

A Sourcebook for **Kult**TM

#5007

Metropolis SourcebookTM



M *Our Reality Will Be Destroyed
and the Truth Revealed.*

Metropolis

A S O U R C E B O O K

F O R

Kult

Forgive me, Father.

By the time you read this I'll be hanging from the railway bridge, the eternal seal tight around my throat. I hope you find it in your heart to forgive my mortal sin and pray for my lost soul.

We opened the church doors to the homeless and destitute. It was the coldest night in ten years. A necessary act of charity. I must have dozed off. At first when I awoke I was not sure whether I was still dreaming or not. Strange and wonderful music was thundering from the organ-pipes. Inhuman voices were screeching in tongues I had never heard before. I sat up, wide awake. Where was Sister Anne? Then I saw the horror!

She was lying naked in the aisle, her torn robes swept beneath her like the black wings of a broken angel. Her intestines hung out in a bluish bunch on her soft white belly. Ragged creatures squatted around her warm, steaming body, greedily tearing and gulping the raw meat. A banquet of the Beast! I lost my self-control and rushed outside.

Instead of the street I found myself in an endless marshland. An abnormal, curious marketplace, stinking of feces and rotting flesh. Metal lizards flew through the sky above. A fire big enough to devour cities roared in the distance. A mountain, maybe a gigantic building, overshadowed the grim surroundings. My intuition sensed heathen powers emanating from the monstrous pile. A palace of Satan! Sickly men and women were living in little huts by the palace. They were sitting around a huge mound of rotting meat. A macabre, blasphemous rite was in progress. I watched horrified, as a girl was sacrificed to some dark divinity. They burned heathen symbols in my back with hot irons and forced me to revile my faith. I ate rotten meat which made my stomach cramp. I defiled the rotting corpse of a child, which laughed through the whole act! I can't remember what happened next.

I have betrayed my faith. I have broken my vow of celibacy. I have read the horrifying headlines. My life must be ended! Pray for me, Father! Pray for all mankind! I think that the higher powers have been laughing at us poor, puny creatures since the beginning of time!

John Matsuo McMillan

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Editor's Note:

This book is a translation of the Swedish original manuscript. The writers have seen fit to alter some aspects of Metropolis (e.g., the Demiurge's palace); as a result a few items are not entirely consistent with the original Kult rulesbook. The English editor, rather than make a judgement call as to which version is superior, has left the descriptions here as they were translated. Individual GMs should decide which version they prefer.

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Introduction

Metropolis is a campaign module for the role-playing game Kult. This book recreates Metropolis, the original city of true reality beyond the eternal lie, conceived by the Demiurge to keep the world in slavery. It will describe when, where, and how a person can break through the great Illusion and wind up in Metropolis, and what happens then.

Metropolis is not a textbook. These covers do not contain every detail or a definitive description of the far side of the Illusion. You will find no absolute answers, no final explanations.

Metropolis' primary function is to be a source of inspiration. It is a guide book for every Game Master on how to create a Metropolis adventure of his own, or it can simply be read for enjoyment by anyone who takes an active inter-



est in Kult. It is designed to thrill and inspire as much as to inform. This book should provide the reader with the feel of Metropolis, which he can then translate into campaigns of his own. It should not bury you with clinical descriptions and dry-as-dust information. Metropolis cannot be described in any particular way, though Metropolis is a story which demands to be told.



Metropolis

The Cracks in the Lie

This chapter provides you with suggested situations in which the Illusion is torn open, admitting entrance to the other side. Here the Game Master finds the tools with which to dramatize such occurrences, adding a touch of atmosphere to the game.

The Structure of Madness

This chapter contains campaign materials which recreate Metropolis, as well as a number of incidents which you, in your capacity of Game Master, can easily fit into your game. The situations are presented either in the form of incidents (short sequences of suspense with which to spice up your adventure), or as episodes (longer, fleshed-out ideas that can easily be developed into an adventure or an entire campaign of its own).

Lairs of Power

This describes the dwellings of Metropolis' potentates: the palaces of the Archons and the closed citadel of the Demiurge. It also provides some easily adaptable situations, and brief explanations of the palaces' inherent powers and how these powers affect their surroundings and the creatures who dwell within.

The Cogs in the Machine

This chapter is dedicated to places of particular function, or of singular importance to the Original City. It covers the Memory Banks, the Primal Sea, the Clockworks, the City of the Dead,

and the Mirror Halls. Playable incidents are added to these descriptions.

The Damned

Wherein we learn about the weird and most dangerous creatures which inhabit the Original City, about people of our own world who have seen the truth and been profoundly changed. Once again, these descriptions may serve chiefly as raw material to be applied in your game or elaborated upon into adventures or campaigns of their own. This chapter also contains descriptions of Metropolis' residents, whose multi-layered personalities cannot be touched on except in the broadest of terms.

Appendix

A Game Master must not only know how to bring a party of characters to Metropolis and then to anticipate what happens, but also how to maximize the potential drama, how to attach a visit to Metropolis to a campaign, how to adapt information to a role-playing context, and how to follow up on the characters' new experiences.

Handouts

Each chapter is generously supplemented with excerpts and illustrations, which can be copied and distributed among the players. This is to help Metropolis seem more alive. There are excerpts from diaries, magazines, newspapers and dictionaries, police cross-examination reports, etc. A gold-mine of visual and literary accessories which will add to the excitement of every gaming session.



The Illusion Shatters

Our reality is a prison — a very cleverly designed and well organized one, but a prison nevertheless. It is an illusion which has robbed us of our divine wisdom and godly powers, and which blinds us to the true reality of the abysmal conspiracy. Only by journeying into Metropolis to confront our mistaken assumptions and master our fears, can we awake and reclaim our place as the equals of the Demiurge.

The prisons of mankind are called Elysium, Inferno and Limbo. Elysium represents the world as we know it, while Inferno is like hell, and Limbo is the domain of our dreams. All three prisons border on Metropolis.

Between Metropolis and the three prisons, separating Elysium, Inferno and Limbo from the Original City, lies the Labyrinth. This is a chaotic maze of buildings and ruins, spanning all times and architectural styles, piled helter-skelter onto each other. It is virtually impossible to cross at will. Any conventional sense of direction is absolutely lost in the Labyrinth, which exists for the sole purpose of confusing us and leading us astray, keeping us prisoners in Elysium.

Part of the Labyrinth overlaps with Metropolis, as well as all three prisons. Its zig-zagging alleyways, stinking sew-

ers and murky catacombs connect the four worlds with each other, and at the same time hold them effectively apart. Few have conquered this maze, as it takes extraordinary methods and gifts of perception even to find and enter it. Furthermore, the Labyrinth is inhabited by the degenerate heirs of the guards whom the Demiurge posted before his departure. To travel the Labyrinth is to wager one's life and one's sanity.

The veil of deception which shrouds Elysium is slowly coming undone. The Labyrinth is crumbling, and can no longer properly fulfill its purpose of keeping us locked out. In certain areas it has already completely vanished, while in others it could momentarily crack, causing part of our world to merge into Metropolis, presenting horrifying glimpse of the truth our senses are unable to grasp.

Metropolis

Metropolis represents what we would see if the Illusion ever broke down. It is a never-ending city of chaos and destruction; a city composed of the most deplorable features of our own cities' slums and back alleys, concealing secrets far more shocking than we could ever conceive from watching the world we call our own. As humans, we have been denied the gifts to compre-

hend this city, or to sustain our existence within it.

In Metropolis, time is not linear; there is no connection between time in the world as we know it and time in



Metropolis. Thus, an excursion through Metropolis would uncover traces from mankind's past, as well as hints of our future. And, consequently, you might discover, on returning from Metropolis, that time has passed either faster or slower in the Original City than here. In an extreme case you might even find yourself transported to an altogether different age on your return to Elysium. This relativity of time is a very powerful tool for the Game Master, but a tool only to be used with the greatest of care. The Game Master must carefully consider how much tampering with time his campaign will withstand.

In Metropolis, the physical laws are largely void. Distance, mass, and momentum may fluctuate, confusing the disciplined structures of our human faculties. For instance, we may sometimes be able to move objects of seem-

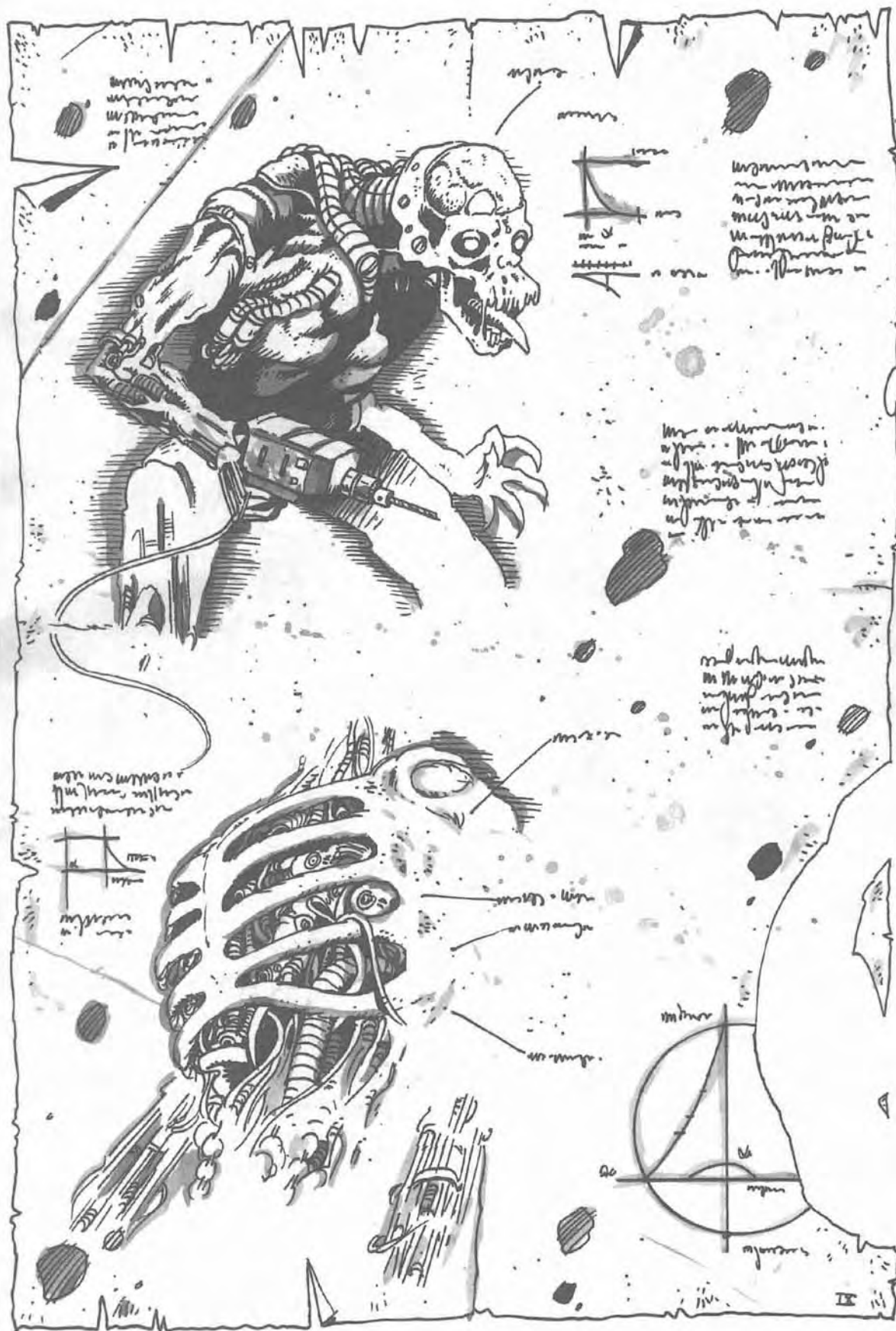
ingly immovable mass. In Metropolis things are seldom what they seem. This too, is a volatile feature in a Game Master's campaign, which must be approached with caution.

The GM should also bear in mind that the players are captives of their own perceptions and assumptions. They are unable to perceive or perform extraordinary things largely because they assume they cannot.

Metropolis is constantly changing, as if it were a giant jigsaw-puzzle, which could fit together in a million different ways. Buildings are never in the same place, nor of the same shape, from one day to the next. You cannot possibly navigate Metropolis by maps or landmarks; the geography is metamorphic. Consequently, it is impossible to give an accurate description of Metropolis in its entirety. It has been divided into different types of milieu: *The Living City*, *The Ruins*, *The Underground*, *The Labyrinth*, *The Machine City*.

From these the GM can recreate Metropolis for his players. These 'milieu archetypes' exist merely to simplify a description of the city, and they appear absolutely independently of geography, merging into each other to form a patchwork of constant architectural change. The GM has a free hand to move the players from one sort of milieu to another, but, however, should never refer to them as 'types'; this division exists only to aid the Game Master and only for the purpose of story-telling.

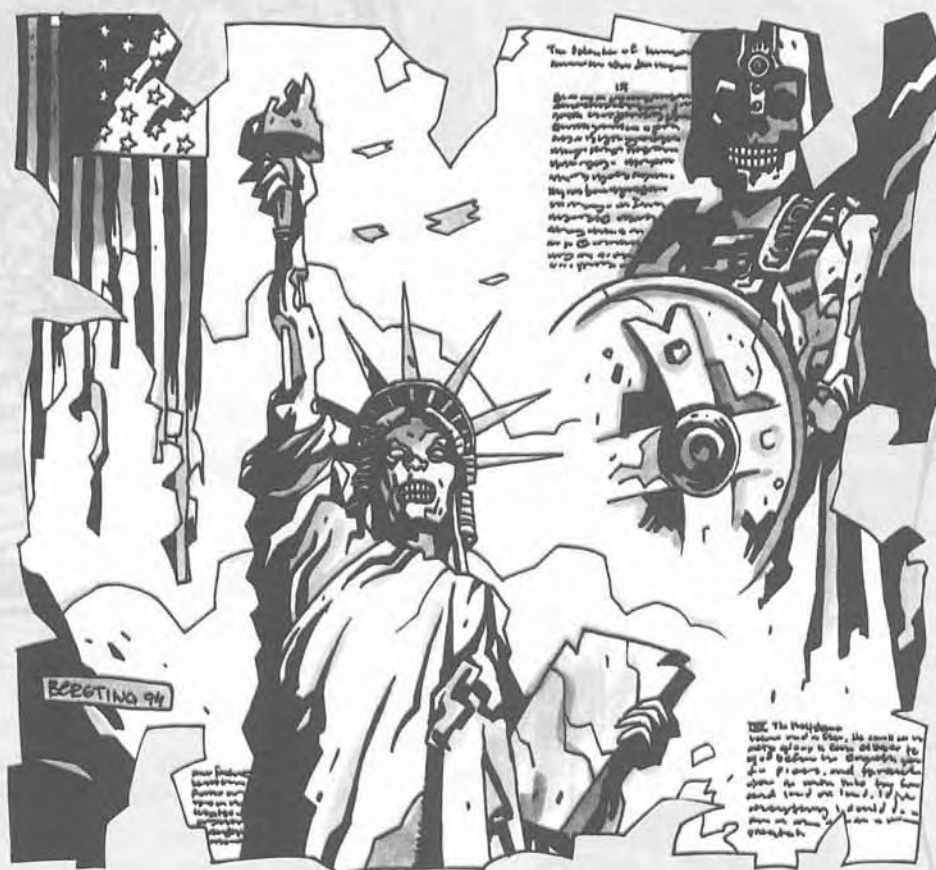
But Metropolis also contains some less ephemeral places, although surrounded by the previously described architectural chaos, they appear never to be in the same place. The Archons' palaces are among this number, as are a few independent sites: the Primal Sea, the Memory Banks, the City of the Dead, and the Mirrored Halls.



Techrone
Sketch

Metropolis

Cracks in the Lie



The snow came down in large, ragged flakes, adding piece by piece to a rapidly filling white pattern. The chill kept the whores and the pushers in check. They stood huddled together, shivering, making the best of their little ashcan fires.

The room pulsed with psychedelic music. Fires of unimaginable color burned in Andrews' head. This was powerful acid. Curt had

cracked his skull on the concrete floor. Its contents had leaked out looking remarkably like dirty egg-yolk, which had had Andrews laughing for hours, basking in his pink mist. The damp, peeling walls of the condemned building watched in silence. This was the way he preferred to remember 'Nam: the hedonistic orgies in celebration of victory, with the short, squint-eyed villagers as anxious bystanders.

At long last Andrews focused his blurred senses. Heatseeker had carefully explained the ritual to him. God knew why. Andrews didn't exactly trust him, but he badly wanted a way into the city. Then he could start looking for his friends — Harry Shepard and Rebecca Martinique. He unrolled the thin, crisp piece of parchment, slowly revealing the pattern. The gold burst into thick bubbles in the flame of his bunsen burner. He poured the viscous fluid onto the floor, carefully trying to copy the pattern from the piece of human skin.

Andrews sat in the middle of the still-hot golden emblem, placing the chalice of burning acid in front of him. He cut deep into his abdomen, using his worn combat knife, and pulled out a wet, glistening strand of entrails. He held it, feeling it pulsate slowly in his hand. The pain was of no consequence. It was, in fact, his only ally in fighting off the misting influence of the LSD. With a silver bolt and a hammer, he nailed his intestine to the grimy floor. With a decisive cut, he chopped the ring finger off his left hand, dropping it into the chalice. The acid, hissing viciously, devoured his separated flesh. Andrews' shrill voice, insensitive to all musical harmony, chanted the strange, ominous words. Here, in their true context, they seemed almost obvious. He toppled the chalice of acid and flesh and was shrouded in a cloud of corrosion.

An alien smell drifted in through the crumbling walls. Outside, the Chicago slum was gone, as was the motley crowd standing in the snow. He was now in Metropolis.

He dressed his wounds and prepared to plunge into the city. The acid vapours had badly stained his uniform. A dull pain throbbed in his left hand. The pain was a staunch friend, a guiding light through the drugged chaos of his mind, through the city in which madness knew no bounds.

Carrying the heavy, fully-loaded flame thrower on his back, arrayed in rags he emerged from the room to meet the city's challenge. Violent odours assailed his nose, causing his stomach to protest. He heard a boys' choir from afar, but the singing was cut short by crackling gunfire. A sea of stinking debris opened on the nearest building, a burnt-out synagogue. He squatted down next to a pile of trashed TV-sets. The city could only be trusted never to remain the same, but he was prepared for anything. Sitting absolutely motionless, he waited, listening for the monstrous creatures to whom discretion was unnecessary. From behind the friendly heap of TV-sets came the harsh sounds of heavy jaws grinding on bone. All Andrews' senses flashed into full alert. He lit the flamethrower and held it, the flame still merely an ominous whisper.

'It's party time,' he thought...

The Illusion Coming Undone

**When?
Where?
How?**

The Illusion may shatter at any time, such is its volatile, unpredictable whim. There are, however, certain places where the Illusion is particularly weak, where the truth is more easily revealed and appears more frequently, such places as crime scenes, big city slums, jails or prison camps, war zones and disaster areas. But the curtain may also shred in less desperate parts, due to actions or incidents of destruction, violence and mental abuse. Thus, a gross

lie which passes undetected and causes extreme consequences could momentarily damage the veil. This was the case when, for instance, the Watergate scandal unfolded and President Nixon was forced to resign. Part of the Democrats' party headquarters was relocated to Metropolis for seven minutes, and four people vanished without a trace. A similar incident occurred in 1985, during the Senate's hearing on Oliver North. Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment in Milwaukee, rooms beneath the Pentagon, the Vatican catacombs, a mobile home in the Texas panhandle are locations which have opened to Metropolis at various times.

Some 'rips' are the indirect result of incidents in Metropolis beyond our realm of perception. If, for example, a building collapses in Metropolis, the Illusion at a construction site in our world may tear. Other rips are created in places where, for instance, the Archons' influence has been strong of late. Although the Archons essentially are ideas, concepts, or principles, they may assume different forms whose influence can be concrete and can be felt physically. Research in fractal geometry has long been under the influence of Malkuth, and consequently many universities and 'think-tanks' now teeter in the balance.

The Illusion may be torn at any time, day or night, spring or fall. The factors which cause a tear need not take immediate effect. In certain cases a year or two will pass until the veil is worn through and yields. Some rips become more or less permanent gates to Metropolis, while others open by chance.

The Archons were born of the Demiurge's need for servants. These images of the Lord strove side by side, but after æons of work they came to see that they were unequal to the task. They humbly approached their Lord and bade him create more servants so that the glory of Creation could be further added to.

*[Extract from Aguirre's Genesis
(Inner Cosmos Publications, 1971)]*

The Illusion can be torn in any way. It adheres neither to principles nor laws of nature – at least none which we can perceive and understand. Rips could manifest themselves as vague phenomena of light, almost imperceptible; or with loud, unbearable noises. Smoke or dust might erupt. But it could just as well happen in a desolate place of perfect silence. Have you ever seen the Northern Lights? Let the circumstance guide your choice of phenomena accompanying a rip.

Why?

We have already established the fact that the Illusion is torn due to a chaotic and unpredictable process — and so we can form no logical conclusions or name any legitimate reasons as to why the veil breaks. Nor would there be much point to do so.

The object of this book is to enable the GM to recreate the special atmosphere which has become associated with Kult; where horror lurks at every corner, and where there is no escape from the unfathomable madness of the true reality. Your primary tools are the mystique of the unknown and the unpredictable. Since your first object is to surprise and shock the players, it would be counterproductive for the tearing process to be fixed to any particular reasons or logical explanations. The less aware the players are of any preconditions, the greater the chance to scare them.

So, instead of a definite explanation, this supplement is dedicated to a host of ideas as to the Where, When, and How the Illusion comes undone. It is then up to the GM to review the material, and to make the most of it. In the Kult game, the Illusion's rupture is an end of itself, and, consequently, the best answer as to 'Why?' is — simply 'Because!'

Incidents

A main feature of Kult is that the world isn't what it appears to be. Behind the façade of 'normality', swept under the rug of our collective consciousness, hide unbearable horrors which are materialized from our own fears and anxieties. These horrors lie in wait for us, ready to attack when we least expect it. When they do, as our view of the world is brutally abused and the lie that we live shatters, we confront Metropolis, the Original City, and see the world as it really is.

These cracks in the Lie, these rips in the Illusion, present us with a unique role playing potential, in which the characters can experience all the trademark qualities of Kult. Below are suggested a number of ideas with which to enhance the feeling essential to Kult of your role playing sessions, using fresh, unanticipated solutions for actions and situations typical to a gaming context.





Places & Incidents

Travel & Transports

A golden opportunity for the GM to strike fear into the players, is when their characters must travel between two places in a city. Leaving point A, who knows whether they will ever reach point B, or wind up in Metropolis instead...

Taxi

The cabbie, an anonymous personage dressed in sweaty, tobacco-reeking polyester: from behind the wheel of his nomad vehicle, travelling the city seemingly without aim, he sees it all. The elusive, ever-present cab which covers every inch of municipal asphalt, from desolate slums to the depraved dwellings of the filthy rich. He rides his worn tires over rainy night streets glistening from the cold city lights on a never-ending odyssey of modern-day decadence and despair. Who is he working for? What dubious orders does he receive over his short-wave? How do you know that he's really taking you where you want to go? Whether it's a legitimate taxi, or a moonlighting unmarked car, any cab ride could end up as a nightmare...


- The driver is a pale, sickly man whose upper lip is a constant nervous tremble of greasy sweat. He wears a mocking grin, bouncing strange sinister glances off the rear-view mirror. All attempts at conversation will be met with a rattling guffaw. If the characters achieve a normal effect PER roll, they discover that the name on his taxi license, sitting on the short-wave radio, is written in a strange, unreadable script. The license carries a picture of his face as well, in which the color and complexion of his skin seems to be constantly changing. The atmosphere in the taxi cab grows increasingly tense. The cabbie makes an incomprehensible call over the short-wave, which the characters, if they score a normal effect for EDU, can understand to mean: 'The shipment's on its way,' although they haven't the faintest idea of the language. The cabbie makes a sharp turn, splashing into a wet alley. He stops, shoots the characters a quick condescending glance, and promptly leaves the car. The characters can open neither the doors nor windows; and unless they smash a pane (at cost of a

serious wound), they fall victims to a gas (similar to ether) which seeps in through the air conditioner. Roll for END every combat round. Eventually, within 10 CR, a cadre of gluttonous Zeloths emerge from the sewers to scavenge the car...

- The reassuring purr of the taxi's engine suddenly sounds strained, and then the motor starts to cough. The driver sighs, stops, and goes out for a look at the engine. Shrugging his shoulders, he slams the hood down. But, catching sight of a gas station a couple of hundreds of yards away, he asks the characters to wait in the cab, and goes for help. He does not return. After a while, a light flickers on at the gas station (PER roll, normal effect). If the characters explore, they uncover nothing: the gas station's little convenience store is abandoned, as is the workshop, where a broken light bulb swings from a cord. There is the faint echo of a dripping sound, but no visible source. Then a bright flashing light appears outside the oil-spattered workshop window. The light pulses and falls in intensity. It seems to come from the workshop's backyard. If the characters seek it out, they find that it belongs to a burning beacon in which dances a woman of superhuman beauty, her raven black hair burning with perpetual fire. The characters are under the powerful mental influence of an Ignytide...
- Riding through rush-hour city traffic, the taxi's windows suddenly cloud up with a thick coating of condensed smoke. The driver switches on the fan, but the obscuring smoke soon returns. Finally, he is forced to drop his speed down to a crawl. He curses madly, at the same time wiping the windshield with his jacket sleeve. Should the characters do the same to their side win-

dows, they do not recognize their surroundings. The temperature is constantly rising inside the car, in spite of the driver's desperate efforts to check it. At last, he stops to find the cause for this unexpected heat. He has no sooner opened the door when the car's tires, one by one, explode with an ear-splitting sound. Those characters who fail to cover the ears following the first explosion (EGO roll) will have their eardrums burst, with blood coming out of their ears in a slow trickle. Their hearing is badly impaired for 1D20 hours (halved PER for any sound-related rolls). If the D20 roll exceeds the character's END, the damage is permanent. The first one out of the taxi will step into burning hot, melted tarmac (corresponding to Oil in the Kult rules for Accidents). His shoes are ruined, and the burns will make any travel on foot extremely painful. The fact that the characters have now entered Metropolis, is, of course, no consolation...

- There is a thud on the car-roof. The driver lowers his window and sticks his head out. It is instantly torn off. His headless body collapses on the wheel, and the cab swerves, crashing head on into a building. The wolver, on the prowl, is still sitting on the car-roof, and will attack unless the characters do something. There are more wolverns close by, all with the same object: to chase their prey into Metropolis where, later, they will divide the food...
- Their driver is a quite ordinary cab driver who, for some reason, mistrusts the characters' faces and is mortally afraid of being robbed. He will misinterpret anything the characters say to him. Finally, he pulls out a gun, and tells them not to try any tricks and calls the police over the short-wave.



Then, waving the gun in his panicky hand, he keeps the characters in check until the police arrive. They are, however, no real policemen answering his call, but a troop of brutal Einsatzers...

CAR RIDES

Big city traffic is a brutal affair which pities no one. Haunted drivers, desperately trying to escape their own shadows, crash blindly head-on into each other causing multiple collisions. Suicidal madmen, taxing their engines to the limit, race each other down one-way streets in the wrong direction. Metal monsters, greedily grinning in an inferno of burning gasoline, have once again proven the superiority of a car's construction over a man's.

- The characters are riding through a dilapidated big city slum that rapidly takes on a semblance to the city of Beirut or Sarajevo. They have growing difficulty telling where they are, or even in which direction they are going. Strange sounds, unlike anything of this world, mix with those of the engine. Something scrapes at the car's chassis. The driver is at a loss. Suddenly, a giant creature appears in the headlights (the driver must pass a Drive Car roll of good effect to maintain control over the vehicle). The characters have abruptly entered Metropolis and are in big trouble with the giant Ferocco which their car has just barely missed...
- The characters helplessly witness a semi crash head-on into a school bus in rush-hour traffic. Instantly, the busy crossing has turned into an inferno of burning gasoline, twisted metal, and broken glass. The wails of ambulances mix with the screams of the injured, and soon a chattering crowd of the terminally curious arrives, drawn by

their vulture's instincts. Suddenly, two hand grenades explode in the crowd, followed by the harsh staccato of several machine-guns. The scene is turned into a field of panic where the wounded fight tooth and nail to escape the line of fire. The characters must duck for cover behind the sooty exterior of an exploded house, as a Kalashnikov automatic rifle opens fire on them. They are stranded in the war-plagued ruins of Metropolis...

THE ROAD TUNNEL

You are coming down an endless river of anonymous cars going nowhere into a concrete intestine linking one end of the city to another. Finally the road returns to the surface, bringing you into the unknown. Who knows for sure that the tunnel will really resurface where it says it will? Who can even guarantee that you will ever see the light of day again?

- After several minutes in the tunnel with the monotonous whirr of the tires and the flickering tunnel lights as their only company, the characters find that they are driving through a thickening smog. Their field of vision grows increasingly short. Have the characters roll for PER: if they achieve a normal effect they will discover the tail-lights of fifty-odd cars stopped in front of them, just in time to hit the brakes. The tunnel is hopelessly clogged and there's no way to get through. The standing cars have turned it into a virtual gas chamber of exhaust fumes. If the characters try to switch on their radio, it picks up only aggravating static. If the characters get out to check on the obstructing vehicles, they will find them all empty, with the engines running. They must roll END for carbon monoxide poisoning, should they remain outside the

car for more than a few minutes (see chapter 'Accidents,' in the Kult rule book). Through the unceasing din of the cars' engines come occasional sinister rumbling sounds as from some large distant industrial plant. If the characters turn and drive back, they have no trouble leaving the tunnel. If, however, they decide to proceed by foot, past the blocking cars, after about a half-hour's walk, they reach a vast and hostile wasteland of old ruins. There is no use in turning back into the tunnel now. They have entered Metropolis...

- A faint drumming sound from the car-roof tells the characters that there is something strange about the tunnel they are driving through. Looking up, they see a fine black sand ominously falling from the tunnel's ceiling. Presently their suspicions are confirmed: the tunnel is caving in! The fine sand is followed by small pebbles, then by rocks, and then huge chunks of rock start to fall on the black asphalt. Unless the characters find cover under their car (throw EGO to figure this out), or turn around to drive out of the tunnel, they will be buried in a massive cave-in. For each CR the characters spend under the falling rocks, the chance of being hit is increased by one (starting from 0; scr 1-10, lw 11-15, sw 16-20, fw 21+). The cave-in escalates dramatically, growing constantly louder and filling the air with rock dust and flying slivers of stone. The characters need to cover their faces. Their only cover — the car — is badly shaken and almost flattened, but unless they have forgotten to put on the handbrake (roll EGO to remember), the chassis will remain intact to protect them. After what feels like an eternity the cave-in suddenly stops, and the sounds of rocks

landing, tin crumpling, and glass shattering, are replaced by a heavy, monotonous hammering as if from a nearby factory. When the characters crawl out from under the car, they discover that the tunnel is sealed off in both directions. But through the crumbling remains of the tunnel's ceiling, which resembles the naked rib cage of a giant beast, they make out the faltering skies of a falling dusk. They could climb out from the tunnel, but only at their own great peril, as that might easily start another cave-in. Once out of the tunnel, they realize that their troubles have just begun: they are in the Machine City of Metropolis.

*Clipped from the
Washington*

Mysterious Disappearance

Algernon Brexler, 43, disappeared on Saturday night, apparently on the street elevator at the Metro Center subway station: all traces end there.

After the notice on TV, several people contacted the police to relate their observations of the missing man. According to the evidence, Brexler was upset and talked loudly about how he was being followed as he exited the metro car on the Red Line. There was a ruckus at the gate when Brexler pushed his way through without a farecard and ran to the elevator. Following that, there is no trace of him. 'Despite the man's loud and violent behavior, no one saw him exit the elevator at the street', says Terence Eagleton of the Washington DC police. Brexler is slightly above average height and at the time of his disappearance was dressed in a white poplin jacket, black trousers and brown loafers. Information concerning the missing person should be transmitted to the District of Columbia or DC Metro police.

NIGHT BUS

- The night bus travels the dark, desolate streets, through a thickening fog. Having just passed over a crossing street, the characters catch sight of the orange traffic cones and the black-and-yellow ribbons of an upcoming road-

'Rats streamed out of the side tunnels by the millions, their combined weight derailed the train... those who tried to escape were overtaken by rats as big as dachshunds, hanging in bunches on their backs... I fled to the tunnels, but no matter where I ran it always led back to the carnage by the train... they bit off my left foot at the ankle... I managed to crawl up to the power cables on the roof and cling on to them. As if on command the rats disappeared. I felt an evil presence - I couldn't see the creature but I could hear it tearing chunks of meat from the bodies that lay moaning around the train wreck.'

Excerpt from the police cross-examination of the rabies-infected Hans Wilhelmsson.

block. Apparently, the street is undergoing some sort of repair; they make out vague shapes of moving bodies in the fog. These are the probable source of the sharp metallic sounds of impact which reach them, vibrating through the bus. After a slow, eerie ride, taking them past the roadblock where all workers remain featureless in the fog,

the bus driver suddenly brakes. For very good reason, too, for there is no longer any street in front of his bus. A giant crack, a hundred of yards in width and about thirty feet deep, has effectively cancelled his route. Beyond the crack a strange, unlit and very menacing city skyline appears. A roll for PER will inform the characters that the hammering sounds of the roadblock have ceased, and a quick backward glance reveals that the 'workers', who suddenly seem to have grown larger and hunchbacked, are slowly approaching the bus. They are actually Destructates, under the command of a remorseless Nephrite, whose task is to widen the crack and tear down all the surrounding buildings. The characters have two choices: either defend themselves, or run. The only possible escape leads over the rough ground of the crack, and, naturally, into Metropolis...

THE SUBWAY

The subway is one of the best places to stage an unexpected event in a Kult scenario. After all, who knows what hides in the darkness behind the tunnels' gaping mouths? Where do they go, those shiny, bright tracks of unfeeling steel, creeping down into the underground world of darkness...?

In each underground system of a major city there is a subway train which forms a portal to Metropolis. It is known by many names: in Berlin they call it die Götterdämmerung, in London the Meat Wagon, in Paris le Cercueil, in Washington DC, the Old Red Line, and in Stockholm they call it the Silver Train. Its passengers seem uncommonly apathetic; they sit staring out into thin air, and seldom answer when spoken to. If the characters take this train, one of the following things may happen:

- A sweet-looking white-haired little old lady sits across from the characters. With her amiable smile, you wouldn't suspect her of swatting a fly. Suddenly, between two stations, the lights grow dim, and, right in front of the character's eyes, the little old lady starts to change into something from their worst nightmares. She grows a short coat which could easily be mistaken for chainmail armor, but on closer inspection it proves to be a multitude of closely-fitted enamel pins stuck through her naked skin. Her long, sagging breasts are uncovered, but they are pierced by metal rings to which a number of small babbling heads are attached. Her black leather boots reach well over the thigh, and each of the needle-point heels are run through ten-odd severed human hands. Nobody but the characters seem to have noticed her change. The demon hag throws her head back and lets out a chilling cackle of a laugh. Then, all of a sudden, the train has stopped and the characters—the only passengers subjected to the laws of inertia—fly head over heels forward, crashing through their fellow travellers and the door of the cars, to land on the tunnel floor, far beneath Metropolis...
- A gang of young hooligans enters the train. As soon as the doors are closed, they each produce a three foot long iron pipe and proceed to break the knee-caps of an elderly gentleman. Nobody in the train seems in the least upset. The other passengers just go on staring out the black windows. The young thugs move on, and, unless the characters interfere, they will work their way through the train car, beating up on everyone, until it is the characters' turn. The characters can either escape at the next station — which, of course, isn't where it's supposed to be

— or they can fight. No matter what, the train has already passed the point of no return into Metropolis, and the next station is, irrevocably, the last one.

- The train suddenly stops, and remains standing between two stations. The light falters, turning into a spasmodic flicker. A voice from the speakers announces that there is something the matter with one of the cars. Then, absolute silence, as the characters see that their fellow passengers are gradually transformed into hideous monsters. The train has started to move again but the characters' car is still standing motionless, and the monstrous passengers are grouping to attack them. If the characters make use of their weapons, they will nevertheless soon be overpowered. The only way to save their skins is to leave the subway car and run for it through the tunnels — in which they soon discover the train driver's dead body in a puddle of blood. No matter which way they choose, the tunnel will end in underground Metropolis — and it's anyone's guess what happens next...

- At the platform: The echo of clanging bells comes from one of the tunnels, growing louder and sharper. A strange procession comes marching into the station. There are thirty-odd cloaked figures (1D20+20), slowly marching and ringing their hollow-sounding verdigris copper bells. Some of them carry torches, while others have rustic old wooden buckets from which a dark thick fluid occasionally spills.

Metromorte:

...Thundering that sounded only remotely like a subway train. It was more like a gigantic medieval war machine rolling slowly over tightly-bound slaves with its huge, ironclad wheels. And then I saw it. Good God!

—From 'My Metropolis' by Stanislaus Krause

*Foreman Karl
Krunac's report to
management on
the progress of the
Underground train
construction.*

They make a sudden turn up onto the platform, and stop, blocking the exit. If the players achieve a PER roll of good effect, they will notice that the bellringers' uncloaked parts — their hands and the lower part of their faces — are puffy and decomposing. Some of them lack two or three of their fingers, and blood is trickling from their eyes. They spread out on the platform, ringing their bells faster and faster. Then, an approaching train is heard. It comes slowly in to the platform and stops to let passengers off. The characters enter and the train closes its doors. But it does not depart from the station, and the hollow bells keep tolling louder and more sharply, finally forcing the characters to cover their ears. Then, as if on command, the cloaked figures strike a final note, bursting the windows, spraying both the platform and the train's interior with shattered glass. Unless the characters score on a Dodge roll, they will

sustain light facial wounds. Ten of the cloak-bearers slowly approach the characters' car, monotonously chanting in some alien tongue: three of them with torches, the other seven with the brim-full buckets. They empty their buckets' contents, which proves to be oil, through the smashed windows, and then the torch-bearers toss in their torches. For the procession are Chaotics who have suddenly seen fit to punish the characters for their existence. The rest is up to the characters...

- The characters are down in the subway tunnels of a major city (the GM will decide which). They are walking along the tracks when suddenly the harsh smell of burnt flesh disturbs their nostrils, growing disgustingly strong as they proceed. Reaching a station, they see that a dozen bodies have been chained to the tiled pillars, some of which are still burning brightly while others have been reduced to smouldering ashes. The platform is patrolled by seven lictors in blue uniforms, who are just about to make an example of a fare dodger. They chain an elderly woman to one of the pillars, then pour gasoline on her, screaming, 'Bitch! What will the world come to if even a simple rule can't be obeyed! Burn, you cheapskate, you!' After which one of the lictors turns his blowtorch on her soaked body. Then the seven lictors board a waiting train, yelling, 'Tickets, please!' The doors immediately close, and the train rattles off. The characters have come too late to interfere. They may at the very best be able to save the woman, but the lictors can't be stopped. Following the incident, new passengers arrive to wait for the next train. But they do not seem to notice either the burnt bodies or the terrible stench.

Del Marr Construction

Los Angeles • New York • Miami



7-11-95

Dear Sir,

'Work on the southbound tunnel has run into unusual technical problems. The rock cannot be cut away at the desired rate, and natural caves create serious obstructions. The risk of a collapse is high. Since yesterday, three men have gone missing. None returned home after work. We fear they may have lost their way in the tunnels. No cave-ins have been observed, but the number of mentally impaired homeless we encounter in the tunnels is a matter for concern. Workers refuse to operate in groups of less than five.

The rats in the tunnels are as big as piglets, and some 3rd shift reports describe man-sized animals... The air in the tunnels has been tested (with negative results) and we shall soon have the men tested for drugs. Some workers report hallucinations during night shifts and speak of strange, old stations that can't be found on any maps. They have either had their contracts terminated or been given leave of absence.'

Kuult

TRAIN STATION

At a desolate train station where thunderous monsters made of steel flash by, anything could happen. What secrets are hidden by the tremendous constructs of steel and concrete, erected for the dubious comfort of the waiting passengers? What greedy nightmare creatures could not hide in the dark, deep shadows of a lonely boxcar?

- With a mighty rumbling sound, as if of Fate approaching, the heavy train rolls up to the windswept platform, where the only passengers waiting are the characters. The last straining stage of the train's seemingly endless braking is accompanied by a screeching that seems to be trying to wake the dead. Then, absolute silence. Nobody gets off. Nobody climbs on. Then comes a sound from within the wagons: a squeaking, screaming sound; growing louder, and louder, then louder still. Then, at a final violent screeching pitch, it shatters the train's windows, and hundreds, even thousands of frenzied rats burst out onto the platform. Each character is hit by 2D20 desperate rats (Bite 5; scr 1-15, lw 16-19, sw 20). Following a combat round of wild chaos, the rats run off down the tracks, flowing like a furry river of living flesh. If the characters try to board the train, they find that its doors do not lead into the compartments, but out into a dark, dystopian landscape: it is a portal from the platform to Metropolis. And once behind it, there's no turning back; for in Metropolis neither the train nor the portal exist...
- The characters have leaned back in a warm, comfortable compartment, and sit waiting for the train to leave. With a discreet tug, the engine sets itself and the three cars in motion. But the characters soon discover (scoring a PER

roll) that the train is going backwards, coming to a sudden stop at the back platform buffers. The engine heaves and rocks, but its wheels keep spinning, round and round, shooting sparks from the tracks. The whole train is shaking and jumping, sending all loose objects off shelves and tables, and a brutal, screeching sound announces that it is about to break apart. Then, to the cacophonous symphony of glass breaking, metal tearing, and concrete cracking, the train leaps from its tracks, breaking the platform foundation, and then goes crashing through the walls of the waiting-room, where it crushes a few resting travellers and concrete pillars, finally tearing on through the station-house and out into Metropolis. Here, in a hail of splintered wood, dented tin, and lumps of concrete, it comes to rest, and an ominous silence ensues.

- A faint whistle sound from far off tells the characters at a little train station out in the suburbs that the train is coming. The biting chill has all the waiting travellers covering their faces, and a dense fog makes the wait feel like standing in a white void. The lights of the incoming train cut sharply through the mist, shooting crazy beams at those waiting and creating sudden shadows which seem to jump at the unexpected light. Then the train comes into view, bursting out of the fog. But it doesn't slow down at the station; the relentless engine keeps pumping its powerful action to spinning steel. Like a bat out of hell, it thunders past the platform, and the characters must brace themselves so as not to be toppled by the force of the wind. Through the train windows they barely make out the vague features of hideous faces attached to bodies of inhuman shape. A harsh, mock-



ing laughter flutters in the wind. The train seems to be without end, going faster and faster until you no longer can make out the separate cars. The thunderous roar grows into a violent crescendo of slamming, hammering, crashing sounds, making the characters' heads throb with pain — and there is still no end to the train. In a final explosive uproar all standing in wait are knocked over (END roll of good effect to avoid losing consciousness for D10 minutes) and lost, along with the train, to the sparkling rays of the cascading light. When the characters come to, they find themselves in the badlands of Metropolis...

Communication

The ether waves transmit messages of unholy madness. The underground optic cables carry signals of evil perversity. Our very bodies are imprinted with this, as if we were secretly being tattooed. Our senses of perception are weaker than we would like to admit, but shouldn't we be grateful to our eyes and ears for sparing us from certain sensations?...

*Clue found in the tent:
Membership card of
the New Christian
Legion (NCC)*

New Christian Parish (NPC)

Morals—Ethics—Conscience—Righteousness



Member No. 601252
James Eldredge Doe
104 Ash Lane
Milwaukee, WI



RADIO

The characters could switch on the radio simply to catch the news, but while the tuner leisurely travels the

wavelengths, words of a not-altogether mainstream character come through...

- In between the chatty disc jockey and the latest hits come catchy slogans inviting the listeners to a political event in the downtown area. The commercials are at first innocent enough, with a reporter broadcasting live from the meeting, enthusiastically describing the atmosphere. But, gradually, the tone is changed: the music grows brutal, the jingles incorporate sounds which might have come from a slaughterhouse. The commercials' speaker rattles and gnarls, and the live reporter is openly insulting his interviewees. Finally, the station is broadcasting only news about slasher murders, physical and psychological abuse, and how best to degrade the innocent and weak. The music is replaced by unearthly screams, clashing metal, thick meaty impact sounds, and crazed laughter: all growing to hysterical, cacophonous heights. At last, the radio set itself is fuming, as a frightful voice cuts in over the rest of the noise, screaming crazily about 'the puny, faithless souls of humanity,' and promising the listeners that 'your pathetic bodies shall be ground down to build a monument to the meaninglessness of life.' If the characters visit the location of the alleged political meeting (a large park in the downtown area) they will find it empty except for a large, dirty circus tent erected on the lawn. The tent proves to be uninhabited, but when they leave it, the characters are no longer in the peaceful park...

- 'And now, ladies and gentlemen, as the hand approaches five o'clock, it's time to play "switch the frequency." We soon start broadcasting on 107.5 FM, and we hope that you will all come

with us. In the meantime, here's 'Regret,' with New Order. See you in a couple of minutes on 107.5!' If the characters pick up the new frequency, the car radio's speakers will start to squeal as if they were receiving from a fax machine run amuck. The shrill, ruthless frequencies climb higher and higher, tearing at the characters' sanity. Then, suddenly, they fall and cease. Then, silence. The radio is dead. But the first one to touch it will receive a violent shock (corresponding to 220 volts; see chapter, 'Accidents,' in the Kult rules) as the set blows up in his face. Everyone inside the car is temporarily blinded (20-END minutes), and when they regain the power of sight, their surroundings will have changed. They have passed through a tear in the Illusion, into Metropolis.

- 'Calling Alpha Charlie. Calling Alpha Charlie. This is Quentin Baker. The victims have just turned northwest, taking the turnpike for the downtown area.' An anonymous, metallic voice of unpleasant pitch is transmitting incomprehensible coordinates. The voice will break in over the normal programming at irregular intervals, and the characters can't get rid of it, no matter what frequencies they choose. Let the characters make a halved EGO roll (cumulative modification +1 for each attempt) each time they hear the coordinates. If they are successful, it slowly dawns on them that the voice is reading their own position; that someone is watching them and secretly reporting their movements. With each report that they hear, the driver will increasingly lose control over the vehicle (roll Drive Car of accumulative effect -3 for each report). He has increasing trouble controlling the wheel, and is at last totally unable to affect either speed,

gears, or direction. The car makes a sudden right turn, heading down through the open doors of an underground garage. The motor shuts down, and the car rolls on silently into the darkness, finally stopping against a cement curb. The garage is part of Metropolis, and the characters can hear distant footsteps approaching in the background...

TV


The parabolic rooftop dishes pick up more than just the latest silly game-shows, children's cartoons, or rock videos.

And beyond Monday night football and the Tuesday night debate on the immigration issue lurk programs of such nature as would shatter our fragile psyches were we ever to watch. The licensors' cable network lackeys spy on us via our sets, and macabre subliminal messages turn our children into frenzied killers...

- Atmospheric disturbances disturb the reception, turning sound and vision into a sharp crackle of flickering snow impossible to watch. But before the characters have had time to switch to another channel, the crackling noises fade, and a sharp chugging sound — not unlike a moped starting — takes its place. The new sound travels up and down, but it is at last drowned out again by static. A voice fades on and off sounding like that of a badly shaken and upset man. Whispering, his lips obviously too close to the microphone, the man pleads for somebody

The Demiurge saw the wisdom of this and created a new race of servants. And so we Humans came to see the light of day, and from then on we worked to increase the glory of Creation. But as the Archons considered themselves superior to Man they soon came to redirect his work from building Creation, the glorious Metropolis, to adding to the elegance and beauty of their own palaces.

*Extract from Aguirre's
Genesis (Inner Cosmos
Publications, 1971)*



to help him. His face, shiny with perspiration, occasionally flashes onto the screen, which is then immediately blurred again. Then starts an odd jumble mixing images of the man's desperate face, the optic snow, and short gruesome sequences from a dimly lit cellar that looks like a torture chamber. The one distinguishable sound is the roaring motor of a chainsaw. The last time the man's face appears, he manages to blurt out an address and finally cries: 'if there's anybody out there, for God's sake help us!' Then his voice is drowned out by the buzz of the chainsaw and the screen goes blank. If the characters visit the address, they will find the street but there is no such number on it. Should they ask around in the neighborhood, they are told that that house was torn down during the fifties. A somewhat absent-minded but friendly elderly gentleman of the same street claims ownership of an outdated city plan in which the house was still included. He offers to show it to the characters, and if they accept he will take them down into his basement. The basement is an exact replica of the torture chamber from the TV screen, but the old man seems absolutely at ease with its appearance. He opens up a rusty iron maiden as if it was an ordinary cupboard, and removes an old map from it. It's the old city plan. If the characters study it long enough, they find that the map is slowly changing: the streets are twisting, tangling up into each other, as the blocks take on strange, irregular shapes. When the characters leave the cellar, they will also leave this world — for Metropolis...

- The old, moody, black-and-white movie is interrupted by commercials. Sugar-sweet images of families seated

at their breakfast table intermingle with fast-paced glamour from the fashion world. Plump, smiling housewives swear to the infallible qualities of a brand of diapers or the effectiveness of a detergent in a flashy box. A single word, 'PAIN,' flashes momentarily onto the screen. Then cheeky children sing their praise to a pre-cooked dessert. The word flashes by again: 'PAIN.' Yuppies in striped shirts and flowery ties display diagrams explaining the unmatched abilities of their cellular phones. And yet again the word, 'PAIN.' Pickled cucumbers. 'PAIN.' Shampoo of unique restoring powers. 'PAIN.' Suddenly the characters are seized with unbearable, unrelenting headaches. A glowing pain surges through their brains and, temples throbbing, they fall from their chairs to their knees. All players should roll for END. Those who fail will pass out, while those who succeed lose control over their bodies and, violently convulsing, throw themselves around in the room. They start to bleed at their hairlines, and their eyes flash with a sharp painful light which seems to be emitted from their brains. In a last brutal vision, before they faint, they see long sharp, roses' thorns emerge from their frontal lobes, growing in spirals down their cheeks, accompanied by trickling blood. Then, they lie unconscious for 20-END hours. When they awake, the thorns and the blood are gone, as is the room in which they had found themselves. They have been transported to Metropolis.

PHONE BOOTH


What protection is a mere phone booth against the chaos and perils of the outside world? Its clear glass will permit visions which make your eyeballs wish that they could quit the unsafe residence of your head. Its

receiver can translate sounds and messages that would make your ears shrivel. Your mouth would struggle in protest while you watched, helplessly, as the receiver transformed itself into a giant earwig, reaching for your face...

- The character enters a phone booth and falls straight into a hole where the floor used to be. Roll for AGL to see if the character manages to hang on to the ledge. If not, he or she will fall some ten feet to collapse in a sewer of underground Metropolis.
- The character, just about to pick up the receiver to make a call, is surprised by a shrill ringing signal. If the character chooses to answer it, an out-of-breath, slightly panicky voice will say, 'Hello, who is it? Is anybody there? Please, whoever it is, just say something! You must answer! They're after me, all afternoon they've been following me. I've kept to crowds, so they haven't been able to get at me, but I can't run any longer. I'm standing at the corner of X Street and Y Road (the GM decides). One of them is standing across the street, staring at me with his cold eyes — but where's the other one? I can't see...' The voice is cut short in a surprised gurgle, by a dull crunching sound. Then silence — long silence. Then, suddenly, a heavy, very harsh voice cuts in, sputtering out an unholy curse of strained, guttural sounds. This voice sounds much closer than the one before, and its curses are followed by distinct ripping sounds as if something is tearing the skin off a quartered pig. Another short silence follows. Then, as if on command, all four windows of the phone booth explode, shattering the view of an ordinary street into just so many pieces of glass, and revealing an altogether different, terrible cityscape. The character is now in Metropolis...

- The character picks up the receiver and inserts a few coins. Over the ear-piece comes a distant hissing sound which changes in tone and intensity depending on how the character holds the receiver. There's no getting rid of the sound. Then the meter goes crazy, counting numbers totally at random. Over the constant hiss, comes a hoarse whisper: '(Name of character)' The name is repeated until the character answers. Then the cold, steel armored telephone cable starts swinging to and fro: 'Come to us...' the anonymous whispering voice drones on, the cable now twisting itself, wilder and wilder, '...we're waiting for you...' and a thick greenish-yellow smoke comes oozing out of the mouthpiece. 'What took you so long?' the muffled voice asks, while at the same time the cable is twisting itself around the character's forearm, and the smoke is clouding up, stinging the character's eyes and throat. The whisper perseveres: 'You know that you belong here. Come to us.' The smoke is now almost impenetrable, blocking out most of the booth itself and all of its surroundings, and the cable is clutching tighter to the character's arm, tighter and tighter, and then tighter still. The character, who can't pry it loose, has the circulation cut off from the lower arm and hand. 'Join us... Live with us... Become one with us...' The hard segments of the cable dig deep into the character's flesh, and the receiver seems to merge with his hand. The character writhes in pain. Suddenly, five vaguely human shapes loom out of the smog, pressing their hideous features to the glass and staring with wild, mad eyes at the character. Their faces are barely human, twisted and deformed by slimy tubes jutting in and out of their skin, thick,





sharp iron instruments penetrating their skulls, gross oculars replacing the eyes, and a grid of metal wire straining their features. They are Prototechrones, and once more their beckoning, gurgling voices echo, hypnotically, in the character's head, as the 'living' telephone disintegrates: '... die with us... die with us... die with us...' The smoke dissolves, drifting away from the booth like a thin misty veil over the coarse texture of a rough and uninviting land. The curtain has lifted on another scene, another place: Metropolis...

GRAFFITI

They face you from the cracked surface of the city's concrete: corrupt, living messages that will hypnotize and mentally rape you.

- A spray-painted tag on a decrepit housefront suddenly comes alive before the characters' eyes, slowly turning into an intricate pattern of red-black-and-white. Hateful, organic arabesques intertwine, forming around a fixed abstract symbol of blood which seems to be drawn out of the wall itself, where it immediately coagulates. If a character touches the symbol, an icy pain will shoot up his hand, traveling up the veins until finally pricking the very heart. The chest will then start to ache with a dull, even pain as if a rib was pressed up against a nerve. The character's nipples grow very tender and are rubbed to a bloody pulp by the touch of the shirt-cloth. If the character strips to examine the wounds, he will find that a strange mark, identical in all aspects to the one on the wall, has formed on his chest, right above the heart. Should the character touch it, with a loud bang a crack will open in the wall, offering entrance to Metropolis.
- The ten commandments have been scribbled on the wall, to which some unknown wit has added comments in the form of strange, occult associations. When one reads them out loud, one by one, the wall comes undone in one large chunk after another, giving the characters a frightful view of Metropolis' wasted grounds.
- On closer inspection, a graffiti-covered wall is found to conceal an incredibly detailed construction plan of a house, squeezed in among the loudly colored tags. The plan is executed in sepia color, except for a single red dot marking out a skylight in a top-floor closet. There is no indication of where the skylight will lead. Later, when the GM sees fit, the characters discover the house, so to speak, 'in the flesh' (a halved EGO roll will help them to recognize the house and remember the skylight). If they seek out and open the skylight, it will lead out of a sewer hole up into a filthy Metropolis alley.
- On a largely unmolested wall in an off-side, dimly lit alley, the characters see a strange message slowly materialize, letter by letter, as though painstakingly crafted by an invisible hand. The words are written backwards and inverted, which will take some time to figure out. Soon the characters realize the meaning: 'LET ME OUT!' The last letter comes very slowly, and the exclamation mark dot is drawn out into a long line until it finally touches the ground. If the characters touch the letters, which are in a clumsy, childish hand, the wall is magically transformed into a giant pane of dirty glass, with the words imprinted on its reverse side. Behind the glass, a vast, dreadful city expands to view: Metropolis. The characters' eyes follow the extended dot to the ground and see the bloody little hand of a frail,

malnourished young boy. His face is an ashen grey, vacantly turned to the sooty, yellowish sky. Then the glass pane topples over, and they, too, are received into Metropolis.

Public Places & Institutions

POLICE STATION

Every city is fortified by at least one police station. These massive buildings suggest power and restrained force, as the very architecture of a police station seems to demand submission. You think that the police enforce law and order? Whose law? And how? And at what cost? Your innocent ignorance will dawn on you, as they chain you to the cell wall in rusty, razor-sharp fetters, pour ice-cold water on your naked body, and animate it with 10,000 Volts...


- Riding in their car, the characters are stopped by a motorcycle cop, all black leather, reflecting sunglasses, and an ironic smirk. In a coarse drawl he explains that they were speeding, asks to see the driver's license, and then tells them that they must go to the station for a blood test. The presumably short visit at the precinct gradually turns into a nightmare: they are heckled, debased, and finally booked by the cynically laughing desk officers, and then taken to a cell to await their arraignment. But first they must pass through seemingly endless hallways of clinically cold whiteness, lined with massive steel doors with barred windows. These doors look a little worse for the wear, some of them scratched and dented while others have been soiled with blood. Coming down the halls, the characters can hear inmates howling like crazed animals inside — or throwing themselves and loudly crashing into the cell door. Through

some of the barred windows they glimpse freakish features of mocking contortion. Venturing deeper, knotty hands reach out of the cells trying to scratch the characters in the face with long, sharp nails. Finally, the characters are shoved into a small rectangular cell, which, however, has only three walls. In place of the fourth wall there is a gaping hole, opening up on a tunnel of uncertain depth. A chilling wind sweeps in from the open tunnel, the cold breath of the coldest of cities: Metropolis.

