

Demon

SERVANTS OF DARKNESS



Allen Thomas

DEMON

DEMON: Servants Of Darkness
An Organization Book for *Champions*

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INTRODUCTION



OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to *DEMON*, Hero Games publishes many other books for gamers whose Champions campaigns emphasize or involve the mystic side of superheroing. These include:

The Mystic World, a complete guide to the Mystic World of the Champions Universe, including a detailed Multiverse, a grimoire of spells, and several master villains.

Arcane Adversaries, three dozen supervillains and other enemies with mystic powers, ranging from mighty organizations such as the Circle of the Scarlet Moon and the Vandalaur family to solo villains like Doctor Teneber and the Hell Rider. You could easily convert practically any of them to DEMON-created or -allied supervillains. Of particular interest where DEMON is concerned, *Arcane Adversaries* covers the Kings of Edom, including several Qliphothic entities that serve them (and would thus make good summoned servants for a Morbane).

The Ultimate Mystic, a guide to mysticism and magic powers for all roleplaying genres.

Vibora Bay, a setting book describing a city in the Champions Universe that's of great mystic significance.

Few things strike terror into the heart of a hero quicker than an evil cult devoted to doing the work of, or bringing to Earth, charnel gods and foul beings of great power. In the Champions Universe, that fear takes the form of DEMON, an organization whose Satanic trappings are bad enough by themselves... but which mask a far more horrifying purpose! *DEMON: Servants Of Darkness* is your guide to this organization, from the fiends in human form who lead it, to the rank-and-file members, to its enchanted items, places of power, spells, and resources.

Chapter One, Res Demonica, chronicles the history of DEMON. With its seeds lying in the turn of the twentieth century, DEMON has plagued the world for over a hundred years... but its true plan is a few years short of fruition.

Chapter Two, The Nature Of The Demon, discusses the basic organization, goals, and resources of DEMON, as well as its world-view and approach to matters occult. While it seems like a simple Satanic cult, DEMON is in fact far more... and far worse.

Chapter Three, The Doings Of The Wicked Ones, describes DEMON's leadership. It includes not only the terrifying Inner Circle and their servants (the Maleficia), but the organization's true leader and his bodyguards, the Inverted Trinity.

Chapter Four, Mephistophelean Evil, looks at the main members of DEMON: the Brothers; the Initiates; and the powerful Morbanes who lead Demonhames. It includes information about DEMON's recruitment network and procedures, personality archetypes for each level of membership, and templates of powers and spells by membership cate-

gory. It also describes the Demon-Bound, members of DEMON granted superhuman powers through demon-binding rituals.

Chapter Five, The Abode Of The Demon, discusses *Demonhames* — DEMON's bases and places of power throughout the world. After reviewing common features of hames, it provides two detailed examples: the Redbrood Demonhame in New York City; and Studio Lot 0 in Los Angeles.

Chapter Six, Infernal Devices And Malevolent Magics, reviews the Profane Regalia — the enchanted items commonly used by DEMON members. If you need to beef up your local Demonhame's forces before a confrontation with superheroes, this chapter has the weapons and other resources you need.

Chapter Seven, A Gamemaster's Demonic Designs, discusses how to GM DEMON. It includes notes about making DEMON a more or less immediate threat, the anatomy of a black magic-based adventure, how the organization relates to other beings and groups in the Champions Universe, and how you can fit DEMON into other genres and settings.

DEMON, like *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*, is designed primarily for GMs. It's a book about an organization player characters oppose, and thus falls within the GM's province. For that reason, it doesn't have a GM's Vault or other section of GM-only material; for most games, the entire book constitutes GM-only material. If you're a player, stop reading unless you have your GM's permission! Some GMs let players read parts of this book that pertain to their characters' origin or the like; others keep the entire thing off-limits.

chapter one:



RES DEMONICA

A HISTORY OF DEMON

A HISTORY OF DEMON



DEMON is an organization that grew out of the same spiritually barren soil that allowed the Ordo Templis Orientalis, the Theosophic Society, the Antiquus Mysticusque Ordo Rosae Crucis, and other occult societies to take root in the popular mind, spread their creepers among the idle rich, and blossom wildly in the early part of the twentieth century. In the previous decades science had usurped religion as the primary lens man used to perceive and explain the world around him, and the Industrial Age was well under way. People had left the land where they worked in the open air and under the sun and went to labor in monolithic structures — from dingy gray factories with grime-stained windows and stacks belching black smoke, to unnaturally tall skyscrapers that evoked the story of the Tower of Babel. The first World War truly brought home the horrors of this new way of living. In the face of these gruesome fruits of science and reason, some rebelled against the rational and found comfort and the answers they searched for in the mysticism of occult societies.

Unlike these other societies, which were largely harmless, DEMON had *and still has* the ultimate goal of bringing about the end of the current age of mankind and ushering in the next — the Iron Age of the ancient Greek mystics; the Armageddon foreseen in the Revelation of St. John the Divine before the Council of Nicea re-wrote the text to thwart the Gnostic infiltration of Christianity; the end of the Age of Pisces and the beginning of the chaos of Aquarius; the Kali Yuga, the Year of Skulls, of Hindu belief; the death of the sixth and final Sun the Mayans predicted long ago — a time when mankind's suffering knows no bounds and Humanity is ground beneath the heel of its masters, the foremost among whom will be the secret leadership of DEMON.

THE EARLIEST DAYS

Though founded in 1918, and first come to the attention of the authorities as something more than a mundane criminal cartel in 1925, DEMON's history truly begins in *fin de siecle* Paris when its founder, Luther Black, lived among the Decadents....

FEBRUARY, 29 1896: THE RUE MORGUE, PARIS, FRANCE

While returning home from an overwrought production of Wilde's *Salome, Drame en un Acte*, the play passé three years after its publication, Luther Black passed through the Quartier St. Roch in Paris. He walked along the Rue Morgue, cutting between the Rue Richelieu and Rue St. Roch, and his boot heels and silver-topped cane clacked hollowly on the cobblestones. The night was chill, the frigid air drifting in mists around his ankles and mingling with the warm fetid air that steamed up from the labyrinthine sewers below.

A distant bell tolled the midnight hour, February 28th becoming the 29th and Black's birthday, only his 41st since he was born 164 years ago. As the bell rung the twelfth stroke, Black heard a gendarme and a whore, standing at the crossroads up ahead, speak in Latin as they finished their transaction. Black looked to the moonless sky. The heavens had reversed themselves, the Southern Cross visible in the Northern Hemisphere for the first time in millennia, and he watched as Saturn passed unnaturally fast through the constellation's center.

At the crossroads where the Rue Morgue intersected the Rue Richelieu, just beyond the whore handing over Roman denari to the gendarme, Luther Black took the left-handed path.

He walked along the street, dark eyes scanning calmly from the left to right, looking for the next sign. The wind picked up, flapping his great coat around his legs, and the air grew deathly cold. The night winds howled down the street behind him — Hecate's hounds chased his scent and closed with their prey — and Black wrapped a scarf over the flat crown of his top hat, knotting it under his chin to hold his hat to his head. The knot was square, two ends crossed over to form a crossroads of sorts, and hid him from the eyes of the goddess, who found his trespass into her domain an affront.

When he saw the stains on a weatherworn cornerstone fade until the stone appeared as it had in 1547, the year chiseled on its surface in Roman numerals, Luther Black again turned left. In the distance he could hear the quiet roar of the mob as Madame Guillotine took the head of another noble. A rumbling murmur filled the heavens, and when

he looked up, he saw seven strange flying machines, obviously man-made from the white crosses stenciled on the underside of their wings, flying overhead in a V-shaped formation.

The flickering illumination from the gaslights along the street grew steadier and brighter, electricity replacing gas, and Luther Black again turned left. He breathed in the earthy scent of loam and primeval forests, neither smell found any longer in Paris's urban decay. He circled the Quartier St. Roch widdershins. He walked against the natural order — neither traveling back in time, nor forward, but rather stepping outside of time, to a place where future and past became one — and always he turned left at the crossroads.

Finally Luther Black stopped and looked in the window of a shop. Beyond the window was a book with a binding like none he had ever seen, its clean lines and mechanical precision letting him know it was from the future. He pushed through the door into the book shop; a small bell hanging above the door rang tinnily and announced his entrance. The smell of moldering paper filled the small room, and a maze of dilapidated bookshelves confronted him. The shelves tilted forward or back, left or right, threatening to topple from the weight of their burden. Books covered the dusty floor of the place, some lying open, their spines bent and broke; others were piled neatly, one atop another, in a corner or against the wall.

Luther Black kicked through the books on the floor, traversing the maze of shelves to the back of the silent shop. As he walked along the narrow aisles, he scanned the titles of the books all around him, but the letters remained blurry and refused to come into focus, as if his eyes rebelled of their own volition. Reaching the back of the shop, he found himself in front of the counter. No one stood behind it. Laid on the counter near the till was a single book — an octavo, its yellowed pages stitched with thread stained black with grime, and the signatures bound between faded gray boards, reddish-brown splotches of dried blood marring their surface. He opened the cover and the title of the book printed on its first page came into crystal-clear focus. The plain letters written with black ink read: *Liber Terribilis*, the Harrowing Book.

Luther Black murmured quiet thanks to whatever agency had brought him to this place. He passed two silver coins over the book to hide the deed from the eyes of men and gods, and set the coins near the till. Then he picked up the book and tucked it under his arm, graciously accepting this gift on his birthday. It was a gift that would set the course for the rest of his life — the 116 years remaining in his unnatural life span.

JUNE 30, 1908: BLACKBRIAR MANOR, YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND

On the desolate moors of Yorkshire, Luther Black helped his fellow sorcerers carry the dead from the sanctum at the heart of Blackbriar Manor. The corpses were mutilated. While the apprentices had suffered the least, killed by sudden heart failure or brain aneurysm, the coven members — those thirteen leaders of The Circle of the Scarlet Moon — had

suffered the worst. One's eyes had exploded, his brains leaking out of the bloody sockets like molten lead. Another's heart had blazed with hellfire and burned a fist-sized hole through her spine and then out her back, the burning heart dropping to the floor and leaving only ashes that stunk of brimstone.

The Circle had just accomplished the greatest magic of the modern age, and as with all black magic, the sorcerers paid a high price in blood and souls. They had brought forth from the infernal realms what Luther Black would later call the Hellstone. They had hurled the Hellstone, like a thunderbolt from Zeus or a meteor streaking from the heavens, at Siberia where stood the isolated domicile of the Archmage, Earth's mystical defender and the Circle's nemesis, and slain him. Men would later advance many explanations for what happened that day at Tunguska, but none came close to the truth of the thing.

All of the apprentices and five of the thirteen coven members were dead, leaving Luther Black and his seven peers to dispose of the bodies. They burned the corpses on a large pyre and watched the high-reaching flames flicker pallid green, blood red, bruised purple. Each of them could read the future in the flames; all of them knew they had changed the world.

Five coven members, lesser men and women, had died as their magic was reft from their souls when the Circle pulled the Hellstone through to this world. Luther Black and seven others had survived the black magic ritual. Though they still lived, they had paid the same price in magic, and little power remained to them. Luther Black studied the faces of the other survivors, seven men and women who were both his peers and rivals for power. He wondered if they felt as weak — as drained of mystical resources — as he did. Which of the eight who survived had the most power? Had any of the others held back during the ritual? Did one of his peers have unknown reserves of mystical might?

Black spent the next few months answering these questions to his satisfaction.

NOVEMBER 29, 1908: CENTRAL PARK WEST, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

Sitting behind his mahogany desk in the study of his apartment, Luther Black stared hard at the *Liber Terribilis*. At the corners of the desktop burned candles, black wax creeping down their length; and from wall fixtures gas lights lit the study, the deep yellow light casting dark shadows in the corners of the room. The wind rattled the windows behind where he sat, a draft rustling the heavy velvet curtains and blowing cold against the back of his neck. The slim octavo laid on the black blotter unopened, and Luther Black fingered the corner of the book's grey cover, considering his future.

Less than six months after the slaying of the Archmage, Luther Black had answered two questions to his satisfaction. First, the fullness of his sorcerous powers would not return for some time. Second, the weakness that crippled him afflicted the other members of the Circle's coven as well.

He had tested their resources, and the other coven members had done little but rebuff his bids to take over their territory. Prior to June of that

WHO IS LUTHER BLACK?

Born on Leap Year's Day in 1732, Luther Black is the bastard son of a witch named Edith Payne and a minor member of the British nobility, Jonathan Warwick, Earl of Barlington. Though the earl had no magical prowess of his own, he was a Warwick, a family known for its mystic pedigree, and for that reason Edith Payne chose him to father her child. Lord Barlington had no knowledge of his son (and even if he had, would not have claimed Luther as his own) — he was drunk when Edith seduced him and her spells only heightened the inebriated delirium that swallowed his soul that night.

In the hours after Luther's birth, Edith Payne worked the spell that extended his life. An old magic that tapped into the stolen time of Leap Year, the spell was first cast by Italian monks when they thieved ten days from October during the change from the Julian to Gregorian calendar in 1582. His mother's variation gave Luther Black four times "the threescore and ten" given over to a man — 280 years with which to accumulate power and knowledge, and work evil.

Though nominally a British citizen, Luther Black long ago ascended into the ranks of men and women who acknowledge no nation as their sovereign. He took the surname Black after killing his mother in his youth and soon thereafter joined the Mystic World, attaining the highest degree of secret knowledge when he was initiated into

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the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, that shadowy society of occultists and black magicians, in the nineteenth century.

For more about Luther Black, see his character sheet on page 34.

A DEMONIC ACRONYM

Throughout its history, only Luther Black has known what the acronym DEMON stands for. Many of the organization's members have speculated on its meaning, some taking it as a riddle they must solve before ascending higher in the organization, but none have unraveled it — mainly because the correct solution requires full access to the *Liber Terribilis*.

The acronym is formed from the first letters of the names of the Kings of Edom when written in an ancient language forgotten in the days before mankind came down from the trees to walk erect. Like many aspects of the organization, the acronym is a spell hiding in plain sight. Whenever the word "DEMON" is spoken aloud, the speaker evokes the acronym's *logos*, the fullness and entirety of its meaning, and calls the attention of the Kings of Edom. Though a minor effect, little more than a gnat buzzing around a colossus, no one should willingly welcome the attention of such terrible beings — Black postulates the acronym's repeated use further weakens the barriers between this world and the Qliphothic, like a slow drip of water on stone or a constant wind eroding a mountain.

Continued on next page

year — before they used the Hellstone against their enemy — they would have come down hard on him, likely banding together to crush him. Instead they simply stopped his initial advance and hoped he would go away. It was obvious they had withdrawn to their respective places of power and were biding their time until their powers returned.

Luther Black had relocated to the Americas in the previous weeks. His occult powers at low ebb, he felt the need for material wealth to ensure his safety, and simple divinations revealed times of corruption and graft ahead for the United States — a time when a man could accumulate money in the burgeoning nation and infiltrate loyal agents in the nascent federal government.

Across the ocean from the center of civilization and the heart of the Mystic World, he turned his full attention to the *Liber Terribilis* and the five Kings of Edom described therein. He understood now why some unknown agency had delivered the book into his hands: it was providence. Neither he, nor the other members of the Circle, could afford to wait. They must strike now if they were to take advantage of the Archmage's death.

With the Harrowing Book as his guide, Luther Black was convinced he could discover a means of drawing power from these Kings of Edom — either strike some bargain with them or steal their power like a thief, it mattered not which — and by exploiting the power of these otherworldly gods, the Circle could regain, if not surpass, its former occult might.

JUNE 16, 1914: THE MID-ATLANTIC

Two weeks out from the coast of the United States, Luther Black stood at the rail of the Trans-Atlantic steamer, *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*, as the German ship made its way to New York. He pulled the signet ring from the little finger of his left hand and studied the silver crescent moon set with five small rubies, the symbol of his membership in the Circle of the Scarlet Moon.

With a disdainful flick of his fingers, he tossed the ring into the grey waters.

At a meeting in Bavaria where the Circle had taken control of the monarchy just the year before, the other coven members rejected his proposal to discover a means of drawing power from the Kings of Edom.

Too dangerous, they claimed — too alien, too unknown. Better the devils we know, one of Black's peers punned. Such beings, they all fearfully agreed, would overwhelm us and make us their slaves.

The coven made other plans instead, and all the while Luther Black sat silently, glaring at his peers, but keeping his scorn for their cowardice to himself.

Luther Black knew the path to future power was not further involvement in the machinations of the mundane world, nor any of the other plans his fellow coven members proposed — the path led through the places where the Kings of Edom were imprisoned. Black would keep his departure from the Circle quiet for a time, but soon enough they would learn what he intended.

DECEMBER 21, 1918: UPPER WESTSIDE AND LOWER EASTSIDE, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

Luther Black hosted a masquerade for New York's wealthy elite on the longest night of the year. He needed the extra hours of darkness; he had much to accomplish this night, for its blasphemous events would set the course for the remainder of his life and determine the fate of the world itself.

He held the masquerade in his newly opened lodge, the first temple in the *Novus Ordo Magorum Et Aeternorum Ducum*. For several decades mystical orders and occult societies, all of whom claimed to possess the secrets of the ancients and have antecedents from a time before history, had gained in popularity. At first Luther Black dismissed these orders as little more than pale reflections of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. It was nothing new; across the ages the power the Circle wielded had rippled through humanity, both through its conscious and subconscious, and inspired imitators. These reflections were little more than dogs or monkeys imitating their masters. But in the post-war world, the false orders and their wrong-headed teachings were gaining popularity among the masses, especially the wealthy and idle rich.

Unlike many of his peers, who eschewed modernity for hoary traditions and ages-old rites, Luther Black was a pragmatic opportunist. He embraced modernity, insofar as it served his ends. In this spread of occultism he saw a chance to further his own power. He started his own order and gave it a name that would appeal to arrogance: the New Order of Magi and Eternal Rulers. He would drain these wealthy men and women dry and use their money to fund his true goal: DEMON, an organization intended to rival the Circle in resources and influence, and assist Black in his goal of gaining power from the Kings of Edom. Any of the wealthy members of the *Novus Ordo* who showed a talent for the occult, and for evil, he would recruit into DEMON under its guise as a Satanic cult.

Later that same night he retired to New York's Lower East Side where he profaned the first Demonhome, a center for DEMON operations and temple to dark gods. His ritual was the sacrifice of a young, unattached woman who had come to the masquerade eager to join the *Novus Ordo*. The sacrifice took place in an abandoned church, the location consecrated back when New York was called New Amsterdam and later forgotten as the wealthy fled the area before the influx of immigrants. Once called the Chapel of the Holy Blood, Black renamed it the Redbrood Demonhome.

He stood behind the altar in his robes of scarlet and black bombazine wearing a silver mask with the snout and horns of a goat. He had gone to the masquerade in that same mask costumed as the Goat of Mendes, the old fraud Eliphas Levi's symbol for occult knowledge and later adopted by other spurious mystics. Around him stood the first DEMON Brothers, evil men steeped in Old World superstitions and cast out of their respective countries for their blasphemous crimes. They had infiltrated the United States, hiding themselves among

the immigrants coming to America with hopes of a new life. They had been, every one of them, wolves in sheep's clothing passing through the lines at Ellis Island, and Luther Black found them hungry for the power they had left behind and eager to join his new order. The sacrifice of the young woman was symbolic, mystically linking in blood the Novus Ordo with DEMON as Black hoped to do in finances and recruiting.

The sacrifice was also successful.

Over the next seven years, the newly-formed DEMON grew until it had Demonhames in Shanghai, Los Angeles, New York, London, Paris, and Berlin. To oversee the Demonhames when he was elsewhere, Black created the Morbanes, and into their ranks he initiated the talented apprentices who had joined him when he left the Circle. Slowly but surely, Luther Black was encircling the world.

AUGUST 9, 1925: HELL'S KITCHEN, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

For two weeks the Dog Day Murders had grabbed headlines and terrified the residents of Manhattan. Since the start of summer's hottest days, police had found ten murdered men and women at various locations in New York's Hell's Kitchen. The bodies of the victims were drained of blood, and their limbs stiff with *rigor mortis* were arranged unnaturally and awkwardly — in many cases the joints at knee, elbow, shoulder, and neck shattered to form the poses. Murder was nothing new to the Kitchen, but these were brutal even for that place and its violent history.

The successes of the last eight years had made Luther Black bold. Taking advantage of the Circle's weakness because of the unexpected results of their assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, DEMON expanded across the globe. It had become heavily involved in the opium trade and bootlegging, also using both smuggling networks for transporting artifacts across the globe; it robbed banks to seize safety deposit boxes it knew held mystic relics; it hijacked transport ships carrying archaeological finds, of which the period saw a great many. All of these criminal activities were attributed to the mob and organized crime, bank robbers, bootleggers, pirates on the high seas, and other mundane criminals. The ritual sacrifices DEMON made during the dog days of 1925 brought the organization, as well as its dedication to supernatural evil and unique *modus operandi*, to the attention of the authorities.

With the murders Black attempted to pierce the gulfs of night that separated the material world from the Qliphothic, and each of the ten victims was a sacrifice to one of Archdemons who ruled the ten infernal realms of the Tree of Life's dark reflection, the Sephiroth's cursed double. Metaphorically Black attempted to drill a sort of pinhole through the ten realms of mortal evil and into that otherworldly realm that lay beyond the evil known to man. Through this pinhole he would mystically glimpse the imprisoned Kings of Edom, and after his spying, understand better what he must do to gain power from the Kings. The pain and suffering of the victims served as

the drill bit. The position of their limbs and location of their bodies formed an occult geometry that focused his efforts. The terror that gripped the populace because of the murders, exacerbated by the heat, was the final component of his ritual — the hard hands turning the drill.

Amid accusations it was neglecting the poor, the New York City police department scrambled to solve the crimes, but Luther Black manipulated the city government via members of the Novus Ordo and stymied its efforts. The department assigned only two investigators, Detectives Jimmy Finn and Lothar Mannheim, to the case. Both were black sheep on the police force. Jimmy Finn was a man ostracized by his fellow officers for refusing bribes from the Irish mob. Lothar Mannheim was a proponent of using Freud's teachings, far from accepted by the mainstream at the time, to understand the motives of criminals. Despite the lack of manpower and the city government's active meddling, the two detectives succeeded in discovering the place where Luther Black sacrificed his victims. In this they had the help of Jack Fool, a masked mystery man who would frequently thwart DEMON's efforts in New York over the next fourteen years.

The scene of the murders was an old gas works on the waterfront, and though the two police detectives and Jack Fool hurried among the clanking rusty pipes and hissing methane burning with blue fire, valiantly fighting through the DEMON Brothers who stood guard, they were too late to save the eleventh victim in the Dog Day Murders.

When they arrived Luther Black, wearing scarlet and black robes with a goat mask hiding his face, had peeled back the flesh of the latest sacrifice and cracked open the rib cage. He gazed through the murdered man's twitching heart, beyond the ten infernal realms of mankind's evil, and into the Qliphothic Realms.

The three stopped Black's spying with an explosion that consumed the sacrifice, who had become a gateway to the Qliphothic, and resulted in a fireball seen for miles. Though Black and his three adversaries all escaped alive, none of them left the gas works unchanged. Qliphothic energies had spilled forth from the sacrifice and transformed them.

Jimmy Finn left the police department to work as a private investigator whose cases often involved the supernatural and paranormal. Lothar Mannheim also left the department and found employment as a psychiatrist at Blackwell Island; his field of speciality was "alien humors" and their effect on the insane. Jack Fool entered the gas works a reckless thrill-seeker, named by a newspaper headline that read: "Fool Rushes In...!"; he departed a man whose soul, perhaps in an attempt to protect itself from perfidious corruption of the Qliphothic, had somehow melded with the mystic archetype his name invoked.

And Luther Black, having spied into the Qliphothic Realms and glimpsed the Kings of Edom, changed from an occultist seeking only to regain his former power, to a servant of ancient evil seeking to free the Kings of Edom from their aeons-old prisons in exchange for rulership of the world...

Continued from last page

Mystics of the highest power and most refined sensitivity, like the coven of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, have noticed the baleful effect of speaking the name aloud — with a chill and an itch behind their eyes, they can sense forces of incomprehensible evil sometimes turning their way when the name is spoken. They don't know precisely what the name evokes — only that it calls on dread and otherworldly powers — but they do not speak it under any circumstances, preferring instead to refer to DEMON obliquely.

DEMON IN THE PULP ERA

Below are some of the villainous plots DEMON, usually without Luther Black's direct involvement, perpetrated during the 1930s. As with the other "DEMON In..." boxed texts in this chapter, you can use these events to flesh out DEMON's history, perhaps for a time travel adventure, scenarios in a *Pulp Hero* game, or events that have ramifications in the modern world — for evil is never truly vanquished, only thwarted to return again someday.

DEMON in the Pulp era was considerably different than its modern-day counterpart. Its Demonhames always posed as Satanic cults, never disguising themselves as sects of other illicit religions. Black had yet to create the Profane Regalia, the enchanted items DEMON members would later use to work their evil, so the Brothers relied on mundane weapons — knives, revolvers, tommy guns — in encounters with mystery men. The Morbanes, six of Black's students who joined him when he departed the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, possessed limited magical powers, but often substituted sleight of hand and mechanical illusions for true magic. The Morbanes' real threat lay in their knowledge of the arcane. At the time magic levels were on the rise, and artifacts from ancient times were slowly regaining their former power — the Morbanes, possessing considerable knowledge of these, used the artifacts to work their most dramatic effects. To work magic without an artifact, they needed to draw on their congregations to power their spells, which required intricate and time-consuming rituals. Luther Black, himself, was almost as weak as his students because of the Circle's summoning of the Hellstone (a secret he guarded closely).

Brimstone Showers Bring Infernal Flowers: During the 1930s California orange-growers attempted to irrigate much of their home region, and one of these attempts was an ambitious plan to use high-flying airships to seed clouds and increase the rainfall in arid areas of the state. The Los Angeles Demonhame, called Studio Lot 0, infiltrated the association responsible for administering the irrigation effort and replaced the seed crystals with a mystical substance — crystals calcified from molten brimstone taken from the infernal realms. The rains would have corrupted the soil creating, in the words of the Morbane, "a garden of earthly delights, more nightmarish than any landscape Bosch ever imagined!" The plot, however, was thwarted by the timely intervention of the Futurian.

Shanghai Satanism: Working behind the front of a missionary society named the Society for Oriental Aid by Helpful Christians, DEMON's brand of Satanism spread among the poor in Shanghai. Tainting the food served in soup kitchens with an opiate, its phantasmagoric qualities intensified through sublimation in the blood of sacrificed innocents, DEMON used hypnosis to influence the narcotic-spawned hallucinations of the hungry people. Its victims fervently believed they had already died and gone to Hell, where they fell under the thumb of Satan — that infernal being's part played by the Morbane. The honorable Inspector Chao, who became involved because of the murdered innocents, uncovered the plot with the help of an expatriate American aviator, Mickey "Ace of Spades" Spader... and secret assistance from agents of Dr. Yin Wu.

Red Lightning Always Strikes Twice: The architects of the Chrysler Building weren't the only ones to attempt to exploit the skyscraper's occult significance. Acting under Luther Black's orders, the Morbane from the Redbrood Demonhame attempted to transform the building into a transmitter that would send a mystical signal into the Qliphothic Realms. The plot involved the unwitting

assistance of an elderly and senile Nicola Tesla; artifacts of an unidentified metal found during the second Byrd Antarctic Expedition, melted down and recast as a twenty-foot-long antenna; and a jeweled amulet of the ladder stolen from King Tut's tomb and placed at the tip of the antenna. Though the whole building crackled with energy, blood-red lightning shooting upwards from the skyscraper's spire for hundreds of feet, Jack Fool thwarted the plot before the energy had pierced the dimensional barriers.

