

HEAVEN & EARTH

PARADISE LOST



Fiat
voluntas
tua, sicut



in Caelo
et in
Terra.

Heaven & Earth

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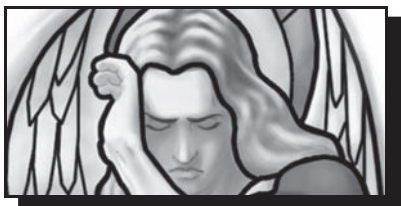
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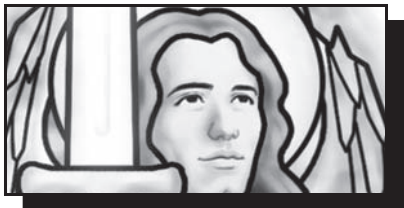
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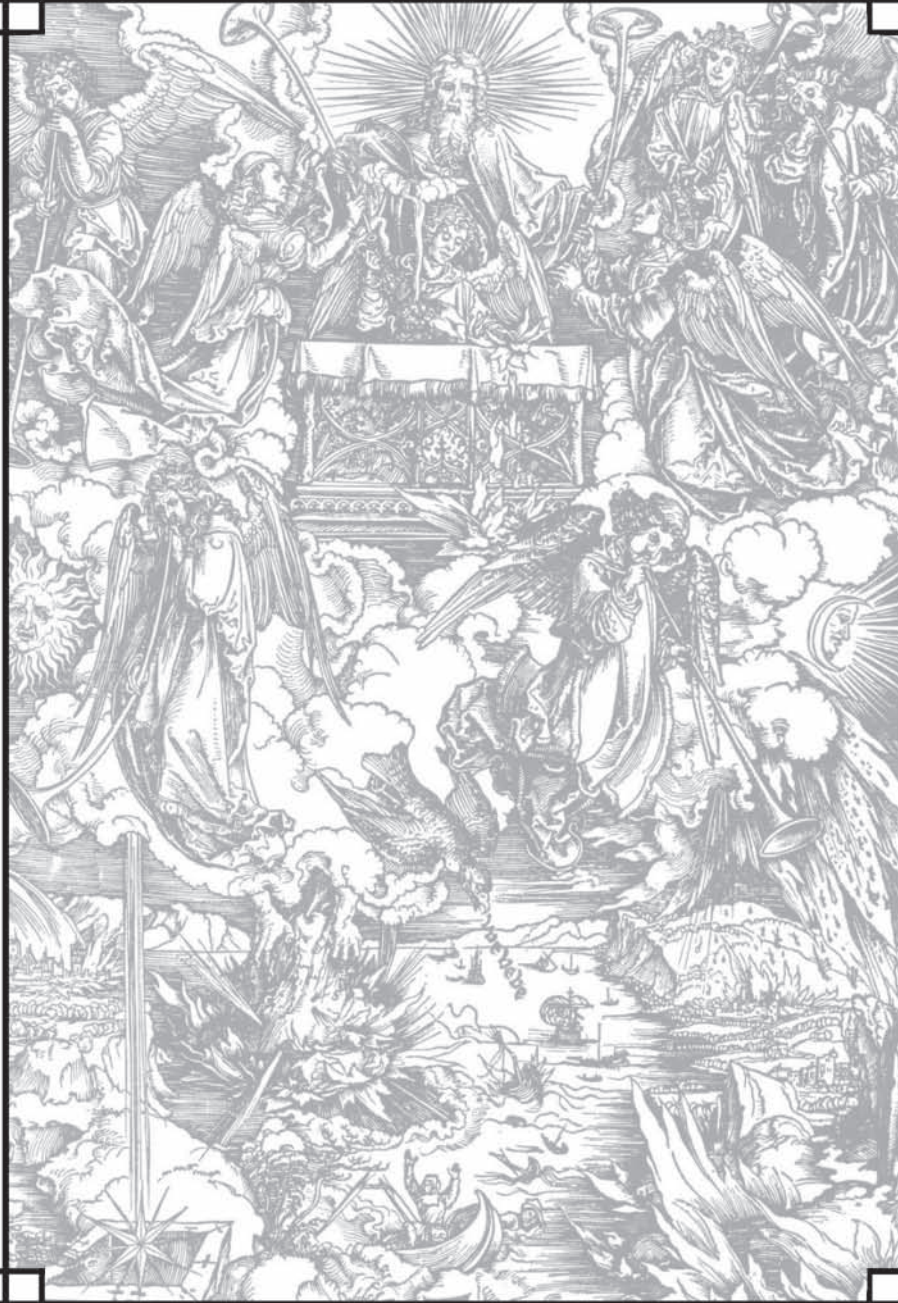
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

in Caelo et in Terra



For every story waiting to be told, there are three essential elements. First there is the plot, the thread of the tale itself; and second are the characters, those upon whom the plot acts. Finally, there is the setting, the backdrop for the entire tale. Without this third element, the characters can move through the essential plot points, but nothing holds them to any one location or time period. It would be like watching a play on a bare stage, with no mention of where the action is taking place.

Give a story a rich setting, however, and instantly the tale becomes more immediate, more engrossing. Suddenly, there are smells and sounds recalled to memory, images that cause the audience members to think of places they know and have been to. By linking the story to a place, the audience is given a relationship to the characters and plot, and this empathic connection allows them to feel what the characters feel. The audience then understands the consequences and magnitude of the events befalling the characters, and finds that they too have a stake in the outcome of the story.

The need for a setting is true of all stories, whether on a stage, in a book, or in a role-playing game. The stories in *Heaven & Earth* are no exception. *Heaven & Earth* is a world of surreal horror, a world where the pleasant surface is simply a distraction from the rotting truth that hides beneath. Potter's Lake is the nexus of that world.

SYNOPSIS

Paradise Lost is a sourcebook for *Heaven & Earth*'s small town setting of Potter's Lake. It is meant to be a companion piece to the main rulebook, which is required reading to make sense of some of the material presented here. *Paradise Lost* is designed to expand the setting, and thus gaming potential, of *Heaven & Earth* without invalidating the material in the main book.

BREAKDOWN

Beyond this introduction, *Paradise Lost* consists of eight more chapters: the history of Potter's Lake, new citizens, new locations, local rumors, folklore, two adventures, and the secret history of Potter's Lake.

Players can read the first six chapters of *Paradise Lost*

without ruining their gaming experience, as none of *Heaven & Earth*'s secrets are revealed within these pages. However, it's best if they don't. This way, they learn the details in these chapters at the same time their characters do. Much of the fun of *Heaven & Earth* is discovering the weirdness that permeates Potter's Lake. Reading these chapters may lessen that sense of discovery and wonder.

The last three chapters, the adventures and the secret history of Potter's Lake, are intended for the Gamemaster only.

READER'S CAVEAT

Heaven & Earth is intended for mature audiences and includes themes and situations of an adult nature; it is not intended for children. People with difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy should not play *Heaven & Earth*, nor should anyone who is easily offended. This book is not a dogma, creed, or belief. It is a game of alternate, horrific possibilities. The beliefs reflected here, either positive or negative, are not claims or theories about any group of people or system of belief. There is no truth or advice to be found within these pages, save this: it is only a game.

PLACING POTTER'S LAKE

Officially, Potter's Lake is situated in Eastern Kansas about 30 miles from the Missouri border; it is an hour's drive from Kansas City. However, gamemasters can place the town anywhere they like. The community itself embodies the notion of small town America, and thus fits anywhere in the country where idyllic countryside, a lake, and forest are commonplace.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

in Caelo et in Terra

Supplementum Canticorum

nus pressum eliminatum: atq; ubi truncatum prius habebatur / sup-
mento acutissime integratum / diligenterq; ex archetypo emendatum .



Potter's Lake has a rich history, one dating back over a century. It's filled with everything that makes history great: tragedy, adversity, and the triumph of the human spirit. Over the course of this chapter, several key moments in this remarkable town's past will be detailed. Gamemasters can use this information to add depth to the setting, making Potter's Lake a complex and believable community with a fascinating back-story.

THE FIRST EUROPEANS

French fur trader Louis Jolliet and Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette were the first Europeans to explore the area now known as Potter's Lake, Kansas. They, and five other companions, entered the region in the late 17th century, but their stay was short-lived. Records from this period are scarce, so no one really knows why the men decided to turn back so abruptly. However, popular belief holds that the two explorers had violent encounters with the indigenous population. Over the years, local Native Americans and scholars interested in the topic have decried this viewpoint as false and racist. Regardless, Jolliet and Marquette returned from whence they had come, and the area remained free of European influence for over a century.

POTTER'S LEGACY

In the mid 1820s (sources dispute the exact date), a fur trader named Jacob Potter discovered a lake nestled deep within the same wooded vale trod upon by Jolliet and Marquette. He established a trading post there and lived happily — until sometime around 1855, when he disappeared from his home.

Jacob Potter was born to George and Sarah Potter in 1783, in what would later be Ohio. George was a fur trader and woodsman. The father and son ran a small trading post in the Ohio woods, where Jacob spent his childhood among the trappers and natives, learning everything he could. When he grew old enough, he left his childhood home to become a trapper himself. Very little is known about this period in his life, though there are records of fur sales in his name and minor fines paid (mostly for drinking and rowdy behavior) all through the Mississippi River basin area, then in the Ozarks. In 1816, he married a woman named Constance Smith, who died two years later in Missouri of an undocumented illness.

Jacob, weary of travel, was around forty when he reached Kansas. He had been on his own for almost twenty years and was apparently tired of roaming the wilderness. While other existing records of the time have been lost, the Potter's Lake Historical Society has Jacob's personal journal from this period. In it, he writes:

"I have roamed over all the Earth, and I have not found one soul

with whom I could share company, exceptin my Dear Constance, who is now in Heaven. I am tired of wandrin and wish to settle. But where shall I call home?" — June 1820

Nearly five years later he found the lake. In his journal, he mentions traveling across plains that looked flat from a distance, only to discover up close that they were gently rolling hills.

"I crost over the last Hill, tall with golden Flours and Grass. When I reached the top, I saw a Forest Glade, which stretched for some Miles. I went toward it, glad to see Trees in such a large group. Shade and Water were welcome. — 1825

Jacob built a cabin and storefront within a year. By 1827, he was well established as a tradesman and mediator, often offering aid to travelers who needed it. He welcomed Catholic missionaries who came into the area, and soon after converted to the Catholic faith. He encouraged others to settle in the region as well, and it is believed he took a wife from one of the local native villages. His journal refers to a woman who visits him from the woods, whom he refers to as Constance, named no doubt in honor of his first wife.

"It is Friday and she has brot back my clothes clean. She waited til Father Brown had gone before she knocked. I asked her to stay again, but she just shook her head. Constance is stubborn as a mule on this point. I resolve not to make her mad by keeping on about it. I feel very lonely when she is away." — 1831

However, this situation did not last forever. Jacob writes of an argument one stormy evening, when he tried to keep the woman in his home for the night, presumably afraid for her safety if she attempted to return to her tribe. She flew into a rage and left, ignoring his attempts to persuade her to stay. He tried to follow her back to her settlement but to no avail.

"The woods press in uneasy these days. A tree fell on the ruf two days ago, and I have not patched the holes yet. The wind blows unseasonable cold. It has been a month since Constance come. I will go to look for her once more" — April, 1833

Jacob Potter never returned to his home. According to records at St. Anselm College, Father Brown visited at the first of May, only to find Jacob's house and store open and abandoned, without so much as a note to indicate where he had gone. No trace of a body was found in the woods beyond, so it was assumed that Jacob had finally found and joined his second wife's tribe. Local superstition, however, doubts Father Brown's claims, believing instead that Constance or her tribe killed Potter in the woods while he was out searching.

The site of Potter's cabin and store is now built over with parking lots and a grocery store. Nothing remains of the



trading post that served so many.

ST. ANSELM

What is now a venerable basilica and college traces its history back to humble roots. In 1827, a small band of dedicated Catholic missionaries came to the area with intentions of civilizing the west and spreading the word of God. Upon their arrival they encountered Jacob Potter, who agreed to serve as their mediator when dealing with the natives of the area. Surprisingly, there was very little resistance from the indigenous population. Most natives of the area were quite curious and open-minded regarding the beliefs of the missionaries. Naturally, there were some individuals who despised the newcomers, but hostile incidents between the two camps were minimal.

Within a year, the Vatican gave its blessing to establish a college and church in the remote part of the world known as Potter's Lake.

CALVIN TRYST

In 1876, a farmer, landowner, and long-time resident of Potter's Lake named Calvin Tryst kidnapped the governor's daughter and threatened the governor at

gunpoint. Frustrated with bureaucratic red tape, he and five companions rode to the governor's house on July 4th to request that the governor sign the charter recognizing Potter's Lake as an official Kansas township.

The governor was unwilling to see them. So, the men, wearing masks, pulled their rifles and entered the house. The governor and his daughter were in the music room at the time, entertaining their guests with patriotic music. One of Tryst's accomplices, Dickie Carpenter, stood by the pianoforte with his rifle and requested that the governor's daughter remain seated and calm, perhaps playing a soothing concerto for the guests. She agreed, but when the governor proved recalcitrant, Carpenter asked the young lady to accompany him outside. She did so, and therein lay the charge of kidnapping, though the two went no further than the rose garden.

Reluctantly, the governor agreed to Tryst's demands, signing the charter that officially made Potter's Lake a Kansas township. Following the deed, Tryst and his men released the company of guests and returned to their homes. By the next morning, however, the sheriff and a posse of his men went to each home in turn, rousting the men out of bed and arresting them in front of their neighbors, wives and children.

Days later, after a very controversial trial, a public hanging was held at a gallows specially constructed to simultaneously execute six. Calvin Tryst, when led to the noose, declared

that he felt he had acted in a patriotic manner and that “Posterity will consider us heroes.” The majority of the new township’s citizens attended the hanging. The crowd was unruly at first, protesting the hanging of such an esteemed man and his loyal compatriots, but armed deputies kept the throng in check. During the hanging itself, every tongue was silent, save for the sobs of the prisoners’ horrified families.

The funeral for Potter’s Lake’s leading citizen was held three days later.

BLEEDING KANSAS

In 1854, Kansas territory was thrown open to settlers. Emigrants from the east arrived in droves, many of them helped by the Emigrant Aid Society, a Massachusetts-based organization devoted to the abolitionist cause. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 established popular sovereignty for those states, allowing them to chose for themselves whether to be free or permit slavery. This decision fanned the flames of outrage across the United States and led many believers in abolition to move west, in hope of influencing the decision to keep Kansas a free state and prevent slavery from spreading.

Many of those “free-state” individuals, as they were called, settled in the area around Lawrence and Topeka. Working together, they agitated for political change and encouraged like-minded families to settle in the area, so as to push out the slavery contingent altogether. A fair number of farms and houses around both Potter’s Lake and Lawrence were, in fact, stops on the Underground Railroad for slaves fleeing Missouri and places further south. Their Missouri neighbors to the east, of course, did not agree with this abolitionist agenda. Missouri was a slave state and had a vested interest in bringing Kansas into the Union under the slave faction. Many pro-slavery citizens of Missouri took it upon themselves to chase the free-staters back east where they belonged, using such means as squatting, claim jumping, and even vigilante violence when needed.

Between 1854 and 1861, the level of tension in eastern Kansas continued to escalate. Finally, in 1861, Kansas entered the Union as a free state. Some politicians expected the decision would calm issues in this tumultuous zone, but in fact the opposite occurred. The nation spiraled into civil war, with eastern Kansas caught in the middle.

During the Civil War, violence in Kansas mostly occurred in small skirmishes. Troops attacked individual farms or ambushed small groups of enemy soldiers. Guerilla warfare was the call of the day, and no one was safe. Finally, in 1863, this undercurrent of violence culminated in one of the worst atrocities of the time.

William C. Quantrill, a captain in the Confederate army, led a band of approximately four hundred and fifty guerillas into Kansas on August 12, 1863. Their destination was Lawrence. They managed to refrain from open bloodshed along the way, but once among the farms

outside of Lawrence their goal became clear. While the majority of the company rode ahead, a small regiment remained behind. Their orders were to “clear the area of that damned abolitionist scum.”

The soldiers certainly did their best to fulfill their orders, stopping at every farm in the area. At each homestead, they busted down the door, killed the men, and proceeded to burn the place to the ground. They killed with impunity, spreading through the unsuspecting region in the early morning. Whereas the main group in Lawrence contented themselves with robbing, arson, and murder, the smaller splinter group in the Potter’s Lake area lost all sense of humanity and included rape and torture in their repertoire. The only individuals to escape relatively unscathed were the children and people at St. Anselm College, apparently spared out of respect for the Catholic Church.

Within a month’s time the area south of Lawrence was literally abandoned. Widows and children, many injured in the massacre, could not repair the devastated farmsteads on their own. Speculators bought the land for pennies on the dollar, and quickly sold it to eager new settlers. What many at the time did not realize was that the new homesteaders were, in fact, from Missouri, seeking a foothold in the traditionally abolitionist area. Within a year, supporters of slavery had wholly settled the area around Potter’s Lake.

INDUSTRY ARRIVES

In the spring of 1902, Southey’s Paper Mill opened in Potter’s Lake. Built by Robert Southey, the mill ushered in the age of industry for the area. It also gave a tremendous economic boost to a community struggling to keep its head above water.

Robert Southey became a hero to the citizens of Potter’s Lake. Not only did he save the town economically during some trying years, but he also became a pillar of morality and a generous philanthropist. The Southey family donated vast amounts of money to build new streets, stores, and housing for the citizenship and even adopted poor orphan children from New York, bringing them out to Kansas in hopes of a better life. Robert was a god-fearing man who gave much of his time and money to the church, and he lived his life with the goal of making Potter’s Lake a better place to live for all.

BLACK SUNDAY

On April 14th, in the year 1935, the worst dust storm in the whole Dust Bowl era, touched down in Potter’s Lake. Originating from western Kansas and stretching through northern Texas, the storm was seen all across the eastern half of the United States, even to Washington DC.

The Potter’s Lake Women’s Auxiliary was hosting their annual Spring Festival at Tryst Memorial Park when

the first signs of the storm occurred. The gathering was just breaking up when the temperature dropped sharply. Suddenly, the birds in the surrounding trees chattered loudly in a most unusual fashion, and dogs across the town began to howl. It was not until seeing the black cloud rolling closer, across the woods, that those assembled realized what was happening. Many took shelter in St. Anselm's Main Hall, since it was the closest large building to the park. Others, though, attempted to return to their homes and loved ones before the storm hit.

Over the ensuing hours, the black blizzard buried Potter's Lake under inches of dirt. Nearly a dozen people were found dead following the storm, suffocated either outside or by dirt entering through broken windows and doors. Property and livestock damage was extremely high, and many people went missing during the storm. Some of them were never found, causing the presumed death toll to be even higher.

POLIO

The spring of 1950 brought the plague of Polio to Potter's Lake. Although the whole nation suffered, Potter's Lake was hit especially hard. From April to August of 1950, doctors diagnosed no less than thirty cases among the town's children.

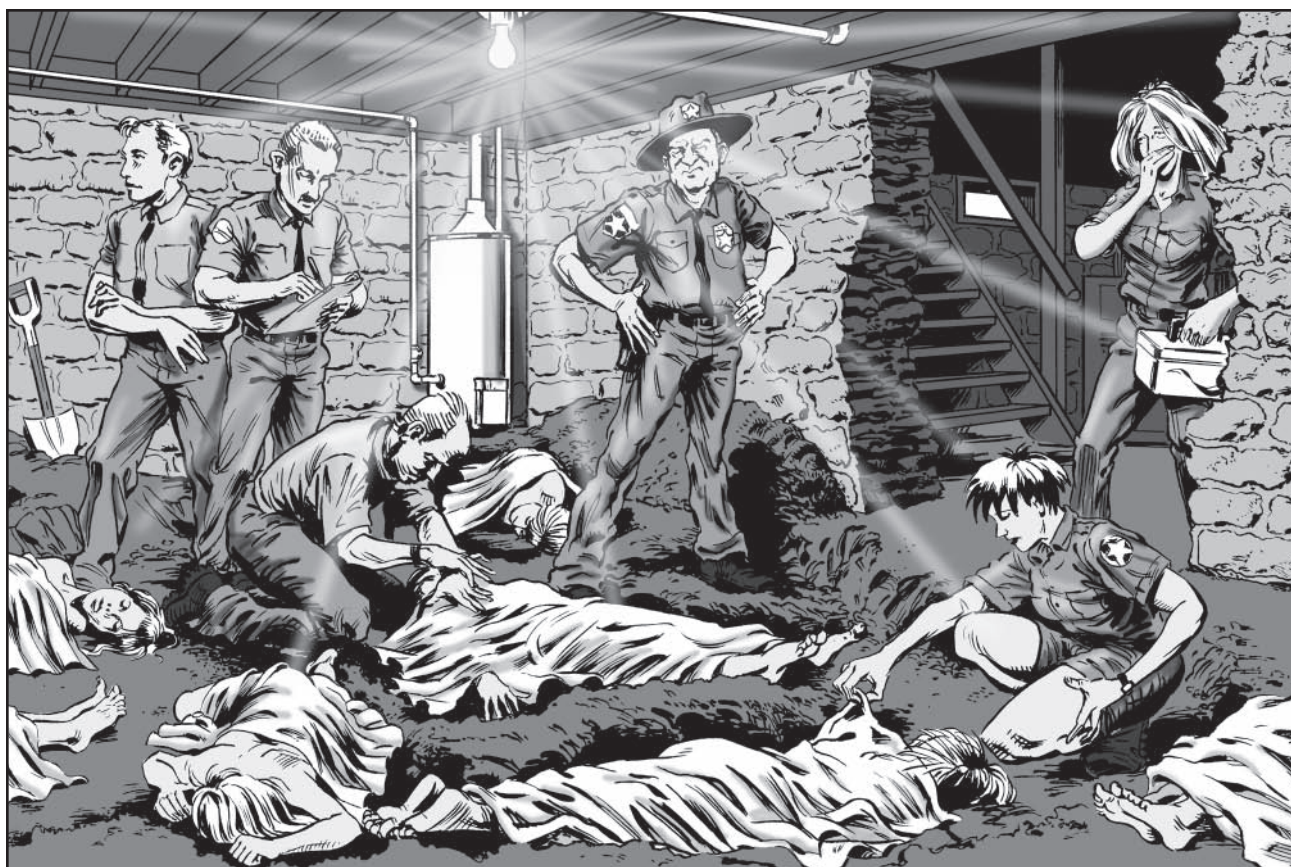
Of the forty-six total cases that year, thirty-four of them died from the disease or complications thereof. Of the twelve who remained, only one walked again.

A MILITARY PRESENCE

Powell Air Force Base opened in 1951. Although many questioned why the Air Force would need a base in this remote location, few disputed its benefit to the local economy. Like St. Anselm College, Powell drew outsiders to the area and brought a constant influx of new consumers. However, this prosperity did not continue for long. Within a decade, what was once a bustling base full of activity became a virtual ghost town. There were still staffers to be found at Powell, but their number dwindled by over seventy percent. In 1980 the base was expanded, but its staff was still kept to a minimum. For years, local politicians have feared the eventual closing of the base, but it has yet to occur.

THE TORNADO STRIKES

A freak tornado, rated an F2 in scale by the National Weather Service, landed in Potter's Lake on June 8th, 1974. It materialized in the woods outside of town and traveled



towards Powell AFB, jumping and skipping throughout the city limits, inflicting considerable damage.

Though the tornado vanished before it reached the base, many of the town's buildings were damaged or destroyed. The Civic Center, Kaufman's Grocery, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and the new shopping district that was under construction were all severely damaged.

THE CAIN MURDERS

During a span of three years, from 1998 to 2000, Potter's Lake and the surrounding area were the hunting grounds of a serial killer named Luther Cain. A Potter's Lake native, Luther worked as the groundskeeper for the town's primary cemetery to support himself and his mentally retarded brother, Bartholomew. The two had no relatives to speak of and lived a solitary life in their spacious three-story home, which had been willed to Luther by their parents.

Luther Cain was thirty-three years of age when he was finally apprehended in the winter of 2000. A young coed, who he had kidnapped and planned to murder, escaped from his home and informed the police of her ordeal. Shortly after, Sheriff Bowman arrested Luther and Bartholomew Cain.

The subsequent investigation of the Cain House revealed seven female bodies buried in pits of lime beneath the dirt floor of the basement. Each was tortured and violated prior to their deaths. Strangely, there seemed to be no pattern to the method of these killings. One was stabbed in the back with a knife, another was shot execution style in the forehead, two had their jugulars severed, one was decapitated, and two had their hearts removed. Although Luther fit the profile of the standard serial killer, his methods were anything but typical. Unfortunately, the townsfolk never received any answers regarding Luther's unusual means of murder, as he was silent during his entire time in custody, refusing to cooperate with authorities.

Bartholomew was found innocent during the official investigation and released into the care of the state. Although Bartholomew saw his brother's victims being taken to the basement for torture, he obviously had no idea what was going on. His challenged mind simply thought Luther was playing a game.

Luther Cain never reached trial for his crimes. He died of heart failure while in police custody.

He always exhibited a keen interest in his constituents, often strolling through town to have personal chats with residents.

Jackson died at the Sands — a homey bed and breakfast, on the town's northern shore, that he owned with his wife Margaret. He was on the roof, fixing some burned out Christmas lights, when he lost his footing and tumbled to the yard below. The mayor twisted badly during the fall, his neck snapping upon impact. He died within moments.

Belinda Wainwright, a long-standing member of the city council, replaced Phillip Jackson shortly thereafter. Although she will never take the place of Mayor Jackson in the hearts and minds of the townsfolk, she was greeted with open arms. This is in part due to her excellent record of public service and the endorsement of Margaret Jackson, a long-time friend of Wainwright's.

Mayor Wainwright's excellent record of public service continues to this day.

THE MAYOR PASSES AWAY

The winter of 2000 was a difficult time for the citizens of Potter's Lake. Not only were they confronted with the fact that a serial killer had been living among them, but their beloved mayor passed away. Phillip Jackson was very popular with the townsfolk, practically a revered hero, and served Potter's Lake as its mayor for almost twenty years.

CHAPTER III
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

in Caelo et in Terra



Potter's Lake is populated by a host of colorful characters. This chapter contains a sampling of these diverse personalities. Each one is unique and can add an extra dimension to *Heaven & Earth's* stories. These characters should be treated as dynamic, believable individuals in much the same way player characters are. They are designed to spruce up encounters and provide mysteries for the PCs to unravel.

As is the case with the NPCs presented in **Chapter V** of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook, no statistics are given. Gamemasters should assign whatever Skills and Ranks they deem appropriate, based on the needs of the story and the character descriptions provided. While the occupations of some will dictate their skill base, GMs are encouraged to personalize them as needed.

ADOLPH ABRAMS

Adolph Abrams is a certifiable genius; he's probably one of the most intellectually gifted people in Potter's Lake, although few realize it. In part, this lack of recognition is due to his appearance. Adolph is an overweight man in his late 40s, with graying black hair that he wears long and loose. A lot of the time this hair is also unwashed, giving it a greasy sheen that does little to demonstrate his native intelligence. Adolph also sports a scraggly beard the same color as his lackluster hair. His large brown eyes, though hidden beneath bushy eyebrows, are penetrating and intense, as if he could see right through someone if he stared long enough. These eyes are probably one of the few physical indications that Adolph is more than he seems. Most of the time, he dresses in rumpled jeans, old tee shirts, and a leather jacket and boots.

As one might expect, Adolph rides a motorcycle — in his case a 1970 Harley-Davidson Sportster, complete

with a sidecar. He bought the bike in his late teens and has maintained it ever since. Since that time, Adolph has used his vehicle to deliver the *Daily Sentinel* door to door. He took this mindless job so that he would have time to think without too much distraction. Adolph finds that he is at his intellectual peak when he is riding his Harley and, if he had his way, he would ride around all day, stopping only to eat, sleep, and obey nature's call. Unfortunately for him, he needs money (if only a small amount) to keep his bike in fuel and parts, which is why he continues to deliver papers after all these years.

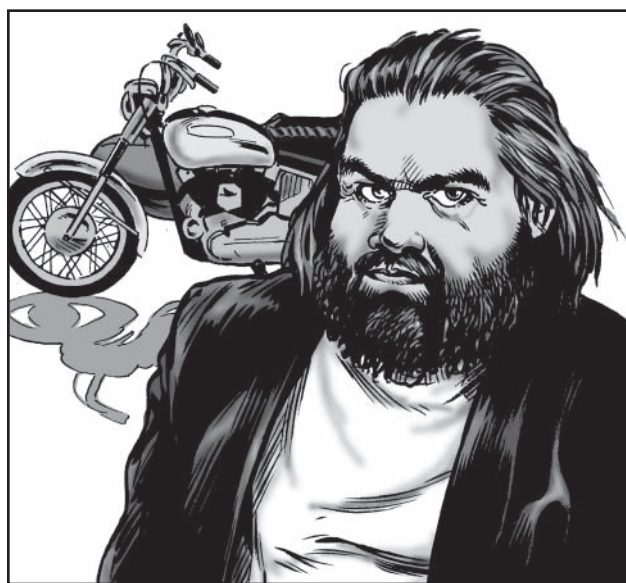
Adolph is the younger brother of Florence Abrams and is very protective of her. He constantly volunteers to help her in her florist shop, but she rarely takes him up on it, preferring to give him "time to think," as she knows it's one of his greatest pleasures in life. The two siblings live together, although Adolph is rarely in his basement apartment. He spends most of his waking hours on the road (even when not delivering papers), in the public library, or trolling bookstores for new volumes to add to his mammoth collection. He is a voracious reader of both fiction and non-fiction works, but he favors essays on philosophy, theology, and political theory over everything else.

