adventure Hook: A close friend of one of the agents begins to suspect that there's something more to the agent's activities than he's letting on. When he finally witnesses them battling

some horrific creature, his obsession is transformed into insanity. Now, the former friend fixates on the agent as the target for his violent nature and seeks an opportunity to "punish" the agent for what has happened.

Moreau

These animal-human hybrids, detailed in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, may be created by mad scientists or via government contract. Some organizations use them as elite soldiers, others as spies or assassins.

Adventure Hook: Agents all-too-accustomed to dealing with psychotic cannibal-killers find that their latest target is actually a rat *moreau*. But this isn't the end of the story, as the agents follow the *moreau*'s trail back to a secret government lab dedicated to the creation of these hybrid xeniforms.

Mummy

These undead creatures from the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* are preserved through ancient rituals. Some claim that the *kinori* (see above) taught humans the art of mummification more than 5,000 years ago.

Adventure Hook: An outbreak of an illness resembling a flesh-eating virus strikes a major city. The first victim turns out to be the curator of a local natural history museum. Under pressure, he lets slip that he developed symptoms shortly after receiving a shipment from an affiliated museum in Tunisia—a shipment that was stolen from the museum that very night. The shipment, of course, contained a mummy, sent as part of a terrorist plot of biological warfare. Now the mummy roams free in the city, spreading its rotting disease to all it touches.

Night Terror

Whether created from whole cloth by the nightmares of children or summoned to this world from alien dimensions by particularly vivid dreams, the horrors known as night terrors pose dire threats to their chosen victims.

Adventure Hook: A young girl targeted by the Institute as a potential future recruit begins to suffer from extraordinary fatigue and tension. Her parents, fearing for their daughter's health, contact the Institute for a follow-up visit. The heroes assigned to her case can't let the parents know that the agency's been watching their daughter for many months, even as the girl's nightmares begin to take very real form.

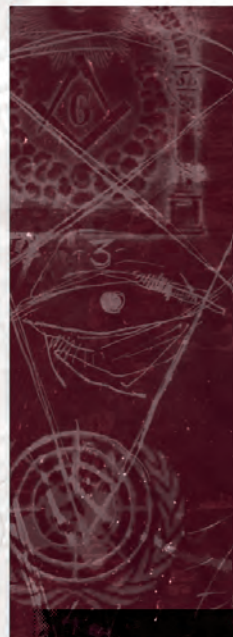
Replacement

These vat-grown clones (see the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) are used by wealthy and unethical organizations and governments for purposes of deception and subterfuge.

Adventure Hook: After many weeks of negotiation with his kidnapers, the CEO of a major defense contractor is safely returned to his family. When top-secret technology starts disappearing out the back door, the government blames left-leaning technicians, but the truth is more dire: an enemy nation has replaced the CEO with a clone loyal only to them. The agents must uncover the conspiracy, learn if the original is still alive (and where he is), and stop the knowledge drain without creating an international crisis.



Running the Campaign





Revenant

Like a spirit (see below), a revenant is a once-living person returned from the grave. Unlike the spirit, the revenant exists for only one reason—to seek vengeance upon those still alive.

Adventure Hook: A judge has been slain, brutally torn limb from limb by an unknown assailant. Due to the unusual circumstances of the crime, the Institute sends in some agents to check it out. The culprit is a revenant, sentenced to death 7 years earlier after his public defender (now a very dead judge) intentionally allowed him to be framed in exchange for political favors that led to his election. The revenant isn't done, though—it also seeks the death of those who traded the attorney those favors, including the mayor herself.

Sewer Sludge

The product of an unknown mix of toxic chemicals, the sewer sludge feeds on whatever creatures are unlucky enough to cross its path.

Adventure Hook: Half-eaten cattle found along an irrigation ditch are chalked up by locals to the activity of wolves, or perhaps devil worshippers (except for those few who insist that aliens are responsible). The real predator is a sewer sludge, washed downriver from its urban home by recent torrential rainfalls.

Spirit

A wide range of spirits exist, from the animating spirit (poltergeist) to the possessing spirit (or haunt). These beings,

described in the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*, are the essences of once-living creatures cursed to remain on Earth for any of a variety of reasons. Some are malevolent, others merely malicious or spiteful, and a few may even prove helpful to living beings.

Adventure Hook: A schoolteacher contacts one of the agents for help solving a murder. She claims to have taught the agent in his youth, though the agent has no particular memory of the teacher. During the investigation, the agents fail to find any connection between the schoolteacher and the murder victim (who, it turns out, is known to the agent). When the agents finally track down the killer, they learn the truth: the schoolteacher has been possessed by the spirit of the murder victim, who used his extra days on Earth to bring his own killer to justice.

Urban Wendigo

These cannibalistic urban creatures, detailed in the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*, hunger for the flesh of those who wronged them in life. Though once human, the Dark Tide has tainted these wretches, turning them into unspeakable horrors. Or perhaps, the Dark Tide merely revealed what was there all along.

Adventure Hook: A rash of missing persons is traced to an area of a half-dozen blocks. Suspecting something more than just another serial killer, the institute sends a team of agents to keep the problem from getting too public. Investigating a condemned tenement in the middle of this area, the ill-equipped heroes run afoul of a hunting pack of urban wendigos.



Chapter 7:

Exit 23

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Exit 23

This chapter presents a short adventure to kick off your *d20 DARK•MATTER* campaign. “Exit 23” is designed for four to six 1st-level heroes. The adventure assumes that the heroes are not yet agents of the Hoffmann Institute, but fate has brought them together. If they survive the adventure, the Institute will attempt to recruit them.

If you are not the Gamemaster for this adventure, stop reading here. It’s no fun when someone tells you how a movie ends before you see it, and it’s no fun to know how the adventure proceeds before you play it.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

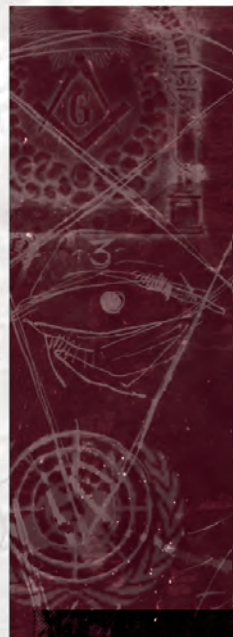
The Hoffmann Institute is an organization devoted to investigating and understanding all kinds of paranormal phenomena. The Institute operates more than a dozen major offices around the world, dispatching field agents to check out reports of ghosts, hauntings, UFOs, mysterious creatures, real magic, and the activities of secret organizations and conspiracies.