UNIVERSITY

Knowledge is dangerous. At the old universities with fine, old traditions, as at the latest ultra-equipped modern research centers, the sharpest intellects of our age are gathered. But for what purpose, and on whose behalf? Scientists are led astray by false clues which our evil keepers have planted, to keep the true knowledge to themselves. Gross experiments on human beings are instigated by the dark powers from beyond. Mad scientists, blind to all consequences, push their research to the frontline of scientific inquiry and beyond, stirring up fearful forces which would otherwise have remained dormant for eons. The echoing stone corridors of our foremost faculties are haunted by the memories of knowledge gone astray.

- The characters, along with the fifty-odd others gathered in the large, portentous lecture-hall, are listening to a confused mathematician claiming fatherhood of equations to be used for measuring time in dimensions other than just backwards and forwards. The small runt of a man has soon worked himself up to almost ecstatic levels, pouring forth an endless stream of intricate calculations in a coarse voice



with an unsettling pitch. His auditors are beginning to turn uncomfortably in their seats, casting back nervous glances over their shoulders. The characters feel a grinding pain in their heads, and they start imagining things moving in the dark corners of the tall walls from which dead professors, stern of face and accusing of eye, vividly captured in oil, look down. The auditorium grows dark, as if something had blocked the high, lead-mounted widows from the sun. A brutal squeal, as if of some large, uncoiled machine, soon takes precedence over any other sounds. Then, suddenly, the head of a student sitting next to the characters explodes, and its contents of bone, blood and brains are scattered wide. People jump from their seats to run for the doors, but few ever make it before they suffer the same horrible fate, and fall, decapitated, to the floor. The characters will make it out of the room if they hurry. Outside the lecture-hall, however, the university is gone; replaced by a room of seemingly unlimited space which is taken up by a giant clockwork of cog-wheels, struts and driving chains. The clockwork is turned by hundreds of dirty, starved men, bleeding from the cruel whips of ruthless Chronites. The hot, humid air reeks with blood, sweat and oil. The panicking students rush blindly into the bizarre machinery, where they are captured or pushed in under the immense cog-wheels by nimble-legged Chronites. The characters can see the lecturer disappear up a narrow iron ladder into the high shadows of a wall covered in thick pipes and rusty driving chains. The lecture-hall no longer exists. Neither does the university. They are trapped inside the giant Clockwork of Metropolis...

- The characters have come to a univer-

sity looking for a certain Dr. Schelling, whose erudite expertise is of consequence to a more or less serious problem of theirs. The university building, however, proves too large and confusing in its layout, and asking their way, they are given increasingly complicated directions to the professor's office. At long last, they do find a door bearing his name, but a flashing red light indicates that Dr. Schelling is busy. Inside, a blaring radio is turned up loud, and nobody will answer the door if the characters venture to knock. If they remain waiting outside, the characters eventually will see a small stream of blood running out through the crack under the door. The door is locked, but can easily be picked, or, for that matter, forced open. Inside the room, two techrones are busy wiping every trace of Dr. Schelling and his all-too-successful research off the face of the planet. The smell of burning gasoline greets the characters when they enter; the small office is utterly destroyed and dripping with blood. Scribbled papers, smashed diskettes and torn laboratory whites have been gathered in a heap on the floor and set fire with gasoline. The badly tortured Dr. Schelling sits tied to his desk chair, steel wires cutting deep into his bleeding flesh. The techrones stand hunched over their victim, and, when aware of the intruders, one of the half-mechanical creatures exhales a scorching flame to the floor, which is splattered with gasoline and instantly catches fire, turning the room into a burning inferno. The characters back out of the office, but, instead of the dreary old hallway, they emerge on the roof of a tall building. They look out over a wide landscape of thundering machines, sizzling power lines and power plants with fluorescent cooling

dams, all glimpsed through the yellowish smoke emitted from giant smokestacks three thousand feet high or more. The roof on which they stand is cluttered with an odd collection of tangled cables connecting huge radar and radio-masts erected in various irrational places. Dr. Schelling's office is gone, but the characters can still hear his desperate calls for help. If they follow the screams to the edge of the roof, they will see the techrones dragging him down a rickety fire-escape, also the only way down off the roof. The characters have ended up in Machine City...

HOSPITAL

At the hospital we are at mercy of a band of total strangers. Who knows what evil masters they might serve? Are they even human, behind their masks of smiling pleasantry? Their drugs will pacify and bend us to their wills. We are all prisoners to our bodily shortcomings. Controversial citizens have disappeared, strapped to their bloodied hospital sheets, never to return from the long rows of private rooms in which hungry monsters are waiting to be fed...

- One or more injured characters have been hospitalized, and, for an unspecified amount of time, they inhabit a hallucinatory world of drugs, pricking needles, leaking IV's, bleeping machines, and stressed-out nurses. Presently, the characters wake up when a strange, sharp-faced nurse wearing oval glasses enters their room. She scans the names listed on the short ends of the beds lining two sides of the room, finally fixing her blank face on the characters. She then approaches one of their beds, placing a small case of stainless steel on his bedside table. Opening the case, she

Sleeping Bear

During Stalin's last years, a lictor named Beria was among the most powerful in Russia. He was in charge of internal security for the entire Soviet Union.

The year Stalin died, a conspiracy to take over from the dying dictator was plotted by a man called Boris Tjukov. Tjukov was born a man but later acquired knowledge and abilities that expanded his powers beyond the scope of mere humanity. He and his supporters manipulated groups of lictors to fight each other. As Stalin lay dying, Tjukov made a vain attempt for his throne, which was quashed by force by a group of potent lictors. Beria issued orders on his customary grand scale: 'The Commandant, Kiev: Execute 3,500 Tjukov supporters.' The order followed with ruthless precision. A total of 23,357 people were executed on Beria's orders, including Tjukov's schoolmistress. Beria had candles made from Tjukov's subcutaneous fat. Six months later, Beria himself was in prison.

The candles Beria had made were charged with peculiar powers. When they illuminated a painting, the picture would change. An Azghoul devouring human flesh would appear in a beautiful and bucolic landscape. The transformed paintings showed images from Metropolis, Inferno or Limbo. Did all hand-painted pictures have secret images which need only the light from Tjukov's candles to appear?

Twenty candles still exist, mostly in eastern Europe. They circulate among adepts of the occult. The candles' powers vary. A few are portals to other worlds, others create vague images of strange realities in paintings, and some just modify the existing motif. A candle sells for \$1,000 to \$3,000, and are available from former members of the eastern European secret police: GRU, STASI, KGB, SECURITATE.

removes a hypodermic syringe of astonishing dimensions, the needle alone at least nine inches long. When he tries to move, the character can't even raise his head. The nurse hisses a grim, 'Good night,' forcing the needle into one of the character's temples. The process is then repeated for each of the hospitalized characters. When the thick needle enters their heads, they pass out from the pain, only to wake up in an oily puddle of water on a dark back street of Metropolis. They are freezing and in terrible pain, and from out of the shadows a number of hunched-up shapes bear down on them...



Objects & Artifacts

CAMERAS & BINOCULARS

It is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder — but what about the eye of a camera? What unearthly visions might come creeping in through the lenses? Your finger on the shutter, with the seeker closing in on the decrepit dirt of true reality, you may ask yourself whether there ever was such a thing as beauty at all...

- Some primitive people would rather not be photographed, as they believe that their souls will be stolen by the strange box with the evil eye. And wisely so, for some of the sophisticated photo booths which are found in railway or subway stations are secretly used as portals to strange and sinister worlds... While still blinded by the flash bulb's light, and with the feeder ticking away, the characters may discover that the world outside the dirty drapes has been radically changed — or could it be that the camera was doing something to them...?
- When the pictures start to appear on the photographic paper, bathing in the developer and in the blood red laboratory light, the characters discover that the camera has seen things differently than they did themselves: friendly faces saying 'cheese' have changed

into greedy demons with mocking grins, well-known city views have been enriched with hostile architecture, and bestial crimes are committed in the background of innocent holiday snapshots. And, leaving the photo lab, they set foot on the damned earth of Metropolis, and there'll be no putting a protective camera lens between themselves and reality, now...

- The characters find that their binoculars let through a far more brutal vision of the big city, than what is visible to the naked eye. With the binoculars as their one trustworthy sense, they must spend 50 PER-minutes slowly 'weaning' their brains from the shocking images which their eyes have thus far refused to register.

CLOCKWORK

Tick-tock. Tick-tock. Tick-tock. The wheels and arms, forced on by an uncoiling spring or an unfeeling battery, are inexorably approaching the fateful second when the Illusion will be ripped to let the truth come crashing through. The bell is tolling for you. You can't turn back time, and when your alarm clock goes off you will wake up to a world of sulphurous smog and scorching pain, which goes by the name of Metropolis...



Characters & Episodes

Business Card

NEO LASER LTD

ROBERT KULINSKI, TECHNOPHYSICIAN

800-410-4030 EMAIL RKULIN@aol.com

Ad from Evening Paper

ROBERT KULINSKI

Bob Kulinski owns NeoLaser Ltd, a curious company addressing us from posters in the subway, the colors of which might bring on an epileptic seizure, if studied too closely. The posters ask if we suffer from insufficient impulse conductivity of the motor nervous system, superfluous consumption of energy, or disruptions to the dendritic synapse development. NeoLaser offers help for said ailments, stating the cure as synchronistic, electro-caustic, or quantum chemical laser treatments.

Whatever that is supposed to mean...

Bob Kulinski is a cracked genius

Are You a Seeker?

Feel out of touch with your surroundings? Do you reject the fetters of physical existence and the absurdity of your own fate? Dr. L. F. Horvath, Lic. Parapsychologist at the Macro Mental Institute of Switzerland, will help you discover the true meaning of life. Astral Seances: \$150 / hour, Macro Mental Therapy: \$50 / hour, Classes and Lectures: by agreement.

L.F. Horvath Tel. 08-33 20 66

who on several occasions has lived in the Machine City, returning with amazing innovations in laser technology. Kulinski has made a pact with a cadre of techrones, by which he will provide them with humans - for their never-ending bio-technical experiments- in return for titillating laser gadgets...

LASZLO HORVATH, PARAPSYCHOLOGIST

Every now and then the GM might have the characters come across a small, very peculiar advertisement in one of the evening papers: 'Are You a seeker? Do You feel out of touch with your surroundings? Do You refuse the fetters of physical existence and the absurdity of Your own fate? Dr. L. F. Horvath, Lic. Parapsychologist of the Macro Mental Institute of Switzerland, will help you to discover the true side of life. Astral Seances: \$ 150 / hour, Macro Mental Therapy: \$ 50 / hour, Classes and Lectures: by arrangement.' Try to tease the characters' curiosity by introducing this little ad at different times and for no apparent reason. When, at last, they decide to answer the ad, you will introduce them Dr. Laszlo Filemon Horvath, an insane Hungarian parapsychologist. He is man with a vaguely defined body, shaved head, a moist upper lip, and eyes staring in celestial bliss behind round horn-rimmed spectacles. Horvath is truly deranged, but his methods work. He can take the characters' astral forms on a guided tour of the way to Metropolis. He can even enter into their bodies and bring them there in the flesh. The only catch is that that he will desert them there and disappear with their money.

THE PICTURE VENDORS

A strange, ancient sect originating in medieval Romania, which, to the glory of Binah, carries out a mission to send

'On the Rudimentary Astronomy of Astral Bodies and the Sexual Potential of Auras'

By Mischa Pterzhen, Doctor of Parapsychology

'In Paris in 1963, I had a rendezvous with a hairy dwarf in a dirty hotel room with unwashed sheets. Longtime heroin use had endowed the dwarf with an attractive yellow-white aura. During this golden weekend, which unfortunately cost the dwarf his life, I learned the basics of controlling the movements of astral bodies between realities and of the magnificent charts constituted by our most fundamental desires. The attraction between auras is a requisite for the submission of desire to the intellect, in accord with the principles posited by De Sade. Guidance of perception, popularly known as astral body guidance, is a simple operation as long as the receiver is willing and has an open and tolerant mind. After my escape to Tangiers I sought new means to crack the lusty secrets of the aura and find the cause of the dwarf's death, which cost me several years in exile.'

off independent free-thinkers to the other side. Their victims will pass through a painting (usually depicting lazy crows in a dreary, grey landscape) into Metropolis when the picture vendor utters a guttural curse: 'Dhiss baythun fehru britt-uh tcech' (which is easily mistaken for, 'This painting very pretty, yes?' a phrase of ingenious salesmanship which has been known to convince many a skeptic). In Metropolis, the victim is fettered inside the grotesque original of the painting's landscape, where soon the servants of Binah will find him.

Excerpt from 'On the rudimentary astronomy of astral bodies and the sexual potential of auras,' by Dr. Misha Pterzhen, Parapsychologist.



VIDEODROME

Kuan Yin is a deranged Chinese film producer working for Takeo Oshima, a hired hand of the Tiphareth incarnate, Nakamura. Yin produces snuff movies in a little village in North Vietnam, which are given world wide distribution by the London media mogul Rex Tenebray III. The films have been cleverly manipulated to meet certain diabolical ends.

During the Vietnam war, the North Vietnamese army performed genetic experiments on human beings, trying to develop a race of super soldiers. But the Americans bombed their research camp, and the whole scientific crew fled into the jungle. Many died, but some were never accounted for. Among the latter number were a few of the human guinea pigs, who survived and later reproduced, resulting in a second generation of mutant battle-machines. Tiphareth has come into possession of much of the 1973 research project's results, which she hopes will enable her to 'activate' the unwitting super soldiers who live normal lives and are totally unaware of their powers. She thinks this can be achieved through the media. The proper stimuli will yield the desired reaction; the skills to kill, to destroy and to survive have been crafted straight into the gene pools of the mutant soldiers, and they need only be reminded of their true potential. So Tiphareth is trying to reach them via Kuan Yin's movies, to activate their dormant powers, which would create a tear in the Illusion. The films have, in fact, activated a few of the 'sleeping soldiers', resulting in a few random acts of mayhem; but they have affected others, as well. Their audiences will develop latent aggressions, and once exposed to 'Street Soldier,' 'Son of Sado,' or 'Chainsaw Mayhem III,' you need only

the right set of circumstances to be suddenly transported to Tiphareth's Metropolis palace.

DUST DEVIL

During the 70's, before he became completely unhinged, this psychotic mass murderer was a captain in the Special Police Force of South Africa's Civil Ministry. He was leader of a ruthless death squad, known and feared as Breukel's Blood Brothers. On a mission to the scorching deserts of Namibia, which was to prove his last, he had experiences which plunged him into the abysmal depths. Now he is not even human, but an immortal demon who can pass between Elysium and Metropolis at will. He keeps himself occupied with sadistic games of singular brutality, which he usually ends by flaying and quartering his victims with careful deliberation. But when he takes particular interest in a case, he will first bring it to Metropolis for a little cat-and-mouse game. His passage between Metropolis and Elysium can only be achieved under meteorological conditions of extreme heat; where Dust Devil 'comes and goes' through the shimmering air, fading out of this world to appear in the other. His activities are therefore mainly limited to the southern hemisphere, and have been documented in several reports on acts of extreme cruelty, allegedly performed by UNITA, Sendero Luminosa, or the private armies of certain Colombian drug lords.

TODD

The characters have been taking care of an autistic six- or seven-year-old boy. His name is Todd, and they found him, alone and crying, somewhere in their current scenario (for instance, living in the headquarters of some cult, or as the prisoner of a cult). Todd's father was brutally kidnapped by techrones

from his sophisticated basement workshop, and taken to the Machine City in Metropolis where the machinery still suffered from his previous visits. Todd and his mother had witnessed the ruthless assault; she was badly traumatized by the experience, and the world collapsed around Todd, who was then only four years old. His mother could no longer give him the loving care he needed, and as a result the child withdrew into himself. Half a year later, Todd rebuilt himself into kind of a proto-techrone, using his father's sophisticated instruments and some ordinary kitchen appliances. Then he killed his mother, who was by now constantly strung out on Valium, but, resuming his child's identity, he was able to fool the police...

He is now drifting, looking for a new mother and father to give him the love and attention he so desperately needs; in his machine personality, Todd has killed eleven single women to date. Whenever he feels emotionally denied, his body becomes a living portal to Metropolis, and this ability has attracted several cults to the boy. When the characters stumble on Todd, the GM must make up a pretext which discourages them from dumping him at the nearest police station: for instance, imply that the officers on duty are liars by having them act in a strange and unsettling way. At the characters' place, Todd is calm and quiet, but he will not answer when spoken to. But when the characters leave him alone he rebuilds himself again, using up all their household electronics, into a weird, complicated construction which serves as a portal to Metropolis. When the characters return home, they are faced with his machine personality. Todd is now hateful, screaming at the characters in his vocoder voice: 'You whore — you let

me down!' 'Bitch!' 'Meat!' 'Gnfk!' etc. Then he attacks the characters with their own drilling-machine, and he and the characters are suddenly transported to Machine City. It will take a serious wound to stop Todd; the machine personality then dissolves into a crying little boy who is tangled up in a mass of technical gadgetry. A deadly wound to the machine personality would seriously wound the child. The characters will of course not know that Todd and his machine personality are one and the same. When exposed to the latter, they perceive him simply as an electronic monster. When the machine personality is reduced to the child, Todd and the characters return to Elysium — but the portal remains open until they have disentangled the boy. And the characters may unwittingly bring creatures from the Machine City into Elysium.

DISHARMONY OF THE SPHERES

Disharmony of the Spheres is a loud underground rock group from London with three moderately successful CD's to their name. Although they are generally ignored by MTV and the major radio stations, their decadent image, dismal harmonies and obnoxious lyrics have built them a loyal following throughout Europe, predominately of class cutting teenagers and coffee house pseudo-intellectuals.

The band's charismatic singer, Chris Wolverine, is actually one of Samael's razides, using music to spread the words of the Angel of Death to the youth of Europe. Soul-trashing death drugs and sexual ultra-violence are standard features of their touring life, and the band's beat-up bus is a permanent portal to Metropolis and the ongoing banquet at the Steel Heart palace of Samael. Groupies and autograph collectors, as well as other young people who



are attracted to, or forced into the bus, will disappear into this part of Metropolis, where twisted creatures ravage and feast on their bodies. A chosen few are spared, to return to Elysium and spread the perverse gospel and addictive drugs of Samael to their friends and families.

RIOT BOYS

Riot Boys is a name that is feared throughout many American and Western European big city slums. In 1959, the Riot Boys were just another Midwestern American car-riding gang from the sleepy town of Coulton Creek. By listening to rock'n'roll, growing long hair and assuming an attitude of general disdain, they managed to shock the adults in their hometown. In fact, they succeeded so well that the town priest made a pact with a demon to kill the boys. But when the Riot Boys were

delivered to the demon's lair, she double-crossed the priest and instead made the boys her servants. The demon takes an interest in all the worst aspects of big city life, encouraging and protecting lowlife crimes, such as prostitution, drug dealing and street violence. The Riot Boys execute her plans by initiating gang wars, selling drugs and firearms to school children, and by forcing the penniless into robbery or prostitution. At first glance, you would think that they look like an average street gang, in their short leather jackets and outrageous hair-dos. But they smell like corpses, their T-shirts are spattered with blood, and their cheap sun-glasses hide decaying sockets in which the eyes have long since rotted. Through the big city cemeteries, the Riot Boys find free passage between Elysium and their Queen's crypt in the City of the Dead.



Methods

Contact with Metropolis should not always be made at random. The GM may let the players find an object, or meet a creature, which enables them to tear through the Illusion and pass into Metropolis at will. The players must not, however, be allowed to believe they have mastered Metropolis. There is no such thing as a fool-proof method...

BY SUMMONING AN AZGHOUL

After some careful research, and a good deal of luck, the characters could come into possession of some old, barely decipherable parchments and books in which ancient ceremonies and rituals are described. These were used to summon a fearful azghoul creature to Elysium, which would then guide its

obviously weak-minded conjurer to Metropolis; and, if the GM so pleases, the ceremonies could still be empowered. The scriptures state that in order to summon and control an azghoul you must first know its name, and the old azghoul's name has, of course, been long lost to humanity. You could plant hints and clues throughout the campaign, which would at least give the characters a sporting chance to discover this name. But don't indulge them: if they mispronounce its name, the azghoul will surely take them to Metropolis - but it won't be under their spell, and it will most likely be hungry...

BY BODILY MAIMING

Age-old mysterious, half incomprehensible written works of different early cultures will sometimes mention bizarre and painful rituals by which a person can travel to 'the other side.' In short, by mortification and stigmatization of his own flesh, in certain ways and with certain instruments, the subject can turn into a 'living tear' in the Illusion. The GM, however should exercise great care with these methods, and should perhaps even limit the effectiveness to once in a lifetime. After all, a severely handicapped character is harder to play, and this method should really only appeal to very desperate players...

Metro

Codex Azghouli

The conjurer is bound to a wheel stained with the blood of his associate, the associate scrawls the holy symbol onto his body. For each part of the conjurer's body that is thus recreated, he intones six times 'Azghoul Hominum Ferrus'. When the conjurer's flesh is completely recreated, the associate, during the continued incantation, places three receptacles under him to catch his blood. The conjurer pronounces the name of the azghoul seven times. After it has drunk from the three receptacles, it is forever bound to him.

An object that belongs in the Original City has great power, which in the hands of the knowledgeable can be used to bind an escaped slave. After fasting for three days the conjurer re-creates his flesh while chanting the invocation 'Corpus Metropolitii, sator Azghouli'. When the conjurer has reconfigured himself into a holy symbol, the object is introduced into the blessed opening in his body which is then closed with twelve steel nails. Then the conjurer thrice calls the name of the escaped slave in each direction, upon which the slave materializes at his feet. The creature will be the obedient servant of the conjurer as long as his body remains a symbol of the object from the Original City.

Excerpt from Codex
Azghoulii

Excerpt from Diary

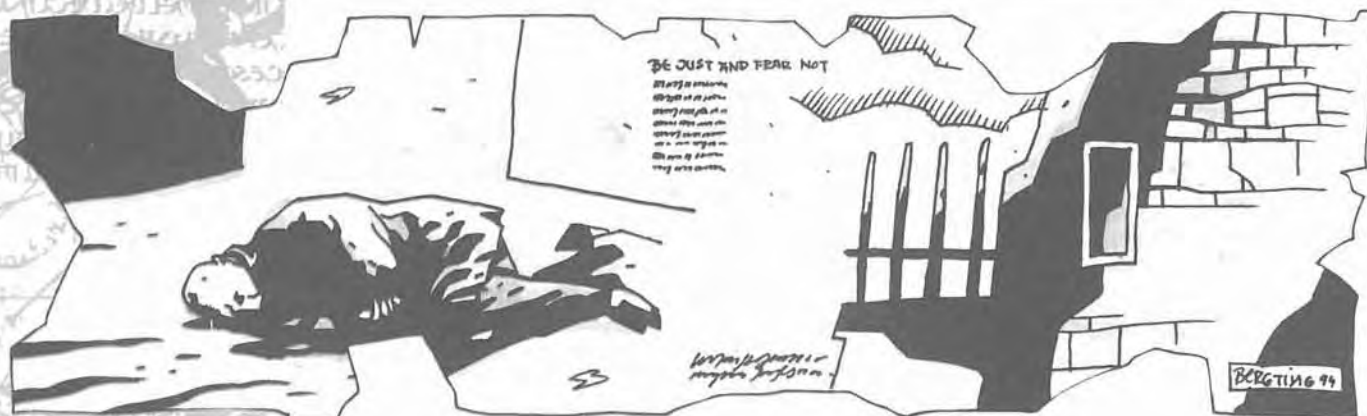
Pain. During my short life I have known so much pain that the few moments between the attacks have become a greater torment. Though it feels as if my head will burst, though I once broke every bone in my foot to divert the pain, it is still better than the non-pain. I have had days without pain now and I'm going insane. I want to feel my synapses burst, I shudder in pleasure at the thought of the glowing sensation, the convulsions, even the involuntary movement of the bowels. The aching silence of my nerves mocks me, the IV painkiller is driving me mad. Slowly, almost lovingly, I draw the razor blade across the back of my hand. Blood, a slight prickling sensation. Weak, unsatisfying - I want more, the urge has awakened. Blood spurts from a deep slit in my forearm. Warm comfort, but far from what I am seeking. I dig the fork feverishly into my thighs, fast, fast - ten times in each leg. Strange: I have created the same pattern of blood on each leg - a cross with a vertical stem. Never mind. I hunger for more, and I saw open a steaming hole in my stomach with the table-knife. It is slow work. I curse the knife, I slip in the blood, the effort makes me sweat. My fingers, trembling with well-being, dig into the heat. I find what I am looking for. Through the flickering lights of my agony I glimpse the strange creatures, apostles of my pain, in the dark urban landscape under the gloomy yellowish sky. I hear shrill voices in the distance, but they have nothing to do with me. At last.

(Text in the CD booklet of the Subhuman Channels' debut album *Mescaline Dreams*)

G E L O C H E L I

'THE BABYLONIANS LAY PEACEFULLY FOR NIGHTS ON END, CONTEMPLATING THE STAR-LIT SKIES ABOVE THEIR ARID LAND. THEY BECAME OBSESSED WITH THE INFLUENCE OF THE HEAVENLY BODIES. I MYSELF HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME IN THE UNDERWORLD. ALL TUNNELS AND MAZES FORM A POWERFUL WEB, AND THAT WEB OBSESSES ME. THERE ARE DOORS THAT SHOULD NEVER BE OPENED AND WOUNDS THAT CAN NEVER HEAL. THE RUNNING OF THE MACHINE IS CURIOUS AND UNPREDICTABLE. I HAVE KNOWLEDGE THAT NO OTHER MORTAL SHARES.

—GELOCHELI



GELOCHELI

Hundreds of young people from all over the world are drawn daily by London's vain promises. Many have neither jobs, nor money, nor a place to live. They end up on the street, among thousands of others. Most will eventually succeed in establishing a normal working and family life. Some few will even realize the big dreams which brought them to London. Fewer still end up as borderliners.

The Underground system is a convoluted tapestry of intricately intertwined tunnels and vast stations of unplanned chaos and smog-like colors. The system extends into atomic shelters built during the Cold War, and to older brick vaults and cavities from the days of the Blitz (when 60,000 Londoners were killed in their homes). Even older tunnels open on medieval cellars, Roman ruins, and age-old caves of unknown origin.

Permanent Portals

Most doors into Metropolis are only temporary, as when event causes the Illusion's veil to tear. There are, however, places where the border between Metropolis and Elysium has been so weakened that the Illusion is constantly torn. These places are hardly to be trusted. The intensity, the circumference, the duration, and the destination within Metropolis of the opening are prone to such frequent changes that they neither can nor should be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, throughout the game, the GM can favourably confront the characters with various dubious groups — cults, as well as organizations run by lictors — which, by incantation or powerful artifacts, try to open permanent portals into Metropolis. In the course of an adventure, an attempt may even be allowed to succeed. But caution must be used: the characters should never be permitted to come and go as they

please. If Metropolis was to become too easy to reach, it would diminish the suspense and rob the Original City of its nimbus of mystique.

GELOCHELI'S PORTAL

Gelocheli, London's mythical self-proclaimed Messiah, controls a private portal into Metropolis. The characters will find him by talking to the homeless of London and those who live on the borderline. A follower of Gelocheli will point them to an Underground tunnel. Gelocheli himself is a melodramatic man of many whims. He always places himself in the shadow. He is dressed in colorful rags, and his long hair and beard clearly suggest a messianic complex. He takes great pleasure in his own myth, and is extremely self-conscious. If the characters try to joke with him, or if they get off on the wrong foot, he immediately orders them killed by his

loyal Gelochelis. If, however, they humbly beg for his help, he will bring them, blindfolded, to the portal.

The portal consists of a room lined by memorial stones and illuminated by flickering torches. The ceiling is inscribed with occult runes.

Before the characters are allowed to pass through the portal, they must pay tribute to Gelocheli. This takes the form of a wound which he inflicts on them with a not overly-clean carving knife (see table below).

The portal is controlled by the Dark Art (see the Kult rule book, 2nd edition). If the characters have brought an ally with these abilities, they can try to control where the portal opens within Metropolis. This should be done according to the skill rules, but the Game Master, if he so pleases, can screen the roll and then modify the result at will. If the characters have come unaided, Gelocheli will steer the portal any way he, (i. e. the GM), sees fit.

Table: Gelocheli's wounds

1	The wound heals normally
2-5	The wound heals, but leaves a scar that looks like an insect is hidden under the skin.
6-9	The wound never heals, but remains open, shedding pus for the rest of the character's life. But it will soon stop bleeding.
10-15	As above; the character gains +1 for all physical activities.
16-18	As above; gains +2 for all physical activities.
19	The wound mutates, leaving a second mouth. If unattended to, the mouth will later develop teeth, and then a windpipe. If it is still not attended, the mouth will start to speak, and the character gains +10 for every roll when something is trying to possess him. The mouth can be surgically removed. It takes 6-8 weeks to fully develop.
20	The character dies. No further rolls.

If a character makes use of the portal on several occasions, he will gain +3 each extra time. This is cumulative, i. e. the second attempt would gain the character +3 at 1D20, the third 3+3=6, etc...

This immense tunnel system leads from Elysium out into different worlds. But only the Gelochelis dare to visit its deepest levels. Not even the most demented homeless people travel beyond a certain point.

The Gelochelis are borderliners as described in the rule book, but their collective consciousness, through which they are controlled by Gelocheli, sets them apart as a group. Their instincts have been much impaired, even by borderliner standards. They lack even the instinct of self preservation, and they are unable to learn from their mistakes. They number somewhere between 50 and 150. They can perform simple duties, such as fetching things, attacking on command, or guarding a tunnel. In spite of their collective consciousness, they only coordinate their actions on Gelocheli's command. They are his eyes and ears throughout the underground system.

Gelocheli himself is a character of mythical stature in London. His name sometimes appears in song lyrics glorifying the use of drugs, where he takes on meaning as a symbol of the unknown or as a mystical messenger. At the mere mention of Gelocheli, the eyes of hardened alcoholics and drug-abusers pop open with fear. The official police story has discarded him as mere fiction, but a secret report is rumored to exist, in which the disappearances of ordinary people, and scores of homeless, is compiled to form a clear and frightening pattern.

Excerpt from secret police report, by police candidate Mark Fullerton, of London: 'Statistical analysis of disappearances in the London underground.'

Statistical Analysis of Disappearances in the London Underground

'The number of disappearances in the Greater London Area underground train system varies accordingly to noticeable changes in the C4 group (the most prominent group of derelicts). (See Appendix 4)

The number of substance abusers and permanently unemployed homeless decreased drastically by 10-15% without satisfactory reason. Dr. Webster's report on the 'Ursus' case provides new clues and suggests that parts of the Underground are inhabited by seriously disturbed individuals. Even for them, Ursus seems to have had a strong impact on their decisions, I quote: 'The patient has no will of his own. Brain functions are reduced to a primitive level (...) Inner voices give peremptory orders, which causes extreme anxiety(...).'

The name Gelocheli is mentioned respectfully by all the homeless and appears to verify Dr. Webster's conclusion of the final elimination of free will. Rumours among addicts confirm interview excerpts from Lewisham where rock musicians tell of human sacrifice in dark tunnels'

The Structure of Madness



Harry felt that he had been wandering the green tunnels for days, but he was far from certain. His infra-red glasses provided a sort of vision in the eternal darkness of the swampy tunnels, a vision of shimmering, dreamlike shades of green. The vaulted sewer-like walls and ceiling were covered in a dense mat of repulsive vegetation and organic waste, and the air, in which their stench had mingled, was as dense. A few days of aimless roaming had him quite convinced that his clothes - a linen suit and ordinary shoes - weren't up to this sort of thing. His festering feet were soaked in foul, sticky fluids. He knew there was no way to see danger

coming if his enemies had the sense to stick close to the walls.

The Geiger counter strapped to his hip began to chatter frantically. Contact! Something separated itself from the undergrowth and Harry fired. He couldn't make out the individual limbs of his attackers, but perceived them as perverse and grossly swollen vessels. Both his shots and the inhuman shrieks of the genetides rang out, vibrating through the tunnel. The creatures tried desperately to snare him with their cancerous growths. His special hollow-point bullets tore chunks from their abhorrent bodies. After a short, stiff fight, they had been reduced to pieces of reeking warm meat. The price, how-

ever, was the last of his bullets. He carefully scraped the genetides' radioactive secretions from his suit. Would there ever be an end to all this? he asked himself in despair.

Harry stumbled on, empty gun in hand. Suddenly, he was blinded by the green flash of daylight penetrating his IR glasses. He pushed the glasses away from his eyes and gazed anxiously out through the tunnel's exit. He had thought that he was at least a thousand feet below ground. The city still eluded him. In front of him lay a huge stretch of burning ruins, and the pungent smell of napalm and scorched flesh hung over the grounds.

The search for Rebecca was no longer of importance. His only concern was to keep himself alive just one more hour, one more minute, one more second... His hope had vanished with the last of his ammunition, and the sight of the remains of the genetides from the recent slaughter didn't exactly cheer him up. He feared that there were more to come, which would surely mean the end of him.

Harry had kicked cocaine a couple of years back, but now he was grateful for the few grams he carried in his pockets. The fields of Metropolis were hardly tempting to him, but to remain where he was could only mean certain death. Some fifty yards off was a fox-hole, obviously of sound construction as it was still intact. He decided to use its shelter for the coming hour and inhaled a line of the white powder to fortify himself for the dash. The short sprint over the urban debris made his body feel as though it were about to explode.

To his surprise he found that he was suddenly sitting perched close under the ceiling of a vast, damp and noisy industrial hall, chemical vapours pricking his nose. A steel ladder descended to the floor, which wasn't quite visible from up here. He pushed back

the infra-red lenses over his eyes, and through the now familiar shades of green, the vicious machinery appeared. He felt as if he was about to dive into a frozen lake. There was no way back, and no way to make up for a mistake. Still foolishly brave from the influence of the cocaine, he started his downward climb. Whatever he saw from the ladder was of no use to him. There were thunderous machines, emitting poisonous smoke; some of which was of an almost organic quality, thick veins traversing their hulls in which moist cavities opened and closed. Others looked as if they might claim seniority to a steam-engine: puffing, creaking: obvious death-traps. Despite the odd assemblage, everything adhered to a single working principle, which seemed strikingly simple but at the same time impossible to fathom.

Suddenly, he felt an icy metallic grip around one of his ankles. He was violently hurled from the ladder and landed hard on the steel floor. Harry turned his throbbing head to one side and spotted the techrone from the corner of his eye. The taste of blood and metal was in his mouth. The techrone's machinery was of perverse ingenuity - sporting sharp hooks and spinning saw-wheels, smeared in oil and dried blood, and the shrieking mechanism was now positioning itself to go to work on his writhing limbs. It was the metal insect's duty to eliminate anything that interfered with the Machine. The steel arms reached hungrily for his frail human body. The grip around his ankle tightened. Harry kicked out desperately and struck the creature's compact chest area. The impact had a staggering effect on the techrone. It started spraying him with small bits of chipped plastic, and he felt the grip around his ankle weaken. Sparks started to fly from the monster, and then it began to spew heavy smoke. Today's dissection was off, and Harry fled towards the strange, thundering machines.

Metropolis, mother of all cities. A never-ending throng where time and space are of no consequence; where the individual is reduced to Nothing but also grows into Everything. To us, snatched from our Elysium prison and suddenly confronted by these fragmentary, incoherent, absurd surroundings, there is no way to form an idea of Metropolis as a whole. Maybe there is no idea, or maybe it's an idea which our human faculties are unable to comprehend. The prime object, however, is to present this vision of absolute chaos to the players.

They mustn't think that anything here could be reduced to a map. Their visit to Metropolis should be a disconnected turmoil, where they are rushed between conflicting locations. One moment they are standing in

the Living City, then sneaking around in the Ruins, and, three steps later, stumbling through the Underground. Then take them back to the Living City, turn them in the same direction, and take them on a completely different tour...

If you find some of the following incidents a little too much to stomach, as most of them focus on death and destruction, we suggest that you let the resulting pain and anxiety of the characters form the pretext for a tear in the Illusion through which they can return to our own world. Or, at the last possible moment, suddenly change the scene: for example, from the Underground where the characters are ten seconds away from death at the hands of a razide, to the Living City where the greatest threat facing them is the rush-hour traffic...



The Living City

The Slum

The slum of the Living City is the part of Metropolis which is the easiest to reach, since it borders on the slums of every city in the world. The Living City is a mix of South Central Los Angeles, the Belfast ghetto, and the Kreuzenberg of Berlin, where rats, of every size and on four or two legs, have free reign. Violent gang fights, car

bombs and police attacks of ferocious brutality are everyday occurrences, but the average citizen, wasting his life in the dismal mists of the Living City doesn't even know that he should bemoan his own lot.

Though neither streets nor sidewalks are very busy, they resound with honking cars, cursing pedestrians and crying children - sounds that bounce between the dreary housefronts, adding

to the general atmosphere of despair. The few humanoid shapes, which now and then appear from the deep shadows of the houses and the ever-present sulphurous yellow smog, seem dull of soul and spirit, as if they were always performing some oppressive duty. Soon the characters will find that any sounds, smells or actions always seem to be on the other side of the street or just around the corner. Their immediate proximity is expressionless and dull, as if they were caught in the eye of a storm where only certain sounds can be perceived, which then take on an almost painful clarity. The gross crunching sounds coming from one end of the street, of casual passers-by stepping on a beggar can suddenly block out the opposing sounds of two rival gangs shooting it out with automatic weapons. The eye of the storm also reveals glimpses of the true form of Metropolis and its inhabitants. What in Elysium would seem to be two young lovers locked in a passionate embrace, here, in the Living City, are momentarily turned into two cannibals greedily munching on each others faces. The merchandise of our world's fruit stalls here are changed to severed babies' heads dripping with blood. The hideously transformed appearance of a traffic policeman will sometimes suddenly cause multiple collisions.

After a while, the conditions are reversed, and the characters are unable to register anything out of their closest surroundings. A mass killing across the street seems distant and irrelevant to them, and the police helicopter's threat to machine-gun a traffic jam unless it clears up is hardly noteworthy.

The average inhabitants of the Living City compare to a harrowed, weary-eyed flock of lemmings pushing along endless streets of dead or dying

beggars. They live in pathetic tenements where rats feed on their children. They work at stupid and degrading jobs, live lives of absolute hopelessness and drop dead in droves every morning at over-crowded bus stops and subway stations. They have hardly anything of interest to tell the characters. The heavy traffic of the main thoroughfares, which look like the German Autobahns, is wrapped in a thick blanket of suffocating exhaust fumes. The dark alleys and dreary back streets stink from garbage piled up everywhere. The back street inhabitants at first seem a little more accommodating than those on the main streets. This is merely because you're not standing close enough — after all, the average character represents at least a couple of day's worth of food...

The Bazaar

The Living City isn't strictly limited to a mix of western cities' seedy parts. It also contains numerous dubious bazaars, lending an eastern air to the place. There, with a little luck, the characters may pick up strange artifacts or useful information. The bazaars are very different from the rest of the Living City. Wailing police sirens and crackling Uzis slowly fade, giving into the eager shouts of a market crier or the anticipating buzz of a crowd gathering around a street juggler or mime. Every now and then you even catch people smiling, although it is probably from falsehood or greed. The characters hardly need to worry about how to make connections, the problem is rather how to meet someone undisturbed. At the bazaar, anything and anyone can be bought. The most valuable item is information, which they desperately need, and will soon be hearing offers right and left. There is no trouble finding well-maintained weapons of every kind and age,

THE MARLBORO BOY

Yasivar looks like a twelve-year-old Arabian boy, but in truth is 180 years old. He has escaped death by changing bodies every time it was his turn to be eradicated. He has found a hiding-place in the bazaar to avoid the dread Chronites of the Clockworks, who are constantly nipping at his heels. He tries to sell cigarettes and offers his services as a guide to the characters. He is an excellent guide, but demands payment in living flesh. If he is tricked, he will not hesitate to lead the characters into a trap.

even future ones. The weapons are all modified with organic features: the trigger may be a tongue, or when you look down the barrel, the barrel's eye may be looking back at you!

Most merchandise is weapons or drugs, but the bazaar also trades in sex and slaves.

Trench Town

The slum gradually merges into Trench Town, part of the Living City that can be reached from most cities of the Southern hemisphere. If possible, life is even harder here. Death squads and infectious disease both come to call at the small corrugated metal and cardboard shacks, and the physically transformed, almost savage inhabitants give literal meaning to the expression 'eat or be eaten.' A harsh, sickly-sweet smell emanates from the garbage, the excrement and body parts mixing with the mud in the streets to breed fat, glistening green flies.

The Garbage Dump

On the outskirts of this capital city of slavery and degradation lies the garbage dump. Here, the grossly deformed inhabitants - kicking, fighting, even eating each other - look only vaguely human. The children born to this place compare more to animals than humans, running on all fours and making pig-like noises over the vast expanse of trash. Every now and then the visiting characters will also confront the compostats: creatures of garbage who dwell deep within the mountain of waste.

The Industrial Site

The industrial site is a vast flatland of steel and concrete, which in spite of

its hammering machines, seems strangely desolate. The more humanoid inhabitants can be seen slinking into the tall factories in the early morning, to creep back from their long shadows in the late afternoons. But you won't see much of them during a tour of the premises, where most workers are lost in the smoke and darkness. Deals which can't bear the light of day go down in the friendly shadow of a towering crane. Stolen property is loaded or unloaded at the orders of brutal men with Uzi's. Many deals involve the Mafia, and are often settled with gunfire. The characters' safety could profit greatly from the following spoils.

Incidents

THE HOMELESS

The Bag Lady, who knows her place in Elysium and does not bother people of substance, here is a terrible pest who will fight the characters over a couple of recyclable beer cans which she thinks they have cheated her on. She grows openly hostile, grumbling about, 'The youth of today... My cans... no proper upbringing... have to EAT, don't I!?!' Suddenly, she grabs a lead pipe from the junk in her shopping cart and attacks the characters. The characters can:

- flee, followed by curses, bricks, and non-recyclable beer bottles.
- try to bargain with her; fail, and be attacked by the old woman along with a howling mob of her fellow sufferers, who, despite their frailty, can inflict serious injuries on the characters with their crutches, broken bottles, and sharpened screwdrivers.
- take the easy, violent way out, and simply shoot the unruly old lady. Then, her brethren (statistics according to weak Metropolis standards) rush out

screaming, drag her body to one side and divide the meat. If the characters misinterpret their screams and shoot into the mob, it only means more food for the survivors.

THE POLICE

As the characters dig deeper into the slum of the Living City, they are increasingly aware of the fact that everything is very wrong. Grotesque gargoyles seem to be sitting uncommonly low on the housefronts, and in strangely casual positions. They have pieces of cloth and meat stuck between the teeth of their gaping jaws. Some of the drainpipes are gushing blood, and an iron gate is crowned with rotting human heads: 'Beware!' Shop signs have been subtly changed to look anything but inviting. People move in fits and starts, hunched-up and nervous, terrified of any coming vehicle that might be the omnipotent, well-armed and paranoid police force. Soon enough, the characters hear wailing sirens, accompanied by sporadic gunfire which they had previously discounted as a stick-up or drug deal gone sour. Even if they duck into the nearest alley, the characters will still be picked out by the enormous police van's search lights. They hear a number of safetys click off and a frenzied voice comes through a loudspeaker crackling with distortion. It tells them to drop all weapons immediately, while the red dots of laser-sights play on the characters bodies. Then:

- the policemen (statistics according to strong Metropolis standards) try to force the characters into the van, where they proceed to manhandle, rob and strip them. The characters are finally left for dead in a ditch outside Trench Town.
- the policemen approach the characters with handcuffs and leg-irons, and

will later take them to the infernal chaos which they call their station for cross-examination. The characters know nothing about the incident they are being questioned about, and are therefore assumed to be guilty. But, finally, they are cleared of the charge and set free — the police, however, keeping all their money and valuables. If the characters were carrying weapons, these will, oddly enough, be returned: probably because they are infinitely inferior to the police's own weapons. The long wait for their cross-examination will be spent in a foul-smelling cell where the characters might possibly pick up some interesting information.

THE PUB

The characters find a pub which in spite of its decrepit exterior seems to be open, and they enter it for a drink and a bite to eat. If they have any cause for suspicion (i. e. they know that they are in a strange world) the characters will notice that all the other guests look nervous and peculiar, though not alarmingly so. They feel no more threatened than they might by any locals who mistrust strangers. Then, the menu comes...

THE GARBAGE SYMBIOSIS

The characters have entered one of Metropolis' seedy, stinking back streets, where people regard them with poorly disguised hunger in their eyes. Toothless oldtimers lick their gums, starving street people finger their carving knives, and the street quickly takes on an atmosphere of complete hostility.

At last, a wall of malnourished people armed with simple weapons forms between the characters and the comparative safety of the wider streets. The grey-faced cannibals are just about to tear and devour the characters, when a

mother compostat noisily approaches. Instantly, the man-eating derelicts flee in blind terror of the insatiable semi-organic creature, knowing that the grossly deformed compostats following in the wake of their mother creature will clean the street of everything – including the pedestrians. The compostats are trigger-happy, extremely aggressive, and absolutely death-defying in battle as they know that the mother compostat will provide them with a safe home in the event of death. If the characters manage to gun them down, the mother compostat will try to entice them telepathically to become her new symbiotes, and the characters must roll against her EGO to withstand it. If they fail, the characters will have free transportation on board the mother compostat, but they must constantly feed her. Failing this, they must once again roll

against her EGO to withstand the order to throw themselves into the grinding teeth of her incinerator.

BLOOD BATH

The characters have ended up in Trench Town. There is very little traffic in the filthy mess of the streets — mainly because of the heavily armed terrorists, pushers, and sex offenders who rule the territory. Most shacks wear traces of recent gunfire or arson, and from within them come screams of pain and shouts of lust as well as a few spine-chilling death howls. If the shacks have windows, their panes are almost certainly broken, and the few still intact are splattered brown with coagulated blood. Passing a comparatively unharmed house, the characters hear a chainsaw start. Then comes a terrible drawn-out shriek and the window is splattered with blood. Garbage cans as well as

buildings are frequently set on fire, and suddenly the characters must dive out of the street to avoid contact with a thundering armored police vehicle. Should the characters choose to delve into the chainsaw incident, they will confront a frightening, macabre sight in the above-mentioned house: four men grinning mockingly, covered in blood from head to foot, stand around the mangled remains of their victim. He was chained to the wall, where his arms still hang, while their severed owner writhes, screaming silently, in a growing pool of blood. Just as the characters enter the shack, the man with the chainsaw is expertly plowing a furrow in his victim's thigh. Hearing the intruders enter, he spins around and severs the entire leg. The four men waste no time on words; the characters must kill them or run, that is all. The victim



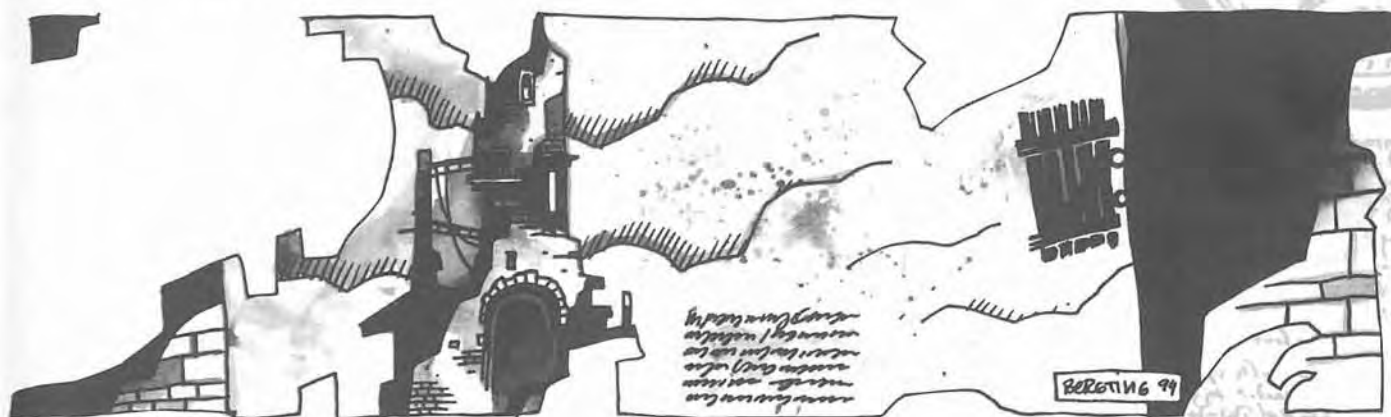
may, if the GM wishes, have something of interest to tell.

THE FATEFUL MAP

The characters enter a cellar which is dimly lit by candles and reeks of incense and mold. An elderly man with friendly features is comfortably seated behind a old rusty steel table. Along the walls, barely visible in the flickering candle light, sit some apelike creatures, the so-called servilians. The old man kindly invites the characters to share his meal, and magnanimously offers to help them solve their problems. The food is excellent, and their host assures them that he knows just the way to get wherever the characters might want to go. If the characters press for an explanation,

he will tell them that there is only one way and that he has a map of it, which he is willing to give away in return for a favor. The favor consists of putting an end to the miserable life he is forced to lead with his servilians. He explains that those loathsome apish creatures have kept him a prisoner in the cellar for ages, and that they will never leave him unless he dies. The characters can:

- shoot the man; who will collapse with a cackling laugh, saying that there is no map. Then, the apish creatures will attack without mercy.
- politely refuse; in which case their host, purple with anger, starts screaming profanities, telling them to get out before he kills them.



The Ruins

The Ruins are a desolate wilderness which includes wrecking yards, industrial and construction sites, harbors and a vast expanse of ruins. The impression of emptiness is exaggerated by the fact that everything seems to have been abandoned in a hurry. The light is still on in the little office building at the car dump, a large container still swings creakingly from a tall harbour crane. The fluorescent tube is sputtering its last over the half-drunk cups of coffee in one of the shacks on a construction

site, while the canvas of the scaffolds flaps like broken sails in the moaning wind.

Parts of the area look like the war-torn cityscape of Beirut or Sarajevo, where some buildings have collapsed completely, while vain attempts have been made to rebuild others. Exploding grenades and the dry rattle of machine-guns are commonly heard, but always at a distance. Scattered remnants of ancient buildings and old city walls suggest that there were once prouder and

Juha crouched in the shallow ditch across the street. A machine gun coughed from the tallest building in the vicinity. Fresh bodies lay strewn around the street, but he couldn't reach them. When he reached the safety of the concrete wall, he sat down. Juha knew he would have to wait out the sniper or die. He dug out three pills, swallowed them, and washed them down with a shot of Yugoslavian vodka.

He thought about the video with the rape scene, the one Matts and he used to watch in slow motion all day long. Four blond, Nordic men in UN uniforms sadistically defiled young, brittle, Moslem girls. But Juha didn't need to see the video. It was enough to close his eyes to feel and hear it all again. He'd had the leading role.

Juha read a book he had found: *Laterna Magica*. 'If I had given the City shape in my dreams, the Town that does not exist and yet manifests itself in sight, sound and smell, if I had given it shape I would have moved through it with impunity and domiciliary rights, and brought the viewer to a foreign yet secretly familiar world'. You're almost there, thought Juha. Almost...

better times. Far inside the colonnades you might spot some threadbare bums by the flickering light of their campfires, but this is probably as close as the characters will ever get to the inhabitants of these parts. Other humans (for example failed adventurers) have left plenty of traces — from which the characters might make useful additions to their equipment. Scavengers search the ruins, alone or in small groups, hoping to find a profitable corpse, but as a rule they will refrain from attacking the characters. The creatures in this part of the Ruins are usually perceived as fleeting shadows, a rustle on the gravel, and then, sudden deadly attack!

The characters may also be exposed to ruins like Berlin in 1945, in which the whole city has been ground down over stinking corpses into undulating fields of stone and concrete. Streets are no more, and travel is made more difficult by frequent cave-ins, giant bomb craters, and most of all by still frequent battles. In certain places the landscape changes from heaped rubble to a sooty black desert in which the occasional carbonized house points its accusing timbers at the leaden sky. On the outskirts of the stone ruins lie huge garbage dumps where gargantuan composts hide beneath the deep trash, and where the other inhabitants are often seen fighting over what little that can still be used or eaten. The characters could also visit car graveyards where lost souls fight tooth and nail to defend a makeshift home in a wrecked Buick. They see radioactive zones, and desolate salt deserts where the inhabitants are engaged in inexplicable tribal wars which date back to the days of their long forgotten civilizations. In these parts of the Ruins, where aggression is ever-present, death cries pierce the constant rumble of exploding

bombs, falling ruins and collapsing buildings.

Other areas are connected by bombed-out highways and falling bridges, or divided by barbed wire, mine fields and stretches of no man's land, where battles rage from muddy trenches. Apart from creatures of Metropolis origin, such as the wolveren and the ferocco, the characters will also encounter twisted versions of soldiers of every war known to mankind. All have the same ambition: to conquer or die. These troops are accompanied by savage *Einsätzers*, the sworn enemies of all living things. The Ruins also accommodate Salvadorian death squads, the private legions of Colombian drug lords, the Sicilian Mafia, Japanese Yakuza, all in different states of derangement. Having arrived in Metropolis by one means or another, these soldiers immediately staked out a territory, which they have been defending and viciously trying to expand ever since. They are organized into autonomous warring enclaves with feudal or utopian-socialistic structures focused exclusively on combat. These groups care little for land itself. War is its own reward to them. The other inhabitants live like urban hunter-gatherers to whom every stranger poses a deadly threat. No one wants to share what little can be found, and the best defense is offense.

Incidents

THE MONOLITHS

Randomly scattered in the wilderness of ruins, about a mile apart, are sculptured monoliths, which are dull black and about 35 feet tall. A peculiar sweet smell emanates from them. If the characters look closely enough (scoring a PER roll) they can make out human forms with agonized faces in the intricately carved relief. The monoliths

seem to have grown up out of a sticky black material in the ground, rather like carbonized wood. They are stickiest near the top, and grow less so further down. The sweet smell is slightly anaesthetic and will cause unconsciousness in about an hour's time (throw END, END -1, END -2, etc. every twenty minutes). When put to sleep, the character is grasped by 1D6 outgrowths (STR 2D6+6) and slowly hauled into the monolith (1D4 meters / hour) to be merged with it (an extremely painful process which lasts about 24 hours). The characters who are lucky with their PER rolls can help their afflicted friends by matching STR with the monolith.

MELTING STREET

Walking down a street the characters feel the ground getting hotter and hotter under their feet. Finally, it becomes unbearable and they must find refuge. They see that the melting tarmac is mixed with streams of lava oozing from deep within the earth. The melting process spreads and gradually extends over an entire block. The characters must act accordingly, moving through the ruins without touching the ground. Eventually, several buildings are undermined and cave in, but the melting process continues. The melted streets assume a dull black color and will never be entirely stable again, and the softened street surface now has spots which are like bottomless pits of quicksand.

THE RAZOTHS

Sooner or later the characters must duck for cover from a deadly troop of soldiers. They will find that they have just jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire. It so happens that the relatively intact cellar that they sheltered in is inhabited by a colony of razoths (numbers: PC+D6) - and these crea-

tures are very protective of their territory...

THE EARTHQUAKE RITUALS

The characters feel tremors in the earth, like a rhythmical series of minor earthquakes. If any of them scores on a PER roll, he will hear a faint chanting coming from a small open space up ahead. If the PER throw has been uncommonly successful, the character in question will also understand that the tremors emanate from this place.

(The characters have no way of knowing it, but some of the natural disasters of Elysium are created in the Ruins of Metropolis. In the open space in front of them a ragamuffin crowd is at work whipping up an earthquake in the part of Elysium which we know as southeast Turkey. The faint tremors that the characters perceived were the faint echoes of the preliminary quakes in our own world. By their strange rituals these creatures can create an earthquake which brings them human beings to eat. These people are later believed to have been swallowed up by the earth in the Elysium catastrophe.)

Twenty-four shaggy derelicts are lost in a trance, dancing around a stone altar in the square's center. They each carry a ten-foot shaft that looks like stone which is covered from top to bottom with magical symbols and intricate runes. The same runes and symbols are recreated in larger characters on the four wooden pillars supporting a roof over the stone altar. The dancers are circling the altar, chanting in rhythm while driving their stone shafts with uncanny precision into twenty-four holes in the ground. This explains the earlier tremors. The altar is shrouded with a cloud of images showing terrible visions of the Elysium disaster area. Behind the fluttering screen of rags hanging from the altar's roof sits a creature which at a

A quick sprint brought him beyond the machine gun's line of fire. There was the orphanage. The anti-tank grenade launcher that had been hampering him would come in handy now. He aimed at the coarse concrete building's supporting wall. He could dimly hear the sound of children singing. The muted pressure of the shot sent a wave of endorphins to Juha's brain. The wall crumbled. The children screamed. Everyone in the ruins were pasted against the walls or dying. He would grab a kid before the other rats in the neighborhood came looking for food. He was feeling hungry.

As the building of Metropolis neared completion, their hate had grown so strong that they did not hesitate to seek Astaroth, the Dark twin of their Lord. In his cold kingdom, Inferno, Astaroth performed a bloody and unholy rite, sacrificing his left ring finger, from which the Temptress sprang. The Archons returned to Metropolis to bide their time, but no longer dared to face the eyes of their Lord.

So the Temptress ensnared the Demiurge in her web and obscured his senses with pretty speech and sweet lies. Soon he was entirely in her power and followed her slightest whim, and no longer did he have eyes for his Creation. This was the beginning of the end for Mankind.

*Extract from Aguirre's
Genesis (Inner Cosmos
Publications, 1971)*

quick glance resembles a fireman with a smoke helmet. Scoring a PER roll, however, the characters will see that the helmet is really an armored skull, and the gas mask is the creature's fanged snout.