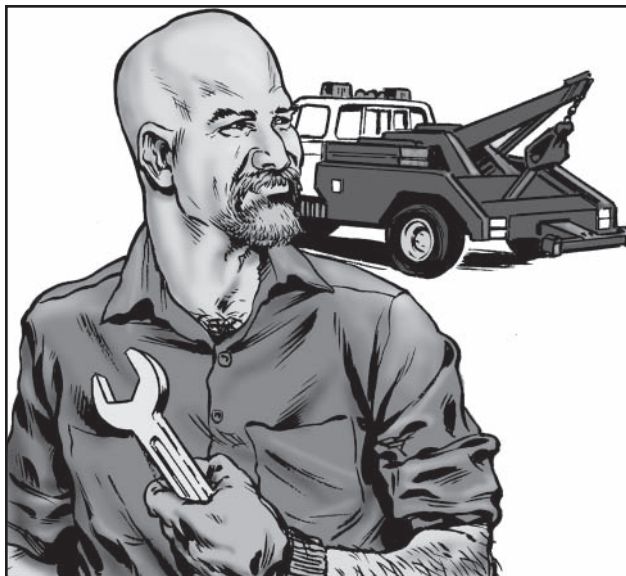
In his late night travels on the roads around Potter's Lake, Adolph has seen a number of things he cannot explain. On one occasion, he witnessed strange baleful lights emanating from the woods — like fire, except there was no smoke. On another solitary excursion, he saw ghostly forms dancing on the surface of the lake. Though by no means a rationalist, Adolph is reluctant to ascribe any supernatural or alien origin to what he has seen. For the moment, he keeps an open mind and would love the chance to speak with someone who might be able to make sense of these mysterious encounters.

RANDY BRIDEGROOM

Randy Bridgroom fits the image of the average mill worker. He wears jeans and flannel shirts, a cheap baseball cap, and work boots. His hands and face are usually greasy, but he'll dash on the Old Spice if he goes out to grab a beer at Deke's. By doctor's orders he has just started wearing glasses, but he takes them off halfway through the day when they chafe.

Like most guys in town, Randy got a job at Southey's before he graduated high school. For five years, he did not do much besides work, drink beer, watch football, and fix his truck. A recent accident at the mill — the saw hit a tree spike and a piece of saw blade embedded itself in Randy's leg — led to his firing when Southey decided not to pay worker's comp under accusations of negligence. Bridgroom rightly feels he was cheated out of his job and medical care, but he has been powerless to force Southey to make amends. The grudge burns whenever he sees Bob Southey at Deke's, but Southey has forgotten who Randy





was long ago.

To pay the bills, Randy spent the last of his money on a run-down tow truck, and he's now selling his services as Randy's Towing Company. Luckily, the only other tower in town drove his truck off a bridge late one night, leaving Randy with a monopoly. Most of his business comes from strangers who have broken down on the road through the woods or who have had freakish accidents on the edge of town. Bridegroom's repertoire of rescue stories is growing rapidly - like the abandoned vehicle he found filled with lake water (nowhere near the lake), or the guy who decided to ride in the towed car back to the station, but who was not in the car when it arrived (and has not shown up since).

ZACH BRIDGES

Zach is large, muscular, and well proportioned. His handsome looks, blond wavy hair, and blue eyes allow him to play the devilish bad boy and get away with it. Zach tries, quite successfully, to dress above the town standard - so he can fit into frat parties and look good when he hits on women at bars.

Most residents remember Zach as the cute altar boy, the winning high school quarterback, or the snappy kid who dated their daughter for a few weeks. Blinded by sentimentalism and high hopes, none of them see that Zach has failed to advance in life as expected. Neither his mediocre grades nor small-town quarterback skills were enough to land him in a good college, and he's simply too arrogant to work at the local mill. He has been trying his hand as a plumber, but the work hasn't agreed with him. Instead of pursuing another trade, Zach is taking the downward spiral into long benders, petty crime, and domestic terrorism.

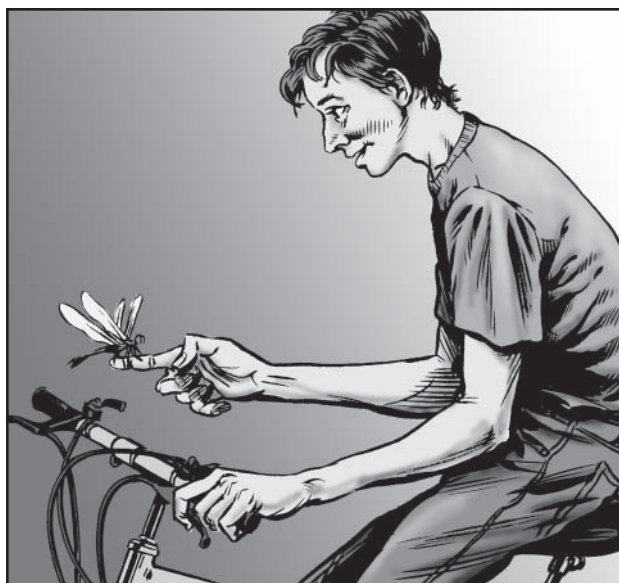
Almost overnight, Zach has transformed from golden boy to town bully. His only way of coping with depression



is to get drunk, pick up women, and cause trouble for others. When he's not carousing at Deke's, Zach leads his crew of young thugs to harass outsiders, start fights with college boys, or spook people out in the woods. Zach never ventures near the lake, though; he cannot stand being near it as he nearly drowned there as a child.

DAVEY

Davey, a twelve-year-old latchkey kid, is the son of hardworking and distracted parents. Long ago, Davey grew bored with hanging out by himself at home, so he spends the time after school riding his bike all over town. He likes to explore and just doesn't comprehend he's not supposed to go places people consider private — the town and surrounding area are simply his playground.



Davey's intrusions sometimes land him in trouble, but most townsfolk know who he is and keep an eye out for him.

Davey has an unnatural infatuation with bugs of all varieties and types. He occasionally makes odd bug references that most people dismiss as imagination, like the time he described a millipede as the type of bug "that crawled out of that dead woman's nose." Davey's bug hunting has also led him to investigate the woods, despite his parents' strict warnings to keep away from there.

SHARON GALLAGHER

Sharon is the hardest-working waitress at Deke's Bar & Grill. She knows everyone by their "usual" and is always chatty. She habitually eavesdrops when serving food or refilling coffee, and is the town's most passionate rumormonger. Rather than accepting that food-service and small town life is her future, Sharon works overtime and saves every penny in the hopes of someday moving to a big city.

Sharon is attractive in her own right, with sparkling hazel eyes and an easygoing laugh. However, an ugly scar running down the left side of her face (from eye to chin) mars her natural good looks. She keeps her good side toward customers and deflects questions about the scar with sharp, practiced witticisms.

Sharon is a hypochondriac and loves to talk about her latest ailments. She may alarm anyone who does not tune her out with the amount of odd and bizarre rashes, infections, pustules, and other symptoms she suffers, most



of which are simply unknown to modern medicine. None of these afflictions impede her work or last for long, but they will spoil the appetite of anyone who allows her to show them off.

REGINALD GREY

Reginald Grey is terrified of enclosed spaces. When he was a child, neighborhood children dared him to open an abandoned refrigerator they found behind the old Amalgamated Industrial Chemicals plant. Abandoned refrigerators, the kids all knew, were gateways to hell and thus very scary things. To prove himself to the kids who always teased him for being a bookish Momma's boy, he gave in to their taunts and opened the battered door — and was promptly pushed inside. Reginald was trapped inside the fridge for nearly 10 hours, which fortunately had rusty holes through which he could breathe and scream for help. It was nightfall before the children confessed to what they had done and led the police back to where the refrigerator was located.

Reginald is an unmarried African-American in his late 30s. He wears his hair short and has neither a mustache nor a beard. Contacts correct his farsightedness, and he can sometimes be seen crawling around on the sidewalk looking for his lost lenses. He usually dresses smartly, preferring button-shirts and slacks, both neatly pressed, in addition to a necktie and sports jacket.

Reginald is an attorney at law. He will take up any case that does not require him to enter a courtroom. His claustrophobia weighs heavily on him and, like many chronic diseases, its intensity rises and falls inexplicably. Sometimes, he will be able to control his fear to such an extent that he can take a short ride in a bus or a car (though he usually walks everywhere), while at other times his panic is so intense that he must take sleeping pills to overcome it. His anxiety also prevents him from spending much time in buildings that have not been designed to satisfy his rather peculiar needs.

Unsurprisingly, Reginald works from his home on Chester Street. A tall, spacious building, it has been modified over the



years to meet Reginald's unusual specifications. The third floor, where he maintains his bedroom, has a retractable roof with a ventilated glass cover, so that he can sleep soundly without feeling the suffocating weight of claustrophobia. No room in the house, not even the bathrooms, has a door and most have large windows without curtains. During the summer months, Reginald's office moves entirely outside. He sets up his desk, chair, filing cabinets, computer, and other necessary equipment in his driveway and works until it gets dark — at which time he moves it all inside again.

Were it not for his excellent skills as a lawyer, it is unlikely anyone would ever take up his services. As it is, he has a thriving practice and has resisted all offers to join a larger legal firm, terrified at the prospect of spending the day in a cramped office.

SAMUEL IRVING

Samuel Irving is a believer. He's the kind of man who can speak at great length about "the importance of belief in our cynical age." By this he means that the world is no longer the "magical place" it was for previous generations of men and women. Science has laid bare Nature's secrets and the resulting academic facts are not half as compelling as the myths, legends, and mistaken theories that once stood in their place. Samuel looks back on his childhood in the 1960s as one of unmitigated perfection, because his generation was the last "to really believe in something with all their hearts."

Among other things, Samuel Irving believes in ghosts. When he was a boy, he would seek out the supposedly haunted spots of Potter's Lake, like Saltonstall House and Hugent Farm, to find proof of the existence of ghosts. He claims that, late one night in 1969, when he was supposed to be in bed, he sneaked into the boarded-up Saltonstall House

in hopes of seeing the ghost of Reed Saltonstall — which did, indeed, appear. As Samuel tells it, Saltonstall's ghost materialized before him and was not nearly as menacing as he would have expected. Instead, the ghost cautioned him against ever coming into the House again lest he be "drawn to the Other Side" before his time, and assured him that there really was an existence between our life in this world and our ultimate destiny in the "Great Beyond." Samuel did as he was told and ever since that day has been Potter's Lake's foremost believer in ghosts.

A tall, thin man whose wavy hair is still a sandy brown color despite his being in his early 40s, Samuel cuts a distinguished figure. His clean-shaven face likewise betrays little evidence of his actual age. He usually dresses well, wearing neat Oxford shirts and cuffed, pleated trousers. His shoes are always well shined, and Samuel carries his grandfather's gold pocket watch and fob with him at all times. When speaking, he is precise and even-toned, which only adds to his aristocratic air.

Samuel is employed as a history teacher at Potter's Lake High School, typically covering courses in American history and government. He is well-liked by both the staff and students, although some find his manner and oratorical attempts to get the students to "believe in something" a little overblown. Rather unsurprisingly, Samuel is a founding member of the Potter's Lake Ghost Hunters Society. He does not trumpet his belief in ghosts, but neither does he hide it. Most people consider it just an eccentricity, another manifestation of Samuel's lifelong obsession with the importance of belief, and don't take it too seriously. Though he would not admit it, this angers Samuel, who has centered his life around the power and necessity of belief in the modern world.

MARGARET JACKSON

Margaret is the widow of Phillip Jackson, the previous mayor of Potter's Lake. Over four years have passed since her husband's death, but there is seldom a night that she doesn't still cry herself to sleep. Margaret is in her early fifties and rotund of figure. Her cherubic face seldom smiles anymore and perpetual bags have formed beneath her eyes. Margaret used to be obsessive with her appearance, constantly applying this skin treatment or that to fight Father Time. Now, she no longer cares. After religiously dying her hair for the last twenty-some years, Margaret has begun to allow her natural grey to show through.

Margaret is a popular woman with a vast circle of friends who truly care about her. At least one of these townsfolk visits her daily, hoping to wake Margaret from her depression. Her only child, Christine, has taken over the daily operations of the Sands, a bed and breakfast long owned by the Jackson family. While Christine has eased the burden of work for her mother, she has been unsuccessful in easing her mother's pain.





A few weeks ago, Margaret took in a stray rottweiler that had been lurking along the edges of the Sands. This development has delighted her friends, who hope a pet might prove a distraction from her sorrow. What they don't know is that Margaret has taken to calling the dog Phillip and is convinced that it is the reincarnation of her dead husband. Margaret has thought of sharing this wonderful secret with her daughter, but Phillip has advised her against it.

MAURA KILLOUGH

Potter's Lake has a long and proud history of military service. During the Civil War, the town sent many of its sons into battle, just as it did generations later in the First and Second World Wars, Korea, Viet Nam, and later conflicts. Of course, many of Potter's Lake's daughters also served their country in times of war; and locally, there are few more famous than Maura Killough. Trained as a nurse and sent into the Pacific Theater of World War II, Maura found herself forced to fight off Japanese soldiers in order to protect the wounded GIs under her care. This she did with remarkable skill and coolness under fire, earning many commendations for her heroic efforts — including the Presidential Medal of Freedom given by President Truman in 1945. Maura remained in the US Army into the Viet Nam era, rising through the ranks of the Medical Command before finally retiring in 1965. She never married.

Now an old woman in her late 80s, Maura retains something of the military bearing she had in her youth. Her silvery hair is kept short, in a style reminiscent of what she wore as a younger woman in the Army. Her gray eyes remain as brilliant as ever, but she rarely smiles except for those to whom she is very close. Maura has a much-deserved reputation for seriousness and this is borne out in



her manner of dress. She seems far more comfortable in well-pressed suits than in flowing skirts or dresses. A small American flag always graces her lapel and she has a permit from the sheriff's department to carry a concealed firearm, although no one has ever seen her use it.

Long retired, Maura volunteers her services at Potter's Lake Memorial Hospital, spending time with terminally ill patients. As she grows older and feels the weight of her own mortality upon her, she sees an ever-greater duty to attend to those whose lives may also end at any time. Maura is reluctant to tell war stories, but can be coaxed into doing so, particularly if the request comes from one the patients whom she's attending. Though a firm believer in the grim necessity of war, she does not glamorize her tales, as she believes everyone should know that every victory comes at a price, often a high one. She is a gifted storyteller and few who listen to her cannot help but hang on her every word.

Lately, Maura has been haunted — literally — by the ghosts of those who have died over the years while under her care. At first, she tried to dismiss these phantoms as a sign of creeping senility, but she can no longer do so. Each week she sees more and more of these apparitions and guilt is building in her soul. Though she knows she could have done nothing to save them, their loss of life weighs heavily on her and Maura wonders if their appearance does not presage her own end.

ONIJİ KOYANAGI

Being a smallish town in the heart of the American Midwest, Potter's Lake doesn't see too many people of Asian descent, let alone one as unusual as Oniji Koyanagi. While there are many claimants for the title of "most mysterious person in town," Oniji comes closest to fitting the bill. He appeared in Potter's Lake a little over five years ago, looking for work. No one knew where he came from — most simply assumed

Japan — or why he chose to come to an insignificant place to which he had no ties. Even now, after being a fixture of the town for half a decade, few dare to ask such questions of him.

Oniji is a short, stocky man of obviously Asian descent. He keeps his dark hair cut short and, as his ancestry would portend, sports no facial hair. He has a small scar around the orbit of his left eye. He dresses simply, with loose, long-sleeved clothing even in summer months. Some claim that this is because his body is covered with tattoos, a sure sign of a member of the Yakuza. Others dispute this as sensationalist gossip, although the fact that Oniji is also missing a finger on his right hand only lends more credence to these speculations. He generally wears sandals when the weather permits, but is not adverse to running shoes or even boots when necessary.

Oniji works as a bartender at Deke's Bar and Grill. Deke Richardson completely vouches for his employee and does his best to dismiss some of the wild stories that swirl around Oniji. When he came into the bar looking for work, Deke immediately took a liking to him, for reasons he's never really explained other than to say he was "good people." For a lot of townsfolk, Deke's opinion is enough, although there are still skeptics who openly wonder about this outsider who not only speaks English with no trace of a foreign accent but is also a master mixologist. There is a large glass jar that sits on the bar stuffed with money — no one knows the precise amount — for whoever can come up with a mixed drink that Oniji does not know. If he is able to produce the beverage, the person who requested it adds the drink's value to the jar. Since this ritual began four years ago, no one has ever stumped Oniji.

Although born in Shingo, Japan, Oniji has been an American citizen since the age of five. While highly intelligent, he never did well in school and always felt out of place. Upon dropping out of high school he wandered

the country, taking odd jobs here and there and acquiring a large number of unusual skills. He found that his ability to connect immediately with others served him well and he gained a reputation as a "good listener," a talent that makes him a natural bartender. For reasons even he doesn't understand, he felt himself drawn to Potter's Lake, a place he did not even know existed before he stepped off the bus that brought him here five years ago.

CLAUDE LAPIERRE

If Potter's Lake has a memory, some say it is Claude Lapierre. For one, Claude is almost certainly the oldest living person in the town. At 103 years of age, he is surprisingly — even disturbingly — spry. He also has a mind like a steel trap. Claude seemingly sees everything that happens on the campus of St. Anselm College. He has a photographic memory and total recall. Events that happened when he was a young child, shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, are as clear to him as what happened yesterday — at least that is his claim. There are some who doubt the trustworthiness of his highly touted memory, but few say so openly for fear of upsetting his legion of admirers located throughout St. Anselm's student body and the wider town populace.

Claude is in surprisingly good health. Though his face is deeply lined and he has only a few wisps of gray hair on his head, his deep blue eyes are those of a far younger man. Through a regimen of regular physical exercise and a Spartan diet, Claude remains as fit as a man half his age. He's rarely seen wearing anything but his work clothes: a white shirt, overalls, and boots. He sometimes dons thick eyeglasses, as his vision isn't as good as it used to be. Despite this, Claude still seems to be in touch with any and all events that occur at his beloved College. When asked about it, he



simply smiles and says that his “other senses compensate for poor eyesight.” True or not, there is little doubt that he is a champion eavesdropper and more than one student (or faculty member) has turned to him for the latest gossip he may have overheard.

Claude works as the head groundskeeper at St. Anselm College, as he has since he was a much younger man. He oversees a staff of other workers, practically all of whom respect him for his knowledge and expertise. In his 80 years on the job, he has seen just about everything and has a solution for most problems. Only a fool would turn down advice from Claude. Over the years, there have been many attempts to convince him to retire, but none have succeeded. He’s rebuffed all such suggestions with the gruff statement that “my job here is not yet done” and then hurries off to prune some bushes. In the last decade, no one has dared take up the matter again.

A devout Catholic, Claude is very close to Father Ezekiel Cage. The stories circulating on campus say that he assisted Father Cage with the exorcism in Room 616 (see **Chapter VI**). In fact, these anecdotes go so far as to say that Claude regularly visits that room to ensure that whatever is in there stays put. Like most such stories, there is no proof and Claude dismisses these rumors out of hand — not that this has dissuaded those sure that the old man is hiding a secret of some sort.

MICHELLE MARINOVICH

As Daryl Bowman’s undersheriff, Deputy Marinovich is a competent female officer loyal to her job and the people of Potter’s Lake. She is popular with the townsfolk and has an upbeat demeanor that contrasts the dour personality of Sheriff Bowman.

Michelle and Deputy Quinn Harker were good friends prior to the onset of his Multiple Personality Disorder. They used to spend a good deal of time together and shared a mutual affection for ruffling the feathers of their superior. Unfortunately, that camaraderie is gone and the two are now uncomfortable around one another. Quinn’s condition unnerves Michelle, and she secretly yearns for him to be removed from his duties — though she would never share this desire with Sheriff Bowman or Quinn.

Over the last few months, Sheriff Bowman has entrusted Michelle with more and more responsibility. She believes the sheriff is considering retirement and is grooming her to replace him, although he has not said so himself. In response, Deputy Marinovich has toned down her pranks and jokes to present a better image to her boss.

Michelle Marinovich is in her late twenties. She works out regularly and prides herself on her exercise regiment. Her brown hair has always been worn short, but lately she has been thinking about growing it out. Michelle is engaged to a local veterinarian but, ironically, is allergic to cats and dogs. This has made their relationship difficult, but she is



determined to make things work.

MATTHEW MCCAFFREY

Matthew McCaffrey is not afraid of cows, despite what a lot of people say. He grew up on a farm that his family still owns to this day. In fact, he will even point out that one of his childhood “pets” was a cow named Mildred. Matthew is simply afraid of dairy products — not at all the same thing as a cow phobia. So strong is his fear that he is unwilling to walk down the dairy aisle at Kaufman’s Grocery Store without a friend at his side. Even being accompanied is sometimes not enough reassurance, particularly if he sees yogurt or Ricotta cheese, both of which are especially frightening to him. On such occasions, running away from the offending dairy products screaming is his typical response.

Thin and of medium height, Matthew has blond hair and blue eyes. He is in his late 20s but looks much younger, with a baby face and a high tenor voice that sounds more like that of a teenager than a grown man’s. He dresses plainly and does his best not to stick out in a crowd. His peculiar phobia is well-known in town and a source of much embarrassment to him. If possible, he would rather avoid public scrutiny and does his best to live his life inconspicuously. So long as he does not accidentally encounter a dairy product in some form, Matthew is amazingly successful.

Matthew owns and runs a small computer repair shop, and lives in the apartment above it. He is a very talented technician and his rates are quite reasonable, earning him a steady stream of clients and the thanks of more than a few local businesses that have come to depend on his expertise. For his part, Matthew partially regrets his success, as it brings him into contact with an ever-greater number of people, any one of whom might laugh at him



or ask uncomfortable questions about his phobia. On the other hand, his business helps him to afford expensive sessions with a local hypnotherapist in an attempt to cure the problem.

Despite his many sessions over the course of several years, Matthew still has no idea how the unusual fear originated or how he might overcome it. It began on his sixteenth birthday, he is certain, for he can still remember how he fled the school cafeteria after opening up his carton of milk. Beyond that, his affliction remains a mystery, except that the fear has grown more intense with each passing year and shows no signs of subsiding.

CLAIRE NOONAN

St. Anselm College occupies an important place in the life of Potter's Lake. One of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the Midwest, it is one of the town's major draws for outsiders. Some of its faculty members are well regarded in their fields of knowledge and are frequently called upon by local citizens and authorities to act as "experts," giving them a degree of influence with the community. However, school officials are not the only ones from St. Anselm who have acquired this local regard. One such individual is a student by the name of Claire Noonan — president of the Student Administrative Council.

A slight, attractive young woman in her early 20s, Claire has curly auburn hair and deep green eyes. She dresses conservatively but with the latest fashions, favoring bright colors that accentuate her eyes. She speaks with what she calls a "mild Irish accent," but which is in fact the result of years of speech therapy to overcome a lisp she developed in childhood. Claire welcomes the attention of anyone and everyone who seeks her out. She is headstrong and not in the least bit shy. While she has left behind a string of

boyfriends, none of whom ever met her ridiculously high standards (or those of her overprotective father, it is said), that hasn't stopped the many young men who attempt to court her affections.

As the president of the Student Administrative Council, Claire wields a great deal of clout. Officially, the Council is merely an advisory group designed to assist the school's administration in routine matters, such as course scheduling, planning social events, and producing the yearbook. Since Claire took over, her combination of ruthless self-promotion and intense personal magnetism have helped the Council acquire much more influence at the college. Although only an undergraduate in the English department, Claire regularly sits in on hiring committee and admissions meetings. Her status is unofficial, of course, but that hasn't stopped her from using her position to advance policies she deems best for the college — and herself.

Originally, Claire's primary interest was in ensuring that she received as many sterling recommendations as possible to gain entrance into a great graduate school and perhaps meet a man "worthy" of her. In the last six months, however, her goals have changed. Her childhood speech impediment was the result of a traumatic experience in which, while lost in the woods, a luminous, kindly woman saved her from the clutches of what she described then as a "monster". She had nightmares for years afterward. Although the bad dreams have not returned, the woman has. She regularly appears to Claire when she is alone and has told her that the world will soon end and that she should use her influence at St. Anselm to save as many souls as she can. Claire now believes the woman to be the Blessed Virgin Mary and has taken up her call to arms. While oblivious as to the cause, her many friends and admirers (including the clergy at St. Anselm) are noticing the change in Claire, much to their surprise and confusion.



GLENN PECCARY

Glenn Peccary is the head of the Peccary family, owner of the Peccary Pumpkin Factory, and proud sponsor of the yearly Potter's Lake Pumpkin Festival. Glenn considers himself the caretaker of the Pumpkin Pete Legend (see **Chapter VI** for more details), dutifully donning his Pumpkin Pete costume every year to perform for kids at the festival.

Glenn Peccary's trademark facial features — red hair, freckles, and unusually large ears — make him easy to spot in a crowd. There was a time when Glenn was seldom without a smile on his face, but in recent months his exuberant glow has faded. Glenn Peccary now looks like a tired man. His cheeks are sunken, his hair is thinning, and dark circles are always under his eyes. His mood has also taken a turn for the worse. What was once a sunny disposition has been replaced with a sullen, almost mournful demeanor. Most people attribute these changes to the recent bad luck that has befallen the Peccarys.

The Peccary family is struggling financially, for reasons they are not sharing. To keep from going under, Glenn was forced to borrow a substantial amount of money from Bob Southey. Glenn has also turned to alcohol to cope with his troubles; on more than one occasion he has had to be forcefully removed from Deke's. There are whispers that he even mumbles about suicide in his darker, drunken moments.



DEKE RICHARDSON

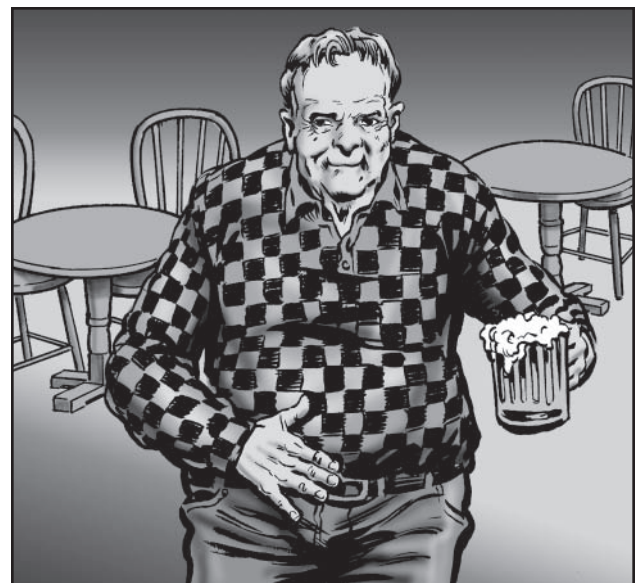
Human beings have a remarkable capacity to overcome all manner of adversity. The mind has a vast arsenal of defenses to assist in this, including denial. Confronted with

tragedies too horrible to contemplate, many people simply ignore that the events occurred, thereby protecting their sanity and allowing them to get on with their lives. Some people, on the other hand, turn headlong into the face of adversity and confront it. Donald Richardson is one such person. There can be little doubt that the course of his entire life has been deeply affected by his unwillingness to move on from a painful event in his past.

Known as “Deke” by everyone in town, Donald Richardson is now an old man in his late 80s. He has a full head of yellow-gray hair and dark, soulful eyes. His physique is that of an aging athlete: the muscles of his youth turned to flab on a stocky frame. Even as his health deteriorates, Deke is a bear of a man, looming larger than most of the customers who patronize his bar and grill. His typical attire of worn jeans and checkered shirts has changed little over the years, and he only wears his out-of-date suit to attend funerals.

Deke is the owner of the eponymous Deke's Bar and Grill, perhaps the most popular eatery in town. Deke opened the establishment after he returned from fighting in Italy during World War II. Originally, his entire family helped him run the place, including his wife and three children. The Bar and Grill gained a reputation for its hearty fare, reasonable prices, and friendly environment. The atmosphere changed, however, after the drowning death of Deke's son, Donald Jr., in 1955. Although he wasn't responsible, Deke blamed himself and was grief-stricken. His despair eventually became so great that it tore his family apart. His wife divorced him and his other two children left Potter's Lake along with her; he hasn't seen them in years.

Deke never recovered from his grief, but one fateful day he decided to turn and confront it. He realized that his son's death was not his fault — it was God's. From that moment on, Deke has been passionately angry with



the Almighty. Previously a regular, if somewhat less than devout, churchgoer, Deke now has nothing to do with any church or its ministers. He began the Memorial at the Bar and Grill as a way to never forget Donald Jr., but in short order his obsession grew. He saw that God didn't just hate him and his family; God hated all of humanity. Why else would He allow so many people to die senselessly on the lake? The Memorial is now more than just a way to remember those who have died. It is an act of defiance in the face of God's cruel ordering of the universe. Deke largely keeps these feelings to himself, but those who know him well are aware of his anger and worry that it will one day consume him.