Several days ago, agents working for Department-7 (a branch of the Institute’s Intelligence Division) investigated an old estate formerly owned by a reputed cult leader and diabolist named Michel Galvin. Galvin disappeared about ten years ago, and distant relatives finally sold his manor in order to wash their hands of the whole business. Hoffman agent Jonas Riley, who’d been keeping tabs on the old Galvin place, heard of the upcoming estate sale and visited the site to make sure that it was free of Galvin’s sinister influence before it was sold to some unsuspecting person.

Riley and his team examined the place in detail, discovering a secret laboratory or conjuration room hidden in the manor’s attic. The room was mostly empty, but concealed in a secret door Riley found an evil artifact—a snow globe with magical powers. Neither Riley nor anyone else on his team knew what to make of Galvin’s globe, so Riley took it to an Institute expert in Portland, Oregon, for thorough examination and safekeeping.

Unknown to Riley, other people besides the Hoffmann Institute have been keeping an eye on Galvin’s mansion. Galvin’s circle of apprentices, *Les Trieze Corbins* (The Thirteen Crows) still exists, and they still watch Galvin’s place. They’d searched the grounds several times for the glob but never found the secret drawer. When Riley discovered the globe and removed it from the mansion, Galvin’s apprentices wanted it back. They sent Jacob Dumont, one of their number, after Riley to retrieve the globe.

Dumont trailed Riley from Galvin’s estate in Montana into the rugged mountain country of the Idaho panhandle. But Dumont isn’t alone. Using an incantation learned from Galvin years ago, the cultists conjured a winter-demon and created a vicious blizzard to close the highway and trap Riley at a lonely rest stop in the middle of the night. This allowed Dumont to catch up with Riley.



OVERVIEW

What does all this have to do with the players? The answer is simple: Their heroes are caught at the rest stop along with Riley and Dumont, and it's up to them to stop the sadistic cultist from killing everyone and escaping with Galvin's sinister artifact.

The beginning of the adventure finds the heroes stranded in a rest stop on I-90, near Exit 23 in Idaho. They're on the road for various reasons of their own. The heroes may be traveling together or separately. Most likely, they're just travelers stranded together by fate in a sudden snowstorm.

The adventure opens when the heroes discover that someone or something has attacked several other travelers in another part of the building, killing one person and seriously injuring another (Jonas Riley, although the players don't know who he is or what he's doing there when their heroes find him). The adventure should proceed through seven distinct scenes, as shown below:

Scene 1: A Grisly Discovery. The heroes learn that they're not alone in the rest stop and that something waits in the storm.

Scene 2: Danny Wood. The heroes interview the only witness to the winter-demon's attack and learn something about what they're up against.

Scene 3: Who Goes There? The winter-demon lashes out at anyone who tries to track it into the storm and drives the heroes back inside.

Scene 4: Smoke 'em Out. The cultist, Dumont, drives everyone in the rest stop outside so that the demon can make short work of them. He starts a fire that the heroes must extinguish, or they'll have to abandon the tenuous safety of the rest stop.

Scene 5: Firebug. The heroes discover that Dumont lit the fire, and they capture him.

Scene 6: The Thirteen Crows. The heroes question Dumont to learn more about what they're up against and why he's after Riley.

Scene 7: Fire and Ice. The heroes determine that the only way to survive the storm is to destroy the demon. Arming themselves with improvised weapons, they lure the demon into a final confrontation.

Of course, the adventure may not follow this exact path. The players will think of dozens of things to try that don't have anything to do with the adventure script. As GM, you need to treat each of these improvisations fairly and sensibly, using what you know about the plot as a guideline for whether or not the players' idea will work.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

When you are ready to start playing, read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

You've never seen a snowstorm like this. October in the Idaho mountains can be bad, but for hours now it's been a virtual whiteout. The snow must be at least fifteen inches deep on the highway, and the weather's showing no signs of breaking.

It's close to midnight now, but you've been stranded since sundown in a small interstate rest stop, waiting for the plows to come through so that you can get back on the road. Several other motorists share your predicament, plus four or five rest stop employees who have stayed on to serve coffee and food for the duration of the storm.

Each of you has places to go and things to do, but for now you're all stuck here. No one's driving anywhere tonight, and no one's coming to get you. Some of you have passed the time with a paperback novel or a magazine, while others have been chatting with the other motorists.



If the players haven't already introduced their heroes, they should do so now. Have the players state their heroes' names, describe their general appearance, and maybe even say something about where their heroes were going when the snowstorm set in.

Here are answers to some of the questions that players will have about the situation or the people around them:

What does this place look like? It's an interstate rest stop. Use the accompanying map to explain the general layout of the place. The heroes have been stuck here long enough to look around a little.

Who else is here? In addition to the heroes, a number of supporting GM characters populate the Exit 23 rest stop.

- A balding business executive of about 50, wearing a good suit and a conservative overcoat (Jonas Riley).
- A short, stocky lady truck driver wearing a flannel shirt and a sheepskin vest (Norma Thomson).
- A long-haired college student with John Lennon glasses, an Army jacket, and a sketchbook filled with Gigeresque drawings (John Black).
- A matronly waitress of about sixty years who runs the donut shop (Mabel Adams).
- A big, beefy truck driver in a cheap parka and a red ball cap (Jacob Dumont).
- A teenage kid with long hair and an apron who does the short-order cooking in the restaurant (Danny Wood, the witness in Scene 1).
- A pretty teenage girl who runs the register in the convenience store (Anne Banks).
- A young man with South Asian or Indian features who runs the gas station (Ahmed Singh).

Why can't I keep driving? Your players may hail from someplace like Florida or Georgia, and they might find it hard to believe that a snowstorm could close a major highway. If any hero tries it, have him make a DC 20 Drive check every half-mile. On a failed check,

the hero drives into a ditch. It takes a long, cold walk to get back to the rest stop, and then you can continue with the adventure.