Characters who can see the creature's true features will also perceive its powerful magical aura, and must consequently throw for EGO. The shaman creature, which is chanting something in an odd and incomprehensible language, suddenly reaches its clawed fingers down into the altar which seems to be a large, elevated tub. As the twenty-four dancers drive their shafts into the ground one last time, it quickly empties the tub of D4+4 screaming and bleeding human beings. The creature proceeds to cut their throats and then throw the dying, jerking bodies back into the altar, which quickly fills with their blood. The shaman and the dancers jump at this food like starving animals, shredding the warm quivering bodies with their claws and teeth — and the characters must each score on an EGO roll to refrain

from crying out in terror or exposing themselves otherwise.

ALL-OUT WAR

The characters are in the scorched wastelands. No matter which way they turn, they can't see a living thing: only the desolate black desert, peppered here and there with a lonely carbonized

tree. But, isolated as they are, they suddenly hear the rattle of weapons, troops assembling and tanks being deployed. Suddenly, all hell breaks loose. Artillery fire mixes with the swish of arrow volleys; then comes a thunderous stampede of infantry. The characters find themselves caught in an infernal chaos of fighting men. Gradually becoming visible through the smoke, they appear to have come from all wars in military history. The soldiers can neither see nor hurt the characters, at least not physically. However, they are all perfect duplicates of the characters themselves. They keep killing each other in the most frightful, protracted ways, screaming, whining, moaning, cursing, over and over again. All troops are under the command of callous Einsatzers. The characters could:

- take active part in the battle, in which case they must kill their own duplicates and will be badly traumatized (the characters receive a new disadvantage) with, for instance, necrophobia or death wish, or according to the GM's choice.
- kill the Einsatzers, in which case their shadow replicas will be liberated and dissolve.

EINSÄTZER

The characters are suddenly transported from the ruins to a wide open space where they are met by a group of Einsatzers. These are forcing hundreds of innocents, threatening them with automatic weapons, to walk side by side across the field, which is mined. The Einsatzers then see the characters, and:

- force them to join the people in the minefield, which will mean certain death.
- receive them as brothers, offering the characters ten or so prisoners to 'play'

with (i.e. to mow down). If the characters refuse, the ruthless creatures will insist, until they finally give up on the characters' suitability and court-martial them instead.

- ignore the characters.

THE HUNTER

One of the characters suddenly hears rapid footsteps in the gravel behind him. Turning, he finds nobody there. This is repeated a couple of times, until the characters have had enough. They sneak back to settle it once and for all. And then:

- they are attacked by the Hunter, who captures and questions them.
- they manage to take the Hunter by surprise.
- the Hunter strikes from a concealed vantage point.
- the Hunter has already lost interest in the characters and left.

The Hunter is a former soldier of the French Foreign Legion (statistics of strong Metropolis standards) who ended up in Metropolis while on a mission in Tchad. He has wandered the Ruins as a lone survivalist ever since. He talks very fast, intensely, almost as if possessed, mixing angered outbursts of obscene profanities with disassociated fragments of gloom-and-doom poetry and even a few scattered lines about blissful love. He is at his most eloquent while fighting. He is extremely paranoid, and whatever the characters say, there is always a 30% chance that he will interpret it as hostility. If the characters understand this, and act accordingly, the Hunter could become an invaluable ally in the deadly Ruins. Otherwise he himself becomes as deadly. The hunter under no circumstances may be made to leave the Ruins.

ARTILLERY BARRAGE

A chilling chorus of shrieks wails overhead, and suddenly the ground is exploding all around the characters, throwing up giant cascades of dirt, stone and blood. The characters have not yet figured out that they have been caught in the middle of an artillery barrage. The characters who fail to throw PER in time to cover their ears will only hear the first explosions. Then, their ear-drums burst, and they can only feel the shock waves. Blood comes trickling from their ears, and they may have their hearing permanently impaired. Looking down the avenue of destruction, they see straight lines of bomb craters running on either side of them, stretching out towards the horizon in a series of new explosions. Close in their wake comes the infantry, driven on by the ever bloodthirsty Einsatzers, wearing a stink of death and decay like a nimbus of contempt for all living things.

The infantry men are armed with Mauser rifles, but make up for their old, clumsy weapons with ferocious aggressiveness. They will strike when within ten yards of the characters.

For a dénouement, the GM could choose to have it all fade away, like a bad dream, the characters having sustained no worse injuries than the burst eardrums. Or, if the GM would rather play out the incident, the characters could take refuge in a bomb crater. Blood will start to seep from the bottom. Soon there is a spurting fountain of blood filling the crater. Unless the characters leave it quickly, they must start treading the blood as if it were water. Then, one of them feels something grabbing his leg...

INSATIABLE HUNGER

Suddenly, the players are seized with unquenchable hunger or thirst.

'I have drunk a wine of snow / I love a woman of snow... You spew! The sweat under the tits of a soldier's whore is more manly than you! Wretch! Give me one good reason I shouldn't use you as a whore for my pit bull! The strokes of love have abated and they now sleep / but their secrets meet / as when two colors meet and flow together... In Algeria, at night, we'd slaughter Arab swine with our knives to save ammunition and time, heh-heh. F---ing c---t!

The Hunter's Monologue

Unless they score on an EGO roll, they are soon unable to think of anything but how to satisfy it. Alas, it can not be sated by any food or drink available, and the characters are driven away, half crazy, to look for more water or an edible creature. If the players have been stuck with a problem or a situation for too long, this could be a good way to get them moving again. After some aimless roving to satisfy their hunger, the GM can get them off to a fresh start in the scenario.

PERSECUTED

The characters have made it to the outskirts of an hellish war zone. They are just starting to unwind, thinking about their next step, when they discover a group of Einsatzers, stalking the grounds and killing all survivors. In true predator fashion, they begin with the easiest prey, and if any of the characters is wounded these savage creatures can instantly pick up the scent of his blood...



SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE

The houses of the street which the characters are walking down suddenly burst into flame. The characters are caught in a burning inferno from which there is only one way out. They must score an AGL roll to avoid being sucked into the blazing inferno, and an END roll to keep from suffocating.

THE CABLEWAY

The characters stand at the foot of a tall pillar that supports a cable. A few hundred yards away, the cable disappears into a mysterious mist. If the characters climb the pillar, an old tarnished cable car comes creaking down the line to stop at their feet. Inside the car, the characters face a terrible sight: the walls are covered with blood and excrement, and the seats and floor are littered with pieces of torn clothing and tufts of hair. The stainless steel exterior and plexi-glass windows are clawed and scraped with ominous occult symbols, and there seems to have been abortive attempts to write something in blood. If the characters can brave the sight and smell, the cableway car will take them back to Elysium, to a long abandoned and defunct elevator in the Oslobodenje building in Sarajevo. Intense suffering in the war-torn city has torn a rip in the Illusion, paradoxically enough at the Oslobodenje, the newspaper which has become a worldwide symbol of hope. The tear is a one-way street, leading only from Metropolis to Sarajevo.

The characters have ended up in the civil war of the former Yugoslavia. Roll a D20 every five minutes, and if numbers 1 or 2 come up, a sniper, using a Dragonov Sniper's rifle FV 12, has discovered them. The atmosphere in Sarajevo is tense with fear. The GM should use any convenient crisis (as for instance, the bombing of a bread line)

to send the characters back to the Ruins of Metropolis. If you think that the characters have stayed there long enough, you could continue the adventure in our world by having the characters grease some palms to bribe their way onto a UN flight out of Sarajevo.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

The tarmac road on which the characters are travelling suddenly opens up onto a vast, even surface as slippery as ice. It turns out to be a giant disc of green marble. If they have been riding in any kind of vehicle, the driver must score Drive Car with a +5 modification to avoid a skidding and crashing. If not, the characters must achieve an AGL roll every ten yards to keep on their feet. If the characters examine the surface, they will discover a subtle yellow pattern of queer, interweaving spirals, converging at the disc's centre.

The detail of the pattern is so fine that the characters must use a magnifying glass to determine that it is actually a written text. Any character who studies the text (and scores on an EGO roll), will make out some or all of its meaning. If he achieves a Very Good or better EGO effect, the GM reads them all of the text; in case of a Good or Normal effect every second word is skipped, and of an Acceptable effect every third word. In case of a Bad effect, the GM reads them every third word. (If the GM thinks that the players should not be informed about the world in which their characters live, he should skip this part altogether.)

THE TARMAC SWAMP

The street grows soft under the characters' feet, and a nauseating stench like rotten eggs overwhelms them. Gently rocking, the street slowly dissolves into a stinking swamp, leaving only a few patches of intact tarmac to walk on. Circles appear on the swamp's surface, followed by a cluster of bubbles, which, bursting in a leisurely fashion, prove to be filled with gas. A path of spinning cogwheels appears, rising out of the marsh, only to sink back again. Then the street gradually resumes its old form, and the characters may travel on.

THE FAIRY RING


Ahead of the characters on the cobbled street is a macabre ring of human heads. The heads, which look as if they have been scorched by a blowtorch, alternately

beg for mercy and pray for help. If the characters try to dig one of the heads of the street, they discover that it grows from a green, foul-smelling, pulsating pupae. The pupae bursts, spilling a filthy mess of

gore, white worms, and a darkish pulsating mass onto the street. There it settles in small stinking puddles in between the cobbled stones. The other heads instantly stop talking. They shoot their long, split bluish tongues out into the mess. The tongues clash and twist around each other, eagerly trying to get the best parts. All this time the mouths are squealing inarticulately. From the now almost empty

In
the beginning, the
Demiurge created Metropolis.
And Creation was empty and desolate,
and darkness hung over the abyss,
and the spirit of the Demiurge floated above it.
And the Demiurge said: (...) So the Demiurge put Man in Metropolis
to build and care for the City for him. (...) And Man was as the Demiurge,
and the Demiurge was as Man, and all was good
(...) But the Demiurge was mared in the web of the Temptress
and lured to send Man into exile from Metropolis,
to Elysium, the prison that was created for him.

The text on the marble disc.



pupae emerges a pair of chubby baby's limbs, followed by its body. The head is malformed, having neither nose nor mouth. Instead of a throat, it has an open hole through which it breathes, and behind the gory eye-sockets you glimpse a cluster of brain fibre with lumps of tissue jerking spasmodically.

LIEUTENANT DIDEROT

Lieutenant Diderot commands a 1916 French platoon of seventeen infantry soldiers which were lost in the trenches of Verdun, following a German artillery attack, and ended up in Metropolis. Ever since, they have been fighting to survive in this even grimmer world. The constant battle and danger have hardened the men into callous killing machines, who have long given up hope of ever seeing their families again. The slightly deranged Lieutenant Diderot, however, is working on a plan to bring his men back home from this hostile wasteland. His plan involves a sudden attack on the giant black palace which looms on the horizon whenever the battle is at its fiercest. The platoon is always on the alert and is most suspicious of strangers. The soldiers can, however, be won over with liquor, chocolate, cigarettes, or other such things which have long been absent

Excerpt of volunteer LSD experiment cross-examination report, CDC, 1969

Cross-examination Report

'I stood in a smoldering landscape of ruins. I saw whole blocks on fire, but couldn't hear a sound. It was like a silent movie. Then came the sound. Roaring blazes, machine-gun fire, explosions. There was not only noise, but a stench. It stank terribly. The stench of dead bodies. Then I saw them little children laughing My God, they laughed, laughed and danced around the poor crucified bastards, who burned and howled And Oh God, they tore them to shreds fought for the pieces like animals They ate them up'

Volunteer soldier following LSD experiment, U.S. Medical Corps.

from their rations. They are always grateful for news or gossip from home, in exchange for which they will pass on helpful hints on how to survive in the Ruins. But there is very little to eat in this part of the world, and the platoon has already had to sacrifice several men to feed the others. A careless stranger always runs the risk of ending up on the mess-table, although Lieutenant Diderot is trying desperately to keep up the shattered morale of his men.

PIER 38

Pier 38 is a mile-long structure of cracked concrete, jutting out into the desolate harbour of a dark and oily sea. A thick fog blurs the silhouettes of giant tankers, tall cranes and towering steel constructions creaking in the cold wind from the open sea. The sharp smell of noxious chemicals combines with rotting algae and the smoke of sputtering fires. Sometimes the silence is broken by a wailing foghorn, a bird's coarse cry, or the brief, sharp rattle of gunfire.

At the far end of the pier stands a tall lighthouse. There lives the gruesome creature known to the dock dwellers as 'the Watchman.' From the lighthouse this creature sends out false signals which attracts ships to run aground on the harbour's shallow reef hidden by the dark waters. When it succeeds, the Watchman invites the surviving crew to the lighthouse, where they are killed for use either as food or undead slaves, or as sacrifices to the Black Madonna. The lighthouse is equipped with sophisticated technology, and the Watchman's signals can reach Elysium, Inferno and Limbo, and, perhaps, a score of other alternate realities which we have yet to discover. The sea beyond the harbor borders on many worlds, and a ship whose planned destination is the Persian Gulf may well end up in the Primal Sea of Metropolis.

Kuult



The Underground

Excerpt from *Arcanum Metropoli*.

The characters are feeling their way through dilapidated subway tunnels, sparsely lit by a few flickering lamps and the occasional sparks which fly from short-circuited couplings and loose cables. Without warning, the tunnel fills with blinding lights and spine-chilling wails, as a Metromorte comes thundering down the warped tracks. Tunnel dwellers struck by the vicious jaws or whipping tail of a Metromorte train are unceremoniously dragged into side tunnels or other hidden recesses to be devoured by their surviving neighbors. The inevitable fight over leftovers is sometimes carried on for so long that the combatants fall prey to the next Metromorte. At the most irregular intervals, the tunnels open onto seemingly endless platforms, where the walls, covered by a disgusting sludge of fungus and sewer water, seem just about ready to cave in. The stale, unventilated air carries the atonal, arhythmic sounds of a deranged symphony performed by a creature of mocking mien — a Harmonide — the Metropolis equivalent of a busker.


The tunnels at any moment may unexpectedly change into sewers dripping with dampness, where strange elusive creatures, easily mistaken for surg-

ing waves, swim in the foul oils of the slowly floating water. Where squatting forms sit around small campfires, their malformed bodies never seen closely — or if they were, it would be the last thing the characters ever saw in their lives. These waters, thick with excrement and floating body parts, is the Fekküzers' mating place: a place which no one in his right mind would willingly enter.

The Underground also contains vast echoing caves where towering stacks of leaking canisters of radioactive waste stand dripping with poisonous liquids, reaching for a ceiling which would escape even the strongest beacon. The creatures of these caves have been so radically transformed that it would be a lie to call them human — although they were probably born as such. These genetides, hateful and aggressive will attack anything that moves. Catching a trespasser, the genetides will wrap their sticky tentacles around their victim, who will then experience incredible pain while the creature dissolves his insides and drains him of all bodily fluids. The genetides, which do not eat but sustain themselves on radiation, analyze the prisoner's DNA, which they hope will help them mutate back into their original human form. In Elysium, people

'A maze of tunnels, holes and huge caverns, both natural and artificial. An abode of death — living death'

Extract from Arcanum Metropoli



of sufficiently low mental balance can spot genetides in places of high background radiation, such as Three Mile Island, Sellafield, Tchernobyl, and some of the Pacific Islands. The genetides also flay and dissect cancer patients, looking for clues to their genetic heritage.

The genetides have long been involved in a bitter war against a race of burnt-out, physically transformed soldiers from the American, Russian, French, Chinese and Indian armies. In the 1950's and 60's, these soldiers were used as guinea pigs to determine how the human body is affected by the radiation from atomic explosions. The pain and anxiety those men experienced many years later, when they lay dying of cancer, threw them back in time to the radioactive Underground of Metropolis. There, they were transformed into the radiakks. Since then, some have started to transform into genetides. This has probably contributed to their bitter hatred of that race, representing to them their own fate. Soldiers from an American unit which contaminated the countryside of Vietnam with Agent Orange are the most transformed. Their heads and arms have sprouted such a rich vegetation of branching flesh that it covers their helmets and weapons, which are now an integral part of their bodies. These so-called agentii will attack the characters out of hateful envy for their normal bodies.

The Metropolis Underground is a battlefield for all the subhuman soldiers who have organized into rival clans fighting each other in riotous wars where yesterday's ally is today's enemy. Sometimes they are united against the genetides, in spite of their different interests and nationalities, under the leadership of their terrible Commander-in-Chief. Even when fighting the common enemy, these men may turn against

their brothers-in-arms. The Military Base – a space which they grudgingly share – is an immense complex of service and logistic tunnels converging at a missile silo. The five main tunnels interconnect through a series of sub-tunnels, showing the tell-tale signs of violent battle. In some places, the walls and floor have holes dug out, opening on yet another sub-system of tunnels, which is used for ambushes. Scattered throughout the tunnel system, seemingly at random, are guard posts. Machineguns are triggered by motion sensors, surveillance cameras, and surrounded by more or less automated minefields. Everything is tarnished, broken, or badly repaired, dirty, sooty, bloody, and in a state of decay. The soldiers themselves, in spite of the cadaverous discipline of the dreaded Commander-in-Chief, are little more than a loose bunch of paranoid killers in blood-covered rags. Discipline means only that a large number of soldiers are shot in the neck or crucified every day. Sporadic gunfire, death cries and detonations are heard from far off. The moans of a crucified soldier echo through the dark tunnels. Here and there lies a smouldering body caught by a flamethrower. Then a motion sensor is activated, firing a round of bullets into a section of the tunnel.

Dreary, dark, narrow catacombs where the unventilated air is pungent with the smell of dirt and mold and rotting death: on such a land the City of the Dead was built. Most of the catacombs are narrow passages between the grave chambers' niches, which seem to lead nowhere but deeper into the catacombs. The tunnels are divided and redivided into a hopeless tangling chaos which could never be mapped. But here and there, up the dusty stones of a narrow, winding staircase, you will find the way to the City of the Dead.

In the darkest depths are abandoned tunnels, which could be of either ancient or modern date. Mine shafts, cold as ice, slowly turn into tunnels of almost organic matter, bringing intestinal canals uncomfortably close to mind. The slowly pulsating, swamp-like halls open on the hatching nest of the razides, its walls and ceiling of a gently flowing fluorescent leathery texture.

Incidents

THE GENETIDES ATTACK

The characters are ambushed by D6 genetides, which try to snare them in their long, sticky tentacles. The genetides will fight to the death, or until they have caught D3 characters. In this case the fortunate ones will withdraw with their prey, while the other genetides delay the remaining characters. The only chance to save the captured characters is to kill the genetide rear-guard and free the prisoners within D6 minutes before their captors have time to dissolve and drain their bodies. The genetides who have snared their victims are too engrossed in this process to put up resistance, but they must be killed before the characters can be freed.

THE TEMPLE OF THE SEEKERS

The characters hear a monotonous mumbling sound coming from around a corner of the winding sewers. The sound rises and falls with no correlation to the characters' progress, as if it came from everywhere at once. Every now and then the characters glimpse a light shining from the end of a tunnel, but it has always gone out when they get there. Then, at a tunnel crossing about twenty yards off, a group of ragamuffin shapes appears slowly circling a fire and chanting in rythm. The vision just as suddenly disappears, but when the

characters reach the crossing they still feel the warmth from the campfire. Before they have time for further discoveries, they are attacked by D20 seekers...

THE FEKKÜZERS' LAIR


Far down in the stinking sewers of the Underground, two tunnels converge in a lake of human waste. The thick liquid sludge is ringed by piles of rotting body parts and pale yellow bones. This is the Fekküzers' mating place.

These loathsome parasites can possess individual parts of a human body — arms, legs or head — and summon them down into this pool of sludge, where they begin their mating game. The center of the lake becomes a stinking turmoil of frantically shaking limbs, sending out ripples in circles over the unclean surface to the shores. Here and there float body parts which have been discarded, and which will later merge with the growing embankments.

The stench is so utterly abominable even a hundred yards off that the characters must score on an END roll to be able to continue. The END effect must then be upgraded by 1 for every twentieth step they take. If the GM scores 1-10 with a D20, a throw to be modified with -1 for every twenty steps, the characters are attacked by PC's numbers + 1D6 fekküzers.

THE RAZIDES' NESTS

The characters have reached the farthest, darkest and most lifeless region of the Underground, which borders on Inferno. In this icy world of shadows you might stumble into the hatching nests of the razides. These are low-ceilinged, bare rooms, the floors knee-deep with cloudy water, where the black leathery eggs, glowing fluorescently, lend the nests a spooky blueish tint. The eggs are faintly pulsing, the



translucent shells each revealing a moving embryo inside. The embryos will develop into larvae, a kind of black, wormlike creature which hunts in the earth between our world and Metropolis. These will later develop into full-grown razides.

When the characters enter the nest, D8 embryos react by bursting from their shells to fly at the characters, and these are assisted by D6 larvae which are hiding in the dirty water. Squealing high-pitched sounds pierce the characters' ears, while mouths with razor-sharp teeth lunge for their throats. The creatures will attack until the characters have been devoured, after which they turn on the weakest of their own species, then finally stream out of the nest to hunt for new prey. If the characters try to run, the creatures will follow for D4 minutes and then give up. Please note that the larvae can pass straight through dead matter: only living organisms, such as the characters, will stop them...

FUMBLING CORPSES

The dull mutter of distant voices grows stronger as the characters make their way through the catacombs. Finally, they are surrounded by a buzz of conflicting voices in different languages spoken with increasing agitation, and no visible source. Without warning, 3D6+4 knotty skeleton hands reach out for the characters from behind the surface of the suddenly pliable dirt walls. 1D6+6 grinning skulls press up against the membranous surface, quickly withdraw and then reappear, as if they were looking for something. Suddenly, the surface bursts and, fast as lightning, a multitude of skeleton arms crash through grabbing for the nearest character (D6 skeletons per PC). Those who cannot escape their chilly grip are brutally hauled back into the

darkness behind the dangling shreds of what was once a dirt wall. If the remaining characters wish to save their unfortunate friends, they must match their STR with that of the skeleton arms', which is 3D6+8. If the rescue succeeds, the characters must fight their way back. If it fails, the desperate screams of their friends suddenly stop. There follows a sick, wet, smacking sound which is soon explained when the victims are thrown back, bone by bone, into the dark tunnel.

OPERATION OVUM

The characters find themselves in a giant cave, surrounded by hundreds of soldiers who take no notice of them, but continue to talk together in small groups in low murmuring voices. Before the characters have time to examine their strange surroundings or the peculiar disinterest of their new neighbors, a bald man, in his mid-fifties with a scrofulous face, marches swiftly up in front of the lounging troops, who leap to their feet in stiff and breathless attention. The last soldier on his feet receives a sharp blow from the newcomer's riding crop, drawing blood from his face. Still, not a word has been uttered. The bald man is a living parody of military decoration. Except for numerous dark stains, his uniform would fit right into any cheap operetta. His disfigured face and the undisguised pleasure he takes in meting out punishment lends the showy pomp of his uniform an air of singular repulsiveness.

The fearsome man delivers a short, thunderous speech about the coming glory on the battle field, and then dismisses his troops with a contemptuous wave of his hand. Within ten seconds every soldier is gone, and the characters are left in the discomforting presence of the Commander-in-Chief and a few heavily armed members of his private

Guard. The Commander orders the characters to be at ease, and, in a breathtakingly rapid gush of words, starts to brief them about an upcoming mission. His mental faculties – and his mental balance – are extremely low, as is evident not only because he mistakes the characters for his soldiers but from the detached way in which he views his surroundings. During the briefing, he points to a bare stone wall, obviously convinced that he is pointing at a map. The characters have no trouble recognizing the ‘map’ as scattered bits of brain from a soldier at the Commander’s feet — a soldier whose head has been blown to pieces.

The Commander will not take no for an answer, and he will describe in great detail the punishment should the characters refuse his mission. If the characters persist, in spite of his threats, their memories of the crucified soldiers in the tunnels, and the four gun-laden, psychotic, smiling guards — all hell breaks loose! His mouth becomes a fountain of splattering saliva, his sounds of his voice range from the snorts of a raging bull to a hysterical falsetto, and he tears into the characters with his riding-crop. This is the last chance for the characters to change their minds, before they make a lifelong enemy of the Commander. If they still refuse the mission, they are better off running, rather than facing a fire-fight which they have virtually no chance to survive. The Commander will send his men after them, and they will pin the characters between their ranks in a narrow section of tunnel. An average PER roll will reveal a secret sub-tunnel hidden behind a pile of oil drums. If they choose to make their escape through it, they will unwittingly have just started on the very mission they were trying to avoid.

If the characters accept, or pretend to accept the mission, the psychotic Commander-in-Chief will go through his rambling incoherent briefing once more:

‘Far below lie the remains of a dead civilization, the city of Ktonor. Your mission is to scout the terrain. If possible, avoid all contact with any life forms. Mission’s object: to establish the military strength of such life forms, if any exist. Group leader to sign for necessary equipment from cache 14. Repeat!’

‘Any questions? Excellent. Dismissed!’

His tone of voice makes clear that the Commander not only expects no questions from the characters, but would be furious should they really have the nerve to ask any. The place he speaks of is not really Ktonor. Unknown to him or the characters, it is the hatching nest of the razides.

Having received their orders, the characters are whisked away to the cache where they are equipped with weapons and ammunition. As soon as they have signed for it, they are brought to the tunnel which leads to the ‘city of Ktonor.’ The characters are given no time for questions or preparations. They receive a curt ‘Good luck’ from the Commander-in-Chief, before they are pushed into a gaping hole into the deep unknown.

They go down through a rough, narrow tunnel dug out during the clan wars, which ends after a couple of hundred yards. A man-sized hole leads downward. Squeezing themselves through the hole, the characters enter an altogether different kind of tunnel. The walls, floor and ceiling are extremely clean and all surfaces meet at absolute right angles. A chilly breeze blows past the characters, up the slanti-

ng tunnel, sending a shiver down their spines. If they try escaping the mission by taking the way upwards, they will reach a giant locked door, which they can neither pick nor break, since it was designed to thwart far greater powers than theirs. They have no choice but to return back down. When they reach the place where they entered, they find the man-sized hole blocked by an oil drum. Attempts to remove it will be unavailing. There is only one way out...

Grail [gre'il] or [gra'al], of uncertain origin (poss. late latin *cratulis*, drinking vessel), first appears in literature in Chretien de Troyes (q.v.) *Conte Del Graal* (ca. 1180). The tale concerns a precious if mysterious bowl, the G., to which many wonderful qualities are attributed. It is uncertain whether Chretien himself invented the tale or if he culled the subject elsewhere (possibly from an Oriental story). Robert de Baron's (early 13th c., probably English) interpretation of the G. was decisive for all subsequent poets. To his mind, the G. was the vessel in which Christ and his disciples had taken communion, and in which Joseph of Aramathea caught the Savior's blood. Joseph's brother-in-law Bron brought it to England. The hero Percival, who was designated as the keeper of the G. and in some poems ended up as Grail King, descended from the tribe of Bron. The G. was said to be kept on Monsalvat where it was guarded as a miracle-working relic. The Grail novels were gradually endowed with a new quality. The chivalrous spirit of Chretien de Troyes was abandoned for a more ascetic direction. Love was perceived as a temptation, and knights errant now sought the G., which only the most chaste and severe was worthy to have under his protection. In the Middle Ages, a whole series of poems to this effect appeared, notably the prose novel *La Queste du Graal* (13th c.) and Wolfram, von Eschenbach's (q.v.) great symbolic/romantic epic *Parsifal*. The story was most popular in England and even reached Iceland. A renowned adaptation to musical drama is Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*. Familiar too is Tennyson's *Holy Grail* (in *Idylls of the King*, 1869). In Sweden, Fröding's poem *Sagan om Gral* is notable. Q.v. article on Briton novels; A. Nutt *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail* (1888); Newell *The Legend of the Holy Grail* (1902); L.E. Iselin *Der Morgenländische Ursprung der Grallegende* (1909); L. von Schroeder *Die Wurzeln der Sage vom Heiligen Gral* (1910) and W. Golther *Parzifal in der Dichtung des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (1925). J.M.

The farther down the tunnel they go, the colder it gets. Finally, the cold is almost unbearable. Whatever life they may have encountered on their way down is gone now. The characters have an uneasy impression that nothing ever changes down here. It is the end - utter death.

Moving on, the characters become aware that they must be approaching some sort of life again. Still, the feeling of a crushing fate pressing down on their minds persists. They are approaching organisms so rigidly controlled that they defy the very concept of life. They are approaching the hatching nests of the razides.

If the characters are careful, they may be able to sneak up undetected and peek into a low, square room knee-deep in muddy water. The room is full of black eggs, 5-10 inches in diameter, which emit a strange light which lends the walls and ceiling a chilly blue hue which is reflected in the water. The black, leathery, semi-transparent shells contain the vague moving forms of embryos. At the far end of the room stands a lone razide, its back to the door, nursing the eggs. From a hole in the center of the floor comes a pale light. To anyone who scores with a PER roll, it also emits a faint, monotonous roaring sound, as if from distant motors. The sound seems familiar, but the characters can't quite place it. Any character who hears it must succeed with an EGO roll to resist being lulled by these domestic sounds.

The eggs just inside the door have already been hatched. They look like basketballs of black flesh which have burst from within: perhaps some recent visitor posed an irresistible temptation, which was promptly yielded to. A stripped skeleton, barely discernible through the foul water, would suggest

so. If the characters awaken the other D6 embryos, these will burst out of their shells to attack, assisted by D3 larvae which lurk beneath the water, and finally also by the fully grown razide nurse (see chapter 'Inferno' in Kult for a closer description of razides). If the characters lacked the foresight to requisition a flamethrower from the Commander-in-Chief's cache, they had better run. If they are discovered by the fully grown razide first, this increases their chance of making a getaway. Should they try to kill this creature instead, it will bring the embryos and larvae into action within D6 CR.

If the characters manage to destroy all their foes, they may examine the nest. But they will experience severe unease: feelings both claustrophobic and agoraphobic. While in inside the nest they must roll for EGO every other minute to keep their nerve.

A staircase leads down from the hole in the floor's center. The feelings of unease will yield to the light and sounds coming from it, and the characters will feel a strange attraction to the hole. A small triangular room awaits them at the bottom of the stairs. Here, in each corner, stand three man-sized versions of the razides' eggs. One of the eggs emits the familiar sounds that can now be identified as the noise of city traffic. The room is illuminated by a light which emanates from a golden cup next to one of the silent eggs. Approaching the cup, the characters will experience a growing feeling of security. Any character who lifts the cup will have a vision of the Last Communion. This ought to be food for thought. The vision will also suggest that the three eggs are portals to other worlds, and the character will be strongly inclined to try the egg next to the cup. Only an EGO roll of normal

According to Christian tradition, the Grail was the chalice used by Christ at the last supper and in which Joseph of Aramathea collected his blood from the cross. The Greeks spoke of *crater*, the cup in which the matter of Creation was formed. The Sufi Moslems saw the chalice as the cup of Jamshi, containing divine knowledge and inspiration. All these are exact and refer to the same chalice: The Holy Grail. In an incunabula that I stole from the Vatican library, I found the following fragment: 'Grail was sought by many a valiant man at the court of... All were slain. Without this key to... one of the seven... secrets not meant for mortals... clammy womb under... the age-old city...' The section quoted in the book is Bliheris' now lost manuscript on the Grail. The text clearly indicates that the Grail is in the catacombs under Rome. The authorities do not admit visitors due to the risk of cave-ins, but hundreds of men work secretly underground for nights on end. I have myself been subjected to pressure, and...'

effect can keep him from taking the plunge. The third egg beats with a faint and regular pulse.

The eggs are actually portals, but the one with the cup will not lead to Elysium, but rather to Inferno! The pulsing egg leads back to the Underground of Metropolis, although to a higher level. Through the remaining egg, that of the traffic sounds, the characters will enter a grave-vault beneath a church in a city of the GM's choice. All portals are one-way streets.

If the characters decide to return to the cave and the Commander-in-Chief, the oil drum will still be blocking the hole leading upward. This time the characters can pierce the barrel, which will soon drain and can be easily moved. Returning to the base, they find it deserted.

Excerpt from Andrej Dworkin's book 'The Holy Grail and the Jewish-Bolshevik Conspiracy.'



The Labyrinth

The Labyrinth of Metropolis is a crazy quilt of steel, glass and concrete buildings, merging into each other like a giant architectural game of pick-up sticks. The concepts of up and down are wasted in the Labyrinth, where you walk down the cellar stairs of one house into the attic of another. The area is not just a labyrinth in a physical sense, but a mental maze of constant change. The characters move through a nightmarish landscape where nothing remains the same for long. A narrow hallway leading through an attic ten steps later has turned into a vast furnace-like chamber and a never-ending staircase. Then abruptly it resumes its original shape. The characters don't need to be moving to experience these changes.

The Labyrinth dwellers exhibit the same chameleon personalities, which may account for the wars between clashing factions of almost interchangeable friends and enemies. The characters may confront a seemingly friendly person, who sincerely offers them his help. Ten seconds later, he may attack them with murderous intent. A raging beast suddenly turns into the personification of peace and volunteers a password, a missing piece of map, or some-

thing else of value to the characters. The Labyrinth is a scary, unpredictable place, in which the advantage of Empathy is absolutely wasted.

Daylight is seldom seen in the Labyrinth, and then only indirectly, as through a window opening onto an atrium. The characters must make their way through conflicting or never-ending hallways with the impersonal decrepitude of a deserted civil service department. There are elevators which open far down in the Underground, cellars where long badly lit hallways, damaged by damp, run between storerooms and odd nooks; over-sized furnace rooms; endless staircases and defunct elevators; service passages; ventilator shafts; and immense underground parking garages; not to mention fire escapes to nowhere and endless expanses of roofs. Along the way, they see evidence of confused battles between various factions of Labyrinth dwellers: dead bodies, puddles of blood, and abandoned, useless weapons.

The Labyrinth proper of Metropolis is only an extension of the infinite maze which encompasses the whole city, sealing its borders to Elysium, Inferno and Limbo. In past ages, when the Illusion was still intact, the Labyrinth

was the only way through to Metropolis. Its enigmatic structure would only allow passage to the most powerful creatures. Now the Machine is falling to pieces, the Demiurge is gone and the Illusion is coming undone, and more and more of the uninitiated or previously incapable are coming through.

Incidents

THE AZGHOUL

Absolutely without warning, the room around the characters dissolves, and they find themselves inside an enormous furnace chamber with three roaring incinerators. In one corner stands a steel cage with peeling black paint. It is shut with a giant padlock. Inside the cage sit D20 terrified children, skinny, pathetic, and extremely dirty. The children are so dazed with fear and exhaustion that the characters have less than a 20% chance of getting their attention. If they actually manage to convince any of the children of their good intentions, they will get little else from them but a few whimpering sounds and shaky fingers indicating the center incinerator. If the characters examine this furnace closely, they will find a large black key on top of it — apparently the key to the padlock.

D20 CR after the characters have entered the furnace room, they hear crying, wailing sounds coming through the open door. An azghoul enters, carrying a desperately struggling child under each arm. The azghoul is too preoccupied with its burden to notice the characters, providing that they keep quiet. The azghoul throws the two children into the central incinerator, then shoots a quick glance at the cage. If the characters haven't hidden by then, the creature attacks viciously. If they have, the azghoul turns back to the incinerator —

now resounding with agonized screams from the burning children — and reaches for the key. If the key is still there, it goes to the cage and opens it, pulling out two more children. If not, the creature screams with anger and starts to search for it through the vast chamber. If it finds the characters within D20 CR, it will still be so angry that it gets two extra attacks, but it also totally lacks its defense.


If the characters can open the cage, free the children and take them away in less than D20 CR, they will stay absolutely clear of the azghoul. Otherwise, they must kill the azghoul to free the children. If the azghoul wins, it will chain the characters to the wall and make them watch, while, one by one, it slowly beats the children to death, then throws them into the incinerator. Then it is the characters turn... The azghoul has barely started on the first one, when a sudden change comes over it. Politely bowing, it backs out of the furnace chamber.

THE CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The characters have entered the seemingly endless halls and corridors of a civil service department. At first nothing seems unusual, except perhaps the vastly exaggerated proportions of the rooms. But they soon become aware of far stranger things than 300 foot-ceilings and twenty-mile long hallways. In the cold flickering light of the fluorescent tubes, the receptionists and passing administrators momentarily seem to change: a smiling female secretary is transformed suddenly to a razide who laughs mockingly, and the Head of Department sits rotting at his desk, an undead corpse...

SCHUTZENPANZERWAGEN

The characters enter an even shab-



bier portion of the Labyrinth, consisting of strangely folded brick walls, which are impossible to navigate. In places, behind heaps of collapsed bricks, the walls open into dark holes leading to strange worlds. The air is hard to breathe, and the apparent lack of progress should greatly frustrate the characters. Suddenly they reach a room, the first open space they have seen for a while. In the middle stands a German armored vehicle. In the tank sit four dried-up corpses, wearing German uniforms of WWII. Each body has sustained a deadly wound in the head. One face is half blown away, the eyeball dangling from the socket like a worm from a bad apple. A shrunken brain rests on the armor plates. If the characters enter the room, the dead bodies will come to life and attack them. They function according to the Kult rules for the living dead. If they overcome the soldiers, the characters can use the tank to punch through the brick walls. They will emerge into a strange and unexpected situation. The GM may use any of the following suggestions, but if the characters don't catch on to the use of the tank, we suggest he nudge them in that direction.

- The characters force through the wall and end up outside the Demiurge's palace, which is just starting to sink.
- They burst through the wall into a large city in Elysium. The area is one of the worst slums, inhabited by the homeless and the dispossessed, who are not at all prepared for the visit. It may be awhile before the characters are aware they have changed worlds.
- They break through, only to find themselves teetering on the edge of a bridge, then they go crashing down towards the cold waters some hundred feet below. They should roll for AGL, and if they achieve +3, they are able to get out of their vehicle before

impact, and dive into the water. If not, the following applies: 1D20 1-4 scratch, 5-10 light wound, 11-17 serious wound, 18 + deadly wound. The bridge is located wherever the GM sees fit.

SHAFT SHOCK

The characters suddenly find themselves on a ledge skirting the wall of a square shaft about 100 feet on a side. Above and below them are several identical ledges made of a low steel rail traversing the cracked concrete. Some connect to a door: the characters' ledge does not. The shaft seems endless: they can make out neither top nor bottom. A stale, unbearable stench rises from the bottomless pit. The walls bristle with a rusty stubble of iron footholds, but scaling the walls is still fraught with danger. If the characters try to reach the next ledge without making preparations, they must score a successful EGO roll, or one of the footholds will break. If they check each foothold in advance, they must roll for PER. Failing this, settle for the above-mentioned EGO throw. If they try to secure themselves with ropes or cables, they will be successful. A character who falls will not rejoin the party. We have listed a couple of possible scenarios:

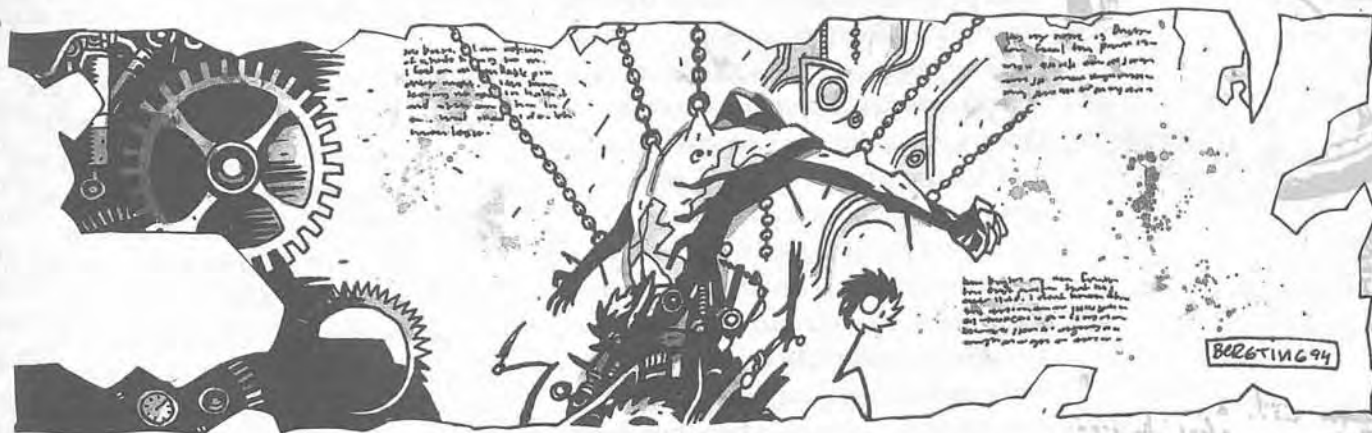
- The characters are scaling the wall when the shaft suddenly fills with horrible screams. About ten badly burnt bodies come tumbling down, bouncing off the walls, each trailing a yard-long tail of torn skin. The characters should make a horror throw, followed by an EGO-check. Any character scoring 20 on the EGO roll will be struck by a falling body and fall.
- The characters reach a new ledge, but the door they saw before has disappeared.
- With a screeching sound, the ledge on

which the characters stand gives way and goes crashing down the shaft. The characters must make a +5 AGL throw to grab onto a handhold in time, or to try to jump off for the next ledge as they fall past it. Desperate characters are allowed both options.

THE CENTRAL ARCHIVES

The Central Archives is an almost mythical place of uncertain location. Some claim it is at the very heart of the Labyrinth. Myth has it that everything that has ever happened to the Machine - or will ever happen - has been filed away in the Central Archives. Agents of

the Archons and of the Angels of Death anxiously look through the never-ending hallways, the cellar corridors, and the civil service departments of the Labyrinth, in search of the Central Archives, where they hope to find the truth about the Demiurge's disappearance and the mystery of the Seven Keys. There are those who claim that the Central Archives can be reached (through the crowding personal acts?) of the Stasi or CIA. It is said that the Keeper of All Knowledge, the Archival Head, has left the Archives to search for the keys, and to take the place of the Demiurge.




The Machine City

The Machine City is a technological anthill, a multitude of machinery in which untiring techrones ceaselessly improve and expand, disassemble and reassemble their environment. Ancient and futuristic technology mix indiscriminately. A digital control system is found on a medieval treadmill, while assembly lines are powered by roaring diesel engines. The floors are crowded everywhere with cables, spinning transmission shafts, serial pistons-and-cog-wheels, and pipes of alternately steaming or cooling water. Now and then an electrical coupling explodes in a sparkling fireworks, celebrating the

dripping consistency of a leaking pipe. A crowd of techrones make haste to repair it. Machines start up and halt suddenly in a strangely suggestive symphony of industrial equipment. Any character suffering from technophobia has a -5 modification for all skill related throws.

The Machine City is the engine block of the Demiurge's creation, but it has — as has the Machine itself — fallen into decay. Machines and electronics break down with regularity, keeping the techrones always busy with repair jobs.

Despite the swarming worker techrones, the characters will be able to move freely in the vast transformer



halls. The air crackles with electricity, making their hair stand on end and causing unpleasant shocks from contact with metal objects. Equipment like systems cameras, short-wave radios or pacemakers will be affected by strong disruptions.

In the mechanical workshops, the steel works and rolling-mills, and the construction halls, sparks fly from welding machines, molds, and steam hammers. The terrible roar limits the characters' ability to discern individual sounds. Five minutes' exposure gives an almost hypnotic power to the constant din, making all skills relating to PER or EGO be modified by +2 due to the ringing in the characters' ears.

The Machine City is also home to a strange construction known as the Queen: - a techno-organic assembly line where new worker and soldier techrones are produced under the watchful eyes of D20+10 soldier techrones armed with sophisticated weapons. Connected to the Queen lies a research center where the techrones make ground-breaking discoveries in cybergenetic science, where hundreds of human bodies and organs are stored in cryogen canisters in a giant freezer room. 3D6 techrones, guarded by another 2D6 soldier techrones, are always at work, dissecting human specimens, or hooking up detached organs to meters or mechanical contraptions. On a stainless steel examination table lies a pale blue corpse with wide-open eyes and a gaping mouth. The top of its head has been cut off, and around thirty electrodes connect the exposed brain to kind of an ECG. Suddenly the machine starts a clattering print-out, while the body jerks spasmodically in a danse macabre on the table, the blue lips babbling wordlessly and the dead eyes blazing with fear. The characters

must pass a horror throw to avoid panic.

Incidents

THE MAGISTRATES

The characters encounter a Magistrate on the outskirts of Machine City, who orders them to drop their weapons and give themselves up. Two CR's later the command will be followed by a well-aimed round of fire at the characters' feet. If the characters don't surrender within two CR's, the next round will be meant to incapacitate them, regardless of whether the characters have run for cover, or are still trying to talk themselves out of the situation. The Magistrate seldom shoots to kill, as its techrone masters have a use for living human bodies. If the characters fail to escape, they will be dragged off to the central laboratory where scientist techrones perform gruesome experiments to determine the composition of DNA for a new race of semi-organic techrones. Their object is to create the ultimate warrior techrone, a project which the Archons' spies observe and try to sabotage to prevent other Archons from gaining an advantage. The frequent sabotage has given the laboratory the look of a technological Armageddon. Sooty, damaged, technical equipment is cobbled back together under the flickering light of fluorescent tubes.

If the characters enter the laboratory of their own will, one of the 3D6 scientist techrones will immediately summon the guards. 2D6 soldier techrones arrive within D6 CR. The characters will be locked into cages, like monkeys or rabbits in the laboratories of our own world. Hours there seem like an eternity, watching the techrone scientists coldly shoot low-voltage currents through the cerebral cortex of a human

specimen recently removed from the cryogenic tanks. When the screams have died down and the blood is washed away, it is the characters' turn...

VIVARIUM VIVISECTION

The characters enter a place like a vivarium, except that there are no snakes. Instead, there are rooms upon rooms of glass display cases filled with human body parts connected by dirty tubes, oily pipes and bare wires, formed in gross, distasteful combinations. A male torso is hooked to a female head and a baby's arm, and mounted behind a speckled window in cold, blue light. Each case is equipped with a lever. If the characters push down on it, it will crank up the light to almost blinding intensity and jerk the mounted limbs in a spasmodic dance. Mouths open in oily shouts, splattering the glass, orifices leak blood, oil and other fluids. Limbs and muscles contort, jerking violently, until they break into useless pieces barring the naked bone. The glass of the case is soiled further and some limbs start to scorch. Have the characters make a +5 horror throw. The incident will alert the techrone guards, and the characters may have to beat a hasty retreat.

ECHO


The characters can hear gunfire ahead, through the brutal roar of the machines. A group of teenagers dressed in dark clothes and ski masks are engaged in a desperate fight against a techrone, which has seized one of them, a girl, in its iron grip. One of its steel claws pushes a buzzing blade against her throat. Her ski mask has been torn off and rests on the steel floor in a puddle of blood. Her face is contorted in terrible pain, blood shoots from her neck and her head comes off,

striking the ground with a thudding impact. The other three youngsters panic, dropping their guns, and are easily caught by the techrone. This happens in a place filled with vast tanks, marked with symbols for poison, which have been riddled with bullets and are spilling liquids and heavy, eye-smarting fumes. The teenagers are wrapped up tightly by the techrones' steel tentacles and will soon suffer the same fate as their friend. If the characters decide to help, the rescued boys and girl will be very grateful and show them the way out of what they apparently think is an ordinary factory. If the characters follow their directions, they will be arrested by police just outside the factory doors. They are then accused of malicious damage and manslaughter. There are ambulances waiting outside: several workers have been killed in the incident.

The poisonous fumes require a throw for PER to keep the characters from passing out. If successful, they nevertheless suffer +2 in all actions for the coming hour. If they fail and lose consciousness, they are +5 for all actions for the next three hours. If they remain in the fumes, they will eventually die.

THE CENTRAL LABORATORY

The vast complex referred to in some obscure books on the occult as the Central Laboratory, rates as one of the most dangerous areas of the Machine City. Here the artificial evolution of the techrone race is advanced, which has given birth to groundbreaking bio-technological inventions. The Archons' agents regularly sabotage the work, to keep important discoveries from ending up in the wrong hands. Other groups make raids into these parts, fanatically combatted by the



techrones. These outbursts of sabotage and retaliation have covered the steel walls with soot and left their mark on the machines in the form of make-shift repairs. If the characters choose to visit the Central Laboratory, they will be in constant danger of attack by the techrones, and from machines which may suddenly explode, sending out a deadly spray of scrap metal.

The techrones have cryogen chambers in which they store their organic samples, including specimens of the human race. The chambers are kept at a temperature of between -50° and -80° C, and the frozen bodies rest in canisters of green cryogel. The stainless steel walls are so cold, they will freeze onto bare skin. The techrones may well decide to lock a captured character in the cryogen chambers...

Experiments in the Central Laboratory are performed exclusively on living matter. If the characters visit its innermost parts they will see humans with uncapped skulls, writhing and twitching in pain, while techrone scientists curiously poke their instruments and electrodes down into their brains. The walls are smeared with organic by-products or waste, while the floor and benches of stainless steel are scattered with greasy, blood-stained tools and discarded human limbs. The techrones are always looking for new experimental material...

MAD SCIENTISTS

A common occurrence in the Machine City that has contributed to its decay are raids by scientists from Elysium. These are carried out by different groups for different reasons, the common denominator being a desire to possess the arcane inventions hidden in the fragmentary techno-puzzle of Metropolis. Some of these expeditions are organized by lictors and are carried

out with brutal perfection. The lictors, however, seldom take an active part in it themselves, as they consider the area too dangerous.

A second type are lone scientists who may be seen stalking the grounds, carrying frightful weapons and tools, dressed in blood-spattered laboratory whites. They are usually alone, and never more than three. Their excursions into the Machine City may be quite involuntary, as a result of weeks of overwork and no sleep. They are in a state of trance and react to no stimuli except the 'great discovery'. Techrones and characters alike are mere obstacles which must be eliminated.

The raids focus on inventions which can be applied to already existing Elysium technology. The most sophisticated bio-technical inventions are incomprehensible to a human mind and will therefore be discarded as irrelevant. Scientists, researchers, and inventors are logical people who can not grasp irrational occurrences beyond a certain point.

Other groups that visit the Machine City are the hellers, and occultists who seldom have any preconception of what they are going to see.

ABOUT TECHRONES

The characters encounter an expedition sponsored by a lictor to steal a revolutionary new battery from the Machine City. The group is led by an seasoned mercenary named Leon Schneider, who plans to push his men to the limit and beyond with his iron hand of discipline, then he will abandon them to die in the Machine City. If necessary, he will execute them himself. The group has seven members, two of whom are scientists. They are equipped with kevlar vests, machine guns and plastic helmets. However, they are surrounded by the techrones, who

capture them, one by one, and then go to work on them. The thick, meaty sounds of techrones dissecting their first victims are discouraging to the other men. The GM may let the characters take an active part in the expedition, or they could discover the group when the dreadful battle begins. Or the characters could meet one of the surviving members, who has been shot by Schneider himself and begs the characters to avenge him. The lictor's name is Marcus Rosencreutz, Head of Research at ABB, a major Swedish industrial concern. He will be waiting in his laboratory with a group of servilians...

THE DESPERATE SCIENTIST

The characters stumble on a man clumsily using a pair of tongs to tug at a strange piece of machinery, which is spraying him with boiling hot oil. The man is bald, middle-aged, and very much out of shape. When he discovers the characters, he drops his tongs, and peers at them through his oil-streaked glasses. His face is badly damaged by the boiling oil. After a moment of hesitation, he falls to his knees, frantically searching through the heap of junk at his feet. Finally producing a Magnum revolver, he fires it rapidly to no effect. After wasting all of the bullets, he throws the gun at the characters and attacks them with his bare fists. He will fight until they kill him. He wears a plastic tag on his coat, identifying him as, 'Martin Sandén, Head of Research, 3th floor. Pharmacia.' The machine which he was trying to pry open is a kind of plastic box containing some transparent pistons.

PROTO-TECHRONES

The proto-techrones dwell in all parts of the Machine City. They worship the real techrones as the end of creation: the perfect symbiosis of technolo-

gy and biology. They try to improve their own bodies, adding mechanical parts and electronic components, the usual result being infections, hampered mobility, physical handicaps, and in some cases even death. The proto-techrones' aim is not to become techrones, but to develop into enhanced humans. They truly believe they represent a giant step in the advancement of mankind. They are different than most other groups in the Machine City, being much less aggressive, and not primarily set on stealing technology. On the contrary, they are inclined to mysticism. The additions to their bodies are the clumsy work of dilettante engineers of substandard skill and insufficient insight. They are accepted by the real techrones, as long as they don't bother the machines or try to steal anything. Proto-techrones may know the way into the Machine City, and they could be of use to the characters - if the GM wishes.

THE MACHINERY OF DEATH

The Machine City is a dangerous place, as is the entire city of Metropolis. Some areas are almost unpopulated, but hold other dangers. These are often referred to as sleeping or dead areas. This is a misleading term, as they may be fully functional. We will list some incidents which could take place in these areas.

- The characters enter a vast steel-coated hall. From the cracked ceiling copper wires dangle all the way down into the cloudy surface of a large pool lined with tin in the center of the hall. The pool contains a saline solution, and the wires are electrified. To get safely through the hall, the characters must achieve an AGL roll, or else they will slip in the sludge beside the pool and suffer serious damage from the



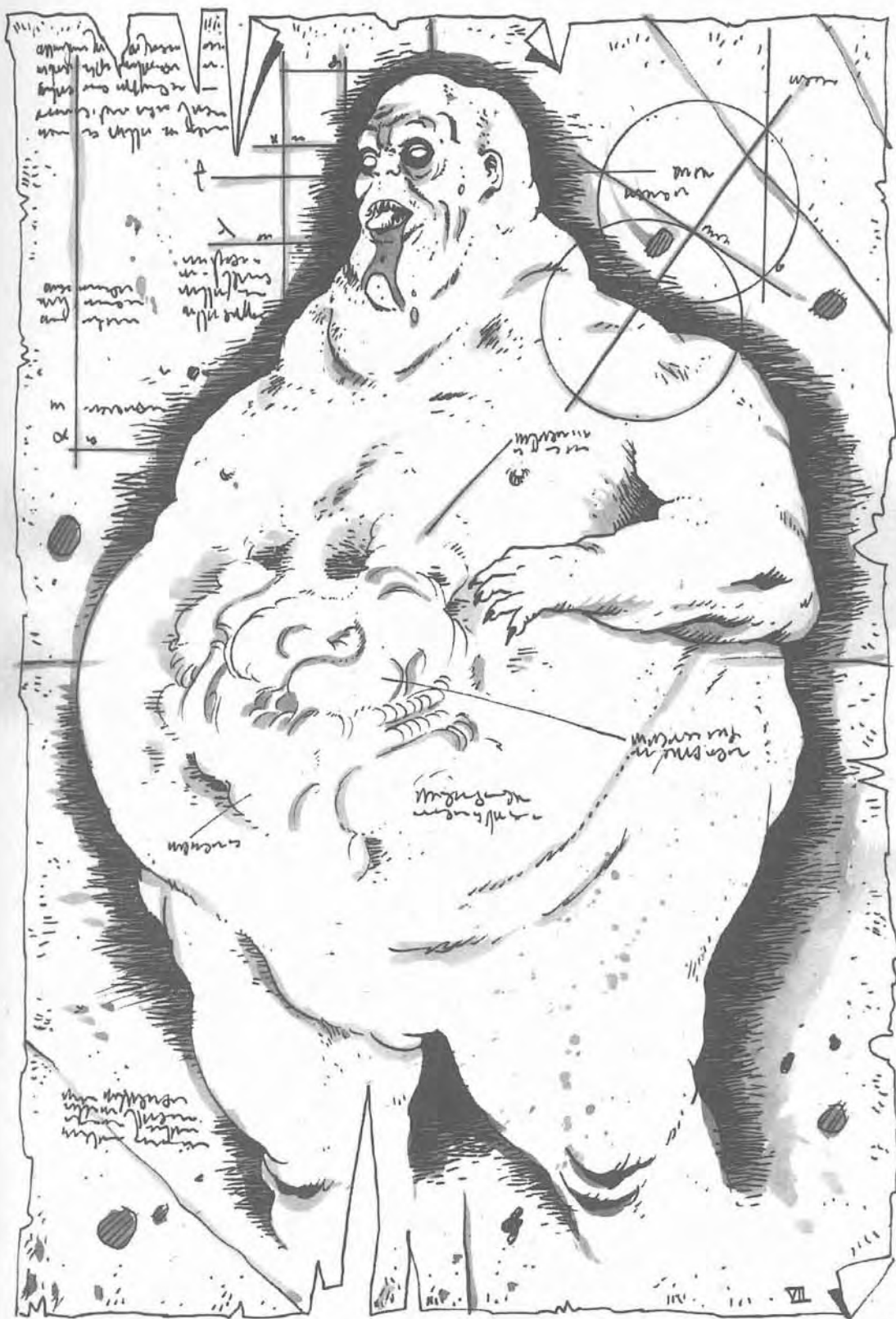
electrified water. Repeated failures could prove fatal. If the characters wish to protect themselves, they should use rubber materials.

- The characters must walk across a leaden courtyard, partly melted, partly corroded, revealing underground machinery making a dull buzzing sound. Signs in Cyrillic letters are posted all around — apparently warning signs, as one of them is standing next to a pale, hairless corpse in a pair of scorched overalls. If the characters stay for 3 CR's, they will sustain a scratch; 5 CR's cause a light wound; 10 CR's produce a serious wound, dizzy spells, and the characters will begin to vomit. After 15+ CR's they have sustained deadly wounds. The machine is a Soviet nuclear reactor from the 1950's... If the GM is keen

on effects, he can speed up the dizzy spells and vomiting later on. The characters may also start losing their hair.