"Life Is A Cabaret, Old Chum...": The Demonhame in Berlin used a cabaret, the Dans Le Noir, as its front. The place's star attraction was the singer and exotic dancer, Marlene von Reiter... who was also Luther Black's student and the Morbane in charge. DEMON exploited the economic devastation caused by the Treaty of Versailles to corrupt city officials. In exchange for American dollars, the officials sold the artifacts held in Berlin's museums to von Reiter, then DEMON transported these artifacts out of the country. This pillaging of Germany's national treasures came to an end when von Reiter attempted to obtain the Reichschwert, a sword that legend said the pope gave Charlemagne when he anointed him the Holy Roman Emperor. The plot was a tangled web of alliances and betrayals involving DEMON, a nascent Nazi party seeking legitimacy, and Funf Gegen Vergessenheit, a group of five heroes from World War I who fought a hopeless battle against Germany's descent into debauchery, despair, and eventually madness.

Le Roi Secret De La Cité: In 1931 the city of Paris played host to the French Colonial Exposition. Here the colonial powers of the day — Great Britain, the Netherlands, and others, but most especially France — displayed the cultures of the lands they administered, not only to give Western Europeans a taste of the exotic, but to show them the "civilizing influence" of their governments on the indigenous peoples. Visitors could view the people, their lifestyles and pastimes, cuisine and architecture... and unbeknownst to most, they were also witness to the arcane secrets of an ancient race of man. Working through a local architectural firm, the Morbane in charge of the Paris Demonhame, Guillaume Courau, had an exact replica of the Temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia built on the Avenue of French Colonies.

Legend had it that centuries ago, the temple had focused the prayers of the faithful and granted their ruler nearly godlike powers. Guillaume Courau intended to use its arcane geometries to focus the awe of visitors and make himself, as he phrased it, "the secret king of Paris," tying his mystic powers with the hustle and bustle, commerce and trade, loves and hates of one of Earth's largest cities. On the last night of the French Colonial Exposition, the night crackled with the pent-up spiritual energies of thousands of visitors gathered in Angkor Wat's tapering stone towers. But Courau's plot came crashing down around his ears — literally, when sticks of dynamite exploded and collapsed the temple. A trio of men were responsible for Courau's failure: Prince Bolden, expatriate American, jazz trumpeter, and descendent of Tituba, a Carib indian slave convicted of witchcraft at the Salem Witch Trials; Claude de Lesseps, a debutante, native Parisian, and close associate of both Aleister Crowley and Pablo Picasso; and a mysterious Cambodian known as Louie Nol, whose only official record is that he owned and managed a Parisian club called la Maison des Mysterés Orientales.

**SEPTEMBER 3, 1939: THE REDBROOD
DEMONHAME, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED
STATES**

On the same day France and Great Britain declared war on Hitler's Third Reich, Luther Black presided over a Black Mass in the Redbrood Demonhame. On the wall behind him, a crucifix hung upside down; on the altar before him, Jack Fool lay insensible and spread-eagle, chained at the wrists and ankles. The sacrifice took place in the last of Black's Demonhames — he had spent the past year abandoning his attempts to expand DEMON and rolling up his networks.

He had already lost the Berlin Demonhame to Hitler and his cronies — Himmler's occultists had infiltrated, subverted, and co-opted the Demonhame for the Nazi party's use. They had assassinated the members loyal to Black and enlisted the others in the Reich's occult projects. Shanghai had become a cesspool of espionage and intrigue between warring nation-states, and with the city's Western allies now embroiled in a war in Europe, it was obvious Japan would annex the city. Black knew of the Iron Father, a powerful sorcerer in the service of Hirohito, and also knew he would brook no challenges to his power. The Paris and London Demonhames, with war looming, would soon go the way of those other two and become worthless to his organization.

Only the Los Angeles and New York Demonhames remained secure, but the Novus Ordo was defunct. The idle rich — those few who had kept their wealth during the Depression and unwittingly financed many of DEMON's activities — were turning their eyes toward Europe and choosing sides, as well as remembering their patriotism. Black well recalled the first World War, and needed no divination to know the United States would soon involve itself in this new conflict. He deemed it better for DEMON to lie dormant through the war years. Let the world sort itself out, and once it did, DEMON would be waiting.

Using the same combination of mysticism and hypnosis he would perfect in later years, Black re-programmed his followers in Los Angeles with instructions to infiltrate the nascent movie industry, but he had different plans for the Redbrood Demonhame in New York. Throughout the previ-



ous fourteen years, Jack Fool had proved a thorn in DEMON's side, and the occult significance of the mystery man was not lost on Black. DEMON's last act before the close of the decade was to set a trap for Jack Fool.

Again a brutal murder spree struck Hell's Kitchen, the victims and the positions of their corpses exactly as it had been during the Dog Day Murders. Jack Fool enlisted the aid of Jimmy Finn and Lothar Mannheim to stop the murders, but unbeknownst to him, Black had already subverted and corrupted the two men. Both former detectives had spent the last fourteen years struggling against the Qliphothic energies that tainted their souls — it was a simple matter for Luther Black to push them over the edge.

In the end those two victims of evil betrayed Jack Fool, and there was no last minute rescue for the man who had often rushed in where angels feared to tread — as Black would later jape, there was no dog to save the fool from going over the cliff.

Bound to the altar in the Redbrood Demonhame, surrounded by DEMON Brothers chanting the Black Mass, the captured mystery man found himself a sacrifice to guarantee DEMON's rebirth after the war — but Luther Black did not hold a sacrificial knife above Jack Fool's heart. There would be no bloodletting in this sacrifice. Instead he held the Crystal Skull, an artifact found in 1927 in Lubaantum, Honduras (now Belize). Earlier in the decade DEMON had stolen the artifact, replacing it with a forgery so the theft would go undiscovered. In the sacrifice of Jack Fool, Black put the Crystal Skull to use. Drawing upon its powers he tore Jack Fool's soul from his body and cast it into the infernal realms, a retainer of sorts for services rendered in the coming decade.

After visiting revenge on his enemy, Black reprogrammed the DEMON Brothers who survived the trap laid for Jack Fool, implanting in them a command to seek employment in government agencies or anything related to the war effort. Some of these, originally immigrants from Italy or Eastern Europe, enlisted and found positions in the OSS as translators or even spies. They would later go on to become members of the CIA and FBI. Others, sons and daughters of the wealthy recruited via the *Novus Ordo*, threw themselves into their families' businesses — industrial concerns able to help the war effort, or international corporations with ties to Europe, both the fascists and their enemies, that could provide valuable data to the government. Like their foreign-born brethren they would also develop useful, and exploitable, connections to later intelligence communities.

With his sleeper agents infiltrating the government — seeds planted that would one day grow and be reaped — Luther Black preserved Jack Fool's lifeless body, shot through with Qliphothic energies and its mystic significance intact, for future use. In later decades Jack Fool would rise again as a part of Black's Inverted Trinity, taking the role of the Father and acting with the Black Shepherd and the Left Hand as Luther Black's bodyguard and personal agents.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1944: THE TIMES SQUARE THEATER, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

His fedora resting on his knee, steepled fingers held under his chin, Luther Black sat in the darkness of the cinema watching the sepia-tinged frames of the newsreel click by on the screen before him. He watched a feature on the Defenders of Justice and their latest adventure, the defeat of a cadre of Nazi saboteurs who had attempted to cripple New York's Port Authority; then the next feature that concerned the Freedom Battalion and their clashes with the *Übermenschen* during the liberation of Paris. As the voice-over related the superheroes' exploits and how they had furthered the Allied

cause, Luther Black had a startling insight. For the first time he saw these new superheroes for what they truly were.

In the superheroes' aliases, he saw the sorcerer assuming a name to protect his true one, the essence of his being, from his enemies. In the iconography of their costumes, he glimpsed the occult geometries and symbols he had mastered over the last century and a half. In their forthright and unyielding moralities, he recognized the universal principles and archetypes they embodied. In their superhuman powers, he remembered the stories of lost ages such as the kingdom of Atlantis at its height, when men wielded power enough to rival the gods.

In these emerging superheroes, as well as their superhuman nemeses, Luther Black saw the occult hiding in plain sight unnoticed by the sheep who dwelt in the mundane world. He discovered a new direction for DEMON when it was at last reborn, a way to hide its occult purpose and black intentions under the guise of supervillains.

THE MID-CENTURY

With this new awareness in the forefront of his shadowed mind, Luther Black led DEMON to even greater heights of power after World War II.

JANUARY 25, 1952: FBI FIELD OFFICE, KANSAS CITY, UNITED STATES

Sitting at a desk under a photograph of J. Edgar Hoover, Luther Black flipped through files concerning the nearby town of Haynesville, Kansas. Having awakened one of his sleeper agents, now the Special Agent in Charge of the Kansas City office for the FBI, Luther Black gained access to the files for the Haynesville Project, the United States' study of superhumans conducted during the war years, as well as what little intelligence the U.S. had concerning Nazi efforts to create superhumans.

During the 1940s Luther Black felt the waxing of his own mystical powers, and he had a hypothesis about the source of the superhumans who first appeared during the war. He had spent the intervening years traveling around the world. He tracked down members of Himmler's occult circle who had escaped Germany in the closing days of the war, and after lengthy interrogations learned much about the RSvKg, its methods, and its membership which, not surprisingly, included some of his former colleagues from the Circle of the Scarlet Moon.

As he traveled he also visited ancient places of power — Stonehenge and Glastonbury Tor, Manchu Picchu and Tiahuanaco, Easter Island and Ayer's Rock, lost Ophir and the Pyramids of Egypt, Kailasa Temple and Angkor. At each of these sacred sites the mystical energies were pooling, as dry gulches overflowed with water during a flash flood. But there was nothing natural about this sudden surge in magical energy, and nothing Luther Black had witnessed indicated the storm would end anytime soon. In fact, just the contrary. Something — either calling forth the Hellstone and slaying the Archmage, or the RSvKg's tampering with magic, or both — had caused the world's levels of mystic

energies to rise, and the files Black studied from the Haynesville Project only confirmed his suspicions.

A new age of magic had dawned. Grimoires and incunabula only alluded to ancient times — the Turakian Age, the Valdorian Age, the Atlantean Age — when mortals derived powers so great that most modern-day occultists scoffed at the legends. But Luther Black knew enough of those times of power and magical might to envision the future.

Though during these years other mystics and occultists around the world were realizing the same thing as their powers increased, Luther Black came to one conclusion no else had: as magic continued to rise, the latent mystical talent many people possessed, previously too weak to effect any results, would soon grow potent enough for them to work magic. Their magic would be limited, but still potent enough for Luther Black to exploit to further his goal of freeing the Kings of Edom. This insight inspired the creation of the Profane Regalia, the enchanted items DEMON members would use to commit their evil.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1961: THE HOUSE OF THE VENETIAN, SPETSAL, GREECE

Luther Black stood before the assembled men and women, and anointed them with the names they would hold in DEMON's Inner Circle: Satan-Moloch, Adam Belial, Lucifuge, Astaroth, Asmodeus, Belphegor, Baal Chanan, Adramelek, Lilith, Nahema... and for himself he took the name *the Edomite*.

He held the convocation on the island of Spetsai off the coast of Greece in an ancient villa once owned by a Venetian merchant of the sixteenth century. Three continents met at the Mediterranean Sea, which ancient cartographers placed at the center of the world, and it seemed an appropriate location for the first meeting of the leadership that would guide the world-spanning organization DEMON had become.

Luther Black's reborn DEMON had evolved. It still posed as a Satanic cult, and the Demon-hames, the Morbanes, and their congregations still served as the building blocks of the organization, but between them and himself he placed the Inner Circle. Already, in less than ten years, DEMON was larger than it had been in the 1920s and 30s — so large Luther Black couldn't oversee all of its operations. Furthermore, the Inner Circle would shield him from being discovered. The world had changed since DEMON last terrorized the world. The Cold War waged by the United States and Soviet Union and their respective allies had created an all-pervasive intelligence community with agencies far more coordinated than their pre-World War II predecessors. Coupled with his foresight that many of his enemies would come from the new generation of superheroes, Black knew he needed to protect himself and his identity, and he intended the Inner Circle to serve that purpose.

The members of this first Inner Circle came from all walks of life, not just the Mystic World — but whatever path they had taken, it led them to evil. Only three of the members were sorcerers

with powers of their own. Two of these three, *Sylvia Taylor-Evans* and *Aganju Lambo* (who took on the identities of Astaroth and Asmodeus), were defectors from the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. The third, *Lyle Pike*, was a black magician, his petition for membership rejected by the Circle, who became Lucifuge. The other seven were dabblers in the occult at best... but despite their ignorance, they were evil through and through, and valuable because they wielded influence and power in other areas. Among these were:

Rudolf Von Recker, given the name Adam Belial, was the owner of Global Energies, a South African company that explored the world searching for petroleum, natural gas reserves, and other exploitable sources of energy. As its personnel explored the world, they discovered places lost to mankind. Though he was one of the world's wealthiest men, money and influence weren't enough satisfy Rudolf Von Recker's hunger for power.

Marcel St. Luke, who became Baal Chanan, was the owner of Tenebres Films, a movie production company in France nefarious for its exploitation movies and pornography, and most infamous for its gruesome horror films. St. Luke attempted to give life to the twisted visions that haunted him, but seeing them on the silver screen only drove him to make his nightmares real.

Southeast Asia had a long history of sorcery and mystical societies, but even in the 1960s, Hong Kong was as much a western city as an eastern one. Under British rule it abandoned the traditions of Chinese emperors and rejected the precepts of Communism. *Randolph Xiao*, the director of the First Bank of Hong Kong — an institution notorious for its close financial ties to the city's Triads and other darker, less well-known societies — saw joining DEMON as Belphegor as an appropriately western way to further his power.

America's Ku Klux Klan with its "Imperial Wizards" and "Exalted Cyclopes" was already rife with agents for occult societies. For *W. C. Stevens*, Grand Dragon of the First Sons of the KKK who took the name Adramelek, joining DEMON seemed a natural step to increase his power.

Billed as the "two men with one brain!" the conjoined twins, *Jebediah and Obediah Jefferson*, had gone from poverty in rural Mississippi, to being the stars of a traveling freak show, to becoming the owners of Smiley and Sons Circus, one of the largest circuses in the world with troupes that traveled the globe. Joined at the back of the head, with a single brain grown between two skulls, their psychic powers gave them a nightmarish insight into humanity's evil — an insight that perfectly suited them to the role of Satan-Moloch in DEMON's Inner Circle.

With the initiation of the Inner Circle completed, Luther Black stepped back into the shadows. He retired to the Thirteenth Floor, his recently completed sanctum known to no one but himself and his personal servitors. He only came forth in the guise of the Edomite when matters were important enough to demand his personal involvement.

DEMON IN THE SILVER AGE

After the Grendeling Plot in 1963, when DEMON stole Beowulf's sword, the organization increasingly came into conflict with superheroes. During the decade the world's protectors gradually realized the threat DEMON posed to the world, culminating in 1968 with the Basilisk Orb Incident. But DEMON suffered some "growing pains." The methods of this new sort of occult society and their implementation were unfamiliar to Luther Black, and in many circumstances he was forced to improvise. The ten members of the Inner Circle had diverse backgrounds and reasons for joining DEMON — as well as different degrees of sanity — and their ambitions, though always evil, took them in myriad directions. Luther Black struggled to keep them in line and keep DEMON working toward *his* goals.

Furthermore, the Morbanes and their Brothers were just as diverse as the Inner Circle, if not moreso. The new Morbanes were *not* long-term students of Luther Black who had studied under him when he was with the Circle of the Scarlet Moon; the Brothers were *not* the amateur occultists with pretenses to scholarship and the evil men steeped in Old World superstitions Black had recruited during the 1930s. This new generation of DEMON members were modern men and women, typically from mundane backgrounds, with evil lurking in their hearts but no previous knowledge of the arcane. This was before the Black Shepherd and formalized rites of indoctrination into DEMON, and the members' knowledge of the occult drew as much from popular culture — movies, comic books, pulp magazines, and other sensationalistic media — as it did from ages-old teachings. These influences led to a lot of grandiose plots and maniacal laughter.

The final difference was in the Profane Regalia — there was less variety in the enchanted items the DEMON members used. A DEMON Brother only had a Amulet of Protection and Brazen Wand; a Morbane often had the same, only slightly more powerful, and maybe an artifact to bolster his powers (Black had yet to create the Soul Gems).

El Espectro Contra El DEMON: Mexico City, because of its mystical significance, has long been a target for DEMON, and the authorities discovered the organization's first Demonhame in 1964 during the annual festival of Dia de los Muertos. The Morbane had intended to raise the spirits of a select few deceased men and women, all of whom were relatives of the rich and powerful in Mexico City. When the residents of Mexico City ritually welcomed the spirits of their dead family members back into their homes, these spirits would enter and permanently haunt the places, acting as spies for DEMON. However the Morbane misjudged the potent power of the holiday and inadvertently called forth Mictecacihuatl, the Aztec Lady of the Dead. Mictecacihuatl unleashed her spirit hordes, who possessed the celebrating children and then rioted in the streets. Only the timely intervention of El Espectro saved the day. The heroic wrestler forced Mictecacihuatl to return to her home dimension when he went there himself (by coercing the Morbane into sending him) and threatened to take over her dominion. The goddess recognized El Espectro's silver mask for what it was, knew this was no empty threat, and abandoned the material world to protect her realm.

The Macabre Melding Incident: Doctor Macabre and DEMON had frequent run-ins during the sixties and early seventies, usually involving attempts by DEMON to steal the Janus Key. The strangest of these was DEMON's first attempt, the Macabre Melding Incident. The Morbane of the Chicago Demonhame and Dr. Macabre teamed

up to steal a primitive machine from ancient Greece on display at the Field Museum. The Morbane claimed the machine was a Lemurian artifact, but this was a trap — he actually wanted to steal the Janus Key. The ruse took a turn for the weird when the Morbane attempted to make off with the artifact. Just as he laid hands on the Janus Key and muttered his spell of teleportation, there was a flash of light... and the two men had become one, melded back-to-back! The pain and confusion of this monstrous merger provoked a rampage, during which the Janus Key caused untold damage when it somehow opened temporal doorways. From out of the doorways rushed hordes of Neanderthals, Mongols, Vikings, radioactive mutants, space pirates, and other, less easily identified ravagers. The Black Mask teamed up with Amazing Man from the Fabulous Five, who was attending a convention on rocket science at the time, to stop the chaos. While the Black Mask captured the merged Morbane and Dr. Macabre, Amazing Man closed the temporal doors by isolating the time-manipulating harmonic, then producing a counter-wave with his super-science. The merged Morbane and Dr. Macabre later escaped — no one knows how they were eventually separated.

The Secrets Of Pythagoras: The London Demonhame first reared its head at the British Museum where the Elgin Marbles were on display. The Morbane believed the statues had mystical powers related to the Parthenon, the Golden Triangle, the number 1.618033989, and the secret teachings of Pythagoras. He stole the Marbles, then used them to rebuild the Parthenon in a remote area of Wales. Once the building was completed, the surrounding countryside rang out with *Musica Mundana*, the Music of the Spheres, and the Morbane re-discovered the secrets of the universe known to ancient man. But before he could fully grasp those secrets, the same that had brought doom to the enlightened inhabitants of ancient Ophir, the New Knights of the Round Table showed up to thwart his plot. Since that day, the British government has kept the Marbles under lock and key at an undisclosed location, putting plaster castings on display at the Museum in lieu of the originals.

The Blood-Red Scare: He called himself Rasputin. Though no proof existed that he was *the* Rasputin, when asked he didn't deny it. He possessed an eerie resemblance — the haunted, piercing eyes, sallow skin, and long beard — to that hard-to-kill monk who long ago passed into Russian history books... and who, for the Communists, was a symbol of all that was evil about the Tsarist regime, but whom the common men and women honored as one of their own. This second Rasputin promised DEMON and its Inner Circle he would bring the organization into the Soviet Union. Penetrating Russia was a goal high on the Inner Circle's agenda because of Luther Black's continued interest in Tunguska and the whereabouts of the Hellstone (which had proved impossible for him to locate over the years for mysterious reasons).

Rasputin did as he promised — under his leadership DEMON successfully infiltrated the Soviet Union's government. But once he had secured this beachhead, the Demonhame located near the Soviet naval port in Odessa, Rasputin slipped the leash and went rogue. By the time he was done, he had caused a schism in the Soviet superteam, the People's Legion, brought the world's superpowers to the brink of nuclear war, and pushed a young UNTIL's resources to the limit. Only a hastily-assembled UNTIL team of covert agents, their actions and identities still classified to this day, staved off a nuclear apocalypse.

JUNE 4, 1963: THE REDBROOD DEMONHAME, NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

When the Sentinels burst through the wall of the old, profaned church — red bricks exploding across the nave and forcing the DEMON Brothers on guard to scurry for cover behind pews and the Satanic altar — the heroes neared the conclusion of the first confrontation between DEMON and the superheroes of the modern era.

Morbane William Hale, a notable New York dilettante, scion of a Dutch family with a history going back to New Amsterdam, and son of a Novus Ordo member from the thirties, had recently re-established the Redbrood Demonhame. After a string of normal-seeming crimes, he orchestrated the theft of Beowulf's sword, *Naegling*. Drawing upon the mystic power of the weapon wielded by the reincarnation of the ancient hero and member of the Sentinels, the Morbane brought forth a horde of Grendel-like monsters, which the newspapers dubbed "grendelings," to terrorize the city.

UNTIL analysts thought Hale acted alone in an attempt to re-establish the Satanic organization of the 1920s and 30s to prominence in the 1950s. Even after the Sentinels uncovered the Redbrood Demonhame, almost a year passed before DEMON's presence in other locations hinted at the true scope of its operations. Only when superheroes discovered Demonhames elsewhere did the authorities suspect the extent of the reborn DEMON — and only after the theft of the Basilisk Orb in 1968 did anyone glimpse the threat the organization posed to the world.

MARCH 18, 1968: NAN MADOL, POHNPEI, CAROLINE ISLAND GROUP

Deep in the overgrown jungles of Pohnpei, a volcanic island in modern-day Micronesia, Luther Black stood at the center of Nan Madol, an ancient city of basalt whose origins were lost to history. He spoke the words of his spell, its harsh syllables reverberating across the island. Around him winds blew with the force of a monsoon, and on nearby islands long-dormant volcanoes erupted, magma and ash geysiring high into the air. Tsunamis rushed away from the Caroline Islands and crashed down on seashores in surrounding lands, flooding towns and cities, and taking the corpses of the drowned out to sea.

Luther Black held in his hands a viridine orb, and the object pulsed with power. It tapped into the mystic energy gathered at Nan Madol and provided Black with the might he needed to cast his spell.

No human had spoken the arcane words of his spell since mythic times when the last age of heroes ended. The spell was a divination of fell power, for its caster not only glimpsed a potential future, but chose from all possible futures and made one a certain reality, however unlikely its coming to pass. The caster took time itself and shaped it to his desire, and once he completed the spell, no force in Heaven or Earth could alter the future.

As the sun set on the final day of Luther Black's spell, and he chanted the last words of the three-day-long ritual, he began to set in place the last event of the future he desired above all others: February 29, 2012, the last day of his life, when he successfully called forth the Kings of Edom with his final words and the sacrifice of his own life, then



WHAT DID HE SEE?

In his vision of the future, Luther Black saw a great many things — events and people, concrete tasks he must accomplish to succeed — and these are discussed in more detail on page 38. But underlying all of this was a single insight that changed everything.

As he sifted through the possible futures, searching for the one that would bring him all he desired, Black realized the Kings of Edom would grind him under their heel if he successfully freed them. He came to understand, beyond a shadow of a doubt, there was no way to bargain with these beings — he could expect no reward for his efforts — and there was no way to simply syphon their power. The only way to achieve his goal was to become one of them... and the only way to do that was to *force* them to effect his blasphemous apotheosis.

It was this goal — to become a King of Edom, himself, and not simply free the Kings of Edom — that guided Luther Black as he created the modern-day DEMON.

rose from death to stand beside them as one of the rulers of the world.

The plot had begun when Luther Black took a direct hand in DEMON's affairs for the first time since founding the Inner Circle. It was also the first time far-flung Demonhames had coordinated their efforts, the Morbanes and their followers converging on the island from sites around the Pacific Rim. All of this effort was to obtain the Basilisk Orb, an artifact recently discovered in the ruins of Nan Madol where it had been hidden since the fourteenth century.

In 1376 a fisherman had dredged up in his nets a large orb made from an eerie, greenish stone — almost some sort of over-sized pearl, but carved with disturbing-looking reptilian figures, all intertwined. After lust for the orb inspired greed that led to a massacre among the fisherman's community, the priesthood of Nan Madol confiscated the unholy thing. Despite their faithful service and ardent prayers, the priests received no divine protection from the influence of the orb, and they quickly descended into the same murderous greed that had gripped the fishermen. In the end the king of Nan Madol ordered the orb buried deep below the city, but the corruption the Basilisk Orb radiated was perfidious and invasive — stone and earth was not enough to stop it. Slowly, over the course of centuries, the energies from the Basilisk Orb slithered up through the earth, burrowing into the hearts of Nan Madol's inhabitants, and the city succumbed to its malevolent influence. The Basilisk Orb remained below the ruins of Nan Madol until American airplanes bombed the island during World War Two, inadvertently revealing the Orb's hiding place.

The Caroline Islands were out of the way, far off the beaten path, and much of the island group was inhospitable, either desolate rocky coasts or lush tropical jungles. Though the people of Pohnpei knew of the Orb, their legends and folklore warned them to stay away from it. Because they didn't trust outsiders, they kept the Orb's existence a secret. But eventually the modern world came to the Caroline Islands, and one of the first visitors was an archaeological expedition. Led by a professor from the University of Melbourne, the expedition journeyed to Pohnpei to study the ruins of Nan Madol. Among the students was a DEMON Brother.

News of the find quickly spread through DEMON's hierarchy and reached Luther Black. He knew immediately that the expedition had discovered the Basilisk Orb.

Though the United States protected the islands, it could not prevent DEMON from taking over — at least, not for long enough for Black to work his spell. The U.S. Navy had a single base on the island chain, and the people themselves had little in the way of protection. The assembled Morbanes summoned a host of malevolent elementals, and these shaped their physical bodies from ocean sludge, seaweed, coral, and volcanic rock. Shambling forth from out of the ocean depths, the elementals eliminated U.S. military personnel at the naval base, while human agents for DEMON

took over the local government authorities on the islands and severed communications with the outside world. With the islands under DEMON control, Luther Black emerged and took possession of the Basilisk Orb. DEMON only needed to hold the island for three days, just long enough for Black to complete his spell.

In this, however, DEMON failed.

Just as the spell neared completion, UNTIL agents stormed the beaches while the Sentinels fought their way to Nan Madol and confronted Luther Black. MeteorMan wrested the Basilisk Orb away from Black, then sunk the artifact in the heart of a raging volcano, hoping to put an end to the threat it posed.

Luther Black escaped from Pohnpei when invisible spirits of the air bound to his service whisked him up into the winds that raged above the islands. The fierce winds tore at his robes of scarlet and black, as he twirled and spun up through the storm. Blood dripping from his clawed fingers, he laughed maniacally at those superheroes who had thwarted him, but he could not see his enemies. Blood ran from the empty sockets where he had scratched out his eyes when the divination was abruptly ended.

In a fit of madness, Luther Black had blinded himself... but only after seeing far more than he ever had as a sighted man. He had witnessed a future when his desire was fulfilled — witnessed the events that must come to pass, the tasks he must accomplish, to successfully summon the Kings of Edom.

And the first task was to murder the Inner Circle.