JOAN TALBOT

If the economic heart of Potter's Lake is the Southey Mill, Joan Talbot is the jolt of electricity that keeps it pumping. Joan is the mill's foreman — a term she prefers to “forewoman” or “foreperson” or any other such neologism — and is every bit as vital to its continued success as is Robert Southey IV. Joan has worked at the mill for the last thirty years and knows it inside and out. She has made herself indispensable to its day-to-day operations and, more importantly, she knows where the bodies are buried — which is to say, she is every bit as knowledgeable about the mill's secrets as she is about its business practices.

Joan is nothing special to look at. Short, slightly pudgy, with dull brown eyes, she wears her hair in a utilitarian bob. She speaks with a sweet, almost musical voice, a fact that catches most people off-guard. Happily married to Christopher Talbot, who also works at the mill, Joan's personality is quite different than her appearance would suggest. While on duty, she dresses in work clothes, including a hard hat and overalls. When on her own time, she wears plain dresses and sensible shoes. She won't win any fashion awards for her choices, but they look natural on her and do a good job of separating her two worlds of work and home, which is exactly how she likes it.

The reason for this is quite simple: Joan feels increasingly “dirty” about working at the mill. Over the last few years, she has watched as Bob Southey and his family have cut corners to make greater profits, often in ways that can and do harm the populace of Potter's Lake. Her indebtedness to the Southneys for her job had long kept her conscience in line, but no longer. Last year, when dead fish turned up in the lake in large numbers, Joan reached a breaking point. She could no longer stand by and do nothing while her employers destroyed her town. She contacted a reporter at the *Daily Sentinel* anonymously and tipped him onto the Southey's environmental pollution, which led to a series of inconclusive investigative reports about the mill and its practices. Undeterred, Joan turned to a group of environmentalists and gave out inside information that allowed them to vandalize and sabotage the mill on three



occasions. None of these efforts has changed the mill's operations, but they have alerted Bob Southey to the reality that someone on the inside is helping his enemies, although he does not yet suspect Joan.

TJ TRASKER

TJ is the owner of Arcane Goods, a resale and collectibles shop. The geeky twenty-three year old proprietor is wheelchair bound, thanks to a freak childhood accident when he fell down the front steps of St. Anselm Basilica (if pressed, TJ claims he was pushed). Since that time he has been paralyzed from the waist down. TJ takes his disability in stride, decking out his motorized wheelchair with dozens of conveniences and accessories, from saddlebags and work trays to remote control operation and off-road tires. Though most buildings in Potter's Lake are not wheelchair-accessible, TJ has a knack for getting in anyway.

As seen by the store shelves, TJ is a hardcore fan of comic books, science fiction, trading cards, action figures, and more. He is the master of all things trivia-related, particularly obscure facts concerning the town's history and colorful folklore. The store contains an interesting assortment of items that various residents either do not know what to do with or simply wanted taken off their hands. TJ's oddest collection is a small army of lawn gnomes, vigilantly arrayed at the front of the shop. Although he refuses to sell them, these creepy gnomes have a strange habit of showing up on other people's property. The Cat Lady (see **Chapter V** in the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook) is known to destroy them on site, though her reasons for doing so remain unknown.

TJ is slight in frame, with an unassuming presence. His thin, long nose draws attention to his face, and he wears his black hair long in the back with the sides shaved and the bangs cut short. Sometimes, he will spike his hair just to



irritate the more conservative citizens of Potter's Lake.

ALICIA WINTERS

A hypnotherapist by trade, Alicia Winters believes her “science” can conquer every neurosis and bad habit, no matter how ingrained. She’s also convinced that a person can trace his or her problems back to past life traumas and experiences. According to Dr. Winters — a title she’s given herself even though she holds no actual degree — every human being’s personality is an amalgam forged from their previous lives. Through hypnosis, Alicia claims to mentally regress her patients through these past lives so the source of their personalities can be discovered. Once this is accomplished, the patient will at last understand why they do certain things in their current life, and any self-destructive behavior can then be treated.

Most of Alicia’s patients don’t believe in her bizarre theory. However, few doubt her results. Most clients find that the hypnotherapy truly does help, so they put up with Alicia’s eccentric beliefs and eagerly spend great sums of money to become “a better person.” Of course, there are a handful who believe whole-heartedly in her unusual theories, and they are very vocal in singing Dr. Winters’ praises.

Nearly all of Alicia’s patients keep secret their association with her, for she is horribly ostracized in Potter’s Lake. The police have investigated her on more than one occasion, but so far her lawyer has kept them at bay. Likewise, church and college authorities have no love for Winters or her practice. They hound her at every opportunity in an attempt to drive her from Potter’s Lake. However, her biggest opponent is Dr. Ed Miller. Miller worries that Alicia’s techniques dissuade her patients from seeking proper medical treatment that might cure their conditions.



Dr. Miller is also angry at Alicia’s improper assumption of the title of doctor, a designation that Ed Miller worked very hard to legitimately earn.

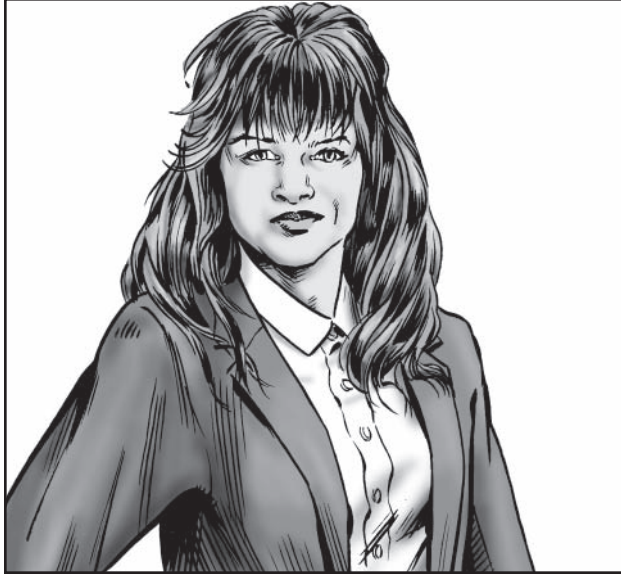
Alicia Winters is a tall, extremely attractive woman in her late twenties. Many people believe she is a model or actress upon first meeting her. She wears her long blonde hair in a curly perm, and she always dresses in tight clothing that accentuates her hourglass figure while remaining tasteful. Her blue eyes are always expertly accented with mascara and her full lips are always smiling, exposing a perfect set of white teeth. Although her vision certainly doesn’t require glasses, she often dons them during therapy to give herself a more distinguished look.

Despite Alicia’s obvious comeliness, she has difficulty getting dates and, subsequently, she has become something of a recluse. She attributes this to the nonstop pressure from the local authorities and hardcore conservatives of Potter’s Lake. However, Alicia is a feisty and spirited woman who refuses to shut down her practice, change her ways, or move from town. She certainly will not give up without a fight; indeed, she welcomes the challenge.

CHASTITY WRENMORE

Chastity is the great-granddaughter of Dr. August Wrenmore, a noted theologian who left Duke University in 1952 (after a string of inexplicable deaths in their Parapsychology Laboratory) to become the head of St. Anselm’s Religious Studies Department. Though her parents and grandparents pursued different interests, Chastity’s fascination with the supernatural and questions of her spirituality found a home in the library bequeathed by her great-grandfather’s will. Delving into the same field, she followed in his footsteps, graduating with a doctorate from Duke and filling a position at St. Anselm. The sudden





(and quietly hushed) suicide of the previous department head left a vacancy that she occupied just last year, perhaps due to the school lacking any other interested and qualified contenders.

Young for her position at thirty-five years of age, Chastity sports reading glasses, conservative clothes, and a serious demeanor at her office. Away from the campus, she lets down her long copper hair and transforms into an outgoing and fun-loving individual.

Chastity comes from a Catholic family and follows the direction of the Church in her duties, but she secretly lost faith in the Vatican some time ago. A very open-minded theologian, she is well-versed in the spiritual beliefs and practices of other cultures, including archaic ones. Privately, she considers herself an agnostic.

Chastity's interest in the many rumors and stories surrounding Potter's Woods has made her supervisor, Chancellor Hardig, very uncomfortable. Hardig does her best to keep St. Anselm's name out of the local rumor mill, and Chastity makes doing so that much harder. Dr. Wrenmore is also receiving harsh stares from Father Gorrand, though he has yet to actually confront her with anything. The two have been at odds since Chastity took the position last year. She is troubled by Father Gorrand's increasing irrationality, zealotry, and patriarchal attitudes. He is concerned with her interest in "the Devil's Woods."

Chastity's home life is much more relaxed, in part due to the companionship of her pack of well-trained Alaskan Malamutes. She also finds relief from the stress of her academic position by playing volleyball in a local league, taking women's self defense classes, and spending the occasional night at Deke's. She recently started dating Dr. Miller, though their relationship has been kept quiet for professional reasons.

CHAPTER IV

LOCALES OF NOTE

in Caelo et in Terra



This chapter provides new and interesting locales to expand the official setting for *Heaven & Earth*. Each of the following entries has a unique and often bizarre story to tell. They are intended to spark a GM's imagination and convey the "local color" of this singular community. Gamemasters should alter or ignore any information that does not fit within the framework of their own games.

THE AIC PLANT

Known locally as "the old Amalgamated Industrial Chemicals plant," this collection of concrete buildings stands at the outskirts of Potter's Lake, removed from the majority of its population. This isolated location was by design. When the plant was operational, before its closure in 1985, it produced a variety of chemicals, most notably those used in fertilizer and pesticides. This information was widely known by the populace, who nevertheless preferred to not talk about it openly; after all, the plant was one of the main providers of money and jobs to Potter's Lake. At the same time, there was a very real — and justified — fear that the plant's industrial processes were harming the environment and increasing the incidences of cancer and birth defects among the populace.

Throughout its thirty years of operation, there were only two instances of an industrial accident at the plant. The first, in 1961, was a fire that nearly got out of hand. Two workers were killed while heroically dousing the flames that would have otherwise reached combustibles — capable of blowing the plant, and the surrounding area, sky-high. The second mishap occurred in 1983 and ultimately led to the plant's closure. Toxic chemicals being taken out of the plant for disposal elsewhere accidentally spilled, seeping into the ground and creating a panic among the townsfolk that took weeks to subside. AIC Incorporated, the company that owned the plant, made every effort to downplay the incident and alleviate local fears. They even brought in EPA officials to support their claims that the chemicals had not harmed Potter's Lake's water table or any other part of the environment in a permanent fashion. Their efforts failed, however, in part because Bob Southey led a group of prominent citizens in demanding a monetary settlement for perceived damages. AIC paid the town, and shortly thereafter closed the plant forever.

In the two decades since, the plant has sat, abandoned and fenced off. The EPA continues to certify that the land on which it sits is not toxic and is fit for human habitation, but local feelings to the contrary have prevented anyone from ever reopening the plant or even using the land for another purpose. Being abandoned, the plant is a favorite spot for teenagers and other ne'er-do-wells to explore. The Sheriff's Department regularly catches people (or rescues them) inside the plant's grounds. Many children believe the plant to be the home of a terrible demon called "Aicor,"

which is probably just a corruption of the name of its original owners. Nevertheless, at least a few Aicor sightings are made each year, although most dismiss them as the result of toxic fumes emanating from the old machinery. Regardless of the demon's authenticity, the plant itself is large, dark, and empty, making it an object of fear and mystery even among those who doubt that anyone — or anything — dwells within.

BEL-LOC DINER

Located at the corner of Bellamy Avenue and Locke Street (hence its unusual name), the Bel-Loc Diner is a relatively new addition to Potter's Lake, despite its appearance. Built in the mid-80s, the diner was the brainchild of out-of-town investors who felt that a faux 1950s-style diner was just what Potter's Lake needed to liven up its restaurant scene. They were soon disappointed when almost no one patronized the café, preferring Deke's Bar and Grill and other genuinely local businesses. The diner nearly closed its doors on numerous occasions, but its investors kept pouring money into the place, adding yet more "authentic" touches (like a chrome-plated jukebox and a hot pink 1959 Cadillac coupe de ville on the roof) in a vain effort to bring in paying customers. After all their purchases failed to improve profits, they finally conceded defeat and the Bel-Loc Diner officially went out of business in 1991.

The diner was boarded up, with prominent "For Sale" signs decorating the windows. No one made an offer until 1996, when another out-of-towner named Nicholas Erligan bought it for a fraction of what the original investors had lost. He took his time in re-opening the diner; two full years passed, while local attention grew and everyone from the mailman to reporters at the *Daily Sentinel* attempted to find out what Erligan had planned. When the doors finally opened in 1998, it was a grand success, drawing so many customers that the diner's staff had to turn patrons away at the door. In short order, the diner became a popular hotspot for residents and visitors to Potter's Lake, if only because it had a reputation for being a difficult place to get a seat.

Erligan retained the décor of the original Bel-Loc Diner, right down to its chrome-plated tables, chairs, and jukebox. To this he added even more kitschy 50s memorabilia, turning his restaurant into a shrine of bad taste. Yet, somehow, it *worked* this time around. Erligan hadn't done much different than the previous owners. If anything, he simply ramped up their plans to a higher level of tackiness — and reaped rich rewards as a result. The Bel-Loc Diner is packed most nights of the week and the weekends are practically standing room only. The place is especially popular with St. Anselm's students and older citizens who remember the actual 1950s.

Erligan personally oversees the running of the diner. He's always around, hovering in the background and ready to offer assistance at just the right moment, as if



he instinctively knows what his customers want. He does not live in Potter's Lake, but no one is quite sure where he makes his home. Most people simply assume that he resides "out of town" and leave it at that, which is just fine with Erligan, who generally dissuades people from asking too many questions about himself or his origins.

CARLETON HOTEL

The Carleton Hotel opened its doors in 1912 and was considered proof that Potter's Lake had finally "made it." At that time, it stood six stories and had nearly 80 rooms. The growth of the mill had brought many more people to the town and, along with them, more visitors and travelers. The Carleton tended to their needs and proved so successful that, in 1928, another four stories were added, bringing its room count to nearly 120, including the two penthouse suites at its summit. The Great Depression wrought terrible economic destruction across the country and Potter's Lake suffered as much as any community. The Carleton weathered those lean years by renting out its rooms at dirt-cheap rates to residents of the town, in the process becoming more of a well-upholstered flophouse than an actual hotel. The owners also sold the two penthouses to well-to-do citizens as another way of raising funds and, since then, they have been in private hands.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Carleton developed a deservedly sinister reputation. There were regular brawls, between the indigent residents or those whose business it was to cater to them, in the lobby and hallways. Illegal booze, gambling, and prostitutes were commonplace and the management turned a blind eye so long as the police weren't taking an interest in the hotel — at which point the managers suddenly became exemplars of moral rectitude. No less than three murders, including that of mobster William "Billy Boy" Finnegan, took place under its roof and there were rumors that other equally nefarious deeds were covered up lest the Carleton's reputation sink even lower in the public imagination.

The prosperity of the post-war years brought money back into the Carleton and its owners worked hard to clean up its image. By 1949, it was again a working hotel, although it took some time before memories of its past were sufficiently forgotten to generate many visitors. Throughout the 1950s, the Carleton slowly regained its former place of honor in Potter's Lake. In 1962, the hotel celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and was made a historical landmark by order of the mayor's office for its "central place in the history of Potter's Lake's economic growth and development." Naturally, no mention was made of its sordid past.

Unfortunately, someone — or something — didn't like the idea of whitewashing the Carleton's history. Shortly after the historical landmark plaque was placed on its

outside wall, the marker was vandalized by being coated in dark, red paint. Attempts to clean it failed and a new plaque was installed. It too was painted over. A third plaque was eventually hung and a guard posted to ensure there would be no further vandalism — and there was not. Instead, patrons reported water taps running a thick reddish liquid and white sheets stained with a similar substance. A few individuals even claimed to hear screams coming from the hallways, although there was no possible source for them.

Management has long dismissed these stories as exaggerations, providing “rational” explanations for every incident. The troubling events have all continued, though intermittently, up until the present day. So far, this has not adversely affected business, since most patrons are from outside Potter’s Lake and have never heard the tales of the “Bloody Carleton.” How long the management can keep these stories secret, however, remains to be seen.

FIRE STATION NUMBER 2

Fire Station Number 2 is the most well-known fire station in Potter’s Lake, in part because there is no Station Number 1. Station Number 1 burned down three times over the course of five years between 1966 and 1971. No explanation for the fires was ever given, despite the best attempts by fire inspectors to find one. Some believed that it was arson, while others theorized that the conflagrations were caused by careless fire fighters going through training maneuvers. Neither explanation fit all the facts, such as how the fires spread so quickly — even through heavy metal doors designed to prevent such things. Rather than overcome Station Number 1’s reputation as “cursed,” the fire department officially retired Number 1 and no station bearing that name has ever been built in the last thirty years. Station Number 2 on Lake Street is now the town’s premier fire station and is the office of its fire commissioner.

The station is an old building, built from brick and mortar. Standing three stories tall, it looks every bit like what one would imagine a firehouse to look like. It even has the traditional fire pole running down its center, although no firefighters have used it in at least a generation. Of course, this hasn’t stopped the pole from being a major attraction for the throngs of schoolchildren who regularly visit the station. The first floor houses the station’s firefighting equipment and vehicles. The second level has a recreation area and offices, including those of the station’s chief and the commissioner. The third floor is filled with bunks, showers, and other amenities for the firefighters who are on duty.

The core of Potter’s Lake’s fire department is made up of professional firefighters, supplemented by volunteers from among the townsfolk. Professionals and volunteers alike hone their skills at Station Number 2, whose back lot is the site of a training area, complete with working hydrants and a wooden building in which to practice. The firefighters

are very strict about not allowing residents to watch these practice sessions, since the exercises can be quite dangerous. This hasn’t stopped both children and adults from peering over fences or spying from higher ground, though.

In recent months, the firefighters stationed at Number 2 have found — and snuffed out — a number of small fires that have inexplicably popped up both outside and inside the firehouse. No explanation can be given, since the fires seem to feed on nothing at all. They are, as one firefighter described them, “tongues of hellfire,” since they have a sulfurous odor. Most residents of Potter’s Lake know nothing of these incidents, which is exactly what the commissioner wants. If word got out, he fears that the memories of Station Number 1 would cause a panic, not to mention encourage whoever it is that is setting these fires. For now, he counsels caution and has instructed all firefighters to be extra vigilant in the days and weeks ahead.

FROG POND

Potter’s Woods, or simply “the woods,” have both fascinated and terrified the residents of this region since before the town was founded. The Native Americans who dwelled in the area treated the woods with the utmost respect, although some historians disagree, saying that the indigenous people feared rather than respected them. Be that as it may, the woods are old, large, and in places, extremely dark. In some parts, the canopy almost completely blocks out sunlight, creating an eerie, shadowy realm very much unlike the world that exists just outside its borders. Potter’s Lake residents generally avoid the woods unless they have a compelling reason to enter them. Much like the Native Americans, they feel a combination of awe and fear about the area and prefer to leave well enough alone.

Naturally, this doesn’t stop a few individuals from penetrating the woods on a regular basis, and most of these brave souls report nothing unusual during their explorations. At the same time, there are those who claim to have encountered strange or bizarre things in the woods, things that can’t be easily explained. One such oddity is the Frog Pond. According to those who say they have encountered it, the pond is a mid-sized body of water within a strangely humid part of the woods. It gets its name from the mold-encrusted lily pads that dot its surface, as well as the inordinately large number of frogs that can be found within the pond’s waters and dotting its banks. If stories are to be believed, there are hundreds — maybe thousands — of frogs here, with at least some having calls that sound like the wails of injured human beings rather than the croaks of amphibians.

The only problem is that no one, not even those who claim to have found the pond once, can ever find it when they are looking for it. It’s as if the Frog Pond moves from place to place, if one were to believe the stories that locate it at disparate spots within the woods. Nevertheless, there

are a couple of commonalities between all the anecdotes about the pond that suggest it might not be a mere tall tale. The first is the appearance of the pond and the number of its denizens. The second is that the pond is always situated beneath a small break in the tree cover that allows a ray of sunlight (or moonlight) to shine directly onto the great mass of lily pads at the pond's center.

In 1999, a team of researchers from St. Anselm College set off to find the famed Frog Pond. They never discovered it, but they did come across multiple marshlands within the woods that might have been the sites mistaken for the Frog Pond. They brought back samples of water, water lilies, as well as tadpoles and fully-grown frogs from these areas. They discovered, much to their delight, that the lilies were covered with a new species of mold that produces hallucinogenic spores. This led the researchers to believe that it might have been these spores that led to some of the wilder stories about the Frog Pond, such as the human-like voices of the frogs. The mold, dubbed *ascomycata potteriensis*, grows only in humid environments and thrives in darkness. Despite this scientific explanation, travelers still report encountering the Frog Pond and insist that it's not merely one of the mundane locals discovered by the St. Anselm researchers.

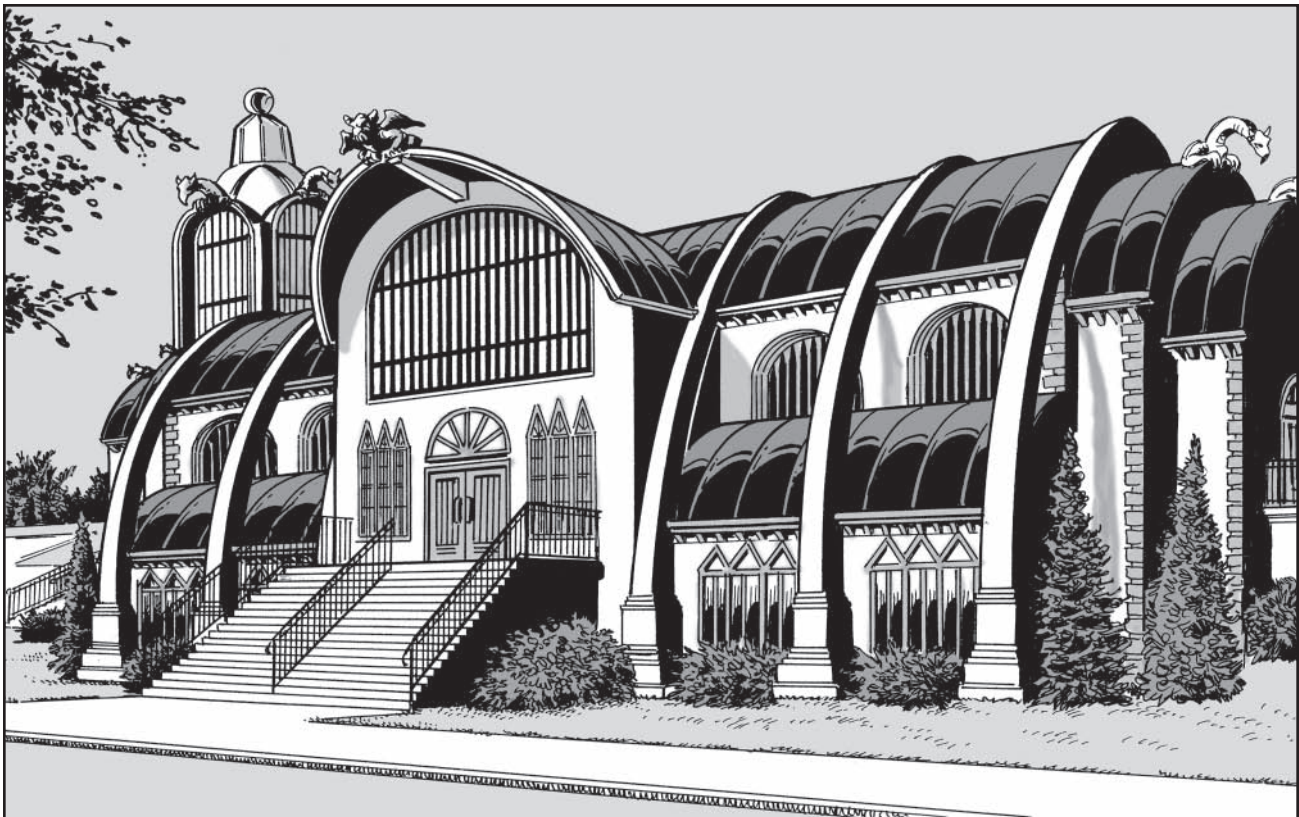
NEW CITY HALL

Built in 1975 to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the

founding of Potter's Lake, New City Hall is quite possibly the ugliest building in town — which is saying quite a lot, considering some of the esthetically inept structures built since 1825. Nevertheless, the title is well deserved. New City Hall is a large building, constructed in a strange combination of art deco and neo-gothic styles, with elegant, geometric patterns supplemented by flying buttresses and gargoyles. Many critics dubbed it a “monstrosity” at its completion, but over time many residents have come to like it, despite — or perhaps because of — its unattractiveness. There's no question that New City Hall is unique. It looks like no other building anywhere in the world and the town takes some small amount of pride in the fact.

New City Hall was built as a replacement for what is now known as Old City Hall, built in 1866. Old City Hall was deemed too “old fashioned” for “modern” Potter's Lake, and a committee was struck to fashion a new one. The council accepted proposals from architects from all over the United States and Canada. The design that was chosen was put forward by an otherwise unknown woman named Meryl Swindon of New Mexico. Swindon's design took the committee aback at first, but they soon came to see it as the only one that, in their words, “captured the true spirit of Potter's Lake.” By a unanimous vote, they offered Swindon the commission to produce the plans for New City Hall. When completed, Old City Hall was turned into a civic center where public hearings, meetings, and other events are held.

The construction of New City Hall ran into many



problems, not least of which being the suicide of Swindon herself. Only three months after ground was broken, she slit her wrists and bled to death in the Carleton Hotel room where she was staying. Because her blueprints were so unusual, there was much debate over how to interpret some of the specifics of the design. Indeed, debate still rages to this day as to whether the final building was what Swindon originally had in mind, with neither camp having sufficient basis for their position. Later, as New City Hall neared completion, building supplies and even workmen went missing for hours or days before suddenly reappearing without any explanation or, in the case of people, awareness they'd been gone.

These phenomena continue to the present day. The interior of New City Hall, especially its council chambers and library, are not symmetrical and use lines that make some people dizzy or confused. From time to time, people get lost within its corridors for hours without even realizing it, wandering through what appears to them to be a maze of identical doors and corridors. Mayor Phillip Jackson so intensely disliked being in New City Hall that he conducted most of his business outside its walls when he was able. Others, like the current mayor Belinda Wainwright, deny there's anything wrong with the building and question the sanity of those who say otherwise. The truth, whatever it is, remains obscure.

NICHOLSON'S BOOKSTORE

Though not the biggest bookstore in Potter's Lake, Nicholson's has a reputation for being the best. In part, that's because its owner, Miranda Nicholson, like her father and grandfather before her, believes in quality over quantity — or at least uniqueness over packed shelves. The bookstore has always had a strict policy of never stocking more than one of each title at any time and it specializes in unusual editions, rare printings, and historically significant items. Its small staff is very knowledgeable about the store's holdings and is extremely helpful to customers, which is a plus, since it is otherwise quite difficult to know just what is available on its shelves at any given time. Typically, customers enter the store, tell one of the staff the kind of information they're looking for, and are directed to a wide selection of books that fit the bill; although, quite often "fit the bill" must be taken very broadly. Miranda Nicholson sees it as her duty to "broaden the minds" of the town's residents and, as such, will sometimes steer customers toward books she believes will do just that — even if the tomes are not what the customers believed they were looking for.

Nicholson's is also well known as the place to unload books from estate sales. Every year, Miranda purchases thousands of dollars worth of publications from these sources, in addition to university library sales. Consequently, the store has an eclectic mix of volumes under its roof. Everything from quantum physics to Daoist poetry is represented.

This makes it a popular spot for St. Anselm's students and faculty, particularly those who like to present themselves as above popular tastes. The fact that Nicholson's does not stock mass-market bestsellers only adds to its appeal. In fact, visitors from all over the state flock to the store when it holds its quarterly sales. Miranda is not just erudite; she is a savvy businesswoman as well.

Every so often, books turn up in Nicholson's whose origin no one can explain. They don't appear to have been purchased by the staff and they don't show up in catalogs of known published works. Almost all of these books appear to be original editions from times past, often the nineteenth century, but whose existence had previously been unknown. Miranda rarely sells these mystery volumes, despite the enormous monetary offers she gets for them. Instead, she keeps them herself, adding to what is reputedly a sizable collection of totally unique books. The majority of these are said to be heretical (or at least heterodox) Christian texts, although there are hints of even darker contents.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The Potter's Lake Sheriff's Department is located across the street from New City Hall, and it has stood there for the last sixty years. Indeed, the proximity of the Department was one of several reasons that New City Hall was constructed in its current location. Joined to the Sheriff's Department is the County Courthouse, where both criminal and civil cases are heard. The two buildings have a common neo-classical architectural style, with tall, milky columns and arched roofs. Their clean white exteriors make them stand out and they are, next to New City Hall, the most distinctive buildings in town. Unlike its neighbor across the street, though, the Sheriff's Department and County Courthouse evoke no dislike in residents or visitors, many of whom see the structures as perfect examples of what civic architecture should look like.