- The characters have travelled for hours through seemingly endless dead areas. Suddenly, they must pass through a hot, humid factory hall with large containers of melted metals. These can be emptied by activating the machinery. This could be an opportunity to block pursuers. The GM should give a quick description of a large industrial hall and then focus on the levers which operate the containers, a hint to the characters to make use them. Or the containers could suddenly start emptying themselves, flooding the entire hall with incandescent liquid metal and forcing the characters up rusty ladders to escape death.





Lictor 101,858



Metropolis

Lairs of Power

'Andrews, Andrews, Andrews,' came the crowd's ecstatic cry. A heavy gridiron net kept him separated from the mutant human trash in the spectators' seats. 'Animals,' he thought. The spiked club had made him king in the Arena. He had killed more men than he cared to remember and the losers lay sprawled out on the uneven concrete floor. Spotlights swept the Arena, and the air was charged with adrenaline and the sweat from hundreds of unwashed bodies. There was but one of them that remained to him now - but he didn't look like much of a fight. The baphazard terrain of the

Arena, in which the concrete floor was littered with steel obstacles of different sizes, would sometimes turn the testosterone rush of battle into a frustrating hunt for scared opponents. Andrews hadn't slept for days, and he was angry, so angry - he hadn't been this angry since the Tet Offensive, but that time he had constantly been on pills ...

Harry, his last opponent lay panting with exhaustion behind a tank obstacle. The pathetic sight of his business suit, torn and bedraggled, forced a smile to Andrews' lips. He dropped his battle club; it would be absolutely superfluous here. Harry looked at him imploringly with his large dog's eyes.



'Who do you think I am,' Andrews growled, 'Mother f---ing Theresa?' A vicious kick in the spine settled the question. Catching him with an iron grip by the throat, Andrews prepared to let out a jerky spurt of his enemy's blood. The spotlights stopped dead on the two fighters. Then came the strained, hissing voice of his victim: 'Andrews, we must find Rebecca, we have to stop her.' His face unflinching, Andrews slung Harry over his shoulder. The crowd buzzed in anticipation, hoping for some cat-and-mouse play before the kill. But with a few quick leaps, the victor and his victim were both out of the Arena. Andrews used a splinter grenade to clear the elevator. A siren struck up an angry wail. The blood-

spattered steel cage was ascending with Andrews and Harry before the seated crowd had time to react.

Andrews grabbed a machine-gun from under a ripped-open body. Harry told him that he had tried to contact him, but Andrews had failed to recognize him. They were still far down below Netzach's palace, and Andrews was beside himself with rage. Harry was very, very frightened. He recalled the endless maze of guarded tunnels, every soldier screaming for a password, when they had brought him down to the Arena. He was now convinced that the ground-floor building must have been a hallucination — there could be no house of that size in the material world, nor of that terrible exterior, looking like a perverse manifestation of all the most obscene fictions of war. 'It must have been the cocaine,' he thought. 'Always did make me paranoid... I shouldn't have tried it again.'

Andrews fired from the hip, the other man still slung over his shoulder. They had reached the highest sub-palace levels. The tunnel-system's defense had been planned with only an outside aggressor in mind; the thought of rebellion had not even occurred to them. The militaries, stiff and stiffly uniformed, reacted like all soldiers when their Pavlovian thinking collapses: they panicked and ran. Guards were blown to a bloody pulp when they turned their unarmored backs and were hit by the solid beams of tracking light. Andrews' face had locked into a hard smile of contempt. He let the thunderous rhythm of his machine-gun numb him to any idea of what might be waiting for them around the next corner. The slack bodies of the dead and the twisting limbs of the living made the way to the palace's outer bastions a treacherous path to walk. Moving out of the palace, he slowly started to gain a perspective on its vast exteri-

or. Then, the truth bit Harry with final force: It wasn't a hallucination. He passed out.

The infernal shrieking from the caterpillar treads penetrating the armored cage of their T 72 was a welcome distraction to the terrifying exterior of Netzach's palace. The constant use of the cannon had made the tank's interior a hot and humid space which had created the feeling of riding in an armored womb. They had forced the last encasements now, but still the palace masked the entire horizon from their eyes; it would take them hours and many miles until they had a full view of the building. They kept on, rolling slowly away from the palace through its macabre surroundings. From his claustrophobic pit, operating the controls, Harry's eyes fell on rotting corpses piled-up in heaps, with surviving brothers-in-arms sitting beside them, crying or staring vacantly out into the air. He drew past complex systems of interconnecting trenches in which men were savagely fighting each other. Swinging their last remaining weapons, the sharpened spades, in blind rage and giving themselves as little mercy as their enemies, death and dismemberment was the only possible outcome. Behind triple lines of electrified barbed-wire fences stood the endless rows of prisoners of war, awaiting death.

The cordite gunpowder had cranked up the tank's inside temperature to respectable sauna level, and Andrews, face was glowing red. A patrol of hearty Home Guards had made a brave attempt to stop them with an outdated anti-tank cannon. Andrews' savagely grinning, chose leisurely among the running targets: 'The Grim Reaper sees you...' he hissed. Harry managed a faint smile; he felt slightly embarrassed about the mess he had made during their escape. He still felt it inside his pants.



Introduction

The palaces, the Archons' lairs, dominate Metropolis. Of the original eleven, only seven remain intact and active today. They are the palaces of the Demiurge, Kether, Binah, Geburah, Netzach, Tiphareth and Malkuth. Also, a new palace has been built next to the former lair of Hod, which belongs to Samael, the Death Angel, who is trying to take over the lictors and cults that formerly adhered to Hod. Of the remaining three Archons — Chokmah, Chesed and Yesod — only the skyscraper building of Yesod is still in use: the Death Angels Nehemoth, Gamichioth and Sathariel have moved in to take over some of his Metropolis action — in Samael-like fashion, although as yet with far less success. The palaces of Chokmah and Chesed are absolute ruins: desolate, deserted and overshadowed by the other palaces.

The palaces are more like entire city districts than actual buildings. The adjoining land, comprising anything from a few blocks of streets to vast stone deserts, take on the character of their respective Archon. At the center of each area, usually a towering construction, is the palace itself. Their appearances vary. Some consist of many buildings strung together, while others

were built from a single plan. Each palace has large parts no longer in use. Where lictors once sat plotting and scheming, a forlorn azghoul now prowls for stray visitors. Most parts are not so desolate. Hungry cannibals hunt with their sleuth-hounds. Battles are fought and death sentences are carried out by the still loyal subjects of the reigning Archon, whose physical presence is usually confined to the core or the top floors of the palace. The Archons are organically integrated with their palaces, which are continually changing according to the state of mind of their master. They are waited on by droves of lictors and acrotides, and a score of human servants, as well. The palaces are steeped in the presence of their Archons, whose mental powers will affect anything and anyone around or inside them. Thus, power of mind is as important as firepower when approaching one of the palaces.

The palaces are scattered over the chaotic map of Metropolis. You might catch a glimpse of one over the cracked roof-tops in the Living City, or from beyond the mountains of trash which crown the Ruins. But you can never take the same route to them twice. The distance is always illusory, as is time.

Effects

Once the characters have made their way to Metropolis, they are unavoidably under the influence of the different powers which rule in the Original City. The strongest and most pronounced powers emanate from the palaces, which are the physical representations of the persons and principles of their Archons. As soon as the Game Master has placed the characters in Metropolis, he must decide which palace is closest by. That Archon will affect all in that vicinity: people, creatures, even the characters themselves. It is probably impossible to force a player to play his character in a particular way. We have therefore suggested different ways in which each Archon manifests his influ-

ence. First we describe the feeling which the characters experience from the place. The players can either ignore or react to this feeling. The GM should try to make the players aware of how the particular set of circumstances affects the game as far as possible. Then follows a description of how the Non-Player Characters behave in general. This is also only a suggestion. However, if properly handled, it will add an extra dimension to a Metropolis adventure.

Finally, we will discuss some aspects of how the Archons' presence affects the rules and Technical Gaming Solutions. The players cannot ignore this. Their characters will unavoidably be governed by the idiosyncrasies of the palace they visit.

The Demiurge

They came walking in on the muddy cobbled stones. The pungent smell of rot and decay was nauseating to the little group which was making its way through the ruins towards the open fields ahead. Mikhail constantly thumbed the safety catch of his automatic rifle - 'on,' 'off,' and back 'on' again. He stole a sideways glance at Kratov, his boyhood companion who was now suffering from malnutrition and lack of sleep, as he was himself. They had also both suffered from horrible nightmares, and when they met Natasha, another childhood friend who shared the same recent dream experience, they understood that it was more than a mere coincidence. They did not know why, or even how they had ended up here, but something drove them onward, ever onward, towards that distant silhouette up ahead. Suddenly Mikhail felt a chill down his spine. What was that sign that Kratov had just made to the woman? Why wouldn't he look him in the eye any longer? A glance at his left revealed that

Natasha was reaching for something. He tightened his grip on his rifle, and suddenly he felt that his coverall underwear was soaking wet with perspiration. He looked back to his left, and saw that the woman was holding the gun in her right hand and locking it — or was she? He spun around, and caught Kratov fumbling for something inside his coat.

'So — it was you all the time!' Mikhail's voice broke into a cracked falsetto. 'You scum! Well, you're not taking me alive! Die, you scum! Die!'

Natasha's surprised face gave way to a strange, choking non-expression as the high velocity bullet tore into her frail body, shredding it. Kratov tried to say something as he stood hunched over the woman's writhing body as she died. In that position, he was executed by the wild-eyed, insanely grinning Mikhail. Kratov fell to the ground. His arm slipped out of the coat, the bloody fingers still shaking until, at last, they released their hold on his old Bible, which fell on the ground where his blood was blending with the mud.



The Citadel

The Demiurge is biding his time. He is waiting for the Archons and Death Angels to destroy each other and themselves, to return to a world in which mankind has seen through the Illusion. Then he will create a new Metropolis in Elysium. But that time is yet to come, and meanwhile the Archons search in vain for the Seven Seals and the Citadel foils their attempts by sinking to the bottom of the Primal Sea, from which it only rises occasionally.

The Primal Sea, stretching over the core of Metropolis, is a wide, solitary space. It covers what was once a part of the city. Its oily, translucent surface washes quietly over city buildings, and its perfect mirror is broken in places by roof-tops and other pieces of architecture. Sometimes, a shoal of floating fetuses appears in the dark waters, only to immediately disappear leaving only the faint trace of a memory. Tankers lie leaking side by side in mutual abandon, dousing the waters with their oil and chemical waste. The stench is sometimes suffocating, when foul gases rise from the innermost depths in gurgling bubbles which burst at the surface. Further out, the open sea clouds over with a thick, yellow fog which sticks to anything or anyone traveling on its surface. Where once you could see an odd movement of something in the water or a flaring fire on one of the shipwrecks, here you see absolutely nothing. Suddenly, even the queasy deep sound from the rumbling ocean stops, and all is silent.

The Primal Sea hides a secret, but it is a secret which now and then gives itself away, uncovering its mighty walls, its mighty black towers and its vast open courtyards: it is the Demiurge's Citadel. At irregular intervals the Citadel, in its mind-boggling immensity,

rises from the bottom of the Primal Sea. Breaking the surface, its walls washed in the black stinking sludge, its tall grid-iron fences catch corpses on their spikes to spill their contents on the reappearing island soil. Where once was a foggy expanse of never-ending water, now stands the Citadel, blocking out everything else under the yellowish-brown skies with its crumbling houses, its bombed-out streets and its caved-in sewers.

After the Demiurge departed, the Citadel was torn by frequent battles between Archons and Angels of Death, some of who wanted to break into the Citadel to establish themselves in place of the Demiurge, while others defended its gates. Finally, greed and deceit proved the downfall of them all, and the Citadel was never taken, but has remained closed to this day. Hundreds of thousands of lives were wasted in the surrounding ruins, and even more were slain in the wide-open square in front of the Citadel. Each time the Citadel sinks, dead bodies and battle equipment are washed a little closer to the island's shore. In some places things have stuck, virtual hills of rotting flesh are seen, formed from countless bodies which have merged into one, courtesy of the polluting powers of the Primal Sea. In other places, single bodies are pierced by reinforcement rods protruding from the ground. The bodies are in various conditions: some are reduced to bare skeletons, while others still have a transparent skin of sorts, through which their decomposed innards can be seen clearly. Suddenly, a rattling yell rings out over the deserted square where the reflection of the Citadel can be seen in the steel-plated coating on the ground. Then comes another yell, and then the slow, creaking noise of metal being twisted until it breaks. The ruins are

more than a graveyard for fallen soldiers: they are the prowling-ground for mutant predators who live to hunt and kill. These beasts were originally legionnaires, lictors, human beings or other loyal subjects who survived the wars. They wandered the ruins, looking for their lost regiments and masters, until the Citadel suddenly went down and they followed it into the sea. Instead of dying, they were preserved and mutated by the polluted water and evolved into ultimate predators. Since then, they have lived off the floating foetuses and the occasional creatures which still visit the Citadel. Whether by the Demiurge's intent or not, these monsters now viciously guard the Citadel from trespassers in a fashion very much their own. The walls of the Citadel still stand true. Tall and devoid of any form of exterior decoration, they look rather like a giant version of the Berlin wall. Far overhead you can see an occasional tower looming above it, with a few other structures which seem to scale the sky and disappear into the odorous smog. The seven doors still stand strong, guarding the Hall of Tears with the Demiurge's greatest secret: the formula to his creation. Ever since the Demiurge left, the hunt has been on for the Seven Keys which unlock the doors to the Citadel. These keys, however, are not easily found, because they are less a physical reality than a manifestation of the Demiurge's person, and are not a function of time or space. In the darkest depths of the Citadel lies the Hall of Tears, where the stern faces of the stone angels keep watch over an iron book in which the secret of creation has been recorded. From their stone eyes, tears of blood drip onto the floor, where they slowly clot. Nobody has yet been able to find the keys, but the final circle has begun and the Illusion is com-

ing further and further undone. And the hunt goes on: the keys to creation are sought desperately by the Archons who must stop the Demiurge's plan to shatter the Illusion and commence an apocalyptic liberation, which would mean the dawning of a new life...

Incidents

MUTANT LICTOR

The characters suddenly hear a faint voice crying for help (PER throw, normal effect). The cries come from the deep shaft of an old caved-in sewer. Someone is stuck somewhere down there in the darkness. If the characters answer the plea, a whimpering man's voice explains in English that he was just trying to find his car keys which he had dropped into an open sewer when leaving a bookshop in Charlotte Street. He claims that he had just found the keys when suddenly the shaft caved in and he got stuck. He is actually a mutant lictor trying to fool the characters down into his hole.

- If the characters climb down to help him, they will be attacked by a many-armed creature with long, shiny claws which will cut through anything but steel. The mutant lictor will try to knock its victims unconscious, then drag them down the winding sewers to his slaughter chamber a couple of hundred yards away.
- If the characters ignore him, or refuse to descend into the shaft, the ground will start to shake. Then it cracks open in wide fissures, devouring the pavement and the decaying ruins close by. The characters must achieve a normal effect for AGL/CR for three consecutive Combat Rounds to keep from falling down into a hole. There the hungry lictor awaits them, who will try to drag them to his pantry. The lictor's slaughter chamber is a broad

sewage pipe whose moldy walls are hung with the remains of previous victims: mutilated men who have been partially eaten and then left to rot. If the characters are knocked out, they will wake up hanging from the wall by their manacled hands. Beside them hang mutilated pieces of their predecessors, and down in the brown, filthy water swim cat-sized rats. It is possible to wriggle out of the fetters, but it isn't easy (AGL roll, good effect). A crowbar with which the fetters could be broken is hidden further down the

hall (acceptable Seek/PER roll) (normal STR). The fetid water also hides a functional though dirty Colt M16 A2, loaded with grenades (normal PER). If the character are not free within twenty Combat Rounds, the mutant lictor will return to consume his food.

Picking out one of the characters at random, he cuts off a large chunk of flesh with a blunt butcher's knife. If the characters are able to escape, they must flee through the sewers until they find another exit. The GM might choose to lead them into the sewers of another palace, for instance Yesod's, or perhaps into the Labyrinth.

THE CITADEL SINKS

There is a small tremor, followed by a stronger one. Houses collapse as the streets bulge inwards, bending, breaking, caving in. The violent earthquake is followed by absolute silence. The Citadel is sinking. Slowly but surely the large island disappears into the depths of the Primal Sea, the shoreline cutting deeper and deeper into the ruins and then flooding the open square in front of the Citadel. Unless the characters can find their boat or some other form of waterborne transportation, they will be caught in the maelstroms resulting from the giant construct's descent into the abysmal depths. They might drown in the ocean and then be reborn. Or they could be preserved for centuries by the Primal Sea, slowly evolving into a race of skinless predators who hunt the grounds around the Citadel.

Effects

The atmosphere is very tense. As the Citadel is underwater most of the time, it has no population in the normal. Most of its creatures suffer from hysterical schizophrenia, showing violent hostility towards all strangers. The characters can sense memories of past betrayals



and unspeakable deeds permeating the air. They lose faith even in their close friends and refuse to trust each other. For every ten minutes the characters spend on the Citadel island, the GM should hand out note paper to the characters. He should ask them to write down if there's anything they want to do which they would not like the other characters to find out about. Everybody must return their notes, even if they

haven't written anything. In addition, the GM will make screened EGO rolls for each of the characters until somebody fails (less than a normal effect). The GM should then give this player a note describing how another character is behaving in a threatening manner, maybe even pointing a gun at his own character. The object is to make the players insecure. They should be driven to the edge of paranoid hysteria.

Binah

Their half-track broke down, the corrosive sewer sludge having finally penetrated its steering system. They would now have to continue on foot. Hertz, their guide, who had so far kept on his toes, skillfully taking them through the dangerous marshlands, was taken totally unawares by the vicious tentacle of the suddenly mutated vehicle. The half-track sat down, with slow creaking motions, settling itself in the sewage waters while chewing on Hertz' shredded head. Claudio killed the spastic monster, using an anti-tank launcher, while Vicente and Bertrand watched in horror as Hertz' wasted body spilled its blood on the muddy ground. The three set out again with great resolve for the red glow of the high-towered building. Led telepathically by their no longer living guide, they finally made it to an enormous open space. The dusty concrete was littered with papers which were now and then stirred up by a fleeting wind. Huge pillars scaled the skies, and a far-off vague chanting sound reached them. Beyond the horizon lay the round temple in which the sufferer hung suspended from the ceiling Her

pained cries as the wire tore into her young flesh found its way to their ears. They would save their sister, at any cost. Little did they know that all their fates had already been sealed.

Binah controls all of Eastern Europe, actively counteracting the Demiurge's plan by meddling in politics and religion. She is allied to Geburah, and together they hope to become sole rulers of both Elysium and Metropolis.


Binah's Palace

Binah's palace is marked by the fiery red smog which derives its glow from constantly burning bonfires. Spires of gross proportions shoot from its black base, climbing into the skies and communicating with each other by means of bridges which span thousands of feet. Soaked in dripping humidity and cluttered with gargoyles in black stone, the palace twinkles like a starlit sky, reflecting the lights of thousands of fires lit by true believers to the greater glory of Binah. From around its base, which is washed in the glowing red light, stretches the wide expanse of the marshlands. Muddy waters mixed with oil and sludge from the palace sewers pass under curious bridges built by loyal sub-

The Demiurge saw the wisdom of this and created a new race of servants. And so we Humans came to see the light of day, and from then on we worked to increase the glory of Creation. But as the Archons considered themselves superior to Man they soon came to redirect his work from building Creation, the glorious Metropolis, to adding to the elegance and beauty of their own palaces.

When the Demiurge saw this, he was angered at the shamelessness of the Archons and gave Humans more power than he had originally intended. The Lord's design was to level the difference between Man and Archon, so that both could better serve him in unity and cooperation.

Excerpt from 'Genesis,' by Aguirre (Inner Cosmos Publications, 1971)



jects from iron junk. The remains of ancient churches, sepulchral monuments and elevated walkways form occasional islands in water that reflects no light. The dull surface is infrequently disturbed, as one of the Black Madonna's watchmen rises to eliminate a trespasser. Close to the palace, the ground is firmer, and many of the Archon's subjects reside here. Endless rows of tin shacks line dark, narrow alleyways, which are never disturbed apart from occasional crouching figures slinking silently by. In other areas there are city blocks or entire districts where light never shines, whose residents have grown to regard eternal darkness as their normal way of life. The citizens of Binah live in blissful ignorance that they are little more than guinea pigs to a gross social experiment. They live happily off their faith in the Black Madonna.

Binah's many subjects hold masses at the feet of the garbage shafts which hug the palace walls. These verdigrised metal pipes are thirty feet across, and resound with swishes which are now and then drowned out by spine-chilling screams. The worshippers, clad in rags, bleary-eyed and often barefoot, stand near the openings, chanting a monotonous prayer, while gargantuan lumps of rotting meat fall from the shafts. Complicated rituals and strange processions follow. Between the shafts rise giant pillars which, along with a few major structures of the building, support the entire palace. The cracked concrete pillars are hung with poster-like icons of a perverse Christ or visions of the Black Madonna. Torn pieces of communist manifestos are blown about by the conflicting winds, while still-persisting communist supporters are chased screaming over the desolate open spaces which separate the palace's legs. They will later be made, by arguments

of pain, to accept the proper faith, and are taken into the congregation of the Black Madonna. Those who refuse are burnt alive on a rusty iron cross. Side by side, along the slowly slanting ramps leading from the center palace, lie family graves. A faintly illuminated crawling cloud makes the tombstones and scattered mausoleums look like wrecked ships in a sea of smoke. Inside the tarnished, battered walls of the palace blood oaths are sworn by the light of trash can fires. Guards in brown uniforms adorned with stars and stripes check the identity of every visitor. Every now and then, somebody is stopped, and hauled off kicking and screaming to choose between death and conversion.

Incidents

THE INTESTINAL MASS

Hundreds of ragged barefoot people form a murmuring congregation gazing up at the end of one of the garbage shafts. The shaft opens its hatch, and with a loud swishing sound, it exhales hundreds of pounds of rotting flesh and guts on the waiting worshippers. Some of the believers are buried in the stinking mess, but the others keep on chanting. A man dressed in white and armed with a gleaming meat hook approaches the steaming heap. Faithful church members offer him their bodies to climb on, and he laboriously makes his way to the top of the pile. Then comes a heart-rending scream, and some of the worshippers stop their mumbling to turn and look, as a young woman of heavenly beauty is carried up to the flesh heap. Her perfect white skin has been pawed by filthy hands, and a thin white veil covers her sleek naked body from the hungry eyes of the religious fanatics. The priest performs a short ritual, and then cries out in a powerful voice:

'Receive our sacrifice - a female child as guilty as only a female can be. Take her; and grant us in return a moment of blissful insight. Reveal your wisdom to our souls, through this guilty flesh!'

He is going to kill the woman, then throw her mutilated body on top of the heaped flesh and read the future from the pattern her white limbs form on its gory surface. Then the faithful believers will feast on her body.

- If the characters choose to stand by passively, all will proceed according to the ritual. The characters are then invited to partake of the holy feast. If any of the believers discovers that the characters aren't initiated, i.e. that they have no wounds on their hands, they will try to have the characters inducted.
- The characters could also try to save the woman, in which case they must fight the religious fanatics. These are all unarmed, but they are driven by a holy rage and would gladly die for their faith. The woman is actually a virgin, from a catholic school for girls in Italy. Her name is Carla and she speaks only Italian. She was brought beyond the Illusion by a borderliner from the Congregation of the Black Madonna.

THE INQUISITION

A group of chaotics passes slowly down the dirty street. They wear their black capes with the hoods up, shadowing their faces. The leader of the procession carries a tub of incense, which reeks with the harsh smell of burnt flesh. The others carry copper bells which they slowly ring to the rhythm of their feet. Behind them stand ramshackle wooden crosses hung with crucified sinners who are bleeding from their pierced wrists and ankles. Others are stoned by the brawling mob. The first of the chaotics walks up slowly, and stops at the very feet of the charac-

ters. Slowly swinging his tub of incense, he indicates one of the characters, calling the player by his or her real name:

'Confess, o wretched sinner! What foul deeds hast thou committed? Fear not the punishment, for it shall be thy opportunity for redemption and cleansing thy soul from the wicked work of the Enemy. Confess and repent, thou sinful creature!'

If the character ignores the accusation, the chaotic will press for an answer. The character's actual sins are never stated, only the fact that he or she has committed shameful acts. Meanwhile, other members of the procession have approached, surrounding the characters. They hold their curved daggers with a menacing glint inside the dark folds of their cloaks. Others are erecting a gallows pole from which the unfortunate character will hang. The leader also demands that the other characters testify in the case, and anyone who refuses or testifies in favor of the accused will be considered a partner to his crime.

- Unless something is done, the sinner is promptly hanged.
- The characters could fight their way out of it. The chaotics will not engage in battle willingly, and will not pursue the characters themselves. Instead, the characters are chased by a posse which the chaotics will gather from nearby deformed mutant loafers (normal citizens).

THE REVOLVER

A shiny revolver has been left on a sooty black beam overgrown with algae

NOTICE

The Italian police have issued the following description via INTERPOL:

CARLA MARIA STAGLIERI, 19, from Milan.

On her disappearance 10/4/93, was dressed in blue jeans, white shirt, white sneakers.

Information concerning Carla Maria Staglieri should be sent to nearest police station.

(PER throw, normal effect). The beam stretches across the open sewer of a steaming, stinking stream. If the characters try to reach it by stepping out on the beam (AGL roll of good effect not to fall in), the gun will drop into the stream. It can still be seen gleaming on the bottom. If anyone tries to reach it through the water or falls into the stream, he will be attacked by 1D3 fekküzers.

SALVATION

A fog covers the open space between the castle's huge pillars. Hurried footsteps can be heard running over the vacant surface, followed by hoarse, angry shouts. A raging mob streams through the square, carrying blunt axes and knives in their wounded hands, and screaming in an unknown language.

- Unless the characters manage to hide (Hide roll of acceptable effect), they are discovered by the angry mob, which then surrounds them. A fat man with a scrofulous face gleaming with sweat orders them to fall on their knees to swear the blood oath and be taken up into the Congregation of the Black Madonna. If they refuse, the mob will attack and try to crucify the characters on iron crosses, then they will pour gasoline on them and set them on fire to the glory of Binah. If any of the characters have second thoughts after seeing one or more of their number perish in the flames, he or she is still welcome to go through with the rite, after which the character is taken into the congregation. During the ritual, the character is cut on the hand, and the wound will never heal. (This detracts -1 from all physical actions which involve the cut hand.) If the characters manage to hide and escape the mob, they soon discover that they are not alone in their hiding-place. Next to them sits a small trembling man with a black beard and dark glasses. He intro-

duces himself, in German or broken English, as Lloyd Kaufmann. If the characters treat him kindly, he soon becomes talkative and starts cursing the religious fanatics. He produces a bundle of pamphlets which he distributes to the characters, and then starts spouting communist doctrine, proudly showing them his old party book, creased and soiled with blood, but still intact. Lloyd offers to show the characters around the area. He could be very helpful, but only for as long as he thinks that there is still a chance of winning them for the communist resistance. If he decides that they are hopeless, he instead tries to lure the characters into a rotting, fleshy mass.

Effects

PC

The characters share a strong feeling of community with each other, and with everyone they meet. They do not wish to excel and become increasingly apathetic.

NPC

People will very seldom be seen alone, but the down-and-out loafers sit around in small groups under the dilapidated tin-shack roofs, staring apathetically at nothing and awaiting the orders from their superiors.

TECHNICAL GAMING SOLUTION

The characters must succeed with a CHA throw, modified according to the table below, or else they will involuntarily submit to an imposed group hierarchy. The oldest character will become 'head of family,' and the rest will do exactly as he does. In order to break the pattern and act individually again, the characters must score a better CHA effect than that of their leader. The leader will have a +10 bonus to his effect.

Hod / Samael

Their footsteps were gaining on her, and she decided that her high heels had slowed her down too much. Kicking the expensive Chanel shoes into the gutter, she ran on barefoot through the heavy rain-filled air of the New York night.

'You whore! You'll get yours - just you wait and see!'

The echo of their shouts bounced between the unlit housefronts which refused to witness the chase. She jumped a fence, landing in the undergrowth, hoping for a place to hide. There she lay, her heart beating like a drum, watching her pursuers search through the bushes, their panting breaths coming closer and closer to the spot in the dirt to which she clung. 'I see her!' She started up in panic, but was at once knocked over by a man whose whiskey breath almost made her throw up on the spot. His thick fingers tore her skirt apart, and, accompanied by the appreciative laughter of his brothers-in-crime, he forced her head back to the wet tarmac. Then, suddenly, his grinning face turned into an exploding ball of blood and gore. His dead body sagged on top of hers, and she finally did throw up. She heard two more shots, and then at last she stood up, partly naked and covered in mud, and saw the police officer bending over the dead bodies of the other men.

As he turned around and approached her, through her tearful eyes, crying from both shock and relief, she was suddenly aware of his hideous features: his red eyes were burning like beacons and his grossly distorted mouth revealed a jaw-bone in which decaying tusks gleamed yellow in the light of the street-lamp. She froze, and

stood in motionless terror, watching him raise the gun yet another time.

Ever since Hod disappeared, the Death Angel, Samael, has tried to infiltrate Metropolis with his loyal subjects. He has erected a new palace, the Steel Heart, next to the ruins of Hod's, and he is now trying to win over the confused former followers and cults dedicated to his predecessor, and to bend them to his will. He has taken these measures to secure his own position, as he feels that Inferno is disintegrating.

Hod's Twin Palaces - the Steel Heart

A weeder stands crashed against a giant heap of junked iron. Some of its dented metal has been torn off and now lies motionless, a small trickle of brown sludge running from the broken vehicle. Following the small runnel downstream, the eye strays to the wide expanse of stone ruins, where other abandoned weeders sit caught by collapsed power lines. The once proud houses are now a pitiful sight: roofless, fallen in, and covered in black soot. Bitter battles have buried crushed bodies under the caved-in walls, or left them hanging from the now slack high-tension cables. Cartridges from firearms of a hundred makes are strewn over the ground. An almost skeletal man, his hair a greasy black tangle and his nails grown long and hard, appears suddenly from out of nowhere. His barely human face is pierced by several metal tubes, and needle-point teeth glint menacingly from his mouth as it opens to emit an incomprehensible hiss. Then he disappears into the maze of junk, just as suddenly as he had come. Sounds of paws treading on metal are all around, and





the shattered housefronts seem to lean inward as if to close out the sun. Through narrow paths and alleys allowing almost no passage, you push further into the ruins of Hod's palace. A chanting sound, interrupted now and again by sharp blows, comes from somewhere inside the chaotic waste. The ruins are getting lower. A lone weeder, still running but now useless, goes round and round in a perpetual circle. The field is cleared as far as a building which reaches almost a full mile into the grayish skies: a palace still, but a palace in ruins. Magnificent pillars of massive steel, thousands of feet high, have toppled and squashed everything which stood where they fell. Through these massive forms shines a faint light. The hardest buildings support passageways under the fallen pillars, which had once held up the top tiers of this temple of ruthlessness. Mutilated bodies arranged in strange patterns form a bloody path which the cannibal tribes take to see a steam-driven mass guillotine at work. This terrifying machine is made of black metal, now turned red from putting on a fine performance to please the gathered crowd, kept in breathless attention by the watchful eyes of the well-armed bounty hunters. Beyond the relentlessly chopping giant blade reclines a huge shiny body of stainless steel - the Steel Heart, a virtual heart of darkness and evil. Its outward appearance is that of a human heart which seems to pulsate in rhythm with the ghastly cries of the condemned and the blood-choked gurgles of those already executed. Drove of bloodthirsty cannibals are driven on by fanatical officers to search the area for fresh victims. Lowered from the moist steel surface, of the same cold material themselves, a number of drawbridges lead up to the palace's perversely ornate portals. Wiry old men wearing

shabby police uniforms and squeezing well used brass knuckles, stand on guard at the many entrances. Suddenly a gong is struck, drawing a jubilant cheer from hundreds of throats:

The banquet has begun.

Incidents

THE BANQUET

The famous Banquet is held in the vast inner halls of the Steel Heart palace. In these halls, under baroquely stylish steel railings, razides from Inferno sit side by side with lictors, to feast on living human flesh. The ceilings are lost beneath extravagant decorations, and the entire hall is brightly lit by immense melting-pots in which screaming humans are washed in gasoline and burnt alive. Every now and then one of Samael's servants appears with a freshly caught victim, who is first brought to the table of the highest ones where everyone gets his pick of a special part from the new addition to the menu. The rusty steel tables are placed in a circle around a wide circular pit. There, in a cloud of flying steel dust, malformed Satanists engage in brutal orgies, molesting the already mutilated bodies of naked men and women. Other sadistic games, always ending in death, are played out in a hempen net above the pit. A sweaty scent mixes with the harsh smells of blood, pain and suffering, which are carried away by the dry, warm wind of a dozen fans, fifty feet high, which stand at the far end of each hall. If the characters are captured outside the palace, they will very likely be brought here, where they are first displayed to the guests and then hung by their feet to witness the gross spectacle.

- If the characters can reach the knots at their ankles (STR roll of good effect) and untie them (AGL, good effect),

they could then climb the rope (Climb roll, normal effect) up to the ventilator shafts which form a complicated web in the hall's ceiling. Several of these shafts lead to the slippery exterior of the palace, and are consequently a possible route to escape. Other shafts end at the giant fan blades, which are already colored red with blood.

- If the characters don't succeed or even attempt to escape, they will be unbound, one by one, and tied to an iron cross and carried around to be offered to the misshapen but delighted subjects seated in the halls. Every now and then, a razide or a lictor will reach out to rip off a limb from the unfortunate character, while others settle for a chunk of meat.

THE ARREST

A fast vehicle comes skidding around a corner, and then rolls over. It catches fire, and the driver struggles frantically to free himself from the seat belt. In less than a minute, he is free and crawling away from the wreck, when the vehicle explodes. Then there is a sound of an approaching heavy motorcycle, which materializes seconds later in the form of an awesome machine carrying a policeman. He is dressed in the uniform of the highway patrol, wearing metal-plated leather boots and gloves of spit-and-polish. Casually toying with the badge that twinkles on his chest, he draws his truncheon and walks up to the man who has now stopped crawling. The man turns his pleading eyes to the characters, begging in a whimpering voice for help.

- If the characters refrain from helping the man, they will witness a two-second trial, followed by a ruthless execution. Then, the six-foot-plus policeman (considered a strong Metropolis inhabitant) turns to the characters, and, parting his burnt, bleeding lips, hisses,

'You have the right to remain silent... (etc.)' while at the same time rubbing the blood from his truncheon onto his right trouser leg and taking a step towards the characters.

- If the characters decide to run, the policeman will follow on his motorcycle. He will never give up. He is a one-man judge-jury-and-executioner appointed to enforce the law in the dark alleys of Metropolis. He is absolutely unconcerned whether a person is guilty or not. Punishment is an end to itself.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER

Having wandered for a long time under caved-in houses, through ground-level tunnels where the wet floors are strewn with debris and the cold leftovers of unspeakable meals, the characters see a blazing light up ahead. A swishing sound comes every three minutes, which is followed by hundreds of thick, meaty thuds (PER roll of acceptable effect). Suddenly, something comes tumbling from the tunnel, which could be mistaken in the darkness for a large rat but is actually a chopped-off human head (PER roll of good effect). When the characters reach the light at the tunnel's end, they find that they are standing inside a giant crater in which the floor and walls are covered by human skulls and rotting heads. Above the crater, silhouetted against the blazing sky, hovers the mass guillotine, its giant blade sending hundreds upon hundreds of human heads down into the already half-full cavity. Here and there in the unsteady shadows walk crouching cannibals looking for heads with flesh still fresh. The bounty hunters, however, are guarding the crater, and shoot the scavengers on sight.

If the characters emerge from the tunnel, they might be spotted by the bounty hunters (1-5 on a D20), in



which case they will certainly be shot at, and may even be chased by a flock of hungry cannibals (see below). A glittering prize, however, is hidden in this sea of decapitation (PER roll of good effect): it is a chainsaw equipped with a shoulder prop with a flame-thrower on the side. The weapon's former owner, a dead bounty hunter in black leathers, his dried-up skin barely able to contain his swelling abdomen, still holds it in a firm grip. It will take three Combat Rounds to force the saw from his stiff fingers, and with each round the chance

increases that the bounty hunter will explode, splattering the characters with his putrid entrails.

THE CANNIBALS

Suddenly, with loud crashing sounds, a huge heap of metal scrap is dropped into the almost impenetrable alley. The way ahead is now totally blocked. When the dust settles, a score of hairy shadows emerge from the broken frameworks of the collapsed houses. A backwards glance up the alley reveals a powerful silhouette slowly turning a club in his hand, its spiked head suggesting unbearable pain. At a signal from the dark shadow, the cannibals spring forward with drooling mouths, exposing yellow cracked teeth sharpened to needle points.

The cannibals' object is to capture the characters alive. The battle which ensues could develop as follows:

- Despite the fact that several cannibals have already fallen with a last rattling breath, both their aggressiveness and number seem to be growing. The characters, pressed back into a corner formed by a couple of collapsed walls, prepare for a last stand. Three cables hang down from one of the walls (PER roll of acceptable effect). Alas, they are standing on what seems to be metal scraps, and all three of the cables look conspicuously like live wires. Only one of them is, however. The others may be climbed (Electronics / Climb, of good effect). A wild chase follows over crumbling rooftops, with leaps over abysmal depths and futile attempts to hide behind riddled beams. Maybe they merely have to find a way back to ground-level. The possibilities are endless.
- Overpowered by the cannibals, the characters are tied by their hands and feet and taken through the rubble to the great Ritual Site. Thousands of rat-



- As before, the characters are overpowered. This time something a little more elaborate than the blunt edge of a mass guillotine awaits them: namely, the Banquet (see above).

rotted floor-boards, the lights were suddenly switched on. Robert saw the Major, disemboweled and swinging from the ceiling by his own entrails. A stooping creature with thick veins embossed on its skin stepped from the shadows, covered in blood and steaming bowels. To his own great amazement, Robert wasn't the least bit afraid of the repulsive creature; on the contrary, it inspired him with a crazy lust for blood. He felt he was moving in slow motion, picking up another gun from the floor, undoing the safety catch and then, his frothing mouth grinning hysterically, he followed the monster out into the trenches...

Netzach, the paranoid General, has found his calling in a war against the Legions of Darkness, in Elysium as in Metropolis. A former ally of Kether's in the never-ending war for power in Metropolis, Netzach is convinced that he himself must now assume the power

of the Demiurge, to keep the other Archons – as he believes in his paranoid fantasies – from using the present situation to bring about the awakening of mankind. His hatred is focused particularly on Malkuth, who openly tries to enlighten the mortals.

Old battered houses line the streets. The bullets and grenades have not spared a single building. The windows gape wide open, showing their sharp teeth of broken glass. Sooty skeletons of burned-out cars have found permanent parking spaces measured out by sacks of sand and barbed wire fences. Stray gusts of wind travel the lonesome alleys, rustling the torn curtains and swinging the creaking doors. Moving on, the houses grow more and more like proper ruins, where still reeking tear-gas grenades, leaking oil drums and half-rotted bodies lie scattered in the bombed-out streets. Dull explosions and chattering machine-guns now become an unavoidable part of the setting. A sharp smell sweeps in from the endless sea of stones beyond the ruins, reeking with the gasoline smell of napalm, combined with the acrid stink of burning flesh. Far off in the distance appears the sleek surface of Netzach's palace, shooting up out of the scarred landscape which is littered with wrecked armored vehicles. The closer one approaches the hexagonal building, the shorter grows the distance between the trenches, some filled to overflowing with dead bodies. Smoke from anti-tank weapons drifts by like low-flying clouds. Suddenly an infantry company emerges from the mists for a crazy attack on an objective which isn't even in sight. The heavy clatter of the caterpillar treads drowns out their battle cries, and then volleys from a trusty old T 34 rips their bodies to shreds. Stern-faced, determined soldiers sharpen their bayonets



in bunkers of welded concrete with barbed-wire reinforcements. A harsh sergeant is executing his own wounded, then once again shoulders his heavy flame-thrower and, with a hysterical laugh, charges through the oil-filled smoke of a burning tracked vehicle, firing as he goes. Close to the palace are concentration camps, where a forlorn execution patrol searches the grounds for a prospective victim. Well-armed bastions keep watch over the roads leading into the palace, roads which must frequently be cleared of dead bodies and vehicle wrecks. The massive palace walls are alternately of stone and armored plate, and have thick protruding spears of steel. Minor towers support machine-gun platforms where men of the well-armed guards are engaged in guard duty. Highways turn into multi-lane tunnels leading straight into the central palace. Suddenly, four or five rugged individuals appear at the palace. Their torn leathers reveal swatches of dirty blood-clotted skin. They march briskly over the concrete, their partly organic weapons shiny with moisture and smelling of fresh blood. They are received by men of their own kind, armed with heavy chainsaws, who force them down into a tunnel. They are pushed through tarmac tunnels coated with thick plumbing, led over steel bridges and brought down elevator shafts until, finally, they approach the growing noises which greet all the unfortunate new arrivals to the Arena. Here, the odors of fear mix with those of sweat and burning oil. Shrieks of terror announce that the games have started at the Arena. These games feature fights to the death, man vs. man, man vs. machine, or free-for-alls. It is a never-ending battle against time and deadly enemies who live but for the pleasure of a slow kill.

Incidents

THE MASS GRAVE

Suddenly the ground gives way at the characters feet, and they slide down a steep slope (PER + AGL rolls of normal effect, or they will receive a light wound for each failure), to land among a multitude of corpses. They have fallen into a mass grave where soldiers lie, shot to pieces or burnt to a crisp, side by side with innocent civilian victims, including women and children.

Equipment finds can be made from the soldiers (PER throw of good effect will uncover different weapons) by characters inclined to dig into the cadaverous mess.

THE RECRUITMENT

All around Netzach's palace, constant battles are being fought, although the reasons have long since been forgotten. Stray officers search the grounds trying to recruit new outfits or reinforcements for the old, decimated ones.

A heavily decorated Major riding in a tracked armored vehicle stops and tries to recruit the characters. He doesn't persuade, but rather commands them to come with him. If the characters refuse, he will become aggressive and threaten to court-martial them. If they persist, he tries to kidnap the characters with the help of his few remaining soldiers (1D5 + 3 men), and they will then be equipped and used for a frontal assault on a well-armed bunker.

D-DAY

This incident includes a means to get the characters into Metropolis, which may be edited out if necessary. They are traveling by boat in a heavy sea, and the characters are all very sea-sick. The captain offers them some pills which he claims are the perfect remedy. Having taken them, the characters experience a violent shaking of the ship, and then all



Pointe du Hoc

—Sergeant Lowery!
We can't—

Private McGowan was engulfed in a torrent of fire from the bunker above them and fell screaming down the slope. Lowery quickly looked around: Giles, Pratt, Kane — four of them were all that remained of the platoon. Down on the beach Mac made a hissing noise as he tumbled into the water. Four men left out of forty. They were prepared for losses, but no one had hinted at the kind of resistance they had met. The Krauts — as Lowery called the demons, lacking any other adequate term — had taken everything they could throw at them. Hand grenades prompted scornful laughter. The sappers went quietly up the hill with their satchel charges. When the platoon attacked, after waiting ten fruitless minutes for the explosions, they had found them impaled on their own bayonets. Half the platoon was wiped out when the charges finally exploded. Not a shot had been fired from the bunker. The torrent of fire that hit Mac was the first sign of life from the hideous creatures in five minutes, apart from the mocking laughter and the howling. They waited — but what for? For the hunger to return, so that they could go hunting? Lowery shuddered at the thought of the werewolf-like creatures who plowed through two groups of well-trained commandos,

lights go out. From the darkness, a stern American voice shouts at them: 'Move it, move it, move it! Get your butt out, soldier, or I'll kick your f—ing ass all the way to Germany!'

The characters discover that they are dressed in the uniforms of the U.S. Army. They each carry an automatic rifle and other military equipment, such as ropes, grapnels, hand grenades, etc. The stern of their small landing craft opens up into a hatchet door, and the faint light of dawn comes gleaming in. A cliff hovers in front of them, about 150 feet high. The waves come crashing into the small boat which is violently rocked, and the characters are passed by soldiers running out of the craft. If the characters remain on board, the officer will force them out at the point of his gun.

Grenade and shellfire explosions blossom in the sandy soil of the beach, and the loud crashes are amplified by the surrounding cliffs. Heavy machine-gun chatter from the background mixes with the dying screams of Darby's Rangers dropping from the cliffs. Others, who have made it all the way up the knotted ropes, struggle with the barbed wire which separates them from a German bunker.

The officer shoves the characters towards a grappling-rope. His once reassuring face has now cracked into a twisted mocking grin. Yellow tusks protrude from his pierced, bloody cheeks. His weapon has merged into his body and is lined with pulsating veins. This incident could develop in different ways:

- The characters could climb the ropes and take part in the attack on the German cannon fort at Pointe-du-Hoc. It will take three Climb rolls of normal effect to scale the ropes successfully. The barbed wire can be cut by wire-

cutters in their packs, but it takes three Combat Rounds during which they are shot at from the German bunkers.

- They could overpower their officer and the captain, and desert with the landing craft. Leaving the beach, they will instantly come under heavy fire from German guns. For every combat round the GM should roll a D10, and, scoring a 1 or 2, the boat is hit and sinks. The characters must score EGO rolls of good effect, or else they receive light wounds. Once in the water, the characters must either swim for shore or be picked up by the allied forces. The GM may use this extreme peril to create a tear in the Illusion which brings the characters back to reality, or he can leave them stranded on the French coast.
- They might be captured by German troops, following a failed attempt to blow up the bunkers. They are then brought back through German lines and wind up in a damp cellar, where a skinless humanoid will torture them with his steel whip to make them reveal the purpose of the attack, and what code words are used for communicating with the command ship in the bay. If they invent a quick answer, they are left alone for a while, but soon the torture is resumed. During one of these reprieves, the GM may let them escape, and finish the incident with a wild hunt through the endless bunker tunnels.

THE ARENA

Six starved, barely human figures suddenly appear. Their tangled hair sticks out wildly in all directions and their dilapidated leather jackets and torn army trousers barely cover their repulsive bodies. They are circling the characters, waving chainsaws and trying to force them into a side tunnel, leading in

under the palace. If the characters resist, they are attacked by these lost souls who will not relent until they are killed or knocked unconscious. If, however, the characters comply, they will be brought through damp tunnels and over slippery steel beams (AGL throw of normal effect not to fall into a shaft). After ten minutes' progress, the tunnels start to resound with excited shouts (PER roll of normal effect will identify them as, 'Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!') which come from the Arena.

They enter the wide open space of an amphitheater, whose walls are a loose-knit metal mesh. The Arena floor is encumbered with constructions of steel and concrete, some erected almost like a city block, while others are scattered helter-skelter. Chains hang from the ceiling, and the floor is ceaselessly swept by search lights. In the center of the space hangs a platform on which an overweight subhuman character is perched, commenting continuously on what takes place in the Arena. The other side of the net is crowded by drooling, mutilated beings, who bestow their loud cheers on the fighters locked in deadly combat against either each other or the vile killing machines which lurk in the shadows.

The mutants try to force the characters into the Arena. Unless they refuse and try to escape, they will be made to fight. The GM could let them fight

either each other or some of the opponents listed later on. If they win, they will be brought to stone prison cells with floors covered with clotted blood. There they will await their next fight.

Effects

PC

The characters experience a creepy feeling of unpleasantness. They feel persecuted and instantly mistrust anybody they meet. Everyone is their enemy who must be defeated at any cost. Paranoia and anxiety make them question everything, and they will challenge everyone with their views.

NPC

People behave aggressively towards each other. They are as paranoid as the characters themselves and as alienated from trust. Prone to violence and utterly selfish, they will go any lengths to protect their own interests.

TECHNICAL GAMING SOLUTION

The negative effects from a wound (i.e. inferior aim, fewer actions and deficient stamina), will not be felt by the characters when in the vicinity of Netzach's palace. But they will suffer the consequences retroactively. When, leaving the area, each light wound they have sustained is supplemented by a scratch, and each serious wound by a light one.

scattering them like rag dolls. Bleeding, screaming men were dragged back up the slope and into the bunker. Fifteen minutes later they were tossed back as skeletons, picked clean. This was too much. He didn't care if he died. It might be better to die than have to live with those frightful memories.

Traverse and Blockhurst were joined together in the sickest way, as if a surgeon had chopped them into twenty pieces, thrown the pieces in the air, and then sewed them back together. Rogers had returned from the first failed attack babbling heaven prayers to a God unknown to Lowery, naked, his skin flayed. The list of the dead was long, but each man's morbid and unnatural fate stood branded on Lowery's retina. Death would be emancipation, even the fates he had witnessed.

—Forward! For God and country!

Four madly-laughing tatterdemalions stormed up the slope, shooting wildly and cursing. They reached the bunker thirty seconds later. It was empty and desolate. They collapsed, weeping like children. They were still weeping when the reinforcements arrived, and they still wept forty years later when they died, one by one, within the course of a minute, ghastly grins carved on their lips.



Geburah

The door slammed shut with a harsh clanging noise. Behind the echo of the collision between the hardened-steel door and the mottled concrete wall rang the last word of the judge: "Guilty!" Jordan was overcome by shivers, the cell walls were bitterly cold. "Guilty of what", he asked himself. It was he who had reported the theft of his car to the police. Then he remembered how the prosecutor had brought in the little boy.

'John, wasn't that his name? John Epswood, the kid from second grade. Why was he smiling in that malicious way, and what had he been talking about? Sure, we used to hassle him a little but we didn't mean any harm. Broken back, well, he'd fallen out of a tree. Was that our fault? We were only kidding, he could have told us that he was scared'.

The anguish came suddenly, the guilty admission, the shameful confession. The darkness around Jordan seemed to dissolve. The red-hot iron was pressed against his lips. Bloody hands forced him down to the floor; the pain seemed unreal but the sudden din of the chainsaw gave no room for doubt: this was not a dream.

Geburah once had tried to keep mankind in check with rules and regulations. But now his influence in Elysium is slowly fading, usurped by his collaborator, Binah, who employs religious ethics as her means of control. This has freed Geburah to focus his powers on Metropolis, where he is in open feud with both Netzach and Tiphareth.

Geburah's Palace

The desolate concrete flatland surrounding the gray façade of Geburah's palace is swept by hot winds carrying dry clouds of pulverized concrete and stone dust. Sinister constructions in rusty metal shoot out of the ground like giant claws. Parts of these torturous machines, which have long since gone out of use, are jostled by the breeze, making piercing squeals. The sweeping wind resounds in the cracked concrete pipelines and old drained conduits with a dull swishing whisper, and the palace's square-angled features seem almost as if alive, shimmering in the scorching heat. With only a few doors and windows, which are small and placed far apart, the massive building bears a strong resemblance to a cube-like mountain. Closer to its sparse,

majestic form, streets are discernible on the flat ground, as are huge piles of scattered metal junk. The streets cross at right angles, skirting the lesser buildings which now are in ruins, or the vast piles of metal junk which take a proud part in the plain's topography. Viaducts and tunnels pass over and under the no longer functional pipelines. Gallows poles shoot from huge cadaverous heaps of rotting bodies. Still closer to the palace, bodies hang from the poles, slowly swinging in the hot wind. The decomposing process is quickened by the ever-scorching heat, and the unbearable stench of decay is inhaled with every breath. Next to the gallows which line the roads where they are already overshadowed by the anonymous palace, stand metal cages welded shut. Atrophied limbs of mummified bodies stick out through the iron grillwork, clearly stating that this is a place where all hope has fled, and where judgment and punishment are now the only ruling factors. The creaking snares and the swishing of the dust lend a finishing touch to the feeling of absolute unreality, until, at last, a few living figures appear. Dressed in clothes which have long since lost their colors, and accompanied by a group of strict, knotted men, the judges patrol the desert. The unfortunate souls they catch will be judged and sentenced without remorse, their old henchmen carrying out the punishment with evil instruments and unfeeling hands. Nobody is innocent in their eyes: everybody has committed at least one little crime. And, although the punishment may vary, the condemned will be lost to pain and suffering for the rest of their lives. A few despairing cries come from sporadic window rectangles, and soon the sounds of gross ritual punishment ring out all around the palace's vicinity. Pipes ending at an even level

with the sparse portals dispose the results of the conscientiously executed punishments. The steaming, bloody sludge creeps slowly down the wall, where it sticks and clots or finally makes contact with the stinking fly-covered heaps which ring the palace.


Inside the building, the screams of the condemned ring even louder in the high palace vaults. Torture chambers and prison cells share the same iron bars, lining endless labyrinthine corridors lighted by fluorescent tubes. A monstrous judge's pulpit is prominently placed beneath an unsupported, hovering black club of iron. Fettered prisoners are brought to the blazing mass punishment halls, by ruthless guards with bare, gleaming torsos. Even here, judges and executioners hold summary trials, the light supplied by glowing hot steel used for punishment. Bounty hunters lurk in the shadows looking for lucrative prey to be brought back before the judges and given their proper judgments. The court-room walls are lined with sinners, standing in wait under embossed stone symbols of judgment and arcane instruments of punishment, the use of which have long been forgotten. This is a place of uncompromised despair, where repentance is of no use.

Incidents

THE PSYCHOPATH

From the deep shadows behind damp dripping bars come despairing moans. The ordinary corridor through which the characters were walking has suddenly turned into a prison ward. The illusionary wall of prison bars is occasionally solidified by the reinforced steel of the isolation cells' doors. The cells are all dark, and mostly empty. But every now and then something will be heard moving in the shadows. One larger cell is even lit by a naked light bulb,





Mysterious escape of the Dresden Cannibal!

VIENNA (Reuters) Werner Krawietz, the 'Dresden Cannibal', escaped custody yesterday in Vienna. The circumstances of the escape are not clear. How could Europe's most demented child killer escape from a police Headquarters isolation cell? Bribery and negligence are suggested, and a scandal seems unavoidable. The minister of Justice is holding a press conference this evening.

Krawietz was arrested last week after having been the subject of a two year manhunt. He was captured as he held a kindergarten class in an isolated cabin in the Alps. He had murdered several children and eaten their flesh before the police could intervene.

which swings on a cord from the ceiling and makes the shadows of the few pieces of furniture move in a hallucinatory pattern. In one of the chairs sits a man who frantically chews on the torn armcloth of his leather jacket. When the characters appear, he starts up, clutching desperately to the bars: 'I'm innocent! Get me out of here!'

He pleads with the characters that they must let him out, stating that he has been falsely condemned under the most irregular circumstances. His lawyer had promised to appeal the sentence, but now he has been sitting in this cell for months without seeing a single person. He shows the characters a small box full of cockroaches, his only food during his imprisonment.

- The characters could help him in two different ways: one, by shooting the lock out with a gun (the lock yields with a serious damage), or two, by overpowering the sleeping guard (strong Metropolis standards, armed with truncheon and revolver) who keeps all keys. The guard sits a little further down the hall, but he is hidden by shadows. If the characters liberate the prisoner, he will be extremely grateful but also very much afraid and anxious to stay in the characters' company. After a while, however, his features twist into an expression of sick hysteria. He starts shaking violently and coughing up blood. Then, suddenly he darts into a side corridor, screaming. Later, if the characters return to Elysium, the GM could expose them to a short newspaper story about a gruesome mass murder of little children: a psychopath hijacked a school bus, and having driven it to a mountain cabin, killed and ate all the children in less than a week. If the characters score a PER roll of normal effect they will recognize the

psychopath as the man from the Metropolis cell. The story also says that the man had miraculously escaped the police.

- If the characters leave him in the cell, and later return to Elysium, they will read a newspaper story about a man who was falsely convicted of murder, and later died in his cell. By scoring a PER roll of acceptable effect, they recognize the man from the cell. They will later suffer nightmares (1D6 times) in which they see themselves decapitating the innocent man in front of a giant judge with leering lizard's eyes. (If they fail an EGO roll of normal effect, they will also meet with a -2 mental balance deduction per bad dream.)

THE CURSED

Behind the rusty corpse of an old execution machine a fleeting shadow suddenly appears, and then just as suddenly is gone. There follows a long suspenseful silence broken by (PER roll, acceptable effect) the cold clicking sound of the bolt of an automatic rifle being pulled back. Next round, a man jumps out and opens fire on the characters with a Kalashnikov. He is dressed in a business suit which has seen better days, as have his striped tie and scratched glasses. He is desperately trying to kill the characters, who, however, are surrounded by plenty of debris to take cover from (average AGL). When the man, whose name is Rudolf Arnstadt, has emptied his rifle, he attacks with a letter-knife. He will not give up until he has received a deadly wound. Then he starts he whimper, while his life's blood spills into the desert sand. If the characters ask him any questions, he immediately starts to tell them his life story.

He, Rudolf Arnstadt, formerly Morris Cohen, Jerry Bronson, Claire Goulart,

Frederico Vasari... he will go on and on until the characters stop him. He then shoots a contemptuous stare at the character who gave him the final, deadly blow.