APRIL 30, 1969: MARKET SQUARE, HELSINKI, FINLAND

The crowd of riotous Finns had gathered around *Havis Amanda*, a bronze statue of a nude woman placed at the center of Helsinki's Market Square. They celebrated *Vappu*, more commonly known as Walpurgisnacht elsewhere in the world — the last night of winter before the beginning of spring, and the last night of the year witches were free to work their evil on the common man. Sylvia Taylor-Evans, a visiting professor of anthropology at the University of Helsinki and the member of DEMON's Inner Circle known as Astaroth, pushed through the riotous Finns, desperate to escape her pursuer.

Behind her a hunched and deformed figure slipped through the people, his limbs like bundles of sticks moving awkwardly. He wore a tattered motley of stained rags, their colors long ago faded. Over his face he wore a scaramouche mask with a long beak of *papier-mache* and decorated with cracked and chipped gilt. In his hand he held a long knife.

Jack Fool, risen in undeath to serve as Luther Black's assassin, moved somehow unseen by the drunken celebrants. No matter what spells Sylvia Taylor-Evans cast, even on this night when her powers waxed strong, Jack Fool ignored them.

A young man climbed up on the pedestal to

DEMON IN THE BRONZE AGE

In-fighting consumed DEMON during most of the 1970s, and while some of this fighting was over the loyalty of Demonhames, many Morbanes slipped through the cracks and were left to their own devices. Even before the Years of Red Nights and the struggle for control of DEMON, Luther Black had a difficult time keeping the Morbanes in line with his goals. In the Seventies, when tracking down and killing the Inner Circle members consumed Black's attention, the Morbanes were left to their own devices and sometimes interpreted the organization's goals weirdly, changing their respective Demonhames appropriately.

Some became little more than crime cartels with the trappings of Satanism — they abandoned DEMON's mystical goals entirely for the pursuit of material wealth and power. Some fell under the thumb of infernal powers, Satanism no longer simply a disguise, as the Morbanes abandoned the Kings of Edom. Demonhames even sprung up that were totally unaffiliated with Luther Black and the rest of the organization, the self-proclaimed Morbanes stealing the name DEMON to attract members.

In short: DEMON fractured and lost the coherency that had previously made it such a threat to the world — as well as an integral part in Luther Black's plans to bring forth the Kings of Edom. What follows are four incidents that illustrate the schizophrenic nature of DEMON during the decade.

Demons Rule, The Prequel: With the imprisonment of their Morbane after Highway Patrol One captured him, the Demonhame in One Dog, Arizona was left without a leader. The DEMON Brothers were young men recruited from the motorcycle gangs that often made One Dog a stop while traveling Route 66 (or 666 as the route markers often read, a third 6 sprayed on with red spray paint). After the death of their leader, they reverted to type, becoming a motorcycle gang called the Demons. The gang spread across America, first as simple drug runners with kilos of cocaine and heroin stashed in their bikes' gas tanks, then growing larger as it established street gangs in inner cities and prison gangs in state and federal penitentiaries. Although an occasional member was a would-be occultist, and all of the members were sadistic in the extreme, the founding principles of DEMON mostly served as a motif for Satanic tattoos, with the occasional biker stitching a goat pelt to his vest or attaching goat horns to his helmet. The gang had frequent clashes with Highway Patrol One as well as the Black Mask, Shadowboxer, and other street-level heroes.

DEMON And The Fourth Reich: A Morbane in Vienna, Alois Hausner, came to believe that five of the leaders of the Third Reich had embodied — not just symbolically, but literally — the five Kings of Edom he had learned of in his initiation into the ranks of the Morbanes. Heinrich Himmler was the King of Lost Hope, Ilse Koch, the Queen beyond the Pale, Joseph Goebbels, the Heart in Men's Dementia, Eva Braun, the Muse of Lethargy and Despair, and Hitler himself the Master of All Sorrows. With this arcane (and delusional) schema in mind, the Morbane joined the neo-Nazi movement, and soon positioned himself and his Demonhame as the leaders of a European resurgence in Aryanism. The conspiracy came crashing down when the Morbane attempted to travel through time and rescue the five Nazis by bringing them through to the modern world. The Sentinels thwarted his plans, leaving him trapped in the past in the role of a SS commandant history records as sentenced to death at Nuremberg.

The Tomb Of DEMON: An expedition of DEMON Brothers came to an isolated castle high in the Carpathian

mountains. Centuries of folk stories had led their Morbane to believe the vampire, Prince Stephen Bathory, ally of Vlad Tepes and ancestor of Countess Elizabeth Bathory, lay entombed there. The expedition found the staked corpse of Prince Bathory and transported it to the Demonhame in Athens, where the Morbane awakened the vampire. He had planned to use Prince Bathory as one of his agents; instead he served as the vampire's first meal in centuries. Prince Bathory then took control of the DEMON Brothers and used them as his minions. In subsequent years Prince Bathory subverted Demonhames along the Mediterranean coast for his own use, and came into frequent conflict with a group of vampire hunters mentored by the Trismegistus Council.

DEMON In Name, Body, And Soul: Luther Black spent considerable time struggling to keep infernal powers from taking control of DEMON, and during the Years of Red Nights, he failed... dramatically. The Morbanes he recruited during the sixties had more lust for power than training in the arcane, and they were easily tempted into poor bargains with the infernal. In other words, their eyes were bigger than their souls. Nowhere was this more true than in San Francisco, when the members of the Demonhame began to graft demonic limbs in place of their own. They thought they maintained their own personality, but such was not the case — the soul of a demon may reside anywhere, including an arm or a leg. The surgeries culminated when the Morbane, deep in the throes of derangement, had his Brother cut off his head and sew in its place the head of Cimerias, a demon of no small status in the infernal hierarchies. The grotesque combination of demon and human somehow subverted the magical laws binding demons, rendering them immune to the usual restrictions on their actions. Cimerias leading them, these demonic Frankenstein monsters burst forth from the Demonhame to unleash an unholy terror only barely stopped by the Freedom Patrol.

Sabbath Night Fever: Some called him the Devil of the Dance Floor; others, the Jesus of the Hustle; but in truth he was the culmination of an eighteen-year-old plot to give birth to the Antichrist. Damian Silke-Benton, called Dame Silk by his friends and admirers, took the New York disco scene by storm in early 1978. Garbed in a red silk three-piece suit with flared slacks and butterfly collar, with red high-heeled boots and black silk shirt, his dance moves were the talk of the town. Like some gyrating, swaggering Pied Piper of Hamelin, Dame Silk led disco goers deeper into debauchery. In this he fulfilled the hopes of his mother, the Morbane Camille Benton, when she gave herself to an incubus summoned forth from the nether regions. Dame Silk taught his followers his own variation of the Four Corners, a version that looked impossibly contorted, but which dancers found strangely simple to perform... as well as exhilarating ("a better high than any drug," one person said of it later). Dame Silk claimed the dance aligned the seven chakras. What it truly did was discovered on October 31, 1979 at the Devil's Discotheque on New York's Eastside. Clubgoers dancing Dame Silk's Four Corners found their souls cast loose of their bodies and given over to infernal powers... and their bodies, now empty shells, possessed by demons. The Justice Squadron only barely stopped the demons' rampage, afterwards discovering that the Devil's Discotheque was the front for Camille Benton's Demonhame. Insiders later christened the event "the night disco died." Dame Silk disappeared into the night leaving nothing behind but dead disco dancers and his suit jacket of red silk.

stand next to Havis Amanda, and as he tugged his white student's cap over the statue's bronze head, performing the symbolic return of youth that came with the end of winter, Jack Fool plunged his knife into Sylvia Taylor-Evans and murdered Astaroth.

Her blood running into the gutter to mingle with spilled beer and wine, Astaroth died. Far to the north the witches in Lappland threw off their modern guises and took flight, wailing with grief and mourning their fallen sister on the last night of their freedom. Luther Black's assassin had killed the first of the Inner Circle members and begun the Years of Red Nights, a decade-long struggle for control of DEMON.

MAY 8, 1973: TENEBRES STUDIOS, MONTE SAINT-MICHEL, FRANCE

Throughout the 1970s, analysts working for UNTIL and other services recognized that something was amiss with DEMON, especially since its threat level had dwindled after the incident with the Basilisk Orb. But the infighting among DEMON's secret leadership during the Years of Red Nights came into public view only twice.

The first time was at the studio for Marcel St. Luke's Tenebres Films, when the cameras caught the murder of that infamous producer and director, Baal Chanan in DEMON's Inner Circle, on film.

After the murder of Astaroth, the rest of the Inner Circle knew Luther Black had determined to kill them, though none knew why. Led by the occultist Lyle Pike, some banded together to oppose Black. Their actions prolonged the Years of Red Nights, forcing Black to spend a decade struggling with the Inner Circle for control of DEMON. A few others, deranged by DEMON's evil-doings and the Edomite's influence, simply awaited their death at his hands. Among these was Marcel St. Luke. The film producer saw his impending death as he had seen everything else in his life, both waking and dreaming: as material for a horror movie.

He halted all other film projects and assigned his camera crews, working in eight-hour shifts, to record his day-to-day life. After almost a month of filming, the end finally came — and when Jack Fool crept out of the shadows, the cameras were there to capture the moment. Though Black's assassin also murdered the camera crew, he left the film behind. Marcel St. Luke's employees, students of his film style, took up the task of editing the hundreds of hours of black-and-white footage into a three-hour movie entitled *St. Luke Entrer dans le Tenebres* (English title: "St. Luke Enters the Darkness").

The movie shows St. Luke's rapid descent into paranoia and despair, depicting the filmmaker as a manic genius and visionary, but only provides ominous hints of Marcel St. Luke's involvement with DEMON and his pacts with powers beyond his control. The movie ends with Jack Fool, wearing his scaramouche mask and holding a bloody knife, turning to the camera and then stalking closer — almost seeming to emerge from the screen as his dead eyes, barely visible behind the eye-holes in the cracked carnivale mask, fill the scene — before the

movie abruptly fades to black.

Critics have called the movie everything from the culmination of the *Cinema Verite* movement, to a pedantic, sensationalistic fraud and perverted snuff film. Among fans of horror movies it is legendary, although the original disappeared years ago and only poor, grainy copies (often believed incomplete) remain in circulation. Whatever the artistic merit of *St. Luke Entrer dans le Tenebres*, it is one of the few pieces of concrete evidence concerning DEMON's secret leadership.

THE LATE CENTURY

As the twentieth century wound down, Luther Black prepared to move forward from the Years of Red Nights, consolidate his gains, and achieve his ultimate goal.

OCTOBER 10, 1981: UNTIL TEMPORARY FIELD OFFICE, LAGOS, NIGERIA

By 1981 Aganju Lambo, called Asmodeus, was the only Inner Circle member still alive. He had run to ground in Lagos, Nigeria and taken sanctuary with his Yoruba tribesmen. Though his own magic coupled with that of his fellow Yoruba shamans protected him, and the spirits of his ancestors shielded him from divinations, all omens and portents indicated he would die at Luther Black's hands. Desperate to deny the omens and stay alive, Aganju made UNTIL an offer.

Working through intermediaries Aganju offered to turn himself in and provide the authorities with all he knew about DEMON. In exchange he asked for immunity from prosecution and protection from reprisal. Immunity was the sticking point — DEMON had caused many deaths in the last two decades, and not just victims' families, but entire nations, demanded justice.

The two parties went back and forth for over a week until, Aganju suddenly agreed to all of UNTIL's terms. He only had one condition of his own: that four superheroes he named act as his bodyguard. Only these, he claimed, had the necessary power and abilities to protect him from his enemies. UNTIL performed extensive background checks on the four heroes, but found nothing suspicious. They agreed to Aganju's terms and assembled the superheroes in Lagos: the ESPert, a American man with telepathic and clairsentience powers; Purim Queen, an Israeli woman who could change both her physical form and clothing; Luftspanzerganger, a German man who could become incorporeal and fly; and Ephemera, a British woman who could teleport.

Later reports on the incident identified four areas where the agent-in-charge committed fatal errors. First, he should never have allowed Aganju's entourage to enter the building. Second, his men should have noticed the increased presence of Nigerian militiamen in the streets. Third, he should have suspected the unauthorized repairmen from the week before. Fourth, he should have had a member from Project Hermes, the UNTIL branch concerned the mystic and arcane, in his task force.

Luther Black had already gotten to Aganju. Learning of the negotiations, he decided to make use of UNTIL and its resources. The week before, several DEMON Brothers, posing as repairmen, altered the air conditioning system so it would spew a hallucinogenic powder. Black infiltrated other Brothers among the Nigerian militiamen. He and a Morbane became Aganju's entourage. Luther Black posed as the man's lawyer, and since he was blind, the Morbane posed as his assistant. Finally, lurking in the shadows was Jack Fool.

After his DEMON Brothers had secured the building and captured the UNTIL agents, Luther Black began his ritual. On a makeshift altar set up atop the building, he sacrificed the captured agents to evoke the Imhullu, "the whirlwind, the hurricane, the wind of four and the wind of seven," those same demons Marduk had commanded when the protector of ancient Babylon fought and vanquished Tiamat.

Raging through the heavens and around the ritual, the seven demons tore the souls from the four superheroes... and in taking up their souls, the demons also stole the superheroes' powers. Then Luther Black forced "the wind of four and wind of seven" into the helpless Aganju, driving out the man's own soul. Finally, Black mingled his own essence (with its Qliphothic taint) with those in the vessel Aganju had become. Black had performed a blasphemous immaculate conception. The former Asmodeus became the Black Shepherd, the second member of the Inverted Trinity, taking the role of the Son.

With the Black Shepherd in tow, Luther Black departed the area. He left behind a gruesome scene out of nightmare — a high heap of mutilated UNTIL agents, their bodies cut to ribbons and drained of blood, and the desiccated corpses of four superheroes, the dry flesh flaking from their soulless husks — that announced DEMON was once again a threat to the world and its superhuman protectors.

AUGUST 1, 1986: BEACON HILL, BOSTON, UNITED STATES

Luther Black sacrificed five men and five women. He cut their bodies in two, slicing down the middle from crown to crotch. Then, with a large needle and coarse twine, he stitched them together again, the left half of a man stitched to the right half of a woman. In sacrifice to Satan-Moloch, the double opposed to the divine unity, his assistants threw each of these gruesome abominations

on the fires of the Demonflame. The skyscraper, One Beacon Street, rose up a thousand feet, and its metaphysical analogue broke through into the infernal realms, bridging the gulfs of infinite darkness and calling forth the demon hordes, devilish doppelgangers that served Satan-Moloch. One Beacon Street, the Demonflame burning hot at its impossible height, became an infernal beacon calling demons into the material world to terrorize Boston. And Luther Black continued the ritual.

Ten more men and women died atop One Beacon Street, these a petition to Adam Belial. Black wedged chunks of cubic zirconia into their empty eye sockets. He sewed counterfeit hundred

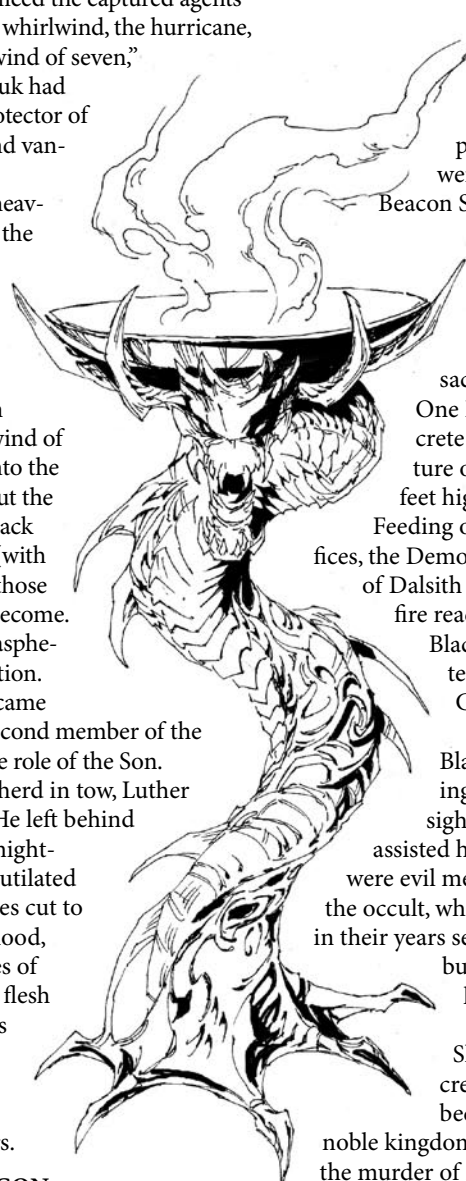
dollar bills in place of their ripped-out tongues. He scooped out their brains and filled the bloody cavities with cheap plastic trinkets and toys. These too were thrown on the Demonflame. One Beacon Street rose another thousand feet and more demons, foul spirits of greed and teachers of false knowledge, descended on Boston.

The ritual continued, ten innocents dying each time, ten sacrifices for each of the Archdemons. One Beacon Street, a skyscraper of concrete and glass, became a hellish caricature of gothic architecture, ten thousand feet high. At its summit stood Luther Black. Feeding off the bodies of a hundred sacrifices, the Demonflame burned high in the Brazier of Dalsith the Orphan, the tongues of angry fire reaching for the heavens. Above Luther Black the tumultuous grey skies shattered like broken glass, and the Edom Gate opened.

Blind for eighteen years, Luther Black could only feel the power spewing out the gate. He could not see the sight that drove the Morbanes who assisted him into gibbering madness. They were evil men and women trained in magic and the occult, who had witnessed countless atrocities in their years serving DEMON and the Edomite, but this was a sight beyond any evil known to mortal man.

Luther Black could not see Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, the creature Dalsith the Orphan had become in his quest to topple the noble kingdom of Atlantis and take revenge for the murder of his father. Sharna-Gorak was this world's last great servant of the Kings of Edom — Luther Black's forebear, if not in flesh then in spirit. Imprisoned long ago in the Qliphothic Realms, the monstrous and inhuman creature floated lifeless, seemingly unaware that men from the world he once desired to rule looked upon his fearsome countenance for the first time in tens of thousands of years.

Luther Black could not see the ghastly physical changes service to the Kings of Edom had worked



LUTHER BLACK THROUGH THE DECADES

Officially, Luther Black doesn't exist. The persona he adopted soon after relocating to the United States in 1908, Lucius Blackwell, died in 1948 (of unknown causes according to the death certificate issued by the New York City coroner). To the first and second Inner Circles, he has been only known by the title "the Edomite." But he has maintained several identities over the decades (since the Demonflame Incident more as fallback plans than anything else), including: Lewis Semfer (deceased 1967), Lawrence Schwarz (deceased 1986), Nat Aster (still active as a resident of North Carolina), Dane Melville (still active as a resident of Texas), Francis Noir (still active as a citizen of France), and Prince Blackwell (still active as a citizen of Australia).

He also maintains several residences as safehouses in case the Thirteenth Floor is compromised. Some of these (official owner in parenthesis) include: small homes in Edom, Texas (Dane Melville) and on The Kings Road in Greensboro, North Carolina (Nat Aster); the House of the Venetian (see page 13; Francis Noir), and Mulraven House (see page 20; Prince Blackwell).

on Sharna-Gorak, could not see the sight that had driven his assistants insane — but he did not need to see Sharna-Gorak to steal the power of this ancient servant of the Kings of Edom and make it his own.

In 1968 Luther Black had glimpsed this moment in the depths of the Basilisk Orb when he attempted to make an uncertain future an unalterable reality. He had seen himself assuming the mantle of Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, taking that being's power for his own — seen the exact moment when Qliphothic energies poured forth into the world and swirled around him, filling him with power. But the Sentinels had thwarted the spell he wrought at Nan Madol almost two decades ago, making his vision of the future an uncertain thing, and the arrival of VIPER — a worldwide criminal organization with resources that rivaled, if not surpassed, DEMON's own — on the morning of August 2 threw all of Black's plans into disarray. VIPER's secret leadership had determined the events at Boston threatened their own plans, and the organization dispatched a small army of agents to thwart Black's attempt to assume the mantle of Sharna-Gorak.

DEMON Brothers had already defeated the Justice Squadron when the superheroes first attempted to scale One Beacon Street's unnatural heights the night before, but the coming of VIPER gave the superheroes a chance to muster their strength and make a second assault on the skyscraper. Again they scaled the building and this time, with VIPER agents providing cover against demonic attacks, they reached the top. There Luther Black stood alone, consumed with power and unaware of the superheroes' arrival.

With the advantage of surprise, the heroes toppled the Brazier, extinguishing the Demonflame and scattering across the rooftop the bones of the sacrificed that smoldered like red-hot coals. The superhero Blink gathered up the bones and transported them to Boston Mills Cemetery, called Helltown by the locals, a site of ancient power dating back to when it was an Indian burial mound. As Blink and a local minister put the bones of the sacrificed to rest in hallowed ground, the Justice Squadron fought Black and his new minion, the Left Hand — a figment of Black's perverse imagination yet wholly real, a magical creation Luther Black formed *ex nihilo* from his cast-off notions of occultism, black magic, and demonology who took the third and final place in the Inverted Trinity, that of the Holy Ghost.

For the superheroes who remained at One Beacon Street, the fight was hopeless. Black drew upon the power of Sharna-Gorak and none could defy him, but once the bones of the sacrifices were laid to rest, the Edom Gate closed. The Archdemons, having had the payment Luther Black had made stolen away, denied him their aid in this endeavor contrary to their own infernal goals for Earth and mortals. Cut off from the source of his power, his erstwhile allies calling back their demonic servitors, Luther Black only barely escaped the Justice Squadron through the

intervention of the Left Hand. But he did not leave One Beacon Street, now returned to a normal skyscraper, unchanged.

He had failed to take all of Sharna-Gorak's power, and as with any black magic rite interrupted, he paid a high price for his failure. The Qliphothic had perverted his mind in 1925 at a gas works in Hell's Kitchen; a fell divination broken off before completion had stolen his sight in 1968; now his body paid the price. The Justice Squadron had stopped the ritual before Luther Black gained the ability to master his immeasurable power, and barely controlled, the Qliphothic energies corrupted the mortal body that was too weak to contain its might. In the end Luther Black was left a cripple.

OCTOBER 31, 1997: MULRAVEN HOUSE, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

From the safety of the Thirteenth Floor, Luther Black ignored the agony his corrupted body caused him and concentrated his power, casting his sight halfway across the world. Through the eyes of his emissary, the Black Shepherd, he studied the faces of the five men and women who were the members of DEMON's second Inner Circle.

They sat around the long table in the dining hall at Mulraven House — a mansion built by Elisha Mulraven, the Beggar King of London, after he fled England in 1843. At the head of the table, the Black Shepherd, wearing dark robes with a deep cowl pulled over his head, finished his reading from the *Liber Terribilis*. He closed the book and took up his crook of corroded iron. The initiation completed, the Black Shepherd took his leave of the Inner Circle and departed Mulraven House in a swirl of shadow and smoke.

During the Demonflame Incident in Boston, the Qliphothic energy spilling out of the Edom Gate had insinuated itself into the material world and found vessels for its power. Tracing its path via the Inverted Trinity and his Morbanes, Luther Black spent a decade finding those vessels and recruiting them for his new Inner Circle: *Demoiselle Nocturne*, a woman who stepped out of a murderer's nightmare; *Herr Doktor Pandemonium*, a psychiatrist who delved too deep into humanity's genetic memory; *Dyer vander Bleek*, a Morbane risen up through DEMON's ranks; the *Coin Collector*, a banker who held Judas's thirty pieces of silver in trust; and the *Dalang*, an Indian puppeteer who abandoned his shadow puppets of leather and sticks for those of flesh and blood. The Qliphothic had touched each of these (except vander Bleek), and they possessed considerable power — and that same power had twisted them into an evil shape.

Luther Black had plans for them beyond what they knew of his and DEMON's goals. Like the first Inner Circle, the five men and women thought Black had formed DEMON to free the Kings of Edom in exchange for power. This Inner Circle was, in truth, Black's summoning circle — when all was ready, the five would contain the power of the Kings of Edom when those beings came into the world to assume mastery of the Earth.

As with the Demonflame, Black had seen this

DEMON IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES

After Luther Black killed the last of the Inner Circle, he once again took a direct role in DEMON's operations. Though the Demonflame Incident left him crippled, he used the newly completed Inverted Trinity to carry out his commands. Working through the Black Shepherd, he brought the straying Morbanes back into the flock — sometimes co-opting the resources and networks they had developed while acting autonomously, sometimes simply abandoning them. Working through Jack Fool and the Left Hand, he eliminated the Morbanes that infernal powers or others had subverted and taken control of — sometimes placing the Brothers who belonged to those straying Demonhames with loyal ones, sometimes sacrificing them on the altar of power. Then he created the Soul Gems, the enchanted items which would allow him to spy into the hearts and minds of his Morbanes and better ensure their loyalty.

After he had consolidated his control over the Morbanes, DEMON took a turn for the deadly. In the years between 1981 and 1986, the organization dedicated itself to paving the way for the Demonflame Incident: securing the Brazier of Dalsith the Orphan, stealing ancient texts describing Sharna-Gorak, calculating planetary alignments, and accomplishing other mystical tasks — before laying siege to Boston and causing untold deaths. After events at Boston, DEMON's activities were still deadly, but on a smaller scale. Listed below are some of the more notorious plots the organization perpetrated between 1986 and 1997 before Black finished assembling the second Inner Circle.

Jonesboro Inferno: Once Luther Black killed off the Inner Circle, he found himself beholden to numerous infernal powers whom he had called on for aid during the struggle to control DEMON. He decided to discharge his debt in one fell swoop. A field team for Global Energies, Von Recker's company and now a front for DEMON, discovered natural gas deposits under the town of Jonesboro, Indiana. Decades before the area had been famous for its supposedly inexhaustible supply of natural gas, even going so far as to name one city in the area "Gas City." Despite the locals' optimism the wells ran dry after only a few decades, leaving the area in an economic doldrum it never recovered from. Rather than exploit these new-found reserves of natural gas for profit, Luther Black ordered Global Energies to keep them a secret. Then he dispatched Morbanes of questionable loyalty to the site... and sacrificed the potential traitors to the infernal powers when he set the natural gas reserves alight. The town of Jonesboro exploded in flames and the dimensional barriers came crashing down, allowing hordes of demons to pour out into the material world as Jonesboro literally became hell on earth. The Peacekeepers kept the demon horde from spreading across the Midwest... but only with the heroic sacrifice of one of their members, Junkyard Dog, who stayed behind in the infernal realms to singlehandedly keep the demons from escaping through the gate while the other Peacekeepers closed it.

The Nine Torches Of Surtur's Fire: In 1963 a volcano erupted off the coast of Iceland and created the island of Surtsey, named after Surtur from Norse legend. Almost thirty years later a team of geologists made a startling find there: a runestone that told of a voyage of nine Viking longships. Circa 1000 AD the Vikings had found nine torches burning with a blood-red flame that proved impossible to extinguish. Their priests told them these were the brands Surtur would use to set the world aflame during Ragnarok, one torch for each of the nine worlds in Nordic cosmology. Determined to serve the gods, nine Viking captains resolved to set sail in their longships and carry the torches to the ends of the Earth so they would be impossible for agents of evil to find — thus staving off

the "wind-age, the wolf-age, the Twilight of the Gods." The discovery of the runestone at Surtsey, and its subsequent translation, touched off a world-wide battle between the forces of DEMON and superheroes, as both sides sought to find the Nine Torches of Surtur's Fire first. Over the course of a single summer, the battle raged across seven continents and in Atlantis until DEMON had obtained four torches and the superheroes, five. These five were given over to the Trismegistus Council for safe-keeping and have remained in its care ever since.