Okay, so what do we do now? Once the players are familiar with their heroes' surroundings, read or paraphrase the following text:

You're sitting in the donut shop, nursing a warm beverage, when the lights flicker. "Oh, great," mutters Mabel, the counter waitress—and then the lights go out altogether. Somewhere on the other side of the rest stop you hear a door slam open, followed by a vicious blast of freezing cold air that somehow finds its way over to where you sit. The wind howls like something alive, scratching and clawing at you with an icy grasp.

Without even thinking about it, you realize that something is horribly, terribly wrong. Then you hear an awful racket from the direction of the rest rooms—violent blows, choking cries, breaking glass, and finally one more high-pitched scream that makes your blood run cold.

The wind howls again, and more doors slam . . . and then the room becomes still again, except for the distant whistling of the storm outside.

"What in heaven was that?" Mabel says in the darkness.

What do you do?

SCENE 1: A GRISLY DISCOVERY

When the heroes investigate the screams and sounds of struggle they heard earlier, read or paraphrase the text below:

The last gust of wind seems to have knocked out power to the rest stop. There's just enough illumination from various emergency lights to carefully move through the darkened building.

White River Rest Stop

While truckers and locals know it better as the Exit 23 rest stop, the name on the lobby identifies the place as the White River Station. It's located between the eastbound and westbound lanes, and there is a turnoff here for a lonely mountain road that runs about ten miles to the closest town, White River. At the moment, none of the roads is even close to passable due to the accumulation of snow and the lack of visibility.

The heroes may explore the rest stop anytime they like. In fact, since the adventure assumes that they've been here for a couple of hours before the action starts, you can pretty much tell the players anything they want to know about what's where—their heroes have seen the whole place by now.

1. Vestibule and Phones. The main entrance. There are two phones here, neither of which is working.

2. Lobby. A large, open room featuring an information counter (never staffed), two wall displays with flyers for local tourist attractions, and a big wall map of Idaho.

3. Women's Room. A typical rest room.

4. Men's Room. A typical rest room.

5. Arcade. This alcove contains six coin-operated video games.

6. Convenience Store. A small, cluttered shop loaded with knickknacks, caffeine pills, road maps, and souvenirs. The store is closed, and the lobby entrance is blocked by a roll-down grate. Anne Banks, the cashier, is waiting out the storm in the donut shop. She'll open the store if anyone wants to buy something.

7. Storerooms. These are typical stockrooms filled with supplies needed by the rest stop businesses. All feature large sheet-metal doors leading outside that are currently locked (Open Lock DC 20).

8. Donut Shop. A small shop with a counter, stools by the counter, and a couple of small booths. The shop serves coffee, donuts, breakfast sandwiches, and other light fare. Most of the people in the rest stop have gathered here.

9. Restaurant. A McDonald's that is closed for the night. A pull-down grate covers the counter window, but the seating area is open.

10. Kitchen. The kitchen for the McDonald's. It's crowded with stoves, fryers, and several large refrigerators.

11. Fuel Office. The cashier's stand for the gas station. Ahmed Singh, the cashier, has shut down the pumps and the office in order to join everyone else in the donut shop.

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At the rest room, a body is sprawled in the doorway. It's the young man in the Army jacket, and he's quite dead. Several needle-sharp icicles as long as swords impale the corpse, now surrounded by a puddle of slick crimson ice. He seems to have been stabbed through the back as he left the rest room.

Inside the men's room, you find another body—the executive. Like the guy at the door, he's impaled by several icicles, but while you watch he groans and stirs. "Help me," he gasps. "So... cold..."

The dead man is John Black. He's beyond any help the heroes can give. The executive is Jonas Riley. He's been badly injured, impaled through the thigh, upper arm, and side, but by pure chance the icicles missed killing him.

The heroes can help Riley, search for his identification, search the scene for clues, or search the surrounding area. Each of these options is discussed below.

Helping Riley

Riley's game statistics don't really matter in this adventure. Despite his moment of lucidity, he has -5 hit points and is dying (losing 1 hit point per round). A hero can attempt to stabilize Riley, but doing so requires a medical kit and a successful DC 15 Treat Injury check. If none of the heroes have the Treat Injury skill, they can make an untrained Wisdom check instead. Apply a -2 penalty to the check if a hero attempts to stabilize Riley in the dark.

If the heroes don't have a medical kit, Ahmed Singh can find a partially full one in the fuel office (area 11) and return with it in 3 rounds. Stabilizing Riley uses up all of the medical kit's remaining supplies.

Searching for ID

Inside John Black's Army jacket, heroes can find a wallet containing John Black's Idaho State driver's license and a couple \$20 bills.

Riley isn't carrying any identification at the moment, although heroes can find his wallet and dead cell phone in the pockets of his coat, which hangs on a hook inside the rest room (see Searching the Scene below). (Riley's cell phone recharger is in his car, along with his luggage suitcase and sidearm.) His Portland State driver's license identifies him as Jonas Riley. In addition to some credit cards and \$150 dollars in mixed bills, Riley's wallet contains a Hoffmann Institute ID card bearing his picture and signature and a business card marked with the Hoffmann Institute logo, Riley's name and position (Jonas Riley, Field Agent, Department-7), and Riley's personal cell phone number.

Searching the Scene

Heroes who peer into the men's rest room can see that all of the stalls are empty. A trashcan stands against one wall, and a condom dispenser hangs on the other wall. The mirror behind the sink has been holed and broken, and ice standing in the sink seems to have frozen right out of the faucet.

Any hero who examines the scene closely can make an Investigate or Search check:

DC 5 or higher: A fine layer of frost covers the entire room. This was not present the last time one of the heroes visited the facility. Also, the rest room is much, much colder than it should be.

DC 10 or higher: No icicles large enough to kill someone have formed anywhere on the building, and certainly not in the rest room. Riley's coat hangs on a hook on the wall, but no other personal belongings from either victim are in sight.

DC 15 or higher: Riley's valise has been stashed in the trashcan under a layer of paper debris. It contains some papers (see The Snow Globe and Riley's Notes sidebar) and the snow globe. (If a player states that his hero is searching the trashcan, he automatically finds the valise.) What the heroes don't know is that Riley stashed the valise here when the demon burst in, suspecting that he—or, more specifically, the snow globe—was the target.