The Sheriff's Department is the smaller of the two conjoined buildings. It contains several offices, including that of the sheriff, as well as small holding cells used to contain suspects until they can be sent either to the county jail or the state penitentiary. Sheriff Daryl Bowman and his deputies (including the undersheriff) act as ministers of the court, executing civil and criminal process, attending courts, and generally keeping the peace. By longstanding tradition, though, they also act as the Potter's Lake police department. Consequently, the Sheriff's Department is constantly overworked and in need of greater funding, neither of which is likely to be alleviated in the near future. Sheriff Bowman finds the situation increasingly intolerable. He had hoped to retire in the next few years, but now rightly worries that his doing so might further destabilize an already tenuous situation. At least until a suitable replacement can be found, he has chosen to remain in charge and keep his steady hand on the tiller of Potter's Lake law enforcement.

The County Courthouse holds several courtrooms, in addition to numerous offices, meeting rooms, and small libraries. Visitors can travel about the courthouse freely, provided they remain quiet while court is in session and obey the directions of the deputies on duty. Because the courthouse is where all trials in the county are heard, there are many out-of-towners who are forced to visit it. From time to time, local citizens take it upon themselves to greet these newcomers and inform them about Potter's Lake, much to the visitors' surprise (and sometimes dismay).

During the Depression, Sheriff Clancy Depew led a secret life as a distiller of illegal liquor. He set up a large still in the sub-basement of the Sheriff's Department, even as he was cooperating with Treasury agents to enforce Prohibition elsewhere. This sordid part of Potter's Lake history wasn't known until the late 1970s when a deputy stumbled upon the distillery by accident. Since then, there have been numerous attempts by historians and archeologists to gain access to the sub-basement, but all have been rebuffed by order of the mayor's office. In fact, every mayor, including those who vowed to make "Clancy's Quarters" open to the public, have ultimately reinforced the original order. The sub-basement remains closed to the present day "for reasons of public safety."

TRYST MEMORIAL PARK

Located at the edge of town is a sizable expanse of greenery known as Tryst Memorial Park. As its name suggests, it commemorates Calvin Tryst, the man who, along with five others, ensured that the state would recognize the town's charter. That Tryst and his companions achieved this feat by forcing the governor to do so at gunpoint is usually overlooked by most residents, who consider him nothing less than a hero and, along with Jacob Potter, one of the "founding fathers" of the town.

The park contains several copses of trees that nicely complement its spacious expanse of well-manicured grass. At its center is a large copper statue of Calvin Tryst, now covered with a green patina, looking defiant as he lectures an unknown interlocutor. Students of Potter's Lake history know that the statue was patterned after a photograph of Tryst on the scaffold, where he denounced the judge who condemned him and promised "death is not the end but only the beginning of my revenge." The plaque beneath the statue includes an expurgated version of that quote that says simply "death is not the end but only the beginning." Interestingly, the judge who condemned Tryst died of pneumonia three days after the hanging, while several members of the jury likewise met their demise not long thereafter. Statues of Tryst's five companions are also found in the park, but the public regards none of them nearly so highly.

In the spring and summer months, the park is covered with flowers and other blossoming plants. This makes it a

popular locale for families with children, as well as young couples for whom the park's name is unintentionally fitting. Politicians also regularly use the park as a backdrop for their speeches and rallies. Many a mayor or councilor has stood beneath Calvin Tryst's statue in order to take a stand or stake a claim to a position. Politicians of every stripe invoke Tryst's memory and refer to him as a role model, even as they disagree about the exact nature of his legacy. Unsurprisingly, outsiders see this as further evidence that Potter's Lake is an asylum run by its inmates.

Every Fourth of July, an unknown individual leaves a "gift" at the foot of Tryst's statue — a hangman's noose. This has been going on for nearly fifty years now, and no one has yet been able to determine who is leaving behind the noose or why, despite many attempts to catch the person responsible. Most assume it's a show of respect, but of course, it's impossible to say for sure, leading to wild speculations that have now become part of the folklore of Potter's Lake.

UNION STATION

The days of the railroad as a major means of passenger transport may be long gone, but rail travel still remains an important part of life in Potter's Lake. Union Station is the only remaining passenger embarkation point in the county, and its usage is declining with each passing year. Despite this, there has not yet been any serious attempt to close it, perhaps because both the College and Powell AFB make regular use of it. In addition, a small number of local residents work in larger communities outside of Potter's Lake and use the train to commute. Similarly, a few out-of-towners commute into Potter's Lake, typically to work in places like the Southey Mill or the county courthouse. Consequently, Union Station remains in operation, although the majority of its traffic is seen on the weekends and holidays, when many college students head home for family visits.

Union Station itself is a large art deco style building (it was built in 1926), with a bank of glass doors that allow entrance. Above the doors is an array of stained glass windows, each one of which depicts some event from the history of Potter's Lake and the surrounding region. From a distance, these windows make Union Station look like some kind of New Age church rather than a train station. From inside the building, the windows catch the sunlight and produce a brilliant display of colors that illuminate the cavernous interior of the building's main level. A lot of residents who work in local businesses spend their lunch hour here, enjoying the view while patronizing one of the many eateries located on the same level.

Beneath the main level is the train level, where the tracks and waiting area can be found. There are also rows upon rows of rental lockers located here. Travelers use these to store their belongings while they are elsewhere. In the past,

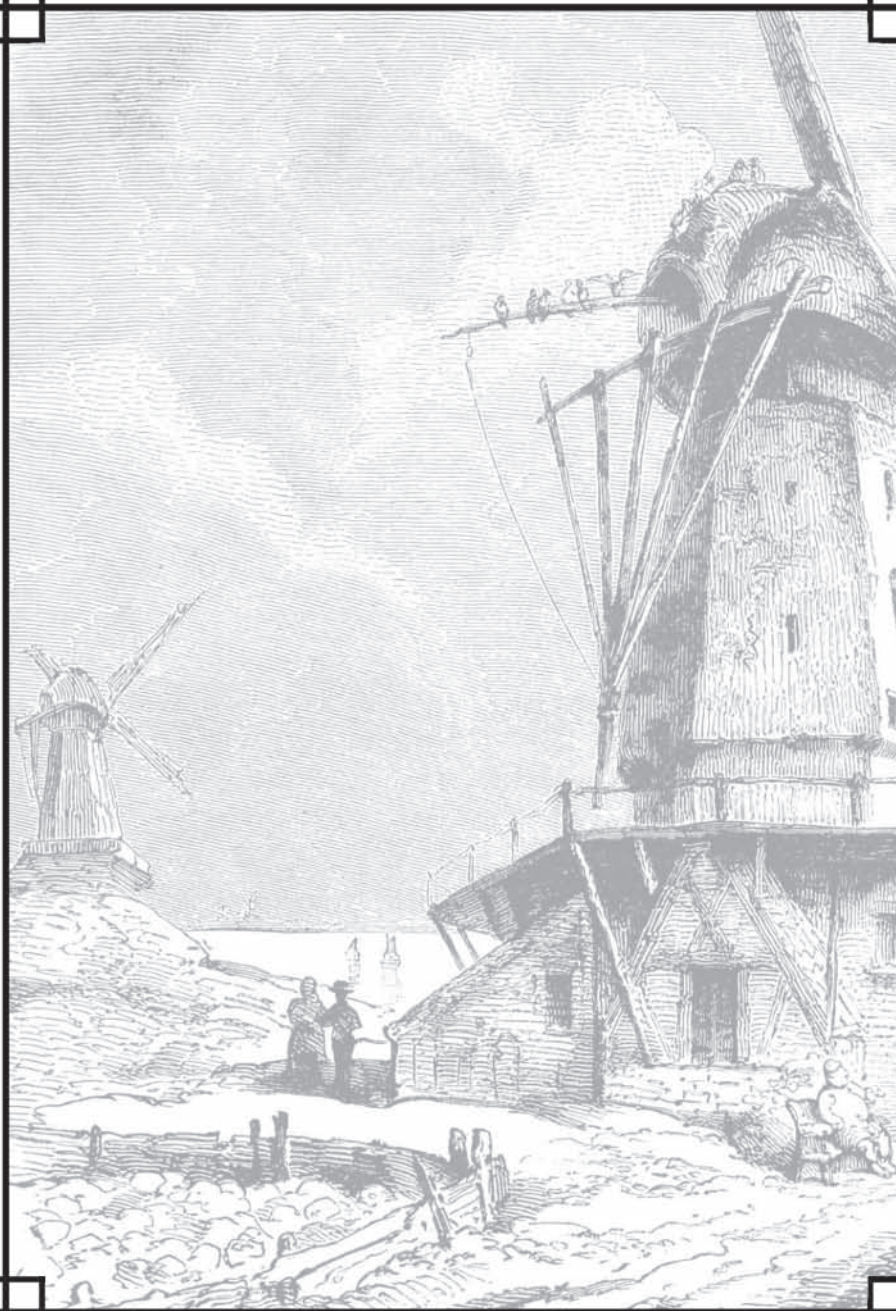


when Potter's Lake was a more popular destination, the number of lockers was almost inadequate. Now, as travel has slowed considerably, there are obviously far too many lockers to be practical; Union Station's administrators have never seen fit to remove the disused ones, however, believing that they might one day come in handy, should traffic pick up again.

The numerous empty lockers are regularly cleaned out and inspected, since there has been evidence of homeless people (like Meltdown) jimmying them open and utilizing them without paying. At one point, local criminals began using the lockers as a drop-off point for stolen goods, but the Sheriff's Department put an end to that. Late night travelers sometimes claim they hear noises from within the disused lockers, noises that sound human, although extremely faint and high-pitched. This has led to tales that there are "gremlins" or "fairies" in the lockers, something dismissed by most residents who, of course, have their own theories as to the nature of the noises. Interestingly, Florence Abrams is one of the most outspoken deniers of the fairy theory, though no one is sure if it's because she really disbelieves or because she wishes to draw attention away from her own reputed encounters with the Little People.

CHAPTER V
RUMOR MILL

in Caelo et in Terra



Rumors circulate through every small town, and Potter's Lake is no exception. In fact, Potter's Lake has an extremely robust rumor mill, one that is in full swing at all times. Whether it's stories of impropriety or unfounded accusations, it can be said that the citizens of Potter's Lake live for their gossip. In such a small, insular community, news travels fast, regardless of its veracity, and the wilder the stories the quicker they spread. Of course, should a rumor be too mild, the townsfolk are quite adept at exaggeration to enhance their tales.

This chapter contains brief summaries of some of the town's more popular rumors. By no means is any of this canon, and certainly gamemasters shouldn't accept all of these rumors as truth. Whether these snippets of gossip are accurate or false, substantive or completely baseless, is entirely up to the GM.

Rumors should be subtly introduced to the player characters; they can overhear a conversation while drinking at Deke's, or be told a "well known fact" while chatting with the mailman. This gossip is primarily designed to add some "local color" to *Heaven & Earth* stories. It will help make Potter's Lake feel like a real community, which in turn will help immerse players in the setting and their role-playing. However, there is no reason why these rumors can't also serve as subplots in story arcs. It's even possible for them to grow into full-blown plotlines, depending on the interest of the players and the paths they opt to follow. Should players

latch onto one of these rumors and decide to investigate its veracity, the Gamemaster should allow them to do so. Of course, characters may never get to the bottom of the rumor and if they do, they may find the truth far different than the gossip.

Some of the following "theories" are culled from information or innuendo in the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook. Some are hinted at or stated elsewhere in *Paradise Lost*. Other scuttlebutt is mentioned here for the first time.

Ezekiel Cage and the woods. The presence of St. Anselm College has always raised eyebrows. Since its unlikely founding in 1831, rumors have circulated about the now venerable institution, particularly its supposed interest in the woods surrounding Potter's Lake. While these stories have waxed and waned over the decades, they became omnipresent with the arrival of Ezekiel Cage. As the gossip goes, Father Cage is a trained exorcist secretly acting on behalf of the Vatican. His mandate: to investigate and eliminate the demonic presence in Potter's Woods. That Ezekiel Cage is wheelchair-bound and seventy-five years of age, does nothing to slow down these rumors. In fact, conspiracy theorists use this as proof that he must have accomplices among the staff and/or clergy of St. Anselm.

The lake has been poisoned. After fish began turning up dead in the lake, both the EPA and *The Daily Sentinel*



conducted separate investigations, looking for possible connections to runoff from Southey's Mill. Ultimately, these inquiries proved inconclusive. Naturally, there is talk of Bob Southey paying off the EPA and silencing *The Daily Sentinel*.

Black Masses at the Monolith. The Monolith at Megiddo's Hill has long been an object of curiosity. Recent tales speak of witches' sabbats and black masses being held during full moons at the old black rock. Though these stories have circulated for years, they have picked up steam in recent months with reports of a witches' coven operating in Potter's Lake.

Bartholomew Cain is at large. A few weeks back, Bartholomew Cain, brother to the infamous serial killer Luther Cain, escaped from Peaceful Valley Sanitarium. Though considered harmless, Bartholomew is mentally retarded and a potential danger to himself. There have been a string of Bartholomew sightings, all placing him at the Potter's Lake Cemetery late at night. The police have investigated these reports, but have found no trace of Bartholomew Cain.

St. Anselm's Campus Ministry. Father Gabriel Gorrand heads up the college's campus ministry, where he acts as a spiritual advisor to dozens of students. He organizes special masses and social activities, both designed to foster

a sense of belonging and an understanding of the proper role of the Church in a young person's life. Unfortunately, the ministry's members have become increasingly militant, staging marches and acts of civil disobedience to protest the town's "immorality." The Ministry has also been at the forefront of the gossip campaign linking various local figures to the alleged (as far as they know) coven that operates in Potter's Lake. They also zealously seek out "skeletons in the closet," exposing the private sins of any who oppose their straight-laced moral agenda. In the process, they've brought disrepute upon the Church and given ammunition to anti-Catholic bigots. Law enforcement authorities have investigated the Ministry on numerous occasions, attempting to link it to various acts of vandalism and arson. So far, there is no proof to connect the organization to these crimes, but more and more people are starting to believe that the Ministry is getting out of control.

Extraterrestrial Activity. There are many who claim that the local Air Force base has an interest in flying saucers, and that Potter's Lake is a hotbed of extraterrestrial activity. Men-in-Black sightings are occasionally reported, and strange lights are often seen in the nighttime sky. Lockhaven Observatory, a popular site for UFO watchers, is also rumored to be of key interest to the military.

Accidents at the lake. An upswing in the number of accidents at the lake is prompting city officials to consider



shutting down all recreational activity there.

Quinn Harker is blackmailing City Hall. By now, everyone in town is aware that Deputy Quinn Harker suffers from Multiple Personality Disorder. As quickly as this news spread, so did word that he was going to be relieved of his duties. However, his dismissal never came. According to the local gossip, he is blackmailing the mayor and Sheriff Bowman, threatening to sue the town if he loses his job. Quinn's friends and the Mayor's office continue to deny these allegations.

Animal Court is going nationwide. Supposedly, a major network is interested in acquiring the rights to produce their own Animal Court television show based on the one in Potter's Lake. Multiple television personalities and washed-up actors have been attached to the project, but no facts have surfaced to indicate that such a development is even on the horizon.

The LeMar-Gallagher Affair: Colonel Bernard LeMar has been spending more and more time away from Powell. His destination of choice is always Deke's Bar & Grill, where he has been seen flirting with one of the waitresses, Sharon Gallagher. The frequency of LeMar's visits increase when his wife Fonda is away on one of her many business trips, fueling rumors of an affair.

Lucas Wolf's muteness. The ten-inch scar across Lucas Wolf's throat is often whispered to be the reason he is mute. The more fanciful stories claim that he and his twin Kyle got into a scuffle years ago (supposedly over a woman) and that Kyle attacked Lucas with a knife. Most people find this preposterous, as Lucas and Kyle are as close as any brothers can be.

Randy Bridegroom's revenge. After being injured at work, Randy was fired from his mill job. To add insult to injury, his employer denied Randy medical assistance and workman's compensation. Every time Randy sees Bob Southey, his blood begins to boil. People are whispering that Randy is close to snapping and that Bob better watch his back.

The Ku Klux Klan. There are rumors that the Klan is active in Potter's Lake. Though some dismiss this, a recent spate of cross-burnings and lynchings imply otherwise. The Sheriff's department claims these crimes are the work of independent hatemongers, but of course suspicion of Klan involvement continues. Some say these activities have recently drawn the attention of the FBI, which is currently investigating the situation in Potter's Lake.

The burning of St. Luke's. A few weeks ago, St. Luke's Episcopal Church burned to the ground. An investigation revealed that the cause was arson, with evidence indicating



that the conflagration started in the basement. That area of the burnt out husk of the church showed the greatest damage, including some peculiar smoke patterns that baffled the fire investigators. The basement appeared to have been ravaged by an intense firestorm that had a constant supply of chemical fuel. Unfortunately, no residue of such a fuel could be found. In fact, the only reason the investigators believe it was arson is that no wiring or other electrical power sources show signs of having been the cause. Within days, rumors and wild theories began flying through Potter's Lake. One of the most popular is that St. Anselm is somehow involved. Just last Sunday, Father Gorrard denounced the "false Christians" at St. Luke's for their "immoral ways," by which he meant their liberal attitudes toward matters such as abortion and homosexuality. Although Reverend William Ramblin was not hurt in the fire – he lives with his wife in a separate building – the minister does have a long history of public clashes with the Catholic priest. Chancellor Hardig has defended her school vigorously from these allegations, though the questionable activities of the Campus Ministry have made this even more difficult.

CHAPTER VI

FOLK TALES

in Caelo et in Terra



Without question, Potter's Lake is a unique community. From the time of its founding to the present day, it has been a haven for unusual men and women, as well as the site of events that can, at best, be described as "colorful." The peculiar nature of the town is exemplified in many ways, including the stories that its inhabitants tell about their home. Potter's Lake has a vast body of folklore, tall-tales, and legends that have grown up since its founding almost two hundred years ago. What follows are a few of the most significant or intriguing examples of these local stories.

Nearly all of the folk tales included here are based on actual events in the history of Potter's Lake. They are testaments to the power the past still holds over the town and its people. While many have been told and retold so many times that they have become distorted almost beyond recognition, that does not lessen their power. If anything, it shows that Potter's Lake richly deserves its notoriety, since its own citizens would willingly add to and augment it. As events unfold in the years to come, the brave and the foolhardy alike may find these folktales prove to be sources of invaluable insight into Potter's Lake — as well as the promise and terror it holds for all humanity.

THE BLACK ANGEL

In 1921, a few years after the Potter's Lake Cemetery opened, an anonymous benefactor — some believe it was Robert Southey — gifted the graveyard with a large, cast-iron statue of an angel of mercy. The statue was intended as a memorial to those who had died from the Spanish influenza epidemic, but the fact that it was black in color, and the angel's visage was covered by a funereal shroud, led many to nickname it the "Angel of Death." In short order, it became an object of fear among children who believed that "Angie," as the statue became known, came to life at midnight on All Soul's Day (November 2nd) to claim those whom God had marked for special punishment due to their sins.

Not surprisingly, this belief encouraged some children (and a few adults) to visit Angie's secluded locale in the cemetery on the appropriate day to see if she would indeed come to life. In 1930, six children who participated in this yearly ritual never returned home. The police found no clues as to their ultimate fate and this only added to the tales of the statue's dark nature. To discourage any further nocturnal visits, the cemetery removed the statue and placed it in storage in 1932. After a public outcry and, it is said, pressure from the donor, the cemetery agreed to return the statue to its original location — despite the tales that had grown up around it. Inexplicably, the statue was no longer in its storage facility, and it has been missing ever since. This lent further credence to the notion that the statue can come to life, and generations of Potter's Lake children have grown up fearing that Angie will come for



them if they disobey their parents or do not attend mass on Sundays.

DUST TO DUST

While by no means large in number, Potter's Lake has always had a small Native American population, and these families have their own stories to tell. One of the most prevalent, is how the Great Chief Above collected swirls of dust from each of the cardinal directions to create the first two human beings. He then placed his new creations in a vast forest, and they became the parents of all people everywhere. Unfortunately, the Great Chief Above also created a shape-shifting demon who began to torment these nascent people and to encourage them to do evil. At first, the people resisted the temptations of the demon, but over time, it convinced them that the Great Chief Above did not in fact wish them well and would one day do them harm. Believing the demon, these first people did evil and were sent far away from their original home. Time passed, but the desire to return to that first forest did not.

The stories go on to say that while the Native Americans were the first to return to their original home, all people, whatever their ancestry, would one day seek out this sacred place. Those whom Father Marquette encountered in the 17th century (see **Chapter II** for details) believed that the area that would become Potter's Lake was this original

mythic home; but then, most tribes equated their lands with the original homeland of their people. Interestingly, some stories suggest that returning to their point of origin would prove disastrous for humanity, and that the Great Chief (or the demon — the legends vary) would wipe out any who dared come back to the place from which their ancestors were sent eons ago.

THE HANGING TREE

The Hanging Tree is the town's oldest documented ghost story. It dates back to before even the founding of Potter's Lake. The tree itself is the largest oak in Tryst Memorial Park, making it hard to miss. During the Bleeding Kansas era (see **Chapter II** for details) and the subsequent few years, the area that now sports Potter's Lake was not a hospitable part of the world to be in. In addition to the raid on Lawrence, that is so well documented in the history books, Quantrill and his men stopped at the farms that then stood in the area. They gathered up all the local males who had survived being captured, along with any "uppity" slaves they could find. By this, of course, they meant any of the freed African-Americans living in Kansas. All of these prisoners were then taken to what became known forevermore as the Hanging Tree.

Once they reached the tree, which stood alone in a meadow at this time, they began hanging all the poor souls they had brought with them. They left the bodies suspended there, dangling from the tree limbs, where they stayed until the priests found them the next day. Most of the bodies were never claimed and are still buried in the old St. Anselm Cemetery just off from the school.

As to the tree itself, it's rumored to be haunted by the ghosts of those who died there. On nights with a new moon, people report hearing voices that speak when the wind blows. There are also anecdotes of bloody patches that appear on the tree every August. Supposedly, the ropes that held the victims up were never completely taken down from the tree. While hangings of the time were typically accomplished simply by throwing a rope over a branch, then tying the free end to a horse's saddle, Quantrill's raiders had everything planned out. By the time the prisoners had arrived, there were nearly thirty ropes already tied onto the branches with nooses hanging from them. The "slaves" were forced to hold the farmers on their shoulders, high enough to keep them from hanging, then the raiders whipped the standing men until they ran or fell — thereby hanging the farmers they had been supporting. In any case, the ropes tied around the branches were never completely removed and, in time, the tree and its bark grew around many of them. In some cases, though, one can still tell where a rope lies; these are the spots where the blood appears.

Although the Hanging Tree has a horrific backstory, few fear it on account of its location. Many public events

are still held at Tryst Memorial Park, and the square is heavily occupied on days when the weather is nice. Thus the Hanging Tree is more of a curiosity than a place to be feared.

INTO THIN AIR

In 1976, the Potter's Lake High School Marching Band vanished into thin air during rehearsal for the Independence Day Parade. Nobody saw them vanish; the school faculty just realized something was wrong when the music stopped. The students were discovered an hour later, skinny-dipping in the lake with supposedly no memory of ever having been at the parade rehearsal. The entire band was given a week's detention, but no other mention was made of the incident.

MULBERRY STREET

It is hard to say whether or not Mulberry Street actually exists. It appears on every map of Potter's Lake, between Hyacinth and Cherry streets, but there is no actual road located there; at least, not most of the time.

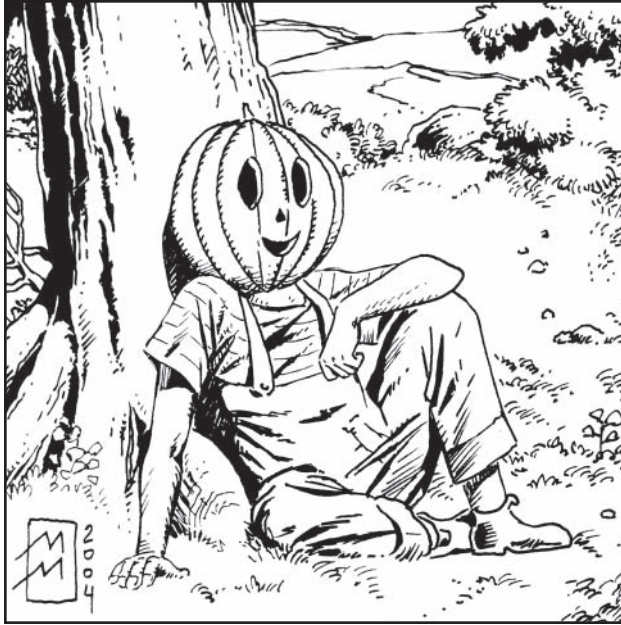
Periodically, someone reports seeing Mulberry Street. On their way to Hyacinth or Cherry, they discover they have accidentally turned onto Mulberry Street instead. Once they turn off the road, however, Mulberry is gone again. There are also a few anecdotes of people going down this street and disappearing along with it.

No one in town can quite recall when Mulberry ceased to exist, but there are a few long-time residents who seem to remember a time when they could get there. Now the road has become something of a standing joke. People who are incessantly late are teased about having "taken Mulberry Street," while lost packages are said to have been accidentally delivered to Mulberry. The whole matter is typically laughed off. Anyone claiming to have seen the mysterious road has a captive audience, but few people actually believe the storyteller. The official stance is that Mulberry was simply a mapping error for a street long built over.

PUMPKIN PETE

The tale of Pumpkin Pete is an old local legend that has survived into the 21st century. It remains a popular story, one that's retold each autumn in one form or the other. While different versions of the tale exist, the following is the most popular one:

Farmer Pete Kearney was not like the other villagers. Kind, brave, and strong though he was, he looked peculiar. Resembling the pumpkins in his patch, his face was round



and scraggly, big and puffy, tough and craggy.

On a day like any other, Pete was sad and in need of company. The Pumpkin Lord, who rarely spoke, decided he should intervene. “Poor Pete,” he exclaimed, “Seek out the company of folk in this small county seat!”

Considering the Pumpkin Lord’s suggestion, Pete paced and worried. Finally, he decided to stay and tend to his small patches.

“Coward!” said the Pumpkin Lord of the pumpkin patch, forever jealous he couldn’t walk from where he sat. “Boo, hooo hooo, you cry and you cry, but you’ll never know until you try!”

Thinking he was confronted with the truth, Pete strolled into town.

“Hello,” he said to those nearby.

In return, silence and stares were all the townsfolk gave poor Pete.

Still, Pete went on thinking he would meet a friend. Eventually, the villagers gathered and crowded sad, sweet Pete. “Go!” they screamed, “This is no place for such a face!”

And so Pete left, sorrow stabbing at his heart. The next day he returned to the patch where the Pumpkin Lord sat.

“So tell me Pete Kearney...how was the journey?” asked the Lord, knowing full well what had transpired.

“They gawked and stared, balked and blared!” Pete cried as he sat down beside the Pumpkin Lord. “Finally, I paid heed when they told me to leave.”

“And so you did, poor fool,” said the Pumpkin Lord. “Fear not, for I have a notion. But first we must put this plan into motion.”

“To town you will return oh sullen-lipped, but take me you must on this second trip!”

“How?” said Pete confused, “when you’re tied and bound to this very ground?”

“Hah! Listen carefully to me: Cut my roots and set me free!”

Pete obeyed the Lord’s instructions. He brought a knife and a great big spoon, and Pete cut the Pumpkin Lord from his patch. With his knife, Pete carved out a mouth, a nose, and eyes; the spoon he used to empty the Pumpkin Lord’s insides.

“Now quickly!” said the Pumpkin Lord, “place me on your lumpy head and take me with you where you tread.”

Pete went back to town with the Pumpkin Lord upon his head. To his surprise, the townsfolk’s laughter replaced their bitter stares and anger. Pete was happy, believing the Pumpkin Lord’s plan had worked.

Still, each time Pete went to town, people gathered with the same demeanor; soon he grew suspicious. “Why all the chuckles and laughter, guffaws and chatter?” he asked the Pumpkin Lord.

The Pumpkin Lord told Pete that he was beloved by the townsfolk, that their laughter was merely a sign of their affection. Pete, unsatisfied with the Lord’s response, walked up to the nearest passerby. “Why such chuckles whenever I approach this town? It is as though I am naught but a clown.”

The bystander replied with a question, “He who wears a pumpkin for a crown expects not to be laughed at and labeled a clown?”

Immediately, Pete tried to remove the Pumpkin Lord from his head, but it was stuck. Crushed, Pete returned home, realizing the Pumpkin Lord’s cruel trick.

The Pumpkin Lord could only laugh. “We are forever bound together like the mantis to his lover tethered!”

“We shall see, we shall see,” Pete said with a sinister laugh. Fearless as he was, the Pumpkin Lord was unsettled by these words.

Upon their return, Pete walked over to the stables. “Say goodbye to the day,” he said to the Pumpkin Lord, “this has been your final play!”

Later, while the Pumpkin Lord slept through the night, Pete smashed him to bits. It was not until much later that Pete was found hanging from a rafter.

Each passing year only serves to heighten the popularity of the enigmatic and uncanny Pumpkin Pete. Plush toys, miniature stuffed dolls, and ceramic Pumpkin Pete figures (complete with noose) are popular items at the Visitor Center gift shop at Tryst Manor. Although decried as “macabre and hideous” by tourists and newcomers to Potter’s Lake, these knick-knacks still sell at a brisk pace.