'So, you've murdered me again. I bet you thought you'd never see me again after the last time. You slime - you lousy creep! But I just couldn't escape from you with your sharp nose locked on the scent of my blood. You, a puny mortal who can barely see the world around you, the true world. Few people have grasped the bitter truth of the never-ending cycles, the sentence, the prison, the curse. The curse which is cast on us all. But by your ceaseless acts of murder, I finally understand. I know. You have taken me across the border. Ant yet I shall never know freedom. You have transported me to an even grimmer hell. Haaha, haarrrr... I had just barely started to be reborn, and who do I meet? Yes, who - if not Dr. Victor Zuckerkandl, who 'never committed malpractice on a single patient in his life' - Herman Whitman, using a meat hook, unless I am mistaken - or Adrian Villaert, who was drunk and drove up onto a crowded sidewalk on Christmas Eve in 1932. Many, many others, but always the same. The evil is in your eyes, you cannot hide from me. And now, (name of character) you did it again! How does it feel? My only hope is that you, here in this land of judge... Haaha haaaahh... of judgment, I say, shall get your proper punishment. Aaaaaaaarrrrghhhh! It's starting all over again. Aaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrghhh!'

He dies with an inscrutable smile on his lips. No further explanations are needed. The GM may move on to an incident involving a trial (see the Trial).

THE TRIAL

This incident is also a bridging sequence from Elysium to Metropolis.

The Game Master must appoint one or at most a few of the characters to the leading part/parts, i.e. accused of a crime (henceforth called 'the Guilty Party'). The crime should have been committed during a previous gaming session and it must be a murder. Those of the characters who are innocent of this particular crime will participate as witnesses.

One morning comes a knock on the Guilty Party's door: it is the police, arresting him for murder. A couple of days later, the other characters receive a summons to the trial as witnesses. The Guilty Party is taken in a well-guarded police wagon to a unusually shabby police station. Following an endless cross-examination about the time and circumstances of the crime, the Guilty Party is thrown into a damp cell which is shared by an elderly drunkard whose clothes are becoming increasingly hard to tell apart from his skin. The old-timer hardly answers when spoken to, and never more than a curt, barely audible, hoarse whisper, such as:

'To live is to sin, and dying is just the beginning of another crime.'

If the Guilty Party wishes to contact his friends or a lawyer, he will be given a telephone, but as the overweight prison guard informs him, it can be used for one call only. The telephone is unreliable, and whatever number the Guilty Party punches, he is disconnected. The day after the arrest, the Guilty Party is visited by a lanky man of nondescript eye-color. His hands are ice-cold, his skin is all dried-up and his cheeks display the multitude of scars of a careless shaver. He introduces himself as Ralph Lister, lawyer of the Guilty Party. In spite of his strange appearance, he makes a very reassuring impression, repeatedly saying things like '...this will work itself out - just you wait and

Wrongly Convicted Man found Dead in Cell

VIENNA (Reuters) Werner Krawietz was found dead in his cell this morning. His head was almost torn off. According to the Medical Examiner, Dr. Meier, the injury could not possibly have been self-inflicted.

Werner Krawietz was convicted despite his denials of a series of sensational child murders in a scandalous trial last year. Much of the evidence was fabricated by the police, and the chief witness perjured himself on several counts to get Krawietz convicted. With the proof of a solid alibi last week, it was only a matter of days before a release was ordered. An internal investigation of the prison's personnel is ongoing.

see...' The next day the Guilty Party is taken to the court-house. With chains rattling from his ankles, he enters a courtroom where bums in dark ragged coats and muttering old hags fill the spectators' seats. Strange diagrams and ancient symbols decorate the dusty, dark walls. Its tall windows admit darkness rather than light.

The Gamemaster may draw out the trial for as long as it pleases him. Endless pieces of evidence are brought in: fingerprints, the murder weapon, a video-tape recording made by a passer-by, photos, the doubtful social position of the Guilty Party, his previous criminal record, his neighbors' testimony to his strange behavior, etc. The other characters are forced to testify and will be heard by a lictor, who hides most of his hideous physiognomy under a footlong cape. Every now and then the burnt skin or the lashing snakelike tongue will peep out from under the black hood covering his bald scalp.

Unless the other characters interfere, the Guilty Party will be locked into a dark, dripping prison cell which proves to have a parallel existence in both Elysium and Metropolis (see 'Police Station' in the chapter 'Cracks in the Lie'). The Guilty Party may later be able to escape from the cell, only to find himself in Metropolis. The Game Master might prefer to build this into an episode where the other characters must go to Metropolis to rescue their imprisoned friend.

THE HANGING

People are gathered near a stony hill to watch a mass hanging. The twenty or so unfortunates are hooded with a cloth bag. One by one they are taken down a low wooden bridge which ends at a gallows. A man wearing a showy spangled suit passes through the audience offering a large urn from which each specta-

tor must draw a piece of paper. A lottery number is drawn, and whoever has the lucky number has won the great honor of executing the law of Geburah. The characters must each draw a ticket, and the next winning number will, of course, correspond to that of a character. The one about to be hanged is a small frightened boy who keeps calling for his mother.

- If the character obediently walks up to the gallows and pulls the worn lever to activate the drop mechanism, the crowd will cheer but the character is given a new disadvantage, for instance Depression.
- If the character refuses, the crowd is enraged and calls out for vengeance. A group (1D6+4 people) of half-rotten zombie-like people attack the character and drag him up to the bridge to be hanged. If the character tries to pretend that he does not hold the winning ticket, an old hag peeking over his shoulder cries out her heartfelt congratulations, attracting the crowd's attention to the character's stroke of luck.

Effects

PC

The characters feel that someone is watching them. They imagine that prying eyes are everywhere, waiting for them to make a mistake. They feel the presence of something standing in judgment over them. They are frightened and very careful.

NPC

A wide variety of savage types can be found around Geburah's palace. They all fall into either of two categories: the sinners and the punishers. The punishers stage summary trials in which there is no use to plead for justice. The sinners repeatedly proclaim their innocence and shamelessly beg for mercy.

In the palace	-5
Very close	-4
Near (within sight)	-3
Farther away (without sight)	-2
Close to the domains of another Archon	-1

TECHNICAL GAMING SOLUTION

The characters find it increasingly hard to lie or to keep their secrets. With every passing hour they receive a nega-

tive cumulative bonus to the effect of all their CHA related skills. The bonus depends on the distance from the palace, which leaves the judgment of its extent to the Game Master.




Kether

It was dark when they woke up. The palace gardens weren't lit at night, so Joshua and Adèle had to feel their way out. The large hedge which had been their playground as well as their love-nest, now seemed like an endless maze forever turning in new and unpredictable directions. The rain-heavy leaves blocked away the sky and the icy chill went right through their light summer clothes. Adèle was already shivering, and was afraid that they might never find their way out. Suddenly they were caught in the blinding light of a search beacon. A large old-fashioned horse-coach drove up, the hunchbacked coachman climbed down to open its creaking door to them, and, rather than stay in the cold outside, they accepted the invitation. Inside the coach, it was decidedly warmer, but there was hardly any light. A tall, thin man wearing a felt-brimmed hat sat facing them. His eyes were hidden by the hat-brim, and his feeble lips let out a hissing breath. The man raised his chalk-white fingers, which were pierced by rusty nails, to remove his unsociable

headgear. His horrid death-marked face was badly ravaged by acid, and then it split into a blood-stained smile.

Hours later, the coach approached the palace, which was surrounded by a crowd of many thousands, although no one seemed to pay any attention to the injured young man pinned down and writhing in agony on top of it. Joshua fought a lonely battle against the pain, driven mad by the cracked voice of his beloved fiancée whose agonized shrieks penetrated to the roof.

He was just as alone two years later, sitting on his small cot in the dark dormitory. The moldy mattress reeked of rotting death, and, in front of him, several mutilated slaves were locked in combat on the floor, fighting over the fresh meat of a dying cell-mate. Unable to cope any longer, he closed his eyes and was instantly haunted by the recurring vision of Adèle, the last time he had seen her: ravaged and defiled, with the skinless man poking his shiny white skull around inside her abdomen, looking for the choicest bits.



Kether's activities in Elysium are limited. His servants, who can be found among the Royal families of Europe, are more observers than active participants. Metropolis is the main concern of Kether's ambitions. Kether is the Archon who strives most actively to gain control of the Citadel of the Demiurge and form a seat of power. His elaborate plans are executed by loyal generals and well-disciplined lackeys who all have their place in the hierarchy.

Kether's Palace

Kether's palace consists of an enormous obelisk shaped building, its surface covered in wet, verdigrised copper. Its base is broad and massive and stretches upwards until it is lost in the fog and darkness above. Along the slippery, steep walls, electric cables cling, until they crawl snakelike into the building through some of the many openings, gaping maws which let out hot, stale smoke from the nether regions of the palace. Rusty ladders, whose ends cannot even be divined, compete with the cables for space on the walls, and rare fan vents, their propeller blades gleaming with neon light from within. Growths of stone and metal, black and sleek, form alleyways and mazes in the parks of seemingly endless proportions that surround the palace. Here and there, this 'flora' is broken by enormous ponds of oily, smooth water. Tracks have been made in the muddy soil at the water's edge, the tracks of clawed feet, of slithering scaled bodies and others quite beyond identification. Statues and busts of leaders and rulers grow more and more common as one approaches the palace. Some represent human leaders, some are vaguely humanoid, yet others distance them-

selves completely from our race by virtue of their tentacles, exposed spinal columns and amorphous bodies. Some of these sculptures are mechanically articulated and execute jerky motions to the sound of rusted machinery. Here, in the gloom of the palace, processions occasionally appear from the shadows. Dirty slaves, their backs slashed by whips, slowly drag great metal wagons loaded with building materials or corpses. Steam engines, puffing and blowing, pull the wagons that transport Kether's higher servants, mainly lictors, who must be revered by all in their passage. Offenders run the risk of swift punishment at the hands of the Lictor's bodyguard. These stately men with razor-sharp teeth and piercing eyes dress in oilskin coats branded with the marks of Kether and their respective masters. Their arms are a ritual sword, along the blade of which runs a gun-barrel. Buckshot is their most convincing argument to get a sinner down on his knees. Here and there, large throngs of loyalists have gathered to honor their lord Kether and listen to speeches. The speeches consist of meticulously phrased tape recordings that now are worn through overuse and are practically unbearable to listen to. The stained loudspeakers that are placed along the base of the palace emit long, jarring signals on occasion, upon which the numerous slaves shuffle their way towards some of the many gaping doors and openings in the palace. Once there, they divide and plod up the numberless stairs that constitute the greater part of the palace's base. Some disappear into great elevators with iron gates, designed to carry hundreds. The elevators sink deep towards the nether regions. The walls are decorated with low reliefs in black marble, depicting different important individuals in the palace hierarchy.

Others are shaped as intricate symbols of Kether's power. Even inside it is damp, and running water has worn furrows along the broad stairs. Fans of huge dimension hang suspended by cables from the darkness above, slowly whipping the warm damp air. The shuffling noise of the slaves that seems to come from every corner is the respiration of the palace. A stifled, warm and fateful pulse.

Incidents

THE PROCESSION

A large wagon pulled by a hundred slaves approaches. The slaves are thrashed by sweating, naked foremen whose arms end in long whips of twined skin. The wagon is flanked by the bodyguards of the lictor within. People step aside and respectfully bow their heads. From the wagon, the screams of tortured children can be heard, mixed with a gurgling, evil laugh.

The Game Master has several choices.

- The wagon passes and people return to their chores.
- Suddenly one of the foremen approaches and signals to the characters to join the ranks which have become thinner as some of the much-abused slaves have fallen to the ground, never to rise again. If the characters join, they must pull the wagon around the outer walls of the palace for hours before they are driven down to the workers' quarters in one of the great elevators (See Workers). Every hour they pull the wagon they must make a CON throw or be whipped by the foreman. Should they try to escape, the foreman will follow, but will not pursue them very far. However, the bodyguard will open fire with his shotgun, aiming to kill.
- The bodyguards find the behavior of


- one or all of the characters lacking in reverence. Three of them step forward, and try to bring the offenders to their knees to lick their boots. They do not hesitate to use their swords or the shotguns affixed along the blades.
- Should the characters try to rush the wagon in order to save the screaming children, they must face the assembled bodyguards.

WORKERS

The characters find themselves in an elevator together with a hundred or so slaves and workers. The immense elevator does not stop till after a downward journey of ten minutes. From afar, a constant hammering can be heard, and the air is filled with an amber mist. Huge halls spread out and the many workers obediently walk away in single file to the various cement-gray buildings that serve as their homes. Agentii make sure that they do not stray from their allotted cement path. The characters are brusquely shoved towards one of the large houses.

- Should they resist, the Agentii attack, simultaneously attracting some radiakks nearby with their piercing shrieks (another 1D10 will appear in a round). If the characters are able to defeat their adversaries, they can try to get back to the surface again. The elevators are operated by a central command according to a time table. The next will depart upwards in five hours.
- Whether they allow themselves to be pushed towards the house, or should the Agentii and the radiakks defeat them, they will sooner or later be thrown into the building. The door is locked behind them and the darkness seems solid. Sobbing can be heard, and muted, fleshy sounds echo over the wet floor. A toothless man with bloodshot eyes and hair all over his





body suddenly lights a candle in front of them. He gestures for them to follow him. If they follow they will be led between many-layered wooden bunks that stretch up into the darkness. In them lie exhausted slaves and mutilated bodies that serve as food for the others. Yet others are empty, but the blood-stained wood, yellowed by human skin, testify to their having been recently occupied. The man hisses illegible things, and soon arrives at a dank corner of the single room in the large building. He points excitedly at a number of unoccupied beds meant for the characters. This is their new home. Suddenly a tremendously strong light from the ceiling is turned on and a sharp report rings through the hall. The man rushes away in horror and all in sight cower in their beds, shuddering with fear. A PER roll with normal effect reveals a group of radiakks (1D5+5) who appear to be patrolling the hall. They stop here and there to torment some poor wretch who has drawn attention to himself. Sooner or later, they will approach the characters. Instead of fighting, the characters can lie low in order to explore the large, damp dormitory in search of a way out. The doors are equipped with a time lock but there is a fan vent. Either they try to slip through the huge fan blades (AGL/PER throw with good effect or 1D3 serious wounds) or they destroy the fan. Should they start shooting or blowing things up, they will attract more radiakks.

REBIRTH

The loudspeaker on the wall starts to roar and shriek. Finally the cacophony ends but is soon followed by a cracked voice:

'Bow to the Lord, our ruler and father! Kiss the ground that has been

honored by his presence!'

The ragged individuals who have gathered kneel in the dust. Some are too exhausted or too handicapped to do so, but are assisted by their comrades.

'The time is near, a great leader shall be born! A failure in Hell shall be made into our success, here in our Paradise.'

A procession makes its way through the crowd. A number of men with chalk-white limbs, clad in long coats, carry a large slab of concrete on their shoulders. The concrete bears the inscription 'Blut und Ehre' (PER throw to good effect). Other men carry tattered banners decorated with swastikas. Last comes a wagon upon which a lictor preens himself. In his hands he holds a strange glass jar. Through the yellow liquid that fills the jar, a human brain can be clearly distinguished. The wagon is flanked by attentive bodyguards.

Effects

PC

The characters' faith in loyalty towards a guiding ideal or a person of higher rank becomes more apparent in them.

NPC

Humans all have some form of rank within a social system of strict hierarchy. Whether these are military grades or unspoken ranks, they keep to their station and are loyal to their superiors. Nor will they tolerate that one of lower rank (a character, for instance) breaks the social code. Then they may use violence to cow the 'freethinkers'.

TECHNICAL GAMING SOLUTION

All deeds performed by a character that have a directly detrimental effect on Kether's power are punished by -5 on the effect. For instance, should the characters try to shoot a servant of Kether in order to pass through a door,

they get -5 deducted from the effect. However, if they try to climb a wall in order to avoid being run over by an armored car, there is no negative affect. Actions that favor Kether, on the other

hand, receive a positive bonus of +5, as in the case of a character shooting a malefactor, a rebel, or a still-freethinking comrade.



Malkuth

Slowly Susan awoke as the sun's rays filtered in through the blinds. Tiger was asleep on her belly, when all of a sudden she was seized with violent cramps and had to shoo the cat away as she doubled over in pain. Thoughts went flashing through her barely conscious brain: Was this the labor pains already? What about the abortion? Had it failed? Was she still pregnant after all? Then, as suddenly as they had started, the pains stopped. Shocked but relieved, she made her way to the kitchen and poured a cup of cold, stale coffee from the night before. She sat down at the kitchen table, gazing out at the still-wet streets. It was then that she saw the paper, which had somehow gotten stuck under the toaster. She disengaged it without particular interest, and unfolding it, turned her eyes to the blue, typed words. There was such a cold, impersonal feeling to a hospital report, and feelings of unease traveled down her spine and settled like a lump of ice in her belly. Susan tried to argue

it away: she really had a rewarding job, and she just couldn't allow a single night's folly to ruin her entire career. And then the pains were back, even stronger than before, and she fell from the chair to cringe on the kitchen floor. Images from the operation invaded her mind: men and women dressed in white smiling and putting a cool cloth on her forehead; the doctor speaking soothingly all through the operation. There was something that didn't quite match: she remembered a sudden sideways glance, the small quivering creature which fought desperately to break free from the doctor's hands. Susan's eyes turned inside out and her convulsed body relaxed, as her recently implanted womb burst, her stomach erupted with blood and gore, and something oozed out onto the kitchen floor, eagerly lapping at the mess.

Malkuth, the rebel, acts entirely according to the plan of the Demiurge in helping humans to awake from captivity by means of science, technology

The Nachstahl Laboratory

Malkuth is unique among the Archons, the only one who uses a human as her envoy. Vibeke Nachstahl, whose mother promised her unborn child to Malkuth, dreams of interrupting blocked human senses, which she will do by cracking the genetic structure the Demiurge implanted when humanity was sent into captivity. Nachstahl's laboratory used to be in Geneva, where she had close contact with the foremost genetic scientists of Europe. She almost found a solution, much too close in the opinions of the other archons' envoys. They joined forces in bloody action, destroying all that could be found in the laboratory and maiming the researchers. Shaken by the loss, Vibeke fled to South Africa. There she slowly and secretly established a new laboratory beneath the streets of Johannesburg. Her experimental methods are more direct and more desperate. Where she earlier experimented on dogs, she now uses destitute citizens. The Nachstahl laboratory looks like a torture chamber, and the experiments often tear a portal to Malkuth's palace in Metropolis. Operations degenerate into useless chopping, penetration, and cutting of brains, vertebrae and internal organs.

and magic. She has abandoned all aspirations to a leading position in Metropolis and wishes to establish herself in Elysium, which once she created, as soon as the occasion arises. There she will await the return of the Demiurge. Her enemies are legion. But now and then, she cooperates with Tipareth.

The Palace of Malkuth

A strong bluish light illuminates the distant sky. The ground is level and clean-swept. No buildings can be distinguished in the darkness beyond, which is why the wall that suddenly springs into view gives an impression of the supernatural with its perfectly-shaped blocks of stone and spotless surface. As unexpected as its appearance is its entrance, a small archway, beyond which the silence is almost numbingly painful. A cement path leads past windowless façades. The light from a greenish searchlight comes from high above, and the buzz of surveillance cameras grows louder as one progresses further. Suddenly, one of the façades is seen to be in pieces. Blocks of stone and cement, carbonized cloth rags and melted plastic litter the ground. Bullet holes, claw-marks and soot-stains on adjacent walls lead the viewer's gaze to the piles of corpses that lie further down the wide open street. Disemboweled humans lie bleeding next to the stinking bodies of hairless creatures whose chests, torn open, reveal an impossible anatomy. The battle seems to have been quick and just recently ended, as the blood that has trickled down onto the paving-stones is not yet congealed. The façades are now quite different. Gone is the impression of perfection. Dirty, ramshackle huts of tin and the ruins of stone buildings border the now lop-

sided street. A look back offers no clue to the high wall that seems to have disappeared as well. Old newspapers flutter like ghosts blown by a capricious wind. The lights of a huge bulldozer are suddenly turned on, and soon the mutilated bodies are being pushed towards the dirty-gray factory buildings whose smoke-belching chimneys stand out against the sky. The damaged road leads past strange spools of copper wire. Transformer stations stand humming quietly, and a net of cables and wires of various kinds form a roof hung from the poles that support the tumble-down houses. A sudden ridge reveals a mile-wide depression. Around its edge lie hundreds of factories and other industrial buildings, most of which bustle with activity. The large truck empties its contents into a shaft welded to one of the nearest buildings. Through greasy windows one can see men in white performing surgical operations of dubious nature. Half-dead patients squirm in vain and their anguish is abruptly ended as the scalpel cuts deeper. Organs from a variety of known and unknown creatures are preserved in glass jars on metal shelves. The post-mortems of bodies hanging from the roof on meathooks have gathered onlookers who nod in agreement and jot complex notes in their notebooks. A roar captures their attention and draws it to the center of the depression where a magnificent building suddenly materializes. With its framework of polished steel that bears sections of glass and crystal, it resembles a jeweled crown. Its roof is dotted with antennae and radar dishes that reflect the bluish-white light that occasionally flashes from the opening in its vaulted roof. It raises itself slowly on great hydraulic arms that extend from the blackness beneath. Suddenly, searchlights dance in the sky and one

can distinguish flying creatures high above the ground that plunge earthwards with terrifying shrieks. Steel claws glimmer in the evening sky. The fleeing figures on the ground are easy prey for the attacking razoths who tear them apart and scatter their remains to the four winds. A powerful alarm rings out and Malkuth's palace sinks downwards again. Huge armor plates of sooty steel slide from the sides to seal off the shimmering building. Crude, old-fashioned gun turrets appear and fire deafening salvos up towards the unseen enemy. A sickly smoke emanates from the burning factories and people run like human torches, only to trip and be burned to death, screaming horribly, before the eyes of their comrades. Mutant trackers comb the area. With their evolved olfactory senses and infrared vision, they are more efficient than most machines. One of them approaches and sniffs the air before suddenly bending its upper body and leaping forwards with a blood-curdling scream. Excited shouts mingle with the sound of steel-shod feet. In the other direction, rows of factories stretch out into infinity. The wall with the little gate has disappeared and the painful silence has been replaced by the hoarse cry of the crowd: 'Intruder! Intruder!'

Incidents

BLUE DREAMS

An ambulance, its blue lights still spinning, stands parked by a warehouse. No one is seen in the vicinity, and the back door stands open. Blood trickles from the vehicle (PER throw with normal effect) and a quiet humming can be heard (PER throw with normal effect). Inside the ambulance, now drenched in blood, a man lies strapped to a stretcher. A vacant look shines in his eyes and his humming is a

perverse accompaniment to the flayed, torn and bubbling bodies of the servilians. On shelves inside the ambulance are jars containing drugs. These are of similar nature: they accelerate an awakening, they serve to pierce the illusion. The man has just been pumped to the gills with them by the servilians. His development progressed too rapidly and with new-found powers beyond his control he tore them to shreds without using his hands.

The man starts to babble:

'Everything... So obvious. Of course the pain is necessary. No freedom without it. Want more of the blue... give me the blue... aargh...'

Jerking with cramps, he writhes and tries to make the characters give him the blue pills. Things start to fly around in the ambulance and the straps that bind him start to untie themselves.

- Should the characters give him the blue pills, he will pretend to calm down in order to invade their minds. The pills give him strong telepathic powers and he tries to guide the characters to set him free. Then he tries to enslave them to make them soldiers in his war of vengeance against the Archons. The Game Master rolls 1D20 + the man's EGO, 30 (increases by 1 with every roll), and the characters do the same. If the man rolls the higher value, his influence on the characters increases. With one higher roll he can stop a character from acting against him. Two rolls of superior effect give him the power to make the character to help him with less important things, for instance freeing himself. After three superior results he can decide what the character does, even if it involves attacking his friends. The man can try to take control of several characters at the same time but he must divide his EGO-value between





the different victims.

- Should the characters refuse to give him the pills he will become aggressive and will try to use his mental powers to tear the characters apart, as he did with the servilians. In this instance, he is also using his EGO though it is only considered to be 20, and decreases by 1 with each round. If he succeeds with the attack, the characters will only be scratched.
- Should the characters take the drugs themselves, they run the risk of dying. The drugs are strong and have a detrimental effect to a person's psyche and external perceptions. Things seem to change and those near you may suddenly appear as enemies. First a CON throw (with good effect) is necessary to avoid going mad and running amok. Then an EGO throw (also with good effect) is needed to accept the effects of the drug. If it is not accepted, madness is the result, and the newly-acquired abilities will distort everything negatively. Everyone will be perceived as an enemy, and death will be the only way out. If one succeeds the drug will engender abilities that will help to perceive the world as it really is. The Game Master can choose between the advantages and disadvantages listed in the rules on character creation.

REMAINS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Something glimmers in the black sky (PER roll, good effect). A sudden alarm rings out and searchlights start to comb the sky. Black razoths dive with outstretched talons. They have been sent by Geburah to spy and to terrorize Malkuth. Some of the Razoths (1D6) spot the characters and attack. A hundred yards from the characters stands an abandoned factory building. The front of the building is gray and mottled

with holes, as though caused by shrapnel.

- If the characters stay where they are they must fight off the creatures from the sky.
- If the characters rush for the factory they can avoid the attack (AGL roll, good effect). It is quiet inside, but for the sound of heavy raindrops falling on the oil-stained cement floor. Soon, however, a groaning can be heard (PER roll, good effect). The sounds come from large containers on the ground further on in the shadows. There is a padlocked door (serious damage is required to open it) on each container. Should the characters open any of the doors, ten or so women, limping and with skin scratched to pieces, stream out. They are in their fifties and their naked bodies are swollen, as if they had spent several hours lying in the water. These experimental subjects from the transplanting theaters have been placed in these containers, where they are kept prisoner until they are needed for some new experiment.

THE OPERATION

A factory building can be distinguished through the fog a hundred yards further on. Its windows, which sit twelve feet up on the gray cement walls, are misty, but a flickering greenish-white light nevertheless finds its way to the darkness outside. The sounds of metal objects rattling on a tray mingle with hoarse screams and high-frequency beeps from the EKG (PER roll, good effect). A small door swings in the wind, and within its frame there is only darkness.

Should the players enter to investigate, the door will slam shut and lock behind them. They may try to push it open, in which case they risk attracting the attention of a guard patrol that will


try to arrest them (see The Autopsy). Behind the door, a creaky iron staircase leads downwards. After ten yards there is a slightly-swaying masonite board. It is the back part of a closet and is easy to pass through. On the other side is a locker-room, all barren walls and metal benches upon which a lab coat lies, stained with blood and other bodily fluids. The closet contains others similar except that the human remains have dried upon them and they no longer smell like a freshly-butchered corpse. Suddenly, the characters can hear (PER roll, good effect) steps approaching from behind the door that is the only exit from the room. It is a team of doctors returning from an autopsy. The doctors are not fanatical fighters and will try instead to alert their colleagues should the characters attack them. Outside the door, a corridor stretches, its wet metal floor gleaming with the reflection of the lamps that swing from the ceiling. The corridor ends in a gigantic operating theater that resembles a factory hall. An advanced but badly maintained medical apparatus stands side by side with steel lathes and rollers. Cooling water drips from the ceiling onto the tables that have long since rusted and are colored with blood from previous operations. Feverish activity prevails. Medical teams relieve each other, operations are performed in the flickering light of old neon tubes, autopsies on living as well as dead people are performed by hysterical drooling men in stained coats. In order to escape the characters must either retreat, fight their way through the hall (1D100 + 25 normal standards attack together with a couple of tracker dogs) or try to sneak out in disguise.

If they put on the lab coats from the closet and enter the hall, no one will notice them at first. However, they must



roll for EGO (good effect) in order to avoid vomiting when the smells of rotting flesh and disinfectant reach them. If they become sick, they will of course draw attention to themselves and must pass an Etiquette throw with normal results to avoid exposure.

- Should they be exposed, they will be attacked as described above. If they do not succeed in escaping they will each be strapped to an operating-table. One by one they are wheeled out and hung up by their legs. A doctor whose skin is alternately replaced by electronics and animal skin dangles a blunt carving-knife from his hand, while he lectures to a number of other men in white who closely observe his demonstration. The doctor then proceeds to cut up his unfortunate victim, presenting the organs to the viewers one by one. He then replaces the organs with others



In the palace	-5
Very close	-4
Close (within sight)	-3
Further away (beyond the field of vision)	-2
In proximity of other Archon's domains	-1

made of a black, shiny material that seems partly made of living tissue. If the characters survive the operation (a CON roll, acceptable effect), they will be only slightly handicapped by the surgery. However, within 1D5+5 days the living organism that is a part of the implant (see Fekküzers, chapter "the Damned") will try to make its way out, following the line of least resistance.

- If they succeed in evading exposure, they may instead be involved in an operation. An extremely soiled medical team calls them and one of the men hands one of the characters a scalpel, telling him to continue the operation. On the table lies a terrified woman, her abdomen open in several places. She has not been put to sleep, but is only sufficiently drugged to keep her from thrashing about. Twenty onlookers stand around the table taking notes. The character is forced to perform an intestinal compression and a lung exchange. Moreover, the woman's eyes are to be replaced by electronics. If the characters play along and perform the operation, they will not be exposed even if they cannot operate and the woman dies. If they hesitate, they must pass an Etiquette-roll with normal effect or suffer organ transplants themselves (See above).

THE AUTOPSY

A patrol (1D4+ 1D6 soldiers) with trackers discovers the characters. They attack and fight to the death. If they succeed in capturing the characters, they conduct them to one of the many autopsy-rooms that lie in the old aban-

doned factory buildings spread near Malkuth's palace. If the characters succeed in slaying their opponents, they will find all kinds of advanced equipment on the soldiers' persons.

Weapons, infra-red goggles, hand-held radar, distance gauges, etc.

Effects

PC

The characters start to consider themselves more important. Their self-assuredness and trust in themselves increases. They start to realize the grandeur in their own creation. They become unafraid and possibly less than careful.

NPC

Either hysterical or catatonic. People who have been scarred by operations, or who have realized their own greatness but not managed to cope with this insight and broken down. Those who have braved the shock and become illuminated have long since left the palace of Malkuth.

TECHNICAL GAMING SOLUTION

For each hour spent in the vicinity of the palace, the characters' mental balance either increases or decreases. If their balance is negative, it sinks and if it is positive, its value is augmented. How much is subject to the proximity of the palace itself. Since distances are most difficult to measure in Metropolis, the Game Master must decide how close he judges the characters to be. The following chart is meant as a guideline.



Tiphareth

Yet another day, ten more hours of paralyzing impotence. The heavy metal door folded open like an accordion bellows, and some light found its way inside, but you couldn't tell from where. Anyway, it seemed like a gray day, and their first visitor, a middle-aged man, wore the telltale signs of rain on his trenchcoat.

How bad it all begun? Haberman tried slowly to collect his memories of that first, fateful day. That party was absolutely out of control: they were drinking, smoking and snorting like crazy. There were impromptu strip acts and couples fornicating in the most unlikely places. They all belonged to that damned 'trendy' set: advertising people, film producers, ubiquitous aspiring but inept 'artistes'. Pop art - of all the stupid f---ing things! Especially that dweeb Freedom. Max Freedom, a perverted little upstart whose pathetic attempts at what he thought was 'Art' was stunningly devoid of the faintest trace of talent. While clumsily trying to persuade Haberman to write a rave review of his *Human Collages*, Freedom slipped him something in his drink which sent everything spinning. Suddenly,

Haberman was surrounded by lean, wiry creatures smeared with half-digested vomit steaming from their uncapped skulls. The last thing he remembered was a pricking pain in his left temple.

Now, here he was, stuck to a twelve-foot metal canvas, sharing the fate of a yellow bicycle, its spokes sticking through his head, its other wrecked parts randomly scattered, intermingled with those of his own body. The gallery visitor in the trenchcoat was regarding this work of art with great skepticism. 'Could anybody actually spend money on that sort of thing?' he thought, bending down to read the little nameplate: 'Bicycle Accident III, Max Freedom, 1995.'

Tiphareth keeps a low profile in Metropolis. This is only a cover for her thirst for power. She strives to awaken humanity through art so she can bury the Demiurge forever and obtain unlimited power in Elysium. Netzach and Geburah suspect her treason and denounce her violently in Metropolis. To defend her position, she has made pacts with the generals of Astaroth as well as creatures from beyond our reality.

Film 1

The characters find themselves in a forest at night. A cold wind is blowing and they hear a droning noise growing gradually stronger. Something approaches in the darkness at high speed. It is a terrifying monster, legs like entrails that grab on to tree-trunks and throw the rest of the body forwards towards the characters. If they try to escape, they will happen on a small cottage with planks nailed to the windows. From within, cones of light shoot out into the darkness, creating little pools of light around the house. Mad laughter and hysterical cries are heard. 'Die, you motherf---er! Blam! Aargh! Leggo of my hand, you... Crash... Aar... Now, where are you? Come to daddy, show yourself. Don't be afraid. Vroom-phut-phut-phut-phut...' The sound of a chainsaw drowns out the mad laughter and the lights suddenly go out in the cottage. Meanwhile, the growling sound from the woods draws closer. The characters have landed in the film *The Evil Dead*. The man in the cottage has an evil creature attached to his hand, which he is cutting off with the chainsaw. A terrible demon comes rushing from the woods. It will try to seize control of one of the characters' bodies and to kill the others. It uses an EGO-attack. Roll for the demon's EGO (30) and compare the effect with the EGO-roll of the person it attacks. If the demon has the higher score it controls the body for one combat round. Roll once for every combat round. The film is a madcap mixture of morbid humor, snazzy effects and lots of action. You should let these be your guiding principles and you won't go wrong.

The Palace of Tiphareth

Massive crumbling pillars and columns are arranged in the pattern of the radiating sun, at whose center stands the palace of Tiphareth. Some of the columns are joined by high arches or vaults. In other places the upward view is entirely obscured by pipe-laden stone or metal roofs. From the dark recesses overhead you can hear scraping sounds and moist groans which echo between the pillars, and are only softened by the slimy, intestine-like vines that droop towards the ground. A cold haze wends its way through the pillars, obstructing vision. Here and there, you can spot a flickering light like a campfire. The ground has crumbled between the high colonnades, maimed by gaping abysses from which a thick and impenetrable darkness rises.

Bulging power cables run across the ground, intermittently snaking up a pillar, turning downwards again to end in a bunch of wires that spit sparks as they are struck by the corrosive liquid dripping from above. A small mosaic-laden square seems a place of rest. Classical statues stand moldering in niches colored a yellow-green hue by water and acid. Moss covers the iron fountain, its stagnating water giving off a cloying, musty smell. Earthy paths lead inwards to an uncertain destination. The vaults grow higher and even darker. Blind bat-like creatures dangle upside down from iron bars in the ceiling. They hide their human faces, covered with a fine net of sensitive nerves, behind many-fingered wings. They hang in the dark, ostensibly uninterested in the visitors. Further in towards the middle, the high-frequency tones and hissing sounds by which they communicate become clearer. A man suffering hallucinations staggers from between stone pedestals upon which

half-finished sculptures support the sedum plants that crawl forth from the now firmer ground. Curious diagrams and geometric calculations cover the walls that sometime join the columns together to form small rooms. Suddenly, the roofed colonnades come to an end. The stifling air, laden with centuries of unabated vegetation, is now replaced by a cool breeze that bears a murmuring sound. Within the great sun pattern, the palace of Tiphareth stands. It is a work of great imagination and creativity, a medley of styles and disturbing similarity to buildings of our world. The nether regions are deserted, but large escalators convey you upwards to the jumble of great halls that constitute the palace. The halls are cold and damp. Spotlights flash their columns of light down onto bizarre creations set in the floor or hanging on walls: paintings, collages, mosaics, mobiles, sculptures. Some are complex and bear a likeness to famous pieces from art history, others are incredibly simple and yet so obvious. A treacherous quiet lulls you on towards ever greater discoveries. Here and there lie sobbing shapes that hold the remains of their eyes in their bloodied hands. Beyond a corner and up a ladder, a blood-curdling scream rings out, followed by shuffling sounds that slowly but surely fade away. A rank odor suddenly bursts from an adjacent hall and the calm is replaced by an increasing sense of unease and claustrophobia. The walls lean at a disquieting angle. Perspectives are distorted. Colors heretofore undreamed dance chaotically. Time seems to stop or flow backwards. Suddenly, you feel a cold grip on your shoulder and your body is whirled around in a mad somersault. Or is the room moving? There is no pain, but the sudden realization of having been cheated sends waves of shivers through your

nervous system. The shuffling noise reappears as your body is brutally dragged off into the darkness.

Yet another awakening divinity has been shackled by Tiphareth.

Incidents

INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA

A flickering light strikes the naked concrete wall. It comes from an enormous hall where different films are being projected onto every possible flat surface. Even the floor occasionally opens to reveal buried projectors. The flow of images never ceases, a series of quick cuts and fades and rapid montage.

If the characters enter, their senses are subjected to severe duress and they run the risk of losing their grip in this inferno of images. Every other minute they must succeed with an EGO roll or their consciousness will merge into one of the films, thinking that they act within its scope. They can talk to the characters in the film and participate in its action. The Game Master can choose a relatively quiet film that characters find themselves immersed in, e.g. Blade Runner, Jacob's Ladder or Alien. For more action and stress, The Evil Dead, Platoon, Hellraiser, the Nightmare on Elm Street series, or a WWII film involving Nazi death camps are recommended.

THE INSTALLATION

A conveyor belt carries the characters up into a large hall. Spotlights suspended high above on the ceiling send compact beams down to highlight the works of art that hang on the walls. These are oases of light in a black and opaque abyss. The concrete floor is dry as bone, and dust puffs up with the slightest movement. Occasionally a scraping noise, like small claws on metal, can be heard from above (PER roll with good effect). Closest to the entrance hang Hieronymus Bosch's

paintings of Hell. People crucified, burning, mutilated, damned. Then a series of anatomical studies by Leonardo da Vinci, depicting the human body exposed in the most precise detail. If attentive (PER roll with good effect), one can spot a small growth at the base of the forehead in a cranial study, much like a tick nailed to the frontal lobe of the brain. Further on in the hall hang the 'black paintings' of Francisco de Goya: scenes of war, degradation, morbid tableaux of cannibalism, holocaust and human cruelty. The themes get even more brutally direct and it becomes harder and harder to attribute them to any famous artist. A forty-foot canvas depicting some sort of Last Supper hangs by itself from the ceiling in the middle of the hall. The disciples are distorted shapes with tattered skin that complements the maniacal looks in their eyes. They feast on maimed bodies and dissected babies.

The hall is one of Tiphareth's traps. The more one sees, the more his mental balance is distorted. For every five minute period, the Game Master secretly makes an EGO roll for each of the characters. If they fail, their mental balance is increased or decreased by ten according to their current balance. All are driven towards the awakening. When one of the characters has changed his balance by 50 points, he experiences a moment of clear-sightedness. Perspectives are distorted and all things adopt their true shape and color. Time no longer matters. Then one of Tiphareth's mutated servilians attacks the half-awakened one to drag him to a cell for a life of submission to Tiphareth's will. These servilians are cautious, and skulk in the shadows before pouncing.

THE LIBRARIES

Around Tiphareth's palace are the remains of the great libraries that once

Film 2

The characters find themselves in a jungle. The shrieks of monkeys and the chatter of parrots mingle with the rustle of leaves in the breeze. A flayed human body hangs upside-down from a tree. Blood still drips from the fresh body, which is surrounded by a halo of flies. It is hot and muggy, about 95 degrees, and the characters sweat profusely. A twig cracks (normal PER). If the characters hear it and look around, they can see (good PER) a human outline moving like a chameleon against the green background. The invisible creature bounds agilely away and disappears. The characters are in the middle of *Predator*, near the crashed spaceship their new opponent once occupied. The predator is a creature from another star system who knows the jungle. His equipment, including his chameleon suit and the weapons built into his armor, is very advanced. His weakness is that he can only see in the infra-red spectrum. (In the film, the monster can see in many different ways. If the Gamemaster wants, he can make it more difficult for the players.) The characters will be hunted by the predator as long as it keeps him amused. Then he will kill them. The characters might find his wrecked ship, or just fight for their lives in the unpredictable jungle. If they are unarmed, they can find machine guns and automatic weapons near the bodies they find flayed and hanging from a vine.

Film 3

The characters are momentarily blinded by a flickering glow. When they can see again, they are in a narrow, tunnel-like corridor with wet walls covered with thick, black cables. Steam hisses from leaking pipes, obscuring vision, and the blinking light from the yellow juicers stings the eyes. A rank stench reaches the characters, the stench of sweat and death. The kind, soft voice of a woman is suddenly heard over the loudspeaker. *'The ship will self-destruct in T minus three minutes.'* The clarion call of an alarm signal joins the reigning cacophony and the floor begins to shake. The characters are aboard the spaceship Nostromo in the final scenes of the film *Alien*. If they examine their surroundings, everything is real and concrete. They smell the scents, they hear the sounds, they feel the heat. Gamemasters who have seen the film know what to do from this point. The characters can find their way to the escape shuttle (they won't be able to operate it), get lost in the ship, or come face to face with the alien. They can die on the ship, or be returned to Tiphareth's palace. The Gamemaster should feel free to improvise.

were filled with human patrons before the intervention of the Demiurge. They were not like our libraries. True, they were filled with wisdom and thoughts, but these were not written down. They were made available on a spiritual level. The libraries were enormous constructs, technological wonders, that allowed all within to communicate with each other simultaneously and without limit. Since humanity's recall was then total, there was no need to write down experience: one could always go straight to the source with a minimum of distortion of the original message. The libraries that now exist in Elysium are mirror images of these age-old stone halls. But not only good springs from modern libraries. Nostagor, the keeper of the Memory Bank, spreads wrong and inaccurate information through books. Some of our libraries are portals to Metropolis and its libraries, which are mainly in ruins and visited by azghouls and wolvern. Their basic construction is of red stone, but behind the sleek walls lies enormous machinery made of metal and crystal, now dormant workings that once powered the libraries. In the desolate halls one can experience a sense of tangible presence. A group of people can communicate without words and without seeing each other. The Archons have posted guards, to prevent visitors from understanding the meaning of their discovery. These guards are spiritual entities who are only visible under infra-red light, as their swirling shapes resemble mirror images on billowing waters. They move very slowly and very rarely and feed on the life-force they steal as they distort messages between people who have entered the libraries. They attempt to make their victims distrust each other by spreading false information. It is not rare for old friends, who have found the

libraries together, to suddenly attack each other, in the mistaken belief that they are acting in self-defense. In the halls are the dead bodies of visitors who killed each other, rather than having fallen prey to wolvern or other dwellers in the dark. The characters may find a library subjected to the evil of the guardians.

INCUBATION HALLS

An escalator, sparsely lit by flickering neon tubes, reaches down several hundred yards. Oily water drips from the darkness above, dissolving the dark patches of dried blood that cover the rusty steps. Down below, violent thuds and loud hissing noises mix with the sound of meaty steps on a clattering metal floor. The escalator ends at a little corridor that leads to the incubation halls. Captive humans are kept there who are on the verge of waking up. Their awakening is controlled by Tiphareth's servants (corresponding to genetides), whose muddy skin is in constant flux. The unconscious humans are placed in refrigerator-like coffins with a small round window above the face and a hatch in the back. Squeaky robots stick shining bunches of long syringe needles through the hatches, penetrating the bowed backs of the occupants. Blood and pus mingle on the corrugated metal floor. The situation may develop in many ways. The characters can be captured and placed in an incubator themselves, or perhaps they may try to free one of the captives, who is half-awakened.

Effects

PC

The characters experience the constant shifting of the surrounding world, fraught with hallucinations that break up visual impressions to create an unstable reality. They are worried, and feel

insecure about their surroundings and those they encounter.

NPC

The people around the palace of Tiphareth are often talkative and seemingly open. They blather on for hours about their discoveries or try to convince the characters to accept their help and guidance.

TECHNICAL SOLUTION

The characters' advantages and disadvantages become more pronounced. For instance, a character with a slight phobia will suddenly experience his fear as a greater, debilitating phobia.


The characters can also acquire new advantages and disadvantages depending on their situation and what they are doing. If someone manages to stay conscious after suffering a serious wound, the Game Master can give him the Endure Pain advantage. In the same manner, if someone is standing on the edge of a cliff, the Game Master may inflict acrophobia, the fear of heights, on the character. The Game Master can also increase or decrease the mental balance of a character who has just used or experienced an advantage or disadvantage.



The Dead Palaces

This was the last straw. Flushed with anger, Michael stormed into the elevator. The little brown-nosing bastard had beaten him to it! He had never trusted Strauss, but he would never have guessed that the little shit would threaten his upcoming appointment as department head of Foreign Affairs. That lizard must have gotten his split tongue so far up the board members' asses that he could have licked their lips for them in the bargain. The elevator seemed to take no heed of Michael's hurry, climbing wearily up to the 76th floor. 'All right,' Michael thought, 'I might have lost the job, but

I can at least give that pathetic little opportunist a piece of my mind!' A freshly laid carpet led the way to the office glass doors on which a new name, 'E. Strauss,' had been painted. Michael kicked the doors open and prepared to let loose a storm of wild profanities on his enemy. But the room was empty. The far wall was concealed by a cloud of smoke from which you could hear someone coughing. The floor was washed with a thick, moist humidity which made his shoes sticky. Disappointed and confused, Michael pushed into the room. Finding another open door, he stepped in and discov-



ered an iron frame supporting a net of burning barbed-wire. The gasoline fire emitted sooty, dark smoke. Suddenly, Strauss appeared, but it wasn't quite him. The little man seemed taller, and his bland face was a decaying mask of blood and rotting flesh. Rusty nails protruded from his hands, which held remains of the meal he had just made of his secretary's plump body. Michael just wanted to scream, which he presently did, as he felt the glowing spikes driven into his back.

After the disappearance of the Demiurge, the three Archons Yesod, Chokmah and Chesed became victims of the battle that broke out among the inheritors of his creation. Their palaces were devastated and their power deserted their old residences. But the three complexes do not lie entirely abandoned. Other creatures have found their way there and now hunt for damned souls among the aging ruins.

Yesod's Palace

Its smooth walls made entirely of glass, Yesod's old palace reflects the dramatic red bloom of the sky. Perfect steel bows form triumphal arches which straddle huge motorways. Pyramids of compact glass send roving reflections out into marble marketplaces. But something is missing. Deserted streets run straight as arrows in towards the shining skyscrapers. A few demolished vehicles disturb the otherwise perfect order. The stinging smell of burnt flesh and the hysterical howls that echo between the glass walls are just some of the symptoms. Mad laughter and splashing sounds from panic-stricken flight emanate from beneath the sewer gratings. Gaping wounds mar the immaculate glass façades, spewing thick brown steams down into the street. Further in towards the great complex of skyscrap-

ers of the palace, one can see fires raging in the upper stories. The howls grow louder and suddenly, with a crashing noise, a burning human body smashes through a window and plummets to the ground where it is smashed on the concrete. Shining swinging doors lead into the skyscrapers. Elevators lead upwards from reception desks long since abandoned. Their panels are covered with incomprehensible symbols. Some floors lie empty and abandoned, thickly carpeted with dust. Others form a limitless labyrinthine office-scape. Not all are so desolate, however. The evil henchmen of the Angels of Death, Nahemoth, Gamichicoth and Sathariel, occupy large sections of the old palace. Horrifying scenes of torture are perpetrated in makeshift purgatories. Intricate machines keep mutilated humans alive so that they may taste immortal pain. Other victims sit huddled in rusty cages, freezing and abandoned. Without hope of salvation they quietly await their turn on the burning net of barbed wire. Gone are Yesod's corrupt businessmen, gone also are his lictors. Now there is degradation and pain instead.

Chokmah's Palace

Like a huge haunted castle, its façades exploded from within, Chokmah's abandoned palace sits brooding above dark and muddy waters. Low black clouds circle the remaining spires. From a deserted clock tower, sporadic chimes are heard, their irregularity testifying to the total desolation. Ramps with tiled roofs lead across the marsh to the palace. Large empty halls stand quietly, their walls decorated with religious symbols: crucifixes, stars of David, Indian demons and Nordic runes, the darkness only broken by intermittent

rays of light from above, whirling with dust. Traces of wild gunfights abound: chipped statues and shattered panes of glass. Here and there, the mummified remains of Chokmah's former servants lie in the dust. Maimed and defiled, they testify to the power and finality with which Kether crushed his greatest rival after the disappearance of the Demiurge. Despite its violent history, small rooms with peace and quiet remain in the palace. Eternally burning candles dissipate the darkness around golden icons of the suffering Christ bearing his cross. As they disperse the darkness, so do they dissolve doubt and lack of faith. Our dreams of evading responsibility for our own lives and our desire to entrust ourselves to a higher power are awakened by the slumbering forces that still rest within the palace walls.

Chesed's Palace

Heaps of crushed concrete and chips of stone obscure the view of the place where Chesed's palace once stood. The air, starved of oxygen, hangs still between twisted reinforcement rods and crumbled façades. Now and then the silence is broken by a whining sound, like the quiet sobbing of a thousand women. A flag stands drilled into the ground. Its sullied and torn cloth has lost almost all its design but one can vaguely distinguish the UN symbol on the tattered rag, as faded as the memory of Chesed, its former champion. From atop a pile of gravel the scenery is clearer. The surroundings spread out like an enormous wasteland of concrete and steel and disappear into a haze at the horizon. Here and there a few floors of the palace still stand, but their puny bombed out remains are deserted and the thick coat of dust in their halls has

not been disturbed for years. Suddenly a light drizzle begins to fall. Fleeting, silent drops once again pelt the ruins, and if any life survived among the heaps of rubble, it would be suffocated by the lethal chemical rain.

Incidents

HUNTERS IN THE SEWERS (YESOD)

A manhole cover to the sewers under Yesod's palace lifts up in front of the characters. A terrified man with cracked spectacles and a grimy face appears. He has just enough time to spot the characters and try to hand them a shiny object that he produces from his pocket. Then he loses his foot-hold and falls down the hole. They hear a blood-curdling scream and then the echo of his fleeing steps vanishing down the tunnel, followed by a dreadful grunting sound. If the characters decide to find out what he wished to give them, they find there is no ladder down. (A normal AGL check or an acceptable Acrobatics roll will be necessary so as to avoid injury; 1 scratch.) A Normal Search reveals the direction of the man's path. After that they must follow. The tunnels are damp, and sticky wires hang from the ceiling that seem to grab for the characters. Loud screams and shots fired in panic echo through the tunnels from far away. Soon the characters reach a large room, which is completely dark but for a vague light admitted by a grate in the ceiling. Two large pipes on opposite sides of the room spew out an evil-smelling paste that pools on the floor and then disappears down a drain. In the center, four Zeloths sit on a concrete platform feasting on the tattered remains of the man.

If the characters attack and defeat the Zeloths, they won't find the shiny object easily. With a good Search roll they will locate the polished little case





under the sticky surface. Inside is a photograph of a young girl. The background indicates some sort of graduation party. The man's wallet is empty except for a slip of paper with a dental appointment dated four years in the future. There is also a newspaper article about the vanished girl who was abducted and murdered while returning home from her graduation party'. The man is not from our time, but from a future reality. He is seeking his daughter, whom he has been able to track to Yesod's palace. In one of his pockets is a small tape recorder with a recording of his daughter's voice. She makes curious references to her surroundings.

'Glass walls everywhere... I think it says 716 on the door... Please help me... Someone's coming, perhaps I... Aaaaah!' The daughter, Simone, is being tortured by Desparites and their legionnaires in the palace above, in a chamber numbered 716. If the characters wish to save her, the Game Master may use the following events as a hint.

THE BURNING BARBED WIRE (YESOD)

The characters find themselves in Yesod's palace, standing in one of the many halls that serve as platforms for the countless elevators that ascend into the palace. If they board an elevator it will rise at breakneck speed. Floor numbers flash past on the digital screen which also shows the temperature, the altitude above sea level, and stock market quotations. The elevator stops with a jerk and the doors open. Smoke streams in from the corridor outside. It is considerably warmer here, and a muted thudding can be heard through the fog. The elevator does not move until the characters exit, then its doors slam shut and it departs for its next destination. Long, endless corridors lead in all possible directions. The corridors are

lined by office doors. In the ceiling are neon lamps, some flickering, but most smashed. Behind the doors are little office spaces covered in dust. Some have gaping holes in the walls, exposing dilapidated elevator shafts or the exterior of the building and a fall of several hundred feet to the pavement below. If the characters start to walk down a corridor, they soon hear anguished screams and rattling howls. The corridor turns into a ramp that runs along a wall and overlooks a gigantic office landscape where the small cells together form something resembling a painting by Mondrian. The smoke is thick everywhere and it gets harder and harder to breathe. A door further on reflects the light of a fire. In the far corner of a large room with a panoramic window, a Desparite and some (1D4) legionnaires are torturing victims hooked to large nets of glowing barbed wire. If the characters peer into the room, they will be discovered by the legionnaire posted by the door. The Desparite orders his legionnaires to attack, and a wild chase begins, unless the characters decide to fight. The characters can try to escape into the vast office landscape they have just passed, or flee into one of the many elevators. Their flight may also lead them to makeshift prisons, rebuilt offices where dejected wretches sit sobbing in the corners.

THE SERMON (CHOKMAH)

In the darkness, the characters catch a glimpse (Normal PER) of a figure behind a statue long since shot to pieces. Shuffling steps hastily disappear into the shadows. If the characters follow through the darkened halls and abandoned crypts will take them shortly to a church. Here, the darkness is foiled by countless candles. A calm atmosphere and soothing music fill the church with a feeling of comfort. From

the pulpit, a monotonous voice is droning a mass in an unknown language. The characters can also distinguish rows of pews filling the space up to the pulpit. Here and there individuals sit hunched, their heads bowed. The characters feel an increasing urge to sit down and if they don't wish to, they must roll a Good EGO check to fight the compulsion. The mass drones on endlessly and gradually all those present are subdued into mindless slaves of Chokmah.

During the first act, the characters must make three Good EGO rolls or lose 1 EGO point for each failure. If a character succeeds with one of his rolls he is free to act for 6 rounds. The character must strike again. The first act is ended with a kind of communion in which the priest lays stinking bits of intestines plucked from a silver tray on the tongue, instead of sacramental wafers. These are washed down with a black liquid with flies' eggs floating on top. If the characters fail their EGO rolls they must undergo this ritual and lose 6 EGO points. The mass can be stopped by slaying the priest. This will free the mesmerized characters, but the parishioners will attack, armed with broken bottles.

The priest raises his arms to summon Chokmah's wisdom and will. He produces a red-hot iron and brands a mark on each of those who mindlessly kneel before him. The brand represents Chokmah and its wearer is now his slave. The priest disappears and the anonymous worshippers are gone, the candles are extinguished and all is quiet.

Those branded can become the victims of Chokmah's will at any time. The Game Master can decide what the former Archon's wishes are. To resist it, the character must make Good EGO roll. He may be commanded to sacrifice his life for another, to kill his friends in the name of Chokmah, to commit ritual murder or to immolate himself in a public place.





ACID RAIN (CHESD)

Suddenly a light rain begins to fall. The concrete dust turns to slushy porridge on the ground. The rain feels warm and muggy, but soon it starts stinging the eyes and those who have no shelter will soon find it hard to breathe.

(The rain has a cumulative effect of 1D6 per round. Following the first three rounds, every round that a character stands unsheltered in the rain 1D6 is deducted from his CON value. CON is recovered as with other poisons: see the Accidents chapter in the rule-book. The more CON that is lost, the worse the damage and its consequences:

1/3 CON: powerful blushing, -2 COM

1/2 CON: slight skin damage, blisters, -4 COM

2/3 CON: serious skin damage, open sores and scars, -8 COM

All CON: Victim dies, -16 COM)

There are houses nearby where the characters may seek shelter. In these ruins, however, there are others who have also sought shelter. Burned, hairless women whose skin has become a blistered shell. Open sores spill pus that mixes with blood and tears. A man hysterically grabs his twitching and corroded foot, which is attached to his leg only by a few sinews, slack and yellowed. Others slowly move to and fro to evade the droplets that seep in through the ceiling. All are of African origin and occasionally utter a few

words in an African dialect. If the characters go into the ruins they will be attacked by the men (1D6+5) and those of the women who do not have children to watch (1D6). The desperate people think that the characters are the enemies who caused the rain, and cannot be mollified.

Effects

The Archons overthrown since the Demiurge's disappearance no longer exercise great influence in Metropolis. When the characters find themselves close to these abandoned palaces, they do not feel the same intense influences as near the other palaces. These areas are anything but harmless precisely because of the absence of central power. The strong survive and the weak die. Anarchy prevails, and no form of organized group is found among the ruins. Mutations develop to adapt to the circumstances; the best adapted survive the longest. Inside the palaces the situation is somewhat different. Small groups live together, as in Chessed's demolished palace. There is food for thought in Chokmah's ruins, and Angels of Death spread horror in Yesod's towers. What the characters experience is a sense of loss, of emptiness and desolation in the wake of the Archon's demise. The Game Master must remember that the players have no idea where they are. They do not know that the palace has been abandoned by its former residents.

Cogs in the Machine



Rebecca woke up with a start. There was someone sitting on the edge of her bed. The bedside lamp shone on a naked man whose skin seemed to be made of glass. She could see his blood-filled organs pulsating through the transparent surface. 'Help me...' the man moaned. She did not know how, but the next moment her alarm clock was in her hand, and she hurled it at the glass man's chest. It shattered with a cracking sound. His shell burst open and he cried out in terrible pain. Inside the glass his muscles

were shredding, and blood spurted through the cracks. He jerked convulsively and crumpled to the floor. Rebecca saw the sharp shards cutting into his body and a large puddle of blood quickly formed under the struggling form. Avoiding the bloodied sheets, she climbed out of bed and put on her slippers to protect her feet. She felt slivers crack under the soles as she walked around the bed to look down at the glass man. Then she aimed a kick at his skull, which shattered and split in two. His brains were exposed and he

stopped screaming. 'Oh no,' Rebecca thought, 'not that same dream again.'