The Snow Globe and Riley's Notes

Jonas Riley's briefcase is stashed in the trashcan in the men's room. If the heroes find the briefcase and examine its contents, they'll find the snow globe and Riley's notes about the device and how he found it.

The snow globe is a simple glass sphere about 4 inches in diameter. At the moment, it contains a small representation of the rest stop where the heroes are sheltering against the storm, and the tiny flakes flurry downward without ever settling—you don't have to shake the globe to make the snow fall.

The following information can be gleaned only with a successful Investigate check (not a Search check):

DC 15 or higher: The heroes realize that Riley's attacker most likely hit him from the front, probably as he stood near the sink, judging by the blood splatters on the wall.

DC 20 or higher: There's a partial footprint in the blood on the rest room floor, near John Black's body. It seems to be the print of a large wolf or small bear.

Searching the Surrounding Area

When the winter-demon attacked Riley and Black, Danny Wood was playing video games in the arcade next door. He got a good look at the creature, which scared him out of his wits. He's currently hiding behind a video game at the back of the arcade.

To find Danny, the heroes need to look around the corridor, lobby, and arcade—in other words, they need to look around outside the rest room as well as inside it. If a player mentions that his hero is examining the hallway, skip to Scene 2.

If the players don't think to look around the area, you can cheat a little by having the heroes make DC 10 Listen checks. Any hero who succeeds on the check hears a clunk or scraping sound in the arcade.

SCENE 2: DANNY WOOD

Danny Wood was playing video games in the arcade when the winter-demon attacked John Black and Jonas Riley in the room right next door. When the heroes check out the hallway outside the rest room, read or paraphrase the following text:

The corridor just outside the rest room is dark and cold. At the end of the hallway, a door leading outside swings in the vicious, gusting wind, banging loudly against the wall. Fingers of swirling snow already dust the floor near the swinging door.

Contacting the Outside World

The snowstorm blocks cell phone signals. The only way the heroes can communicate with the outside world is by CB radio, and the only working radios are located in Norma Thomson's truck and Jacob Dumont's truck. Jacob claims that his CB radio is busted (a lie). If the heroes try to reach Norma's truck, Dumont lets the winter-demon (see Scene 3) deal with them.

The globe is remarkably resistant to breakage and won't crack if dropped, thrown against a wall, or struck by a good hard blow. (There is a way to destroy the globe, though the heroes shouldn't discover it until Scene 7.)

Riley's notes about the snow globe take about half an hour to read. If any hero takes the time to study them, take that player aside and sum up the information that appears in the Adventure Background section. Omit any mention of Jacob Dumont, since Riley doesn't know that Dumont followed him.

To your right, the building's arcane is a dark cavern, with the normal chatter of video action silenced by the loss of power. Suddenly, there's a small rustling from somewhere inside, like something moving around in there.

What do you do?

Play this up as a situation that might be dangerous—as far as the heroes know, the murderer could be hiding in there. Of course, it's only Danny Wood, hiding in the back of the room.

When the heroes identify themselves, challenge the occupant of the room, or just go in and look around, continue with the text below:

Slowly and carefully, someone dressed in a fast-food uniform and apron stands up from behind a video game. It's the kid from the McDonald's, and he's obviously scared out of his wits. "Please tell me it's gone," he says in a weak voice. "I don't know what it was, but I was sure it was gonna kill me."

He looks around, panic growing in his eyes, and then starts for the door. "Man, I gotta get out of here!"

Danny Wood is the only conscious witness to the killing, but he flees outside to his car and tries to drive away if the heroes don't calm him down and find out what happened. The heroes can restrain him physically (a hand on the shoulder is enough to stop him), they can try to calm him down, or both.

Calm Danny: A successful DC 10 Diplomacy check calms Danny. A successful DC 11 Intimidate check scares Danny enough to keep him here; add a +2 circumstance bonus to the check if any of the heroes is armed. If any hero points out that the killer is outside now, Danny abandons the notion of going for his car; no skill check is necessary.

Get Him Talking: A successful DC 12 Diplomacy check gets Danny talking about what he saw.

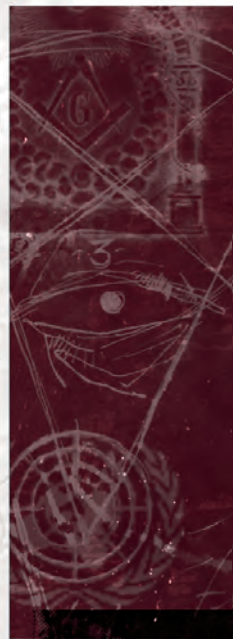
What Danny Saw

Even if the heroes keep Danny on the scene, the cook is very shaken up right now. The sight of Black's body by the entrance to the men's room panics him even more. With the first few opening questions the heroes ask, Danny just mumbles things like, "I dunno" and "Oh, man, it just killed that guy!"

To get some better information from their witness, the heroes need to ask the right questions. Have the hero speaking to Danny make a successful DC 12 Diplomacy check to dig out the following facts. Make one check per question, but apply a +2 circumstance bonus to the check if the heroes calmed him down first.

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What happened? “I was over here playing video games when the lights went out. I started to walk out of the arcade, and suddenly the door flew open in the hallway. A big blast of snow and ice came in, and there was something in the middle of the snow—a big white wolf or animal or something.”

What did it do? “It went right past me and into the men’s room. I looked around the corner, and I saw the dead guy come staggering out, with those icicles sticking in him. I heard someone else yell, and then it came back out again. It looked at the dead guy, and then it left.”

Where did it go? “The wolf-thing stopped right there, there where you’re standing, and looked right at me. I think it was telling me it coulda killed me if it wanted to. Then it blew apart into snow and ice, and it flew back out the door again. It’s outside somewhere.”

What did it look like, exactly? “I don’t know. It wasn’t like anything I’d seen before. It was part ice, part wind, part animal. It had claws of ice, and eyes that glowed red. It howled, too, just like the wind, but there were a thousand voices in it, saying stuff in some language I don’t know. I hope to God I never see it again.”

The heroes can grill Danny for as long as they like, but the cook doesn’t know anything more.

Do I Know Anything About This?