Recently, the Potter’s Lake Historical Society has proven that there is some truth to this local legend. According to old newspapers and town records, there was a farmer named Pete Kearney who lived just outside of what is now Potter’s Lake. Pete Kearney’s face was quite misshapen, possibly creating the myth that he wore a pumpkin for a face. Unfortunately, there are no records of Pete Kearney’s death, nothing to prove that the suicide of Pumpkin Pete

has any basis in fact. However, considering the nature of his affliction, it's quite likely the real Pete Kearney was the victim of his own tortured psyche. While the Potter's Lake Historical Society still searches for the truth behind the Tale of Pumpkin Pete, it is unlikely they'll ever find an answer.

RED TOM

The Great Tomato Festival is one of the most well-known social events in Potter's Lake, with visitors from all over the state attending. The centerpiece of the festivity is the pelting of the "Goblin King" with tomatoes, to symbolically drive him back into the woods. While the Goblin King is a figure of mirth and amusement to most locals, some older residents remember when this was not the case. The drought of 1949-1950 caused the tomato crop to fail and the Festival had to be canceled for two straight years. In October of 1950, a series of murders took place, perpetrated by a killer the papers called "Red Tom" (since two of the first three murders occurred on Thomas Street). Though no one wanted to say so at the time, many believed Red Tom was in fact the Goblin King, enraged at the lack of tomatoes available for his consumption. By the end of the month, thirteen people had been murdered and the authorities could find no plausible suspect.

The killings only ended after a group of citizens banded together and had a large quantity of tomatoes shipped in from California. As they would have done in September, community members each placed a tomato on their front porches to appease the goblin. The tactic apparently worked, as no more murders took place. Some who remember those years still live in dread at the prospect of another drought, fearing that Red Tom might again descend upon the town and exact vengeance in blood.

ROOM 616

Most residents of Potter's Lake accept the story of an exorcism performed at St. Anselm College, in the winter of 1969, as fact. Each telling varies in its specific details, although most agree that the events involved a male freshman (whose name is either Michael Lee or Lee Michaelson) who lived in Room 616 of St. John's Hall. Likewise, Father Ezekiel Cage is said to have performed the exorcism and to have ordered the room forever closed, for reasons that vary with each telling — some say the residence is stained with human blood, while others insist that a demon still lurks within the room, bound by sacred rituals. (Further details can be found in **Chapter IV** of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook).

Over the years, many people have tried to confirm any of the details that surround this story, but to little avail. Newspapers from the time do not mention the supposed incident and college records show no evidence of any

student named Lee or Michaelson being assigned to Room 616. In addition, the college maintains that Room 616 is a "false" room, basically a door covering a large bulkhead housing electrical wiring and heating ducts. That no one has seen proof of this assertion or been able to pick its lock — despite numerous attempts over the years — has only added to the legend.

Since 2000, there has been a standing offer of a \$10,000 reward donated by the *Daily Sentinel* to anyone who can provide verifiable evidence of the exorcism having taken place. To date, no one has succeeded in claiming the money, although at least one St. Anselm student tries every year. In 2002, one such student, John Durlak, was found wandering the halls of St. John's Hall in a state of extreme confusion, muttering to himself about having been inside Room 616. He was taken to the Student Health Center, where he was found to be suffering from a dangerously high fever, which explained his incoherence and confusion. After he recovered, Durlak continued to insist he had been in the mythic room, but claimed that the place was merely an empty dorm residence that contained nothing of interest to anyone. This version of events did not suit popular tastes on campus, which is why most tellings change the details and suggest the truth was hushed up by the college administration. Furthermore, John Durlak's transfer to another college at the end of 2002 has allowed the wilder versions of the story, with which most students are familiar, to run rampant.

SALTONSTALL HOUSE

Around the turn of the century, a man from back east by the name of Reed Saltonstall moved to Potter's Lake. A wealthy individual from a powerful family, he bought a big house at the corner of Bosworth and Elm Streets. Saltonstall hosted lavish parties for the influential and well-to-do, including Robert Southey I, and the newcomer soon became Southey's close friend and confidante. Saltonstall is said to have advised Southey with counsel wise enough to help keep the mill on a solid financial foundation. So close were the two men that Robert Southey named his first son Jacob Reed after Saltonstall. Unfortunately, the boy died young when he was caught in the 1909 fire that also took the life of Southey's first wife — the mother and child being the first victims of the supposed Southey Curse (see **Chapter IV** of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook for more details on the Southey Curse).

The Curse, people say, affects those close to the Southey clan, not just its actual familial members. If so, perhaps Reed Saltonstall is another of its victims. In 1911, Saltonstall simply disappeared from his home, never to be seen again. Police investigated and found no evidence that foul play was involved or that Saltonstall had intended to leave town; all of his possessions, including his considerable library, were left behind. A few days after he vanished, however, his



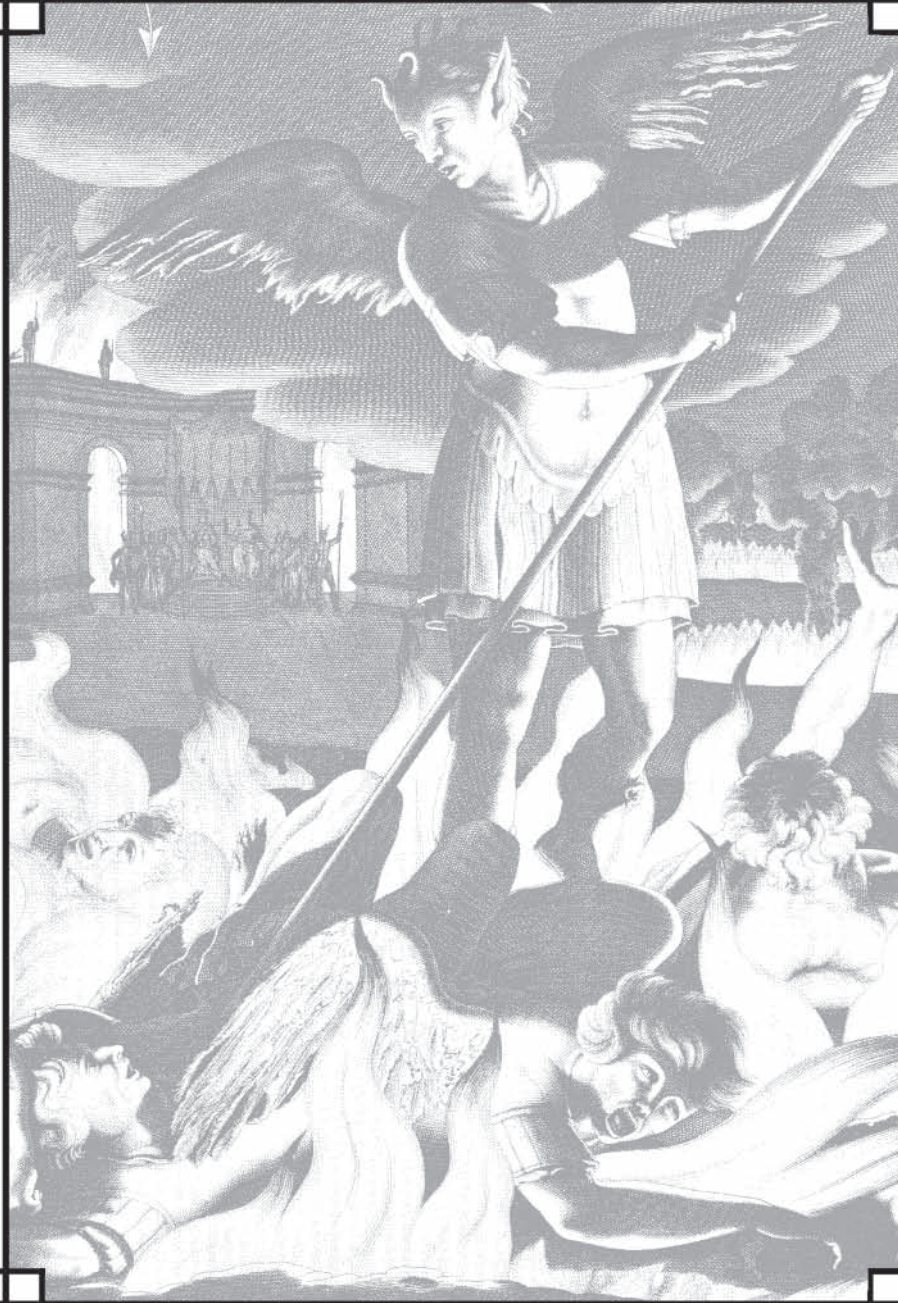
books all disappeared just like their owner. Over the years, volumes bearing Saltonstall's bookplates have turned up in local used bookstores without explanation. This strange phenomenon continues to the present day.

Saltonstall's house was sold at auction in 1912. Since then, it has changed hands numerous times. Each subsequent owner ends up selling, sometimes only weeks after purchasing the massive structure. The few who have offered any explanation say that the house is haunted. They tell of inexplicable noises — footsteps and moans — as well as shadowy figures and inhuman eyes peering into the second story windows. Since 1989 no one has owned Saltonstall House, and it remains boarded up and uninhabited.

CHAPTER VII

HEART OF DARKNESS

in Caelo et in Terra



Hearth of Darkness” is an adventure designed to do several things. The first goal of the story is to forge a lasting bond between the player characters, whether they are newly introduced to the ongoing series or longtime regulars. The second objective is to explore an important event in the history of Potter’s Lake, as well as its relationship to the larger story of *Heaven & Earth*. The third and final aim of this adventure is to provide the Gamemaster with a variety of character hooks and plot seeds, with which to develop future stories. This adventure is a trial by fire designed to test the characters and start them on their paths of Destiny.

More so than most adventures, it is recommended that the GM read the entirety of “Heart of Darkness” thoroughly, since it contains both a great deal of backstory and numerous important set-piece encounters. In addition, many scenes are quite open-ended, meaning that GM preparation is essential to staging them properly. GMs who take the time to read and digest the contents of this adventure will be in a much better position to present it with maximum impact on the players and their characters.

The following adventure makes use of many of the locations, folklore, people, and history presented in both *Paradise Lost* and the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook. For that reason, the GM should also be as familiar as possible with these story elements, as they all drive the adventure toward its conclusion.

OVERVIEW

“Heart of Darkness” is about secrets and destiny. Events beyond the ken of the player characters draw them to each other, and to the infamous Room 616 of St. John’s Hall on the campus of St. Anselm. As the story unfolds, the characters move inexorably toward an abyss of evil, and come to learn firsthand its corrupting effects upon Potter’s Lake. They are given a rare and disturbing glimpse into the dark side of the town and its people — as well as some understanding of their role in standing up to it.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

The adventure can be run with any number of players, although more than four might make it somewhat unwieldy. Of course, the story can accommodate more players, provided there are not so many as to strain credibility. After all, one of the central events of the adventure is for the group to break into a sealed dorm room without alerting anyone to their activities. If there are too many characters trooping through St. Anselm’s hallways, acting unobserved seems highly implausible. Likewise, if not all the characters enter Room 616, subsequent events will not occur for them as they do for those characters who brave the notorious chamber (some advice on this point can be

found throughout the adventure below). In any event, the player characters can come from almost any occupation or background, since their coming together is engineered by outside forces.

BACKSTORY

“Heart of Darkness” has a complex backstory, whose details drive all that transpires during the adventure. This background ties in with several of the central mysteries of Potter’s Lake, as well as with the larger story of *Heaven & Earth*. Consequently, the following information is for the Gamemaster alone, as advance knowledge of it will not only spoil the players’ surprise but also undermine some of its narrative power.

The story begins long before the town of Potter’s Lake was even founded, in Roman-occupied Judea in the 1st century A.D. During this time, the Lamb walked the Earth incarnate as a human being. He preached the Good News, to any who would listen, on behalf of his Father, who had intended his Son to be an “ace in the hole” in the eternal battle against Lucifer. The Devil was enraged by God’s “trick” and did everything he could to tempt or corrupt the Lamb so as to nullify God’s new advantage in the Great Game. Although Lucifer failed to win the Lamb to his side, he did succeed in making Christ question the Father’s plans for humanity — the seed that would one day become full-scale rebellion. That the Father’s instructions to his Son were lies, designed to fool humanity into serving him under false pretenses, only made Lucifer’s temptations all the more plausible.

Admittedly, the Lamb had already begun to question God’s intentions. His ministry on Earth had taught him much, not the least of which being that human beings possessed a potential far greater than either God or Lucifer realized. From his human mother, the Lamb learned compassion of a sort his Father seemingly could not comprehend. He identified with mortals in a way that God could never do. It was because of this that Christ took a wife, Mary of Magdala, and intended to remain on Earth with the children of Adam and Eve he had come to love.

Neither combatant in the Great Game could allow the Lamb to remain on Earth indefinitely. Lucifer worked to destroy the Lamb, and the Father allowed it to happen, forsaking his Son so as to prevent his plans from being upset. Deprived of a physical existence, the Lamb could no longer act directly, but he could inspire and encourage his followers, leading them away from the Father and toward a greater destiny. That original handful of disciples hid themselves, acting in secret, far from prying eyes. Led by Mary Magdalene and her only child (named Adam-Kadmon), the Lamb’s followers taught those they could reach to live in virtue outside the power of both the Father and Lucifer — developing their inner strengths and laying the groundwork for the day when mankind might claim

its birthright as a force equal to that of its Creator and its Tempter.

For nearly two millennia, under the leadership of the Bloodline of the Lamb, these true followers of Christ worked on the fringes of society, persecuted by the Church of the Father as much as by the minions of the Evil One. Thanks to the psychic powers that came with descent from the Lamb, his Gifted followers helped to ensure that the movement survived despite the best efforts of others to destroy it. As the Eschaton draws near, many Gifted find themselves inexplicably drawn to places of cosmic significance, such as Potter's Lake, although only the tiniest handful have even the faintest notion of why.

Michael Lee was one such descendant of the Lamb. Unlike many Gifted, Lee possessed a level of innate self-awareness that made him realize his talents and his purpose from an early age. He understood that he had a great destiny to fulfill and did not hesitate to offer himself in service to the Lamb. He enrolled at St. Anselm College in order to live in Potter's Lake and be at the forefront of the great changes waiting for humanity. Lee was ready; all he required was for the Lamb to give him his instructions and he would spring into action.

Unfortunately for Lee, the Lamb never provided him with the "battle plans" he'd been expecting — at least not that he was able to determine. In 1969, when Michael Lee enrolled at St. Anselm, the Lamb was not ready to play his hand. He had not yet openly rebelled against his Father. Instead, God's son worked behind the scenes and bided his

time. Lee was very impatient with this inaction, and slowly began to grow angry. After all, he had passed up better educational opportunities back east to be "where the action is" in Potter's Lake. He had pledged himself to the cause of the Lamb and had nothing to show for it. Why had Christ forsaken him? Lee imagined that he understood how the Lamb must have felt on Calvary.

And that's when Lucifer saw his opening. The Devil didn't yet know what the Lamb was planning, but he understood deception well enough — he had invented it, so he claimed — to recognize when even the Son of God was planning something duplicitous. Lucifer still believed that the Lamb's plan was done on behalf of God, and therefore he couldn't allow whatever it was to happen; he intended to win the Great Game, after all. With that in mind, Satan decided to corrupt Michael Lee and win his soul for Hell.

Lucifer appeared before Michael Lee as an angel of light. He claimed to be a messenger sent by the Lamb to prepare the elect few for the coming trials they would face. Lee was pleased beyond words: he would finally get to fulfill his destiny. Lucifer convinced Lee to use his psychic abilities in all sorts of ways that served his own ends, all the while encouraging Lee to act not simply out of ignorance but also out of malice. It was one thing to telepathically spy on someone because an angel of the Lord told you to do so; it was another to do it because you *wanted to*. It didn't take long before Lee's pride had grown strong and he was acting contrary to any sense of morality.

Only one thing remained: to convince Michael Lee to

A NOTE ON MICHAEL LEE

As noted elsewhere, Michael Lee is a unique example of the Gifted. Firstly, his psychic potency is extraordinarily great. All human beings bear the mark of their divine Creator and, as such, contain a spark of divinity within them. This flicker can be developed with time and much effort, although few mortals ever do so. The Gifted, as descendants of God's only Son, contain a much greater spark of divinity than do other people. Being humans, however, many Gifted never develop their spark any more than anyone else; some, of course, do — and it is they who manifest controllable psychic powers.

A handful of Gifted throughout history are atavisms: throwbacks to their half-divine ancestor. They exhibit even greater psychic powers than usual, as well as the ability to remove their souls from the rules of the Great Game. Michael Lee was one such Gifted, although he did not understand the full extent of his power until Father Cage exorcised Shemyaza with the help of the Lamb. Shortly before his physical death, he finally understood his uniqueness and how he could serve the Lamb even after his demise.

The second way in which Michael Lee was uniquely special is that he instinctively understood that he had a greater destiny, one in service to the Lamb. Most Gifted don't have an inkling of their origins or purpose. Many of those few who are aware become psychologically damaged, even insane, as they cannot handle the true nature of their existence. History provides plenty of examples of "mad prophets," at least some of whom were Gifted — and whose minds were unhinged as they came to realize their destiny.

Consequently, the GM should bear in mind that Michael Lee is a singular individual. No other Gifted currently alive is like him in any respect, least of all the player characters. He is the exception that proves the rules of the Great Game and, as such, a fitting central plot element of "Heart of Darkness." For this reason, no game statistics are included for Lee, since his power is beyond that of even a Veteran level psychic. Like the Host, his is beyond game mechanical description.



reject the Lamb. Lucifer found this easy to do. He let it be known to God that he intended to destroy one of his servants on Earth, Michael Lee. The Father, of course, did not recognize Lee as one of his entourage, and the Lamb could not admit that the young man was one of the Gifted, lest his hand be played too soon. With that, Lucifer sent his demons to torment Lee and to tell him that the Lamb would not rescue him from their cruelty. After days of physical, mental, and spiritual abuse at their hands, Lee begged the Lamb to save him; he did not. In despair, Lee then turned to Lucifer, who agreed to relent on the condition that Lee submit to possession by one of his demons, named Shemyaza. When Lee readily agreed, Lucifer believed he had won a great victory against God, when in fact he had foiled one of the Lamb's own designs.

The Lamb wept for his descendant. He appeared in a dream to another of his supporters, Father Ezekiel Cage. He explained Lee's predicament and asked Cage to exorcise Shemyaza with his own divine assistance. Father Cage, of course, did not fully understand this dream, but he understood enough to realize he had to help Michael Lee. Cage confronted Lee in Room 616 of St. John's Hall and struggled for hours with the demon that possessed him. He vowed that he would only leave the room when the demon was cast out.

In the end, Father Cage fulfilled his vow — but at great cost. Michael Lee died as a result of the exorcism. His body

could not take the spiritual strain that the power of the Lamb, as manifested through Cage, exerted upon it. Yet, as one of the Gifted, his soul survived the ordeal and was cleansed. Freed from his body and reconciled with Christ, Lee's soul decided to linger on Earth, hoping to find a way to nevertheless fulfill his destiny. Because of his psychic potency, Lee's soul now exists outside the rules of the Great Game. Neither Heaven nor Hell can claim him and this gives him a unique perspective and role to play, one that the Lamb finds immeasurably useful.

Because Shemyaza's own essence had suffused Room 616 and forever warped it, Lee's decision was all the more vital. Through his psychic gifts, Lee holds the demon's lingering evil in check and ensures that no one again enters the room, which is sealed by order of the College. Father Cage suffered too as a result of the exorcism and spent the next three decades a broken man, both physically and spiritually.

Now that the Lamb's rebellion is known to God and the Armageddon is about to be loosed upon the world, Michael Lee's soul has decided, with the Lamb's concurrence, to make a bold move. He has called to others whose own destinies demand that they come to Potter's Lake. He has opened the door to Room 616 and prepared the way for them to see the future that may be if either God or Lucifer should win the Great Game. Just how Lee's actions unfold is the story of "Heart of Darkness."

ASSUMPTIONS

Now that the Lamb has acknowledged him as his servant on Earth, Michael Lee is determined to advance his master's agenda in a big way. To do this, Lee intends to help assemble Christ's new apostles by drawing them to Potter's Lake and to Isaiah Cryingheart, whom the Lamb has already selected as the leader of his latter-day Twelve. As a pure spirit suspended between Heaven and Hell — and a Gifted one at that — Lee has a remarkable ability to manipulate mortal dreams, as well as to induce waking visions. It is through this ability that he intends to attract those whom the Lamb has chosen to Potter's Lake.

"Heart of Darkness" assumes that, for reasons as yet unknown to them (and perhaps never to be revealed), the Lamb has selected the player characters to be among his chosen. That is, they will be his foremost followers and agents on Earth and will spend the rest of their lives on the frontlines of the battle between God, the Devil, and Christ. Consequently, this adventure, if used as written, will propel any *Heaven & Earth* campaign in a very specific direction. If for any reason the GM doesn't intend future storylines to continue on this path, he should consider altering or even rejecting use of this adventure entirely.

Of course, the GM should bear in mind that, even after the conclusion of "Heart of Darkness," the characters may well not understand what has happened to them. It is not as if they will fully — or even dimly — recognize the destiny to which they have been called. Indeed, the conclusion of the adventure may make them question if any of its events even occurred. It's also possible that the characters may reject their destiny. Like the prophet Jonah, they may flee from their call, knowing that it will disrupt and endanger their lives. After all, did not most of Christ's original apostles die martyr's deaths?

OPENING SCENES

"Heart of Darkness" begins with each of the player characters having a dream or vision that draws the person to Potter's Lake (if he or she is not already there) and to one another (if they are not otherwise connected). The content of these dreams and visions will vary greatly from one character to the next. It is the responsibility of the GM to create what would be appropriate to the character, since the Lamb has provided Michael Lee (the source of the dreams/visions) with incredibly complete information about each individual, making it easy for the spirit to achieve maximum effectiveness.

While Lee has all the information he needs, the GM may not. A great deal turns on whether the characters are newly created or if they have a history. If the former, the GM's job is at once easy and difficult: simple, because months of prior adventures do not need to be worked into the dreams,

APOSTLES (OR NOT)

"Heart of Darkness" is an adventure about Destiny - in this case, the player characters' roles as the Lamb's new apostles on Earth. As written, the adventure assumes that this is the path on which the characters are walking, whether they realize it or not (and initially, they shouldn't). While this course provides a great structure on which to build an ongoing series, some players and GMs might find it too constraining or, at the very least, not what they intend to do with their story. If so, that's fine. *Heaven & Earth* is a game about choices and it's perfectly in keeping with the game's themes to adopt a different — perhaps very different — basis for the ongoing series.

The adventure can still work as written, although the motivations of Michael Lee or the Lamb might be different, as might the outcome or interpretation of some of the encounters in Potter's Lake. Perhaps the characters are all Gifted and the Lamb's intention is simply to alert his descendants to the coming Apocalypse. Another possibility is that the characters are being manipulated by a secret society, such as the Zetetics or Wing of St. Michael, to get to the bottom of Room 616. In the end, the revelations of "Heart of Darkness" are more important than the whys and wherefores of the actors who lurk behind the scenes. The GM should feel free to change whatever necessary to suit the needs of his own game and that of his players.

but complicated as it's rather difficult to create compelling visions without much material upon which to draw.

For that reason, the GM is advised to ask players a few questions about any new characters they create. Their answers should give the GM the raw materials needed to construct powerful dreams and visions, as well as to ground the characters with other aspects of "Heart of Darkness." While GMs typically have their own lists of character creation questions, here are some important topics specific to this adventure setting:

- Where does the character currently live? If he's not a native of Potter's Lake, would he have ever heard of the town or passed through it? If he is a local, what does he think of the town? How does he view its oddities? Does he even take notice of them or do the peculiarities all seem "normal" — no matter how outlandish?
- Is the character religious? If yes, what are her beliefs? If not, why not? Is she a rationalist or

skeptic instead?

- What are the character's plans for the future? Does he have goals he's actively pursuing (as described on pp. 14-15 of *Heaven & Earth*)? If so, how important are these goals and how much would he sacrifice to achieve them? If not, why not?
- Does the character have any strong ties to friends, family, or other acquaintances? If so, what reason would be strong enough for her to leave them behind willingly?

Many other questions are possible, of course. The key is focusing on details that will tie the character into the events of the adventure. In addition, any topic that might evoke strong emotions, beliefs, or opinions is useful to the GM. If a question does so, it provides great fodder in constructing dreams. If a question does not, that too can be significant, as dreams sometimes invert reality and cause a person to question previously held beliefs — such as when an avowed atheist dreams of himself as a priest or a homebody imagines herself as the life of the party.

SAMPLE DREAMS/VISIONS

The following are three sample dreams/visions the GM can make use of, either as written or as models for constructing his own. Naturally, these samples use very broad imagery that, to be most effective, should be tailored to the characters

who experience them.

- The character finds himself kneeling in a pew of a magnificent church which he knows is St. Anselm Basilica in Potter's Lake (even if he's never been there or heard of the place), staring up at a large crucifix that hangs without obvious suspension above the sanctuary. Upon closer inspection, it becomes obvious that there is a real person nailed to the crucifix; it is the character himself! His perspective suddenly shifts as he looks down on the congregation and sees hundreds of people, some praying, some looking bored, some trying to pay attention despite distractions — the whole panoply of human behavior during Mass. He then sees the luminous shapes of angels floating over some people, while shadowy demons hover over others. The angels and demons pull at the congregants, as if trying to carry the individuals away. Upon seeing this, the character feels a sharp pain in his head, as blood pours from his brow and drips down onto his other praying self below, along with several other people (whom he may or may not know — the other player characters). At this point, he wakes up from his dream and finds that his nose is bleeding profusely, staining his pillow and bed sheets with red droplets.
- The character finds himself lost in a dark wood, which he knows to be Potter's Woods (even if he's never been there or heard of the place). With him

A NOTE ON DREAMS & VISIONS

Almost as significant as the content of the dreams themselves, is how they are presented. As noted elsewhere, it is important that the player characters not merely believe, but rather *know*, that the dream they each experience is something more than any other dream they have had. The most obvious way to achieve this, as noted, is to make sure the details, even the smallest ones, reflect the character's background, history, and personality. They must speak directly to the character's inmost being.

If a character is newly created, this personalization can be hard to do, but it's not impossible. One method is for the Gamemaster to take a hand in creating the character. That's not to say the GM should literally divide points among Attributes, choose occupations, or select Extracurricular Skills. Rather, by fashioning a dream with lots of specific details and implications of motivation for a newly created character, the GM aids the player in defining the nascent character and, in the long run, makes it very easy for the player to act in accordance with the contents of that dream.

It's a self-fulfilling prophecy, to be sure, and doesn't work if a player already has a very strongly defined idea of his character. In addition, it requires a lot of trust between player and Gamemaster, since the GM is effectively taking a major role in shaping who a character is and how the person will relate to the world. On the other hand, *Heaven & Earth* is a game whose mood and themes reward such trust.

By allowing the GM to decide in a dream, for example, that a character is afraid of heights or still suffers from the wounds of childhood bullying, the player is opening himself to story possibilities he might otherwise have never considered. Because the central mysteries of *Heaven & Earth* defy what most players will expect, giving the GM a hand in crafting a player character is an elegant way to ensure the character is tied into those mysteries. There are plenty of other approaches, of course, and the Gamemaster should choose the one that's right for his specific story and players.

are several people (whom he may or may not know — the other player characters). All around them, the character hears strange voices calling out his name. Some sound angelic, sweet and musical, while others are demonic growls. No matter which way they go, the group gets no closer to any of the voices and the darkness of the woods grows deeper, until it becomes so dark that the character can barely see his hands in front of his face. Suddenly, the character bumps into someone he didn't know was even there (that is, not one of his companions). The man, with a deep and sonorous voice, speaks gently and asks the character where he is going. The character can respond however he wishes or not at all. The man will reply, "Are you sure that's the way you want to go? Wouldn't you rather do something worthwhile with your life?" The character then abruptly wakes, with a very clear picture of Potter's Lake in his mind.

- The character is in an immense library with only a few companions (whom she may or may not know — the other player characters). The bookshelves are immensely tall and the spaces between them are narrow, barely enough for a person to pass through. All of the books in the library look beautiful. Their covers are leather and inlaid with gems, while the pages have gold and silver gilding. Unfortunately, all the books' pages are blank. The character and her companions become increasingly frantic, pulling more and more books off the shelves in a vain effort to find one, *any* one, that has writing on its pages. At last, the character finds a huge, metal-bound copy of the Bible, which she opens and finds that it too is blank. Disgusted, she throws the Bible to the ground and it shatters into a million shards of light; these glowing motes then reform in front of the character's eyes, creating a luminous book that floats in the air and then opens of its own accord. Blinded by the light, the character can't help but stare anyway. She can see nothing except an image of Potter's Lake, whose name, upon waking, she has on her lips.

Naturally, these examples are vague in places and provide little in the way of specific character hooks. Were a GM to use them, details should be altered or enhanced to take into account a character's biography or experiences to date. By doing so, the GM makes it clear that the dream or vision was *meant* for that person. That's a vital part of these opening scenes. The player characters should believe that the dreams spoke specifically and were significant, as if the subconscious were saying something that no one else could possibly comprehend. The characters might not grasp all the elements of their dreams — and probably won't — but they should recognize that their dreams were not random

neurons firing in their sleeping brains. Just what a character believes took place will depend greatly on that individual and his perspective on the world.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The dreams that point the characters toward Potter's Lake are not the only ones Michael Lee will send to them. While his initial goal is to bring the chosen to the town, he must accomplish much more than that. He also needs to ensure that the characters get to know one another and begin to investigate Room 616. Like so much else in this adventure, there are many different ways to achieve this, allowing the Gamemaster a great deal of freedom. What follows is some basic advice on how to handle the next portion of the opening scenes.