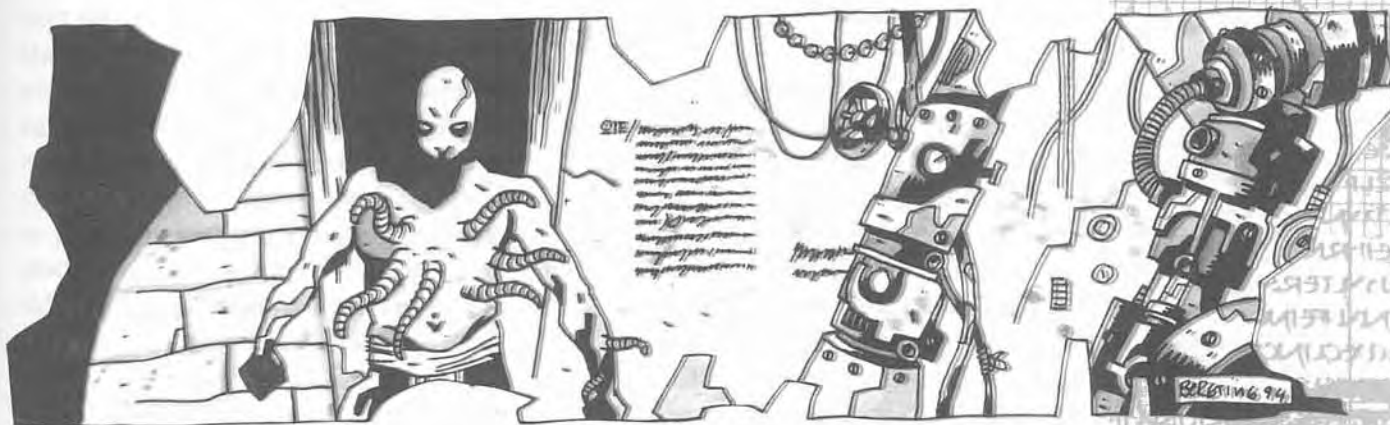
Her watch seemed inexplicably to have skipped several hours, and she was late for work already. 'I'll have to wash the blood out of those sheets in the bath-tub. I don't dare bring them down to the laundry room.' She would blame the screams and havoc on the schizophrenic who lived on the fifth floor. It had worked for her the other times.

Picking up the telephone to call a cab, she got a chanting church choir instead. She put the receiver down and pulled up the blinds. Before her eyes the view of a maroon sea opened up oozing with toxic waste and filled with flot-sam. A few forlorn houses still kept about thirty feet above the foaming surface. The stink was unbearable, like stale meat left lying in the sun. She knew that below the surface the reddish-brown slush was full of dead fetuses, and this reminded her of the abortion she had when she was fourteen, and the probing fingers of the alcoholic veterinarian's large coarse hands... She would never be able to have a child again. Her house was part of a ship graveyard where large abandoned hulls lay rocking and creaking against its walls. Below her window was an old tanker disgorging itself of its deadly cargo. The wreck was surrounded by giant rats, swimming with bits of human babies in their teeth. She was feeling very sick...

I should never have gone on that drug binge to Italy,' she thought. The one redeeming quality of that vacation had been the perfect tan which still

graced her skin. She couldn't imagine a less appealing low-budget travel agency than Happiest Moments — it hadn't been her style at all. Her memories from the trip were unclear but not at all pleasant. She thought that she must have blocked out the worst experiences. The nightmares had started right after the vacation and her whole life had just gone to pieces when she came home: 'I really ought to get rid of that stupid sombrero!' she said to herself. There was no use going to the photo session now. They must have called in a substitute model hours ago. She leafed through the morning paper, stopping at the movie ads. Using a ball-point pen, she circled an ad for a matinee showing of 'The Jungle Book': at three o'clock. Then she turned to the iron scraps, plastic explosive, and the detonators, losing herself completely in the task of bomb-making. There was plenty of time until three o'clock...

Later, she sat in the café opposite the cinema, grinding her teeth. On the small table in front of her was a cup of cappuccino and a ticket stub for 'The Jungle Book'. The waitress favored her table with frequent nervous glances: 'Who cares!' thought Rebecca. The theater had thick walls which had muffled the explosion. Blood-spattered parents stumbled out screaming and crying, carrying their maimed children in their arms. A four-year-old boy was crying for his mommy, his face a bloody pulp. Smoke gathered in the street outside, as the sirens' wail grew louder. Rebecca was no longer at the café. There was only darkness. She bit her cheek. Her hatred made her scream...



The Memory Banks

The Memory Banks are the dreadful terminal point of a life in Elysium. Memories are destroyed; bodies are annihilated; personalities are erased; all must begin again with an immortal soul as completely bare as an unwritten page. Oberons mechanically and capriciously bind the soul to a small helpless foetus that is subsequently obliged to languish in the repulsive sludge of the Primal Sea before it is allowed to be reborn.

The Memory Banks are a large steel-gray concrete complex that has risen to a great height in Metropolis and looms threateningly above the surrounding ruins with its cold, damp bulk. The buildings are topped by a huge black iron spiral, its colossal framework twisting miles into the dirty yellow sky. At the foot of the spiral, gigantic, dull concrete giants lie, spewing out a reddish meaty sludge that flows down to the Primal Sea. A few large gates lead to the abysmal handling section within the complex. The slope down to the Sea is covered with the liquid that pours from the Memory Banks. Someone has razed everything to ruins two feet high in a wide circle around the Memory Banks, perhaps from respect, perhaps in rage. The area, up to the point where the

buildings of Metropolis have dared to rise, lies covered with piles of human corpses awaiting a burial that will never be. Short men in white coats circle the area looking for victims to chop to pieces, bodies to defile, or intruders to catch. The ground sloping down to the Sea has no trace of construction whatsoever.

The stream and the shore are infested by oberons. These clumsy leech-like creatures, about three feet tall, direct the flow to the stinking mutation stew of the sea with small, simple dams that they erect in ritual, instinctive and horrible patterns. Oberons are effectively armored with thick shields of a hard, dark-green material, that appears to be coagulated or hardened. The number of legs varies considerably between specimens. Some seem to have difficulty moving at all.

The Centrifuge Halls

The forty-foot high gates to the huge concrete buildings at the foot of the iron spiral lead to the Centrifuge Halls. The halls are damp and pungent with the sweet scent of blood. Endless rows of apathetic people are driven forward by Servilians in grimy white coats, shoved up spiral ramps and rammed

Extract from the diary of
Vladimir Tatlin

KGB Central Archives,
Lyublanka Prison,
Moscow

Petersburg, May 15 1922

Work, work, work... I work almost twenty hours a day, so much to do, all these petit-bourgeois artists who refuse to place their art in the service of the PARTY and the REVOLUTION! Then they won't eat, either!

Comrade Lenin came to visit today. Looked well in spite of rumors.

Wanted something grand for the fifth anniversary of the Great Revolution this autumn. How shall I find the time? How shall I find the strength? I have no ideas. All these signs, all these posters!

Svetlana complained that I never see her. Hit her until she bled. Why?

A monument, that's what I'll make! But where can I find time for inspiration, ideas?

Yesterday the strangest thing occurred: I felt faint and passed out, but when I awoke again, dazed, I found myself in a strange ruinous landscape. The air was not the coal fog of Petersburg, and I could see no sun, but only a yellowish haze. In front of me, miles away, I could see a gigantic iron spiral towering as high as a mountain! This brilliant structure stood like a throne above a huge industrial complex. Fascinated, I approached,

into enormous steel cylinders. Anguished cries of infernally tortured humans fill the halls when the cylinders start to spin counter-clockwise. The whirling grows faster and faster. The ear-splitting screams cease and are replaced with a repulsive slushing sound when the cylinders stop. Then the next line is pushed in. The cylinders are 60 feet high and 120 across, covering most of the dark surface of the halls. The light flickers coldly on the naked, humid concrete of the walls and floors. The walls are cluttered with a curious network of steel ladders and catwalks that reaches to the roof seventy yards overhead. The floor around the cylinders consists of raised steel gratings that display the macabre contents of the cylinders as they empty. The remains disappear with a slurping noise down a dark stone tunnel towards the sea.

Under the center of the spiral sits Nostagor, the lord, demon, or god of the Memory Banks. His shapeless bulk almost touches the roof. His flesh is made up of countless human bodies, obscenely welded or stuck to each other, a true abomination. Strange machine parts, tubes and pipes join body to machine, body to body at random. Nostagor's body has several different sized orifices that open and shut in unison, emitting an otherworldly roar. Nasty smelling liquids run from each orifice into a large puddle beneath him. Nostagor's body-parts, tubes, pipes, chains or machine arms will snatch a single human or several, or sometimes just a bit or a piece, such as an arm, an eye or a liver, to join to the gigantic patchwork. One who beholds Nostagor must make an EGO throw with a modifier of +15.

Nostagor commands his servilians telepathically. They stand in small groups, reverently looking at their mas-

ter from a respectful distance. In the Memory Banks, the servilians are more independent and evil than if managed by a lictor. They are well-equipped with absurd and horrible surgical instruments of stainless steel, always ready to lobotomize a visitor, cut a victim apart, or to tear out his lungs or torture him for days on end in an operating theater.

An involuntary visitor may try to escape to the tunnels beneath the Memory Banks, but he risks being washed onto the slope above the sea when a cylinder is emptied, and being attacked by oberons. The entrances to these tunnels can be reached by raising the grating next to a cylinder and fleeing into the moist darkness. Most tunnels lead to the slope, but some to Inferno and others to the most toxic industrial sites of Elysium: factory sewers, poison tanks or chemical works.

The Waiting Rooms

If you follow the line of humans away from the cylinders, you will come to the Waiting Rooms: endless, unfurnished rooms, like concrete oceans. The floors are covered with naked crowds who sit staring listlessly down. Some are pale and emaciated, some bear open wounds, others display amputated limbs, but none bleed. They are already dead.

By the gates to the Centrifuge Halls, the servilians form the lines to be sent to the steel cylinders. Those who are active, or even alive are dragged off by servilians, their white coats bristling with bizarre instruments of mutilation.

Beside the great gateways to the Centrifuge Halls are several doors which lead outwards. Beyond them lie clusters of damp concrete corridors bordered with cold, blood drenched operating-rooms where servilians dis-

sect the living who have blundered into the Memory Banks. This sorry fate will also befall any lost character if he can not escape without being detected. The endless, oppressive corridors also lead to dismal morgues and autopsy rooms in prisons or hospitals in Elysium. Some doors lead to the horrors of Inferno, where Nepharites circle in the dim light, seeking a victim to torture. Other doors lead up into the spiral, to narrow steel ladders and catwalks which enigmatically wriggle their way up into the framework, mile on mile of hazards between platforms resting over precipices. Shoddy ladders, raised when Elysium was still young, and crackling electric wires draped on iron bridges are lethal traps. Sharp metal blocks precariously balanced await the clumsy intruder. The view of Metropolis from the spiral has no counterpart in the other palaces, which are perceived as dark, regular mountains in the yellow haze on the horizon. The spiral is almost deserted save for a few servilians or Wandering Memories.

WANDERING MEMORIES

In or near the Memory Banks the hapless visitor may encounter a Wandering Memory. A Wandering Memory is a recollection so traumatic that it has leaked from annihilation in the Memory Banks by virtue of the intensity of its experience. It is impossible to erase and wanders off. A Wandering Memory is like a war veteran's flashback, but the memory belongs to another. It is an experience like a mind-twisting hallucination. A weak character may have difficulty distinguishing it from his own memories. Here are some examples to scare the players:

- You accelerate as you and your buddies see two more of them in your headlights. Holding hands just as if they were normal people. You feel a

rush of anger. Stinking faggots! Your car bumper hits them at about knee level, breaking their legs, so they can't run for it, and they fall to the street, screaming for help. You and your friends pile out of the car, grabbing your bats and tire-irons and run forward shouting threats and cursing. One of them is dead and the other lies bleeding and broken when you all jump back into the car and roar off into the night, looking for fresh victims...

- A warm, pulsating tunnel of soft, meaty tissue. A bright light. A hard fist grabs your ankles and drags you out into the freezing cold. A grotesquely fat creature in a white coat, its eyes glittering like a snake, tongue wriggling, skull cracked. It laughs as it cuts pieces from you with a blunt and rusty pair of iron scissors. You start to scream...
- The chainsaw in your hands gives a devilish roar. The body rattles and twitches even though you just chopped it up. You and your friends are covered with blood and tissue. Their greedy eyes speak clearly. You turn off the saw, flushed with joy. Then you hear the sirens in the distance...
- When they turned the lights out you knew it wasn't a shower-room like your mother said. The gas stung your eyes and nose, and you were overwhelmed by a choking sensation. The air seemed cleaner higher up, so you tried to climb onto the fallen just to get closer to the ceiling. Your father and the others, coughing and choking on the gas, trampled you down as they climbed higher themselves. You could feel yourself being broken and crushed under the growing pile of the dead as consciousness faded. The last thing you remember is feeling your

moving through the landscape. This must be my artistic vision! I have never experienced its equal in significance and blunt beauty!

A door stood ajar in the huge industrial building. I heard machines at work. The room was humid and the sickly-sweet smell of blood hung in the air. The lights flickered, naked people were shoved helplessly into steel drums by short, hairless creatures in white coats. The drums started to rotate at high speed and the screams soon hushed. I had forgotten to hide before this horrible scene, and one of the creatures spoke to me: 'You must be eradicated, wretch!' It produced an instrument that flashed silver and cut me in the arm. I fled the building screaming and lost consciousness. I awoke on the floor of my studio, a deep flesh wound in my right arm. Ilya told me I had been missing for three days.

My vision will give the Revolution a monument! I shall call it 'Monument to the Third International'!

I showed my sketches to the Party Leadership yesterday, and their eyes almost popped out. The enormous spiral that forms the monument made them suspicious. They wanted to know me where I had stolen the idea. Stolen! They threatened to punish me if I did not tell them the truth, but when I told them of my

vision they looked dubious! It was all very unpleasant. In my weak, over-worked condition, I started to hallucinate, and the party leaders seemed to have suddenly grown grotesquely fat and spoke in kisses with snakes' tongues. Their pale faces cast threats and accusations at me, and I fainted again. Is this the end? What have I done?

Comrade Lenin came to visit and advised me to go to a sanitarium. He wouldn't hear of my monument!

(In different writing)

Vladimir Tatlin
lobotomized May 27,
1922, new assistant
named. Project
'Monument to the Third
International' canceled.
Tatlin can return to
normal work, but capac-
ity greatly diminished.

legs wet with your own excrement...

- They wouldn't admit anything, but when you strapped the young assistant's body to 'the scavenger's daughter' they paled and wept. The ingenious metal rack pulled at all the poor girl's limbs. All you had to do was tighten it. You felt sorry for her, but it wasn't your fault. She let out a heart-rending scream when she started to bleed from the fingers and toenails. As you increased the tension, she began to bleed from the mouth and loins. The others cried and begged to speak, but it was too late. When her rib-cage burst you had to vomit...
- It seems like forever since you have had a full night's sleep. And that damned baby won't stop crying. You fed it, and changed it, and walked with it and now your legs are trembling and you can't see straight and still it won't stop. Finally, you can't take it anymore. You drop the baby onto the bed and start screaming yourself, while pounding the mattress, 'Shut up! Shut up! Shut the f--- up!' The baby keeps crying and before you can stop yourself, you're hitting the baby instead of the mattress. After a while, there is silence...
- You all wear white hoods. The black family kneels in the mud before the burning cross. One of the men hands you a .357. 'Go ahead, son, kill the damned little nigger!' Your hand shakes a little as you hold the gun to the boy's head. The bang seems too loud to be real. The boy's brains stain your once-white robes. The others roar with laughter...
- You no longer remember what you found so interesting about this disgusting man you met at the bar. It's all a bit hazy, but now he has strapped you naked to a steel bed without a mattress. Expressionless, he empties a

bucket of water over you. The sound of Wagner's music has reached a crescendo when he produces the electrodes and fastens them to your wet body. Pain from the electric shocks dissipates the drug-induced haze. You see smoke from your forehead rise above your eyes and flames erupt from your groin. Someone screams. You realize it is yourself...

If you have scared the players with Wandering Memories a few times, or if you want to let them experience directly rather than suffer Incidents passively, you can allow the Wandering Memory to continue for a longer period of time. Take the example of the chainsaw murder above. The character has been shocked by a terrifying recollection, but it need not end there. Sirens are heard in the distance. The police, summoned by a neighbor, will come and surround the house. What does the player character do? He must act it out, and it may end with him being shot by the police or tortured in his cell for hours by sadistic officers. It can be overdone, but subject the character to real stress once you have put him in an impossible situation where he does not know whether it is real or not, or even if there is a way out. This is very effective. Here is a longer example, a Wandering Memory in which the player needs to react.

- You are a lieutenant on peacekeeping duty for the U.N. in Bosnia. You come from an aristocratic background, and are not very good at practical things. A month after your arrival, during your first skirmish, you wet your pants. Since you got here, your men have mocked your squeaky falsetto voice and despised everything you tried to do. Every moment in the field you expect the inevitable shot in the back from the riff-raff of the lower ranks. But you have anticipated them as they

lie in wait by the edge of a field to storm a clump of trees. The first salvo from the artillery falls short of the grove and punishes the proles! From your shelter you see the first rounds tear the filthy peasants to pieces as they mill around, calling for their mothers and filling their underwear with yesterday's lunch. A direct hit on Corporal Jones turns him to a shower of blood that sprays the whole platoon. Wharton crawls towards your rock outcrop. He throws up on himself. You hit him between the eyes with the butt of your gun. A strange exultation flutters in your stomach as you see the men you have feared for six weeks reduced to vegetables and corpses. The salvo ends. No one rushes the grove. From the edge of the field you hear weak groans: pathetic and unmanly. You walk among the bodies and put a bullet in the head of each survivor. They beg for mercy, offer you everything their puny lives can offer. It enhances the pleasure. You thank Astaroth. Suddenly you hear a voice: 'What the hell are you doing, soldier?' Another platoon of U.N. soldiers appears in the hollow, prepared for action.

Now the character can play the part as long as the Gamemaster wishes. To shoot his way out is impossible, to talk not much easier. In all likelihood the character will be imprisoned, humiliated, spat upon and lynched from the nearest tree by popular acclaim. The lieutenant carries only a revolver. One way lies dishonor, disgrace, and degradation, the alternative is a desperate escape and a nerve wrenching chase.

Incidents

THE HAPPIEST MOMENTS TRAVEL AGENCY

Happiest Moments is a low-budget travel agency aimed at a youthful clien-

tele, specializing in bus trips in Southern Europe with lots of sun and partying. It is typical of low-budget packages but for one feature: the travelers go nowhere. When they board the bus, they are gassed and taken to a warehouse in an industrial slum where they are kept unconscious for a week. In the warehouse they are brainwashed with false memories of the most ordinary kind: sun, swimming, drunkenness. They are tanned under sun-lamps and fake postcards are sent to their friends and families. They are sent back with cheap souvenirs from their planned destination. The souvenirs contain Wandering Memories from the Memory Banks focused and bound to the objects. These memories are unpleasant, where the hapless passenger remembers committing the most inhuman crimes. In proximity to the souvenirs, the victim's false memories resurface again and again, causing him to believe that they are his own. If the traveler loses or gets rid of the souvenir, the memory will slowly fade, but if he keeps it, his mental balance will steadily erode by one point a week. All memories of the trip are dim and dreamlike. Many try to suppress the whole experience.

Happiest Moments is run by a lictor named Xetorte, who sends his loyal underlings to the Memory Banks in Metropolis to bind memories to the souvenirs. Xetorte commands a dozen young men with pale, scarred bodies bearing primitive tattoos in occult patterns, who follow him blindly. Their mental balance is -50 to -100. They act as travel agents and manage the agency. The customers presume they are partied out. Xetorte's 'office' is located on the premises but he does not accept visitors. In Elysium, he goes by the name Adam Kelno. His office is a portal to



Metropolis. The Game Master can place the offices on a side street in any major city he wishes, along with the warehouse where the sleeping tourists are kept. Xetorte's henchmen carry uzis. The true nature of the 'souvenirs' can be revealed by magical intuition or other magical knowledge. The artifacts are covered with runes that suggest their alien origin.

A Gamemaster may use Happiest Moments in several different ways: the characters can meet Xetorte's disciples outside a Memory Bank conducting a ritual to bind the Wandering Memory to the souvenirs. This will probably result

in a fight, and if they capture a prisoner, he may explain the Wandering Memories and perhaps also the Memory banks to the characters. Or the players could have acquired a souvenir, be subjected to the evil memory, and begin investigating. One of the characters could have a friend who commits suicide following a trip with Happiest Moments, or they could be approached by a friend or relation of the suicide's. This can be strung out into a long episode with action in Metropolis and detective work in Elysium, or be limited to a short incident.



'Piranha!'

'Our Vice-President had filled his kidney-shaped swimming-pool with piranhas. That kind of vulgar nouveau-riche frolic has always been his cup of tea. There were about a hundred of us guests at the New Year's party. I had a lot of champagne. I bumped into Eve at the buffet. She had climbed up the ladder by using bedroom. The slut had pinched my promotion! She humiliated me in front of my whole net of business contacts!

'Calm down, go on...

The Primal Sea

The Primal Sea is a large lake or inland sea that, subsequent to the creation of Elysium, filled an enormous crater in Metropolis with its mushy, pulsing and oily organic liquid. Hacked and butchered human remains flows down the moist slope from the Memory Banks and the fluid has long since submerged former quarters of the city and their residents. Old buildings and towers stick out of the stinking muck like atolls or reefs. Some look intact, while others are crumbling ruins from age-old civilizations. Oberons, who direct the flow with their dams, swim around in the Primal Sea seeking the foetuses that

float under the surface by the hundreds in shoals. The Primal Sea itself seems to create them, but the oberons ignite a light at the center of the shoal, which seems to animate the foetuses in anticipation of what awaits them: Rebirth. The surface is covered with lumber, furniture, and the remains of houses. Some of the buildings that stick up out of the sea are inhabited. These creatures travel the sea by means of rafts lashed to oil drums or similar craft that are hard to sink. In some of the houses one can descend beneath the surface. Others emanate lights as though equipped with electricity. It is possible to drift on the

Primal Sea for years without seeing anything but the peaked roofs of houses that break the surface. Parts of the Primal Sea are floating cemeteries of ships, large cracked tankers pouring out radioactive toxins, old steamers half sunk, embers still glowing in their boilers, spewing coal-black poisonous smoke and threatening to burst in a nightmare of rusty steel. Old sailing-ships menace passers-by with endless fathoms of capsized rigging. Grossly fat rats three feet long swim in currents of nerve toxin from rusty battleships, seeking raw flesh to devour or bodies to infect. From the depths of the Primal Sea, a continuous symphony of pulsing, thundering noises springs, as well as bubbles of foul-smelling organic gases, testifying to the strange chemical processes far beneath the surface, as if the sea itself was alive.

If a character is so unfortunate as to fall into the sea, then fails to swim and misses an EGO throw at +5 modification, he has no chance to be retrieved, even if he has a rope tied about his waist. The Primal Sea has its grip on him. He will be reborn as a baby with his personality and memories intact. As an infant wise beyond its years, he can try to contact his former comrades, unless his mother has destroyed him as a thing of evil..

Incidents

FOETUS SHOAL

The characters are adrift on the Primal Sea in a small boat or a raft. The sea is warm and has a pronounced, rhythmic and regular pulse. They feel that the Primal Sea is alive. Large, foul-smelling gas bubbles rise from the deep, products of a chemical process far beneath the surface. The bubbles shake the boat about, but are harmless. Alternatively, they might make the characters sick.

A light glows beneath the surface some distance away. It comes from the deep, just beneath where a shoal of foetuses floats. There are three or four hundred of them. They start to attach themselves to the vessel, weigh it down, and threaten to capsize it. The foetuses can be scraped off with oars or killed with weapons. One hit is sufficient to dispose of a foetus. If the characters pull a foetus aboard the vessel, it seems normal in all respects, but lies gasping for air.

BIRTH

The characters witness how an oberon swims into a shoal of lifeless foetuses, dives under it and lights a light. The foetuses begin to move. The oberon resurfaces amid a few small, sharp smelling gas bubbles and swims away. The foetuses are now alive and ready to attack passers-by.

REBIRTH

One of the characters (or an NPC) falls into the Primal Sea. He tries to grasp an oar but disappears beneath the surface, out of sight. If the others do not haul him out quickly, he will be tugged away by the strong suction of the Primal Sea. The character must attempt to swim before this happens, and if this fails must make an EGO throw at a +5 modification. If this fails, the character disappears beneath the surface and cannot be saved. He will be reborn as a baby with all his memories intact. He can later try to contact the characters.

OBERONS

The characters are trying to reach the shore in their vessel when they are attacked by a group of swimming oberons, who try to pull them down into the sludge.

TELEPHONE


The characters reach a building that

'I sat down at the bar and then I had this idea. I'd push her into the piranha pool... I've been to the Amazon and I knew piranhas don't attack unless they taste blood...

'We'll have to check on that...

'Yeah, go ahead, do! Anyway, I shove Eve into the pool. She screams in panic and I'm just about to tell her when... something goes wrong... The whole pool starts to boil and a bloody cloud is bubbling around her! I dive in, I'm smashed, and I try to get her to the surface but... when I resurface with her head under my arm, the party is gone... The pool is gone and we're not swimming in water any more... A viscous stew of rotting meat is bubbling around us... Eve is staring at me, crazed... beside us, a sky-scraper is sticking up, it seems to grow from far beneath the surface. In the windows are people dressed in forties fashions, cheering. They're throwing confetti on us, I scream for help, but the cheers drown my voice... There are babies floating up and clinging to us... hundreds of tiny ones... I lose Eve... Then I'm sitting on the poolside with a towel around me...'

-Tape recording of cross-examination of Louise Sperrling concerning the death of Eve Larsen at New Year's Eve party at the residence of director Lars Kalm on January 1st, 1994 at 12:47 AM. Chief examiner Lieutenant Sven Jonsson.



sticks several hundred feet up out of the Primal Sea. They can step inside through a window. Then, they hear a telephone ringing somewhere below them, beneath the surface of the sea. They find themselves in an ordinary office building, somehow insulated from the sea. A stairwell leads down, with three doors on each landing. There are a few alternatives for the Game Master:

- When the characters open one of the doors, the foul sludge of the Primal Sea comes crashing in over them and they must fight for their lives, flee upwards, or be washed down the stairwell.
- The characters climb open a door at the bottom of the stairwell. It leads to the Razides' Egg Chamber (see The Underground).
- They enter a normal office of a typical government civil service department. The head of the office examines them and questions them carefully. He is of course a lictor, and may cause trouble for them in the future.

DESECRATION

The characters risk entering an inhabited building on a reef in the Primal Sea. It is occupied by three naked, bearded, long-haired men, their bodies painted in ritual patterns with the liquid of the Primal Sea. When they discover the characters they cry excitedly: 'Chmetlialiah', which is their name for the Primal Sea, which they worship as the origin of everything. The arrival of the strangers is an act of defilement.

They attack the characters with rusty axes and spades. Outside is a raft made of oil drums tied together.

PORT

Having drifted on the Primal Sea for what seems like an eternity, the characters reach a large urban cityscape. They have drifted into the docks of New York, or some other large port in Elysium.

ONE-WAY TRIP

The Primal Sea is broken suddenly by a violent backwash, and a gigantic, much-rusted steel ship soundlessly plows past through the stinking sludge. Its hull is pierced by man-sized holes. Pale bodies can be spotted moaning sadly. The deck is soiled with dried blood and excrement, as if thousands of people had been slaughtered and their fluids poured over the flaking, rust-infested paint. The ship is a phantom vessel without a crew, its cargo hatches sealed. In the hold stand naked people, tightly huddled together, pale bodies covered in sores. Some are horribly wounded, others have each leg twisted the wrong way, bones sticking out from white flesh. They are all in the throes of agony and jointly can only manage an eerie, hollow moan.

The ship carries the dead from life to the Memory Banks, a last cruelty to the captive souls. The ship neither sails nor calls at any port, but comes to a painful halt before the humans are eradicated in the Memory Banks. Doors beneath the decks lead to the Memory Banks and Elysium.



The Clockworks

The Clockworks, an important part of the Machinery, govern human perception of time in Elysium. When the cogs lose speed or twitch, the same thing happens to Elysian time, and to all who are bound by this the illusory time-flow. This occurs through a stutter in time, backwards or forwards, which no human perceives but for a slight sensation of bewilderment ('Is it lunch time already?'), or an uncommonly strong sense of déjà vu. Since the disappearance of the Demiurge, the cogs have functioned with diminishing regularity. In the immediate vicinity of the Clockworks, chrontal displacement occurs regularly to humans bound by illusory time.

The tortured sound of tens of thousands of emaciated people fills the air, forced to work as hard and as fast as they can, drowning the squeak of uncoiled machinery. Humans are fettered to the Clockworks. Its drive-gear spans a thousand yards across. The wheel is shining blood-black, pierced with darker cavities that appear to gaze at the toiling slaves, and with passages that lead to the center where a light glimmers. A chaotic network of struts, wires, pipes and drive-chains form a roof above the slaves. It stretches its limbs out to various mechanical towers of chaotically designed machines. Small

bewildered children wander everywhere, some are caught in the works and are crushed to death. No one pays them any attention.

Imposing humanoid beasts circle the bizarre scene, their sunken faces replete with metallic teeth. The beasts are Chronites who ensure that the wheel is turned at a certain cadence. If it is too fast, the regulators throw some hapless slaves into the cogs and gears. If it is too slow, they force the pace of the slaves with cuts and blows. The Chronites' height ranges from twelve to fifteen feet. They visibly enjoy their work. On their backs are two large humps, perhaps indicating an origin as angels.

Past the black gates, forty feet high, which lead towards the center of the drive-gear, lost children wander. It is impossible to communicate with them. Along the walls are great alcoves where hordes of small gray-green parasites are tended to by horribly twisted, hunch-backed creatures called the Watchmakers (weak Metropolis standards). Their arms are covered with the parasites which they carry around in large wheel-barrows. Their faces are contorted beyond human limits. Their mouths have contracted into small openings, their eyes are shining red-white sores, and their noses have collapsed. The Watchmakers have a symbi-

ANAMNESIS

Bodily status O.K. except for encope. Pat. is a boy of adequate height, weight and strength for a nine-year-old. Motor reflexes O.K. Pat. was very healthy at an early age except for usual child's diseases: colic, chicken pox, measles, etc.

Pat. attended a private school from the start. The teachers do their best to reach him, make him react, but pat. seems determined to keep all people at a distance. When pat. started school he would not speak, and sat mute and unmoving on his chair. After more than a week he started to crawl around the room and seemed to observe the things around him. Pat. has now been in school for about two years.

When someone approaches he curls into a fetal position on the floor. Pat. never looks anyone in the eyes and never responds when he is spoken to. Something in pat.'s behavior stops the teachers from classifying him - his conduct is uneven. From appearing to be quite retarded, pat. can perform actions that seem to indicate that he is highly gifted.

If he thinks that someone is watching him, he

quickly withdraws into his shell. Mostly he creeps around along the walls or sits under tables where he rocks to and fro sucking his thumb. Pat. is sometimes subject to fits of temper and on these occasions he bites and kicks.

The school is not adapted to dealing with mentally challenged or emotionally disturbed children and the teachers now state that pat. needs treatment of a specialist.

Statement (based on several tests, including sandbox, Rorschach and HTP)

Pat. seems dissipated during the tests, and some disturbance in his motor system is also noted. Pat is introverted, self-engrossed and uninterested in external stimuli. He is a lonely child in a cold, unfriendly world.

This is an autistic child who subconsciously builds a world of his own, filled with its own particular principles. Pat. seems to create this world as the inevitable alternative to an environment in which he cannot function, perhaps because those around him do not let him function on his own terms. In this way pat. is 'forced' into his illness, which acts as a screen against an anguished world. Only in his illness can he find safety, because there he can act without risk of failure to live up to the overwhelming demands of reality.

Pat. requires professional treatment, e.g. the Snoezelen-method.

—Virginia Plythian,
licensed psychologist.

otic relationship with the parasitic creatures. The parasites are wristwatches in our reality and control our perception of time.

At the core of the Clockworks is a marble pool filled with corrosive slime, where Mehdemnon, a creature 36 feet high, gives birth to the parasites. The Watchmakers wander around the drive-wheel, gathering children that they throw into the pool as offerings to Mehdemnon. The children do not protest.

The children in the Clockworks are autistic, afflicted with a warped perception of time that makes communication between them and ordinary people impossible. This defect has two causes: their perception is very slow, and all around them happens at an accelerated pace, like a rock video played at high speed, or it is very fast and everything seems to move with glacial slowness, producing an incomprehensible static world. None of these children has ever managed to communicate with their surroundings. Eventually, they end up in the Clockworks where they become food for Mehdemnon.

Mehdemnon, the mother beast, has soft feminine forms, calluses upon calluses, and large dangling glands. Her huge face is vaguely human and she sits in a pool of her own corrosive body juices, where she gives birth to new parasites. The beast is served by Watchmakers, who are so receptive to the parasites' influence that they have formed a symbiotic relationship with them. If their watches are removed, the Watchmaker may die. Their task is to collect the parasites and bring them to Elysium to foist them onto unsuspecting people as wristwatches. The parasites enslave their bearers to Elysium's absolute perception of time. The victims wear them proudly under brand

names like Tissot, Timex, Swatch, Rolex. The Watchmakers do not consider themselves humans, a race for which they have the utmost contempt, and enjoy spreading Mehdemnon's parasites in Elysium. They convey the parasites in wheelbarrows to Elysian warehouses, whence they are shipped to watch factories to be marked with brand-names. These names in reality are invocations that govern the cemented unity of time: Tisotena, timexana Meheamnonio, Rol ex sil urd, Svo-atsjit drigh, etc.

Incidents

PARASITE

The characters discover that something tightly grips their arms, and find a slimy greenish creature that has fastened itself around the wrist where their wristwatch once was. The Parasite has several insemination tubes stuck in the character's arm, and pulsates to the rhythm of his heart. The parasite can only withstand light damage, but this will also affect the character.

TIME RIFT

The characters approach the drive-gear of the Clockworks. When a group of slaves is thrown in and perishes, the wheel jumps slightly in either direction. The characters may be flung backward or forward in their perception of time. (This is true for all of Elysium's inhabitants, but they suppress or rationalize the event.) For example, the characters are flung forward in time and find themselves inside the wheel in front of Mehdemnon, where they are attacked by Watchmakers covered with parasites. Or, the characters are flung backwards in time and return to the comforting world of Elysium. They can also be flung far back in time, to deal once more with a situation they have already faced. Or, they could see several occurrences simultaneously: an attack by

Chronites, panicked flight, entering the drive-gear, sneaking about at an earlier juncture, all simultaneously.

CHRONITES

In the proximity of the Clockworks the characters' time perception can be disturbed in more ways than the one

mentioned above. Time may seem to flow slower, faster or even to be frozen. Besides bewildering the characters, this may attract Chronites, who attack them with twisted time perceptions (not to mention ripe fruit). It's a good thing I have a pistol.




The City of the Dead

The City of the Dead is an extensive hill covered by mausoleums thirty feet high, bombastic marble statues and other monuments of curious design, totems or focal points for magical rites. The hill stretches widely, and a persistent fog emanates from the ground. Flickering lights shine from within the graves and monuments, and a rhythmic mumbling can be heard, as though someone were praying fervently or casting a curse. Mysterious creatures amble about in the narrow lanes and alleys, seeking the secret or freedom of Death. Some are human, some partly human, others not human at all. In the center of the City of the Dead stands a marble building, a monument to vulgarity some 300 feet high. This is the White Chapel, a mausoleum said to be the final resting-place of the Demiurge. Those who claim the Demiurge is dead think him there already. Before its doors stands a black and mummified humanoid figure

wrapped in a white shroud. This guardian neither confirms nor denies any theory and allows none to pass.

The Square of the Black Monoliths attracts serial killers from Elysium. The black monoliths that border the square are five in number and stand as high as tenement buildings. They are square, but their contours are vague as they reflect so little light, and can only be distinguished at arm's length. Close inspection also reveals the steps and passages that lead into the dark interiors of the monoliths. Serial killers performing their ritual acts are transported to the monoliths whenever they commit a murder, and remain until such a time as Elysium can tolerate their rage without spoiling the Illusion. The immortal souls of the killers are so deranged by their captivity that they try to destroy all human life according to their own bizarre patterns. The urge is not conscious, or even subconscious. This transports them again



and again to the abode of final death, the City of the Dead.

Should one in ignorance enter a mausoleum or chapel after seeing lights or hearing noises, the creatures are hostile and will attack with all the physical or magical power at their disposal. Some creatures like to delude lost humans and can inspire them with terrible insights, either false or genuine, about the true nature of being.

The City of the Dead is one of the most holy places in Metropolis both to the most ignorant serial killer and to the self-proclaimed immortals, and even to the true immortals, who shun the place but are always subconsciously drawn there.

Incidents

FEKKÜZERS

The characters have just been transported to the City of the Dead and wander down its dark alleys. The fog is thick, and from the somber openings of the sepulchers, obscure smells and muted noises escape. The ground and walls seem suddenly soft and moist: the characters are treading in a swarm of thousands of Fekküzers — small parasites with horrific effects on humans.

MONOLITH

The characters have been transported from the illusory safety of Elysium to the Square of the Black Monoliths. A few people wander aimlessly, mumbling, screaming, or simply staring with burning, unseeing eyes. One of them passes close to the characters, clad in bloodied rags of human skin, inexpertly flayed and sewn with crude stitches. (An EGO throw may not be out of place here.) The man disappears into one of the monoliths. If the characters follow him, they will find a portal that becomes visible at half a meter's distance, which leads into the ebon block: A staircase winds upward into a darkness that no light can disperse for more

than half a yard ahead. The interior of the Monolith is a reservoir of evil with many taps into Elysium, Inferno and other parts of Metropolis. The characters can wander in the darkness for weeks, battle raving killers, or chance upon the torture chambers of Inferno. An example follows:

- The characters stumble up the stairs into a kitchen in Elysium. They have entered it through the back door. The floor is drenched with blood, and on the kitchen counters are flayed and mutilated bodies. Powerful teeth have gnawed open a torso, and beside it lies a warm, wet heart that appears to have been chewed on. Flaps of skin sewed together are spread over the entire room. Body parts are arranged in groups of five: it seems to have been a family. The butchering was done with saws and meat-axes. The refrigerator is filled with eyes, brains and genitalia. The doorbell rings persistently. A neighbor? The police? An accomplice? Perhaps a door-to-door salesman?

EXORCISM

The characters meet a group of people on a pilgrimage to the City of the Dead to kill a small boy and bind his soul to his own corpse in an empty mausoleum. Such operations are simpler to perform in the City of the Dead. They conceal their foul intentions and await a judicious moment to attack the characters, if they don't believe they have deluded them. The group consists of three men with low mental balance. All three are bare-chested, and their bodies are covered with open wounds dripping pus and numerous primitive tattoos. They say the boy is possessed by a demon and they must perform a particularly potent form of exorcism. The boy is clad in white, bound by a heavy silver chain and seems drugged. Their leader, who has unusually large biceps and a deep bass voice, calls himself David Nelson. He seems desperate

to convince the characters of his righteousness. The men, however, are poor fighters (values of weak Metropolis standards) and have a skill score of 10 with their daggers.

VICTIM

A woman's desperate cries for help are heard from deep inside a sepulchral monument. The only access is through a small door framed by marble. Deep inside is flickering light. The female voice cries in the throes of agony. If the characters enter, the door will immediately close, and the room, which measures fifteen feet square, will suddenly be lit. An massive Razide appears and attacks without mercy. The door remains closed until the characters slay the Razide, or he them...

ABSOLUTE ZERO

The road ahead is blocked by a large gate that seems to lead to another district of the City of the Dead. When the players try to open it, the handle is ice-cold. A bare hand will stick to it, and will have to be torn lose, suffering a scratch. If they open the door, cold so deep it freezes the air streams out with a hiss. The characters can avoid it by making a Dodge roll and then climbing up on a vault nearby. If they fail, roll a d10: 1-2 scr., 3-4 l.w., 5-6, s.w., 7-10 fatal wound: the character is frozen into an ice sculpture on the spot. The Game Master may modify this at his discretion and perhaps only frighten the characters with minor chills, or let an NPC be deep-frozen.

THE VAULT

The characters seek shelter in an empty vault, and suddenly find themselves in one of the black palaces of Inferno. Along the walls hang flayed bodies, wrapped in barbed wire. A Nephrite emerges from the dark, intent on tormenting these new damned souls. If the characters pass a PER throw, they discover a half-rotted door and quickly flee through it. The

door leads to a concrete Elysian parking garage. If all fail PER throws, they will wake up wherever the Game Master sees fit, unsure of what was dreamed or what was real. They may suffer from flesh wounds and flayed skin and vague memories of torture.

JOSEPH

Somewhere among the inhospitable alleys, the characters meet a human who speaks to them in friendly tones. 'Call me Joseph', he says, and relates his own experience of the illusion of reality, and others besides. Joseph is dead, and after a short time spent near him, the characters discover that he stinks and has difficulty moving. Joseph has tried to hide the stench by all possible means, but he has been dead for months and nothing suffices. Under his coat, a rotting flesh wound crawling with white worms is accidentally exposed: Joseph's fatal wound. Before they see the wound, the characters could mistake him for an unusually unkempt homeless person. Joseph has managed to inhabit his corpse to avoid eradication and rebirth so he can find his lost daughter Lia, abducted by the fanatical followers of an Angel of Death or Archon. He has sought her fruitlessly in Elysium. Now he wanders the alleys of the City of the Dead without knowing how he got there. He is nearing the end as his body has decayed to the point where he can no longer use it. Joseph is not aggressive, but they may wish to slay him as a monster. A fatal or serious wound turns Joseph into a Living Dead, with no real consciousness, every body part independent until it is destroyed. All wounds inflicted on a Living Dead make a disgusting, decaying hole that spews rotting fluid and clusters of white worms.

PATH OF THE DEAD

One of the characters misses a step and falls into an open grave, landing with a soft thud on the earthen bottom.



When the character tries to climb out of the grave, he is no longer in the City of the Dead, but in an Elysian churchyard. This can be done in reverse, as a way into the City of the Dead.

THE MISTRESS

The characters meet four young men sitting in a small depression surrounded by thousands of lit candles. The men are all of striking beauty. In the center of the circle stands a gorgeous amazon clad in scanty tights, chanting something in Swahili in a dark voice. The men gaze at the woman, riveted. All four are bare chested. The monotonous chanting stops and the amazon steps towards one of the half-dressed men and presses a large steel ring into his pale breast. Blood spurts from the wound in an abundant shower. He is dying, but still he only groans with pleasure. After scrawling mysterious signs and symbols with his blood, the black woman pushes him flat and nails him to the ground with a large stake through the breast-ring. The others watch the macabre scene as though hypnotized, while the woman kicks and insults the body with obvious disdain. Unless the characters

choose to intervene, the same procedure will be repeated with the other youths, who yield without resistance. Finally they all lie dying, skewered to the ground, and the woman disappears. If the characters decide to attack the woman, the disciples will flee, leaving their mistress to defend herself. The men are incapable of explaining anything, and the woman will not do so, spitting on the characters by way of answer to any question.

CONSEQUENCES

If the characters spend more than a couple of days in the City of the Dead, they will lose ten pound or more. They suffer from festering sores that refuse to heal. Ears, fingers, toes and noses start to rot. If, despite the symptoms, they decide to spend one more night, a body part will fester with worms and the character will eventually die. The Game Master should let each character make an EGO throw for each stage of bodily decay. The GM should also decide how fast the decay progresses. If he wants to leave an especially horrible impression of the City of the Dead, the whole process of rotting lasts less than an hour.



The Mirror Halls

The Mirror Halls is an awakened surrealistic setting that lacks respect for natural laws and human limitations, a dangerous environment for people caught in the web of Elysium. There are

many entrances to the Mirror Halls: shady nightclubs, galleries, gambling dens, and cinemas. Bewildered visitors wander through them who do not know where they are, or what horrid

secrets they may stumble upon.

Azghouls abound, who wish to stop the awakening of humans for fear of becoming slaves once more. Creatures of the netherworld sometimes appear seeking victims for Inferno. Those who seek the truth also find their way to the Mirror Halls, stumbling across valuable but incomprehensible pieces of the puzzle and dangers without end.

Clinically white corridors wind in bends for miles on end, the walls reflecting the flickering of a badly-tuned TV. Sheet-metal doors lead to dark clubs filled with sweaty bodies where the time is always late at night. The place could be Hamburg, New York or Inferno. A high-ceilinged shining white hall is covered with shapeless pieces of meat that twitch with cramps, spastically smearing the clean, open surfaces. A room is furnished with functional electric chairs, and small hallucinogenic mushrooms grow in neat rows, ready to bestow permanent insanity. Sudden rains of silver forks impale the floor or any hapless visitor. The corridor makes a complete turn and suddenly you are on the ceiling, unable to reach the doors. Hands stretch from the unpleasantly elastic walls to embrace a visitor forever. A vacuum cleaner as large as a truck explodes after sucking in a library. Splinters of wood and occult manuscripts shoot down the bare corridors in a shock wave, knocking over everything in their path. Paintings on the walls become increasingly suggestive and unpleasant, and an EGO throw is required to avoid vomiting at their perverse insinuations. Well-dressed humans walk around, small catalogues in hand, coldly eyeing the repulsive pictures. 'Interesting', 'a trifle banal' are their comments before they pass through a glass door to a buffet where sober muzak plays from loudspeakers. On the street outside, the traffic flows as usual in Paris. This is the opening of an exhi-

bition. People snort coke in the lavatories and engage in amorous seduction, none pay attention to the bizarre revelations of the paintings. The artist is pale, hollow-eyed and nervous. An ominous appearing gallery-owner watches over the whole affair, an awakened human who on further investigation can be identified as the long deceased Bulgarian art dealer Demlik Draal.

Incidents

AWAKENED MUSIC

Unsettling and alien music - awakened music - roars under the vaulted ceilings from an invisible source. The sounds are foreign to the human ear and the combination of frequencies is painful. The players should make EGO rolls (the authors recommend to the ambitious Game Master a record by the 'singer' Diamanda Galàs for added effect)

FRAGMENT

The characters find a heap of shredded fragments of handwritten text. The stack is two feet high and just as broad. The text is rife with gold and silver illuminations, the ink is a dark brown color, possibly blood. The language is a hodge-podge of Ancient Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, etc. The heap weighs thirty pounds. It is a fragment of an outline about how to recognize an Azghoul, with suggestions on how to bind it, compiled in the Middle Ages by a Dominican monk, Rafael de Morais. The monk was burned at the stake for heresy, but his book survived, reduced to indecipherable, garbled fragments under the industrious influence of lictors. The book is an occult item of inestimable value and has long been sought by demonologists. The characters do not know this. To them it is only a waste of space. If they try to sell the fragments or conduct further research, they will attract the attention of lictors, demonologists, Satanists, and thieves.



The papers may disappear or be destroyed at the discretion of the Gamemaster. To know the name of an Azghoul is to be able to bind it, but all available information is cryptic, indeed incomprehensible...

MEETING WITH THE SELF

A small child runs away from the approaching characters. If they chase it, the character who catches up with it discovers that it is himself as a child. The child accuses him in a whiny voice of all the failures and illusions about life that the character carries. 'I wanted to be a stuntman', 'you got married' Even recent misdeeds are dredged up, such as 'why did you shoot the witness, he hadn't done anything?'. The character should make an EGO throw every time the child hits the mark. Then the child disappears with a giggle.

THE PAST

A large mirror in a golden frame displays horrible Incidents from the characters' past. The Game Master can reveal Dark Secrets or just unpleasant childhood memories. More recent incidents can be reflected. All the characters see things personal to themselves. Examples of

unpleasant childhood memories:

- The character sees himself as a child, standing in a circle of other children around a boy, spitting on him. The next day the boy is not in school: he has hanged himself.

- The character and his best friend force a dog to swallow some gasoline and tie a firecracker to its stomach. It goes off, splitting the belly of the animal and releasing its entrails, which it drags behind it. It suffers for hours before it dies. They silently bury the tattered mutt in a deserted spot.

The players may eventually be allowed to roll for EGO.

Letter

THE DARK SHADOW

The characters meet the undeveloped shadow of one of their number. It belongs to the one who has the highest or lowest mental balance. The shadow relentlessly pursues the character until it is slain or until the character flees the Mirror Halls. If the shadow is slain, the character's mental balance is doubled, becoming even more extreme, whether high or low. The shadow is half the size of the character, but in exact proportions, and has the same abilities and powers.

BROTHEL

A door leads into a room with a low ceiling. Beautiful, scantily-clad young women sit drinking expensive wines with men in dark suits. Huge crystal chandeliers and indecent works of art suggest a nouveau-riche atmosphere. Its tastefulness is not improved by the red drapes. No one pays any attention to the arrival of the characters. They are in a brothel at the Reeperbahn in Hamburg (or in another city of the Gamemaster's choice). They have just left the Mirror Halls and stepped out of a cleaning closet. Aggressive behavior from the characters will cause the owner to call the police.

'Dear Director Hultenheim,
It is with great sorrow in my heart that I must write you this letter, a letter I would have hoped no parent should have to read. I do not know how to express this gently, so I must ask you to forgive my somewhat abrupt tone. Your son Göran has committed a grievous injury to the school mascot, our janitor's Labrador. As far as we have been able to ascertain subsequent to questioning Göran and his classmates, he attached home-made firecrackers to the dog's ears, sexual organs and anal orifice. Then he poured petrol on the animal. His schoolmates tried to restrain him, at least according to their own versions, but apparently Göran was so excited he could not be stopped. Finally he set fire to the dog, which we subsequently had to put out of its misery. The school board views this event with the utmost gravity and it is my firm opinion, shared with the welfare officer, that we have to make Göran realize what he has done. For this reason we should meet at once for a talk. Please call me at home or at school, should you have any questions.

Karl-Gunnar Björkstam
Headmaster, St. Johannes' school'

Kult

The Damned



Andrews had caught a giant balloon-like creature. It had taken all the strength, energy, and foolhardy courage he had. The zeppelin was a huge floating, pale, densely veined bladder, chains hanging from every part of its inflated body, almost covering its underside. The chains had sharp meat hooks attached. Harry strapped himself to one of the chains. He hoped at least the lesser beasts would stay clear of them. Two hundred and fifty feet above the ground, the two of them settled into a deceptive and agreeable feeling of safety. Andrews' contempt for death had no limits, but so far it had served them well. He was striking a bold, new course out over Metropolis, as if they had any such thing as a sense of direction. They were still looking for

Rebecca. Harry had long since given up. He was simply content not to be shot at or bitten...

Eventually, Harry and Andrews found Rebecca. She was screaming, quite insane, on top of a black monolith in the City of the Dead. Her features were grossly contorted from the many hours of emotional torture, and they were barely able to recognize her face. Harry stepped into an open trap-door, and sprained his right ankle. The door opened onto a staircase descending into the monolith. They couldn't even make out the hole while standing directly above it. The monolith reflected almost no light, and the edge was nearly invisible. They fastened Rebecca to the netted chains, pinions and hooks on the zeppelin's underside. She hung

limply, her open mouth drooling and her eyes staring vacantly out into thin air. Andrews thought she might be possessed.

Metropolis' repulsive assemblage of bizarre architectural dreams opened up to their high vantage. The cityscape's only steady features were the weird scattered palaces, reaching into the clouds like mountains. The zeppelin flew over a vast demolition area. At its fringes huge machines were grinding down yet another chunk of Metropolis' buildings. As they got closer they saw that the machines were huge gray monsters, attacking the houses with iron heads. They watched in fascination, sailing past this powerful spectacle of destruction. Then they spotted the nepharite directing the machine monsters.

Razoths suddenly attacked the zeppelin's veined skin with razor-sharp wings. Elongated scraps covered with green slime dangled from their wounded mount's body, and they were losing altitude fast. Rebecca had neither moved nor spoken for hours, but now she cried out in sheer terror. The eyeless metal lizards tore at her chains, lashing at her eyes with sharp tongues. Harry and Andrews tried desperately to get a clear shot at the beasts, but the razoths dodged behind the vast zeppelin body between attacks, leaving no target but their split tails. Out of pure frustration, Andrews emptied half a clip into the zeppelin. Leaking a huge trail of green slime, it took a steep dive. Harry and Andrews, unfastening their chains, jumped free before it crashed.

Following the impact, Harry found himself lying in an open field of decomposing garbage. It smelled a lot like shit.

He tried to collect his thoughts and get his bearings. Without warning, his aching body was grabbed by clawlike hands, attached to hairy, festering arms, and he was dragged down beneath the garbage dumps. 'Intruder! Intruder!' came the cries of the primitive trash dwellers. They had gathered inside a damp, foul cave where the walls, floor and ceiling looked and smelled like soggy diapers. Behind an old cardboard box, turned upside down and bearing the Jack Daniels logo, sat a grotesque, leprous humanoid creature. A single candle shed its feeble light in the room. 'Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!' the mob proclaimed. Harry found the stench unbearable...

As he lurched towards the crashed zeppelin, Andrews was distracted by monotonous, captivating music. A fire burned brightly on the flatlands between the old ruins. Disregarding the danger, he drew closer to it. A beautiful naked woman was performing a slow sensuous dance in the flames, and his steps were taking him straight on into the flaring pyre. The ignityde gave him an inviting smile. Soon, he would go up in flames as he embraced her.

Rebecca fought desperately to free herself from the tangle of thick, rusty chains. When the zeppelin crashed, one of her thighs was pierced by a meat-hook, and the shock pulled her out of her stupor. The burst bladder beside her, the size of a small cruise ship, gushed out its green slime. She was drowning in it. She twisted, spat, and gasped for air. 'I know where you belong!' came a bronze voice from inside her head. Her eyes, wild with anxiety, met those of the nepharite.

Non-player characters

Demiik Draal

AGL: 75

PER: 75

EGO: 100

END: 90

COM: 4

STR: 105

EDU: 120

CHA: 145

Height: 175 cm.

Weight: 120 kg

Movement: 37 m / CR

Actions: 7

Initiative Bonus: + 63

Damage Bonus: + 19

Mental Balance: +- 500

Damage Capacity:

18 scr = 1 l w

17 l w = 1 s w

15 s w = 1 d w

It takes ten deadly wounds to kill him; he then immediately starts to regenerate and will be in perfect health ten hours later.

Endurance: Unlimited

Skills: Climb 30, all Projectile Weapons 40, Sneak 50, all Melee and Throwing Weapons 55, Interrogation 65, Hide 60, Seek 70, Night Combat 50

The Dark Art 42

Demiik Draal was once a London art dealer of Bulgarian extraction. From his Argyll Street gallery, he conducted studies into the occult with a zeal that bordered on the obsessive. His collections of artifacts, paintings, photographs, writings and occult curiosities are still almost intact, but his ne'er-do-well playboy son Bela, is selling them off bit by bit. This has resulted in several outbreaks of incurable insanity among the buyers.

Demiik's researches have made him an awakened human being, and he has left this world for a permanent residence in the Mirror

Halls. In Elysium, he is thought dead, although his body has never been found.

Personality: Demiik is arrogant and cynically superior. He speaks in a slow drawl with a heavy Slavic accent. His eyes are cold and penetrating. His face is inanimate, like stone. He regards unawakened people as contaminated and carefully avoids touching them.

Gamemastering hints: Pretend not to hear what the characters say. Cut them short as soon as they try to speak. Avoid looking the players in the eyes, but fix your gaze a yard or two behind them.

Bela Winthrop

AGL: 12

PER: 16

EGO: 9

END: 15

COM: 9

STR: 11

EDU: 15

CHA: 16

Height: 185 cm.

Weight: 89 kg

Movement: 8 m / CR

Actions: 3

Initiative: + 4

Damage Bonus: + 1

Mental Balance: — 55

Damage Capacity:

5 scr = 1 l w

4 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

Endurance: 90

Dark Secret: Inheritor, Occult Experiences.

Advantages: Influential Friends.

Disadvantages: Selfish, Intolerant, A liar.

Skills: Projectile Weapons 7, Impact Weapons 10, Unarmed Combat 12, Sneak 14, Dodge 9, Hide 14, Seek 13, Climb 14. Contact Net: jet set of England.

Demiik Draal's only son, Bela Winthrop, is a seriously disturbed man. Although he has never actually met his father, Bela has been in contact with him: while tripping on cocaine, dreaming, or blundering into Metropolis. But Bela has never grasped the true significance of these impressions. To him the Metropolis incidents are just far-out trips. His inability to work, com-

bined with his expensive jet-set lifestyle and cocaine habit, has forced him to sell off Demiik's collections. The side effect is that many of the purchasers have gone insane. The Temptress has noticed Bela's ability to experience things that normal men can't endure, and she has vague plans to make use of him in her future intrigues. In the meanwhile, she controls

him through one of her Incarnates, Lea, while she ponders what to do with him. Lea supplies Bela with drugs and whores, and she has systematically manipulated his active social life to the point where he no longer exercises the least control over his own existence. During the wildest orgies, Bela's estate outside London is lost in Metropolis for days. The Seekers, a sect led by the cultist Aguirre, have examined the victims who have gone mad following a purchase from Demiik's collections. They have

also tried to contact Bela himself, but as of yet all attempts have been foiled by Lea.

Personality: Insufferable and flamboyant, he shows utter disregard for money and for his fellow man.

Gamemastering hints: Make showy, careless gestures, use a loud voice and laugh loudly at your own jokes. Never agree with anyone about anything. Make up a theory or express an opinion of your own and stick to it with cocksure self-assurance.

The Temptress

GL: 40

PER: 55

EGO: 48

END: 69

COM: 72

STR: 54

EDU: 44

CHA: 63

Height: 188 cm.