A Snowball's Chance...: Right after the Demonflame Incident, DEMON needed a quick infusion of cash — orchestrating the events that led to opening the Edom Gate had been costly and consumed much of the organization's resources. Luther Black, familiar with both the Opium Wars and Prohibition, knew how lucrative illicit drugs could be. He introduced a new drug into American society. Its street name was snowball, because the chance of a user kicking the habit was the same as a snowball's chance in Hell. The narcotic was cocaine mixed with soil taken from the Netherworld, then heated and crystallized. To obtain the infernal ingredients, Luther Black would allow a demon to run free in the material world for the cycle of the moon in exchange for a shovelful of Hell. Despite the Archdemons' refusal to work with DEMON, he found many among the infernal willing to take him up on the deal — at least until the Archdemons cracked down on the trade in infernal soil.

Each user of snowball followed the same pattern: first, a feeling of euphoria and self-confidence beyond anything a different drug could offer for the first months of drug use, followed by a demonic rage that always ended in either death or suicide. Furthermore, an abnormally high number of users developed superpowers as a result of drug usage. Snowball afflicted cities through the years 1987 and 1990, with many a Demonhame acting as a distribution hub, and street-level superheroes of the period fought what seemed a never-ending war against snowball's spread. Eventually, as the War on Drugs gathered steam, Luther Black recognized that snowball, and more importantly DEMON's part in its origin, would soon threaten the organization, so he discontinued its production. To this day the networks created to distribute snowball still serve DEMON's purposes, and the drug is legendary among users.

"Superstition Ain't The Way...": It began on a quiet afternoon in Lawrence, Kansas in 1999 when 1,053 children walking home from school stepped on a crack and broke their mother's back. The kitchens in 438 restaurants caught fire killing everyone inside when patrons, after spilling the salt, neglected to throw a pinch over their shoulders. The next morning thousands of ghosts rose up from their graves to haunt their families because the bereaved had failed to place two silver coins on their eyes.

The Morbane in Lawrence had succeeded in finding the *Book Of Anti-Reason*, and as he read it, ages-old superstition became the natural law for an area extending fifty miles from the Demonhame... and then it began to spread. The DEMON Brothers — well-versed in common superstitions and loaded down with rabbit's feet, shamrocks, and horseshoes — took advantage of the chaos until finally UNITY put a stop to the madness. Mentiac, the team's super-scientist, created a Rational Thought Externalizer. With the mystic couple, Doctor Black and Doctor White, providing its power source, the device externalized Mentiac's ultra-rational superhuman reasoning ability and suppressed the superstitious reality long enough for the rest of UNITY to capture the Morbane and his Brothers. UNTIL agents who investigated the crime scene after the fact never found the *Book Of Anti-Reason*.



The Present: All Around The World

DEMON continues to grow, having reached a size beyond anything it achieved in previous decades — perhaps beyond any occult conspiracy in the history of mankind. As each year passes Luther Black comes closer to his goal. Around the world Morbanes and their congregations commit evil and bring terror to the world. But despite his successes, Luther Black does not rest well.

The Mystic World has grown increasingly aware of DEMON. It began with the Descending Hierarchy, those rulers of the infernal regions, after the Demonflame Incident, and from there the rumors have trickled out into the material world. Among the knowers of secrets and masters of the arcane, word has spread: DEMON serves the Kings of Edom.

The Descending Hierarchy has passed an edict banning its infernal denizens from aiding the organization's members, insofar as they may refuse to do so — a crippling blow to many Morbanes — and it intends to take further actions against the organization. The rest of the Mystic World has begun to penetrate the outward appearance of DEMON, seeing past the limited magic of the Morbanes and their followers. They ponder what action they should take... but so far all they have done is ponder. DEMON's public persona still confounds them. They haven't discovered the true secret; they don't know the fullness of DEMON's evil and how close it is to success. Luther Black's continued existence still goes unknown. The innermost secrets of DEMON's purpose — the spell that is DEMON's and Black's apotheosis — are still held only by the Edomite himself.

Less than a decade remains until the whole world knows the truth. Only a few short years must pass before Luther Black no longer needs DEMON and stands among the Kings of Edom....

new Inner Circle in a vision from the Basilisk Orb. But again, as it was in Boston in 1986, there were anomalies.

Luther Black, possessing the power of Sharna-Gorak, should have presided over the initiation in the flesh. Instead he needed to depend on his emissary, the Black Shepherd, and could not cow the Inner Circle with his power — he would have to depend on cunning and guile, able only to effect the occasional display of power, to keep control of DEMON's leadership.

Dyer vander Bleek, untainted by the Qliphothic, had no place in the Inner Circle. He served only as a place-holder until Luther Black could find the Inner Circle's fifth member, whom he had seen in his vision from the Basilisk Orb. Vander Bleek was a rogue element, a necessary evil if Black was to found the new Inner Circle at the time and place shown to him decades ago in Nan Madol.

In short: the future was uncertain.

The members of the Inner Circle departed Mulraven House, their initiation into DEMON's mysteries complete. Each left to take control of his or her Rite in the Maleficia, a new cabal within DEMON. Unaffiliated with the Demonhames, the Maleficia had as its sole purpose aiding the Inner Circle and furthering DEMON's goals... and secretly, known only to Black, it served the primary goal of completing the summoning circle he prepared to receive the Kings of Edom. This final incarnation of DEMON stepped onto the world's stage to prepare the way for Luther Black's ascendance into the ranks of the Kings of Edom in 2012 on his last birthday — the day when those perverse beings, with Black's apotheosis complete and the Edomite standing among them, took their rightful place as rulers of the world.

chapter two:



THE NATURE OF THE DEMON ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND GOALS OF DEMON

A DEMONIC OVERVIEW



If DEMON successfully brings the five Kings of Edom out of their prison and into the world, Luther Black will have worked the greatest spell since the mythic age of Atlantis, and the spell he will have cast is the organization itself. DEMON is a magician's circle writ large, its circumference encompassing the whole of the world, each of the circle's parts inscribed with a human soul dedicated to evil.

Luther Black stands at the circle's center in a triangle formed by the Inverted Trinity. Beyond the triangle, forming three concentric rings, are the Morbanes, Initiates, and Brothers, and Black has bound them to him via the chapels in the Demonhames and the Soul Gems the Morbanes wear. Set before the magician, outside of his protective circle, is the summoning circle: an inverted pentacle, an Inner Circle member at each of the central pentagon's sides and the five Rites of the Maleficia forming the pentacles' horns, inscribed within a circle formed by each Maleficus Rex.

DEMON is a ritual involving the souls of tens of thousands, a sorcery of fell power to encompass the globe, a black magic rite performed on a grand scale — a scale appropriate to its goal of world conquest and a black magician's apotheosis.

This, however, is a secret known only to Luther Black. The other members of DEMON see the organization differently...

THE BASICS

To anyone besides Luther Black, DEMON has a rigid organizational structure best represented with concentric rings. On the outside are the Demonhames' recruitment networks; traveling inward the rings represent the Brothers, Initiates, Morbanes, Maleficia, and the Inner Circle. The members of each "circle" have increasing knowledge of DEMON's overall goals, networks, plans, and other over-arching aspects of the organization.

To use mundane intelligence agencies as a basis for comparison, each Demonhame is a field office and operations center, the Maleficia is the central office (although it lacks a central location), and the Inner Circle serves as a board of directors for the central office. Morbanes use their Demonhames to pursue DEMON's goals, acting largely autonomously with open-ended directives in the day-to-day, but with guidance and explicit instructions from the Inner Circle for large-scale operations.

When the Inner Circle deems a situation important enough, it assigns special agents from the Maleficia to individual Demonhames. To keep the

Maleficia a secret, these agents pose as Brothers and Initiates assigned from other Demonhames, never revealing their true affiliation to the Morbane in charge. When not assigned to a Demonhame, agents from the Maleficia work alone (as sleepers or infiltrators) or in small groups on special assignment, either to carry out a specific task or with more long-term, less well-defined goals (such as bring terror to the common man or make sure a business continues to work toward DEMON's goals).

Unlike mundane organizations DEMON suffers few of the pitfalls common to a rigid structure and strict hierarchy of leadership. Information is tightly controlled with false blinds set up at each degree of initiation, and only a handful have an accurate picture of the organization. Members often deliver messages via non-technological means, so tapping the communication network and following it up the hierarchy has proven impossible. DEMON uses magic to ferret out potential traitors and guarantee members' loyalty. Its indoctrination rituals, drawing upon centuries of occult tradition as well as magic, have a profound and soul-deep effect beyond anything modern science can achieve. Law-enforcement agencies have found it nearly impossible to infiltrate DEMON — only rarely can they even extract agents alive once they've traveled along the recruitment network and made contact with a Morbane. In the intelligence community it's an open secret, only spoken in hushed whispers, that many undercover agents have turned traitor, joining DEMON's ranks after going through indoctrination. Finally, members of the Inner Circle rarely expose themselves to capture, and many of them possess magical means of escape, so "chopping off the head" has proven impossible. Luther Black himself has not emerged from the Thirteenth Floor since the Demonflame Incident in 1986, and as long as he lives, DEMON will continue to exist.

DEMON And Other Secret Societies

DEMON shares many similarities with other secret societies and occult groups, and most superheroes think of the organization that way — it's just an especially large, insidious, and pervasive one. There are, however, important differences.

DEMON actively recruits members. With many secret societies, discovering the group's existence and then learning the identity of one its members is the first rite of initiation a potential member must pass — only after a person has

accomplished this (often quite difficult) feat does the society consider him for membership. DEMON creates recruitment networks, identifies potential members, and convinces them to join.

DEMON neither posits one true way of magic nor subscribes to a single dogma or magical tradition. Instead, each Demonhame shapes itself to the culture and society around it to better blend in with the surroundings and appeal to its members. This isn't just a matter of subconsciously evolving along cultural lines — DEMON does this willfully to attract members. Esoteric knowledge, like the infernal cosmogony (described below in further detail), is only taught to Morbanes who lack their own way of seeing the universe — the Voodoo *bokor*, the thuggee devoted to Kali, and the dyed-in-the-wool Satanist might each have a different way of envisioning the multiverse and working magic, and DEMON allows them to practice their individual traditions however they wish to further the organization's goals. This even extends to the Kings of Edom, and whatever way a Morbane understands the Kings and explains their position in the multiverse — from Lovecraftian Old Ones, to Gnostic Archons, to the heralds of the biblical apocalypse — is acceptable, so long as he pursues DEMON's goals by the methods described below. DEMON's sole dogma is: by any means necessary to get the evil done.

To summarize, in many ways traditional occult groups are dogmatic, bound to ages-old traditions, and exclusive. In contrast DEMON is almost populist in its philosophy, modern, and inclusive. A member can believe what he wants and interpret DEMON's philosophy how he wants, so long as he furthers DEMON's evil agenda. Ages-old traditions have their use, but if need be, DEMON creates its own traditions to accomplish its profane goals. DEMON doesn't jealously guard its secrets — anyone can join and learn those secrets, so long as they are willing to commit wicked acts and pay the price of their soul.

DEMON And Other Servants Of Edom

Other cults dedicated to the Kings of Edom exist in the world, but DEMON on the whole keeps itself separate from these, and much of the reason for this is Luther Black and his plans. (For other reasons, see *Arcane Adversaries*, pages 41-42.)

First and most important, to succeed in making himself a King of Edom, Luther Black needs to free the five Kings of Edom described in the *Liber Terribilis* on his terms. He needs to work the summoning spell that is DEMON, and unleashing the Kings before he is ready — whether the five DEMON dedicates itself to, or the others like Vulshoth — would likely render all his plans for naught.

Second, Luther Black considers these cultists and pacters little more than primitive degenerates. They are like Stone Age men painting their bodies and dancing around the fire, pale imitators of the great sorcerers of Atlantis, attempting to survive

in the wreckage of that kingdom's fall. In his arrogance Luther Black deems these other servants of Edom pathetic wretches, not worthy of his attention — after all, they've had millennia upon millennia to free the Kings of Edom and haven't succeeded. What could they possibly offer him except an aeons-long history of failure?

Who Knows What?

Like Russian *matryoshka* dolls, each one opening to reveal another smaller doll, DEMON is a secret within a secret within a secret.

Each part of the organization only possesses a piece of the whole, and only Luther Black has full knowledge of DEMON's scope and purpose. The remaining chapters detail the secrets of DEMON, and the relevant sections specify who knows what, but to summarize:

Brothers: Brothers believe DEMON is a worldwide Satanic cult (or other illicit religion). They have no knowledge of leadership beyond their Morbane, do not know of the Kings of Edom, and rarely know the location of other Demonhames. Their understanding of the infernal regions is fragmentary; they know only what they have gleaned through Black Masses and the like.

Initiates: Initiates have no knowledge of the Kings of Edom, but have learned much of the Infernal Powers and gained some mastery over demons and devils. They know the Morbanes report to a higher power, but little of that power's nature.

Morbanes: Much of a Morbane's knowledge depends on the individual. They know of the existence of the Kings of Edom, but only the five described in the *Liber Terribilis*, and only by their epithets — in fact, most Morbanes don't even know the collective term "Kings of Edom." Typically they're also ignorant of the other Kings that seek freedom, such as Vulshoth and Deizzhorath (see *Arcane Adversaries*, pages 41-57). A Morbane believes the Kings of Edom will reward him for his faithful service. Any further knowledge of the Kings of Edom depends on the individual Morbane, his beliefs, and his knowledge of the occult. Commonly, a Morbane simply believes the five Kings of Edom are very powerful infernal rulers imprisoned by the forces of good millennia ago; he rarely grasps the full extent of their inhuman evil.

Morbanes know DEMON's leadership is called the Inner Circle. More experienced and intelligent Morbanes have further insights into the organization. (For instance, a Morbane might know a secret cabal exists within DEMON, unaffiliated with any one Demonhame, but he does *not* know it's called the Maleficia.) This knowledge is limited to what they have determined on their own. An experienced Morbane knows of other Morbanes and Demonhames — after all, in some cases he might participate in a sort of competition with them to gain access to greater secrets and more power, so he needs to know how he compares to others of his ilk — but he generally does not know specifics such as the exact location of another Demonhame.

BUT WILL IT WORK?

The lorebooks and ancient tomes the Trismegistus Council holds in trust oft state a grave warning to ambitious sorcerers: the Kings of Edom cannot be bound by symbol or rite, True Name or sacrifice. No human sorcerer can control them, no matter the power he uses. Yet Luther Black has crafted a spell intended to contain the power of the Kings and turn them to his own use. Can it work?

First, the spell which is DEMON is a magic like none the world has seen before. In its specifics it's not so different than other summonings — but in its scale and constituents, it's something unique. Furthermore, eons ago the Kings of Edom were bound by sorcery (albeit a sorcery of beings as vastly powerful as the Kings themselves) — why should they not be bound again? And this is no containment to last eternity; only long enough for Black to achieve apotheosis. Finally, the visions in the Basilisk Orb showed that Black's spell would work... but those visions have gone astray, so the future is no longer certain.

In the end, whether Black's summoning can succeed is a question that will only be answered on February 29, 2012. One thing is for certain: if allowed to pursue Black's plots unhindered, DEMON will, in time, free the Kings of Edom. And what matter to mankind, if there are five inhumanly evil, impossibly powerful beings ruling the Earth, or six?

“BUT HOW BIG IS IT, REALLY?”

DEMON: Servants Of Darkness assumes approximately five hundred Demonhames worldwide, most located in major population centers with some larger cities having more than one Demonhame, and a minority located in small communities near places of power and other sites deemed important to DEMON's goals.

Each Demonhame has at least one Morbane, with the largest usually having two or three (sometimes more). A handful of Morbanes are at large, actively attempting to establish Demonhames. Therefore, the organization has approximately 600 to 700 Morbanes.

Each Demonhame averages between thirty and sixty Brothers, with one Initiate for every six Brothers or so. That means a total of approximately 22,500 Brothers and 3,750 Initiates.

About two thousand people work for the Maleficia. This doesn't count innocents employed by the businesses that serve as fronts for DEMON, who work unwittingly toward its goals — only those people who either know full well their membership in the Maleficia, or who even though unaware of their affiliation with a larger organization, work willingly toward evil ends.

But of course, you should change any and all of these numbers to suit your campaign if you see fit....

Each Morbane knows of the Black Shepherd because he encounters that foul being at least once (during his initiation into the secrets of his rank) and often several times afterward (when receives messages from DEMON leadership). However, he has no knowledge of the Black Shepherd's origin, and each Morbane describes his appearance differently. Depending on individual experience, a Morbane might have encountered Jack Fool or the Left Hand, but has never heard the name “the Inverted Trinity.”

There are very few Morbanes who were members in 1986, when Luther Black last emerged from the Thirteenth Floor, and these are the only ones who have seen the Edomite in the flesh. Even these few are unsure of his position in DEMON (speculation ranges from “he's a powerful Morbane” to “he's a supernatural entity”) and never saw his face.

The Maleficia: Like the Morbanes, much of a member of the Maleficia's knowledge depends on the individual, his responsibilities, and his tenure in DEMON. In general, assuming he's aware of his membership in DEMON, a member of the Maleficia knows the name of one Inner Circle member (the one he reports to) and the purpose of each of the five Rites in the Maleficia. Each knows the location of more than one Demonhame, but his knowledge is limited to first-hand experience, given out on a “need to know” basis. He might know the Edomite is ostensibly the leader of DEMON, but his knowledge about the nature of this leader is based wholly on speculation and information gleaned over the years. Some consider the Edomite nothing more than a spiritual leader; some even believe he doesn't truly exist.

The Inner Circle: An Inner Circle member has all but comprehensive knowledge of the organization's networks. He knows of Luther Black's existence — though only by the name “the Edomite” — but has never seen him in the flesh, only dealing with him via the Inverted Trinity. He considers the Edomite nothing more than a figurehead, a sort of chairman *emeritus*. The members of the Inner Circle do *not* know the arcane intent behind DEMON's structure, nor are they privy to the secrets Black glimpsed in the Basilisk Orb.

The Edomite: Luther Black stands at the center of the web he has woven over the last century, knowing and seeing everything.

GOAL

Though each member has his own agenda and reasons for joining the organization, DEMON itself has a single goal, simply articulated: free the five Kings of Edom in exchange for power, then use that power to rule the world. Interpretation of this goal ranges from the Morbane who believes the Kings will reward him like a faithful servant, to the Inner Circle which believes it can dicker with the Kings, to Luther Black who plans to force the Kings to raise him to their ranks and stand among them when they ascend to the world's rulership. All DEMON members work in some capacity to achieve this goal, but some have tasks more directly related to the ultimate end than others.

This, however, is a very big goal and DEMON cannot accomplish it in one fell swoop or with a single plot — it must pave the way for success. The task requires, among other things, that DEMON corrupt the nature of the world's magic, insinuating the Qliphothic into magic's ebbs and flows like pollution spewed into a clear blue sea. And it must pervert the substance of mankind's beliefs, sowing the sentiment that humanity is impotent in the face of evil like a man beaten until he knows nothing but blind obedience.

Handed down from Luther Black, taken up by the Inner Circle, and taught to the Morbanes during their initiation, DEMON has formulated five methods for realizing its one true goal.

Methods

The methods described below are broadly defined, encompassing diverse plots and resulting in myriad acts of villainy. The only method not explicitly detailed here is increasing an individual's power and influence. Plots that further this goal, in a way, underpin all of DEMON's activities, and a member is allowed to pursue his own quest for power as long as he never grows powerful enough to challenge his superiors — at which point he's either eliminated or supplants the higher-up, ascending in DEMON's ranks.

“AS ABOVE, SO BELOW...”

The barren worlds and prison-dimensions (many within the Qliphothic Realms from whence the Kings are said to have come) where the Kings of Edom are imprisoned lie across infinite gulfs of night — and however far the infinite when measured with arcane geometries and esoteric systems of mathematics, that's pretty far.

DEMON seeks to close the distance between the material world and the Qliphothic, and one method of doing so is based on the old alchemical notion of “as above, so below.” DEMON seeks to make the Earth like something out of a nightmare — a world at home in the Qliphothic. This will bring the two dimensions closer and make it easier to bridge the distance between them, allowing the Qliphothic into the world.

DEMON's ways of doing so are myriad, but always result in increased suffering: pollute nature

and destroy any sort of native beauty. Turn the world into a charnel house of reeking corpses and corruption. Subvert natural laws, and prove reason and rational thought fallible. Undermine society's institutions and drag down the public's heroes, so people feel they can trust nothing and no one — so they think no one can save them. Make men live in a constant state of fear and trepidation, awaken old evils to terrify men and women, and reveal to mankind how insignificant it is.

QLIPHOTHIC SEEPAGE

Hand in hand with turning the world into a place at home in the Qliphothic Realms, DEMON attempts to bring the Qliphothic into the world.

From “pinholes” like Black first opened in Hell’s Kitchen in 1925, to the gaping rent in the sky he created in Boston in 1986, all of these allow Qliphothic energies to spew into the world, corrupting it and paving the way for the Kings of Edom. The Qliphothic taints men’s souls, filling their hearts with twisted desires and turning them to wickedness. It subverts reason, proving the irrational true. It taints the earth, poisoning the soil and spawning blossoms of alien evil. It creates monsters to terrorize the world and make men tremble.

No aperture is too small — all of them have a baleful effect, however minor — and DEMON seeks to pierce the barriers guarding the world at every opportunity. Although DEMON has yet to successfully open a permanent gate, that goal becomes easier to achieve with each lesser success. Several sites have the potential to become permanent openings... if all goes according to plan.

ARTIFACTS

Like a miser hoarding wealth or a glutton at a banquet, DEMON attempts to seize every magical artifact it can locate. In its quest for artifacts, again DEMON’s modernity reveals itself — DEMON is like a consumer of artifacts, an obsessive-compulsive collector, and however many artifacts it already has is never enough.

Its rationale for seizing artifacts is simple: more is better. The more artifacts it possesses, the more power it can potentially exploit. DEMON doesn’t particularly care if it has an immediate use for an artifact, or even if it understands how the artifact works — some use will present itself at some point, and if not, better to have the artifact than leave it in the hands of their enemies.

Over the decades one fact has worked to DEMON’s advantage in its quest to obtain magical artifacts. During the millennia of waning magic, artifacts were scattered across the globe. Their powers dormant, many could only create the most subtle magic, and regardless of the stories surrounding these possessions and family heirlooms, their owners grew negligent about the seemingly worthless objects.

DEMON, with its widespread resources and expansive networks, has had great success locating these artifacts that have passed out of the Mystic World into the mundane, and seizing them without other mystics and occult groups noticing. They find the artifacts in places like the storage warehouses of museums or university archives, or in the possession of people who considered them nothing more than knickknacks — and every Morbane has heard a story about finding an artifact up for bid at an estate auction or in the window of a pawn shop.

Secrets Of The Ancients

Mankind has walked the earth for tens of thousands of years, and one thing (some would cynically say, the only thing) these countless generations have in common is a lust for power and capacity for evil.

Others before Luther Black and DEMON have sought to gain power through the Kings of Edom, and Black has dedicated himself to gathering up the histories of these past attempts. Some lie buried in the lost cities of ancient civilizations; others are held in trust by secret societies, both those seeking to protect mankind from ancient evils and those not so beneficent.

Toward this end Black seeks to infiltrate these rival societies and learn their secrets, or in the worst case goes to “war” with them. To do this he works through the Black Shepherd and the Morbanes. When conducting an infiltration of this sort, Black keeps his agents in the dark about their true purpose — he knows knowledge is power, and he does not wish to allow a Morbane to learn too much about Kings of Edom. As with DEMON’s pursuit of artifacts, Black cares little if the histories actually pertain to the five Kings of Edom he wishes to free. If a chronicle doesn’t, Black is confident he can find some use for it, and as with magical artifacts, better to have the knowledge for himself than in the hands of a rival for power.

PLACES OF POWER

DEMON seeks to locate Demonhames at places of power, areas where the magical energy pools and runs deep. Black’s reason for this is that on February 29, 2012 he will command the Morbanes to gather their congregations in the chapels of their Demonhames and use them to tap into the power of their worship when he calls forth the Kings of Edom.

Despite the Morbanes’ ignorance of this fact, it isn’t difficult to convince a Morbane to set up a Demonhame at one of these places, since doing so increases his own power significantly. Furthermore, tainting places of power with the Qliphothic is like the difference between poisoning a person’s drinking water and contaminating a community’s water supply — in the former the poison only affects one person, but in the latter the taint spreads throughout the surrounding area.

LESSER AND GREATER MYSTERIES OF DEMON

The Knowledge Skills *Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON* and *Greater Mysteries Of DEMON* appear frequently on character sheets found in this book. The most important difference between the two: those with Greater Mysteries know DEMON is dedicated to freeing five beings (as described in *Liber Terribilis*, below)... but they may not know those beings are five of the Kings of Edom. Further differences include:

—Those with Greater Mysteries know a portions of DEMON’s history as an organization, like the fact that Luther Black founded DEMON in the twenties and the Edomite is still alive. (They do *not* know Luther Black and the Edomite are the same person.) Those with Lesser Mysteries only know the history of their Demonhame.

—Those with Greater Mysteries know of other Demonhames and Morbanes, though maybe not the exact location.

—Those with Greater Mysteries know of the Archdemons’ edict against DEMON.

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

A handful of items, events, and principles play a pivotal role in DEMON's current incarnation. They make DEMON possible, inform the entirety of the organization, determine its goals, and have, to a greater or lesser extent, an impact on its structure.

LIBER TERRIBILIS

The *Liber Terribilis*, which Luther Black calls the Harrowing Book, is DEMON's sacred text — although it is decidedly unholy. It describes the five Kings of Edom the organization has dedicated itself to freeing. The rituals and rites described in its pages form the basis for the most important initiations in DEMON. Though the Black Shepherd knows the Harrowing Book, passage and verse, only Luther Black has access to the book itself, and he never allows it to leave his possession.

“Words To Harrow One’s Soul!”

The *Liber Terribilis* is more than just a grimoire of black magic rituals — it is also a history, albeit a secret one, of an age before mankind ruled the Earth. Written in Latin by an Irish monk of the late fifth century, the book recounts the confession of the last druid — one of those secret masters of ancient Gaul and Britannia whose magic was caged by Roman roads, and whose sect was obliterated by the Roman Empire.

The Harrowing Book details one of the secrets of druidic knowledge, the existence of five beings imprisoned outside of space and time — outside, entirely, the Four Worlds of the multiverse — in dimensions modern mystics call the Qliphothic

Realms. Collectively with the others of their kind, who are likewise prisoners in dark and forgotten places throughout the Multiverse, these five are named the Kings of Edom.

The monk had not the words to describe — and even if he had, the Latin of the Romans lacked the words to give precise meaning to his descriptions — the five Kings of Edom the druid attempted to explain to his confessor. What follows is a summary of the text from the *Liber Terribilis*, but much like Latin, English and its paltry twenty-six letters have not the words to encompass the otherworldly power and inhuman evil of the Kings of Edom:

The Queen Beyond The Pale: She rules what lies beyond man's understanding and comprehension, and like a harlot pulling back her skirts, she tempts seekers of knowledge with glimpses of her domain. Darkness hedges in what a man knows — what he *can* know — no matter how learned or wise he is. If he journeys into this darkness — violates what is forbidden or taboo and transgresses to explore these unknown regions — he enters the domain ruled by the Queen Beyond the Pale.

The Master Of All Sorrows: He is the reason a man's heart breaks. He is the unquantifiable difference between the last failure when a man gives up, and the ones before when he resolved never to yield; the reason a man, who has striven despite adversity, ceases to strive at all and succumbs to woe; the distinction between a sorrowful man and one who knows only sorrow. Tears without cause, suffering beyond reason, the suicide of man who had everything he could want — these lie within the purview of the Master of All Sorrows..



The Muse Of Lethargy And Despair: She is the bastard child of Apollo, the tenth Muse no god claimed as his child and no poet includes in his evocation, for he never writes the verses this Muse inspires. She dwells in the gap between conception and articulation. She is the ineffable, inexpressible reason a work is never completed or never even begun. She is the reason an artist's excuses are lies, and the true reason for inactivity despite a man's talent, desire, or ambition.