The sample dreams presented above assume the player characters are not currently in Potter's Lake; as such, they are intended primarily to bring them to the town. If the characters are already local, the dreams they experience will have somewhat different purposes and contents (see below). Similarly, if the characters already know each other, there's less urgency in finding a way to get them to meet and become a team.

On the other hand, if the characters are new to Potter's Lake and/or do not yet know one another, ensuring that both of these conditions are met is vital to the adventure's continuation. There are several ways to accomplish these necessary objectives. The simplest is via further dreams. Michael Lee has an effectively infinite ability to intrude upon the characters' minds, even if his skill in doing so is more limited. He also has explicit instructions from the Lamb that it is the player characters whom he wishes to enter Room 616. Consequently, Lee is relentless in finding a way to bring the characters together and to the ill-fated dorm room in St. John's Hall.

These further dreams should be similar to the initial ones, which is to say, highly symbolic and vague. They should never come right out and reveal the whole truth. In part, this is because Michael Lee, though Gifted, is still a finite being with a limited grasp of the human mind. In addition, most human psyches, thanks to their "incomplete" state (that is, never having tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge), cannot fully process direct divine revelation. The mind's protective "buffer" dilutes such potential harmful stimuli so that what results becomes indistinct and often incoherent. Metaphor is the safest way to accept divine revelation, although it has the disadvantage of being easily misinterpreted.

These subsequent dreams should, at most, make the characters familiar with one another, perhaps by showing their faces. Then, later, when one player character sees another on the street, there can be a moment of shocked recognition. In a similar vein, Room 616 should appear in some form, such as the room number recurring throughout

RESEARCHING ROOM 616

At the center of this adventure is Room 616. It's where Michael Lee lost his life, and it's also the physical locus of his soul's power. For "Heart of Darkness" to proceed properly, the player characters need to come to Room 616 and enter it—the first people to do so since the winter of 1969. Before that can happen, though, the characters need to know about Room 616, its history, and its dangers.

Through dreams, visions, and coincidences, the characters should find the number 616 recurring with extraordinary frequency. That alone should push them to investigate the number's significance. A series of Knowledge checks can be used to represent research into this question, if that is the route the characters take. The difficulty in finding an answer (though not necessarily the right one) depends on where the characters look. Checking back issues of the *Daily Sentinel*, for example, would be Average Difficulty, while searching the World Wide Web would be Challenging. In addition, it's possible the characters might come upon "incorrect" answers to their question, including that 616 is an alternate rendition of the Number of the Beast (666) found in a handful of Biblical manuscripts.

Besides research proper, the characters might instead seek people out in town and ask them about the significance of 616. Most townsfolk who were older than children in 1969 probably know bits of the story about Michael Lee (or Lee Michaelson, as he's sometimes called). Their details are no more exact than the folk tale found in **Chapter VI**, but it might be enough to get the characters moving. Versions of the folk tale, perhaps with small details changed, could also be overheard in Deke's or the Bel-Loc Diner, if the GM wishes to use those locales in the adventure.

Individuals close to the original events, like Father Ezekiel Cage or Claude Lapierre, won't speak to the characters about what they know. That too should be a clue and resourceful characters can find others who will help fill in the broad details. Eventually, they should know enough to understand that the goal of their quest is Room 616.

the dream, in varying situations. The characters might then attempt to figure out the significance of the number and any inquiry into it in Potter's Lake will soon turn up the story of Michael Lee in 1969.

Dreams aren't the only way to bring the characters together or point them toward Room 616. Another possibility is to use coincidences or waking visions. In the former case, a character might keep bumping into the same person or getting \$6.16 in change. Over time, the sheer unlikelihood of these coincidences piles up and might push a character toward finding their source. Alternately, a character might look across a room to see his brother (another player character) whom he rushes over to greet — only to remember mid-stride that he has no brother and that the other individual is a total stranger. This is an example of a waking vision, a distortion in the character's perceptions that impels the person to do something for reasons that seem mistaken at first but may in fact point toward a deeper truth.

The opening scenes offer the GM a lot of flexibility in setting the stage for the main body of "Heart of Darkness". There are no right or wrong ways to approach these scenes. Providing the player characters all wind up in Potter's Lake, get to know and trust one another, and find out about Room 616, the rest of the adventure should go quite smoothly.

SECOND SCENES

Once together and aware of Room 616 and its significance,

the player characters must enter that infamous residence and plumb its secrets. Depending on what has transpired in the opening scenes, the GM may need to nudge the characters in the right direction in order for this to occur. If so, this directing should be done subtly and without railroading. Although the Lamb wishes the characters to enter Room 616 so that they might meet Michael Lee's soul and experience the terrors within, he also profoundly respects free will. It is, after all, the foundation of his rebellion against the Father. Consequently, he will not allow Michael Lee to simply compel the characters to come to St. John's Hall or enter Room 616.

ST. JOHN'S HALL

Room 616 is located within St. John's, the main residence hall of St. Anselm College. It is a large, stone building with a neo-Gothic architectural design, having been built in 1898. The hall is four stories tall and each level is segregated by gender, with the first and third floors reserved for male students and the second and fourth floors housing female students. The building also possesses two towers: the east tower, called the fifth floor (and reserved for female students), and the west tower, called the sixth floor (and reserved for male students). The first floor contains a large common room and entrance area and the basement of the hall houses a laundry room, as well as several classrooms and faculty offices — which are all closed off at night.

Getting into St. John's Hall is easy during the day.

The front doors are always open and visitors can freely wander about the floors without drawing much attention to themselves. At night, however, the front doors (and all side doors) are locked. Only students who have a passkey can enter the building. Visitors without keys must ring the doorbell, which alerts the on-duty porter. Between the hours of 6 PM and 6 AM, any visitors with a valid St. Anselm's student ID may enter the building, provided they sign in at the porter's desk and leaves ID behind, as well as the name of who they have come to see. Even guests accompanied by a resident of St. John's Hall must follow this procedure. Non-students are not allowed into the building after 6 PM and before 6 AM.

THE TOWER OF DARKNESS

Room 616 is located in the west tower, on a floor that contains only a dozen residential quarters, usually reserved for upperclassmen. During the day, getting to the sixth floor is quite easy and the tower is usually deserted, as the students are all in class. During the evening and night, however, gaining entrance is much more difficult. Unless the characters are themselves students of St. Anselm, they'll find their ability to move about St. John's Hall unaccompanied at night quite difficult, if not impossible. The GM must be prepared to deal with a wide variety of possible scenarios for reaching the sixth floor and Room 616. Characters who take the time to find out about procedures in the dormitory will quickly realize that the daytime is probably the best opportunity to reach Room 616 unseen. Those who do not might encounter difficulties of various sorts, most importantly residents who will wonder who the characters are and why they're in the hall. Furthermore, if the characters seem overly suspicious in their actions, campus security might be alerted, in which case further exploration will be that much more difficult.

ROOM 616

Room 616 is located at one end of the hallway that bisects the west tower. The hall terminates with a large window that overlooks the basilica below. The room itself is set farther back from the hallway than the other rooms, because of a bulkhead that juts out near its door. The bulkhead contains water and heating pipes and its paint is cracked and peeling. It's also frequently hot to the touch. Unsurprisingly, even before the events of 1969, Room 616 had a reputation for being a damp, unpleasant hole in the wall. Nowadays, most students, even those who've heard the stories, believe that the room is just a utility closet where extra janitorial supplies are kept and where the fuse box is located.

The door to Room 616 bears no number, although if one looks closely it's obvious that it once sported the infamous numerals. The door does have a heavy padlock

on it that looks as if it'd be impossible to pick, let alone break. Fortunately for the player characters, Michael Lee finds the lock no more difficult to manipulate than their minds. When he senses the characters are near, he will telekinetically open the padlock while they are present, allowing them to open the door and enter the room.

Provided they do so while no one else is around, they can enter the room with complete ease. If someone else is watching, however, the characters will find that their activities draw a lot of attention. Michael Lee will do what he can to keep such gawkers at bay, but he cannot do so indefinitely. Once the characters are in Room 616, Lee will close the door behind them and relock it. However, anyone who witnesses the characters entering the room will quickly alert other residents, who will, in turn, alert others until word eventually gets out that Room 616 has been breached. It's only a matter of time before campus security learns of this and sends some guards to check it out.

The interior of Room 616 is bare. There is no longer a bed, a desk, a chair — any furniture whatsoever. The window is boarded up and there are no working lights. The air is stale and musty. Characters who enter must make an Average Fortitude check or begin to cough because of the dust and mildew in the room. The paint on the walls is peeling and there are large swaths of dark stains, possibly the result of water damage of some sort and now a home to mold. The room is humid and warm and the air has an unpleasant, though unrecognizable, odor.

MICHAEL LEE'S PLAN

Once the characters are in the room, the door shuts behind them and locks. Because the room is small, dank, and dark, the characters might understandably react with fear. If they attempt to break down the door, however, they will have a tough time of it. To succeed requires a Strength check with a Difficulty of Very Hard. More than likely, the only thing that banging on the door will do is alert other residents of the characters' presence and encourage campus security to arrive.

Because Michael Lee realizes he does not have much time, he acts quickly. He briefly manifests himself in the center of the room, near the site where Father Cage exorcised the demon Shemyaza. He takes the form of a faintly glowing, ethereal young man. He smiles at the characters in an effort to calm them and speaks: "Greetings, Chosen of the Lamb. Your time of trial is at hand. Fear not, though, for the Lamb is with you and he would not put you to the test if he did not believe you capable of bearing it. Rejoice!"

With those words, the apparition of Michael Lee fades from sight and the room begins to change — its walls and floor start to bubble and flow like hot wax. The characters do not lose their footing, however disorienting the process might be. The room eventually takes on a more sinister look: hellish red lights shine through every crack and hole in the

SHEMYAZA'S VIRUS

After Shemyaza appears before the player characters, he “infects” their minds with a kind of demonic virus that distorts their perceptions of the world. This virus is of limited power but is nonetheless potent, particularly since Michael Lee’s soul used his psychic abilities to suppress the characters’ natural resistance to the virus to a limited extent. He did this so that the characters, upon leaving Room 616, might have a brief glimpse into Potter’s Lake as it exists beneath the surface, so to speak. They are getting a chance to see the darkness that threatens to consume the world if they do not, like Lee himself, take up the Lamb’s call and work to save humanity from the imminent Parousia.

The effect of the virus lasts for 24 hours, during which time the characters’ perceptions get increasingly distorted until, shortly before 24 hours has elapsed, they become trapped entirely within their own skewed vision of reality. That vision sees the world and everything in it as dark, sinister, and chaotic. The world is literally falling to corruption, with every imperfection magnified a thousandfold. The characters can see entropy having its effect upon material objects and sin weighing on the flesh of the living. The GM is free to improvise any perception that plays to this general approach.

Shemyaza’s virus is very important to the Third Scenes, since it’s the reason the characters see the world as they do. As time wears on, the virus begins to affect not only their senses and understanding but even their sense of time and place. Just as it did in Room 616, the characters will believe themselves somewhere other than they are. The mounting madness of the virus should be played subtly. The characters’ perceptions don’t warp all at once nor do they always do so in obvious or rational ways. The GM should give his imagination free rein here, even if it sometimes means throwing in odd details or quirky elements that make no apparent sense—that’s the point. The virus is intended to induce despair and insanity, not revelation of great truths. Only because Michael Lee is interceding do they gain any insight from their experiences.

walls and floor. The air becomes hazy and smells of sulfur. Then, standing where Michael had been moments before, a demonic being appears. He looks like a classical demon: horned, bat-winged, and with evil eyes and a broad, toothy smile. This is Shemyaza, the demon sent by Lucifer to possess Michael Lee and subsequently exorcised by Father Cage. Since the exorcism, Michael Lee has kept the demon in check, for his powers far outstrip even this minion of Satan. Of course, Shemyaza is arrogant enough to believe that this sudden ability to interact with the mortal world is his own doing rather than at the pleasure of Michael Lee and the Lamb. Consequently, the demon’s subsequent actions are ones he genuinely believes will advance his infernal master’s plans, when in fact they are all part of the Lamb’s own gambit in the Great Game.

Shemyaza regards the characters with obvious pleasure and says, “It’s been so long since I’ve had anyone to play with — and now the boy delivers me not one but many playthings. I shall enjoy playing with you.” It’s at this point that the door to Room 616 opens. A pair of campus security guards stands at the entrance, along with a couple of students. They came because they heard noises coming from within the room (or saw the characters enter, depending on their actions). Unfortunately, under the influence of Shemyaza (who disappears as soon as the door opens), the characters see the guards as gargoyle-like creatures wielding wickedly curved knives. The guards do not actually have any weapons and don’t intend to harm the characters; however, they do want to apprehend and question them.

Characters who succeed at a Hard Awareness check can — for an instant — see the “gargoyles” morph into human guards, although they have no idea what this means.

The characters now must decide how to react. If they choose to acquiesce to the “gargoyles” who are menacing them, they will be seized (seemingly in chains) and taken to the campus security office for questioning. If they decide to make a break for it, they will have to face the two guards and any students who are with them, all of whom will attempt to tackle and apprehend the fleeing characters. The GM can decide how difficult he wishes to make this encounter. The default assumption is that the characters escape the guards and make their way into Potter’s Lake while under the effects of Shemyaza’s evil influence. Of course, should the characters be captured and detained, that too could provide for some interesting role-playing and can easily lead back to the original storyline.

CAPTURED

If the characters are captured by the campus security guards, they are taken back to the Public Safety Office located just west of the Main Hall. The office is not a police station or a jail. It has no facilities to hold anyone for any period of time. Most often, the security guards deal with rowdy students or curious thrill seekers looking to investigate one of St. Anselm’s many reputed hauntings. If any real trouble occurs on campus, the office won’t hesitate to contact the



Sheriff's Department to handle the situation.

Once at the Public Safety Office, the characters will be put in a room where they will be questioned about their activities. The security guards know nothing of the true story behind Room 616, only that the room has been sealed for nearly forty years by order of the Chancellor's Office. The guards have heard all the stories, of course, but place little stock in them. Their natural inclination is to let the characters go after taking their names and finding out why they broke into the room and what they did there.

By recent order, however, the guards can't let the characters go without first contacting the Chancellor's Office. The current chancellor, Geraldine Hardig, is a member of the Zetetic Society and wishes to suppress all public knowledge of the supernatural. Before the characters can be released, Hardig has to be sure they neither saw anything nor will claim to have seen anything in Room 616 that suggests paranormal activity. If she is not satisfied of that, she'll bring charges against the characters and involve the Sheriff's Department in the matter.

Of course, the Zetetics aren't the only secret society with an interest in Room 616. The Wing of St. Michael, represented by chief librarian Jesse Davis, also keeps tabs on the room. Davis has a network of spies and informants in the Chancellor's Office (and elsewhere). If the Public Safety Office contacts the chancellor, Davis will know about it and arrange to "coincidentally" be present in the

building while the characters are interrogated. She won't interfere or otherwise involve herself, but she'll do her best to eavesdrop and observe the characters, since she would very much like to know more about what lies behind the room's previously impenetrable door.

The GM has great latitude in determining how events play out while the characters are held in the Public Safety Office. Depending on future story plans and the actions of the characters, almost anything could happen — from the security guards prematurely releasing the characters before Hardig arrives, to their being charged with breaking and entering and sent to the county jail. The most likely outcome is that the characters can convince Hardig that they saw nothing and they'll be let go with a warning (and possibly a fine to cover any damage they may have caused). At the same time, it's important to remember that the characters' perceptions have been utterly warped by Shemyaza. They see everyone — except each other — and everything in the worst possible light (see sidebar). Being able to act rationally in the face of such distorted perceptions will be difficult and the GM is fully within his rights to make it troublesome for the characters to get back their freedom.

Likewise, the extent to which the Gamemaster wishes to involve the Zetetic Society and the Wing of St. Michael can be left up to the needs of his ongoing series. Both organizations can easily remain background elements, perhaps with vague hints as to their involvement, or they could become full-blown players, with agents of each vying for information about Room 616. Even if these secret societies don't involve themselves significantly, they will act behind the scenes and the characters' actions will reverberate among the conspiracies operating in Potter's Lake. The GM should keep this in mind as events of "Heart of Darkness" unfold.

THIRD SCENES

Whether the characters avoided the security guards or were released by them after being questioned, the next phase of the adventure involves the return to Potter's Lake proper. It is here that the insidious effects of Shemyaza's demonic presence will reveal themselves most profoundly. The following scenes are set-pieces, which is to say they occur independently of character actions. The GM may choose ahead-of-time where each takes place, only describing the encounter when the characters reach a particular locale, or the scenes could simply be dropped into a convenient section of the narrative. Each set-piece provides only a bare bones description of what the characters encounter. The GM may — and should — add details to make the event more compelling. In addition, as each encounter is described, the nature of the characters' increasingly distorted perceptions (see sidebar) should not be forgotten. Most of these scenes are meant to reveal the hidden face of evil that lurks beneath the surface of everyday life in Potter's

Lake; the GM should make every effort to accomplish this intended purpose.

VISIONS OF HELL

The following encounters occur in chronological order, although the GM can feel free to tweak the sequence or alter it as suits the individual story.

1. Fire Chief Aaron Stone is seen running around town, putting out fires that are spontaneously erupting in disparate locations. The fires are small and do not seem to be causing much damage, and they all smell of brimstone. Stone laments aloud, “The world is coming to an end and I’m not ready.” He is shirtless but nevertheless wearing his fire hat. Consequently, the characters can clearly see the elaborate tattoo etched onto his back. However, like everything else, this tattoo is strange and distorted. Rather than simply being a collection of tombstones (as described in **Chapter V** of *Heaven & Earth*), Stone’s tattoo contains additional details — moving details — such as the dead clawing their way out of their graves and marching menacingly toward the viewer. This encounter
2. A pasty-faced and sinister version of Father Gabriel Gorrand is walking the streets of town. He is flanked by two fierce-looking angels brandishing flaming swords. Gorrand is dressed in jungle fatigues and carries an M-16 automatic rifle. As he passes through the streets of the town, he accosts residents and enumerates their sins and foul deeds, after which he opens fire on the unfortunate individuals. The GM can choose the victims of Gorrand’s militant vengeance, but good choices include Napoleon Hawthorne, Ed Miller, Glenn Peccary, Deke Richardson, Joan Talbot, or Chastity Wrenmore. Of course, the GM should remember not to include NPCs whose secrets he doesn’t want revealed, since Gorrand’s recitation of their sins might well give these details away. Alternately, this scene could serve as a way to draw attention to a character’s secrets and spur future adventures. This encounter also hints at Father Gorrand’s past in Viet Nam (as described in **Chapter V** of *Heaven & Earth*).
3. A disheveled and filthy version of Bob Southey can be seen wandering confusedly through the



streets. His clothes are stained with all manner of disgusting liquids, including some that look like human blood. He smells of rotting fish and burnt wood. Surrounding him is a dark haze, almost like smog, except that it hugs closely to Southey's body and moves in unison with him. Anything Southey touches becomes corrupted, turning brown or greasy or, in the case of plants or animals, dying on the spot.

4. Father Ezekiel Cage is seen sitting in his wheelchair in the middle of a street. He is slumped and obviously wounded, bleeding profusely from his forehead, wrists, feet, and side. Several demons can be seen floating above him, tearing at his flesh and pulling at his soul, which manifests in the form of a sparkling silver light. Father Cage makes little effort to resist. If the characters try to help him, they can drive off the demons with some effort, but they cannot save Cage. Before he expires, he lifts himself from his chair and blesses them.
5. Not long after Father Cage's "death," Isaiah Cryingheart suddenly appears. He puts his hands on the characters' shoulders, either as a sign of reassurance or reproach, depending on their previous actions. He then smiles at them and says, "I was once like you and did not believe, but all things are possible for the Lamb. In time, you too will realize your destiny." He then offers the characters the chance to follow him and he points the way toward his home where he will "confer upon you the blessings of a true apostle." In this way, the characters will know where Cryingheart lives should they wish to later follow up on their encounter.

Whether the characters follow Cryingheart or not, the next scenes occur in chronological order. Before the first incident takes place, the characters should feel dizzy and their perceptions become indistinct for a few moments — after which they find that their surroundings have again changed.

1. The characters suddenly find themselves atop a hill in a dark wood. There they see the Monolith made of blackened stone, around which a pitched battle is being fought. Dozens of Native American warriors are fighting — and dying — before an onslaught of demons, who are pouring out of the Monolith. Despite their best efforts, the warriors are no match for the demons, who eventually slaughter their opponents to a man. Characters who are observant notice that, above the fray, several angelic beings watch from a distance. Two of these entities are seemingly unconcerned by what is happening

and unwilling to intercede. The pair holds a third angel in captivity, despite his violent struggles. The restrained angel clearly wishes to act on behalf of the Native Americans and the anguish on his face is obvious. Characters who have met Meltdown previously will see his similarity to the angel's appearance; those who have not, will immediately recognize it when they eventually do encounter him later in this adventure. **Note: The background information explaining this scene can be found in Chapter VIII.**

2. The scene then changes and the characters find themselves in the lobby of the Carleton Hotel (see **Chapter IV**). The place has a kind of sinister opulence, with many pasty-faced patrons going in and out of its front doors. Shifty characters can be seen in the shadows and prostitutes and gangsters openly make use of its rooms. While the characters are watching, a handsome, well-dressed man walks through the doors, a scantily-clad woman on each arm. As he heads toward the elevator, another man rushes forward with a gun and shoots him in the chest. The gunman then runs away as chaos erupts in the lobby. As the characters watch, the murdered man falls to the ground and an impossibly large pool of blood spreads all over the floor, finally spilling out of the hotel and onto the streets of Potter's Lake.
3. The characters suddenly find themselves in the morgue of Potter's Lake Memorial Hospital. The morgue is filled to capacity with bodies on gurneys. The bodies' faces are not covered. If desired, the GM can even include some of the NPCs killed by Father Gorrand. Father Cage's body is also here. Moving among the gurneys is Maura Killough (see **Chapter III**), who reaches out to each corpse and takes their hands in hers. She spends time talking to the cadavers — small talk mostly. It's faintly ridiculous at first sight, but it soon becomes clear that Killough is *having a conversation*. The characters can't hear what the dead people are telling her, yet she can hear them nonetheless. To make matters more surreal, "Mourgie" the clown (see **Chapter IV** of *Heaven & Earth*) is wheeling about on his unicycle among the gurneys, although Killough does not seem to notice him. The clown smiles in a sinister fashion and points to the characters before disappearing from sight.
4. The scene changes once more and the characters find themselves on a street where they see a huge band of men on horseback, perhaps 300 to 400 strong. Dressed in what looks like nineteenth century military garb (although some of it is



rather makeshift), these men fire pistols and rifles into the air and through windows of nearby buildings. Any townsfolk who come out of their homes to determine what is happening are shot without mercy. Soon afterward, some of the men begin to enter houses and bring out anyone who is within. All are asked where they are from, and anyone whose answer does not meet the approval of the band's leader is shot on the spot — as is anyone who protests his actions. The men then set fire to most of the town's homes and the conflagration quickly sends flames high into the air, smelling of brimstone. The characters can see demons amidst the flames, laughing. Anyone with a knowledge of history might recognize these events as Quantrill's Raid into Lawrence, Kansas in 1863 — one of the worst massacres of the Civil War (see **Chapter II: Bleeding Kansas** for more details).

The characters find themselves back on the streets of Potter's Lake. The effects of Shemyaza's demonic virus are coming to an end and they can begin to see ordinary reality bleeding back into focus. In between all the hellish visions, the characters can once again perceive the town they know — and with each passing minute, the difference between what they see one moment and the next becomes all the starker. It makes their heads hurt and their eyesight blurry.

Finally, their vision refocuses, and the first thing they see is Meltdown standing before them. The characters immediately remember the sight of the angel from their encounter on Megiddo's Hill, since the struggling being looked very much like Meltdown. Meltdown smiles at them and his facial features are remarkably serene. His right eye is no longer lazy and he stares intently at the characters, who feel strangely reassured by his presence.

He says to them, "The path has been cleared for you, if you are willing to take it. If you do not, you would not be the first to reject it, but time grows short and there is much to do before the End." He then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a strange fruit that might be an apple but somehow doesn't quite look right. He offers it to the characters. Any who take a bite find it tastes much like an apple but is otherwise unremarkable. Meltdown smiles and says, "The really good ones are in the woods somewhere — if I could only remember." He chuckles and smiles again.

With that, the world as it really is comes back into focus and Meltdown resumes his normal appearance and mannerism. If the fruit is not yet wholly consumed, he attempts to snatch it from the characters and eat it himself. Whether he succeeds or not, he then shuffles off into an alleyway and does not return. He doesn't remember anything from the conversation he had with the characters and no attempt to make him continue the conversation will yield results.

CONCLUSION

Once the characters return to their senses, they will no doubt wonder what has happened to them. No one can answer that question with any certainty, although there are many individuals in Potter's Lake, who, if told the details of their experiences, will venture an opinion as to what has transpired.

- **Father Ezekiel Cage:** The characters will have great difficulty speaking with Father Cage, as his fellow priests (not to mention Claude Lapierre) keep him from seeing unexpected visitors. Nevertheless, he sometimes sits alone in the Thicket on the campus of St. Anselm College. If approached, he will speak with the characters and listen to their tale. He will then say that they have been tricked by the Devil and that their visions should not be trusted. He begs them to lead virtuous lives and to turn to the Church for guidance "in the time you have remaining."
- **Isaiah Cryingheart:** Cryingheart, of course, knows that the characters have been chosen by the Lamb to be his new apostles. If approached, he will listen intently but offer little in the way of advice or explanation. He asks the characters to pray with him and to ask that Christ might enlighten them. He wants the characters to accept their destiny willingly and after reflection. Cryingheart is always available to speak to the characters and does his best to guide — rather than push — them in the right direction.
- **Father Gabriel Gorrand:** Father Gorrand, like Father Cage, believes the characters' experiences are the work of the Devil. He tells them that the temptations of Lucifer are many and that the only sure defense is a life of prayer, good works, and penance. He offers to help the characters in leading this life, using his own experiences in Viet Nam as illustrative examples of the power of faith to overcome all evils.
- **Ed Miller:** Dr. Miller believes the characters are suffering from exposure to a neurotoxin of some kind. If the characters are amenable, he does some tests — and finds traces of the fungal spores found at the Frog Pond (see **Chapter IV**) in Potter's Woods. Since Room 616 had been shut up for so long, it provided a perfect place for the fungus to grow and mutate, making its spores even more potent. Obviously, all that they experienced was a hallucination, nothing more.

If the characters turn to others for answers, the GM shouldn't hesitate in having those who are asked come up

with their own take on what has happened. In the end, however, no one except Isaiah Cryingheart knows the full truth, and Cryingheart is not interested in revealing it. He believes, as does the Lamb, that the characters must come to their own conclusions without coercion. Anything less would be to deny free will and to behave no better than either the Father or Lucifer. The characters will thus have to grapple with their experiences as best they can.

In doing so, though, the characters will have lots of avenues for further exploration, any one of which could form the basis for future adventures. Here are a few of the most obvious ones:

1. What is the history of Fire Station Number 2? What caused its predecessors to burn down and how is this connected to the vision the characters had? Does the animated tattoo on Aaron Stone's back, from their vision, predict the future in some way? Or is it something else entirely?
2. If the characters learned any secrets from the doppelganger of Father Gorrand, they could easily follow up and visit the "sinners" whom Gorrand publicly denounced. Likewise, Father Gorrand's own history in Viet Nam is ripe for exploration, especially since it was this horrific past that drove him into the Franciscan Order and eventually to Potter's Lake. Is this a coincidence or part of the Father's plan? Or does Gorrand serve Lucifer or even the Lamb?
3. What about Bob Southey's nefarious activities? Are they literally real or are they simply metaphors for something else entirely? Investigating the Southey Paper Mill will bring the characters into contact with stories of the Curse, as well as with evidence of Marbas's activities.
4. The characters have now seen the Monolith, if only in a vision. If they want to find out about its reality, they'll have to brave Potter's Woods and there are few in town who'd accompany them. Once inside, there are all sorts of dangers — and wonders — that await them.
5. What happened on that fateful day at the Carleton Hotel? Why was that man gunned down and who was his killer? This foray into Potter's Lake history opens up lots of avenues for investigation, as well as possible run-ins with the Ghost Hunters.
6. What does Quantrill's Raid have to do with Potter's Lake? Why should Shemyaza's virus transport the characters to Lawrence, Kansas to witness the events of that terrible day in 1863?
7. What is the story of Meltdown? Where did he come from? How long has he been a fixture of Potter's Lake? Why did he appear in the

characters' vision as he did? Likewise, what was the fruit he offered them? He said there were more in the forest — "really good ones," he called them. Is he right? What did he mean by this?

8. There's also the question of the Frog Pond and its fungus. Chances are that Dr. Miller's diagnosis is the first time the characters have ever heard of the place. Might they journey there to confirm the doctor's findings? If so, what other visions might they experience and, if they do, are they similar to or different from the ones that occurred after entering Room 616?