Weight: 65 kg

Movement: 20 m / CR

Actions: 9

Initiative: 28

Damage Bonus: + 11

Endurance: 345

Damage Capacity:

14 scr = 1 l w

13 l w = 1 s w

11 s w = 1 d w

It takes five deadly wounds to kill her.

Skills: all Weapons 50, Sneak 54, Dodge 63, Hide 59, Seek 70, Climb 42, Seduce 68.

The Dark Art: 40

Somewhere inside that illusive vortex of emotion and thought known as Limbo, an enigmatic entity called the Temptress is said to reside. Very little is actually known about her, as she never reveals herself directly to human beings. Information about her existence and influence can only be derived second-hand from age-old works on occultism where she is referred to in connection with the ancient Dream Princes and Astaroth's Incarnate, the Tempter. There are theories that she might be a twin Incarnate of the Tempter, or even Astaroth's concubine. Other sources claim that the Temptress is a sixth, passive Dream Prince, while yet others hint that she is a metaphor for vortex, or at least for its elements of passion. It is said that only Astaroth knows who she really is, and he has refused even to mention her name ever since the Demiurge disappeared.

LEA

One of the Temptress' Incarnates, Lea is seductively beautiful and absolutely ruthless. She will stop at nothing to further her own ends. She has been married three times, and her first two husbands died, leaving her immense legacies. In her last marriage, she

forged photographs of her husband in incriminating situations, and the ensuing divorce made her one of the richest women in the United States. She first encountered the Temptress in her dreams while still living in an orphanage in Puerto Rico. The Temptress recognized her potential, and quickly educated her in the art of ensnaring men. By her seventeenth birthday, when she made the cover of Vogue's French edition, she was already a full-fledged seductress in the service of the Temptress. Eleven years later, she has put her claws deep into Bela Winthrop, son of Demiik Draal, whom she continually degrades, always obedient to the wishes to the Temptress.

Personality: Ruthless, ambitious, calculating, and very intelligent.

Gamemastering hints: Act helpless with male characters, catering to their protective instincts. Pretend to be a bit dim, and smile seductively. Take female characters into your confidence, saying how much you envy them their female strength and that you would gladly give up all your beauty, if, one morning you could wake up, look yourself in the mirror and say, 'I'm a woman and not an object!'

Beria

AGL: 25

PER: 25

EGO: 10

END: 40

STR: 45

Modification to Horror
throw: + 5

Height: 400 cm.

Weight: 500 kg

Movement: 12 m / CR

Actions: 4

Initiative Bonus: + 13

Damage Bonus: + 8

Endurance: 230

Damage Capacity:

9 scr = 1 l w

8 l w = 1 s w

6 s w = 1 d w

It takes two deadly wounds to kill him, and he will start to regenerate as soon his body sinks into the Primal Sea.

Armor: 3

Skills: Climb 15, Sneak 5, Hide 5, Seek 25, Night Combat 30.

Attack modes: 2 x Razor blade attack 18 (scr 1-4, l w 5-9, s w 10-14, d w 15+).

Beria was once a subject of Netzach, a mighty lictor who faithfully served his master, the last time at one of the many battles outside the Demiurge's Citadel. He was seriously wounded there and was trapped on the Citadel island when it sank into the Primal Sea. In the polluted depths, Beria mutated and was transformed into a frightful beast, twelve feet tall, who stalks the ruins of the Citadel on pale gray legs, largely dissolved due to the many years of constant exposure to water. His torso is curved forwards and its bursting, translucent skin reveals his pulsating entrails. Around his arms, which are

embossed with a tight grid of thick veins, are heavy steel bracelets where Beria fastens yard-long razor blades that he uses for weapons. His jaw has grown out of all proportion and protrudes, revealing multiple rows of teeth which seem to be animated by muscles of their own. He has long since lost both of his eyes, and the empty dark sockets ooze a bloody pus. Beria navigates like a bat by broadcasting noises and sensing his location with his hyper-sensitive ears. He is a terrible enemy in the darkness which covers the Citadel. He is absolutely ruthless and his sole instincts are to hunt and kill.

Gelocheli

AGL: 26

PER: 31

EGO: 38

END: 24

COM: 41

STR: 34

EDU: 48

CHA: 29

Height: 192 cm.

Weight: 79 kg

Modification to Horror
throw: +- 0

Movement: 13 m / CR

Actions: 4

Initiative Bonus: + 14

Damage Bonus: + 7

Damage Capacity:

6 scr = 1 l w

5 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

It takes two deadly wounds to kill him.

Endurance: 120

Natural Armor: 0

Skills: Night Combat 30, Occultism 30, Mediation 30, Humanities 30, Daggers 20.

Attack modes: With dagger or his faithful Gelochelis.

The Dark Art: 20

Gelocheli is a character of myth in London. His name sometimes appears in the lyrics of songs glorifying the use of drugs, where he is a symbol of the unknown or a messenger of the mystical. At the mere mention of Gelocheli, the eyes of hardened drug users and alcoholics pop open with fear. The official police line dismisses him as fiction, but a secret report is rumored to exist, which shows a clear and very frightening pattern to the disappearances of several ordinary people, and scores of the homeless. Gelocheli controls a private portal to

Metropolis. The characters will find him by asking their way from London homeless and borderliners. Finally, a follower of Gelocheli's will point them to the right Underground tunnel. Gelocheli always places himself in the shadows, dressed in colorful rags. His long hair and beard clearly suggest a messianic complex. If the characters fail to treat him with the proper respect, he will immediately order them killed by his loyal followers. But if the characters humbly beg his help, he will take them, blindfolded, to the portal.

Gelochelis

Hundreds of young people from all over the world are drawn daily by London's empty promises. Many have neither jobs, money, nor a place to live. They end up on the street, along with thousands of others like them. Most of them eventually succeed in establishing a normal family and working life. A few even realize the big dreams which brought them to London. Fewer still end up as borderliners.

The Underground system is a mixed-up tapestry of intricately interwoven tunnels and vast stations of chaos and smoggy colors. The system extends to bomb shelters of the Cold War, and old brick vaults and cavities from the days of the Blitz. Even older tunnels open into medieval cellars, Roman ruins, and age-old caves of unknown origin. This immense tunnel system leads from Elysium out into different worlds, but only the Gelochelis dare to visit its deepest sections. No ordinary homeless person in his right mind travels it beyond a certain point.

The Gelochelis are borderliners as described in the rule book, but they possess a collective consciousness, through which they are controlled by Gelocheli. Their instincts are attenuated, even by borderliner standards. They lack the instinct of self preservation, and are unable to learn from their mistakes. They number somewhere between 50 and 150. The Gelochelis can perform very simple duties, such as fetching things, attacking on command, or guarding a tunnel. In spite of their collective consciousness, they only coordinate their actions on Gelocheli's command. They are his eyes and ears.

Personality: Gelocheli is a melodramatic man of many whims. He takes great pleasure from his mythical renown, and he is extremely self-conscious.

Gamemastering hints: Speak in a melodramatic tone of voice, as if the fate of the entire world depended on your words. Make slow gestures of elaborate grandeur.

Aguirre

AGL: 10

PER: 10

EGO: 18

END: 16

COM: 5

STR: 12

EDU: 10

CHA: 20

Height: 185 cm.

Weight: 89 kg

Movement: 5 m / CR

Actions: 2

Initiative: +- 0

Damage Bonus: + 1

Mental Balance: — 50

Damage Capacity:

5 scr = 1 l w

4 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

Endurance: 60

Skills: Projectile Weapons
15, Unarmed Combat 16,
Sneak 13, Dodge 7, Hide
15, Seek 11, Climb 14.

The man known as Aguirre was originally from Iran but emigrated at the age of thirteen to Sweden in 1958. He worked in the Loussavara-Kirunavaara mines, where, thanks to his powerful charisma, he rose quickly in the ranks of the trade union. He was set for an excellent career in LO, Sweden's central labor organization, when one day, high on LSD down in one of the deepest shafts, he had an experience which was to change his life. He found himself standing in the halls of the Citadel, watching a child being born. The child's head was imprinted with an intricate tattoo, but before Aguirre had time to examine its strange pattern, the

portal closed and he found himself standing in the isolated mine shaft once more. Aguirre took it as a sign from God. He was the envoy of Our Lord and had been chosen to prepare His glorious return to the earth. He formed a congregation, the Seekers, which soon numbered a thousand members in the north of Sweden alone, and hundreds of thousands more around the world. His instant success was largely due to the church's creative use of drugs to achieve harmony with God and oneself. Aguirre's quest for God eventually rendered most cult followers psychotic from constant drug use and the resulting horrible experiences in Metropolis,

Inferno and Limbo. But Aguirre and his handful of loyal followers are still convinced that they will some day find God and reinstate Him in His rightful position as Our Lord. The Seekers purchased the Loussavaara-Kirunavaara mines when they were abandoned and created a temple in the spot where Aguirre had his mystical experience. The Seekers are an anti-social lot, living alone but for trips to Metropolis where they go seeking clues to the Demiurge. They abuse themselves brutally with alternative drugs to counteract the limitations imposed by the normal human mind. Aguirre himself regularly injects silicon into his head to simulate brain tumors. The Seekers will stop at nothing to further their own ends, including kidnapping people suffering from incurable insanity to study and imitate their symptoms. They search everywhere for the Boy with the Tattooed Head. According to legend, he will reveal the way into the Citadel.

The Seekers are represented in all major cities throughout the world, but they no longer advertise their activities. The players run a major risk of confronting them if they visit areas in Elysium where the Illusion is thin and prone to shatter.

Personality: Charismatic, a religious fanatic displaying clear symptoms of schizophrenia. Gamemastering hints: Use a monotonous voice, make exaggerated gestures. Stare deeply into the players' eyes, asking if they are ready to meet their maker. Make frequent use of pathetic sounding metaphors (as, for instance, 'Our lives are as safe as a snail slowly crawling down the edge of a newly sharpened razor...'). Be ambiguous and always try to convert them to the 'True Faith'. Ask the characters for their views on life. Assume an expression of great understanding, and then explain that they are totally wrong.

Cultist

AGL: 2D10 (11)

PER: 2D10 (11)

EGO: 2D10 (11)

END: 10 + 1D10 (15)

COM: 2D10 (11)

STR: 10 + 1D10 (15)

EDU: 1D10 (5)

CHA: 1D10

Height: 180 cm.

Weight: 80 kg

Movement: 5 m / CR

Actions: 2

Initiative: 0

Damage Bonus: +2

Endurance: 105

Mtl Bal: -25 - 5D10 (-52)

Damage Capacity:

4 scr = 1 lw

3 lw = 1 sw

3 sw = 1 dw

Dark secrets: Chose from Family Secrets, Crime Victim, Occult Experiences, Pact with Dark Powers, Guilty of Crime.

Advantages: None.

Disad: 10 + 5D10 punts (37)

Skills: Automatic Weapons 11, Hand-gun 12, Daggers 15, Impact Weapons 15, Whips and Chains 15, Unarmed Combat 15, First Aid 11, Foreign Language 11, Burglary 11, Drive Car / Motorcycle 13.

Personality: A yes-man, fanatically devoted to Aguirre.

Gamemastering hints: The worship of Aguirre has wiped out every trace of the former personality, leaving only a copy of Aguirre who

parrots his exact words (as, for instance: 'In the words of our great leader, 'Hark not to the false prophets, but follow in the path of enlightenment...').

The Tattooed Boy

AGL: 6
PER: 18
EGO: 18
END: 7
COM: 9
STR: 7
EDU: 15
CHA: 9

Height: 168 cm.
Weight: 87 kg
Movement: 3 m / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative: — 2
Damage Bonus: — 1
Endurance: 65
Mental Balance: — 5

Damage Capacity:

4 scr = 1 l w
3 l w = 1 s w
2 s w = 1 d w

Dark Secrets: Chosen.

Advantages: Mathematical Talent, Honesty.

Disadvantages: Phobia to Light, Curse, Nightmares.

Skills: Natural Science (Datalogy) 22, Computers 20, Information Retrieval 20, Electronics 13, Climb 5, Sneak 11, Throw 12, Unarmed Combat 6, Swim 2, Hide 16, Seek 15, Language (English) 8.

According to prophecy, the Demiurge has left a coded map showing the way into the Citadel, tattooed on the head of a boy who has had many incarnations. The Boy himself isn't aware of his tattoo, which can only be perceived by people with severe mental disorders. The tattoo can only be explained through the personal experiences of its bearer. It is immortal, and if the present bearer dies it will soon reappear on another boy.

KATSUO

Katsuo, the present Tattooed Boy, is an autistic seventeen-year-old who lives surrounded by servants in his father's central Tokyo villa. Katsuo's father, a top executive of the Sony corporation, is mostly away on business. Katsuo's mother died in childbirth. He has withdrawn from the world and lives in the belief that

Cyberspace really exists. There, he can create an identity which isn't limited by his physical shortcomings but defined by his knowledge of computers. He owns a powerful computer which he uses to tap into databases all over the world, using 'Akira' for his hacker's tag. It is his extraordinary ability to break codes that has made him an important pawn in the Demiurge's plan.

Personality: Divorced from reality, introverted, spoiled. He perceives Cyberspace as the true reality.

Gamemastering hints: Act as if scared out of your wits if the characters raise their voices or suggest that you leave your secure, dimly-lit parlor. Start to cry if forced to leave your darling — the computer.

Kreboos

AGL: 26
PER: 37
EGO: 54
END: 20
COM: 8
STR: 12
EDU: 76
CHA: 25

Height: 169 cm.
Weight: 67.5 kg
Movement: 13 m / CR
Actions: 4
Initiative Bonus: + 14
Damage Bonus: + 4
Endurance: 130
Mental Balance: 130

Damage Capacity:

5 scr = 1 l w
4 l w = 1 s w
3 s w = 1 d w

It takes two deadly wounds to kill him.

Skills: Projectile Weapons 15, Climb 12, Sneak 11, Throw 12, Unarmed Combat 6, Swim 14, Hide 14, Seek 11.

The Dark Art: 10

Kreboos is one of the Archons' false prophets. When mankind long ago denied him, he was left high and dry by his creators. Now he performs genetic experiments in his steel bunker on victims kidnapped from subway systems in Elysium by his trained Metromortes. His bunker is encased within a vast system of train tracks,

lined with the bodies of trespassers hanging by their necks. Leaving the tracks, you step into a land of minefields, multiple barbed wire fences, and trap-doors leading straight down into the Metropolis Underground. The bottom floor of the bunker is occupied by freezer rooms, where sedated humans hang from meat-hooks.

It also contains Kreboos' experimental chamber. His original purpose is either forgotten or blocked out. He now devotes himself entirely to wild experiments with human DNA, trying to create aberrations of the race. He takes pride in his few successful mutations, whom he releases in Elysium to spread horror and disease.

Saints

Edmond felt at ease, in spite of the bullet lodged under his left knee-cap, which burned like fire. The verse in blood on the laboratory wall indicated that he would find refuge at the end of the heat conductor. He felt the welcome numbness spread through his body. Soon there would be no feeling from his waist down. But he didn't mind, because here he could die and the scientists would have no more opportunities to perform their terrible experiments on him...

Saints are people who have died a martyr's death. Their spirits inhabit the Labyrinth between Elysium and Metropolis. They are not enlightened and care only for the vindication of their own deaths. Anyone who vindicates a saint will have gained a hold on him and can demand help from this saint. Keep in mind that saints are very bitter by nature and are most reluctant to render help. They will use any opportunity to mislead the characters, but anything the characters do in the name of a saint will make it more difficult for the saint to refuse them (provided, of course, that they demand something which is within the saint's capabilities). Saints express themselves ambiguously and like to make every answer into a riddle. You collect points for each time you vindicate a saint and each time you find an artifact which is bound to a saint. Every point increases the chance that the saint will be unable to refuse your request. This means that saints regard persons with high scores as major threats to their freedom and will waste no time in trying to kill them. A high score also increases a character's risk of stigmatization, which means that the character is removed to the time and place where the saint underwent its

Personality: Energetic and enthusiastic, but completely intolerant. A ceaseless talker who never finishes his sentences or waits for an answer.

Gamemastering hints: Keep your eyes in a wild, excited stare. Rush your words at a break-neck pace. Grab the characters note papers and start scribbling technical sketches on them.

bitter fate, and now the character must relive the incident. The character is endowed with the physical appearance of the saint, but keeps his original skills. If the stigmatized character is able to change the saint's fate, his soul is returned to its own body, and the saint, fully vindicated, dies. But if the character fails, his soul must wander the Labyrinth forever.

We recommend that the Gamemaster keep the score of the characters' points, so that the players will not be able to analyze their own actions.

Finally, a saint can be contacted only at the price of 1D100 points of one own's endurance. The Gamemaster makes the roll.

Effect	Result
Miss	leads character to utter ruin.
0	No contact.
1-5	Helps the character, but difficult to interpret.
6-15	Helps the character, and easy to interpret.
16 +	As above, 6-15, but the saint feels threatened and tries to kill the character.

There are many saints in Metropolis, and those mentioned below are only a few representative examples. The GM should create saints for his own adventures. That way, the saints' fates can be tailored to what the GM has in store for the characters.

Example: If the GM has decided on an adventure where the characters frequently encounter the Catholic church and the licensors of Binah, he could let Claudia help them when in need.

DESCRIPTION OF A SAINT

History: Who the saint was, and what his life in Elysium was like.

Vindication: What the characters must do to vindicate the saint.

Abilities: What the saints' abilities are which can be used to help the characters.

Communication: How the saint communicates with the characters.

Artifacts: Objects which are closely bound to the saint.

Modification to prayer

+ 5 for every vindication.

+ 1 to + 3 for every artifact (the value may vary according to its symbolic value).

Example: By manhandling two rapists, Matt has come into possession of Claudia's crucifix. He already has her ivory comb. He prays to Claudia: 2 vindications 5 + 5, the ivory comb + 1, and the crucifix + 3 = 14 for Matt's skill to pray successfully for Claudia's assistance.

CLAUDIA

'Take off her crucifix, Pablo, and shove it up her... Damn it! Just look at her bleed! Far out, she likes it rough!... Hey, let me... YOU SLUT! Stop praying to your damn Savior — here: this is your maker!... Hey, Marco — do something to stop her from looking at me like that... How? How the hell should I know — just do something!...'

History: Claudia was a pious nun in Los Angeles working to help parents in the slums to provide their children with a decent upbringing. On the night of March 17th, 1977, while saying her evening prayers, five of her Sunday school pupils broke into her room and raped her brutally. The ravaged her with a crucifix, drank the blood of her maidenhead, and maimed her breasts. Claudia forgave them on her deathbed, and did not even report them to the police, but died in the blissful belief that her meekness would grant her a place in heaven. She was embittered when the lies of Elysium dawned upon her, and is now vengeful and will assist anybody who punishes rapists.

Vindication: The punishing of rapists.

Abilities: To reveal lictors within the church, and to expel Binah's agents.

Communication: Speaks in Latin.

Artifacts: Her diary; a book: 'Children Write

Poetry'; an ivory comb; the crucifix from her confirmation (all artifacts can be found in the Santa Monica convent).

Stigmatization: 22

BARBERIO

'You dare accuse these fine policemen, with perfect records, of lying under oath! You cowardly ape! You just couldn't live with her rejection of you, and slaughtered her as if by some tribal justice, showing absolute disregard of the free will of civilized people...'

History: Barberio, a black man from New York

City, passed by an alleyway late at night on April 28th, 1984. A group of policemen were beating and raping his ex-wife, Jessica, a white woman. In his efforts to save her, he was arrested and indicted for her murder, instead of the policemen. The trial was a pure farce, led by the District Attorney, Gerard Washington, a racist of ill repute (and also one of Geburah's lictors), who built his case on the theory that Barberio was jealous and had been unable to accept Jessica leaving him. In order to avoid suspicion, he had postponed his revenge for more than three years! The guilty policemen were lauded for trying to save the white woman from the this raging beast, but, alas, in vain. The jury, all middle class whites, found Barberio guilty as charged, and he was sentenced to death. His appeals for a pardon were denied, and at 07:22 AM, December 22nd, 1991, Barberio was executed by lethal injection.

Vindication: To torture the prosecutor, judge, jury, jailers, executioners, and especially the guilty policemen.

Abilities: To reveal and expel Geburah's lictors (although not the ones who sentenced him), and to halt time for several minutes (during which the characters will still be easily detectable by illusionary creatures, such as the aspectii).

Communication: By use of a ouija board.

Artifacts: A pen case containing expensive fountain pens, a Rolex watch, a Polaroid snapshot of Jessica, a battered law book, a soiled American flag.

Stigmatization: 18

'The Guardian

(See the Kult rule book.)

Creatures

Agentii

AGL: 2D10 (11)

PER: 1D10 (5)

EGO: 1D10 (5)

END: 10 + 2D10 (21)

STR: 10 + 2D10 (21)

CHA: 1D10

Mod to Horror throw: + 5

Movement: 5 m / S R

Actions: 2

Initiative Bonus: 0

Damage Bonus: + 1

Endurance: 135

Mental Balance: +- 500

Armor: 2

Damage Capacity:

6 scr = 1 l w

5 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

Skills: Climb 9, Projectile Weapons 16, Automatic Weapons 16, Rifle and Crossbow 14, Heavy Weapons 16, Throwing

Weapons 12, Impact Weapons 14, Whips and Chains 8, Unarmed Combat 16, Dodge 6, Sneak 6, Hide 14, Seek 6, Swim 8.

Attack modes: Tentacles / growths 16 (gripwise), and otherwise according to weapons.

The Dark Art: 0

The agentii are renegade berserkers of Kether who have been chemically and biologically mutated. They drool at the mere chance of harming another being. Their bark-like skin is covered with rotting tissue and bulges with cancerous tumors. Their heads and arms are overgrown with the thick vegetation of a branchlike flesh, and their helmets and weapons, indicating their military origin, are covered with dull, gleaming tissue which seems to incorporate

the equipment within their already gross, distorted physiognomies. The agentii will attack all human trespassers without hesitation, as they don't like to be reminded of what monsters they have become.

Azghouls

(See the Kult rule book.)

Borderliners

(See the Kult rule book.)

Chronoites

AGL: 4D10 (22)

PER: 4D10 (22)

EGO: 2D10 (11)

END: 10 + 1D10 (15)

STR: 3D10 (16)

CHA: 1D10 (5)

Modification to Horror throw: + 3

Movement: 11 m / CR

Actions: 4

Initiative Bonus: + 10

Damage Bonus: + 4

Endurance: 105

Armor: 5

Damage Capacity:

4 scr = 1 l w

3 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

Skills: Impact Weapons 15, Unarmed Combat 16, Climb 10, Seek 6, Sneak 6, Hide 6, Swim 8.

Attack modes: Bite (Scr 1-4, l w 5-10, s w 14-18, d w 19+); membrane (grip-like: drain 1 year / CR from the character's life); and otherwise according to weapons.

The Dark Art: 42

These are tall creatures with scaly armored skin of a dull, pale red color. They have powerful metallic arm poles which they use to shove people into the Clockworks. They are unable to move their lidless Cyclops' eye, but must turn their entire long, thin head in order to keep a moving object in their lifeless sights. Their immobile gaping mouths are full of irregular, needle-pointed metallic teeth which they move in a sideways grinding motion. Two small

humps on their backs hint at a possible angelic origin. The Chronoites sometimes leave the Clockworks to seek people in Elysium who possess dangerous information about their Metropolis home. The Chronoites encase such an individual in a membrane of jellylike, porous tissue, which drains time from the victim, causing him or her to age prematurely.



... the gross tumors seem to have grown with exceptional speed, while some of the equipment is partially or fully encased in the freakish tissue.'



'Groups of these shock troops from the Clockworks have already been sent after me...'



'The symbiotes crawl off the dial to twist around the afflicted wrist...'

Chrono-symbiotes

AGL: 1

EGO: 1D10 (5)

END: 3D10 (16)

STR: 10 + 1D10 (15)

Modification to Horror throw: 0

Movement: 0.5 m / CR

Actions: 1

Initiative Bonus: — 7

Damage Bonus: 0

Endurance: 110

Armor: 1

Damage Capacity:

5 scr = 1 l w

4 l w = 1 s w

3 s w = 1 d w

It takes two deadly wounds to kill it.

Skills: None.

Attack modes: The insemination tube never fails, and will erase 1D10 minutes from memory of incidents which have affected the mental balance.

The Dark Art 0

The chrono-symbiotes are a product of the giant Metropolis Clockworks which assume the form of wristwatches and clocks in Elysium. As watches, the symbiotes steal time from the wearer in cases where they have recently experienced something affecting their mental balance. They can also summon the Chronoites when in need of reinforcements.

In its true form, the chrono-symbiote is

a slimy, green, buglike creature with no eyes. Its glistening belly merges with the watch wearer's wrist, then it inserts a thin insemination tube, injecting impulses which travel to the victim's brain. Larger clockwork symbiotes, for instance Big Ben, emit a shroudlike, invisible electric field, sending nerve impulses into passers-by, causing déjà-vu or sensations that time has inexplicably slipped.

Concrætii

EGO: 2D10 (11)

Modification to horror throw: — 5

Movement: 5 m / C R

Actions: 2

Initiative Bonus: + 4

Damage Bonus: 0

Attack modes: Ultrasounds according to EGO (if the victim fails the roll, he is given the disadvantage

Claustrophobia, which then brings on the next attack).

The shattering of walls never fails (shatters 1D10 times EGO score / CR of walls).

The Dark Art: 0

'These live in the walls of houses, and feed off their victim's claustrophobia.'

The concrætii are the most intricate creature from Inferno to carve out a niche for themselves in Metropolis. They are predatory spirits with a taste for destruction which live in the stones and mortar of the Original City. The concrætii emit ultrasounds which are irksome to human eardrums, causing feelings of violence, paranoia and claustrophobia. They feed off this primal human fear of being caged and never again seeing the light of day. The concrætii can be glimpsed as spiritual projections within the

walls, seconds before they come crashing down, accompanied by the piercing wails of the spirit creatures, burying anyone still inside the building. They cannot be physically harmed, but can be expelled by mental force. When expelled, the concrætii shed blood which will be seen oozing out through the mortar cracks. To drive them out, the exorcist must make a series of EGO rolls and match the effect against that of the concrætii. Scoring on five rolls over their EGO will expel the concrætii.

Destructates

AGL: 2D10 (11)

PER: 1D10 (5)

EGO: 1D10 (5)

END: 4D10 (22)

STR: 4D10 (22)

CHA: 1D10 (5)

Modification to Horror
throw: 0

Movement: 5 m / CR

Actions: 2

Initiative Bonus: 0

Damage Bonus: +4

Endurance: 140

Armor: 3

Damage Capacity:

6 scr = 1 lw

5 lw = 1 sw

3 sw = 1 dw

Skills: Impact Weapons 17,
Unarmed Combat 14, Climb
18, Dodge 6, Seek 10,
Sneak 3, Hide 14.

Attack modes: Ram 16 (scr
1-5, lw 6-10, sw 11-14,
dw 15+); and Fists (scr
1-6, lw 7-11, sw 12-15,
dw 16+).

The Dark Art: 0



The destructates are slaves that the nepharites have brought from Inferno to Metropolis to tear down and restructure the architectural chaos of the Original City. They are clumsy, crouching creatures with rough and porous skin, and they have long arms with shovel like hands. Their heads are featureless and reinforced with black steel, and they use it for breaking down

buildings. The destructates are incredibly strong, but not that aggressive. They are humble before their nepharite masters, whose orders they blindly obey, and they will not hesitate to kill at the nepharites' command. They work in pairs, always sticking to the same routines, as they are totally incapable of any improvisation.

'A troop of soulless creatures, known as the Destructii, who tear down and devour buildings, clearing the way for a new order.'

Einsätzer

AGL: 10 + 3D10 (21)

PER: 10 + 3D10 (21)

EGO: 2D10 (11)

END: 10 + 3D10 (21)

STR: 10 + 3D10 (21)

CHA: 5D10 (27)

Modification to Horror throw: 0

Movement: 10 m / CR

Actions: 4

Initiative Bonus: +9

Damage Bonus: +5

Endurance: 135

Armor: 1

Damage capacity

6 scratches = 1 light wound

5 light wounds = 1 serious wound

3 serious wounds = 1 fatal wound

Dies only after 2 fatal wounds

Skills: Automatic Weapons 17,
Rifles and Crossbows 15, Heavy
Weapons 17, Throwing Weapons

14, Impact Weapons 14, Unarmed
Combat 15, Climb 14, Dodge 12,
Search 10, Sneak 10, Hide 14,
Swim 14

Attack mode: Claws 17 (SCR 1-7,
LW 8-13, SW 14-18, FW 19+). The
claws are doused in a curare-like
poison). Otherwise according to
weapon.

The Dark Art: 0

The Einsätzers. They are found on both sides of a conflict, urging their respective soldiers to ravage, torture and degrade those on the other side. Any soldier who has once served under an Einsätzer is marked for life. He is haunted by dreadful memories of his deeds, and finally driven to suicide to escape a similar fate at the hands of some future enemy.

The Einsätzer is a tall man, black like carbonized wood. The razor sharp claws

of his wrists are excellent melee weapons. His face resembles a gas-mask and his helmet-like head shines as if made out of armament iron. His body is covered with blisters of adrenaline and testosterone which can be pierced and emptied onto unwilling soldiers.

Erinyæ

(See Kult Rule Book)

'The black beasts of war follow behind their troops, cutting down anyone or anything which gets in their way.'

Fekküzers

AGL 1

PER 1

EGO 3

CON 1

STR 1

Horror throw modification: 0

Movement: 2.5 ft / CR

Actions: 1

Initiative Bonus: -7

Damage Bonus: -3

Damage capacity

3 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

2 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 35

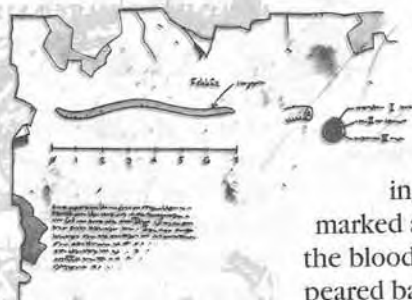
Armor: 0

Skills: 0

Attack Mode: Possession (see above)

As a parasite: Bite SCR (1-9), LW (10+). SCR means that it has fastened itself to the skin and will try again with -5 to the strike. With an LW or more, the fekküzer has managed to penetrate the skin and proceeds to possess a body part.

As a body part: This depends on the part in question. As a body part, the fekküzer avoids battle as much as possible, but if it must fight use SCR 1-9, LW 10-15, SW 16-20 and DS 21+, for body interior organs (they wriggle, corrode, and strangle) and SCR 1-8, LW 9-14, SW 15-19 and DS 20+ for limbs (they hit, jump and grab).



'... horrid red leeches, who place their offspring under the skin of their unfortunate hosts.'

'The trailer shook, and a heart-rending scream resounded. The door was flung open and Klaus stumbled out screaming, holding his severed arm in his remaining hand. The dealer followed, holding a bloody knife. 'You were

marked and I saved you', he said, wiping the blood from the sharp blade, and disappeared back into the trailer. Klaus collapsed, shaking and dropped the cut-off limb. The arm twisted itself and tried to wriggle its way across the parking lot like a snake. The dealer, armed with a flame thrower this time, came out of the trailer again, looked down at the bloody tracks and burned the arm to a crisp.'

The fekküzer is a red parasite with a segmented body, measuring about three inches long, that lives in the sewers of Metropolis. Human beings are fair prey for the fekküzer, as their thin skin is easy to penetrate. Progressing under the skin, the fekküzer resembles a pulsating blood vessel. The fekküzer soon implants its cells, which it carries between its segments, in a random part of the body. Then it dies. The dead fekküzer leaves a tattoo-like mark on the afflicted body part. The implanted fekküzer cell tries to possess the afflicted region every 666 minutes, or until the character manages to get rid of it through exorcism or by amputating or removing the body part. The victim can resist as described in the Possessed chapter of the rule book. If the fekküzer manages to pos-

sess a body part, it causes no end of trouble for the character. Every 666 minutes the body part tries to revolt against the body, to leave it and make its way to the fekküzer's playground. The victim may roll for EGO every time the body part stages a revolt, which it does without concern for the rest of the body.

Following are some examples of how a fekküzer behaves in different parts of the body, and how it leaves it:

KIDNEY:

Occasionally ceases to function, which causes terrible cramps and blood in the urine. Tries to shake itself free and creep out through the navel.

HAND:

Loses objects, hits people. Tries to get itself severed.

STOMACH:

Regurgitates everything swallowed, creates acute ulcers by digesting itself. Corrodes the intestines that bind it and creeps out through the mouth.

BRAIN:

Creates violent headaches, impairs sight and hearing. Forces the victim to hack out the brain with a hammer and chisel.

The fekküzers playground is located in the underworld of Metropolis, a place where a great many sewer tunnels meet to form a lake of human waste. There, the possessed body parts engage in grotesque acts of mating.

Ferocci

AGL 20+2d10 (31)

PER 10+3d10 (26)

EGO 5+1d10 (10)

CON 20+2d10 (31)

STR 20+3d10 (36)

Horror throw
modification: 0

Length: 8 ft 6 in

Height: 5 ft

Weight: 420 lbs

Movement: 50 ft / CR

Actions: 15

Initiative Bonus: +19

Damage Bonus: +8

Damage capacity:

8 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

7 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

5 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 185

Armor: 3

Skills: Climb 30, Sneak 30, Dodge
20, Swim 25, Hide 40, Search 25,
Acrobatics 20

Attack Mode: Bite 20 (SCR 1-4, LW
5-8, SW 9-15, FW 16+), 2 Claws
15 (SCR 1-6, LW 7-12, SW 13-17,
FW 18+)

The Dark Arts: 5

Ferocci are large and deceptively clumsy-looking four-legged animals. They are reminiscent of tigers in their movements, but are hairless and covered in a camouflage pattern that constantly adapts to their surroundings. The head is compact with deep-

set black eyes and long, razor-sharp teeth. Their long tail enables them to jump and climb with great precision. They can climb vertical walls if they can find purchase for their five-inch retractable claws, and even hang upside down.

'Whole cavalry detachments have been destroyed in battle by these catlike, but extremely and intelligent animals.'

Genetides

AGL 10+1d10 (15)

PER 5d10 (27)

EGO 4d10 (22)

CON 3d10 (5)

STR 3d10 (16)

CHAR 3d10 (16)

Horror throw modification: +5

Movement: 21 ft / CR

Actions: 2

Initiative Bonus: +3

Damage Bonus: +3

Damage capacity:

3 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

2 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 105

Armor: 0

Skills: Automatic Weapons 12, Rifles
and Crossbows 12, Heavy Weapons
8, Throwing Weapons 6, Impact
Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 16,
Climb 12, Dodge 10, Search 18,
Sneak 12, Hide 8, Swim 6

Attack mode: Radioactive Radiation
(automatically succeeds. The victim
rolls for CON every CR that the radi-

ation continues and reads the effect
in the following chart: SCR 5+, LW 3-
4, SW 2, FW 1. The wounds resemble
burns and may even cause loss of
hair and radiation sickness. The vic-
tim must pass a CON-throw once a
year in order to avoid cancer).
Otherwise according to weapon.

The Dark Art: 0

One of the grotesque by-products of the experiments performed in the name of Malkuth are the transgenetic genetides, who seek desperately to find a way to regain their lost human shape. The genetides have a consummate way of analyzing the DNA structure of the bodies they acquire. They hang the bodies in an elastic, slimy, web-like device, where they expose them to extreme doses of radiation and slow bloodletting. Then they inoculate the genes with new DNA codes, with catastrophic results for the victims. As a result of intense radiation, the genetides have

mutated into grotesque shapes that bear only vague resemblance to the humans they once were. Constantly dividing pieces of threadlike flesh hang in bunches from their translucent bodies. It is not unusual for a Genetide to have several useless limbs that sporadically drop off and are left to rot.

There are signs indicating that the genetides were once radiakks, and that it is through this heritage that they divine their former human qualities.



'Creatures that have long since left the human form behind, and now seek to regain it by consuming humans.'

Harmonides

AGL 2d10 (11)
PER 2d10 (11)
EGO 3d10 (16)
CON 2d10 (11)
STR 1d10 (5)
CHAR 3d10 (16)

Horror throw modification: 0
Movement: 2 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: 0
Damage Bonus: 0
Damage capacity: Harmonides can only be exorcised. Physical weapons have no effect on them.

Endurance: 85
Armor: 0
Skills: None

Attack mode: Deafening Noise (acts like Possession; see Possession chapter in the rule book. The victim loses will-power, loses one action per CR and all Score points in PER-based skills are halved. A Harmonide can put up to ten people to sleep simultaneously.)

The Dark Art: 5

'These obscure creatures that dull the senses in their surroundings...'

The harmonides are spiritual entities that possess the minds of musicians, or create and stimulate the musicians of Elysium. Few musicians are not controlled by harmonides. Harmonides create light sequences and atonal sounds beyond the range of human perception that fasten to humans' brains. These tunes grind on monotonously and make the listener apathetic and receptive to telepathic sugges-

tion, so that he thinks he is experiencing something unique. When musicians perform live, mass hypnosis results, and the harmonides tap the life energy from the euphoric audience. Harmonides keep an eye on upstarts in the music business and see to it that anyone who could disturb human apathy is ground down and induced to produce bubblegum-mainstream music.

Ignytides

AGL 2d10 (11)
PER 2d10 (11)
EGO 10+3d10 (26)
CON 2d10 (11)
COM 10+3d10 (26)
STR 2d10 (16)
CHAR 10+3d10 (26)

Horror throw modification: -10
Movement: 15 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: 0
Damage Bonus: +1
Endurance: 85
Armor: 0

Damage capacity:
4 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
3 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
3 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Skills: Throwing Weapons 6, Impact Weapons 6, Whips and chains 8, Unarmed Combat 8, Climb 10, Dodge 10, Search 10, Sneak 14, Hide 14, Swim 10

Attack mode:

The Dark Arts: 10

'Fiery sirens with the faces of angels to tempt men to perdition.'

Here and there in the Hunting Grounds of the Ruins of Metropolis, great beacons burn and cast a ghostly glow on their surroundings. On approaching, one can hear a sharp whistling noise and dimly perceive a shape in the fire. The shapes look like nude, dark-haired women who are slowly burning. They reach out in a gesture of appeal.

Ignytides are endowed with strong mental powers and a possessed person finds them very hard to resist. The Ignytides move through the air in the shape of a glowing ball of fire. In this form, they cannot possess anyone. They are bound to the Temptress and are her most aggressive agents in Metropolis.

Chaotics

AGL 2d10 (11)
PER 1d10 (5)
EGO 3d10 (16)
CON 5+1d10 (10)
COM 1d5 (3)
STR 2d10 (11)
EDU 2d10 (11)
CHAR 1d10 (5)

Horror throw modification: -5
Movement: 15 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: 0
Damage Bonus: +1
Damage capacity:
4 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
3 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 80
Armor: 0
Skills: Crossbows 10, Throwing Weapons 8, Impact Weapons 10, Whips and Chains 10, Unarmed Combat 10, Climb 10, Dodge 8, Search 8, Sneak 12, Hide 12, Swim 10

Attack mode: Bell-ringing (The victims roll for PER. Those who pass are deafened during the CR and unable to act). Otherwise according to weapon.
The Dark Art: 5

The chaotics, hunched creatures in dark hoods, wander in long processions through the Ruins and the City of the Dead, chanting in a monotone and ringing verdigrised copper bells. Where they pass the images of time are confused. Medieval witch burnings mix with crucifixions, collections of corpses from the Black Death, hangings, beheadings, etc. It seems that

the goal of the chaotics is to judge and punish the inhabitants of Metropolis, but their motives are incomprehensible.

Common to all Chaotics is that they have their eyes or tongues cut out, or ears and limbs that are gangrenous. Most of are emaciated because of the diseases they carry.

'Like an unboly Inquisition the prophets of horror go forth, passing judgment on those already damned...'

Compostates

AGL 2d10 (11)
PER 3d10 (16)
EGO 1d10 (5)
CON 5d10 (27)
STR 10+2d10 (21)
CHAR 1d5 (3)

Horror throw modification: 0
Movement: 15 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: 0
Damage Bonus: +1
Endurance: 165
Armor: 1

Damage capacity:
7 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
6 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
4 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Skills: Throwing Weapons 12, Impact Weapons 14, Axe 14, Unarmed Combat 14, Climb 18, Dodge 12, Search 12, Sneak 12, Hide 16, Swim 10

Attack mode: According to weapon. Any wounds sustained risk infection: +5 on the CON-roll.
The Dark Art: 0

Compostates conduct an eternal search through the garbage dumps of Metropolis and the stinking remains of our own civilization in the waste heaps of Elysium. They dig and sort, but whether they are looking for food or for something they have lost is not known. They are carrion-eating parasites, repulsive human creatures of rotting flesh and stinking waste.

Their slack bodies are riddled with sickness; blood and pus runs from their pores. The most decrepit are envoys of Baal Reshef.

Compostates are relatively harmless creatures and seldom attack, but they dislike intruders, which explains the half-ripped bodies of brutally executed people found in garbage dumps.

'Human in form, in appearance all rotting skin and excrement, these creatures offer the spectator nothing but Death!'

Larvæ

AGL 7+1d10 (12)
PER 10+1d10 (15)
EGO 1d5 (3)
CON 2d10 (10)
STR 3+1d10 (8)

Horror throw modification: -5
Movement: 18 ft / CR, floating
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus:
Damage Bonus:

Damage capacity:
4 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
3 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Endurance: 80

Armor:
Attack mode: Bite 10 (SCR. 1-8, LW 9-14, SW 15-25, FW 26+)
The Dark Art: 0

"Worms with teeth that can chew through the impenetrable. They hunt in packs and consume all."

Larvæ are black, wormlike creatures that hunt underground on our world and in Metropolis, which they pass between without hindrance. They are three feet long and attack with round mouths bordered with small, sharp teeth. They are the Razides' first state of development, and fully evolve after a few centuries. Larvæ are born in huge egg chambers in the Underground where black, leathery eggs the size of footballs cover the ground.

Larvæ have a unique ability to move freely through dead matter as if it were not there. They float through the ground, their progression unimpeded by stone or earth. Only organic matter obstructs their path,

forcing them to dig their way through or go around. They float through the ground in packs, hunting for prey.

Larvæ eat all organic matter. They feel the heat and movement of a living body hundreds of yards distant, no matter how much rubble separates them from their potential victim. When they have found a victim they summon other larvæ and attack in packs. When they hunt, they emit a grinding sound.

Lictors

(See Kult rule book)

Living Dead

(See Kult rule book)

Magistrates

AGL 5+1d10 (10)
PER 20+2d10 (31)
EGO 5+1d10 (10)
CON 20+2d10 (31)
STR 20+2d10 (31)
CHAR 5+1d10 (10)

Horror throw modification: +5
Movement: 15 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: 0
Damage Bonus: +5
Endurance: 185
Armor: 3

Damage capacity:
8 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
7 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
5 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Skills: Automatic Weapons 16, Rifles and Crossbows 14, Throwing Weapons 10, Impact Weapons 10, Unarmed Combat 8, Climb 6, Dodge 4, Search 16, Sneak 6, Hide 10

Attack mode: Jaws 18 (SCR. 1-4, LW 5-8, SW 9-15, FW 16+). Whoever is bitten by a Magistrate is the victim of a poison like nerve gas; See the rule book). Otherwise according to weapon.
The Dark Art: 0

"The huge warden monsters who guard the Machine City show no mercy."

An elite force developed by techrones for security and defense, based in the Machine City, Magistrates are techno-organic panzer tanks that resemble huge, black beetles. Their organic armor seems metallic in appearance and their natural arsenal makes them very dangerous. Many intruders have met death in the powerful jaws of the Magistrates, with their double rows of

razor-sharp teeth that move back and forth like saw blades, making a hellish sound. Even creatures far superior to Man are dissolved by the neurotoxins that glitter maliciously on the barbed outgrowths that protrude from the outer sides of the jaws. The only sound they are able to make is a jarring howl. They communicate with each other by waving their antennæ like insects.

Metromorte

AGL 30+3d10 (46)

PER 2d10 (11)

EGO 1d5 (3)

CON 30+3d10 (46)

STR 30+3d10 (46)

Horror throw

modification: +10

Movement: 70 ft / CR

Actions: 6

Initiative Bonus: +34

Damage Bonus: +11

Damage capacity:

11 Scratches =

1 Light Wound

10 Light Wounds =

1 Serious Wound

8 Serious Wounds = 1

Fatal Wound

Dies only after 3 Fatal Wounds

Endurance: 260

Armor: 10

Skills: None

Attack mode: Jaws 10

(SCR. 1-4, LW 5-8, SW 9-13, FW 14+). Gas (succeeds automatically, span of 15 ft. Acts like tear gas). Gore 8 (SCR 1-3, LW 4-7, SW 8-12, FW 13+).

The Dark Art: 0



The Metromorte is a huge train-like reptilian creature with the narrow head of a predator. It hunts its prey hungrily in the subway systems of Elysium. The body of a Metromorte is sleek and soft and sectioned like a centipede, covered with rough scales that slowly expand and contract in rhythm to its movements. Its jaws are a series of long, vertical, razor-sharp plates that continue far into the terrifying maw, where they

end in tumorous cartilage. On the very edge of the jaw is a powerful and solid tooth, bent upwards, which is meant to rend anything in the way of the Metromorte as it travels. The Metromorte cannot completely close its jaws and seems to be built to take in food constantly. It has small glands around its mouth that emit a poisonous gas.

'The sections of the city are interlinked by a gigantic network of subterranean tunnels in which huge and predatory reptiles lurk.'

Metropolis Standards

AGL 6, 10, 15

PER 6, 10, 15

EGO 4, 8, 12

CON 8, 12, 18

COM 5

STR 6, 11, 16

EDU 5, 8, 7

CHAR 4, 8, 12

Movement: 10, 15, 20 ft / CR

Actions: 2

Initiative Bonus: -2, 0, +3

Damage Bonus: -1, +1, +3

Damage Capacity:

4, 4, 5 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

3, 3, 4 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

2, 3, 3 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 70, 90, 120

Skills: Basic skills 6, 10, 14 The GM may decide what their weaponry is unless otherwise indicated.

Metropolis is inhabited by people of many worlds. Creatures from Inferno mingle with Archons' lackeys, mutated experiments from Malkuth's laboratories, spiritual entities, even humans. Most of the inhabitants of Metropolis are dangerous. Throughout this book, such inhabitants are referred to as specific monsters or as inhabitants. The latter are human or almost so, and are divided into three categories: weak, normal and strong. This division serves as a guideline indicating how tough they are as opponents in battle. They have nothing in com-

mon as far as appearance is concerned: the guideline is only a measure of their strength and cunning. There are "strong" sewer inhabitants around Chesed's palace as well as "weak" war veterans in the bunkers adjacent to Netzach's. Below, three values are indicated, each corresponding to a category (weak, normal, strong). The values are given so that the GM may use them on short notice during the course of a game. If there is more time, the GM may use them more as a starting point for his own ideas.



Mother Compostates

AGL 1d10 (5)
PER 1d5 (3)
EGO 10+3d10 (26)
CON 20+3d10 (36)
STR 20+3d10 (36)

Horror throw modification: -5
Movement: 10 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: -3
Damage Bonus: +5
Damage Capacity:
9 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
8 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

6 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Dies only after 3 fatal wounds
Endurance: 210
Armor: 5
Skills: None
Attack mode: Possession (The Mother Compostate can possess up to 5 creatures simul-

taneously, see the rules in the Possessed chapter of the rule book). Crush 10 (SCR. 1-5, LW 6-11, SW 12-16, FW 17+). The Mother Compostate can only try to crush already possessed creatures, which it does by rolling over them).
The Dark Art: 5

'Enormous metallic creatures that look like garbage wagons consume the waste of the City. The wagons, which cannot acquire nourishment by their own agency, offer shelter within themselves for human helpers...'

Mother Compostates are omnivorous in the most extreme sense of the word.

Anything that is poured into their ceaselessly rotating grinders is broken apart and disappears into their metallic gullets. At a hasty glance, they can be compared to the garbage trucks of Elysium, except that the Mother Compostates ride on caterpillar treads. The streaks of dirt and chips in the paint are really semi-translucent intestines and veins that entwine the whole body and slowly convulse. Each Mother Compostate is accompanied by two or three symbiotes, possessed Compostates, who obtain protec-

tion in exchange for procuring nourishment. The symbiotes feed the Mother Compostate with offerings and in exchange enjoy protection from the dangers of Metropolis.

The Compostates are like drones and the Mother Compostate is a mentally strong and telepathic queen. The symbiotes are obsessed with the idea of procuring food for their regent and will sacrifice their lives without hesitation in a crisis. When the Mother-creature journeys, the Compostates lie dormant in the driver's cab, which consists of a slimy gelatinous pupa.

Oberons

AGL 1d5 (3)
PER 1d10 (5)
EGO 2d10 (11)
CON 20+2d10 (31)
STR 20+2d10 (31)

Horror throw modification: +5
Movement: 6 ft / CR
Actions: 2
Initiative Bonus: -5
Damage Bonus: +4
Damage Capacity:

8 Scratches = 1 Light Wound
7 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound
5 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound
Endurance: 135
Armor: 3 (on top)

Skills: Climb 6, Search 14, Sneak 14, Hide 14, Swim 20
Attack mode: None
The Dark Arts: 5

'By the beaches of the viscous sea, leech-like creatures create complicated patterns...'

The Oberons, clumsily like beached walruses, use their numerous chubby fin-like growths, slowly digging new channels to the rivers and streams that lead to the Primal Sea. Oberons never use their fins for locomotion, but slowly crawl along the sandbanks like snails. In the sludge of the Primal Sea they are agile and fast, swimming in shoals beneath the surface. The upper part of their leech-like bodies are powerfully armored, but their bellies are soft and swollen. They have no organs of sight or smell, and orient themselves with a sonar echo like bats. When they locate

dying humans, they slide over them with a low hissing sound and a foul black substance is pressed out from the cracks between their body and its armor plates. This substance slowly corrodes the body at a rate of 1 CON-point per hour.

Oberons have no reason to fight and are left alone by all inhabitants except for humans. They are incapable of defending themselves.

Psilosites

(See Kult Rule Book)

Radiakks

AGL 3d10 (16)

PER 3d10 (16)

EGO 5+1d10 (10)

CON 5+1d10 (10)

STR 3d10 (16)

CHAR 5+1d10 (10)

Horror throw mod: 0

Movement: 25 ft / CR

Actions: 3

Initiative Bonus: +4

Damage Bonus: ++3

Endurance: 80

Armor: comparable to riot armor

Damage Capacity:

4 Scratches =

1 Light Wound

3 Light Wounds =

1 Serious Wound

2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Skills: Automatic Weapons 16, Rifles and Crossbows

12, Heavy Weapons 12, Throwing Weapons 6, Impact Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 18, Climb 12, Dodge 10, Search 12, Sneak 12, Hide 12, Swim 12

Attack mode: According to weapon.

The Dark Arts: 0



These mass soldiers of Kether move in hordes through Metropolis, commanded by aristocrats of Kether's court. Most are hybrids of soldiers who were subjected to atomic testing in the 50s and 60s in France, the United States and China. Their burned skin carries painful oozing sores, cancerous growths and rough skin tumors which spread radioactive spores. Their intellect is not brilliant and without a leader they are

bereft of morale. The greatest fear of a Radiakk is to be transformed into a genetide. In their quest for methods to bring down the Illusion, the lackeys of Malkuth have produced a DNA code that reprograms Radiakks into Genetides. This has intensified the battles between Radiakks and Genetides.

'As though burned by the rays of a merciless sun, these men hunt through the underworld, their limbs half-charred, seeking God knows what.'

Razoths

AGL 20+2d10 (31)

PER 1d10 (5)

EGO 1d10 (5)

CON 1d10 (5)

STR 1d10 (5)

Horror throw modification: -5

Movement: 45 ft / CR

Actions: 5

Initiative Bonus: +19

Damage Bonus: +3

Endurance: 55

Armor: 1 point

Damage Capacity:

3 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

2 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Skills: None

Attack mode: Claws 10 (SCR. 1-7, LW 8-15, SW 16-22, FW 23+). If the attack is successful the razoth may try again. If it succeeds a second time, it has gouged out an eye. Halve PER for all sight-related rolls. If both eyes are lost the victim is of course blind).

The Dark Art: 0

At a distance, razoths look like bats. They fly around Metropolis in great flocks. Their cocoon-like nests are in the cavities of the Machine City. They are only vaguely organic, with razor-sharp wings, rough, uneven black talons and black earwig bodies of a metallic material. They hunt constantly and have one favorite delicacy: eyes. They

attack in steep swoops, attack the victim's face and dig out the eyes with the gripping claws that lie on each side of their head. The razoths themselves have no eyes. They originate in the palace of Geburah and fill a small but key role in Geburah's plan to blind as many creatures as possible, so that everyone may stand equal before the law.

'Winged metal monsters swoop down over their victims and devour their eyes.'



'Armored spider-creatures travel the wide market-places. They topple their victims and suck out their bone marrow.'

Weeders

AGL30+3d10 (46)

PER 1d10 (5)

EGO 1d5 (3)

CON 30+3d10 (46)

STR 30+3d10 (46)

Horror throw modification: +5

Movement: 70 ft / CR

Actions: 6

Initiative Bonus: +34

Damage Bonus: +11

Damage Capacity:

11 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

10 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

8 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 260

Armor: 5

Skills: Climb 18, Dodge 8, Search 4, Sneak 8, Hide 8

Attack mode: Grip 10 (If the Weeder gets a grip, both it and the victim throw for STR every CR. As long as the

Weeder achieves higher scores it can attempt or continue a Bone Marrow Suction, Bone Marrow Suction 6 (takes 1 CON per CR), Gore 10 (SCR. 1-4, LW 5-9, SW 10-15, FW 16+).

The Dark Art: 0

These huge arachnoid creatures crawl around the citadels on ten ivory-like legs, in flaming red armor equipped with coarse hair and poisonous spikes. They remove stones and the remnants of skeletons from the enormous marketplaces that surround the palaces and drag them to their great concrete nests resembling beehives spread here and there on the walls of the lower sections of the citadel. Weeders are territorial and aggressive. They love to feed on human bone marrow, which they find by puncturing bones with their needle-sharp

legs and sucking out the contents with their tubular mouths. They have horns made of the same material as their legs and can gore two or even three people to death in one attack.

Servilians

(See Kult Rule Book)

Techrones

(See Kult Rule Book)

Watchmakers

(See Weak Metropolis Standards)

Wolven

AGL10+2d10 (21)

PER 10+3d10 (26)

EGO 1d10 (5)

CON 5+1d10 (10)

STR 5+1d10 (10)

Horror throw modification: -5

Length: 4 ft

Height: 3 ft 6

Weight 110

Movement: 30 ft / CR

Actions: 4

Initiative Bonus: +9

Damage Bonus: +3

Damage Capacity:

4 Scratches = 1 Light Wound

3 Light Wounds = 1 Serious Wound

2 Serious Wounds = 1 Fatal Wound

Endurance: 80

Armor: 1

Attack mode: Bite (SCR. 1-4, LW 5-9, SW 10-15, FW 16+), Tongue (extends about three feet; SCR. 1-5, LW 6-11, SW 12-17, FW 18+).

The Dark Art: 0

'These four-legged hunters seek their victims in our world, then drive them across the divide to the Machine where they make short work of them.'

The Wolven are four feet high, four-legged creatures with coarse red-black skin that is partially covered with coarse black hair. Their heads are triangular and reminiscent of an alligator's. Their eyes are deeply set and bloodshot. Their teeth, similar to those of an alligator, are set outside the

jaw. The tongue is bluish-black, long and sharp and can drill through a victim.

Zeloths

(See Kult Rule Book)

Appendix





Towards Metropolis

Gamemastering Hints

Although Metropolis provides you with a setting which defies logic, you must not overindulge your own imagination. No player will accept having his character treated as a mere plaything by a despotic Gamemaster. You must accept the internal logic of the story, rather than turn everything topsy-turvy just to drive the players to distraction. Stay flexible and let the story flow. When your players start to feel in control, when they believe they have mastered the workings of Metropolis, then is the time to spook them with an unexpected turn. Use shock effects sparingly, saving them for the moment when they will have maximum impact. Metropolis should serve your purposes: to shock and throw the players off-balance.

When the characters arrive in Metropolis, you must decide what kind of setting they are in and give the players a short description. Then you must decide which of the palaces is closest, as the characters' minds will be affected by this particular Archon's powers. Then the real adventure can begin: where should the characters go and how will they get there? What will happen to them on the way, and how long will it take them to reach their goal, if, indeed, they ever reach it at all?...

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

The players' inventiveness and resourcefulness can be immense. In your

capacity as GM, you must be prepared for anything and always keep an ace up your sleeve.

Always prepare by thinking through the entire episode. What are the characters' reasons for coming to Metropolis, and what can you do to turn it into an exciting adventure? You must always balance your own plans with the characters' motivation. You should keep enough obstacles in reserve to give the characters a run for their money, because easy victories make a dull game. But to work obstinately against them, to never allow them to obtain their goals, ultimately turns the game into pure frustration.

You must always be one step ahead of the players. For instance, when the characters have just escaped a hoard of hungry zeloths and are catching their breath in a makeshift hiding place, spring a fresh danger to keep the game from stagnating. When the ground gives way beneath their feet and thirty compostates come slithering out, you must know how they can make another narrow escape to catch the next breather.

CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF HORROR

Horror is a psychological genre, and effective horror requires a complicated dramaturgy which depends on a certain flair from the Gamemaster. Always going for effect, piling up action sequences in a relentless tempo, may not be the best way

to get the players involved. Variation is the key: constantly hinting at upcoming dangers, making occasional rolls, leafing through the rule book with an intent face, you can keep the players on the edge of their seats. Now and then you can work in deceptively calm sequences, just to make the players drop their guards before the upcoming shock effect. As a Gamemaster in a horror roleplaying game you must be ruthless and false, and at the same time playful and susceptible to the players' moods.