The Heart In Man's Dementia: He lurks in the heart of the child who pulls the wings off flies, of the driver who swerves to hit an animal crossing the road; of the man who murders another only to see him die. No rationale formulated by man — not willful cruelty, not a simple expression of power over another — can explain the action; it is an inchoate desire to cause pain and suffering to another. Here, in this lack of conscious thought and reason overcome to inflict harm, is the Heart in Man's Dementia.

The King Of Lost Hope: When Pandora opened her box and loosed all the world's ills, the King of Lost Hope was there, and he took Hope between his hands and smothered it. He hides in the drought that steals a man's crops no matter how hard he works; lurks in the calamity that steals all a man owns and worked for. There is no act of god or nature; there is no bad luck; there is only the malicious caprice of the King of Lost Hope.

“To Feast On Their Own Flesh!”

When describing these five Kings of Edoms' prisons, again the monk had not the words and needed to rely on metaphor to explain them.

He states the Kings of Edom are imprisoned in a dining hall without windows or doors — a moldering place filled with the stench of decay and death, where tapestries crumble to dust and cobwebs creep down the walls from ceiling to floor. The five Kings sit at a round table of rotted wood. Their garb hangs in ragged tatters; their crowns are corroded and tarnished. On the chipped plate set before each of King is the left arm of the one who sits beside him. Each holds a rusty knife in his right hand, and with the knife he slices the flesh away from his fellow's arm, stabs the perverse meat with the tip of the blade, and eats it.

For time without end, in a place without alpha or omega, these five Kings of Edom are guests at a feast on the flesh of their fellows, trapped at a banquet where their own evil is the only sustenance to appease their bottomless appetite.

VISIONS IN THE BASILISK ORB

In 1968 Luther Black stood on the brink of fixing in place a future when he was successful — a future that nothing could advert whether the vagaries of fate, the ill-will of chance, or the supreme efforts of his enemies.

Thanks to the timely intervention of UNTIL and the Sentinels, however, Luther Black failed. But before the superheroes snatched the Basilisk Orb from his grasp, he saw what he must do to make this future a reality, and these visions have

motivated his plans through almost four decades. They led him to murder the first Inner Circle and replace it with the current one, gave him the insight to remake DEMON as a magician's circle, and provided him with the knowledge he needed to raise the Demonflame in Boston.

And the visions from 1968 will continue to motivate his plans until the last day of his life on February 29, 2012.

A crippled and imperfect vessel for the Qli-phothic energies he stole from Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, his every waking moment wracked with blinding agony, Luther Black primarily rouses himself to take a direct role in plots stemming from the vision in the Basilisk Orb, leaving the rest of DEMON's extensive operations to the Inner Circle (unless, of course, he needs to put the Inner Circle in its proper place).

Some of these future events are described on page 38.

THE CROSSROADS

In the 1950s Luther Black first entered, bodily and completely, the world he named Crossroads. He walked through Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood, where the slaughter yards had stood for decades until the stink of blood and offal permeated the very stones of the buildings.

Here, greedy men sacrificed the blood of both man and beast on the altars of wealth. Poor immigrants worked through blistering hot summers and frigid winters, giving up their own limbs to the same cleavers and knives that opened the throats of the cattle and butchered them, as if in mockery of the sacrifices ancient man made to their gods. A nation's railways came together, the tracks crisscrossing and merging, forming a crossroads that extended for miles upon miles. Blood and suffering and human misery had soaked into the very earth, an indelible stain.

And Luther Black — walking between grimy tenements, along corroded rails, and then through hard-packed yards of dirt stained reddish-brown — passed out of the material world into another place.

The world of Crossroads is one of roads, and only roads, long winding paths of grey ash stretching across a featureless plain as far as the eye can see. Like a ghostly vision it overlays the material realm, the roads created by countless men and women traveling along their analogues on earth. Some, those most used, are wide highways; others, those falling into disuse, are fading narrow paths. Even shipping lanes find an analogue in this world, the grey roads crossing dry ocean beds, and so do the flight paths of airlines, the roads crossing the land from airport to airport.

Unwittingly or with only an imperfect understanding, sorcerers and black magicians have long used the Crossroads in some of their spells. Teleportation, spells to pass through physical objects or travel through time, invisibility — all of these magics might tap into this otherworldly realm, but only partially, only temporarily, the sorcerer left unaware of precisely what transpired. Black discov-

INFERNAL POWERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD DEMON

While bound by eternal laws and multiversal axioms to serve sorcerers who correctly summon them, the denizens of the infernal regions have no love for their human "masters" — and this is especially true concerning the members of DEMON.

Better than any mortal, the infernal powers know DEMON's goal and can foresee the results if the organization succeeds. The rule of the Kings of Edom would seriously impair the wicked work the Descending Hierarchy and its minions do in the material world. Before the Demonflame Incident, when the Archdemons were *forced* to send their demonic hordes into the world to do the Edomite's bidding, the infernal powers considered DEMON little more than another cabal of black magicians to be perverted, twisted, and eventually pulled down into the fiery furnace. After the Demonflame Incident, however, the infernal powers took DEMON more seriously as a threat to their malevolent purpose and very way of life... but during this same period Luther Black introduced the Soul Gems, severely limiting the influence an infernal power could gain over a Morbane before it was discovered. Since then the Descending Hierarchy has struggled incessantly to infiltrate and subvert DEMON. They have done this in three ways: the old fashioned way when an Initiate or Morbane botches a summoning and puts his soul at risk; through Brothers who are bound to demons by leaving a

ered a means of passing bodily into the other realm and traveling its roads to reach whatever destination he wished.

Luther Black jealously guards the secret of how to enter Crossroads, sometimes called the Hellhound's Path, *Carrefours*, or Hecate's Domain. But a device he fashioned, Hecate's Key, allows one-time access to and from the realm. When he deems the situation warrants it — and he knows full well frequent use will alert his enemies to Crossroads' existence, so the situation must be both of the utmost importance and extremely urgent — he dispatches the Black Shepherd to deliver the device to a member. Although only a living being and whatever he carries can enter the Crossroads, a DEMON member wielding Hecate's Key can pass across national borders with impunity. Only Luther Black knows the exact nature of the Crossroads — whether it's an astral cyst in Earth's Astral Plane or somehow related to Babylon, the City of Man, or something else altogether — and he never knowingly provides a Hecate's Key to one who might ferret out the place's true nature

For more about Hecate's Key, see page 35.

PROFANE REGALIA

The Profane Regalia are the enchanted items DEMON members use to commit their evil. They are an equalizer, allowing DEMON to fight superheroes, as well as intelligence and law enforcement agencies with access to high-tech equipment. They are creations arising from Luther Black's genius.

Many men and women possess a latent talent for the arcane in these times of rising magic. The Profane Regalia allow them to tap their abilities in the arcane, and more importantly, DEMON exploit that talent. The first rite of initiation a potential DEMON member must pass is the creation of his Profane Regalia, the Brazen Wand and the Amulet Of Protection — only after he has shown he possesses the ability to make the enchanted items can he ascend into the ranks of the Brothers.

The Profane Regalia began simply enough, with only the Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection among the infernal devices DEMON employed, but the number of items DEMON members can create has grown over the decades. The knowledge of how to create these other items passes between the Demonhames, sometimes delivered to the Morbane via the Maleficia or the Inverted Trinity when the situation warrants, and other times a DEMON member creates an entirely new item.

The Profane Regalia are described in more detail on pages 134-42.

The Soul Gems

Soul Gems are a part of the Profane Regalia only the Morbanes possess, but a Morbane does not create his Gem himself. Instead, when the Black Shepherd comes to initiate a member into the mysteries of the Kings of Edom and raise him to the rank of Morbane, he gives him a Soul Gem. Inside each stone, like the magician's blood mixed with the pigments he uses to draw his protective circle, is a shard of Luther Black's Qliphothic-tainted soul.

A Morbane receives many benefits from wearing his Soul Gem, but so does Luther Black. He uses the Soul Gems to keep tabs on his Morbanes. A Gem lets him look through a Morbane's eyes, give mental "nudges" to his agent, gaze into his heart to ensure the Morbane hasn't betrayed him, and take control of those who would betray him.

The Soul Gems not only help Black thwart infiltrators from outside agencies, they ensure the Inner Circle never wields too much influence over the Morbanes. Because of the Soul Gems, the modern DEMON has greater coherency than the organization did in previous decades, and Luther Black keeps considerable control over DEMON despite his seclusion in the Thirteenth Floor and the plots of the Inner Circle.

The abilities of a Soul Gem are described in more detail on the Morbane's character sheet on page 96.

AN INFERNAL COSMOGONY

Only some of DEMON's members come from an occult background and are already knowledgeable about the arcane when they join the organization. In fact, much of DEMON's strength relies on taking men and women from mundane backgrounds, initiating them into the ways of black magic, and exploiting them. These people have a talent for magic, but during the normal course of their lives would never discover it for lack of exposure. DEMON's infernal cosmogony is for such members.

In the course of its evildoings, DEMON often relies on infernal powers to bolster its forces, since creatures of the Qliphothic are difficult to call forth into the material world (and Luther Black, because of his own plans, is leery of allowing his Morbanes too much contact with the Qliphothic).

Laws, profane protocols, and ancient axioms bind demons and devils, even the Archdemons themselves, to the service of a sorcerer who correctly summons them. Though infernal powers have no desire to see the reign of the Kings of Edom come to pass, having plans and plots of their own for mortals, when summoned properly they have no choice but to serve the black magician... even if he belongs to DEMON. Of course this doesn't prevent them from attempting to twist the summoner's commands, and pity the black magician — especially if he's a member of DEMON — who makes an error in his summoning.

The infernal regions are an infinitely changing landscape, the true nature of which is understood only by their malevolent residents (known neither for their honesty, nor their willingness to share secrets). Mortals have concocted myriad ways of charting their regions and hellish geography, mapping it to guide their black magic rituals and summonings. In other words, their name is legion, and so is their place of origin.

The cosmogony DEMON teaches its members stems from one that was popular in occult movements of late nineteenth/early twentieth century and is the same Luther Black uses to guide his magic. The cosmogony is the perverse double of the Spheroth with each of its ten worlds subverted

and twisted to an evil purpose. It is a doppelganger of kabbalism's Tree of Life — a view of the material world seen "through a glass, darkly."

Once a member reaches the degree of Initiate, he begins a formal study of the infernal regions — as well as learning the rituals that summon their inhabitants. The cosmogony described below is a sort of standard for the organization, although individual Morbanes might have their own beliefs about the Netherworld, the Descending Hierarchy (as the Archdemon named below are more commonly called in the Mystic World), and their infernal denizens.

DEMON's cosmogony postulates ten spheres of mortal evil, each dedicated to a category of mankind's wickedness and ruled by an Archdemon, and beyond this hierarchy is the wholly alien evil of the Qliphothic Realms.

The Evil Crown: Called *Thaumiel* and ruled by Satan-Moloch, the double opposed to the divine unity — where God is One, whole and united, here is Two, divided and duplicitous, and man turned against himself.

The Evil Wisdom: Called *Chaigidiel* and ruled by Adam Belial, who stands in the way — here is knowledge and understanding exploited for profit, and the study of evil corrupting a man's soul and closing his heart to faith.

The Evil Understanding: Called *Satharial* and ruled by Lucifuge, who occludes the divine light — here is intellectual arrogance blinding a proud man to the truth of the divine, and rational fallacies disproving the divine's existence.

The Evil Mercy: Called *Gamchicoth* and ruled by Astaroth, the bringer of turmoil — here is forgiveness with an ulterior motive, kindness only to manipulate, and love only to break a man's heart.

The Evil Severity: Called *Golab* and ruled by Asmodeus, the fallen into flames — here is punishment without justice and vengeance beyond the wrong done, two eyes for one eye and all one's teeth for a tooth.

The Evil Beauty: Called *Togarini* and ruled by Belphegor, who binds the righteous — here is vanity leading man into temptation, wicked pleasures that satisfy no one, and a descent into debauchery with no end.

The Evil Victory: Called *Harab Serap* and ruled by Baal Chanan, the victorious tyrant — here is the triumph of the profane over the sacred, and the victory of strength and force over righteousness and truth.

The Evil Glory: Called *Samael* and ruled by Adramelek, who brings discord — here is evil resplendent, and the wicked lauded, and one man succeeding in his goals only through another man's suffering.

The Evil Foundation: Called *Gamaliel* and ruled by Lilith, the whisperer of the obscene — here are monsters to terrorize man, and the obscene befouling God's image and corrupting it into an evil shape.

The Evil Kingdom: Called *Nahemoth* and ruled by Nahema, who profanes the pure — here is a society of evil breaking the faith of the righteous man and laws that protect no one, but only lead to injustice and suffering.

THE OCCULT HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

DEMON subscribes to the philosophy of the occult hiding in plain sight. Two reasons for this are obvious. First, it's easier to accomplish its goals when it doesn't have to worry about keeping its existence a secret. Second, DEMON actively recruits members, and with some potential members, DEMON's reputation is a part of the appeal. The third reason is more subtle... and more nefarious. Familiarity breeds contempt, and by keeping itself — at least through the Demonhames and their Morbanes — in the public eye, DEMON encourages its enemies to underestimate its evil.

After decades of superheroes' exploits and supervillains' schemes, the public has begun to accept magic as real, but its notions about the arcane remain hazy. They're clouded by mystic heroes (who wear bright costumes, similar to superheroes whose powers are explained scientifically) and mystic villains (who laugh maniacally and seem little different than their scientific counterparts). To the public, what's the difference between a demonic-looking person born a mutant or transformed by radiation and a person who has made a pact with infernal powers and shares his soul with a demon?

In truth, the difference is considerable, including the degree of evil involved, consciously giving one's self to otherworldly evils for power, and the subversion of mankind by entities totally outside Humanity's control. But in the mind of the public, no matter how many times DEMON creates hell on earth, the difference often seems negligible. After all, didn't Dr. Destroyer create a "hell" in Detroit on July 23, 1992 and commit an atrocity as bad, if not worse, than any DEMON has ever committed?

No, he didn't. The atrocity Destroyer perpetrated in Detroit was still a human one. It had a human motivation (lust for power) and a human goal (obtaining worldly power). However heinous, however horrible, the destruction of Detroit was *not* the soul of mankind bargained away to inhumanly evil beings.

Despite their respective manias, considerable powers, and desire to rule the world, Dr. Destroyer and his ilk will never threaten humanity's very existence like the Kings of Edom do. Though these supervillains might sink so deeply into the depths of evil they challenge the infernal powers in malevolence, and perhaps even power, they cannot challenge the Kings of Edom, for at the heart of these madmen is still something human, regardless of how perverted or twisted it has become.

Every time a DEMON plot is uncovered, every time Brothers battle with superheroes in the streets, every time the television news shows a Morbane in handcuffs carted away to jail, it re-enforces the public's view that the organization is just like VIPER or any other group of would-be world conquerors.

Continued from last page

fragment of the infernal in the Brother's soul; and Dyer vander Bleek who has come to rely increasingly on aid from the infernal in his struggles against the other Inner Circle members.

By strict and inviolable orders of the Archdemons, no inhabitant of the Netherworld may aid a member of DEMON in any way, if that denizen can avoid doing so (the rulers of Hell recognize that the effects of some conjuration and command spells cannot be avoided). A demon or devil might *seem* to help DEMON, but if so it's either attempting to trick the organization, or it's a diabolic "double agent" with a true agenda lurking beneath its surface motivations.

CANDIDATES FOR THE ARCHMAGE

Page 58 of *The Mystic World* describes several candidates for the Archmage, but thanks to DEMON's increasing isolation from the Mystic World, Luther Black knows relatively little about them (in fact, he's never even heard of some of them). Directly or indirectly declaring one's self candidate for Archmage, or even being considered a potential candidate by others, might prompt Luther Black to kill the mystic if the opportunity presents itself, but is *not* enough to force him to risk jeopardizing his secret existence with a desperate assassination attempt. The candidate must start to show one or more signs of a successful candidacy, as described in *The Mystic World*, before Luther Black acts.

Even superheroes and organizations like UNTIL tend to perceive DEMON that way — maybe they intellectually know or have a gut feeling DEMON is something different, somehow more evil, but often they never fully grasp the true depths of DEMON's malevolence until it's too late.

Other Occultists

The Morbanes and their congregations are the public face of DEMON, and they not only help hide the organization's true malevolence from the mundane world, but from other occultists and masters of the arcane as well. The attitude of many mystics toward the Morbanes is similar to that of the old money and blue-blood families toward the *nouveau riches*: disdain and contempt. The Morbanes undoubtedly possess power — there's no denying that — and DEMON's membership is large, in sheer numbers dwarfing any other arcane organization or secret society. But when they look at DEMON, other mystics most often see Morbanes who spout a hodgepodge of Latin and Greek, who mangle the tongue-twisting syllables of the ancient languages of magic, and whose minds are clouded with a patchwork of half-understood arcane theories and poorly-grasped esoteric cosmogonies. And all of this only serves to hide DEMON's inner workings from the Mystic World.

In recent years, as DEMON's worship of/links to/goals involving the Kings of Edom has become more widely known (though by no means universally known or understood) by other mystics, their attitudes have shifted from disdain to fear and concern. Even experienced wizards rarely deal with Qliphothic entities, and for the (comparatively) ignorant members of DEMON to traffic with such beings poses a grave threat to the entire world. Factions of the Mystic World who loathe one another and agree on almost nothing often see eye-to-eye when it comes to DEMON... and might even team up, or join forces with superheroes, to stop DEMON's schemes.

No one in the Mystic World knows of the existence of Luther Black, the Inverted Trinity, or the Maleficia.

The Death Of The Archmage

Relative to most mystics, the average DEMON member knows little of occult tradition, the history of secret societies, and the lore of Earth's Mystic World — including the existence of the Archmage, a position no one has occupied since well before most DEMON members were born. Even those who know the stories of the Archmage don't think much about it... and if they do, it's only to wonder if they can somehow find the artifacts of his office and exploit them to further DEMON's power.

Luther Black, however, is old enough to remember the last Archmage, and he knows the return of Earth's mystic defender would bring DEMON crashing down. The Archmage is the primary reason societies like the Circle of Scarlet Moon clung so tightly to the shadows. The public displays of black magic DEMON commits would bring the Archmage's wrath down on their heads — not to mention that tainting Earth's magic with



the Qliphothic to usher in the Kings of Edom is exactly the sort of thing the Archmage guards the world against.

In his vision of the future, Luther Black saw no Archmage standing in his way, but other aspects of the future have already gone astray, so he knows it falls to him to ensure the Archmage never stands in his way. Via the Inverted Trinity, Black keeps a close eye on the situation. In previous decades he assassinated two mystics he suspected might attempt to assume the mantle of the Archmage. He had no evidence of these mystics' ambitions; he only acted on a suspicion and ordered their deaths out of hand, just to be on the safe side. And he will continue to do the same until he has succeeded in bringing through the Kings of Edom.

chapter three:



**THE DOINGS OF THE WICKED ONES
THE LEADERSHIP OF DEMON**

THE EDMITE



CHARACTER SHEET NOTATION

Generally, the text of the character sheets in this book should be pretty straightforward and easy to understand. Consult the Glossary in the *HERO System 5th Edition*, and the example powers in that book, if you have any questions about abbreviations, terms, or notations. The *Writer's Guidelines*, available on the Hero Games website (www.herogames.com), also provide some information about character sheet formatting.

In a Multipower, a “u” next to the cost indicates a Fixed (or “ultra”) slot, and an “m” a Flexible (or “multi”) slot.

Under the END column, a number in brackets indicates Charges (however, the bracketed number next to STR is an END cost).

At the center of DEMON, at the top of its hierarchy, stands the man known only as the Edomite. Though he has removed himself from DEMON's day-to-day operations and many members (even some among the Inner Circle) do not recognize his influence over the organization, he is still unquestionably DEMON's leader. When Luther Black steps out of the shadows and takes an active role in DEMON's affairs, it's only for the most important plots — conspiracies involving far-flung Demonhames and numerous Morbanes— that pose the gravest threat to the world.

LUTHER BLACK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
-20	STR	-30	5-	Lift 1.6 kg; 0d6 [0]
3	DEX	-21	10-	OCV: 1/DCV: 1
3	CON	-14	10-	
5	BODY	-10	10-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
25	EGO	30	14-	ECV: 8
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
1	PD	1		Total: 1 PD (0 rPD)
1	ED	0		Total: 1 ED (0 rED)
1	SPD	0		Phases: 7
3	REC	2		
10	END	2		
8	STUN	1		Total Characteristics Cost: -17

Movement: Running: 1”/1”
Swimming: 0”/0”

Cost	Powers	END
285	<i>The Stolen Power Of Sharna-Gorak:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 150 base + 75 control cost, Powers Can Be Changed As Zero-Phase Action (+1), Power Can Draw END From Character Or Endurance Reserve (+¼); Only Magic (-¼)	var
25	<i>The Souls Of The Sacrificed:</i> Endurance Reserve (150 END, 30 REC; only for VPP); Limited Recovery (only Recovers with sacrifice of sentient lifeform; -2)	0
285	<i>Steal Life From His Servitors:</i> Transfer 8d6 (target's BODY, STUN, or END to Luther Black's BODY, STUN, or END), Trigger (when Luther Black's BODY, STUN, or END reaches zero; +¼), Transfer from any one listed Characteristic at a time (+¼), Transfer to any one listed Characteristic at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Delayed Return Rate (points return	

once per hour; +1); Only From His Servitors (-1) 0

115	<i>Through The Eyes Of The Morbanes:</i> Elemental Control, 230-point powers	
57	1) <i>See The World Through Their Eyes:</i> Clairsentience (Sight, Smell/Taste, and Hearing Groups), 32,000x Range (12.8 million inches, or approximately 15,910 miles), No Range Modifier (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Through The Senses Of Persons With Soul Gems (-1)	
38	2) <i>Locate Their Minds:</i> Mind Scan 23d6, Invisible To Mental Sense Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Versus Persons With Soul Gems (-2) 0	
38	3) <i>See Into Their Minds:</i> Telepathy 23d6, Invisible To Mental Sense Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Versus Persons With Soul Gems (-2) 0	
40	<i>Black Is The Father, The Son, And The Unholy Ghost:</i> Mind Link, specific group of 3 minds (Inverted Trinity), Any Distance Or Dimension, No LOS Needed 0	
2	<i>The Stolen Days Of Leap Year:</i> Life Support (Longevity: 280 years) 0	
25	<i>Strong-Willed:</i> Mental Defense (30 points) 0	
30	<i>Strong-Willed:</i> Power Defense (30 points) 0	
-10	<i>Physical Infirmity:</i> Running -5” (1” total)	
-2	<i>Physical Infirmity:</i> Swimming -2” (0” total)	

Perks

3	Anonymity
10	Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of DEMON)
15	Money: Filthy Rich All the Followers, Vehicles, and Bases he could possibly need

Talent

20	Universal Translator 14-
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Skills

20	+10 OECV with Locate Their Minds
9	Analyze Magic 17-
7	Bureaucrats 15-
9	Conversation 16-
15	Deduction 20-
7	High Society 15-
11	Interrogation 17-
3	Oratory 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
31	Power: Magic 28-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Scholar
10	1) KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 22-

- 10 2) KS: Demonology 22-
- 10 3) KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 20-
- 8 4) KS: History 20-
- 8 5) KS: History Man Has Forgotten 20-
- 8 6) KS: The Mystic World 20-; Knowledge Several Years Behind The Times (-0)
- 3 Traveler
- 2 1) AK: Africa 14-
- 2 2) AK: Asia 14-
- 2 3) AK: Australia 14-
- 6 4) AK: Europe 18-
- 6 5) CK: London 18-
- 8 6) CK: New York City 20-
- 6 7) AK: North America 18-
- 6 8) CK: Paris 18-
- 2 9) AK: South America 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 1,184

Total Cost: 1,177

200+ Disadvantages

- 30 Dependence: must remain hooked up to life support or suffers 1d6 damage per 1 Minute (Uncommon)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 20 Distinctive Features: Visible Corruption Of The Qliphothic (Not Concealable; Always Noticed)
- 15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 10 Physical Limitation: Must crawl, cannot leap or use Noncombat Movement (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 25 Physical Limitation: Blind (All The Time, Fully Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Becoming A King Of Edom (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Luther Black) (Frequently, Severe)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 787 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,177

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR THE STOLEN POWER OF SHARNA-GORAK VPP

Speak Of The Devil: Ever paranoid, Luther Black often lays in his bed using this power. He extends his senses across the globe, or even past this plane and into the Multiverse, and if someone speaks his name — not “the Edomite,” but his true name, Luther Black — he knows it, and he knows exactly who they are and where they are.

Detect Persons Who Speak His True Name 27- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Ana-

lyze, Dimensional (any dimension), Range, Telescopic (+40 versus Range Modifier). Total cost: 86 points.

Hecate's Key: Hecate's Key allows access to the dimension of Crossroads, described on page 29. Luther Black jealously guards the secret of its existence, and only gives this power out in cases of both extreme importance and the utmost urgency. Made of silver, a Key looks like a woman's head with three faces, and extending from the head are four rays, flat pieces of metal, one pointing in each direction. The user holds his hand flat and the key in the middle of his palm, and it turns to indicate the desired direction. Luther Black either lets the user determine the destination, or allows the Key to work for only a specific direction if he needs the user to go to a specific place. After the user exits Crossroads, the Key crumbles to dust.

Extra-Dimensional Movement (any two locations — entry and exit point only, possibly pre-specified — in Crossroads), Usable By Others (+¼) (31 Active Points); OAF (-1), 2 Charges Which Never Recovers (one charge to enter and one to leave; -3½) (total cost: 6 points) plus Detect Single Destination In Crossroads 20- (Sight Group), Usable By Others (+¼) (17 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-0) (total cost: 8 points). Total cost: 14 points.

Whip Of Insanity: If his ability to see the actions and read the minds of those who possess Soul Gems reveals to him that a particular Morbane has been unfaithful, or deserves severe punishment for any reason, Black can destroy the transgressor's mind, leaving him a gibbering madman for the rest of his pathetic life.

Major Transform 3d6 (person into person with the Psychological Limitation Utterly, Gibberingly Insane; heals back through another application of this power), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (124 Active Points); Limited Target (humans with Soul Gems; -1). Total cost: 62 points.

Background/History: Much of Luther Black's history is discussed elsewhere in *DEMON: Servants Of Darkness*, but suffice to say since his earliest days he's dedicated his life to evil. All of his unnatural lifespan, 280 years stolen from time, he has devoted (or plans to devote) to the cause of Darkness.

When he was four years old, his mother, the witch Edith Payne, crucified him on an upside-down cross and gave his soul over to infernal powers. When he was sixteen, he sacrificed her on a bloodstained stone altar and took his revenge. Afterwards he repudiated his mother, who only wished to reach heights of evil vicariously through her son, and his father, who knew

LUTHER BLACK PLOT SEEDS

There's a new mayor in Las Vegas... and his name is Jonathan Warwick, the same name as Luther Black's father. Black is more than just curious — he's downright anxious. Is this mayor some sort of doppelganger? Is he Jonathan Warwick, reborn? Or is it just a coincidence? And does Luther Black risk exposing his sanctum when he attempts to find out?

A new villain has just fought the Sentinels to a stand-still, and he called himself Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer. Is it only a sorcerer, maybe an Atlantean, who has delusions of grandeur? Or is it what remains of the real Sharna-Gorak, returned to the world and searching for his stolen power...

Luther Black's crippled mortal shell, for many years only maintained by life support machines, takes a turn for the worse. Unless he can find a new body to inhabit, soon he will die. A man cannot change bodies at a whim — considerations of blood, alignments of planets and stars, the true natures of souls, all of this must be taken into account. And the only candidate Luther Black can find, the person who fulfills all of these criteria, is one of the PCs...



nothing of his bastard offspring, by taking the surname Black.