RETURNING TO ROOM 616

The player characters may decide to return to Room 616 in an effort to understand exactly what has happened to them. Such an undertaking is unlikely to succeed though; too many people are now keeping an eye on the room after this latest incident. However, it is possible for creative and ingenious players to regain entrance to Room 616. Should this occur, they could find traces of the mold *ascomycata potteriensis* (see the **Frog Pond** entry in **Chapter IV** for more details). More than likely, the PCs will have no idea what they've discovered since the mold does not appear odd in and of itself. Furthermore, the PCs would have to send the mold to a properly equipped laboratory to identify its hallucinogenic properties. If the player characters are successful in identifying the mold, the Gamemaster should keep in mind that *ascomycata potteriensis* is very rare and indigenous only to the Potter's Lake area. This means the player characters' investigation could attract unwanted attention, most notably from the government and Project: Grayscale, opening the PCs up to whole new adventures and threats.

CHAPTER VIII

SWINDON'S LABYRINTH

in Caelo et in Terra



Swindon's Labyrinth" is a mini-adventure designed for one to three hours of play. It is a stand-alone story that has no ties to the overarching plotline of *Heaven & Earth*. As such, the following adventure makes an ideal break between story arcs or can provide a brief change of pace during an ongoing series.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

This mini-adventure can be run with any number of players, although it works best with a small group of two to four. Whether the PCs know each other or not, or what their background or occupation might be, is irrelevant - as the drama all takes place at a single location, at which a wide variety of individuals is already assembled when the adventure commences.

BACKSTORY

Minimal background material is needed to run "Swindon's Labyrinth" because the entirety of the action takes place at one location in a span of mere hours.

All the PCs are attending a public re-zoning hearing at New City Hall (see the New City Hall write-up in **Chapter IV** for the details and history of this unusual location). The exact reason each character is present at the hearing is up to the Gamemaster and/or the players. For example, one or more of the PCs may live in an area affected by the re-zoning proposal. The GM can also use the PCs' occupations to justify their presence at the hearing. They could be representing a business that will be affected by the proposed re-zoning, or their occupation might dictate that they would normally be at the town's city hall (such would be the case for a police officer, a politician, a civil engineer, etc.).

The mini-adventure begins with the city council declaring a recess for the day. The player characters, and any NPCs with whom the GM decides to populate the council chamber, depart the hearing, planning to get back

to their daily lives. However, leaving New City Hall is easier said than done.

SCENES

"Swindon's Labyrinth" is broken down into a series of scenes. Although it's easiest, and perhaps best, to run the events in the order presented, the structure of the mini-adventure is fluid enough that they may be organized in nearly any order. Gamemasters should read over each scene and become familiar with the sequence before running the adventure.

SCENE 1: ENDLESS CORRIDORS

When the player characters depart the council chambers, the Gamemaster needs to make sure they are all heading the same way, presumably towards the exit. If desired, the GM can allow the PCs time to converse, though the players will most likely dictate the extent of the roleplaying.

The characters will begin to navigate a seemingly endless maze of identical hallways and doors, in an attempt to simply find their way out. This turns out to be absurdly more difficult than it should be. The PCs will find themselves doubling back on hallways they've already walked, and many of the doors bear no number or faceplate, making it difficult for the PCs to mark where they've been. Asking for directions will also prove to be of little help (see the **Asking for Directions** sidebar for more details). After the characters have wandered a bit, and presumably are becoming frustrated in their attempts to exit the building, the Gamemaster should proceed to the next scene.

SCENE 2: TJ TRASKER

As the PCs struggle to find their way out of New City Hall, they suddenly hear loud cursing coming from around the corner. Rounding the bend, they run into TJ Trasker

ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS

The PCs will quickly discover that asking for directions is pointless. Every response they get will be sincere but impossible to make sense of, let alone follow.

Here is an example of the type of directions the PCs are likely to receive:

"Okay. Head down this hallway, turn left at the door with the fading paint, and at the third water cooler turn right and walk parallel to the big desk. Open the door with the new doorknob, hang a left, and head down - or maybe it's up - the flight of stairs there. Try the door by the fire hydrant. If it's locked keep going till you reach the brown door. Past that, you'll find a white hallway leading to the exit."

Obviously, these directions are obscure and confusing. That's the point.

(see **Chapter III** for his write-up). TJ is in the middle of the hallway, sitting in his motorized wheelchair, arms flailing, screaming towards the ceiling. The battery for TJ's wheelchair has died, and his transport is too heavy for him to wheel himself about with any degree of ease. On top of this, the unusual architecture of New City Hall is giving TJ a migraine.

Whether TJ knows the PCs or not, he will beg their assistance. The tone of his voice will be friendlier than it was moments ago, and he will kindly ask the PCs to wheel him to the exit. If the PCs refuse, he will curse at them as they head on their way (and will continue to do so every time the characters double back and cross his path). If they agree to help, TJ will thank them profusely, and give them the directions to the exit. Unfortunately, TJ's directions will not provide any help whatsoever. TJ is as lost as they are.

While traveling the maze of hallways, TJ will share the story of New City Hall with the players (see the New City Hall entry in **Chapter IV**). He will focus on the more horrific aspects of the tale, particularly Meryl Swindon's suicide and accounts of construction workers who went missing for hours, days, or (as TJ claims) sometimes forever. While regaling the player characters, TJ has a mischievous smile on his face and seems to be enjoying their apprehension.

SCENE 3: THE PAINTING

Wandering down yet another of the seemingly endless corridors, the group stumbles across an unusual painting hanging on the wall. The image is a close-up of a human eye. The painting has an almost hypnotic effect on those who stare into it. The GM should call for a Fortitude check (Difficulty of Average) for anyone who examines the painting. Those who fail the check will be so enraptured by the image that they will have to be forcefully pulled away from it.

The painting is signed with the initials "L.P."

SCENE 4: ONIJI

The player characters, presumably with TJ in tow, will come across Oniji Koyanagi multiple times during their wanderings (see **Chapter III** for information on Oniji). At every encounter, Oniji is personable and bows his head slightly towards the group. If they ask for his help, he claims to be lost as well. If asked to join the PCs, Oniji politely refuses. "I must make my own way," he says with a stoic face.

The oddest thing about the Oniji encounters is their placement. For example, the group may encounter him and take a corridor to the left, while he takes one to the right. Shortly thereafter, even though there is no logical way their

A NOTE ON MAPS

Be design, no map is provided for New City Hall. In "Swindon's Labyrinth," the hallways are not supposed to function in any logical sense. This adds to the surrealism and absurdity of the mini-adventure. Corridors can, and should, double back on themselves, the same person might be encountered multiple times (though he was last seen heading in an opposite direction), stairways lead to an identical-looking floor, and nearly every door is unmarked and identical to every other door. While all of this is highly improbable, it can make for some interesting role-playing.

Ingenious players may decide to map their progress. This simply will not work. The end map will be an impossible mess of improbability. In fact, when the players' map ends up making no sense, the GM should allow the characters to draw their own conclusions about the nature of New City Hall. If the PCs believe there is something supernatural afoot, the GM should do nothing to change their minds. Of course, as written, New City Hall is not actually supernatural - though the GM can change this fact if desired.

paths could possibly cross, the PCs will once again come across Oniji.

SCENE 5: CONSTRUCTION WORKER

The group bumps into a construction worker who is obviously lost as well. "Feels like I've been wandering these hallways forever," he'll say before walking away. Naturally, the PCs may start thinking back to TJ's tale of missing construction workers, and might even assume the man to be one of them, lost for thirty years. Although this is not true, the Gamemaster should do nothing to dissuade the players from reaching this conclusion; it will add some creepiness to the proceedings. If any player characters begin badgering the worker with seemingly insane questions, he will look strangely at them, refuse to answer, and quickly walk off.

SCENE 6: THE SHRINKING HALLWAY

At one point during their wanderings, the PCs will encounter an unusually long corridor, one that appears to become smaller the farther one goes down it. The Gamemaster should call for Fortitude checks (Difficulty of Average or Hard) as the PCs proceed. Failure leads to bouts of dizziness, claustrophobia, fainting or whatever else the

GM deems appropriate.

The “shrinking effect” is an optical illusion caused by the unusual geometry and construction of the hallway. There is nothing supernatural at work. Any characters who make it halfway down the corridor will realize that the hallway is not actually shrinking; it only appears to be.

SCENE 7: PARROT HUNT

When the PCs open one of the doors (which door is unimportant), a parrot flies out, nearly hitting one of the characters in the head. The bird soars away from the group, down the corridor, squawking all the while.

Immediately following the bird’s departure, an attractive young woman in business attire lunges out of the opened door. She alternately curses and sobs, while pounding both of her fists on the chest of whoever opened the door. Her name is Samantha Meadows, and the parrot is her boss’s pet (unimaginatively named Polly by its owner). One of Samantha’s “office duties” is the daily feeding of the bird. Unfortunately for her, the parrot fled its cage while she was feeding it. For the last ten minutes, she’s been trying to catch the parrot and return Polly to its cage. Samantha fears the wrath of her boss, and desperately hopes to have the bird captured before its owner returns to the office. When the PCs opened the door, the parrot left the room and made her task phenomenally harder.

Samantha will share all of this information with the PCs in an attempt to guilt them into helping her track down

the parrot. If the players refuse, Samantha will physically attack one of the player characters with whatever means she has available (stapler, high heels, etc.). Shortly after the melee begins, the police will be called. Minutes later, Deputy Marinovich (see **Chapter III** for her write-up) and another officer will arrive on the scene. After things are calmed down, the GM can proceed to **Scene 8**.

If the PCs agree to help Samantha they will begin an interesting game of “*Hunt the Parrot*,” following the bird down multiple flights of stairs, countless open doorways, and even into the ventilation ducts. How long the hunt lasts is entirely up to the Gamemaster, who should use the chase as a comedic vehicle to bring a moment of levity to the adventure. Eventually, Polly will be apprehended, and Samantha Meadows will be very appreciative. So much so that she will begin to openly flirt with one of the male PCs.

The PCs will have made quite a ruckus during their bird hunt, and the police have been called in response. Deputy Marinovich will arrive on the scene, and the GM can proceed to **Scene 8**.

SCENE 8: DEPUTY MARINOVICH

One way or the other, the PCs will encounter Deputy Marinovich. The crux of their conversation will depend on the events in the last scene. If Michelle arrived because of the fight, she will question the PCs about the incident. If she was called in response to the group’s parrot hunting antics, she will pursue a different line of questioning.

Once her official work is done, Marinovich will tell the characters that quite a few of the employees at New City Hall have seen the PCs wandering about for hours. Once the characters inform the deputy that they are lost, and have been for some time, she will laugh and offer to lead them to the exit. If for some reason the PCs do not explain their predicament to the deputy, TJ (if present) will chime in. In the unlikely event that the PCs say nothing and TJ is not with the group, the Gamemaster should have Deputy Marinovich walk out a door labeled “Exit” that is only mere feet away from the PCs, showing them the way to freedom.

With their ordeal over, the player characters can return to their everyday lives.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Unlike “*Heart of Darkness*” and “*The Waiting Room*” (see the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook), “*Swindon’s Labyrinth*” is not designed to springboard into future adventures or story arcs. However, there are a few minor threads that can certainly be followed up on or built upon by the Gamemaster, most notably the suicide of Meryl Swindon at the Carleton, and the hypnotic painting hanging in New City Hall.



CHAPTER IX

UNTOLD HISTORY

in Caelo et in Terra



And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” — Genesis 2:8-9

As explained in the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook, Potter’s Lake occupies one of the last vestiges of the earthly paradise created by God at the beginning of the world. It was here that God placed the first human beings — and it was from here that he expelled them after their disobedience. The reason for this forced exodus lies with the Two Trees of Eden: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The Tree of Life, as its name suggests, grants immortality to any who eat of its fruit, while the Tree of Knowledge imparts infinite wisdom and insight. Neither is a “tree” like the pine or birch trees pulped in the Southey Mill. They are rather metaphysical offshoots of God’s presence within his own creation, which is to say, an unintended consequence of God’s fine-tuning his handiwork. They are “shadows” of God’s power and, as such, reflect something of God’s own character — specifically, immortality and omniscience. God did not intend for these manifestations of his essence to appear, but appear they did, and all that he could do to secure his plan for humanity was to forbid Adam and Eve from partaking of the fruits of either tree. Significantly, what he most feared was the presence of the Tree of Knowledge, which could open the mortals’ eyes to their true place in God’s plan.

“And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and will be like God, knowing good and evil.’” — Genesis 3:2-5

Lucifer, as leader of the Rebel Host, had agreed that he and his minions would wage their war against God on Earth, the battlefield he had created for just this purpose. The appearance of the Two Trees was Lucifer’s first evidence that God had miscalculated, for clearly he did not intend to make a portion of his power available to humanity — or, by extension, the Devil. Appearing in the guise of a serpent, Lucifer tempted first Eve and then Adam to disobey God.

Both Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and, for the first time, became afraid of God. Initially, they believed their fear stemmed from their nakedness. In truth, their dread went far deeper; it was a terror of God himself. Though they did not understand it, they feared for their very existence and that of all human beings throughout time. They had a fleeting sense of their own insignificance in God’s plan, that they were nothing in his sight. Before the two could make sense of these newfound

insights, God cast them out of Eden, sending them far, far away. It would be untold millennia before humans would again feel the same fear that their first parents did, let alone glimpse its true meaning.

“Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’”—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” — Genesis 3:22-24

The cherub whom God placed to guard Eden was named Iophiel. His assigned task was to ensure that neither Adam nor Eve nor any of their descendants ever found the garden and the Two Trees within it. To that end, Iophiel kept watch and remained vigilant, for God had warned him that human beings would one-day attempt to reclaim Eden against his wishes. Ever faithful, Iophiel obeyed God, despite his loneliness. Separated from the rest of the Heavenly Host, the angel was without companionship of any kind. Even God did not converse much with Iophiel, lest he draw too much attention to the now-empty garden. Slowly but inevitably, Iophiel’s loneliness turned to madness and he came to forget his purpose.

In time, Adam’s descendants returned to the vicinity of Eden. These people, whom later generations would call Native Americans, stumbled upon the abandoned garden and felt the presence of Iophiel. Rather than flee, they attempted to befriend the lonely hermit and their efforts touched the heart of the angel, providing him comfort and easing his madness. Iophiel soon came to love these children of Adam and shared with them a portion of his knowledge, secrets no human had ever known and by which the Native Americans were able to work wonders.

At this, God raged at his angel and feared that these humans would seize Eden and the Two Trees for themselves. Rather than allow that to occur, he ordered Iophiel to hide the garden from the sight of men, including the Two Trees. Saddened, the angel obeyed, reshaping the land to camouflage its true nature and spiriting away the trees to a vast woods; being manifestations of God’s power on Earth, the trees could not be destroyed. To this day, only God and Iophiel know the locations of the trees and neither God nor Iophiel is likely to reveal them. God, of course, has no interest in disclosing their position and indeed worries that one day humans will find them despite all the efforts that have been taken. Iophiel, on the other hand, is now thoroughly insane. He continues to guard the trees, taking on the form of a homeless man known as Meltdown. As faithfully as he serves God, even in his insanity, Iophiel nevertheless seeks out the companionship of Adam’s children — perhaps to heal his madness, perhaps to reveal more of his secrets.

“But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that the time is short!” — Revelation 12:12

Despite God’s efforts at hiding the truth, Lucifer knew what had transpired after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. In an attempt to win another battle in the war, he sent demons to Earth to lay the groundwork for his endgame against God. The fiends were sent to accomplish two goals. The first was to ensure that the children of Adam never find the trees that Iophiel had hidden. While this may seem odd, since it was the Devil who had first convinced human beings to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, it is not. Lucifer knows only too well that, should humans find the trees, they will not merely become like God; they will become *like him* as well. Lucifer’s plan, no less than God’s, requires humans to be pawns, not independent actors. To that end, he commanded his demons to corrupt the woods in which the trees were hidden, making it a nigh impassible and unwholesome barrier against human incursions. Better yet, Lucifer hoped that the corruption might even befoul the Two Trees and their fruit — a blow against God’s own essence as well as a safeguard against humanity’s spiritual evolution.

The second task of the demons was to establish a beachhead near Eden from which Lucifer could send forth his forces when the Final Trumpet is sounded. Upon the mound that later times would name Megiddo’s Hill, the demons constructed a monolith made of black stone brought from Hell itself. The Monolith serves as a gateway

between the Inferno and Earth, allowing demons to travel freely between the two realms. The Native Americans avoided Megiddo’s Hill and told many tales of its dark taint, stories that would filter down through the ages and lead some to believe falsely that it was they who constructed the Monolith.

The presence of so many of the Rebel Host in one place on Earth alarmed the angels loyal to God. Led by Uriel, the angels descended to provide a divine bulwark against the demons. They found, much to their chagrin, that the corruption of the woods was so great that they could not enter it easily. Indeed, it was painful for them to do so. The angels preferred to stand guard at the woods’ edge or to circulate unseen among the children of Adam — doing their best to ward off demonic influence and keep humanity ignorant of the cosmic game under way all around them. By and large, the angels were successful, but, like the greater war being waged between God and Lucifer, there were victories and setbacks over time, with neither side winning the day without cost.

“Do you not know that we are to judge angels?” — 1 Corinthians 6:3

And so things remained until servants of the Lamb first arrived in the late seventeenth century. French fur trader Louis Jolliet and Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette, along with five other companions, explored the area around Eden, but were warned off by the local Native Americans to go no further, especially into the dark woods. While Jolliet was suspicious of these warnings, Father Marquette took them



to heart, claiming that an angel had appeared to him in a dream (for indeed it had) and told him to avoid the area at God's command, "lest you die" — an echo of God's very words to Adam and Eve. The explorers did not journey further, but Marquette reported his experiences back to his superiors in Rome, where they were filed away and forgotten for several hundred years.

Despite the advice of the Native Americans, Europeans eventually came back to the area around Eden, although none stayed for long. In part, this was due to the influence of the Heavenly Host, whose duty it was to protect the Two Trees from mortal discovery. The small number of humans in the area made it quite easy to lead inquisitive explorers astray or, if necessary, destroy those who got too close to the truth. Tales of these disappearances eventually spread back to better settled regions, prompting most to simply believe that the Native Americans were responsible. Initially, this helped keep other explorers and settlers away from the area, as the angels intended, but eventually it meant that those who did come would do so in larger numbers and armed to protect themselves. Even so, the ruse worked for almost 150 years — but it could not permanently keep the children of Adam from returning to their place of origin and reclaiming it as their birthright.

In the meantime, the Native Americans suffered at the hands of Lucifer. His demons sowed dissension in their ranks, stoking age-old feuds between families and tearing apart their communities in the process. The fear engendered by the inevitable arrival of settlers only made matters worse. The wisest Native Americans decided to leave the area and find safety far away, much to Iophiel's disappointment, for their company was all that helped him maintain his tenuous grasp on sanity. Those who remained mistakenly blamed the angel for the departure of their kin and shunned and abjured him. In anger and despair at this betrayal, Iophiel wiped out the remaining Native Americans — an action for which he was not rebuked by God but was rather commended. In doing so, he made it less likely that any human being might find the Two Trees or succumb to the temptations of Lucifer's demons. Iophiel retreated into the woods to brood, and Eden grew darker without his presence. From time to time, a handful of Native Americans would return to their ancestral lands, but only a few dared stay for long, lest they too suffer the fate of those who had remained behind.

The first permanent settler in the region was Jacob Potter, a fur trader, who had read and heard stories of a place west of the Mississippi River rich in game and so wild as to defy any who tried to settle it. Potter first entered the territory in 1823, and found it very much unlike what he had been expecting. For one, it appeared to be totally uninhabited. The "savages" he had expected to find were not there, although there was plenty of evidence that humans had once resided in the region. In addition, the native wildlife was not as plentiful as he had hoped, at least not in the area around the large lake where Potter established his

home and that now bears his name. In fact, the woods were strangely quiet, as if completely devoid of life.

Nevertheless, Potter sensed that the area was not truly uninhabited, even though he could not see any obvious signs that there was anyone (or anything) living nearby. Though he had come to trap game animals and sell their fur, Potter was forced to plant crops to keep himself alive — and he found he had quite a knack for farming, far more than he had expected. It seemed as if he could easily grow whatever he planted. Potter soon found that he had more than enough food to feed himself and he considered taking up the life of a farmer on a permanent basis. At the same time, he remained intrigued by the lack of wildlife in the area and decided to explore further. This led him into the dark woods he had avoided thus far.

With some trepidation, Jacob Potter entered the dimly-lit forest. In doing so, he was the first human being to show such bravery in untold centuries. His presence brought him to the attention of Iophiel, who had remained within the woods, avoiding both his brother angels and the demons that lurked on Megiddo's Hill. Iophiel rejoiced and decided to act. In a moment of lucidity he had not possessed in over a century, the angel appeared to Potter in the form of one of the Native Americans whom he had slain long ago. He told him that this land had been especially blessed and that, if he convinced others to return here, they would find it fulfilled their every heart's desire; it would be a home like no other in all Creation.

Potter did not know what to make of Iophiel's promise or the fact that this "savage" had addressed him in English and knew so much about him and his purpose for being there. Still, Potter decided to leave the lake and return east, to recruit others to come back with him. It took him some time to do this and he had to stretch the truth regarding the nature of the area, but he eventually succeeded. In 1825, Jacob Potter returned to what everyone now dubbed Potter's Lake, with 20 other traders and trappers who were willing to establish a new settlement. Upon his return, he found that the game had returned and the entire area seemed to be bursting with life — a gift from Iophiel, much to the chagrin of both God and Lucifer. In punishment, God finally stripped Iophiel of his position as guardian of Eden and entrusted the errant angel's duties collectively to the other seraphs in the region. God also stole a portion of Iophiel's power, thereby limiting his ability to wreak further havoc in the Lord's war with Lucifer.

In short order, the remarkable fecundity of Potter's Lake had become legendary, with word spreading to more civilized regions. Among those who heard the tales was a Catholic priest named Aloysius Dominic. Father Dominic was, by training, a theologian, but he had long wished to work as a missionary on the frontier. The tales he was hearing inspired him, and he asked permission to travel to Potter's Lake to set up a mission there. His superiors granted his request and sent five other priests with him. They arrived at Potter's Lake in 1827 to tend to the spiritual needs of the

settlers and the practically non-existent Native Americans, whose numbers had remained tiny after Iophiel's earlier massacre.

Father Dominic and his brother priests founded a small church, named Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, which would eventually grow in size and be recognized as a basilica by Pope St. Pius X in 1910. Dominic quickly established a good rapport with many of the traders, most especially Jacob Potter, whom he personally converted to Catholicism in 1830. Due to their isolation and the darkness that remained despite Iophiel's gift, many of the settlers welcomed the priests' message and flocked to the church. A few, like Lucius King and Obadiah Wainwright, chose to forego the church's ministry, keeping to their own faiths or to none at all.

Father Dominic was also known as a great explorer and cartographer. He traveled extensively around Potter's Lake and the surrounding region, talking with the scattered Native Americans he encountered and visiting as much territory as he could. His frequent conversations with Jacob Potter eventually convinced him to explore the woods. It was then that he discovered and named Megiddo's Hill, seeing the Monolith at its summit for the first time. While there, the aging priest sensed the darkness that suffused the woods. He also felt something else that he could not explain, something that drew him to the place and filled his soul with an odd mixture of peace and fear. Iophiel observed him, but chose not to speak, fearing God's reaction and the punishment he might visit on Adam's children as a result.

"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven."—Revelation 12:7-8

All Father Dominic had seen, convinced him that his desire to come to Potter's Lake had been no accident; it was obviously the will of Providence. He contacted his superiors and told them of the woods, the Monolith, and the darkness he felt all around him. Alarmed, the church elders contacted the Holy See, who, after some research of their own, concluded that the time was right to send members of the Wing of St. Michael to investigate. They also instructed Father Dominic to build a college in Potter's Lake. This school would serve as a cover and training site for the Wing of St. Michael, which Rome feared would be standing face to face with the Dragon himself. They were more right than they realized.

With the foundation of St. Anselm College in 1831, Potter's Lake attracted more settlers, including many with refined manners and tastes. The town began to grow and, as it did, increasing numbers of people dared to explore the woods. Many – perhaps most – would never return from their sojourn, but some would. Satan's demons would occasionally attempt to possess one of the souls who ventured within their territory, so as to wreak havoc in

Potter's Lake. More often than not, the angels under Uriel would engage them and prevent the devils from gaining a victory. Those who were in a position to tell of their adventures echoed the sentiment that great darkness was upon the place; but some had also felt the lure of the Two Trees. Hidden though they were, the children of Adam are forever capable of sensing their power.

Human beings were not the only ones drawn to the woods. The seventy-two ancient spirits known as the Goetia also felt the presence of the Two Trees. Older than even the angels, these spirits were powerful manifestations of the primal forces from which God created the world. Though mighty, they could never hope to win out against God directly and thus worked in the shadows, corrupting creation when and where they could. The Two Trees, being aspects of God's power, presented rich targets for the Goetia. The trees could, in principle, be seized and used against God, for they contained within them reflections of his own immortality and omniscience. Each of the Goetia had its own plan to capture the trees, with the most tenacious known as Marbas, who would eventually plague the Southey family for generations.

"Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice."—Jeremiah 22:13

As the town grew further, its importance in the war between God and Lucifer increased. The angels and demons of the woods clashed regularly, but the demons had an advantage in the Monolith. They could always reinforce themselves and often did. While few witnessed these clashes, their effects could be felt by those in tune with the energies of Potter's Lake, particularly the devout and the depraved. Both of these groups found more of their kind being continually attracted to the town, which only emphasized its peculiar character. By 1876, the community had grown large enough that its citizens felt it should be granted a formal charter by the state. Only the actions of Calvin Tryst and his five companions achieved this end, although it is most likely that Tryst was influenced either by demons or the Goetia.

Only a few years later, Potter's Lake attracted another group of unusual inhabitants. Three families had traveled from New York to make a new life for themselves in what they believed was a "God-fearing" community. These households were all members of the Zetetic Society, an organization that combined Christian fundamentalism and philosophical skepticism. Opposed to all forms of scientific learning and convinced that progress was a dangerous sham, they hoped to find converts in Potter's Lake. Unfortunately for them, the spirit of Father Aloysius Dominic lived on and his successors vigorously opposed the Zetetics. Professors from St. Anselm publicly debated these newcomers on matters both theological and scientific and, by all accounts, bested them handily. Even the Protestant minority found little to admire in the Zetetics and denounced all they

stood for. The group was made a laughingstock and many individuals eventually left town. What few realized was that they had actually made a small number of converts among the population, including several influential individuals within the town's establishment. This handful would meet surreptitiously and propagate their odd views, waiting for another time when they might emerge victorious — and, in Hell, Lucifer smiled, seeing the Zetetics as unintended allies, whose skepticism would eventually undermine faith in God.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Potter's Lake had grown large enough in size to attract investors from the wider world. These entrepreneurs helped finance new buildings like the Brandeis Theatre, as well as new work-sites that took advantage of the town's ready access to fresh water and lumber. The town's growth also attracted a handful of individuals from far off places, many of these being non-Americans who sought solace and a chance to start new lives away from the larger population centers. Though they did not know it, these foreigners had been drawn to Potter's Lake by their divine progenitor, Jesus Christ, who had begun to take an independent interest in the war between his father and Lucifer. The Lamb cared greatly for the children of Adam, as he had been born among them, and was growing worried that God's intentions toward humanity were not as he had been led to believe. Thus, he gathered his progeny, known as the Gifted, to Potter's Lake — so that he might one day learn if his fears were justified.

"And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." —John 3:19-20

By 1902, the town's growth was such that Robert Southey set up his paper mill and turned Potter's Lake into a major exporter of paper products, which it remains to this day. Southey's family quickly became even wealthier — and more influential — as a result of the mill's success. Around the same time, a man named Reed Saltonstall made his way to Potter's Lake from Boston. A magician of great power and a servant of Hell, he came to further corrupt Eden on behalf of his diabolical benefactor. Over the course of several months, Saltonstall ingratiated himself to Robert Southey, which placed the mage in the perfect position to do Lucifer's bidding. Saltonstall eventually summoned and bound one of the Goetia, Marbas, to the Southey bloodline. Marbas would inflict great suffering on the family and its friends — the so-called Southey Curse — and, by extension, Potter's Lake as a whole. For his service to evil, Saltonstall was granted immortality. He "disappeared" in 1911 and went into hiding, resurfacing in the last few years under a new name: Sullivan Pierce. Stories persist that Saltonstall's ghost haunts his old home, which is not far from the truth, as the magician used it as a base from which to launch his



own satanic activities.

Potter's Lake weathered both World Wars reasonably intact, although the Depression hit the community very hard. Many businesses went bankrupt, but the Southey Mill survived, thanks in part to the supernatural assistance of Marbas, who tightened its grip over the family. Likewise, many residents sought divine or infernal assistance during this dark time. Lucifer made great headway, as did the Lamb, still acting on behalf of his father. The 1930's saw a religious revival — both Catholic and Protestant — in Potter's Lake and the spiritual enthusiasm put an end to the last remaining vestiges of the Zetetics' public face. From now on, they would exist entirely as a secret society away from prying eyes.