KEEP UP THE TEMPO

Metropolis is not a place of contemplation. The characters should be allowed time to collect themselves and think things over, but you must not allow the players' talking and planning to take over the game. Metropolis is a place of extreme danger which does not allow for plans and deductions. There is always a monster lurking in the shadows.

BE UNPREDICTABLE

It is in your interest, as the GM, to keep Metropolis as unpredictable as possible. The day your players begin to grasp the Original City and see the structure and logic behind the madness, you have lost your ability to shock and surprise them. Never make the players fully aware of what is going on. Even if you want to establish a relationship for cause-and-effect in your own mind, it's not exciting for the players to have everything laid out for them.

ROUND OFF

When one Metropolis adventure is at an end, it's time to round it off. To carry on a gaming session after a wild ride can make Metropolis seem mundane. Metropolis is not a place to sit back into your favorite armchair and pick up your knitting. No - it takes a well-measured pause for effect to put Metropolis experiences into perspective and realize their shocking extent.

Let time elapse before the characters encounter the supernatural again. Feel free to give them a few new disadvantages or

to meddle with their abilities and skills, if it seems justified. Metropolis is not a place you are likely to leave unscarred.


This book wasn't written to make you relocate all your adventures to Metropolis. The players would soon tire of it. On the contrary, make sure that most of your campaign stays in our (illusory) reality. Use Metropolis sparingly, as a spice.

New Archetypes

A problem that may arise when playing Kult (or any roleplaying game) is that the characters lack the required knowledge to carry out the adventure you have in store for them. For instance, how do you take the players in and out of Metropolis without strained explanations, or making the players feel their characters lack the motivation to risk their lives in an unknown world? This can be helped by giving one characters some extra insight or a stronger connection to Metropolis. This should not be allowed to get out of hand, making the passage to Metropolis an everyday event like catching the bus. Here are four new archetypes with a little more knowledge of Metropolis and different realities than the average character. They are: the Lictor Servant, the Heller, the Proto-techrone, and the Living Dead.

THE LICTOR SERVANT

The Lictor Servant is a man or woman who has reached a plateau in his or her career. A person probably past thirty, who may be a colonel or a major in the armed forces, a parson or a priest in the clerical profession, a police captain or even a Commissioner, a business executive or the president of a small company, a lecturer or a professor at a small college, or anything at all. The Lictor Servant has realized that his superiors are lictors, but his insight into their nature and motives may vary and is entirely at the GM's discretion. This character type, like most workaholics, has neglected his family, friends, and ethics. A Lictor Servant shows blind obedience to his masters, if only for a higher salary, more power, or a company car. As a char-



acter, the Lictor Servant reaches a point where he has had enough and breaks with the old ways. Perhaps the character screws up an important assignment and is forced to make a break. He is on the run with no prospects and only vague hope of revenge on the lictors. Meanwhile, the lictors search for their renegade servant, out for his blood. Or maybe they have already written him off for dead.

A Lictor Servant should be adept at handling lictors, and he already knows our reality is an illusion ruled by lictors. He hates lictors because they oppress humanity and because they ruined his career. He may have helped to silence people who knew too much, and performed other misdeeds on behalf of lictors. He can recognize a lictor at first sight. The trials of his life may have brought him to Metropolis more than once. The character may also have carried out missions for the lictors within Metropolis, visiting the palace of his lictor's Archon, or meeting an incarnate.

THE HELLER

A Heller is a young person who is ruled by an Angel of Death by means of strange cults and sick rituals. He combines an unwholesome interest in the occult and Astaroth's motley crew with a self-destructive rock'n'roll lifestyle of drugs, booze and violence. A Heller has no real ambition, no emotional ties, and lives strictly for the moment. He has been ensnared in the net of an Angel of Death, and his mental balance has plunged into the depths. Vile rituals, intended to break down the last remains of the Heller's resistance to the Angel's power, took place in Metropolis or Inferno or in the borderland between. These disgusting rites have backfired, and instead have caused the Heller to revolt and openly oppose the Death Angels and their influence in Elysium.

A Heller is a boy or girl ranging in age from early teens to the late twenties. He is dependent on drugs or alcohol, or at least was in the past. The Heller's low mental balance, combined with a short temper

and high weapons skills with an odd variety of weapons, makes him a dangerous opponent. He might have taken part in rituals including passage to both Metropolis and Inferno. If the Gamemaster wishes, it could be a Heller who brings the characters to Metropolis. The scope of the Heller's understanding is entirely up to the GM. A Heller might have summoned creatures from Metropolis or Inferno; and he could be guilty of unfathomable evils, which now cause the character terrible feelings of guilt and anxiety. A Heller should be well versed in trash- and sub-cultures.

THE PROTO-TECHRONE

A Proto-techrone is someone who once met or learned of the real techrones, and admires their perfect symbiosis of man and machine. He is usually a nerd, a loner with technical inclinations, sometimes a trained engineer but more likely self-taught, who now tries to improve his own body with technical enhancements. He usually starts by reinforcing his joints with steel pins, adding infra-red glasses and miniature microphones to improve his sight and hearing. His object is to achieve a symbiosis of flesh and machine where both parts are interdependent. With his crude technology, this can lead to death or self-mutilation. A Proto-techrone is manic-depressive. During the manic periods, he can become a living portal to the Machine City. He may be a small-time entrepreneur working in his basement, who fears to show himself in the daytime, due to his freakish mechanical features. Proto-techrones socialize with each other over computer bulletin boards and fax machines, exchanging mysterious plans and cryptic information about Metropolis.

The Proto-techrones are accomplished mechanics, but have no sense of the occult. A Proto-techrone finds Elysium's illusory nature puzzling and will gladly accompany expeditions into Metropolis or other realities. He is matter-of-fact and seldom violent.

THE LIVING DEAD

This is a character who might already

be dead when the game begins, whose consciousness remains alive inside his rotting body. Or it could be a character who died earlier in the game, and returns as a Living Dead. The GM should choose the solution that best fits his plans. The reason a Living Dead hangs on to his deteriorating body is that he has left something undone which must be accomplished before his mortal frame can find its final rest. This distinguishes this character from all other forms of the undead, which have no consciousness. A Living Dead lives on borrowed time. Its body decomposes and its sight, hearing, speech and thought processes deteriorate. Not to mention the smell... This character type seeks out cemeteries, where he will get lost, only to emerge suddenly in the City of the Dead. As the dead body grows older, he experiences growing difficulties in returning to Elysium. A Living Dead might try to hide his predicament behind deodorants, perfume, and stories about a strange skin disease. He might mistakenly bring a whole group of characters to the City of the Dead or other parts of Metropolis. The GM must choose the most playable solution. The Living Dead archetype follows the Kult rules for the undead. If the character's head is smashed in, he loses consciousness but the body goes on fighting in blind fury. The player must roll often to determine how rapidly the body and its functions deteriorate, with a maximum lifetime of half a year.

Non-player Characters With Access to Metropolis

These categories can control their passage to and from Metropolis.

LICTORS

The lictors once were prisoners in Elysium just like humanity, unable to travel to the other worlds. Only the most powerful lictors could travel to Metropolis, and only with their Archons' permission. Now, the Machine has broken down, and Metropolis can be reached in other ways

than through the Labyrinth. The collapse caused constant collisions between different realities, which are thus brought into frequent communication with each other. The lictors discovered this and soon made use of the advantages to be had from free passage between worlds. The Archons, however, are displeased, and some lictors have fallen out of grace with their masters.


When a lictor goes to Metropolis, he never travels unaccompanied. His entourage is composed of servilians and lictor servants. Their numbers vary depending on the personal power of the lictor. The passage, or portal, is hard to perceive. If the characters are following the lictor's train, for example, they might find themselves suddenly in Metropolis. They might also find an open portal in a lictor's lair.

Lictors are always plotting intrigues against each other, and are most reluctant to share information with any but the closest allies. As their passages are prone to constant change in both form and location, they are very hard to find, but lictors can use their dark powers to discover portals and where they lead. There are many groups, led by lictors, who can control of their passage to and from Metropolis. Here is a short list of places you might encounter lictors who possess knowledge about the passage to Metropolis. The list is far from complete.

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Environmental movements are made up of small cells, controlled by omnipotent lictors, and supported by huge masses of passive members. The members have no influence over their organization, they just provide it with money. They are forced propaganda aimed at maintaining the Illusion: anti-technological tracts (to keep humanity from making dangerous discoveries), reports on industrial pollution (which damages the veil of deception), protests against the armament race (more weapons would increase mankind's chance of defending itself). The environmental movements maintain archives of





information about where the Illusion is weakest. These archives are the cornerstones of their activities, which are aimed at keeping the Illusion intact. They are controlled by Binah, and are a powerful tool for her in the west, where otherwise her position is weak. Each cell is led by a ruthless lictor, who makes skillful use of Metropolis in his schemes. One example:

So much poisonous waste was escaping from the XeNoTox factory in Pittsburgh that people in the surrounding suburb were beginning to mutate, enabling them to see through the Illusion. The factory was run by a protolictor serving Malkuth, whose plan was to make people aware of their imprisonment. The death of a few hundred people from lung cancer and leukemia was a matter of indifference to Malkuth. Binah had little influence in the United States, but she formed a Greenpeace cell in Pittsburgh. Malkuth tried to have the activists killed, but the Greenpeace lictor opened a portal to Metropolis, letting through a dozen azghouls who took over the factory, and the environmental activists climbed the smokestack with their flag to wave on prime time TV. The azghouls dragged a couple of workers with them when they returned to Metropolis, and this was later used in Greenpeace propaganda, blaming it on a labor accident, and was one of the contributing factors when the factory was closed down.

SECURITY SERVICES

Security services are mainly controlled by lictors. They are shut off from outside scrutiny, and many of them have almost cultlike aspects, such as initiation rites and sacrifices. If one is employed directly by an Archon, it could have contact with Metropolis. They can fetch creatures for special missions in Elysium or put a prisoner beyond their enemies' reach. But the Archons' influence over security services is a little unclear. The lictors in charge often have designs of their own, even if they formally serve an Archon.

RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS

All relief organizations are run by lic-

tors. Natural disasters and famines open huge portals to Metropolis, and must be closed before too much damage is done to the Illusion. Relief organizations are always the first to arrive in a disaster area, where they immediately start to clean up by closing the portal and killing the surviving witnesses. If there isn't enough time to kill the survivors, they are herded through the portal to Metropolis, where they must spend the rest of their lives. The lictors who want to destroy the Illusion are at war with the relief organizations.

THE AUTHORITIES

The authorities have strong Metropolis connections, which they use to dispose of troublesome citizens, or just to expand their office space. The police and law courts are usually controlled by Geburah. Many prison cells are portals to Metropolis, straight into Geburah's palace. Larger hospitals have portals leading to the Memory Banks or other parts of Metropolis. Fire brigades sometimes close passages by using flame-throwers on curious people who have strayed into Metropolis. The carbonized bodies are then returned to Elysium, where a fire is staged. The object is to silence annoying witnesses.

RESEARCH COMPANIES

Companies that specialize in research have lictors directing the scientists. This is always a conflict of interest for the lictors. On one hand, they want to stifle scientific progress to keep the Illusion intact, on the other, they want technical inventions to increase their personal power. The companies send armed expeditions into the Machine City to hunt for new technology. Sometimes their own plants are attacked by desperate techrones trying to retrieve parts stolen from a machine. Such attacks often result in explosions or gas leaks. One of the worst examples is the Chernobyl disaster, which has raised the level of cancer all over Europe. Another is the Union Carbide leak in Bhopal, which caused the death of thousands. The GM could allow the characters to accompany a lictor expedition into Metropolis.

THE MEDIA

The media is a tool of the lictors. Whenever a disaster strikes, the media is on the scene. Sometimes it discovers huge portals, or parts of Metropolis that have passed into our world. Lictors themselves are seldom journalists, but they rule over the copy rooms and news agencies and control what is said or printed in the media. Media lictors keep extensive files on portals to Metropolis, which they sometimes sell to the highest bidder, or give to their closest allies. The characters might happen upon a diskette with information about how to get to Metropolis. If the GM prefers an active approach, they could be tipped-off by a nervous journalist and then break in and steal it, or they could use their talents as hackers.

HELLERS

The Hellers do not have dark powers themselves, but they have made a pact with Astaroth or an Angel of Death, who step by step can show them a way into Metropolis. The way invariably involves rituals unbearable to mind and body, employing torture, self-mutilation, and human sacrifice. These elements are mostly irrelevant to the passage to Metropolis, but are done to torment the Hellers and break their resistance to the Angel of Death's control. A few categories of deranged Hellers follow, all of whom know a way into Metropolis. The list could have been made much longer, but we have to limit ourselves to a few examples.

ROCK GROUPS

Rock groups that take the rock'n'roll myth to the extreme are often affiliated with Metropolis. They may not be Hellers themselves, but are close to a dominant personality who is. Rock stars like this are heavily tattooed and abuse drugs and young women, accepted Heller behavior. Every now and then they perform gross rituals and travel to Metropolis to rape groupies or to fry their brains with unknown drugs. They can't tell reality apart from fantasy, seldom knowing whether they have experienced some-

thing real or just a drug-induced hallucination. They are visited by hideous creatures from Inferno, but find them nothing out of the ordinary. The creatures of Inferno sometimes haul off fans who were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

TERRORISTS

Terrorists are deranged Hellers trying to upgrade their latest acts of death and destruction. Their leaders may even be on the long, dark path to awakening. Terrorist groups can make their escape to Metropolis following an attack. They are usually allied to an Angel of Death, on whose behalf they carry out missions to Metropolis. A terrorist group is a closely knit cult, united by a primitive code of honor. Breaking it is punished by eternal torment in Inferno.

YOUTH GANGS

Youth gangs are teenagers who have worn away all their inhibitions by escalating the kicks to be had from drugs, crime and random acts of violence. The gangs enter into a pact with an Angel of Death and take instantly to the cruel rituals they are invited to attend. Metropolis, and the way there, is the ultimate kick. Some gangs are extremely violent and take ferocious pleasure from murder and rape. They are the obedient ambassadors of the Death Angels. Most members try to break free when they grow older, but by then it may be too late.

Close to Awakening

People close to awakening are commonly regarded as madmen, or at least very eccentric. They make trips to Metropolis to gather knowledge and new ideas. The ways to awakening are individual. All who venture on this path develop a different sets of skills and abilities in the process. They are withdrawn and cannot communicate with more normal people. The characters will get more help from their notes and artifacts than from the people themselves. A few examples follow.





ARTISTS

Artists are constantly in search of new ideas and means of expression, and this confusing process can lead them to Metropolis. Without even noticing the transition, they are wandering the never-ending city. Artists will take the grotesque things they see and experiences to use for their artistic visions, and proof of their own genius. At first, this happens to them at random. But soon the artists develop different ways to travel to Metropolis for new inspiration. Methods are individual, but they usually involve the medium in which the artist works. A deranged film-maker will make perverse cinematographic poems, which tear through the Illusion and transport the shocked audience to Metropolis. A painter creates images of twisted architecture, which with hours of watching will turn real. A psychotic poet writes a poem with no punctuation or spaces between words. If read in a stretch from beginning to end, the reader's perception is so twisted that he sees all entries to Metropolis or goes insane. If the characters hang out with an odd-ball artist, they might discover a way to get into Metropolis.

INVENTORS (MAD GENIUSES)

Inventors are different from artists, as they reject any idea of an alternate reality. Although they make frequent trips to the Machine City, to steal their new inventions, this is blocked from their memories. The inventor has rational ideals which won't allow for experiences that cannot be verified and measured in their laboratories. They develop methods to get to Metropolis, to the Machine City. Common methods involve drugs or machines that stimulate brain activity and affect perception. Inventors are ruthless fanatics when they enter the Machine City. They become lost in a frantic trance and nothing can stand between them and their discoveries. They would not hesitate to blow up a school bus full of children. Inventors entertain visions of grandeur, and have a high opinion of themselves. Their careers often end when they are slain by their

curious machines or by Techrones, seeking them in Elysium to put an end to them for good.

Infernal Creatures

Some infernal creatures move between Elysium and Metropolis. Their purpose in seeking these worlds is to torture humans. The characters can find these creatures holding positions in many communities in Elysium. Their main goal in moving to Metropolis is to flee from humans or lictors. They drag victims off to Metropolis to torture and butcher them in peace and quiet. Here are a few places to find them. These places may be linked to Inferno as well as Metropolis.

PURGATIDES

Lunatic Asylums

Prisons

Concentration Camps

Institutions for Medical Experimentation

NEPHARITES & DESPARITES

Nepharites and Desparites occupy positions of power wherever they appear. These are only a few places where they may be found. These organizations are connected to both Metropolis and Inferno.

The highest ranks of UN peacekeepers are often nepharites. It is hard to pull off a blood-bath, since the UN is such an open organization. But every year hundreds of thousands of refugees are tortured to death by UN troops. Peacekeeping troops seal off large areas filled with refugees, and claim to discover massacres. In fact, the UN troops themselves perpetrate the massacres in their blockaded zones.

Small sects

Small businesses (See "Happiest Moments" for example)

Soldiers of fortune

Brothels

RAZIDES

Make their way into Elysium to drag away humans to torture. Sometimes the torture takes place in Metropolis, sometimes in Inferno. The characters can follow Razides into Metropolis, if they dare.

Metropolis Creatures:

These examples of creatures that can move between Metropolis and Elysium to a limited extent.

AZGHOULS

Azghouls make their way to Elysium to maim innocent humans. When free from human control, they slaughter without compunction. If an azghoul is controlled by a human, it obeys every order unflinchingly, and can reveal paths between Elysium and Metropolis. The azghoul may lead you to other azghouls. It should be impossible for a player character to control azghouls. That function should be reserved for NPCs. An azghoul guide to Metropolis can be useful, but the GM should restrict use of this.

SERVILIANS

Servilians obey lictors' orders to the letter. They are devoid of initiative. If they must make their own decisions, it is a slow process. They are reluctant to act without asking a lictor to command them, and then follow it to the death. They are found in conjunction with lictors and in the same organizations.

TECHRONES

Techrones make their way into Elysium to destroy obstacles that disturb their machines, or to retrieve stolen technology. They make punitive expeditions against companies and inventors. There are no other reasons for Techrones to move between the worlds.



The Lesser Arcana

1d100 results

- 1 Suit of Skulls; Ace
- 2 Suit of Skulls; Ten
- 3 Suit of Skulls; Nine
- 4 Suit of Skulls; Eight
- 5 Suit of Skulls; Seven
- 6 Suit of Skulls; Six
- 7 Suit of Skulls; Five
- 8 Suit of Skulls; Four
- 9 Suit of Skulls; Three
- 10 Suit of Skulls; Two
- 11 Suit of Skulls; One
- 12 Suit of Roses; Ace
- 13 Suit of Roses; Ten
- 14 Suit of Roses; Nine
- 15 Suit of Roses; Eight
- 16 Suit of Roses; Seven
- 17 Suit of Roses; Six
- 18 Suit of Roses; Five
- 19 Suit of Roses; Four
- 20 Suit of Roses; Three
- 21 Suit of Roses; Two
- 22 Suit of Roses; One
- 23 Suit of Hourglasses; Ace
- 24 Suit of Hourglasses; Ten
- 25 Suit of Hourglasses; Nine
- 26 Suit of Hourglasses; Eight
- 27 Suit of Hourglasses; Seven
- 28 Suit of Hourglasses; Six
- 29 Suit of Hourglasses; Five
- 30 Suit of Hourglasses; Four
- 31 Suit of Hourglasses; Three
- 32 Suit of Hourglasses; Two
- 33 Suit of Hourglasses; One
- 34 Suit of Eyes; Ace
- 35 Suit of Eyes; Ten
- 36 Suit of Eyes; Nine
- 37 Suit of Eyes; Eight
- 38 Suit of Eyes; Seven
- 39 Suit of Eyes; Six
- 40 Suit of Eyes; Five
- 41 Suit of Eyes; Four
- 42 Suit of Eyes; Three
- 43 Suit of Eyes; Two
- 44 Suit of Eyes; One
- 45 Suit of Crescents; Ace
- 46 Suit of Crescents; Ten
- 47 Suit of Crescents; Nine
- 48 Suit of Crescents; Eight
- 49 Suit of Crescents; Seven
- 50 Suit of Crescents; Six
- 51 Suit of Crescents; Five
- 52 Suit of Crescents; Four
- 53 Suit of Crescents; Three
- 54 Suit of Crescents; Two
- 55 Suit of Crescents; One
- 56-00 roll again.

In Metropolis

Events in Metropolis occur under the influence of occult powers beyond the scope of the characters' comprehension. As GM you relay these incidents, and to do so you must adopt the role of lictors, Archons, Death Angels, even the Demiurge. It is you who pull the invisible strings, create inexplicable phenomena and frightening scenes that befall the characters. This will test your ability as a raconteur, and your imagination.

The Tarotica

The adventure Tarotica, published in 1994, describes the 78 cards that make up the occult Tarotica, a deck of cards that mirrors the true nature of reality, and even has the power to change it. This set of cards can even influence events in Metropolis. With its help, you can take the fate of the characters in your hands. You can simply let the "predictions" of the deck guide the basis of your storytelling.

The cards of the Tarotica contain many symbols and signs. To interpret them demands insight into the laws of the Universe and the five worlds of Man. Few people have fully understood the secret meaning of the cards or been able to harness their inherent powers. The cards are mirrors of the soul. The only way to read them is to let them lead you to your inner depths, to let them bring out the blocked insights and the wisdom that is kept hidden from Man by the Demiurge.

The descriptions below are followed by a short interpretation intended as a starting point for the GM's own imagination. There is also a description of what they could mean for a group of characters, their future, or the conclusion of the adventure. The GM can use the cards as the equivalent of an event/encounter table, as every card has incidents or specific occurrences connected to it. Or they can just be used as a source of inspiration for a GM who is running out of ideas.

MAKING A PREDICTION

To get a suggestion for an incident to befall the characters, you should divide the deck into two piles: the Lesser Arcana, containing five sequences of eleven cards, and the Major Arcana, consisting of 23 cards representing the powers that govern Metropolis.

When you pull a card from the Major Arcana, it suggests the nature of the incident according to the specifications below. Then draw a card from the Lesser Arcana, which modifies the incident and indicates number, strength or degree.

If the set of cards described above is not available to you, the following tables may come in handy.

The Lesser Arcana

The Lesser arcana consists of the Suit of Skulls, symbolizing death; the Suit of Roses, symbolizing passion; the Suit of Hourglasses, symbolizing time and space; the Suit of Eyes, symbolizing madness; and finally the Suit of Crescents, symbolizing the Dream.

Each Suit consists of eleven cards, ranging in order from one to ace. This order determines the degree of every incident. The figures can indicate the number of opponents if the characters attacked. They may also stand for strength and intensity. If the card from the Major Arcana indicates that a character is going to be hurt, the card from the Lesser Arcana indicates the extent of this injury. The value of the card can also be used as skill score.

Below are suggestions for interpretations of combinations of cards from the Major and Lesser Arcana. Keep in mind that these suggestions cover only a few of the possible interpretations of the cards. As GM you are free to interpret as you wish.

The Major Arcana

0 -ANTHROPOS

SUBJECT: A foetus in an egg in front of a silhouette of Metropolis. This card does not appear in the original set.

SYMBOLISM: The seed of Creation. The beginning of the end to imprisonment. The egg stands for hope and resurrection.

INTERPRETATION: The card predicts insights to come. Freeing knowledge. It may also mean a friend or helper.

GAME SITUATION: The characters find or are made aware of a path to or from Metropolis. The Lesser Arcana decides which area the path leads to or from: the Suit of Roses = The Ruins; the Suit of Eyes = The Labyrinth; the Suit of Skulls = The Underworld; the Suit of Crescents = The Living City; the Suit of Hourglasses = The Machine City. The value on the card indicates how many days it will take before the characters obtain this knowledge or find this path.

I -DEMIURGOS

SUBJECT: An eye in a triangle, surrounded by light.

SYMBOLISM: The all-seeing eye, the eye of the Demiurge. The threefold nature of Mankind: dark or light, body or birth, life or death.

INTERPRETATION: The card indicates the start of something important. A time of action is coming. Hidden potential and power will make themselves felt. It may also indicate a person, a teacher or guide.

GAME SITUATION: The characters have a vision that brings part of their dormant powers to life. The vision is connected to the future, perhaps to the purpose for their visit to Metropolis. As a result their abilities start to change. The Lesser Arcana decides which ability: the Suit of Roses = CHAR; the Suit of Eyes = PER; the Suit of Skulls = CON; the Suit of Crescents = EGO; the Suit of Hourglasses = AGL. The value on the card indicates the degree of this transfor-

mation: $1 - 5 = +1$; $6 - 8 = +2$; $9 - 10 = +3$; Ace = +5. The change takes place over a week and modifies their mental balance by twenty. Plus for those with a mental balance above zero, minus for those whose value is below zero. The characters also get a new advantage of the GM's choice.

II -ASTAROTH

SUBJECT: A horned creature with a snake wrapped around his hips, a pentagram in his right hand, a flame in his left and a man chained at his feet. A black sun in the background.

SYMBOLISM: The Prince of Darkness. The snake is a symbol for the enemy of the Demiurge, eternity and rebirth. The pentagram indicates a nature opposed to Mankind. The devouring fire.

INTERPRETATION: Treason and falsehood among friends should be expected. Cleansing and eventual death and rebirth. A person of superior power.

GAME SITUATION: The characters have a vision of horror that breaks them down and dehumanizes them. The vision is realistic and originates in their past, perhaps a dark Secret. The result is a modification of their abilities. The Lesser Arcana decides which ability: the Suit of Roses = CHA; the Suit of Eyes = PER; the Suit of Skulls = CON; the Suit of Crescents = EGO; the Suit of Hourglasses = AGL. The value on the card indicates the degree of this transformation: $1 = -5$; $2 - 3 = -3$; $7 - \text{Ace} = -1$. The change takes place in about a week and modifies their mental balance by twenty. Plus for those with mental balance below zero, minus for those whose value is above zero. The characters also get a new disadvantage of the GM's choice.

III -KETHER

SUBJECT: A ruler with a crown, a scourge and a royal globe. He sits on a throne decorated with rams. Two veiled lictors kneel by the throne.

SYMBOLISM: A king, a ruler. Elevated and adulated. The ram is a symbol of male power, but also the leader of a flock.

The Major Arcana

1d100 results

1 I -Demiurgos

2 II -Astaroth

3 III -Kether

4 IV -Chokmah

5 V -Binah

6 VI -Chesed

7 VII -Geburah

8 VIII -Tipareth

9 IX -Netzach

10 X -Hod

11 XI -Yesod

12 XII -Malkuth

13 XIII -Thaumiel

14 XIV -Chagidiel

15 XV -Sathariel

16 XVI -Gamichioth

17 XVII -Golab

18 XVIII -Togarini

19 XIX -Hareb-Serap

20 XX -Samael

21 XXI -Gamaliel

22 XXII -Nahemoth

23-99 roll again.

00 0 -Anthropos

INTERPRETATION: The card points to material success and stability, but can also indicate an authority, or father-figure.

GAME SITUATION: The characters (or one of them) occupy a central position in a group, or are delegated a great responsibility.

IV -CHOKMAH

SUBJECT: A horned, crowned figure surrounded by small naked women and children. The card is dim, as if about to disappear.

SYMBOLISM: A patriarch, a messiah. He subjugates the souls of humans, symbolized by the naked figures. Nevertheless, he appears to be a secure but stern father, as Binah is a mother.

INTERPRETATION: A strong spiritual experience is to come. Willpower and self-preservation will be tested. It may also represent a person with great spiritual powers, good or evil.

GAME SITUATION: The characters must undergo a test. They must prove their dignity or be repulsed and despised. The Lesser Arcana decides the nature of the test: the Suit of Roses = show mercy or largesse; the Suit of Eyes = solve a riddle or problem; the Suit of Skulls = slay someone, or defy death and show bravery; the Suit of Crescents = create something of spiritual or artistic value; the Suit of Hourglasses = accomplish a great physical labor. Double the value of the card indicates the effect necessary for an ability roll.

V -BINAH

SUBJECT: A Madonna with child sitting on a stool on a checkered floor.

SYMBOLISM: The checkered floor symbolizes the environment as a place of opposing powers and forces. Light and darkness, man and woman, time and space. The Madonna symbolizes security, the safe arms of the mother. The child is Mankind, taken care of by the Goddess.

INTERPRETATION: An important decision must be made. A time of chaos where the choices are many but only one path is the right one.

GAME SITUATION: The characters meet someone who needs their help, but if they do not make the right decision they will fail, with dire consequences. The Lesser Arcana indicates which is the correct response to the challenge: the Suit of Roses = emotionally and intensely; the Suit of Eyes = intellectually and coldly; the Suit of Skulls = brusquely and powerfully; the Suit of Crescents = in a visionary and picturesque way; the Suit of Hourglasses = carefully and in a well-planned manner. The value on the card indicates how harsh the consequences of an erroneous choice is, or how positive the effect of a good one is. One represents minor consequences or small effect. Ace represents vital consequences or great success and happiness.

VI -CHESD

SUBJECT: A white man wearing a suit with a purse on its belt gives water to a black man in chains, a blindfold over his eyes. A white sphinx flies through the air. The card is dim as if it were about to disappear.

SYMBOLISM: The card indicates the double nature of the Illusion. A helper, Chesed, assists a fettered man by giving him water but does not loosen his chains.

INTERPRETATION: A difficult situation nears a solution. It may also indicate an individual who needs help. It is important to note that help can also meet other needs.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are offered help to extract them from a bad predicament. If they accept, they must make a great sacrifice. The nature of the sacrifice or its result is decided by the Lesser Arcana: the Suit of Roses = loss of a friend or loved one; the Suit of Eyes = loss of memory or reason; the Suit of Skulls = loss of health, body part or life; the Suit of Crescents = plagued by nightmares; the Suit of Hourglasses = ages rapidly. The value of the card indicates how great the sacrifice will be. One is minor and ace is vital.

VII -GEBURAH

SUBJECT: A judge sits on a throne, clad in a long garment. He holds a two-edged sword in his right hand and a pair of scales in the other. A drapery is held up by a triangle with an eye behind him.

SYMBOLISM: The judgment that no one escapes. The merciless sword, the two blades represent the complementary opposites of life and death, creation and destruction.

INTERPRETATION: No crime will go unpunished. The card warns that great care is necessary in the near future. It may also stand for a strong-willed person with high moral standards!

GAME SITUATION: The characters are put on trial for past errors and must account for their actions. The Lesser Arcana decides what kind of crime they are accused of: the Suit of Roses = betraying someone who trusted them; the Suit of Eyes = a rash, unbalanced and unmotivated action with great emotional consequences; the Suit of Skulls = a brutal physical assault; the Suit of Crescents = a lie with great moral consequences; the Suit of Hourglasses = an act that has caused material damage to many people. Double the value of the card is the effect that the characters must reach with a CHA-based skill to prove their innocence. The GM may modify the effect in consideration of the players actions.

VIII -TIPHARETH

SUBJECT: A spider with a symbol of eternity on its back, squatting in its web.

SYMBOLISM: She who weaves fate, who spins the threads of life through all people and binds them together to herself.

INTERPRETATION: A catastrophic incident will leave traces that cannot be eradicated, the world will never be the same again. Control from a higher level will govern with little room for personal initiative.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are dragged into a situation against their will, made to choose between the frying pan or the fire. Their personalities are changed. Draw a second card from the

Lesser Arcana. The two cards indicate the nature of the choice they must make. Ask them to pick one card. The one they do not choose will influence their lives: the Suit of Roses = emotional value; the Suit of Eyes = mental health, spiritual well-being; the Suit of Skulls = bodily function, physical health; the Suit of Crescents = goals and wishes; the Suit of Hourglasses = age, length of life. The value of the card defines the degree of the effect: one is a minor effect of short duration, ace is a major permanent effect.

IX -NETZACH

SUBJECT: A knight with a lion on his shield and a sword on his chest holds his lance against a defeated enemy. Bombers fly in the background.

SYMBOLISM: The lion stands for power, strength, military superiority and war.

INTERPRETATION: Trouble and war are expected. War and armed conflict where the cowardly are punished.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are involved in a brutal battle. Their survival hangs by a thread. The Lesser Arcana decides the nature of their opponents' origin and species: the Suite of Rose = wolverines, ferocci or other predaceous creatures; the Suit of Eyes = borderliners, zeloths, children of the Underworld, or creatures connected to the domains of Madness; the Suit of Skulls = Purgatides, razides, nepharites, destructates, legionnaires or other creatures from Inferno; the Suit of Crescents = azghouls or psyphagi, dream wanderers and other creatures connected to the world of dreams; the Suit of Hourglasses = psilosites, aspecti, techrones and other creatures connected to The Machine City and time and space. The value of the card indicates the number of opponents. One means the opponents are human, a new card from the lesser Arcana will indicate their number.



X -HOD

SUBJECT: An executioner with a double-edged sword stands between a kneeling man with arms tied behind his back and a black dog. Hanged bodies dangle from gallows in the background. A black sphinx flies across the sky behind. The card is dim.

SYMBOLISM: Death, putrefaction and destruction. The black dog is the companion of the damned.

INTERPRETATION: The card stands for suffering and pain. A great loss, either material or bodily.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are subjected to gratuitous punishment with no apparent or comprehensible motive. The nature of the punishment is decided by the Lesser Arcana: the Suit of Roses = temptation, blunting of the emotions, inhibitions and stiff consequences for the characters' CHA-based abilities and skills; the Suit of Eyes = mental stress, sudden visions and disturbances that affect PER-related skills; the Suit of Skulls = physical torture, stress on CON and physical qualities; the Suit of Crescents = the worst nightmares of the characters become real and attack EGO-based skills; the Suit of Hourglasses = handicaps and restraints that limit the characters' AGL-based skills. The value of the card defines the skill modifications: 1-2 = -3 ; 3-6 = -2; 7-ace = -1.

XI -YESOD

SUBJECT: A moneylender counts money in front of a trellis covered with rose bushes. An emaciated beggar sits in front of the table.

SYMBOLISM: The roses indicate well-being, passion, wine, sensuousness and seduction. Material profit at the cost of others.

INTERPRETATION: Money will not be a problem. Material happiness. Success is connected to the immediate loss of another. It may also mean a person who wishes to use a situation to his own advantage.

GAME SITUATION: The characters come across something of great value. If they

take possession of it, someone in Elysium will be ruined. The Lesser Arcana indicates the nature of the valuable: the Suit of Roses = a discovery of an artistic nature; the Suit of Eyes = the solution to a well-kept secret, a difficult dilemma; the Suit of Skulls = the means to resurrect one or more dead people; the Suit of Crescents = the means to make a dream come true; the Suit of Hourglasses = one or several objects of great material worth. The value of the card indicates how great the value and the corresponding ruinous effect. One is of little worth and a loss of no great consequence; ace is great value and dramatic effect..

XII -MALKUTH

SUBJECT: A woman in a loincloth with an ankh around her neck stands inside a semi-circular pattern on the ground. She holds a rod in her upraised right hand. Her left hand, dangling, sends a bolt of lightning into the ground, splitting the crescent on which she stands. To the right, the Tree of Life as a hollyhock. To the left, the Tree of Knowledge with the Serpent.

SYMBOLISM: The ankh stands for life and immortality. The card also represents the knowledge that frees and the breach of the Illusion, a continuous process.

INTERPRETATION: The card predicts an illumination or insight to come. Freedom from old fetters.

GAME SITUATION: The characters come to the Mirror Halls, or meet an awakened one. They are offered knowledge that may modify their mental balance. The Lesser Arcana decides the nature of this of knowledge: the Suit of Roses = Elysium and the nature of the Illusion; the Suit of Eyes = knowledge of Metropolis and the insane power struggle behind the Illusion; the Suit of Skulls = knowledge of Inferno and what happens after death; the Suit of Crescents = knowledge of Limbo and the powers of dreams; the Suit of Hourglasses = knowledge of the Labyrinth and what separates the worlds. Double the value of the

card is the modification to mental balance. Plus for a character of balance above zero, minus for a character of balance below zero.

XIII -THAUMIEL

SUBJECT: A monstrous ruler with a scourge, an iron crown and a death's head, sitting on a throne adorned with the skulls of rams. At his feet two Razides sit. Behind them are cogwheels and slaves carrying burdens across a road.

SYMBOLISM: The scourge warns of suffering and also represents power, sovereignty and male force. The rams symbolize thunder and rage. The enslaved toil in the background.

INTERPRETATION: The card indicates an inexorable force, a power that serves its own purposes. It may also represent a strong, independent male figure.

GAME SITUATION: The authority of the characters is placed in doubt, one of them must fight a battle for his life and death to secure their position. The character with the highest score in the attribute indicated by the Lesser Arcana is the chosen. The Suit of Roses = CHA; the Suit of Eyes = PER; the Suit of Skulls = CON; the Suit of Crescents = EGO; the Suit of Hourglasses = AGL. The lesser Arcana also designates the opponent. See the choices in the description of Netzach above. Double the value of the card is the skill level of the opponent chosen by the GM.

XIV — CHAGIDIEL

SUBJECT: A monstrously emaciated male figure with a pharaonic beard, an inverted ankh on his forehead. He holds a child hanging by its foot in his right hand and a torch turned upside-down in his left.

SYMBOLISM: Evil and destructive forces. The torch pointed down symbolizes Consuming Death, the opposite force to the spark of life.

INTERPRETATION: The card warns of an act of violence that will result in permanent wounds, or an irrevocable, wrongful action that will be catastrophic for

someone near and dear.

GAME SITUATION: The characters unwittingly cause a disaster that victimizes both themselves and others. The card of the Lesser Arcana decides the nature of this disaster: the Suit of Roses = a relationship with relatives, descendants, neighbors or countrymen will be distorted into hate; the Suit of Eyes = an outbreak of madness and insane deeds; the Suit of Skulls = outbreak of war or curtailment of human rights; the Suit of Crescents = radical affliction of the collective subconscious, or attitudes and values; the Suit of Hourglasses = natural disasters or ominous phenomena. The value of the card decides the extent and duration of the catastrophe. One signifies local, limited extent. Ace implies a worldwide disaster of durable consequences.

XV - SATHARIEL

SUBJECT: A mummified, distorted woman devouring a child. A dried-up tree stands to her right. Sharp mountains and a black moon are visible in the background.

SYMBOLISM: Chaos and holocaust. The black moon signifies a perverted aspect of feminine power, consuming rather than nourishing.

INTERPRETATION: Preconceptions are thrown out. Friends become enemies and vice-versa. Good becomes evil. The future is chaotic and full of adversity.

GAME SITUATION: The characters will be confronted with characters from their past, but all changed. Friends are now enemies. The Lesser Arcana clarifies the previous relationship of the character to this figure: The Suit of Roses = a dear friend or relative; the Suit of Eyes = a respected opponent or colleague; the Suit of Skulls = a person who has suffered for the character's sake, perhaps a relative; the Suit of Crescents = a person who has revered and even adored the character; the Suit of Hourglasses = the character himself in a previous incarnation. The value of the card equals the negative modification of mental balance that it causes.

XVI - GAMICHICOTH

SUBJECT: Death dancing with a cup in his right hand and a bunch of grapes in the other while starving people reach out to him.

SYMBOLISM: Illusory help, a broken promise. The starving represent humanity desperately seeking to reach the food even though it leads to ruin and death.

INTERPRETATION: A time of hardship.

The physical world and surroundings will become the worst enemy. It may also foretell a meeting with a deceiver or with people who have lost all reason.

GAME SITUATION: The characters suffer from an hallucination or vision that promises rescue from a situation fraught with hardship, that leads them straight to perdition. The card of the Lesser Arcana indicates what the vision uses as bait, and (in brackets) what the real effect is. The Suit of Roses = Love, sex, total enjoyment (treason, jealousy, curtailed emotional life); the Suit of Eyes = illumination, information, knowledge (unendurable, anguished visions of the true nature of reality); the Suit of Skulls = rest, food, drink (sickness, weakness); the Suit of Crescents = wish fulfillment (contempt, mockery, humiliation); the Suit of Hourglasses = familiar places and environments (shock, alienation, panic). Double the value of the card indicates the effect for PER or EGO needed to see through the false vision.

XVII - GOLAB

SUBJECT: A lacerated body lying bleeding on an altar. Behind it stands a creature with bloody knives for hands, hooded with an executioner's cowl.

SYMBOLISM: The altar symbolizes union with god and punisher alike that occurs through bloody sacrifice and pain. The anonymous executioner represents the inexorable quality of punishment unrelated to crime.

INTERPRETATION: A deep pain that engenders treason. It may also foretell meaningless death or moral decay.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are imprisoned, tortured and set against

each other. One of them must die, and they themselves must decide who. They should roll for Ability points against the Ability indicated by the Lesser Arcana. Feel free to modify the throws according to how persuasively the player argues for the life of his character. The first to fail dies. The Suit of Roses = CHA; the Suit of Eyes = PER; the Suit of Skulls = CON; the Suit of Crescents = EGO; the Suit of Hourglasses = AGL. The winners lose EGO points according to the value indicated on the card: 1 - 2 = -3; 3 - 6 = -2; 7 - ace = -1

XVIII - TOGARINI

SUBJECT: A fully veiled figure stands with a torch in each hand, turned towards two inverted pentagrams on the ground. In the background, Living Dead emerge from a cemetery.

SYMBOLISM: The inverted pentagrams represent Death and Life in Death. The inverted torches underline the negative quality of the card. Death is only the beginning.

INTERPRETATION: Mental illness and fear will soon come. May also foretell a meeting with a person long since dead.

GAME SITUATION: The characters are haunted by creatures or people they have killed, or dead friends or characters. The value of the card of the Lesser Arcana equals the negative horror throw modification.

XIX - HAREB-SERAP

SUBJECT: An endless battlefield strewn with corpses is visible in the foreground. At the horizon is a skeletal face leering from a mushroom cloud.

SYMBOLISM: Total annihilation.

Everything has its end. The mushroom cloud symbolizes modern technology in its most devastating shape.

INTERPRETATION: An old order comes to an end and a new takes over. The card stands for change through the extermination of the old.

GAME SITUATION: The characters find themselves in a situation in which they are threatened by serious and terminal diseases. The Lesser Arcana indicates

what kind of disease the character risks contracting. The Suit of Roses = AIDS; the Suit of Eyes = phobias, mania, schizophrenia; the Suit of Skulls = the plague; the Suit of Crescents = Alzheimer's disease, amnesia; the Suit of Hourglasses = cancer, radioactive poisoning. The value of the card of the Lesser Arcana represents the CON or EGO effect the characters must roll to avoid infection.

XX - SAMAEI

SUBJECT: A man squatting, with eyes blindfolded and a dagger in each hand, atop a pile of bloody corpses. He is covered in blood up to his elbows. Behind him, two black Chreos sphinxes fly.

SYMBOLISM: The daggers symbolize justice through death. The blindfold indicates that no reconciliation is possible. The sphinxes symbolize the peace and quiet to come, but also strength, and through their black color thoughtlessness.

GAME SITUATION: One of the characters' Dark Secrets is reawakened and the character is forced to live through the event once more. The card from the Lesser Arcana decides which character is to suffer the event. The Suit of Roses = Character with highest CHA score; the Suit of Eyes = Character with highest PER score; the Suit of Skulls = Character with highest CON score; the Suit of Crescents = Character with highest EGO score; the Suit of Hourglasses = Character with highest AGL score. The Lesser Arcana indicates the negative modification of mental balance. New disadvantages may also result.

XXI - GAMALIEL

SUBJECT: A loving couple hangs in torment, chained between two black pillars.

SYMBOLISM: Distorted love, pain rather than tenderness. The chains also indicate a coercive force.

INTERPRETATION: The card foretells a relationship filled with aggression and anguish, perhaps a rape. It may also indi-

cate that a contact already established will be perverted into something sick.

GAME SITUATION: On returning to Elysium, the characters discover that someone close to them has changed radically and inexplicably. Or he accuses a character of having changed. The card from the Lesser Arcana explains the change. The Suit of Roses = love distorted to hate; the Suit of Eyes = common experience and frame of reference is changed to insanity and complete lack of understanding; the Suit of Skulls = change of physical characteristics; the Suit of Crescents = empathy and a common goal changed to lack of understanding; the Suit of Hourglasses = memories and experiences are erased or changed. The value of the card symbolizes the degree of the change; a 1 is a small almost unnoticeable alteration, and an ace is total, comprehensive change.

XXII - NAHEMOTH

SUBJECT: A fishlike creature squatting in a desert landscape.

SYMBOLISM: Hopelessness and impotence. The fishlike creature cannot survive in the desert landscape. It can do only one thing: wait for death and liberation. The endless landscape symbolizes our loneliness and inability to achieve anything.

INTERPRETATION: A time of frustration, in which no choice seems to be correct. Adversity is everywhere and no help can be found. It may also indicate a sudden and unfamiliar experience or environment.

GAME SITUATION: The characters arrive in new surroundings. They get lost and cannot leave. The Lesser Arcana decides which environment. The Suit of Roses = the Ruins; the Suit of Eyes = the Labyrinth; the Suit of Skulls = the Underworld; the Suit of Crescents = the Living City; the Suit of Hourglasses = The Machine City. The value of the card indicates the number of days it will take for the characters to find a way out.

Out of Metropolis

Metropolis is a city filled with visceral fear and danger. A sojourn in the dark city leaves more than just memories. Unfathomable forces and revelations alter those who have walked its empty streets, deserted ruins and dusty corridors. Mental disturbance or physical mutation, no one leaves Metropolis unaltered.

The following are guidelines and can be used freely by the Gamemaster. The character should not just be punished, he should be punished a way that affects his development.

Consequences for the Characters

To wander in Metropolis is like wandering within yourself, in the deepest hidden recesses of your own consciousness. You find not only a new image of reality, but your true being. Nobody passes through Metropolis unscathed.

ALTERED ABILITIES

A character's abilities may have been adversely influenced by his stay in Metropolis. This alteration depends on which palace was the closest.

The character or the GM should roll a d20 modified for the relevant Archon. The Ability randomly obtained is affected by 1 to 3 steps. The GM decides how much, and it should reflect in the nature of the alteration.

COM

Tiredness takes its toll: rings under the eyes and deterioration of the skin. Rashes and irritation. Skin loosens and hair falls out.

CON

The character is prone to infection and chills. Running nose and swollen eyes. Shortness of breath and perspiration.

STR

Paler skin and weaker limbs. Fragile bone structure and increased risk of broken bones and sprains.

AGL

Clumsiness. Impaired coordination and shaky hands. Gradual weight increase.

EDU

Difficulties in concentration. Disoriented thought processes.

CHA

Eyes lose their shine. Skin pales and suffers rashes. Voice cracks with increasing frequency.

PER

Muddy eyes resulting in reduced vision. Ear infections and allergies diminish hearing and smell and taste.

EGO

Weakened memory. Rapid perspiration under stress. Shifting gaze and nervous tics.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

A character's advantages and disadvantages may be affected by Metropolis. The GM may increase their degree or give new one to the character. A 'Liar', for example, may become a 'Mythomaniac' (rule book p.39).

ALTERED MENTAL BALANCE

The character's stay in Metropolis, no matter how short, permanently alters his view of the world. He has come closer to insight, to awakening, through powerful mental experiences. This results in the displacement of the character's mental balance towards awakening, either on the dark or the light path. How much the character is affected depends on his experiences in Metropolis and the duration of his stay.

Nature of Experience

Minor (Seeing mutated and injured people encountering humanoid monsters) +/-2
Moderate (Being forced to kill or hurt humans, witnessing executions or being injured) +/-5
Severe (Participating in ritual murder or

ALTERED ABILITIES

Demiurge	+2
Tiphareth	+2
Malkuth	+2
Binah	+2
Netzach	-2
Geburah	-2
Hod	-2
Kether	-2
The Dead Palaces	0

-1 - 1	COM
2 - 4	CON
5 - 7	STR
8 - 10	AGL
11 - 13	EDU
14 - 16	CHAR
17 - 19	PER
20 - 22	EGO

mass executions, killing friends or being subjected to experiments by servants of the Archons) +/-10

THE TIME ASPECT

For every two hours (Elysian time) the character has been in Metropolis, modify +/-1.

INJURIES

Injuries sustained in Metropolis are not always what they seem once one has left. Light wounds or scratches may have left horrifying scars, while serious injuries may lead to difficult, permanent disabilities. The GM should decide which wounds have harsher consequences in Elysium. Injuries sustained under special circumstances, like a cut in the cheek from a ritual knife used to dismember a derelict, are the sort that can have special results. Use the following chart, or improvise.

Modification to Throw

Scratch +1

Light wound +2

Serious wound +3

Character injured by special weapon +2

Character suffered ritual injury +3

1-5 No effect

6-15 Scars

16-19 Mutation

20 Disability and mutation

The consequences depend on the location of the wound. A scar from a head wound has a negative affect on the character's COM (-1). A mutation also causes negative COM points. A head disability can result in paralysis of half the face or constant drooling (-4). Mutations take the form of growths, alterations to the character's CON, scales, blisters, or excessive hair growth. Disabilities mean the character has difficulty using the affected limb. If the GM wishes, he may deduct points from the character's AGL, STR or CON (see 'altered abilities')

Consequences for Elysium

Elysium is a reflection of Metropolis,

as Metropolis is a shadow of Elysium.

Events in Metropolis have a counterpart in Elysium. A ritual performed among the ruins around Chesed's palace can cause an earthquake in the Illusion. The characters don't experience the corresponding phenomena, since they are in Metropolis and not Elysium, but they may see the traces when they return. Here is a list of changes that may have occurred due to events in Metropolis.

ALTERATIONS IN CONSTRUCTIONS

Houses may have moved from their usual location to a completely different place. No one else notices anything strange, only the characters. Whole neighborhoods have been restructured, and roads lead to unexpected places.

ALTERATIONS IN NPCs

Familiar non-player characters may have changed, both in appearance and personality. The easy-going wife of the janitor has become a fierce monster, attacking the characters with a poker. Neighbors have totally unfamiliar faces, a stockbroker acquaintance is selling newspapers at the train station. Only the character notices the change. The NPCs act as if nothing has changed. The newspaper hawker will be scared and might even call the police if a visitor returning from Metropolis tries to convince him he has an office on Wall Street.

ALTERATIONS IN TIME

Time may have been disrupted during the stay in Metropolis. The Clockworks are an imperfect machine, and time skips are frequent. Time is a creation of the Demiurge and functions erratically in Metropolis, with repercussions in Elysium. The characters could return a day before their departure. They could be displaced forwards and encounter a World Government headed by the U.N. They can slip back in time to an exile in the backwaters of history. The GM must be careful with huge time displacements. Machine guns are out of place in medieval Europe. Time slips should be connected to specific

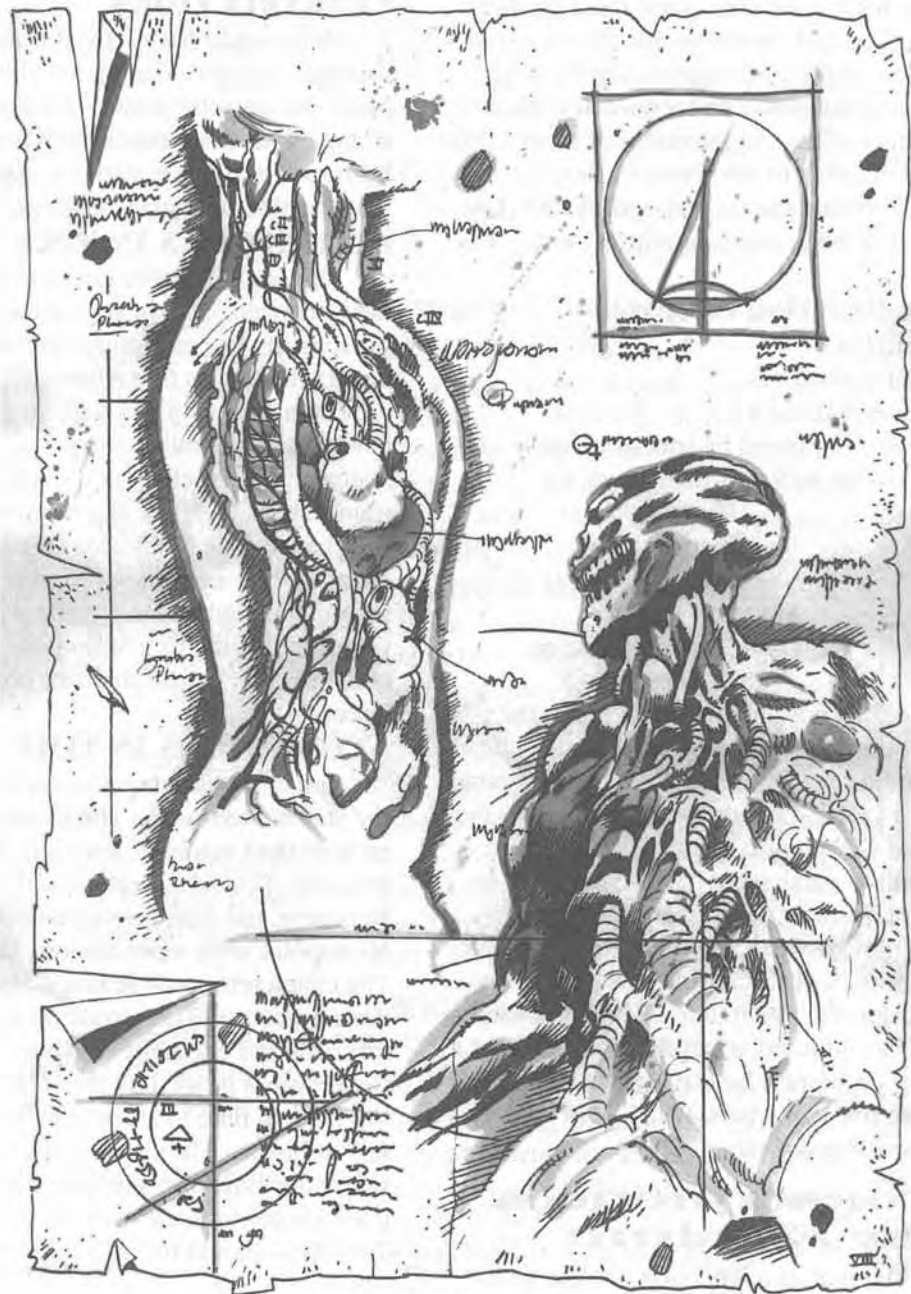


events in the characters' lives. They might find themselves in a charter bus they were in three years ago, which suddenly veers toward an oncoming truck. Such events require the characters to have thorough knowledge of the events described. Dark Secrets may constitute a foundation for such episodes.

ALTERATIONS IN HISTORY

History may have changed. It is no longer Columbus who discovered

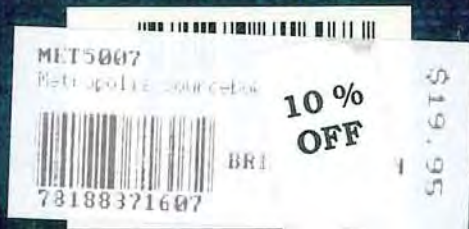
America. It was a Finnish admiral seeking new markets for his sovereign's merchant fleet. Any event can have been affected, from who won the gold medal for hockey in the last Olympics to the succession of American presidents or the dates of the world wars. A displacement has no immediate effect on the characters, but leads to an uneasy feeling that something is not quite right.



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Our reality is a prison — a very cleverly designed and well organized one, but a prison nevertheless. It is an illusion which has robbed us of our divine wisdom and godly powers, and which blinds us to the true reality of the abysmal conspiracy. Only by journeying into Metropolis to confront our mistaken assumptions and master our fears, can we awake and reclaim our place as the equals of the Demiurge.

Metropolis represents what we would see if the Illusion ever broke down. It is a never-ending city of chaos and destruction: a city composed of the most deplorable features of our own cities' slums and back alleys, concealing secrets far more shocking than we could ever conceive from watching the world we call our own.

The veil of deception which shrouds us is slowly coming undone. In certain areas it has already completely vanished, while in others it could momentarily crack, causing part of our world to merge into Metropolis, presenting horrifying glimpse of the truth our senses are unable to grasp.

In this Book:

The Cracks in the Lie: This chapter provides you with suggested situations in which the Illusion is torn open. Here the Game Master finds the tools with which to dramatize such occurrences, adding a touch of atmosphere to the game.

The Structure of Madness: This chapter contains campaign materials which recreate Metropolis, as well as a number of incidents which the GM can easily fit into your game.

Lairs of Power: The dwellings of Metropolis' potentates: the palaces of the Archons and the closed citadel of the Demiurge. It also provides some easily adaptable situations, and brief explanations of the palaces' inherent powers and how these powers affect their surroundings and the creatures who dwell within.

The Cogs in the Machine: Dedicated to places of particular function, or of singular importance to the Original City. It covers the *Memory Banks*, the *Primal Sea*, the *Clockworks*, the *City of the Dead*, and the *Mirror Halls*.

The Damned: The weird and dangerous creatures which inhabit the Original City. This chapter also contains descriptions of Metropolis' residents, whose multi-layered personalities cannot be touched on except in the broadest of terms.

Handouts: Each chapter is generously supplemented with excerpts and illustrations, which can be copied and distributed among the players.

WARNING

Kult is a game which explores the dark side of the human soul; some may find this disturbing. **Kult** is not recommended for players under 16.

NOTE: In order to be able to play **Legions of Darkness**, you must have access to the role playing game **Kult**.



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