Luther Black spent the remainder of his youth engaged in acts of evil — petty wickedness, relative to what he would do later in life. He was there during the American Revolution, attempting to undermine the ideals of democracy and the Enlightenment and deliver the colonies into anarchy. He failed in America, oftentimes due to the actions of the Black Mask and Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge, General Washington's spymaster. He had more success during the French Revolution, where he fought a war of red and white roses with the Comte St. Germain, Cagliostro, and their secret masters. He spent the next decades in Africa, and while his fellow Europeans plundered the land's natural resources, he stole its arcane secrets — millennia upon millennia of accumulated occult knowledge, some of it from before the current age of history, forced from the mouths of sorcerers and wise men through brutal torture. It was after this, at the height of his power, that Luther Black ascended into the ranks of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon and soon became one of its leaders.

But all of this was just preparation for the greater evils that would come later in his life, paving the way for the greatest evil: the day when he achieved apotheosis.

Personality/Motivation: Luther Black is a madman. He seeks to transform himself into an inhuman being — not just a transformation, but an apotheosis. He wants to remake himself as a King of Edom, an otherworldly entity with power that surpasses even the gods. Nothing short of madness can adequately explain this all-consuming desire. Despite the tangle of manias and psychoses that wracks his soul, Luther Black is not delusional — success in his

quest is at least within the realm of possibility.

Though still mortal, Black has become something much less than human. He has sacrificed himself on the altar of power, and after so many sacrifices — his sanity, his sight, his very body — no sacrifice seems too terrible. He will give up anything and everything short of his life to accomplish his goal. And on the last day of his mortal lifespan, he will even sacrifice his life so that he might be reborn.

When he considers the matter too deeply, his current crippled state drives him into a black rage. That one of his generation's masters of the arcane, one of the most evil and powerful black magicians of the modern era, must rely on technology in the form of life support machines to maintain his infirm mortal shell is an insult beyond redress. The irony does not escape Luther Black — it only increases his anger — and he longs for the day when he leaves his crippled body behind.

Quote: “And on that day, I shall be as Hercules burned on a pyre and ascended to Olympus, but not to serve Zeus, nor any god but myself. I shall be as Adonis risen from sacrifice, but not to herald the coming of Spring. I shall be as Christ risen from the tomb, but I shall not have died for Man's sins. I shall die and live again for my own power!”

Powers/Tactics: Luther Black's main personal power derives from the Stolen Power Of Sharna-Gorak. He has sacrificed everything, including his physical well-being and ability to work black magic, to possess that power. Because of his physical weakness, he needs to rely on stolen souls of those sacrificed — his Endurance Reserve — to power his spells. He can also draw energy from his personal servitors, but only does this in dire circumstances.

The power of the Qliphothic is both his main source of magic and the reason for his crippled body. While his VPP lets him to compensate for his physical weakness temporarily, you shouldn't allow him to effect such changes on a long-term basis. For instance, if he were to use The Stolen Power Of Sharna-Gorak to create a Multiform of a healthy man, within hours of assuming the new form it would deteriorate until reduced to his usual crippled state. His power might allow him to move among men for a day or two, but it cannot completely counteract his infirmity.

Campaign Use: Luther Black isn't meant to be villain the PCs confront in battle — in fact, it should be incredibly difficult to even learn of his existence, let alone track him down and fight him. Instead, he should be a shadowy figure manipulating events and working his wicked will unknown.

Black isn't likely to Hunt superheroes. Even if they take down a Demonhame or two, he still considers them beneath his notice and hardly a threat to the larger picture. But it's a different story if the PCs somehow prove themselves a threat to his plans to achieve apotheosis, even if they simply learn of his plot. He begins with sending a member of the Inverted Trinity after them. If they survive that, he brings as many Morbanes and their congregations to bear on the superheroes as he possibly can. He manipulates

the Inner Circle, setting them against the PCs as well as he can without revealing too much interest in them. If absolutely necessary, he takes an active role in the Inner Circle, commanding them to bring their considerable resources to bear on the problem of killing the PCs.

If Black wields too much power for your campaign, reduce his Variable Power Pool until it's at the right level for your game, or remove the Advantage *Powers Can Be Changed As Zero-Phase Action*. You should only decrease his power further than this if you want to change DEMON's structure. To increase Black's power, simply increase the points in his Variable Power Pool. To make him more effective in combat, provide him with enough additional points in his VPP so he can compensate for his physical weaknesses for the duration of a battle. But only if you want to dramatically change the nature of DEMON should you increase his physical characteristics permanently — Black's infirmity is one of the primary reasons for DEMON's form of organization.

Appearance: Once, before he had suffered the ravages of his ambition, Luther Black was a handsome man with dark eyes and wavy black hair. His mien was somber, but a charming smile brightened his serious expression. Now there is nothing handsome about the man. His bed-ridden body is wizened, and his muscles have atrophied. Boils, cysts, and carbuncles cover his shriveled skin, as if the corruption inside him sought to be free of his flesh. His pallid lips wrap themselves around a tube for oxygen, the mouthpiece held by toothless yellowish-brown gums, and IVs run to the veins in his arms. His hair is grey, dry as straw, and falls out in small tufts and clumps. He wears a linen bandage over his eyes, and the bandage bears two red, oval-shaped stains — the empty sockets never healed after he blinded himself at Nan Madol and continue to seep blood as if they were some profane stigmata.

THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR

No casino or hotel owner in Las Vegas is willing to lose a potential customer by including a thirteenth floor in his building. Everyone knows that's bad luck, and for a gambler to have a room on the thirteenth floor is the kiss of death. But not every-one in Las Vegas is quite so squeamish.

Called the Thirteenth Floor, Luther Black's sanctum sanctorum is located in an other-dimensional space that corresponds to Las Vegas's Strip. Black had the sanctum built during the 1960s, when he exerted an unnatural influence on Howard Hughes. He compelled the wealthy industrialist to divest himself of TWA stock and purchase Vegas from the Mafia. From the inside, the Thirteenth Floor seems a luxurious penthouse suite. It has one master bedroom where Black resides and several smaller bedrooms hold bunk beds where his servitors sleep, as well as an office, living room, entertainment room, and other rooms one can expect to find in luxurious surroundings, all of them furnished with the best furniture money can buy. From the outside, the Thirteenth Floor doesn't exist. Not only does it exist outside of this world, but Luther Black has spent decades upon decades weaving protective spells around it. To reach the place requires Black's permission and passage through the other-dimensional realm of Crossroads. Anyone Black invites for a personal audience — few are invited and even fewer return from such an audience — receives a visit from the Black Shepherd. The Shepherd tells him a date and time, a hotel or casino, and instructs him to press the button for the Thirteenth Floor once inside the elevator. The button looks like any other — the whole panel rearranges itself to accommodate the temporary button's presence — and only appears once the invited individual steps into the elevator.

If occultists knew of the Thirteenth Floor's location, they would propose numerous theories behind its arcane operations to explain why Black chose the location. Some theories would likely be: the frequent games of chance, many of which have their origin in methods of divination such as Tarot readings and casting the bones, confound attempts at magical detection; or the streaks of good and bad luck gamblers frequently experience are mystical in origin, and Black taps into these to further his power; the ley lines that have brought so much wealth and success to Las Vegas also aid Black's magic. A few might even suggest that the nearby Yucca Flats are the cause — perhaps the atomic tests performed there somehow altered the space-time continuum to this day. Whatever the truth of these various hypotheses, Luther Black's primary reason for locating his sanctum in Las Vegas is much simpler. Like some kind of unholy parasite, he feeds off the hopeless desperation of those who gamble in Vegas's casinos. The inability of a gambler *not* to bet his last dollar on a losing hand, to wager his life savings when the deck is stacked against him, and the resulting despair when he leaves the casino penniless, satisfy a ravenous hunger in the black-stained soul of the Edomite.

BLACK'S PERSONAL SERVITORS

Despite the promises of wealth that would shame Croesus and power beyond his wildest imaginings, this is the highest rank a Morbane in DEMON can hope to achieve: to have his personality winnowed away until only a desire to please his leader remains, to have his soul shackled to that of the Edomite, and to act as one of Luther Black's personal servitors in his sanctum.

Thirteen of these servitors, all of them former Morbanes, reside on the Thirteenth Floor. Though they've lost much of their former personality and have given up their souls, they still retain the magical powers they had as Morbanes. As shown on his character sheet, Luther Black can draw upon them to sustain his life by Transferring either their END, BODY, or STUN. Even if the Edomite never uses his Transfer ability, a personal servitor lives a short life — no mortal can survive for long the abuses put to a servitor's soul. On average a servitor lives for four or five years before the flesh rots from his eroded bones and he dies. Luther Black then chooses a replacement from the ranks of the Morbanes, dispatching the Black Shepherd to inform the Morbane he has earned initiation into the highest of DEMON's mysteries, and to bring the Morbane back to the Thirteenth Floor. His two main criteria for selection are either Morbanes who harbor hopes of betraying DEMON, their ambitions discovered by the Night Terrors or Luther Black working through the Soul Gems, or those who have simply grown too powerful for Black's liking.

In addition to the thirteen servitors, Luther Black has a doctor and nurse residing in his sanctum. These two tend to his corrupted body and maintain the life support machines that keep his mortal shell from dying. Doctor Edward Haley and Nurse William Jefferson disappeared from the world six years ago, newly arrived in Vegas. Both have been transformed into loyal minions.

Luther Black has three other servants working for him in Las Vegas: Johnny Soul, a lounge singer; Delia Leery, a cocktail waitress; and Sugargut Robbins, a comedian. They act as spies, keeping their master apprised of happenings in the city. There is nothing unusual about any of them except for the ease with which Luther Black can slip into their skin and take control of them, and their reputation for having a taste for the depraved and evil.

VISIONS IN THE BASILISK ORB

Like St. John the Divine on the isle of Patmos bearing witness to a vision of the apocalypse, Luther Black had his own vision of the end times on the island of Pohnpei in the city of Nan Madol. But his vision was no warning to the faithful; it was instead a road map to success.

Below are some of the major events that lead to Black's success, and you can use these events (altered as you see fit) as plot seeds for adventures in your campaign. Each of these, with maybe the exception of the fifth Inner Circle member, should be epic adventures, spanning the course of multiple game sessions. Luther Black uses all the resources at his command to accomplish his goals, and those resources are considerable.

BLACK'S CRIPPLED BODY

The Basilisk Orb showed Luther Black ascending into the ranks of the Kings of Edom, and in those minutes before his apotheosis, he already looked much like a god. He seemed an evil Adonis, an Apollo of darkness, brimming with dark powers and possessing the form of a figure of unearthly beauty — a far cry from his current physical appearance.

In the months after the events of the Demon-flame Incident, while the Black Shepherd sought out the Inner Circle members, Luther Black searched for ways to heal his corrupted body. It soon became obvious only the greatest of magics would succeed — anything less would require him to give up the power he had stolen from Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, and that was unthinkable. The two means he favored both involved artifacts out of myth, but known to occultists to truly exist (although maybe not in the physical form described in the common tales): the Fountain of Youth and the Holy Grail. Black favors the Grail, for in the tales of the wounded Fisher King he sees parallels to his own story.

A secondary task given over to the Vibora Bay Demonhame is searching for the Fountain of Youth, and it is to report any success to the Black Shepherd. Luther Black's plans for the Holy Grail are more involved. He believes he needs a pure soul, a modern day Parsifal, to find the Grail for him, a condition which complicates matters considerably. His current candidates for the quest include: the French super-hero Chevalier; an undetermined member of the New Knights of the Round Table; and Jack Fool.

Black feels Jack Fool is the best of the three — as depicted in Wagner's *Parzifal*, only a holy fool can successfully find the Grail — but the task would require he return Jack Fool's soul to his body and allow him to be a free agent, then trick him into pursuing the Grail, a risk Black is currently unwilling to commit to. He knows he needs the Inverted Trinity to succeed, but feels his body can remain crippled as long as he can continue to hold the stolen power of Sharna-Gorak. But if he should begin to lose his grip on that power because of his infirmity...

THE FIFTH INNER CIRCLE MEMBER

Free of Qliphothic taint, Dyer vander Bleek has no place in the Inner Circle. He is not the woman Luther Black saw in his vision of the future. Vander Bleek is only a place-holder, chosen because he possesses enough power (hopefully) to hold onto his position in the Inner Circle, yet not enough to keep Black from easily removing him if need be. The situation has left Black with a crisis on his hands, one that has haunted him for almost a decade.

The dilemma is this: Black can either continue to search for the fifth member of the Inner Circle, or he can taint Dyer vander Bleek with the power of the Qliphothic and hope he serves as an adequate replacement. The problem with the first: Black has been searching since 1986 with no success. Time is getting short and he's growing not just impatient, but deeply troubled about the situation. The problem with the second: if Black engineers a plot that results in vander Bleek being exposed to and corrupted by the Qliphothic, the result is unpredictable. The power of the Shining Darkness is great, and vander Bleek might not only gain so much power he becomes uncontrollable, he could even become a threat to Black's hold on DEMON.

This is what Luther Black's vision revealed about the fifth member: she is a beautiful woman with pale skin and black hair, her voice like an ill-omen spoken by ravens. She is an evil out of time — but whether the future or past, Black does not know — reborn in the present, for what authority does Time have, that jailer of things mortal, over the Shining Darkness?

THE RISE OF ATLANTIS

The rising of Atlantis is a third event that should have already occurred but hasn't. In the vision Luther Black possessed more than just the power of Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer — he melded with the very essence of that ancient enemy of Atlantis. Because of this he caused Atlantis to rise again to the surface, so Sharna-Gorak could fulfill a prophecy that says if he ever returned to the world, he would rule that ancient place.

Luther Black doesn't concern himself overly much with Atlantis. He feels it isn't vital to his plans to raise the underwater kingdom and become its ruler, since he only possesses the power of Sharna-Gorak — which is what he needs to complete the spell — and isn't truly merged with that monstrous being. However there are any number of events that would cause him to reassess that conclusion, including the discovery of important artifacts hidden in Atlantean vaults, an inhabitant of Atlantis rumored to be a serious candidate for Archmage, or the possibility that Black could reopen the Edom Gate and merge his being with that of Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer as he was originally supposed to.

RUIN OF THE CITY OF MAN

In the plane of Babylon, man's secular ambitions find their embodiment. The city of cities, grown great and huge over the last few centuries, is the echo of all the worldly cities man has built — or at least those mankind remembers. Its inhabitants are inordinately proud of this monument to man's industry, artifice, and skill. They brag it is the greatest creation in all of Creation, and some even suppose that some day it could grow so great as to challenge the gods themselves.

Luther Black is of a different opinion. When speaking of the City of Man, he is fond of quoting from the Book of Revelation, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!... Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come!" And if allowed to carry out his plans, Luther Black shall be the judge, jury, and executioner of Babylon's many crimes.

Black realizes the truth behind the claims of Babylon's greatness. He has lived in cities for most of his two hundred years and knows them well. A city is nothing more than a dirty, grimy machine dedicated to glorifying mankind's sins — an engine that empowers the prideful, gluttonous, and greedy among the ruling class, fueled by the toil and suffering of the helpless chattel who serve them. So it has been since the first cities, even in those times before man ruled the world, and to topple a city is no difficult matter. One must only give the power to commit violence to the disenfranchised.

Black's plan for Babylon is twofold. First, he will send Morbanes to proselytize among the downtrodden who inhabit the Rookeries, the vast slums in Babylon where all the evils of one man's dominion over others find a home. With promises of power the Morbanes will bring worship of demons to the masses of secular Babylon, making it, as predicted in the Revelation, "a dwelling place of demons, a haunt for every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird..." Second, he will have the Black Scientists rediscover ancient Ril'Syssor, now frozen in time below the Antarctic ice. In an age before history, mankind lived in servitude to the Elder Worm and his suffering was beyond comprehension. The discovery of Ril'Syssor, plus the proof of its antiquity and inhuman rulers — and, most importantly, mankind's place in that city — will consume the hearts and minds of many people in the modern day, shaking their belief in mankind's dominance of the world. With Ril'Syssor remembered, the other-dimensional analogue of the city will return to Babylon and corrupt it, transforming it from the City of Man to the City of Man's Slavery.

As for why Luther Black is willing to go to so much trouble in the case of Babylon: if he allows the city to continue unhindered, it and its inhabitants will work to prevent him from bringing the Kings of Edom into the world. Such an event would spell doom for Babylon, and the city possesses enough power to oppose him if not neutralized first.

THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF BLACK'S VISION

The visions from the Basilisk Orb provide Luther Black with a road map to success, and that's a definite advantage in his attempt to release the five Kings of Edom described in the Harrowing Book and force them to raise him to their ranks. But it also proves a hindrance to increasing DEMON's influence, since it narrowly focuses DEMON and its goals. Luther Black has a powerful, widespread resources at his personal command — the Inverted Trinity and his control over the Morbanes are two examples — but because he is obsessed with his vision, he often neglects to bring those resources to bear in plots outside the purview of what he knows about the future.

Furthermore, the vision has gone awry and Luther Black often obsesses over those instances that have gone wrong. Spending long periods frozen with indecision, he waffles between simply forging ahead, hoping for success even if all the conditions are not met, and trying to repair the damage. Attempts to fix things, such as his unceasing search for the fifth member of the Inner Circle and his investigation of rumors pertaining to a new Archmage, force him to devote many of his resources to tasks of uncertain benefit and dubious necessity.

All in all, looking at the situation from an objective standpoint, Black's obsession with the vision has limited DEMON's growth. If the organization were more

Continued from last page

opportunistic — had more broadly defined and goals, with a leadership more open to any and all plots that further its power like VIPER is — DEMON might wield far more power in the world.

For more information about Babylon, The City Of Man, see page 35 of *The Mystic World*. For more ideas concerning Luther Black's plan for the ruin of the city, see the Bible, Revelation 18.2.

WAR IN DREAMZONE

The Dreamzone is where a person's spirit goes when he dreams, and if Luther Black has his way, when a person dreams his spirit will find itself in the midst of warzone. Luther Black's goal is not to conquer the Dreamzone — he will conquer that when he conquers Earth in 2012, for the Dreamzone is only an extension of the Material World. Instead, he wishes to taint and pollute the dreams of mankind with blood and suffering.

Demoiselle Nocturne serves as Luther Black's general in this war, and her Night Terrors as the soldiers. The problem is Luther Black must find an enemy, someone to fight Demoiselle Nocturne. In his vision this enemy was human, not superhuman, and Black has, via the Coin Collector, investigated several private companies that research sleep and dreaming. Among these are The Midnight Group (a privately owned company founded by a wealthy industrialist whose three children all died in their sleep on the same night at the same time for no apparent reason) and Advanced Sleep Studies, Inc. (which hopes to provide drug-free peaceful sleep, a profitable ambition in these days of increasing anxiety and stress). He hopes one of these comes up with the technology for man to wage a war against Nocturne in the Dreamzone, but he has a back-up plan. He's taken to spying on superhumans with dream-related powers, including the villainess Dreamwitch and the hero Morpheus. If need be, he'll manipulate one of these into opposing him.

FEBRUARY 29, 2012

On the last day of his life, all of Luther Black's plans will culminate in his apotheosis — but on the day itself there many tasks he must accomplish to summon the five Kings of Edom. Among these:

Wormwood Falls From The Heavens: This is the reason Luther Black obsesses over the whereabouts of the Hellstone. Some of his fellows in the Circle of the Scarlet Moon called that weapon Wormwood, the meteorite that poisons the Earth in the Biblical Apocalypse. In his vision of the future, Black saw a fiery comet fall from the skies and strike Kansas City, unleashing death in America's heartland. This event will take place on February 28 and distract many superheroes from the events that occur on the next day. So Black wonders what happened to the Hellstone, and also scans astronomical reports, searching for clues about the event.

From The Deep Blue Sea: In 2009, the surface world will establish its first residential neighborhood under the sea. The location is the Caribbean, off the coast of Mexico. Called Last Frontier, it will be a joint project between most of the governments of

North America. The home of 20,000 people, Last Frontier will be lauded as heralding a new age in cooperation. In January of 2012, while drilling a heat mane for the geo-thermal power supply, the residents of Last Frontier will awaken the inhabitants of ancient Grehnesk, a city lost to time before man's ascent to dominance of the Earth. Two species inhabit the city, both now frozen in time thanks to the last spell worked by Grehnesk's greatest sorcerers to save them from their doom. One species is bipedal creatures with bulbous chitinous shells and a single huge claw grown from the middle of their chest. Only possessing rudimentary intelligence, these are the hosts for the true masters of Grehnesk — a species that most resembles a brownish-purple mold with pustules grown huge. The mold grows on the bulbous, malformed shells of their hosts and controls them. Together, parasite and host, the species is called the Grehn. Once awakened, the Grehn will massacre the people of Last Frontier, then march on the coast of Mexico, where they'll wage a war with the surface world — important in relation to events that occur on February 29 as described below.

A Wrench In The Millworks Of Bromion: Page 43 of *The Mystic World* describes the Millworks, an otherworldly place filled with crashing machines and grinding gears, and page 92 of *Arcane Adversaries* describes the Lord of Order who runs it — Bromion. The Millworks in a way embodies the notion of a clockwork universe, a universe that runs with the precision of an unrelenting machine. Luther Black must infiltrate an agent into the dimension (no easy task) and have him throw a wrench — just a simple wrench from the Material Plane — into the gears at midnight as the day turns from February 28 to the 29. The wrench won't have a dramatic effect on the Millworks itself, but it will gum up the works just enough to send a shudder through the fabric of the multiverse.

The Place: The location of the summoning, the site where Luther Black will stand and call through the Kings of Edom, is Mexico City. The place has the dual qualities of being (a) founded at an ancient site of power, where an eagle ate a snake as foreseen by the faithful, and (b) one of the world's largest cities. As with any of his summonings, Luther Black needs to spill blood... and to cast the spell that is DEMON, Luther Black needs to spill lots of blood. On the morning of February 29, the Morbanes will lead their congregations out into the streets and kill whomever they find there. This is the reason DEMON never ceases to establish Demonhames in the city: even though it currently has three in and around Mexico City, Luther Black wants more. Finally, the Inner Circle members will gather around him — in one place with the Edomite for the first time — and when the gate opens, they shall bind the Kings of Edom.

FROM THE FILES OF UNTIL: DEMON'S FOUNDERS

Over the decades UNTIL researchers have assembled all known documentation concerning DEMON's founders. They have identified seven individuals as the leaders of the organization in the 1930s; each was in charge of a Demonhome located in a major metropolitan area. These individuals (and their hames) are: Marlene von Reiter (Berlin); Guillame Courau (Paris); Reverend Marcus Bitters (Shanghai); Klaas Mannerlicht (New York); Victoria Hurt (London); and Sydney Golden (Los Angeles).

All seven are reported dead prior to 1940; UNTIL has the death certificates for six. Analysts have determined that Sydney Golden's certificate is forged by comparing it to death certificates issued during the same period. Investigators' report of Reverend Bitters's assassination in Shanghai, along with two eyewitness accounts, serve in lieu of a death certificate (no death certificate has ever been located; reason unknown).

While links exist between individual members prior to DEMON's existence, the only link between all seven

is that they traveled extensively in Western Europe in the decade after the turn of the century. Several outside experts on the Mystic World, as that group is defined in the 1988 report, *Takofanes And The Mystic World: A Threat Level Assessment* (File #12/3339), have claimed the seven individuals share the same mentor in the occult, a man named Luther Black. Analysts have found no records of this individual's existence except a brief mention in a New York newspaper's society column dated 12/16/09. The column concerned a gala hosted by the Vanderbilt family. The text: "Also attending was Luther Black, a handsome and dashing Englishman new to our shores and sure to become a fixture of New York society."

In summary, UNTIL sorely lacks solid evidence concerning the founding of DEMON. Its current hypothesis is that the seven students of Luther Black, working as a cabal, founded the organization, which at the time was a loose confederation sharing broad goals and methods, but only rarely pooled their resources.

RELATIONS WITH THE INNER CIRCLE

Luther Black maintains an uneasy relationship with the Inner Circle. The tensions between the two result from Black's need to use them as the primary focus of the mystical circle that will contain the might of the Kings of Edom. If he is to succeed in his goal, he cannot limit their power, for that might make them too weak for the task. Nor can he bind the Inner Circle members to him as he has the Morbanes, for then the summoning circle would no longer be discrete from his own protection circle, and the power of the Kings of Edom could find the weakness, flow along it, and subvert him — either destroying him or turning him into one of their slaves. So Luther Black relies on deception, misinformation, and the Soul Gems to keep the Inner Circle in line.

He deceives them into believing he is weak and maintains the illusion that he has little to do with DEMON's affairs, letting them think they are the true leaders of the organization. He uses misinformation to keep them from focusing on any task that might give them too much power and to keep them distrustful of the others. And he uses the Soul Gems to prevent them from obtaining too much power over the Morbanes. If an Inner Circle member gains too much influence over a Demonhome, Luther Black's standard tactic is to take control of the Morbane and involve him in a plot sure to lead to his and his Demonhome's exposure to law enforcement or superheroes (this is what happened in Millennium City; see page 125). It makes for a Pyrrhic victory, but as far as Black is concerned losing one Demonhome is far from the end of the world.



THE INVERTED TRINITY



INVERTED TRINITY PLOT SEEDS

Luther Black receives further visions that make him think he needs to convert the Inverted Trinity into a mockery of the creators of the Four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — by adding a fourth member. It just so happens that one of the PCs has all the arcane attributes needed in this new villain....

When the PCs get too close to some important DEMON schemes, Black decides he has to distract them. He sends the Black Shepherd to join the Devil's Advocates and inspire them to commit a series of crimes that will take the heroes' attention away from DEMON's activities.

Several owners of rare book stores have been found murdered in their shops — crucified in a blasphemous mockery of Christ's sufferings. But as far as anyone can tell, nothing is missing from their stores. What's going on, and how is the Inverted Trinity involved?

Membership: The Black Shepherd, Jack Fool, The Left Hand

Background/History: Standing nearest Luther Black, acting as his personal agents, are the three beings that make up the Inverted Trinity, a blasphemous mockery of the Christian Trinity: Jack Fool, in whom the nonsensical murmurings and mad ranting of a heartless assassin subvert the wisdom of age and strict love of the Father; the Black Shepherd, in whom insane teachings from the Harrowing Book, and harsh commands that lead DEMON's members to doom their souls to perdition and eternal torment, replace the Son's loving words and gentle urgings that lead the faithful to paradise in the hereafter; and finally the Left Hand, in whom the forgiving and all-pervasive Holy Ghost that precedes the kingdom come finds its opposite in a terrible force that portends a horrendous future and heralds a time when the Kings of Edom rule the Earth.

Luther Black spent decades assembling the Inverted Trinity after witnessing them in the vision of the future in the Basilisk Orb. Jack Fool, the masked mystery man and DEMON's old nemesis from the 1930s, was the first to take his place among the group when Black necromantically raised him from the dead to serve as his assassin during the Years of Red Nights. The Black Shepherd came next, with Inner Circle member Aganju Lambo providing the base materials for his creation. Finally Luther Black created the Left Hand from the power of the Qliphothic and his black magic. Since that day, the same occasion when his failure left him a cripple, Luther Black has made extensive use of the Inverted Trinity, both to enforce his will within DEMON and to strike at his enemies. (For more details about the creation of the members of the Inverted Trinity, see pages 44, 46, and 50.)

Group Relations: Since the Edomite has assigned each of them a specific well-defined role, there is little friction among the Trinity. Furthermore, none of them are at all human. Each is more a magical construct than mortal, and little of human emotion, especially emotions such as ambition or envy that typically lead to friction in a group, remains in their hearts any longer. Finally, the group is rarely assembled in one place. Even though there are elements of their mystical existence that might cause problems to arise — the chiding ghosts of Jack Fool's parents, the raging demons and desperate souls of four superheroes imprisoned in the Black Shepherd's soul, the Left Hand's sheer, unadulterated arrogance that grows with each passing year

to rival Lucifer's own before his fall — the three are never together for a long enough time to bring these flaws to the surface.