In 1951, the United States Air Force opened Powell Air Force Base on the outskirts of Potter's Lake. The base was always small, intended primarily as a training facility for certain technical military specialties, such as cryptography, telecommunications, and geodetics. Nevertheless, the community welcomed the opening of the base, as it brought additional investment into the city, although not as much as many had hoped. In 1980, the base was expanded somewhat. Publicly, its mission remained the same, but in reality it had been co-opted by Project: Grayscale, a military program investigating psychic abilities. Because Potter's Lake residents displayed a higher than normal affinity for these abilities, the Air Force became very interested

and viewed the town as a giant “laboratory” for its own experimental uses.

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” —Matthew 24:36

The last decade has thrown Potter’s Lake into turmoil, although not all of it is obvious to the citizenry. Most important is the sounding of the Final Trumpet, heralding the coming Apocalypse. God has decided that the cosmic endgame is at hand. Tired of millennia battling against Lucifer, he has made it clear that he intends to bring about the Eschaton, making this the last generation of Adam’s children. The Lamb tried in vain to dissuade his father from this course. He even attempted to convince Lucifer not to agree to God’s decision, but he failed there as well. Christ is not content to allow humanity — his people — to suffer anymore and, like Lucifer before him, has rebelled against God. Seeking an alternate path, he has called even more Gifted to Potter’s Lake. The Lamb believes that Armageddon might be prevented or at least delayed and that its coming need not spell the end of mankind. To that end, the Brotherhood of Ioannes has come to Potter’s Lake as well. They have offered their services to Christ and, like their eponymous patron, they hope to prepare the way for the Lamb.

Meanwhile, every faction and secret society in the vicinity of Eden realizes that great changes are afoot, even if none has a complete picture of what they are. After the Brotherhood of Ioannes, the Wing of St. Michael is

probably the most well-informed. They suspect that the End Times are upon humanity and seek to save as many souls as they can before time runs out. They spend much of their efforts pursuing demons and their human servants, as well as following up on Father Aloysius Dominic’s original survey of the woods. The Wing’s members believe — and rightly so — that the woods hold the key to humanity’s salvation. They do not as yet suspect that the Two Trees are hidden there or that Potter’s Lake rests upon Eden. Likewise, they do not understand that God and the Christ, both of whom they serve, are at odds. Were they to be faced with this latter fact, it is possible that they might find the truth too difficult to bear — one of the reasons the Lamb has not yet revealed it to them.

Project: Grayscale seeks out individuals with psychic or unexplained abilities. To date, they have concentrated their efforts on Meltdown (whose angelic nature they do not know), Annabella Visconti, and Bob Southey IV. Grayscale knows nothing about the coming Apocalypse but believes that the future of the United States (and therefore humanity, to its mind) depends on finding and harnessing psychic potential. Needless to say, this puts Grayscale at odds with the Lamb, whose scions are all potent psychics.

The Zetetics, on the other hand, seek to cover up any evidence of supernatural activity in Potter’s Lake. They too have only a limited understanding of what is occurring. They realize enough, however, and believe that, by hiding the truth from the public, they might be able to delay or even stave off what is coming. To that end, they and their allies (like the Potter’s Lake Ghost Hunters) debunk stories of the paranormal and offer rational explanations for the oddities that keep occurring in Potter’s Lake with ever-greater frequency.

The Goetia, particularly Marbas, see the final coming as a chance to seize ultimate power for themselves. Each individual spirit is convinced that it can at last succeed in wresting control from God, who is too distracted by his battle with Lucifer and the rebellion of his son to notice the Ageless. As the finale draws nearer, the Goetia are becoming bolder, possessing more humans and exerting more influence in the physical world. They also seek the Two Trees, which they correctly reckon to be their best means to achieving victory. Fortunately, the Goetia spend as much time fighting one another as they do their external enemies.

The angels and demons of the woods have likewise become more active as the world careens toward its doom. The corruption of the woods has grown so great that demons can move about far more freely than they could in past decades, no longer truly needing the Monolith to do so. Their forces are growing and they now outnumber the angels by a large margin. Uriel and his fellow guardians are overwhelmed and have appealed to God for reinforcements, none of which are forthcoming for reasons God has not seen fit to reveal. It may be that he has some other plan to deal with the minions of Hell or that he is so overconfident



in his own position that he does not consider the demons a serious problem. Iophiel, on the other hand, does consider them a threat — a grave one. In the last few years, he has left the woods and ventured out among the children of Adam. Taking the form of Meltdown, he seeks out humans to whom he can tell his secrets, in the hopes that he might somehow save these individuals from the future he sees only too clearly.

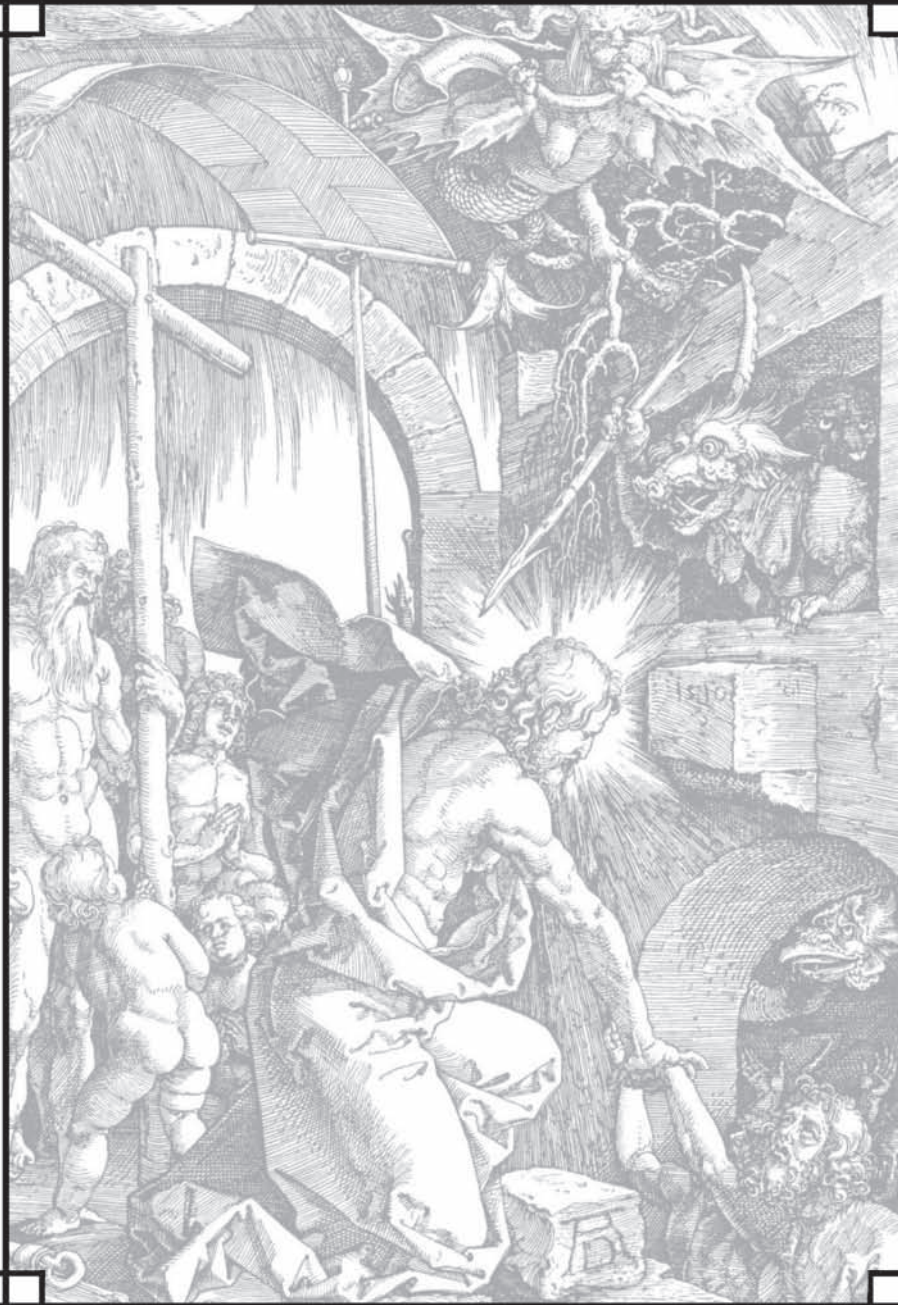
And so this is how the world will end. As it was in the beginning, Eden is again the center of the universe, the focus of divine and diabolic interest — and the site of a rebellion. Just what the ultimate fate of humanity will be remains uncertain, as both God and Lucifer play out the final moves in their great game. The only guarantee is that Adam's descendants have but the slimmest chance to be more than pawns. Whether on its own or with the help of the Lamb or another supernatural agent, humanity must seize its own future before it is taken from it forever. Only then can it fulfill a destiny other than that planned by God or the Devil.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven had passed away, and the sea was no more.”—Revelation 21:1

APPENDIX I

ST. ANSELM COLLEGE

in Caelo et in Terra



More properly known as the College of St. Anselm, this Roman Catholic university is one of the oldest academic institutions established west of the Mississippi River. The Benedictine missionaries who came to this part of eastern Kansas first built merely a small church — but quickly they found a need to erect many other buildings, which they used to educate the trappers, farmers, and other settlers who flocked to the town. Within a few short years, these buildings became the nucleus of a college that received formal pontifical certification in 1831.

The college motto is “*Lux Caecis*”—“A Light to the Blind.” Its academic colors are gold and yellow, while athletic colors are red and black.

HISTORY

Benedictine missionaries, under the leadership of Aloysius Dominic, arrived at Potter’s Lake in 1827. Fr. Dominic almost immediately struck a profound rapport with Jacob Potter, whom he personally instructed and welcomed into the Church later that same year. Fr. Dominic’s reputation as both a great teacher and preacher soon became widely recognized and many others sought him out for education, both in religious and other matters. The priest did not wish to turn anyone away, but he also understood his own limitations. Soon he was forced to send word to his superiors, asking for assistance. Relief came in early 1828, when more Benedictines, along with several dedicated laypeople (including Francis Moynihan), arrived in the settlement with the purpose of founding a school.

Neither Fr. Dominic nor any of those who answered his call for aid had any intention of founding a liberal arts college — at least not at first. Rather, they simply wished to create a place where both the settlers and their children could learn the rudiments of education, especially catechetical instruction. Their efforts met with great success and Potter’s Lake quickly became a predominantly Roman Catholic community, as more and more residents converted to the faith and numerous Catholic settlers made it their destination of choice. Even the minority who did not accept Catholicism were at least not hostile to it, making Potter’s Lake all the more remarkable a place in 19th century America.

Once the College received formal pontifical recognition in 1831, more priests and other religious instructors were sent to join its faculty. Many of these newcomers were from orders other than the Benedictines. Within a decade, the College of St. Anselm boasted a very diverse faculty, as well as a minor seminary where young boys could be trained with the expectation that they would eventually enter the priesthood. Consequently, in its early days, the College remained primarily a theologically-focused institution, although one could also obtain a solid liberal arts education there. Under Fr. Dominic’s guidance, the

College took a very open-minded stance regarding those whom it would accept as students. He believed that it was his duty to ensure that anyone who wished to learn could do so, including women, black freedmen, and even Native Americans, although it would be several generations before many members of any of these groups attended the College in significant numbers.

In the thirty years prior to Kansas’s admission to the Union, St. Anselm College grew at a steady pace. Catholic prelates, both within the United States and elsewhere, recognized its unique status and continued to gift it with books, land, and talented teachers. The minor seminary grew in size as well, making it one of the foremost training grounds for new priests in the territory and beyond. As Potter’s Lake flourished, the College adapted to new realities, officially inaugurating an undergraduate program in 1855 and establishing the famed Religious Studies Department (originally the Department of Theology). It was during this period of restructuring that the existing departments were reorganized to form the basis for what eventually will become the St. Anselm of the 21st century.

The Civil War hit the College very hard, with many of its non-clerical teachers and students called away to fight (or volunteering to do so). During this fallow period, the College continued to operate, although at reduced levels. The associated seminary swelled, however, as young boys from nearby states and territories were directed by their families to join the priesthood and avoid the violence and dangers of war. A side effect of this was that many more priests became familiar with the College and its faculty than might otherwise have been the case, forging lasting bonds across Catholic America. Later, it was these bonds that helped buoy St. Anselm’s reputation outside of Kansas as a solid liberal arts school.

The College continued to grow throughout the remainder of the 19th century, especially as the West was opened up and increasingly large numbers of settlers made their way into these new territories. With comparatively few institutions of higher learning west of the Mississippi, the College enjoyed a place of prominence — one that the Church cultivated, since it rightly saw St. Anselm as one of its best tools for evangelization in western America. As Potter’s Lake prospered, so did the College. The Southey family, for example, made many generous gifts to St. Anselm over the years, as did many others who benefited from the economic growth of the town.

After World War I, St. Anselm College began its slow decline, at least in terms of its popularity outside of eastern Kansas. Its teaching remained as solid as ever, as did the scholarship of its professors. However, larger and better-regarded universities, both secular and religious, were stealing its thunder... and student body. The College had trouble attracting admissions from across the country, a trend that reached its nadir lowest point in the early 1970s. Another blow was struck when the seminary was forced to close due to a lack of applicants to the priesthood. The

seminary's buildings, faculty, and library were dispersed, with only a small part becoming absorbed by the College. This was a great psychological blow to St. Anselm, as it was the seminary that had been its greatest conduit for bringing outsiders to the institution. With it gone, the College became a bit more insular and introverted and its standards began to decline.

Since the 1960s, the College has enjoyed only two moments of widespread attention. The first was in 1969, when the infamous "exorcism incident" took place. The College has always denied that this sensationalist activity ever occurred on its premises and has gone to great lengths to dispel rumors to the contrary. Nevertheless, the story circulated that an undergraduate student at the College had been possessed by a demon and later exorcised by a priest sent from Rome to handle the matter. No evidence of these claims — or at least no incontrovertible evidence — has ever been offered, but even to this day, St. Anselm has entered urban legend as "that school where the kid was possessed."

The other moment of fame, this one enjoyed by St. Anselm, occurred in 1988, when Pope John Paul II beatified Fr. Aloysius Dominic. For years, the cause of his canonization had been advanced by individuals associated with the College. Pope Leo XIII granted Fr. Dominic the title of "Venerable" — the first step toward canonization — in 1900, in recognition of his great personal sanctity and role in promoting the Faith in the West. With the beatification came the hope that Fr. Dominic (or the Blessed Aloysius Dominic, as he is formally known) would one day be declared a saint. From time to time, there are reports of apparitions, visions, and miracles attributed to Fr. Dominic's intercession. All but a few believers treat these with skepticism, but that hasn't stopped the enthusiasm regarding these stories... any more than the College's denials have ended the rumors about demonic possession.

The late 1990s have seen a slight upturn in the College's fortunes. Under the administration of Chancellor Geraldine Hardig, admissions are up, many of them from out of state. There has also been an influx of new bequests and donations, as well as increased Church interest in the College. More than a few new faculty members have arrived, some of them quite renowned in their fields. How the Chancellor succeeded in luring them to the College is a topic of speculation, but few doubt her dedication to securing St. Anselm's future. Although its troubles are far from over, for the first time in decades, there is improvement, which is cause for cautious optimism. Perhaps the 21st century will prove to be a time when, once again, the College of St. Anselm has an important role to play.

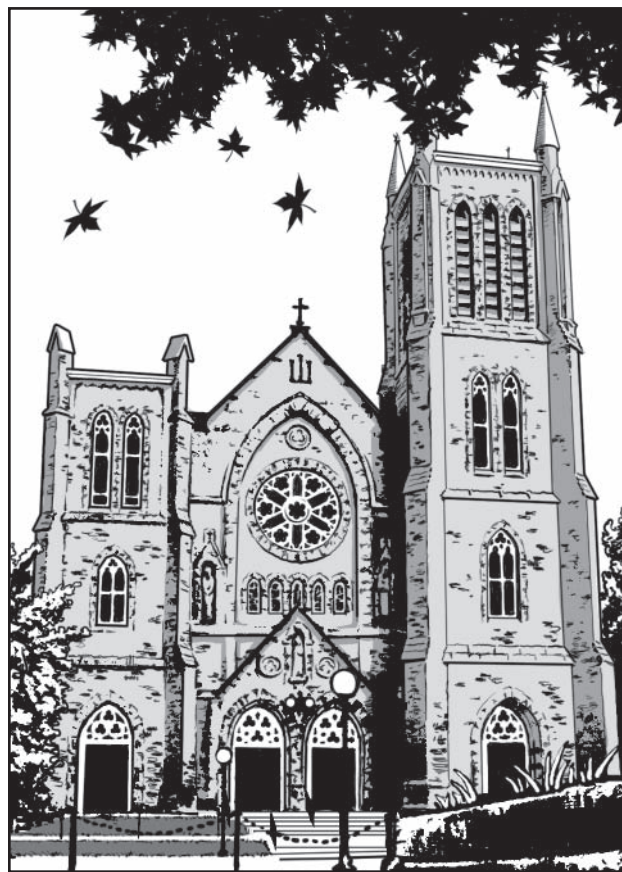
CAMPUS

Saint Anselm's campus occupies close to 100 acres of land — a far cry from the small plot that Jacob Potter gave Fr.

Dominic and his brothers in 1827. The College has been fortunate to have had many benefactors over the years, each of whom has made his or her mark on the institution and whose generosity is immortalized in the names of its twenty-nine different buildings. The Southey Library is probably one of the most obvious examples, its nearly 1.4 million volumes having been to a large extent purchased through a significant monetary gift made by Robert Southey in 1911.

The oldest building on campus is simply called Main Hall. It contains the administrative offices of the College, as well as a number of classrooms. There is a movement afoot to rename the building Dominic Hall, but this has gained very little momentum. Should Fr. Dominic be canonized, however, that may change. St. John's Hall is the primary male dormitory on campus and is well known as the purported locale for the exorcism that supposedly occurred in 1969. The Hall was originally part of the old seminary, which also makes it interesting for historical reasons. The primary female residence is St. Benedict Hall, formerly the home of the many Benedictine priests and brothers who originally populated St. Anselm. Once their numbers dwindled, those who remained moved elsewhere and the hall was converted to secular use.

Of course, the most prominent building on campus is the Basilica of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, more commonly (and mistakenly) called St. Anselm Basilica.



With its neo-Gothic architecture and immense size, the basilica towers over all the other buildings on campus, and serves as the parish church for the College and many of the local townsfolk. The basilica is a beautiful structure and home to numerous religious relics, including those of St. Benedict and St. Anselm. Fr. Dominic is buried in the crypt beneath the church, along with several other members of the original Benedictines who came to Potter's Lake. The crypt is not accessible to the public at the present time, although that may change if Fr. Dominic is canonized one day.

ADMINISTRATION

The College of St. Anselm is administered by its chancellor, who is appointed by the Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas and approved by its Board of Governors. The chancellor is both the chief administrator of the College and its public face. Of course, most academic administration is handled by the College's three deans, who have responsibility for their individual faculties and departments. Not surprisingly, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies handles all matters relating to undergraduate students, while the Dean of Graduate Students handles those pertaining to graduate students. There is also a Dean of Admissions and Awards, whose responsibilities relate to admitting new students and handling scholarships and financial aid. The Board of Governors is appointed by the chancellor with the approval of both the current Board and the Archbishop. Its members are prominent citizens of Potter's Lake and a handful of outsiders with strong connections to the Church.

APPENDIX II

THE
CELESTIAL CONTEST

in Caelo et in Terra



Again, it had ended in stalemate with no discernible victor. And so God and Lucifer proposed to play yet another game. Once more they would clash, and this time they would see once and for all which of them was supreme.

Thus did Lucifer call upon his legion of infernal demons and tossed down the gauntlet of challenge. He brought his festering and blood-eager army to the Gates of Heaven and demanded entry so that he could war against God and His angels, but the Holy Gate was barred and God denied him approach. “If you oppose Me here,” He said, “you commence with an advantage, for you would already claim a portion of My realm with which to make your encampments.”

“Well,” Lucifer replied, “I shall not surrender an inch of my unholy soil. That is my province, on which even Your armies fear to tread. Where, then; for between our two domains rests naught but formless void.”

Michael, once second to Lucifer and now chief of God’s angels, lifted his voice, “We must have a battleground, my Lord.”

And God decreed that it should be so. “I will put forth My hand into the void,” He boomed, “and will make for us a place that the armies might clash.”

Thus did God make the Earth and its upturned bowl, the sky. With drawn breath, He pulled the lands forth from the seas and populated them both with animals borne from the quickest of His fancies.

Lucifer, however, was a crafty opponent, and saw a method to turn this nascent arena to his advantage. He therefore proclaimed to God, “But this battleground is of your making and I am therefore encumbered. You must grant me two concessions, and then we shall proceed.”

“Name your demands,” God said.

“First, I must contribute some small measure of myself to the playing field so that I too share in its creation, and therefore can partake of its rewards. Second, I shall choose the nature of the contest.”

“You may add to the battleground,” God agreed, “but what contest would you wage?”

“We shall not war outright,” Lucifer proposed. “Instead we shall compete for treasure, and when the contest has run its course, whomever possesses the most shall win.”

“Name the treasure,” God said.

“Souls,” Lucifer replied. “We shall seek that which our servants lack, and they shall collect souls for us.”

“Agreed,” God said, “but I shall create the first souls. In turn they will create all others, and we will compete for them until there are no more to be had.”

“Done,” Lucifer agreed.

“And,” God said, “you shall make one concession to Me, one which I will name in my own time.”

“Very well,” Lucifer said.

“Then endow your aspect to the battlefield so that I may create souls,” God told him.

Lucifer then played his masterstroke. He, who is called Morning Star, emblazoned the heavens with his brand and cast light upon the Earth. “Now wherever there is light, I will be present,” he laughed, “for with light, the souls shall see, and they shall question the world around them. With light, they will even come to question You!”

God, however, countered Lucifer by separating the light from the darkness. “I call the light Day, and the darkness Night,” He said, “for it is in night that they will seek solace in Me.” Then God created man and woman. Blessing them, He said, “Be fertile and multiply, fill the Earth and subdue it.”

God set them in the Garden of Eden, saying unto them,

ABOUT THIS APPENDIX

This appendix details the contest between God and Lucifer. It tells of those pivotal events that began creation, events that reverberate throughout the mythology of *Heaven & Earth*. It also briefly touches on Christ’s rebellion, another keystone underpinning the game.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide gamemasters with some background information regarding the celestial contest for souls. The exact details presented in these pages need never come to light during an ongoing series. However, if the Gamemaster wants, this information can be imparted to the players. These revelations should not come easily, though. After all, this is the true story of Genesis, one in which the creation of Earth and man are mere byproducts of a callous contest between two otherworldly powers. These are the events from which all others are spun in *Heaven & Earth*, and they must be handled with care.

Exactly how this information is relayed to players (should that path be taken) is up to each gamemaster. Some GMs may prefer to impart this knowledge through dreams or angelic visitations. Some may choose to have Meltdown divulge it through his fiery sermons and delirious ramblings. Others may utilize the Brotherhood of Ioannes to disseminate this knowledge, most likely through the venerable pages of the Book of Ioannes. Still other gamemasters may have the PCs learn this truth from Sullivan Pierce or another knowledgeable magician.

These are only a few examples of how the information in this chapter can be shared with players. Gamemasters can (and should) come up with the most appropriate means for doing so.

“Of any tree in the garden you may eat. But you shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for if you do, you are surely doomed.”

The game then began in earnest. Lucifer, in the guise of a serpent, came into the garden and spoke to the woman. He asked if God had indeed forbade them from tasting from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the woman answered that it was so; God had said they would surely die if they ate of its fruit. Lucifer told her that this was not so. “You shall not perish,” he said. “Instead you will know all that God knows, for you will know good from evil.” He took the woman to the Tree, and he showed her its treasure.

The fruit was very pleasing to the eye, and the woman was hungry for its knowledge and its taste, so she partook of the tree and ate from its bounty. Only then did her eyes open to the marvels of creation. She proclaimed in a voice once reserved for the all-knowing Father, “What a wondrous gift this is! I must share it with my mate.”

The woman took more fruit from the tree, and offered it to the man. He told her that God had said not to eat of it, but she convinced him with the words that came of Lucifer and of knowledge, and, since he too was hungry for insight, he ate of it.

When they looked upon each other with new appreciation and understanding, they were overjoyed by their newfound gift. Knowing good from evil was indeed powerful, but when they heard God in the garden, they hid from Him for fear of His wrath. Shamed by their own nakedness, they covered themselves.

When God discovered woman and mate hidden, He knew that they had disobeyed His decree. So He questioned them, and learned that a serpent had tricked the two into partaking from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Lucifer laughed at his great and simple victory, for he had won the first of the many battles to come.

God said, “The man and the woman have become like us. They know that which divides good and evil. They must not eat of the Tree of Life lest they become immortal.” So did He turn them out of the garden and settled them east of Eden. Then He commanded the angel Iophiel to stand guard at the gates with his fiery blade.

The man and the woman had many offspring who in turn bore children and their children bore children and so forth ... all the while God and Lucifer competed for their souls.

God struck a covenant with a man named Abraham that all the prophet’s people should obey God, but Lucifer still won his battles.

God arranged a second covenant with Moses, who brought God’s Law to the people, but Lucifer still won his battles.

God gave humanity judges and kings and prophets so that people would know His path, but Lucifer still won his battles.

Eventually, worry troubled the Heavenly Host. “My Lord,” proclaimed Michael, “let me put forth my blade and vanquish these villains once and for all. Your souls are weak, flawed. You continue to show them the way to your Grace, but they falter and they ignore. They fail you. Let me strike down Lucifer and his blistering legions once and forever.”

“No Michael,” God said angrily, “for I move in ways unrealized by you. Lucifer agreed to one concession, and it is the eve of that folly.” God then sent the angel Gabriel to a woman named Mary, who bore God’s Son, known hence as the Lamb.

“Now,” God said with a smile that swallowed worlds, “Earth will know My glory, and they will know the way to Me, because My Son will teach them. When My Son is done, Lucifer will have naught but chaff to reap, for the harvest will be mine.”

When Lucifer learned this, he was furious. He bewailed his grievances to Heaven, but the Lord reminded him of God’s one concession; this was to be it.

Furious and terrified that God would win the contest, Lucifer set about dispersing the Lamb’s influence. First he tempted the Son of God and tried to turn him to the side of the Infernal, but the Lamb was born of the Father and refused.

Then Lucifer tried to turn the people against the savior come to earth, but the people embraced the Lamb for he had performed wondrous miracles; here was God among them.

Then Lucifer convinced the priests that if the Lamb were made king, there would be no need for their profession and there would also be war with the ruling Romans. The priests, consumed with fear and jealousy, betrayed the Lamb to the Romans, but the Lamb forgave the people their sins. He died so that they would not be condemned to Lucifer for their treachery.

So Lucifer set about destroying the Lamb’s followers, but their influence blossomed. Soon Rome fell to the Martyr’s words and there was no one to oppress God’s people any longer.

Foiled again, Lucifer set about seducing the followers of the Lamb. He convinced them that all other peoples were evil and should fall to conversion or to blade and arrow. Poisoned by Lucifer’s lies, they warred against other nations and vexed those who were different from them just as they had once been persecuted. They formed strictures for worshipping God and the Lamb, and behind hollow rituals, forgot his message of love and forgiveness.

So the contest continued. Despite Lucifer’s perversion, many people turned to God, but Lucifer still won his battles.

Throughout the ages, the contest continued until finally the End Times approached. God then said, “The contest nears its end. You, My angels, I charge: go forth and reap the bounty of souls lying in wait, for the contest draws nigh and the Morning Star keeps forever in stride. Those who

will not follow you shall condemn, for once the flesh dies their vote is forever cast. Those who do believe you shall offer to give life everlasting.” So the angels went forth.

The Lamb was troubled, however, for he only saw the quandary — whichever side won the contest, humanity would lose. If Lucifer triumphed, then Hell would bloom on Earth, thus dispatching God. If God won, He would signal the End Time and humanity would be no more, without any to even carry forth their memory. The Lamb - who was part flesh from Mary, his mother - pitied humanity, and beseeched God not to sound the clarion trumpet of Armageddon. He pleaded that humanity be spared.

God replied that He had bargained with Lucifer to compete for all the souls. If there were more born into the world, the contest would never end, thus violating the agreement and allowing Lucifer to win by default. The Lord’s decision was final. Moved by humanity’s plight, Jesus rebelled against God just as Lucifer had done ages ago. Unlike Lucifer who revolted out of pride, however, the Lamb rebelled out of love.

Now the last few moves of the great contest are about to be made. God and Lucifer each maneuver to harvest the remaining souls in the contest, while Christ works tirelessly to save humanity from its inevitable end.

The final outcome has yet to be written.

HEAVEN & EARTH

THIRD EDITION CHARACTER SHEET

✦ IDENTIFICATION ✦

Character Name

Occupation

R P V

Past Occupation

R P V

✦ ATTRIBUTES ✦

Coordination

Strength

Awareness

Fortitude

Aura

Knowledge

Defense Value

Destiny

✦ DAMAGE METER ✦



Blunt



Lethal

✦ EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS ✦

✦ GOALS ✦

✦ HOBBIES ✦

ACTION CHART

Nearly Imp.

d4

Very Hard

d6

Hard

d8

Challenging

d10

Average

d12

Easy

d20

✦ NOTES ✦