The players may ask if their heroes have any knowledge of supernatural entities or murders with this kind of MO (modus operandi). The answer is probably no, unless they have ranks in the Knowledge (arcane lore) skill. A successful Knowledge (arcane lore) skill check reveals the following information:

DC 10 or higher: The creature that attacked Black and Riley may have been some kind of demon. Such things come in many varieties, and ice-demons or winter-demons have been described in some obscure occult texts.

DC 15 or higher: Demons and spirits are often bound to specific missions or tasks, such as the destruction of a particular person or the recovery of a specific object.

DC 20 or higher: Demons may be invulnerable to normal weapons, but sometimes possess other weaknesses—a susceptibility to silver weapons, fear of bright light, and so on.

SCENE 3: WHO GOES THERE?

At this point, the heroes are probably studying the murder scene, examining Riley’s briefcase, talking to Danny Wood, and working to make Riley comfortable. The winter-demon realizes that it still hasn’t accomplished its mission, and it lures people outside.

Begin this scene when Scene 2 is starting to finish up. You can also start this scene anytime a hero ventures outside into the storm.

The wind howls outside, and the snow continues to fall. The building is dark and cold, with icy gusts reaching into every corner of the structure. Mabel, the lady running the donut shop, has lit a couple of gas lanterns in that corner of the rest stop, but it’s still dim and shadowy in here.

Abruptly, bright light fills the lobby. One by one, the headlights of the cars outside are coming on. Over the moaning of the storm, you can hear a cacophony of horns and car alarms going off all at once. You can also hear glass breaking outside.

What do you do?

The heroes don’t have to do anything, of course. They can let the demon outside trash their cars, and no one will get hurt. But several heroes have weapons or special equipment sitting out in their cars, and they may want to retrieve this gear at some point. If the heroes choose to stay inside and do nothing, skip to Scene 4 after the winter-demon commits a few acts of miscellaneous vandalism to the heroes’ cars.

The Winter-Demon

The winter-demon is a powerful, malevolent entity from another dimension. Jacob Dumont’s fellow cultists conjured it to kill Jonas Riley and retrieve the snow globe, and it obeys Dumont’s commands.

WINTER-DEMON

CR 4

Medium outsider (cold)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages none

Defense 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16

(+1 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 22 (4 HD); **DR** 10/silver; **Mas** 13

Immune cold

Weakness fire

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Action Points 0

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 120 ft. (cloud form only)

Melee Bite +5 (1d6+1 piercing plus 1 cold) and
2 claws +0 (1d4 slashing plus 1 cold)

Ranged 3 icicles +5 (1d4+1 piercing plus 1 cold)

Space 5 ft. by 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5 (wolf form only)

Special Actions haunting presence, icicle volley

Abilities Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11

AL evil, *Les Trieze Corbins*; **Rep** +1

SQ cold subtype, darkvision 60 ft.

Feats Improved Initiative, Stealthy

Skills Hide +11 (+19 in snowy conditions*), Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Spot +9

*The winter-demon gets a +8 species bonus on Hide checks in snowy conditions.

Alternate Form (Su) The winter-demon has two forms.

The first is a large, wolflike biped with claws of ice and a gaping jaw filled with needle-sharp fangs. The demon can make physical attacks in this form. The second form is a cloud of snow, ice, and wind. In cloud form, the demon can’t attack and can’t be harmed by anything except fire. Shifting from one form to another is a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Cold Subtype (Ex) The winter-demon has immunity to cold. However, it takes half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

Haunting Presence (Su) The winter-demon can use an attack action to create harmless supernatural effects, such as flickering lights, frightening sounds, and gusts of wind, within 30 feet.

Icicle Volley (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, the winter-demon can hurl up to three sharp icicles as an attack action. The icicles can be hurled at separate targets, provided they are within 10 feet of one another. Make a separate ranged attack for each icicle. Using this ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Anyone who goes outside to confront the creature or get some gear must face the demon, which does its best to injure or kill someone. It attacks lone heroes who are far away from their companions before it goes after a group of heroes.

The wind screams and rages all around you as you stumble out into the snow. It's surprisingly deep, almost to your knees, and you can't see much with the snow whipping past your eyes. Suddenly, the car horns and alarms fall silent.

Jacob Dumont

Dumont is a member of *Les Trieze Corbins*, the apprentices of the modern-day mage Michel Galvin. He and his companions have waited for years since Galvin's disappearance to get their hands on his arcane lore. In the current situation, Dumont thinks nothing of killing everyone in the rest stop to accomplish his goals and glorify the dark powers he worships.

Dumont is a large, powerfully built man who dresses like a trucker or longshoreman. He speaks with a guttural French-Canadian accent, when he speaks at all—he's normally surly and unresponsive to any attempts at conversation.

JACOB DUMONT

CR 3

Male human Strong Hero 1/Tough Hero 2
Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Language English, French

Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16
(+1 Dex, +3 class, +3 armor)

hp 23 (3 HD); **DR** 1/—; **Mas** 14

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Action Points 1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d6+3 nonlethal)

Ranged Colt M1911 +2 ranged (2d6 ballistic)

Space 5 ft. by 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

AL *Les Trieze Corbins*; **Rep** +0

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Skills Climb +4, Craft (mechanical) +1, Drive +3, Intimidate +3, Profession +2, Read/Write English, Read/Write French, Repair +1, Speak English, Speak French

Talents (Strong Hero): melee smash

Talents (Tough Hero): damage reduction 1/—

Starting Occupation: Blue collar

Possessions Colt M1911 (45 autoloader), undercover vest, keys to truck, cell phone, wallet (with Manitoba driver's license, VISA card, and \$150 cash)

Hook "I'm done talkin'."

Storm Conditions

The storm reduces visibility to 10 feet, and creatures beyond that range have total concealment. The accumulated snow reduces overland movement by half. Characters moving through the snow can't run or charge. In addition, the blowing snow imposes a –10 penalty on Listen checks and a –4 penalty on ranged attacks.

The winter-demon ignores the storm's effects. Its visibility is not reduced, its movement is not hampered, and it takes no penalties on Listen checks or ranged attacks.

The Demon Attacks!

Randomly select one of the heroes who is outside for the winter-demon to attack. Have the players make a Listen check and Spot check opposed by the demon's Move Silently check and Hide check, respectively. (Remember that the hero takes a –10 penalty on Listen checks due to the fierce wind.) A hero who succeeds at either check is not surprised.