If they were assigned to a task that required them to work together for an extended period of time — like Hunting a group of PCs who had become an especially persistent nemesis for DEMON and Luther Black's plans — problems would eventually arise among the group. Jack Fool would slip further and further into dementia, his behavior alternating between manic activity and blank-eyed catatonia. The Black Shepherd would also grow less coherent as rageful demons, desperate souls, and the mind-breaking knowledge of the Kings of Edom battled for control of his body. And because of the manias of the other two, the Left Hand would be free to take increasing control over them until finally he, and not Luther Black, truly commanded the Inverted Trinity.

Tactics: Unfamiliar with working as a team, the Inverted Trinity use simple tactics in a fight and rely on their sheer power to overcome opponents. In general, the Black Shepherd spies on the target, learning all he can. Then, if necessary, he leads the target into a trap. During the fight he hangs back and attacks with Mindblast or Hallucinations. Jack Fool clings to the shadows and attacks from surprise, choosing a mystic for his target. The Left Hand eschews cunning or stealth and makes a frontal attack, selecting the most powerful superhero as his target.

Campaign Use: The roles of the members of the Inverted Trinity are clearly defined: Jack Fool is Luther Black's assassin; the Black Shepherd, his messenger; and the Left Hand, his enforcer. If Luther Black wants an individual quietly murdered, especially a mystic, he dispatches Jack Fool. If he wants a message conveyed, even a false one to lead someone into a trap, he dispatches the Black Shepherd. And if he wants an individual killed spectacularly, a warning to those who seek to thwart his plans, he dispatches the Left Hand. Luther Black only assigns all three members to a task when faced with the most powerful opponents or to accomplish a mission of the utmost importance. In the past they have only worked together when plotting the murder of a rumored candidate for the position of Archmage.

All three members have an aspect of their character that could potentially lead to their defection from DEMON. The circumstances of a defection would, of course, be extraordinary, but such amazing events are part-and-parcel of a superhero roleplaying game. If Luther Black were to lose a

member, he would work night and day to accomplish one of two goals. Either he would attempt to bring the defector back into the fold, or, more likely, he would kill the defector and replace him with a new member. The same is true if one of members is killed or otherwise removed from existence (*i.e.*, Jack Fool's soul is returned to his body, or the souls trapped in the Black Shepherd are laid to rest). Luther Black knows that to succeed, he needs the Inverted Trinity, which means he needs three beings to take the roles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. However, he believes the actual individual who assumes the role is less important.

The easiest way to make most villain groups more or less powerful — add or remove members — doesn't work with the Inverted Trinity, since there can only be three of them. Instead, you have to increase or decrease the members' individual abilities, as described in their character sheets.

The Inverted Trinity only Hunts characters when instructed to by Luther Black, and follows his instructions in doing so.

THE BLACK SHEPHERD

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
10	COM	0	11-	
15	PD	12		Total: 15 PD (15 rPD)
15	ED	12		Total: 15 ED (15 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	18		
60	END	15		
50	STUN	19		Total Characteristics Cost: 204

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Flight: 12"/24"
 Teleportation: 12"/384"

Cost	Powers	END
125	<i>Mental Powers:</i> Multipower, 125-point powers	
12u	1) <i>Mindblast:</i> Ego Attack 10d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
25m	2) <i>Hallucinations:</i> Mental Illusions 20d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
17m	3) <i>Read Thoughts:</i> Telepathy 20d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Receive Only (-½)	5
81	<i>Teleportation:</i> Teleportation 12", x32 Noncombat Modifier, x4 Increased Mass, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
81	<i>Aportation:</i> Usable As Attack (+1) for Teleportation, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
8	<i>Shepherd's Crook:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), OAF (-1)	2
15	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)	0
21	<i>Alien Mind:</i> Mental Defense (25 points)	0
25	<i>Unnatural Physiology:</i> Power Defense (25 points)	0
60	<i>Ghostly Form:</i> Desolidification (affected by magic), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
60	<i>Ghostly Form:</i> Invisibility to Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
57	<i>Malleable Form:</i> Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any humanoid shape), Cellular, Imitation, Costs Endurance Only To Change Shape (+¼)	6
36	<i>Flight:</i> Flight 12", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
29	<i>Immortality:</i> Healing 2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn), Resurrection (others can stop with magical ritual or death of Luther Black), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0

BLACK SHEPHERD PLOT SEEDS

Aganju Lambo's fellow Yoruba have at long last determined to save him from his fate, and they attempt to enlist the aid of the PCs. But can the PCs trust the Yoruba — might they be using the superheroes as bait and consider them entirely expendable? If the PCs can trust them, how do the Yoruba plan to hold the Black Shepherd once they have him? Or is that the PCs' job?

The PCs have interrogated several Morbanes and deduced that one individual initiates them into the greater mysteries of DEMON. Could this be DEMON's leader? And if not, couldn't this figure reveal who the leaders are? But first the PCs must track down the Black Shepherd, and how will they do that?

The Babylonian god Marduk once used the the Imhullu to slay the dragon Tiamat. Now he wants the Imhullu back and gives the task to the PCs. How does one say no to a god? Why does Marduk suddenly require the services of the Imhullu (and why can't he get them himself)? Could the dragon, Tiamat, have returned?

50	<i>Immortality</i> : Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
Perks		
8	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)	
Talents		
27	Universal Translator 20-	
Skills		
9	+3 with Mental Powers	
5	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 15-	
10	KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 20-	
7	Oratory 16-	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 767

Total Cost: 972

200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)	
15	Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)	
25	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Luther Black (Very Common, Total)	
20	Psychological Limitation: A Turmoil Of Blasphemy For A Soul (Common, Total)	
20	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Aganju Lambo) (Very Frequently, Major)	
25	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Severe)	
15	Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)	
10	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)	
10	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)	
622	Experience Points	

Total Disadvantage Points: 972

Background/History: Over twenty years ago in Nigeria, not too far from where he was born, Aganju Lambo's life ended, his last words a litany of prayers to the gods of his Yoruba forebears. Now that litany echoes through the shell of Lambo's body. Each god or goddess has dropped away forgotten until all that remains is a desperate plea to Olorun — the supreme god of the Yoruba, one without temples, shrines, or priests who is only called upon in the most hopeless circumstances. But the syllables of the ancient entreaty to intercede on the worshiper's behalf are a quiet murmur under the raging whirlwind of the wind of four and wind of seven, the demons named the Imhullu.

This is what passes for the soul of the Black Shepherd: an echo of a desperate prayer, a tragic wailing of four heroes denied the afterlife, an angry tumult of seven demons whose only pleasure is to torment the trapped souls of heroes, and the ghostly image of Luther Black who stands above the fray and in his spread hands cradles this pandemonium that is the Black Shepherd's soul, containing and guiding it to his purpose.

This is what consumes the mind of the Black Shepherd: the whole of a profane text, the *Liber Terribilis*, its ravings and delirious sentences repeating themselves across his thoughts.... *Here is the black Queen and the black King, the Master and the Muse, and finally the Heart; five who would, who will conquer and leash and lash what is Human, flay it from ourselves, from the world, from all places, divine and infernal.... Good and Evil shall embrace with trembling limbs weak with fear when they are enveloped in the towering shadow of the Kings' dominion, for the height of obscenity reveals truthfully that the two are as one, a single fearful subject yoked together like two horses to a single plow, joined together in bondage to the Kings.... There, beyond our world and God's kingdom everlasting and that place of torment given over to Lucifer, outside, below, around, and nowhere, they are trapped, imprisoned, to provide for their sustenance only their own being, only to feast on their own flesh....* And organizing these harrowing words, this tumult of insanities, are the commands of Luther Black, which make the passages from the *Liber Terribilis* into sense, if only long enough for the Black Shepherd to serve as harbingering and messenger for DEMON's leader.

Not even a quiver of his lips nor twitch of his eye gives away the turmoil inside the Black Shepherd's body. His aspect is solemn, almost tranquil, and there is only the occasional glint of tragic understanding that comes to his dead brown eyes — nothing more than the flash of light from a blood-red, apocalyptic sun glinting off a distant object — as the echoes of Aganju Lambo's soul claw their way to the surface and the man who was formerly Asmodeus in DEMON's Inner Circle comprehends, however briefly, the price he paid for swearing service to the Edomite.

Personality/Motivation: When not engaged in a mission for his master or delivering messages for the Inner Circle, the Black Shepherd simply drifts through the world, invisible and insubstantial, little more than a ghost trapped in the material realm. He floats above the clouds, at the edge of Earth's atmosphere, looking out into the blackness of space; or he wanders through the deepest caverns below Earth's crust, passing through the ruins of antediluvian habitations, both those of man and of other beings whom history has long forgotten.

Sometimes, as he drifts through the world, a person in dire circumstances catches the Black Shepherd's attention. The individual's desperation and all-consuming longing drawing the Shepherd like iron to a lodestone, and he appears to the person, driving him either into madness, suicide, or joining DEMON's ranks — the choice based on whatever whim takes the Black Shepherd at the moment.

Quote: ““They shall spread across this world like a plague of locusts, stripping leaves from stems and carrion from the bones of the dead, for when the five return they shall know no equal and they shall hunger for flesh, for blood, for souls, for all that exists, and none of it shall be enough to ease their profane appetites, and they shall not be stopped not



here, not in the Satan's kingdom of torment, not the kingdom of our Lord....”

Powers/Tactics: The Black Shepherd derives his powers from the four superheroes whose souls are trapped within his body. In combination these powers make him the perfect messenger for Luther Black. His main source of strength is that he can't be denied access to someplace he wants to go, and he can't be stopped from leaving a place.

The Black Shepherd uses his Mental Powers to conduct the initiation of a Morbane. With a combination of Telepathy and Mental Illusions, he shows the Morbane future rewards for faithful service that matches exactly the Morbane's secret desire. He can also use this same power to cripple an enemy — first using Telepathy to detect the target's secret fears, then creating a Mental Illusion that exploits those fears. His Ego Attack is crude — he simply allows the target a glimpse of the turmoil in his soul, a nerve-shattering experience if ever there was one. (At your discretion, the victim of his Ego Blast might come away from the experience having

glimpsed a passage from the Harrowing Book.)

Ending the Black Shepherd's unnatural life involves first banishing the Imhullu, returning them to the Infernal Regions. Then the heroes must lay the souls of the four superheroes to rest, which means bringing the body of the Black Shepherd into proximity of the final resting places of each of their mortal remains.

Campaign Use: The Black Shepherd should be a mysterious figure in your campaign. The PCs should hear rumors of his existence from captured Morbanes — of course, each describes his form differently, because he assumes the appearance of whatever the Morbane finds most striking — or maybe they catch glimpses of him as they near the conclusion of a plot involving DEMON.

If Luther Black assigns the Black Shepherd to Hunt the PCs, the Shepherd avoids using his Mental Powers, at least at first. Instead he spies on them, either using his invisibility or his shape-changing powers to infiltrate their lives. When Luther Black feels the Shepherd has discovered enough about the PCs, he dispatches other members of the Inverted Trinity to kill them.

To make the Black Shepherd a tougher foe, provide him with more defenses; either a Force Field or Damage Reduction is appropriate. Furthermore, you can expand his Multipower to include Telekinesis. To weaken him, you can have the PCs discover a magic — perhaps a circle or protective sign — that limits the Black Shepherd's ability to Teleport, become intangible, and so forth. This magic should key on the demons, the Imhullu, who also inhabit his form.

Appearance: Over his emaciated body, the Black Shepherd wears dark robes. The coarse fabric is threadbare, dusty with grey ashes, and stained with blood. He keeps a deep hood drawn over his bald head to hide his features, but sometimes as he speaks, one can catch a glimpse of his features — the dead brown eyes with jaundiced whites, the creased purple lips, and the brown skin etched with deep wrinkles like carved mahogany. He carries with him a slender shepherd's crook of pitted and corroded steel, and leans heavily upon the crook as if he bears some burden of immeasurable weight.

JACK FOOL PLOT SEEDS

A PC with Luck Powers finds himself haunted by the ghost of Jack Fool. The ghost demands the PC help him find peace, but as the PC looks into the matter, questions arise — including how did this ghost get free of the Netherworld? Are the PCs being used in a power struggle between the Descending Hierarchy and DEMON... and if so, can they survive?

One of the PCs is considered a candidate for the position of Archmage, and somehow Luther Black gets word of this. The Edomite dispatches Jack Fool to kill the PC. How will the PCs stop an unkillable assassin? Can they figure out what they need to do to grant the poor soul permanent rest?

Two men show up on the doorstep of the PCs' headquarters. One introduces himself as Lothar Mannheim; the other, as Jimmy Finn. Both look like decaying corpses. If the PCs pause to listen, the two zombies explain they've been cursed because of their betrayal of Jack Fool, and they cannot rest until Jack Fool's soul is returned to his body. Will the PCs believe them? And if so, what will they do then?

JACK FOOL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
10	PD	5		Total: 19 PD (19 rPD)
10	ED	5		Total: 19 ED (19 rED)
7	SPD	30		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
15	REC	10		
60	END	5		
60	STUN	19		Total Characteristics Cost: 217

Movement: Running: 12"/24"
Swimming: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

125	<i>Any Sharp Object:</i> Multipower, 187-point reserve; all slots OIF (-½)	
8u	1) <i>A Stab At The Heart:</i> HKA 3d6 (3d6+1 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Penetrating (+½), Range Based On STR (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (sharp objects of opportunity; -½)	0
12u	2) <i>Unstoppable Stab:</i> HKA 3d6+1 (3½d6 with STR), No Normal Defense (defense is Luck, Combat Luck, or defenses with luck special effect; +1), Does BODY (+1), Range Based On STR (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (sharp objects of opportunity; -½)	0
10	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Hardened (x2; +½) for 10 PD/10 ED	0
15	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED), Hardened (x2; +½)	0
10	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-10) for Normal Defenses	0
17	<i>Undead Mind:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Undead Physiology:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
48	<i>Magic Resistance:</i> Magic Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%; Not Versus Necromancy (-¼)	0
12	<i>Fast:</i> Running +6" (12" total)	1
4	<i>Fast In Water, Too:</i> Swimming +4" (6" total)	1
29	<i>Immortality:</i> Healing 2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn), Resurrection (others can stop with magical ritual or death of Luther Black), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0
50	<i>Immortality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
30	<i>Archetypal Fool:</i> Luck 6d6	0

Perks

8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Talents

18 Combat Luck (9 PD/9 ED)
20 Danger Sense (self only, in combat, sense) 15-
6 Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to act first with All Attacks

Skills

16 +2 with All Combat
6 +2 with *Any Sharp Object* Multipower
20 +4 DCV
13 Acrobatics 20-
13 Breakfall 20-
3 Climbing 15-
9 Concealment 15-
9 Disguise 20-; Only To Pass As A Homeless Man (-1)
3 KS: Arcane and Occult Lore 12-
13 Lockpicking 20-
19 Security Systems 20-
15 Shadowing 18-
9 Stealth 18-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 590

Total Cost: 807

200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Physical Limitation: Partial Amnesia (Frequently, Fully Impairing)
25 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Luther Black (Very Common, Total)
20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Jonathan "Jack" Forzini) (Very Frequently, Major)
25 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Severe)
15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
457 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 807

Background/History: His earliest memories are still Jack Fool's to call his own. The ghosts of his mother and father remind him so he won't forget. They visit in the quiet hours when he sleeps, but Jack Fool knows he doesn't truly sleep, because the dead can't sleep and they can't dream... and he's not even sure the dead can be haunted by spirits of the dead.

Jack Fool's father was an Italian immigrant, a bricklayer, and his mother was a Gypsy, but his father said that wasn't true. In the Old Country everyone called the poor Gypsies, the father said,

but Jack Fool's mother was only poor — just a poor Italian girl he saved from poverty, or at least abject poverty, when he married her. But when the father had gone to work, the mother told a different story and taught her son all a young Gypsy boy should know. His mother would hold up a card and lean in close to her son. She would tell him to study the card that showed a young man, dressed in colorful clothes with hobo bag and stick on his shoulder, stepping off a cliff and a dog dragging at the waist of his pants, trying to stop him from going over. “This is you,” his mother would say. “A young boy in a new world, a strange and unknown world, setting off on a long journey, a life-long journey. This is you. The fool.” But Jack Fool's journey passed into darkness. The ghosts who haunt him are quick to remind their son where he went astray: “Fool rushes in!” they whisper.

Jack Fool remembers the burning building, the firemen milling around, the screams of a young girl coming from inside the building, and the mother standing on the street wailing with grief, her neighbors restraining her. Then he remembers ducking and diving through flames to rescue the young girl, and afterward the newspaper headline that named him a Fool and the article that called him a hero. Finally there's a voice that speaks over the murmur of the ghosts and Jack's own words to remind him with a sardonic laugh what happened, his only memory of what came afterwards: “There was no dog to save the fool from going over the cliff.”

And here Jack Fool's memories abandon him, the ghosts of his dead parents fading into mist, as the voice that commands him speaks in his ear. His master, the Edomite, bids him to rise up once again to serve his will. Jack Fool's dead eyes flutter open, the chiding of his parents forgotten. He dons his mask, takes up his knife, and returns to the world of living, no longer a hero but instead a killer and servant of evil.

Personality/Motivation: Only two things drive Jack Fool: the ghosts of his parents and the commands of the Edomite. When not about the Edomite's business, Jack Fool resides in near coma, dwelling on his memories of the past and cringing at his parents' harsh words. He chooses crypts, mausoleums, and tombs — any place the dead are interred — for his residence. When he's needed for an assassination, the Black Shepherd comes to him and delivers him to the necessary location. While moving through the world of living, Jack Fool poses as a homeless man, invisible to most people while in plain sight. He makes his way through trash-strewn allies, desolate neighborhoods, abandoned train yards, and decaying factories, all the while muttering to himself in nonsensical rhymes as he goes about his bloody business of murder.

Quote: “Jack Fool went a-walking, up the road to Heaven. But the devils came a-circling, claws and horns, oh my! Jack Fool was a-struggling, against his fiery foes. But the devils were a-winning, they dragged him down... down and down to Hell... Jack Fool! Jack Fool! Jack Fool's a ghoul!”



Powers/Tactics: Despite his decidedly unlucky fate at the hands of Luther Black, Jack Fool's powers still stem from luck. Any Sharp Object represents his ability to pick up a sharp object — a steak knife, a shard of glass, a broken bone — and turn it into a deadly weapon. When he attacks with Unstoppable Stab, the target's defenses are entirely negated for the brief second Jack Fool needs to stab him through the heart. This can be anything from a fatal weak spot in armor, to a momentary lapse in concentration that leads to the target's force field ceasing to function for just the briefest moment — but still long enough for Jack Fool to make his attack.

Two of Jack Fool's Skills, *Disguise* and *Security Systems*, work only because of his luck. When he lurks in allies or on the street, most people's eyes simply slide over him, the onlooker dismissing him as just another insane homeless man. When infiltrating a secure location, Jack Fool can bypass a security system simply by removing the control panel and jiggering around with the wires (he luckily crosses just the right ones) or entering a random number on a security pad (he just happens to get the number he needs).

To kill Jack Fool, the PCs must retrieve his soul from the Infernal Regions, where it's the prized possession of an Archdemon. Once free his soul returns to his body, and he not only loses Immortality, but becomes free of Luther Black's control.

He does not have any memories after his death in 1939. If his history is explained to him, he likely attempts to take his own life — and will definitely do so before allowing himself to become Luther Black's pawn once again.

Campaign Use: Jack Fool is both a nigh-unstoppable assassin and possessed of an unsettling insanity, and as such, the PCs should feel a little bit frightened of him. If Luther Black assigns him to assassinate (Hunt) a target, the Black Shepherd delivers him to the location. Then he lurks on the street, disguised as a homeless man, waiting for the moment to strike. His preferred moment is when the target is alone, but he attacks at another time if need be — for example attacking a superhero while he's fighting a supervillain.

If Jack Fool cannot reach his target through his own powers, and Luther Black begins to grow impatient, one of two courses present themselves. First, the Black Shepherd helps Jack Fool infiltrate by teleporting him to the target, or leading the target to a trap. Second, Luther Black assigns a Demonhame to help Jack Fool with his task — generally by staging a fight in a public area, thus giving Jack Fool the chance to attack from the shadows while the target is distracted.

Jack Fool's main weaknesses are his low defenses and lack of Movement Powers. To make him a tougher foe, give him Damage Reduction to represent his undead state and the fact that he feels no pain. To increase his ability to move about a battlefield, let him Teleport from one shadow to another. Finally, you can give him Find Weakness with Any Sharp Object to make him an even better killer. To make him a weaker foe for the PCs, decrease the Active Points in the *Any Sharp Object* reserve and attacks, and get rid of his DCV Levels.

Appearance: Jack Fool dresses in a tattered motley appropriate to a harlequin (or, more precisely in Jack's case, the Hellquin), the colors long-ago faded and the loose, oft-patched fabric worn thin at the elbows and knees. Over his face he wears a chipped and cracked scaramouche mask with a long beak and peeling gilt leaf. His flesh is unnaturally pale and waxy. His body is all elbows and knees, his long skinny limbs jutting from an even more skinny body. When he moves, he seems like a scarecrow given unnatural life, but despite the awkwardness of his jerking limbs, he moves quickly and silently about his business of murder.

THE LEFT HAND

Human Form

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	30	17-	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 [4]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
40	CON	60	17-	
25	BODY	30	14-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
26	COM	8	14-	
30	PD	22		Total: 30 PD (20 rPD)
30	ED	22		Total: 30 ED (20 rED)
6	SPD	26		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
25	REC	18		
100	END	10		
100	STUN	35		Total Characteristics Cost: 353

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Flight: 12"/24"

Cost Powers

Cost	Powers	END
100	<i>Hellfire Attacks:</i> Multipower, 100-point reserve	
10u	1) <i>Hellfire Blast I:</i> Energy Blast 20d6	10
10u	2) <i>Hellfire Blast II:</i> Energy Blast 13d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
10u	3) <i>Hellfire Blast III:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Variable Advantage (+¾ Advantages; +1½)	10
20	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED)	0
16	<i>Alien Psyche:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Alien Physiology:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
24	<i>Flight:</i> Flight 12"	2
178	<i>Wings Of Darkness:</i> Multiform (change shape into 572-point Wings Of Darkness form), Instant Change, Reversion (to true form; +½)	0
29	<i>Immortality:</i> Healing 2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn), Resurrection (others can stop with magical ritual or death of Luther Black), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0
50	<i>Immortality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0

Perks

8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Talents

27 Universal Translator 20-

Skills

12 +4 with Hellfire Attacks

5 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 15-

10 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 20-

7 Oratory 17-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 536

Total Cost: 889

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Luther Black (Very Common, Strong)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant And Vain (Very Common, Total)
- 25 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Severe)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 559 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 889

THE LEFT HAND

Wings Of Darkness Form

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0	STR	-10	9-	Lift 25 kg; 0d6 [0]
33	DEX	69	16-	OCV: 11/DCV: 11
20	CON	20	13-	
25	BODY	30	13-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
2	COM	-4	11-	
4	PD	4		Total: 7 PD (3 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 7 ED (3 rED)
6	SPD	17		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
4	REC	0		
0	END	-20		
100	STUN	65		Total Characteristics Cost: 221

Movement: Running: 0"/0"
 Flight: 24"/48"
 Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost	Powers	END
84	<i>Flight:</i> Flight 24", Usable Underwater (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
120	<i>Insubstantial Form:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
16	<i>Alien Psyche:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Alien Physiology:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
29	<i>Immortality:</i> Healing 2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn), Resurrection (others can stop with magical ritual or death of Luther Black), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0
50	<i>Immortality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
-12	<i>Can't Run:</i> Running -6" (0" total)	
-2	<i>Can't Swim:</i> Swimming -2" (0" total)	

Talents

- 6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)

Skills

- 15 +5 with Flight
- 25 +5 DCV

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 351

Total Cost: 572

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Luther Black (Very Common, Strong)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant And Vain (Very Common, Total)
- 25 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Severe)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 242 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 572

Background/History: In 1986 atop the unnaturally tall skyscraper One Beacon Street, where the Demonflame raged and in the sky above had opened the Edom Gate, a blasphemous stomach-churning rent in the firmament, Luther Black gave birth to his Left Hand. An immaculate conception, a creation *ex nihilo*, the Left Hand had for his father Luther Black's cast-off knowledge of the occult and the powers that were the Edomite's as a sorcerer and black magician, and for his mother the energies of the Qliphothic, the stolen power of Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer. His form was a marriage of mortal evil and immortal obscenity. The Shining Darkness shaped the Left Hand's organs and flesh; hellfire burned through his veins and arteries, flowing like blood.

The Left Hand has no past, no history — in truth he has no place in this world. He is a being that belongs to the age to come, a portent of a dark future, and his history will begin on February 29, 2012 when Luther Black ascends to the ranks of the Kings of Edom. The Left Hand is akin to the angels that predate the creation of Eden and mankind, who abided in a timeless space before the birth of the world and so Time itself — but the Left Hand is an angel of darkness, and the kingdom he prefigures is no paradise, but instead a charnel house of torment and incomprehensible obscenity.

Personality/Motivation: The Left Hand is arrogant in the extreme, and this arrogance informs all of his actions. When in the presence of a Morbane, the Left Hand demands the lesser being kneel to him.

LEFT HAND PLOT SEEDS

The Left Hand has seized the *Lapis Exilis* from the Wandering Magi (see page 71) and crowned himself the Antichrist. Now begins his fall like that of Lucifer eons ago. War rages between DEMON and the Left Hand with PCs caught between the two sides. There will be no truce — but can the PCs end the war themselves, or must they content themselves with saving as many people as they can?

The Left Hand has sought out Dark Seraph, thinking perhaps the supervillain has something in common with himself. Alas, such is not the case. The two go to war in the heavens above Millennium City... but when the PCs try to intervene, will the two come to a truce and team up against the meddling do-gooders?

The Qliphothic powers that form the Left Hand's body begin to show their true nature. As his skin mortifies, his arms and legs become tentacles that end in sharp toothed maws, and his face melts into the appearance of slag, the Left Hand goes insane. In his vanity, he cannot accept this ugly fate, and he goes on a suicidal rampage. But the Left Hand is immortal... Will the PCs figure out how to kill the horrible creature? And what will Luther Black do about the Unholy Ghost in his Inverted Trinity?

He never creeps up on an opponent — he descends from the heavens wreathed in an aura of hellfire and announcing his presence in a thunderous voice. It is all Luther Black can do to keep the Left Hand's arrogance in check... and he's well aware of the possibility that some day it may get out of hand.

Unlike the other members of the Inverted Trinity, the Left Hand spends much of his time in the Thirteenth Floor. There, he whiles away the hours and days standing at Luther Black's bedside in a mental rapport with the crippled man, listening to his "father" describe the kingdom come, when the Left Hand shall truly act the role of an angel of darkness and not be forced to conceal his presence for any reason.

Quote: "But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath...."

Powers/Tactics: In theory, the Left Hand possesses all the former sorcerous abilities of Luther Black before he stole the power from Sharna-Gorak. In practice, the Left Hand, because of his arrogance and lack of subtlety, only uses this black magic to throw Hellfire and take on his Wings Of Darkness form. But even with only these abilities at his command, he is a powerful foe. In battle, the Left Hand

transforms into and out of Wings Of Darkness form to move about the battlefield, and uses his Hellfire Blasts to attack.