The targeted hero is surprised: If the hero targeted by the demon fails both checks, he is surprised. Read or paraphrase the following text to that hero's player:

From out of the storm's fury, something slams into you like a locomotive, slashing and gouging you with icy claws.

The targeted hero is not surprised: If the hero targeted by the demon is not surprised, read or paraphrase the following text instead:

Despite the poor visibility and biting cold, you sense an even greater cold approaching you. And then you see two points of fiery red, like sinister eyes burning into your soul. . . .

If the winter-demon gets to act during the surprise round, it charges the hero and makes a single bite attack. Because it's charging, it gets a +2 bonus on the attack roll but takes a –2 penalty to Defense until the start of its next turn.

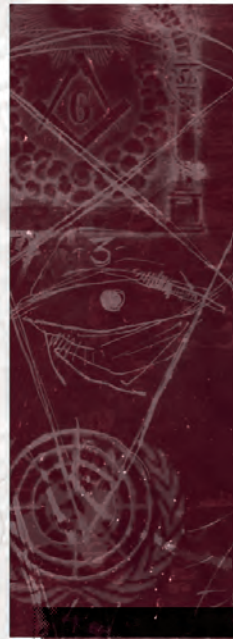
If the heroes gang up on the winter-demon, it tries to injure as many of them as it can, attacking a different hero each round. The fight ends when all heroes retreat back into the building, after the demon wounds three heroes, when the demon is reduced to half its hit points, or after 5 rounds. Read or paraphrase the text below when the fight ends:

Suddenly, the white wolf-thing seems to fly apart in a spray of icy shards. A whirlwind of snow and howling wind dances and spins where the creature was standing. Dozens of shrieking voices seem to gibber and moan in the wind, and the creature laughs maniacally. Then it's gone, flying off into the blizzard. But you can still feel it out there, watching you.

It's very likely that several heroes may be wounded without hurting the demon at all. Assuming that the heroes retreat or drive off the demon and then go back inside, give the players a few minutes to talk things over, and then continue with Scene 4.

SCENE 4: SMOKE 'EM OUT

While the heroes are occupied with the demon outside, Jacob Dumont decides to drive everyone out of the building and into the storm. He figures that the best way to do this is to start a fire. The demon can pick off individuals one at a time



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under the cover of darkness, and Dumont can search the rest stop for Riley's briefcase without interference, at least until he's forced to leave, too. (Dumont is more about action than good plans.)

During the heroes' investigation of the murder scene and fight with the demon, Dumont douses the magazine stand in the store with gas from the gas pump and lights it. When the heroes are recovering from their encounter with the winter-demon, read or paraphrase the following text:

You're keeping an eye open for more strange happenings when you become aware of an orange glow illuminating the dark lobby. At the same time, you smell smoke! Behind you, the magazine stand in one corner of the convenience store is blazing away, and the flames are spreading fast!

What do you do?

The heroes must extinguish the flames within 6 rounds, or the store becomes a blazing inferno that simply can't be extinguished with the materials at hand. Six rounds after the store goes up, heat and smoke make the lobby and the donut shop untenable. Six rounds after that, the entire building must be abandoned.

To extinguish the flames before they spread, the heroes must succeed at a total of ten ability checks, reflecting their firefighting skill.

Beat Out the Flames: Heroes can use coats, blankets, or stomping to fight the flames. Each round a hero tries to beat out the flames, have the player make a Strength check for his hero. In addition, the hero must make a save against smoke inhalation (see below).

Get a Fire Extinguisher: Locating a fire extinguisher requires a DC 5 Search check, and each check represents 1 round of searching. Once a fire extinguisher is located, it takes 1 round to get the extinguisher back to the scene of the fire and get it ready for use. In the third round, the hero may start fighting the fire. Each round the hero uses the fire extinguisher, have the player make a Dexterity check for her hero. In addition, the hero must make a save against smoke inhalation (see below).

Use Water or Snow: To use water or snow effectively, a hero must search for a bucket or container. This requires a DC 10 Search check, and each check represents 1 round of searching. (If the hero remembers about the trashcans in the rest rooms, no Search check is required.) Once a suitable container is found, it takes 1 round to fill it and another round to return to the scene of the fire. Each round the hero spends fighting the fire in this manner, have the player make a Strength check for his hero. In addition, the hero must make a save against smoke inhalation (see below).

Move Flammables Away: A hero can spend a full-round action moving flammable objects away from the fire. This buys one more round before the flames spread. For example, if a hero spends 2 rounds moving flammable objects away from the magazine stand, the fire won't spread until 8 rounds have elapsed instead of 6. No ability check is necessary. At best, this tactic can buy 6 additional rounds before the fire spreads.

Smoke Inhalation

Each round a hero spends fighting the fire, he must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage from smoke inhalation.



SCENE 5: FIREBUG

The heroes should be able to put out the fire. If they succeed, read or paraphrase the following:

Well, you're not cold any longer. Sweat runs down your face and stings your eyes, and you're pretty sure you've got minor burns on your hands and face. But it looks like you've got the fire under control. It's already dying out. Over the smell of smoke, you can make out a different odor—the sharp tang of gasoline in the air. That fire wasn't an accident.

Suddenly, you hear a couple of loud bangs from the other room. A woman screams, "Look out! He's got a gun!"

What do you do?

Since the heroes extinguished his fire, Dumont is trying something more direct. Any hero in the donut shop sees Dumont draw a gun and move out toward the lobby, firing a couple shots in the air to drive everyone else to the ground. He then steps into the lobby to confront the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following text at this time:

You can hear people screaming and diving for cover in the other room. Suddenly, the big trucker in the red baseball cap appears in the doorway of the donut shop, pointing a pistol in your direction. "I won't let you meddle with my plans any longer," he hisses. He raises the pistol. "Time to die."

What do you do?

Dumont lost any chance to surprise the heroes by firing two shots into the ceiling tiles of the donut shop. Have him and the heroes roll initiative normally. When his turn comes up, Dumont shoots any armed character he can see. If none of the heroes carries a weapon, he shoots at the nearest character. If the fight goes poorly for Dumont (if he's reduced to half hit points), he surrenders; go to Scene 6. If Dumont escapes or is killed, go to Scene 7.

SCENE 6: THE THIRTEEN CROWS

You need to run this scene only if the heroes capture Dumont without incapacitating him. They can't talk to him if he runs off, is dead, or is unconscious. If the cultist can't be questioned, skip ahead to Scene 7.

The trucker is a big man, with a thin beard and a feverish intensity to his eyes. He's dressed in a weathered old parka and wears a red baseball cap. He looks up at you with contempt. "You think I'm beaten so easily, eh?" he snarls. He's got a strange accent, maybe French-Canadian. "I think no. My friend in the storm will dispose of you one by one. When morning comes, I'll be here, and you'll all be frozen corpses."

In this scene, the heroes have a chance to interrogate Dumont and find out what he's up to, what's waiting outside, and how they can defeat it. It's also another way for you to reveal elements of the Adventure Background so that players will understand why their heroes became involved.

Questions and Answers

Forcing Dumont to answer questions requires a successful DC 13 Intimidate check or good roleplaying on the players' part. Dumont is contemptuous and angry. He'll spit out anything he says, adding various insults as you see fit.

Who are you? "Jacob Dumont."

If the players ask what he does or where he comes from, Dumont tells them that he is a powerful sorcerer. He threatens them with horrible dooms. "You have meddled with *Les Trieze Corbins*. We shall remember that—always."

What's going on here? "Nothing that you should have interfered with, fool."

If the heroes press harder, have one of them make a new Intimidate check (assisted by the other heroes, if they wish). A successful check reveals that Dumont is here to retrieve some artifact in the possession of a man named Jonas Riley—the fellow who was injured in the demon attack—and the demon is helping him.

What are you looking for, exactly? "If I tell you, you will keep it from me. I am not stupid."

If the players press harder, have one of them make a new Intimidate check (assisted by the other heroes, if they wish). If the check succeeds, Dumont adds, "It is something sacred—a work of my master's hand. I will not have you defile it with your touch."

What is the thing outside? "A demon of winter—a great and terrible demon. We summoned it with a powerful incantation. I command it. Soon it will destroy all of you."

If the players ask about the incantation or Dumont's colleagues, have one of them make a new Intimidate check (assisted by the other heroes, if they wish). If the check succeeds, Dumont adds, "Galvin opened our eyes to the power of magic. He was a good teacher."

How do we beat the demon? "Hah! Your weapons are almost useless. Better to consider how you want to face your demise."

If the players press harder, have one of them make a new Intimidate check (assisted by the other heroes, if they wish). If the check succeeds, Dumont reveals the following additional information: The demon won't rest until it accomplishes its mission. Powerful magic can banish the creature, but such magic is beyond Dumont and the heroes. Mundane weapons won't hurt it much, either, but fire or silver might harm it.

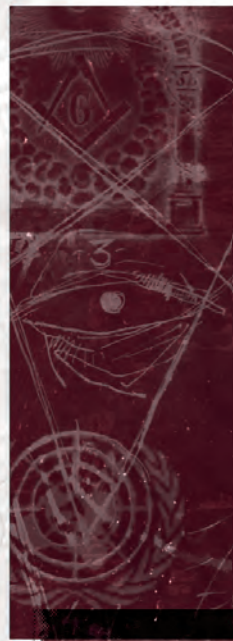
What if we just kill (or hurt) you now? "Do what you will—I don't fear you. There are more of us. One sacrifice for the cause is nothing. But know this: Any pain you inflict upon me will be visited upon you tenfold."

Getting Ready

During the period in which the heroes interrogate and hold Dumont, they also have time to make some preparations for another confrontation with the winter-demon. Ask the players if they want their heroes to do anything while they're questioning Dumont.

Get Weapons: The heroes may still have some weapons in their cars. Retrieving them takes the heroes only a minute, but make sure you scare the players by allowing them to think that the demon may attack at any moment!

Get Fire: The heroes can prepare torches or Molotov cocktails. It takes only a few minutes for a hero to pump gas from the filling station, but he or she has to go outside first. Again, scare the players to build suspense.



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Get Silver: The convenience store sells sterling silver earrings shaped like the state of Idaho. It takes only a few minutes to empty the buckshot from a shotgun shell and stuff it full of silver. Assume that the heroes can put together six shots' worth of silver.

Search Dumont's Truck: Dumont carries the keys to his semi truck in his parka. Characters willing to go outside can search the truck for clues or other useful items. The cab contains a CB radio that can be used to contact the White River police department; unfortunately, no one can come to the heroes' rescue until morning. A successful DC 10 Search check also reveals a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun and a box of 6 rounds hidden under the passenger's seat, a pair of nightvision goggles tucked in the glove compartment, and the following items stashed behind the driver's seat: a portable stove, a sleeping bag, a GPS receiver, a road atlas, 5 road flares, a battery flood light, and a first aid kit.

The truck's trailer is cold and empty. Players might hit upon the idea of using it as a shelter against the demon and the storm. It is certainly large enough to accommodate everyone in the rest stop, albeit uncomfortably. With the trailer's loading door closed, the demon has no way to get inside, although it scratches its icy claws against the metal door, slams its body against the side of the truck, and howls in fury.

Interview's Over

Allow the heroes to question Dumont until they've followed up two or three lines of inquiry, then read or paraphrase the following text:

Dumont suddenly throws back his head and laughs. "I tire of this game," he says. "Come to me, my pet!" He gives out a horrifying shriek, spitting out words in a language you don't know.

SCENE 7: FIRE AND ICE

If the heroes kill or incapacitate Dumont, or when Dumont decides the interrogation is over, the winter-demon breaks into the building to finish off the surviving heroes. This time the demon tries to kill everyone it can catch.

Outside, the wind howls. You hear glass breaking and the sound of a door flying open. A gust of icy wind sweeps through the building, as the storm suddenly reaches out for you!

Screaming in panic, the other people in the rest stop scatter and run, seeking shelter. In the confusion, a sharp blast of wind knocks over the gas lanterns, which gutter out, leaving you in darkness!

The demon assumes the form of a bipedal wolfman and attacks any hero it can catch.

If you want to make the fight more dramatic, the demon slashes once at a hero and then chases one of the supporting GM characters. Mabel runs into the storeroom, Anne and Danny flee into the restaurant, Ahmed runs for the nearest door, and Norma just goes to ground under a table in the donut shop.

Fight Ice with Fire . . .

The players may realize by now that guns don't work extremely well against the winter-demon, thanks to its damage reduction. There are several ways to attack the demon with fire, though. One or more of the heroes may have road flares in their cars. If

not, they can find some in Dumont's truck. There is also the gas station nearby.

There are three ways to use fire against the winter-demon:

Warding: The demon must succeed on a DC 15 Will save to attack a character using a road flare or torch to ward it off. The flame from a lighter is not enough to ward off the demon.

Douse and Light: There's plenty of gasoline around. A hero could fill a bucket with gasoline and carry a lighter, torch, or flare to light the gasoline quickly. Dousing the demon requires the hero to move adjacent to it and make a successful ranged touch attack (which provokes an attack of opportunity). Lighting the gasoline requires a successful melee touch attack (which does not provoke an attack of opportunity). If the demon is set aflame, it takes fire damage each round until it spends a full-round action extinguishing the flames. For damage, roll 1d6 and multiply the result by 150% (since fire deals 50% more damage than normal to the demon).

Molotov Cocktail: See page 106 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for Molotov cocktail rules.

Aerosol Spray: A hero can use a lighter, flare, or torch to ignite the liquid from an aerosol can. Catching the demon in the fire requires the hero to move adjacent to it and make a successful ranged touch attack (which provokes an attack of opportunity). For damage, roll 1d4 and multiple the result by 150%. The demon does not catch on fire from this attack.

. . . or Gunfire

Normal bullets will have trouble piercing the winter-demon's damage reduction. However, shotgun shells loaded with silver instead of buckshot bypass the creature's DR and deal normal damage to it. If the heroes don't have a shotgun, shotgun ammunition, or silver, they can find these things in Dumont's truck or the convenience store (see Scene 6).

Occult Knowledge

With a successful DC 10 Knowledge (arcane lore) check, a hero knows enough about conjuration rituals to guess that Dumont doesn't have the skill to control the winter-demon without help.

By now, the heroes may suspect that the demon is somehow tied to the snow globe found in Jonas Riley's briefcase. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (arcane lore) check realizes that snow globe may be some sort of talisman that keeps the demon in check. (If the hero has reviewed Riley's notes, she gets a +2 bonus on this skill check.) This successful skill check also allows the hero to theorize that the snow globe may have the same vulnerability as the demon does—fire.

Destroying the snow globe requires that it be engulfed in fire or great heat for 1 round, then struck with a hard object. During the time the globe is heated, the winter-demon loses its damage reduction. If the globe is struck after at least 1 round of heat, it instantly shatters, at which point the demon is no longer tied to this dimension (since it can no longer achieve its designated goal). Should this occur, the demon must make a DC 15 Will save at the beginning of its turn each round. If it succeeds, it remains in the fight. If it fails, go to Victory below.

VICTORY

If the heroes defeat the demon or destroy the snow globe, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The howling of the wind and screaming of the demon rise to an intolerable pitch. Stinging ice scours your flesh, and waves of bitter cold rake your body. Then the creature seems to explode in a spray of ice, dissipating in the wind. Its chattering howls fade with it. The wind relents, and the malign sentience of the storm outside seem to vanish as well.

It is done.

DEFEAT

If the demon is simply too much for the heroes, you can spare their lives—just make sure that the demon can reach the snow globe. If a hero is carrying the artifact, the demon takes down that hero and tries to snatch the globe. If the globe is simply lying about somewhere, the demon ignores the heroes, seizes the globe, and leaves. If he can, Dumont makes his escape.

If some of the heroes are in bad shape, any surviving GM characters who work in the rest stop will attempt to administer first aid. It's also possible that an attempt on the heroes' part to use the CB radio in Dumont's truck bears fruit, and a snowplow from White River shows up, along with a police cruiser equipped with a medical kit.

CONCLUSION

If Jonas Riley survives, he comes to sometime shortly after sunrise. Although he's weak and exhausted, he carefully questions the heroes about the events of the preceding night. Then he offers the heroes his business card, marked with the Hoffmann Institute logo. "You handled things well," Riley tells them. "We're looking

for people like you." This is a great way to welcome the heroes into the Institute fold.

If Riley didn't survive the night, another Institute agent assigned to Riley's team shows up at the rest stop at daybreak, following the snowplows. The agent's name is Jessica Carter, and she pieces together the heroes' story and offers the same deal.

If Dumont made his escape, don't worry. The bad guys might have won the day, but some or all of the heroes probably survived. They know the story of *Les Trieze Corbins* now, and they have a reason to go after Dumont. You can use this as a springboard for another adventure—perhaps one of your own creation.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The heroes get experience points (XP) for overcoming various combat and roleplaying challenges. The maximum award for the adventure is 4,725 XP (enough for four characters to gain a level, assuming they capture Jacob Dumont instead of kill him). The XP earned should be divided equally among the heroes. Here is a scene-by-scene summary of XP awards based on the heroes' accomplishments:

Scene 1: 450 XP for saving Riley's life.

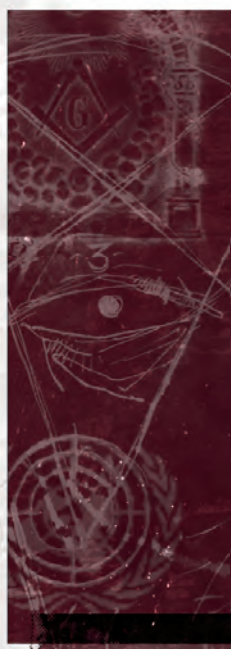
Scene 2: 225 XP for calming Danny and getting a description of the winter-demon.

Scene 4: 450 XP for putting out the fire.

Scene 5: 900 XP for killing Dumont, or 1,350 XP for capturing him alive.

Scene 6: 450 XP for interrogating Dumont and learning about the demon's weaknesses.

Scene 7: 1,800 XP for defeating the winter-demon.



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ISBN10: 0-7869-4349-1

ISBN13: 978-0-7869-4349-4



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Sug. Retail U.S. \$29.95 CAN \$39.95
Printed in the U.S.A. 107697200