To permanently kill the Left Hand is particularly difficult. He's a magical construct, his body composed of Qliphothic energy, and so can only be slain near a breach in the dimensions similar to the Edom Gate that was open at his birth. If this happens, the energy he possesses is re-absorbed and the Left Hand fades from existence. Of course, such a feat is almost a suicide mission for those attempting it — the powers of the Qliphothic, especially in the case of a rift between dimensions, are perfidious and deadly.


Campaign Use: The Left Hand serves as Luther Black's enforcer and is used in times when the Edomite feels a display of power is necessary. This might mean the Left Hand is dispatched to purge a Demonhome subverted by enemies (be they the Archdemons or some other mystical foe) or if a group of superheroes has experienced spectacular successes against DEMON and needs to be put down in a very public manner to maintain the organization's reputation. As a Hunter, the Left Hand is not subtle. He either flies to the target or orders the Black Shepherd to bring him there, then he attacks.

The Left Hand's main weakness is his lack of versatility; to increase his strength, give him more powers derived from black magic — abilities such as Mind Control, Summon Demons, and further uses for his Hellfire (such as Force Walls and Telekinesis) are appropriate. To decrease his powers, change the Wings Of Darkness Multiform to a Teleport 24", Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-¼), or reduce the points in his Hellfire Attacks.

Appearance: The Left Hand is the perfect image of an angel of darkness. He goes naked, allowing the world to glimpse his magnificent, nearly divine physique with its broad shoulders, narrow waist, and sculpted slabs of muscle. Purplish hellfire flickers across his pale skin. His mouth is thin lipped and petulant; his nose, aquiline; and his black, pupil-less eyes are narrow and slant upwards. He keeps his black hair long, and it flows back from a widow's peak and down past his shoulders. When he transforms into his Wings Of Darkness form, his body seems to melt away, exploding into a dark cloud of black-plumed wings. The wings have no body; they only protrude in all direction from the dark cloud. The cloud is amorphous, bending and spreading as it flies swiftly around, the wings beat furiously but only make a quiet rustling noise like a night wind blowing through the desiccated leaves of a dead tree.



THE INNER CIRCLE



In 1986, Luther Black opened the Edom Gate, and through this tear in the Multiverse the corruption of the Qliphothic poured forth into the world. This energy wove itself through the warp and woof of Earth's magic, not only polluting it, but finding its expression in five humans, turning them to evil and granting them powers beyond the ken of mortal men. Luther Black dispatched the Black Shepherd to find them and bring them into DEMON.

Though the Shepherd spent a decade searching, he only found four of the corrupted souls. Black chose a Morbane, Dyer vander Bleek, to assume the role of the fifth member. He formed the five into his new Inner Circle, replacing the men and women he had killed or otherwise dispatched during the Years of Red Nights. To the world, and to all of DEMON's members but Luther Black, the Inner Circle leads DEMON.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
4	PD	1		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
24	END	0		
25	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 77

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

75	<i>Knows A Man's Price:</i> Telepathy 20d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only To Determine A Man's Price (-1)	0
248	<i>A Bid For Your Soul:</i> Major Transform 15d6 (transform person into person with the Psychological Limitation <i>Slavishly Loyal To The Coin Collector</i> [Very Common, Total]; heals back if contract destroyed), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not Body (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); All Or Nothing (-½), Target Must Sign Contract And Accept Some Form Of Payment From Coin Collector (-1)	0
16	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
10	<i>A Fierce Negotiator:</i> +20 PRE; Only When Negotiating (-1)	0

Perks

8	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)
15	Money: Filthy Rich

Skills

25	+5 ECV
20	+4 with PRE Skills
3	Bribery 13-
3	Bureaucratics 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	Deduction 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	Interrogation 13-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
8	KS: Business World 18-

THE INNER CIRCLE AND THE KINGS OF EDM

There exists a correspondence between the five Inner Circle members and the five Kings of Edom described in the *Liber Terribilis*. Luther Black understands this, since it's part of the spell he weaves to summon the Kings. The Coin Collector corresponds to the Master of All Sorrows; the Dalang to the Heart in Man's Dementia; Demoiselle Nocturne to the Muse of Lethargy and Despair; Herr Doktor Pandemonium to the Queen Beyond the Pale; and the fifth member, whom Dyer vander Bleek inadequately represents, corresponds to the King of Lost Hope.

COIN COLLECTOR PLOT SEEDS

A new bank has purchased the mortgage on the superheroes' base — and unlike the old bank, this one is a very "hands on" lending institution. It begins with questions about adequate insurance, then assertions that information on the loan application was false and the bank demands to change the loan's terms... then the bank requests detailed blueprints about the base — standard procedure for this new institution. Will the PCs discover that the bank is truly a front for the Coin Collector and DEMON?

The Coin Collector becomes obsessed with a new mythical coin — this one from ancient Greece and stamped with the features of the Gorgon. Legend has it that it was forged with the blood of slain Medusa and the coin can turn people to stone. At the same time, one of the PCs has just received a letter. Turns out a long-lost relative has recently passed away, and he bequeathed to his only blood relation his extensive coin collection....

What about those Thirty Pieces of Silver? The Coin Collector learns that his origin is false — his descent into Hell was a Mental Illusion the Black Shepherd created during the ritual to awaken the Coin Collector's true nature. But the Coin Collector is still convinced the Thirty Pieces of Silver exist, and also convinced that Judas holds them. He tricks the PCs into signing contracts with him, and promises to destroy the contracts, if they travel to Hell and take the coins from Judas....

- 5 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 15-
- 8 KS: Numismatics 18-
- 3 Language: English (completely fluent; Portuguese is Native)
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 6 PS: Accounting 16-
- 7 PS: Banking 17-
- 7 PS: Finance 17-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 Trading 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 511

Total Cost: 588

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Palpable Evil Aura (Concealable, Always Noticed, Causes Major Reaction)
- 25 Enraged: when outwitted in business dealings (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 8-
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Very Common, Total)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Self-Centered And Amoral (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Javier de Silva) (Very Frequently, Major)
- 238 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 588

Background/History: Half-Indian and half-black but with the name of a Spaniard, Javier de Silva has always been obsessed with western culture, and the tangible expression of this obsession was coin collecting, particularly coins from the Roman Empire. Many of his acquaintances asked Javier if he became a banker because he simply loved coins and currency. Javier always responded he became banker because he loved money and coin collecting was an expensive habit. It was money, he claimed, that allowed men to prove their worth, and thus money was man's most important invention, the only one that mattered. Until coins and so wealth were invented, how else was one to measure truly and accurately one's value?

Javier rose quickly through the ranks of executives at *Banco Nacional de Rio*, all the while amassing one of the world's largest collections of *aurei*, *denarii*, *sestertii*, *dupondii*, and *asses*. In addition to his well-known love for coins, he gained a reputation as being always open to a bribe and more than happy to victimize the poor in any way possible, even in cases where it hardly seemed worth the effort. His life went along contentedly until 1986, when he first heard a rumor of the Thirty Pieces of Silver — the *denarii* paid to Judas for his betrayal of Christ. Looking back, Javier is still not sure he actually *heard* the rumor — he can't recall who told him and when. He suspects it might have come to him

in dream, perhaps even a waking vision.

He made inquiries about the coins, but those bore no fruit. He hired agents to search for them, but all of them failed to find a trace of the coins. Javier came to the conclusion that he was going to have track the Thirty Pieces down himself. He left his job and devoted the next six years to traveling the world. He started by visiting his fellow coin collectors, but none of them had any knowledge of the Thirty Pieces of Silver, and in truth most thought Javier had gone insane. Soon his search took him to darker places than the mansions and penthouses of other numismatists — into the world of the occult and finally to an interview with the damned soul of Judas himself.

Javier ended his search back home in Rio de Janeiro at a Black Mass. Around him DEMON Brothers chanted in stentorian voices words in homage to Satan. Presiding over the ceremony was the Black Shepherd, a dark hood pulled over his face as he leaned heavily on his corroded shepherd's crook. As the unholy ceremony ended, the floor itself cracked open, revealing a gaping pit from which arose the stench of brimstone. No spirit emerged from the pit; instead Javier climbed down the rough walls until he reached Hell, where Judas awaited him. Christ's betrayer said not a word; he only handed Javier a leather pouch and gestured for him to return to the world above.

Once returned, Javier opened the pouch and poured its contents into his palm. Thirty *denarii*, the silver coins as shiny as if newly minted, fell into his palm with the clinking sound of metal on metal. Then the Black Shepherd spoke to him, calling him by his new name, and told the Coin Collector a new life awaited him with DEMON.

Personality/Motivation: The Coin Collector's greed and powermongering are both results of his primary motivation: commerce in people's souls. He considers people nothing more than a commodity to be bought and sold, traded in return for compensation, or simply squandered for no other reason than he owns it and that makes the person his possession, to do with as he pleases. In conversation the Coin Collector is reserved and aloof. Not prone to small talk, he speaks in short, declarative sentences, and more often commands. With those very few he considers his near-equals, he is both charming and patronizing. He uses "we" to include the other in his greatness, but never lets him forget who's the better man.

Quote: "It pains me to tell you this, but in these difficult economic times, the price of a superhero's soul is on the way down. Please, as you consider my offer, bear in mind it is a buyer's market right now."

Powers/Tactics: The Coin Collector has the power to know a man's price and buy his soul. To use his Transform, the target must sign a contract (even just a receipt for funds received) and accept some form of payment... after which, he becomes slavishly loyal to the Coin Collector. The target doesn't need to know he's selling his soul for the effect to take place — although the Coin Collector delights in making allusions to the fact, and anyone dealing



with him knows there's something going on. That said, the Coin Collector prefers to deal on the up-and-up. He enjoys transactions where the person knows, beyond a shadow of a doubt, he has just sold his soul — there is a certain despair that comes over the seller in the moments before he signs on the dotted line that gives the Coin Collector great satisfaction. And as he often says, it's important a man find satisfaction in his work. In business transactions where no money is changing hands, it has become the Coin Collector's signature to give the person some sort of coin — a silver dollar, a Roman denarii, or the like — upon completion of the deal, and this gesture has become a part of his persona in the business world. The only way to reverse the transformation is to get hold of the contract and destroy it, and the Coin Collector keeps his “paperwork” at secure locations around the world.

him tougher — if it comes to a fight, he either relies on the Morbanes or even hires mercenaries to fight for him. To weaken him, reduce the dice in his Transform, or change the nature of the transformation to reduce the strength of the Psychological Limitation: the target is compelled to loyalty and to think well of the Coin Collector, but it isn't an overriding, irresistible urge.

Appearance: The Coin Collector wears impeccably-tailored business suits. His country of origin is hard to determine because of his mixed Indian and black heritage, but he is handsome man with a clear, dark complexion and piercing brown eyes. Despite his personal magnetism, when he smiles his evil is all too apparent — there is something in his smile, in truth more a smirk, which hints at a personality that enjoys another's suffering far too much. He usually keeps his hands in his pockets, his long fingers idling nervously with the Thirty Pieces of Silver, and the clinking of metal on metal is audible to those standing near him.

Campaign Use: The Coin Collector can find his way into the superheroes' lives if one of them owns a company or is otherwise active in the Business World, or if one of them is desperate for money. In his Secret Identity he holds the position of Vice President, Director of Special Projects at the Banco Nacional de Rio, an ambiguous title with ambiguous functions — but in truth controls the whole of the bank. In the upper echelons of the Business World, the Coin Collector is a rumor, spoken of in such hushed, awed tones that he is almost a myth or religious figure — a shadowy person, maybe real or maybe not, who can supposedly make any deal happen, no matter how unlikely.

As a Hunter, the Coin Collector relies on others to do the actual killing — he merely lurks in the shadows, destroying the target's finances and buying the souls of those closest to the target.

The Coin Collector isn't intended to be a combatant, so don't try to make

DALANG PLOT SEEDS

The Dalang decides he needs to personally inspect his agents in the Maleficia and arranges to tour the world under the guise of bringing *wayang kulit* to an international audience. But his anger gets the best of him at a performance in the campaign city and people end up dead. The PCs are asked to investigate, but what will they do when they begin to uncover the whole conspiracy?

The Dalang is an elderly man. When a stroke puts him in a coma, his powers rage out of control. Shadows of the inhabitants of Calcutta are massacring people, and it's up to the superheroes to stop it. But even if they find the Dalang, what will they do then? — there's no guarantee killing him will stop the shadows. Will they be forced to save one of DEMON's secret leaders?

The Dalang's powers have grown great indeed, and now he's created an other-dimensional world where the shadows he summons can live permanently. When the PCs lose their shadows permanently, will they be able to find this world? And if so, how will they win back their shadows?

THE DALANG

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 24 PD (20 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 24 ED (20 rED)
5	SPD	19		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	6		
50	END	10		
50	STUN	27		Total Characteristics Cost: 147

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Teleportation: 30"/60"

Cost Powers END

187	<i>Control Shadows:</i> Summon four 350-point beings, Expanded Class (any being with a shadow, see text; +1), Slavishly Devoted (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½)	0
90	<i>Shadow Attacks:</i> Multipower, 90-point reserve	
9u	1) <i>Shadow Blast I:</i> Energy Blast 12d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
9u	2) <i>Shadow Blast II:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Indirect (+¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	9
9u	3) <i>Solid Shadows:</i> Telekinesis (40 STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
7u	4) <i>Enveloped In Darkness:</i> Darkness to Sight Group 4" radius, Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
30	<i>Shadow Powers:</i> Elemental Control, 60-point powers	
30	1) <i>Cloak Of Shadows:</i> Force Field (20 PD/20 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
30	2) <i>Move Through Shadows:</i> Teleportation 30"; Only Through Shadows (-0)	6
30	3) <i>Shadow Window:</i> Clairsentience to Sight Group, 256x Range (25,600"); Only Through Shadows (-0)	6
16	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
20	<i>Shadows To Guard His Eyes:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (20 points)	0
5	<i>Nightvision:</i> Nightvision	0

Perks

8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Skills

18 +6 with Shadow Attacks

13 Acting 18-
7 Bribery 15-
3 Bureaucratics 13-
13 Concealment 18-
7 Deduction 15-
7 Disguise 15-
8 CK: Calcutta 18-
3 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
8 KS: Espionage World 18-
5 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 15-
8 KS: Hinduism 18-
8 KS: *Wayang Kulit* 18-
3 Language: English (completely fluent; Hindi is Native)
3 Language: Sanskrit (completely fluent)
7 Oratory 15-
13 Shadowing 18-
13 Stealth 18-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 647

Total Cost: 794

200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
15 Psychological Limitation: Despises Modern Social Conventions (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Common, Total)
25 Psychological Limitation: Self-Centered And Amoral (Very Common, Total)
20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Yashpal Patel) (Very Frequently, Major)
474 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 794

Background/History: The dalang Yashpal sat tailor-style on the hard floor, glaring light pouring onto him from above. He held his arms up, and in his hands, gripped delicately between his long fingers, were the slender bamboo sticks that moved the flat puppets of leather behind the white screen. The bright light cast the puppet's shadows against the screen, and the audience sitting outside watched as Yashpal performed a scene from the Mahabharata.

As the shadows danced, and the small orchestra played on their xylophones behind him, Yashpal felt despair and desperation, the same emotions he had felt for the last few months. He knew the cause: he had finally realized he was an anachronism, that his art was dying... if not already dead. He and those few other dalangs remaining in India were no longer a vital part of daily life. They were an oddity, a people out of time and place. Parents brought children to see the dalang perform, so they could

get a glimpse of what life was like in the past — not so they would learn the ancient lessons that would serve them in the future.

On that night, for the first time, Yashpal grew angry at his audience. Just as he knew the character, motivations, and emotions of each of the puppets of leather and sticks, he could somehow feel the emotions of his audience. Yashpal knew why they attended his performance. They came to see the *wayang kulit* for the same reason they would go to a museum to view artifacts from the past, but Yashpal's art was no museum exhibit from a forgotten and no longer vital time. He was a teacher of morals and values, yet he had been replaced by television and the movies that came out of so-called Bollywood. And as the days and weeks went by, as he gave performance after performance to audiences of different people, but all of them feeling the same, his anger grew and grew.

Finally, in a performance given in Bombay, his anger boiled over. Yashpal stumbled over a couplet, one of 90,000 couplets he had spoken perfectly since he was a young child, mangling the words and getting them wrong. On the white screen above him, the shadows of his puppets staggered and threw their arms around awkwardly. The xylophone players behind him hit a harsh discordant note, like fingernails on a chalk board, then stopped. The audience gasped at the dalang's mistake and began to whisper. One man said to his wife, "Today we witness the death of wayang kulit."

Yashpal turned around, intending to cajole the players and tell them to continue playing so he could get on with the performance. The players were gone. In their place sat a man in black robes, a hood obscuring his face. The man did not look up, but Yashpal knew what to do. He took up new puppets. These were made of flesh and blood, but no more difficult to manipulate than the puppets of leather and sticks for a master like Yashpal. At the behest of the dalang, the shadows of the audience acted out the bloody conclusion of the *Mahabharata*, and all the while the man in black robes played the music.

Then Yashpal departed the theater with the black-robed man to take his place among DEMON's Inner Circle as the Dalang.

Personality/Motivation: A love of his craft drives the Dalang. Where once he manipulated puppets while performing the epics of ancient India, now he puts on entirely modern plays where the actors are people and he makes them assume their roles by pulling on the strings of their shadows. Despite these puppets of flesh and blood, and the new stories he performs as he goes about his business of undermining the world's intelligence agencies, the plays still end similarly to those ancient epics of his former life — in death for many of the participants. Although he is left much of his bitter anger behind, considering it a thing of the past, the Dalang still possesses an unreasonable hatred of youth and modern culture.



Quote: "For so many years I have made the shadows dance, made the ancient families, Kauravas and Pandavas, fight and kill... and now I will make your shadows fight and kill, but the shadows will still dance."

Powers/Tactics: The Dalang's powers involve the control of shadows. He can give form and substance to the shadows of the inanimate and unleash them as an Energy Blast; command the shadows to cloak his body and provide him with protection from attacks; or even step through shadows Teleporting from one place to another (and he can Teleport through even the tiniest flicker of a shadow). The Dalang's main power is the ability to take control of people's shadows. When he uses his Summon, the shadow of a person within his site detaches from that person's heels to answer the Dalang's beck and call. The Summoned shadow has the same character sheet as the target (although the special effects of his powers may change — for instance the shadow of a fire-using character might launch fiery bolts that are swirling grey and black in appearance). He can use his Summon to call forth the shadow from anything — human, creature, robot, and so on — but the shadow must be present for the power to work (thus the *Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale* Limitation). The Summoned shadows fade with time (over the course of a week, typically), eventually returning to their rightful place. They also return if reduced to 0 BODY.

Campaign Use: You can use the Dalang in your campaign whenever the PCs attempt to either ferret out DEMON sleeper agents in organizations like UNTIL or PRIMUS, or if DEMON decides to infiltrate the PCs' support staff and the like. His ability to control people gives DEMON access to much information and many resources it would otherwise lack.

As a Hunter, the Dalang seeks to learn all he can about the heroes through his spies, and then dispatches DEMON members to attack them. If the Dalang takes the matter personally, he is present at the attack, where he lurks in the shadows and waits for the best moment to strike — generally summoning the Hunted's shadow to do his dirty work for him.

To increase the Dalang's power, increase the character points of the shadows he can Summon. He should be able to Summon the shadows of the PCs, so if they're built on more than 350 Character Points, increase the points in the Summon accordingly. To weaken him, you can take away many of his other abilities. The Dalang's main power is his ability to Summon shadow duplicates of the PCs; everything else is secondary.

Appearance: The Dalang appears as an elderly Indian man with crows' feet at the corners of his brown eyes and deep creases at the corners of his thin lips. A bald man, he has a nervous habit of rubbing his scalp when deep in thought. His smile is wide and shows off pearly white teeth. His skin is the color and texture of old, well-worn leather. He dresses in a drab tunic and loose breeches, coarse clothing that fits in well in the Calcutta slums he calls home.

DEMOISELLE NOCTURNE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
27	EGO	34	14-	ECV: 9
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
15	PD	12		Total: 15 PD (15 rPD)
15	ED	12		Total: 15 ED (15 rED)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
12	REC	12		
60	END	15		
60	STUN	32		Total Characteristics Cost: 205

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Teleportation: 12"/24"

Cost	Powers	END
89	<i>The Shape Of Nightmare:</i> Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any shape), Cellular, Imitation, Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Shapes Out Of Nightmare (-¼) plus +40 PRE; Linked (-½), Only Versus Target Whose Nightmare She Imitates (-1)	0
200	<i>The Powers Of Nightmare:</i> Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost, Power Can Be Changed As A Zero-Phase Action (+1), No Skill Roll Required (+1); Linked (to Shape Shift; -¼), Only To Create Powers Of Shifted Form (-¼)	var
24	<i>The Nightmare Form's Size:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all slots Linked (to Shape Shift, but size change need not be proportional to Shape Shift; -¼)	
2u	1) <i>Big Nightmares:</i> Growth (+30 STR, +6 BODY, +6 STUN, -6" KB, 6,400 kg, -4 DCV, +4 PER Rolls to perceive character, 8m tall, 4m wide); Linked (need not be proportional to Shape Shift; -¼)	var.
2u	2) <i>Small Nightmares:</i> Shrinking (.25m tall, .2 kg mass, -6 to PER Rolls to perceive character, +6 DCV, takes +9" KB); Linked (need not be proportional to Shape Shift; -¼)	var.
60	<i>Manipulate A Person's Dreams:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve	
6u	1) <i>Unearth Secret Fears And Desires:</i> Telepathy 12d6	6
6u	2) <i>Dream Manipulation:</i> Mental Illusions 12d6	6
6u	3) <i>Your Worst Nightmare:</i> Ego Attack 6d6	6
15	<i>Body Made Of Nightmare Stuff:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)	0
20	<i>Alien Mind:</i> Mental Defense (25 points total)	
20	<i>Alien Physiology:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	

- 48 *Move Through The Dreamzone:* Multipower, 48-point reserve
- 5u 1) *Enter The Dreamzone:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension [the Dreamzone], corresponding to the point character is at in this dimension), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) 0
- 4u 2) *Move Quickly Through The Dreamzone:* Teleportation 12", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) 0
- 30 *See Between Dimensions:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), Dimensional (see into material world from dreamzone and vice versa) 3
- 22 *Create Night Terror:* Summon four 275-point Night Terrors; Requires Sleeping Person Present (-½), Extra-Time (1 Minute; -1½) 6
- 50 *Immortality:* Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality) 0
- Perks**
- 8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)
- Talents**
- 22 Universal Translator 15-
- Skills**
- 32 +4 with All Combat
- 8 AK: The Dreamzone 18-
- 5 Concealment 14-
- 11 Interrogation 17-
- 3 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
- 5 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 15-
- 12 Navigation (Dreamzone) 18-
- 7 Persuasion 15-
- 29 Power: Shape-Changing Powers 26-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 751

Total Cost: 956

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Self-Centered And Amoral (Common, Total)
- 20 Susceptibility: to dream catchers and other traditional means of guarding one's dreams, 3d6 Nightmare-related Powers Drain per Turn (Uncommon)
- 656 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 956

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR THE POWERS OF NIGHTMARE VPP

The Big Bad Wolf: Your mother just tucked you into bed after reading you the story of little Red Riding Hood for the first time — and once you've fallen asleep, there's a big bad wolf stalking you in your dreams. This simple form can serve as any monster or bogeyman from a childhood nightmare. The powers below assume Nocturne has grown as big as she can so +30 STR, +6 BODY, +6 STUN, and so on.

Cost Power

- 24 *What Sharp Claws You Have!:* HKA 2d6 (4d6 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
- 30 *Thick, Hairy Hide:* Armor (10 PD/10 ED)
- 24 *Fast:* +12 DEX, No Figured Characteristics (-½)
- 10 *Really Fast:* +1 SPD

Total cost: 88 points

The Authority Figure From Hell: Everyone's had this dream at some point in his life. An authority figure — a parent, teacher, or boss — confronts the dreamer and begins to harshly list the dreamer's faults — prone to mistakes, clumsy, stupid, selfish, inconsiderate, incompetent, incompetent, incompetent. No matter what the dreamer tries to do or say, it comes out wrong and just provides proof of the dreamer's flawed nature.

Suppress 6d6, all Primary Characteristics simultaneously (+2). Total cost: 90 points.

Or:

Major Transform 6d6 (person to person with Unluck 3d6) (90 Active Points); Limited Target (dreaming sentients; -½). Total cost: 60 points.

The Price Of Betrayal: This is the form Nocturne assumes when it's come time to punish a Morbane for his treachery. It's also an example of her using her powers to kill someone from within his dreams — most people have had at least one nightmare about dying while they sleep. The shape is generally that of Lucifer, standing three meters tall with proud horns curling from his forehead, although for some Morbanes she takes different demonic shapes. She attacks with a blast of hellfire and once she has finished, only a pile of ash lays where once the Morbane slept.

RKA 3d6, Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (+½). Total cost: 90 points.

Background/History: In 1986, Georges Charlebois came home to his wife after a long day at the office in downtown Quebec City. It was his fiftieth birthday, and his wife had prepared his favorite meal for dinner. Afterwards, they went out to see a movie and have a few drinks with friends. Then they came home, went to bed, and his wife wished him happy birthday and good night. She kissed him on the forehead, turned on her side, and went to sleep. Once she had begun to snore, Georges sat up in bed, reached over to turn on the lamp on his nightstand so he could read for a while, but changed his mind. Instead he wrapped his thick fingers around

DEMOISELLE NOCTURNE PLOT SEEDS

A relative of a PC has been admitted into a center for research into sleep disorders. When visited, the relative seems shaky, in a far worse state than when he was admitted. He mentions that all of the patients are having the same nightmare, but quickly cuts himself off and refuses to say anymore. The doctors, secretly agents of DEMON, shrug off the PC's concerns. Demoiselle Nocturne has taken to haunting the center. Can the PCs figure that out in time to save the patients?

Demoiselle Nocturne finds a new artifact, the Dream Net Of Arland Sril. The artifact allows her to capture a sleeper and pull him bodily into the Dreamzone. More and more people are disappearing, and the authorities have asked the PCs to investigate. But even once they discover the cause, how do they return the abducted people to the real world? — the Dream Net only serves as a one-way ticket. Will they make a deal with one of the other-worldly powers that calls the Dreamzone home?

The Night Terrors, all the countless monsters Nocturne has pulled from nightmare, slip the leash and rampage across the campaign city, spreading chaos they call forth the worst dreams of the inhabitants. Demoiselle Nocturne proposes a truce with the PCs: they will work together until the Night Terrors have returned to the Dreamzone. Could this be a trap? Of course it is, but do the PCs have any choice if they are to end the crisis?

his wife's throat and strangled her.

Georges calmly packed his bags, loaded his camping gear into his car, and fled to the north, only stopping once he had entered snowy wastes of Nunavik. There, far from the few small habitations of man, he set up his tent on the shores of a frozen lake. And that was when the dreams began.

Georges found himself in a desolate plain where the only light came from a pinprick of red in the north. The ray of red light spotlighted a distant figure. The dreams were recurring, each night's starting where the previous night's had ended, and as the dreams progressed the figure came closer. Georges felt nothing of fear or dread; he only had only a nagging curiosity. Years and years had passed since he'd felt anything but numb, and the slight prick of interest was a comfort. Finally, several nights later, the figure stood in front of him. Georges was disappointed. The figure was a photonegative of his wife when she was a young woman: blackish hair instead of blonde, murky skin in place of his wife's pale complexion, for her eyes pure white pupils at the center of greyish irises and pure black whites. Georges had hoped he was having a mystical experience, something unique for a man whose dull life had been the same as every other man's, but instead it was just a dream image bubbling up from his subconscious, his guilty conscience revealing itself in his dreams. Even as a murderer, Georges thought, my life is a cliché.

The reversed image of his wife put a finger in his mouth, then her whole hand, and finally both

hands. She pulled Georges's jaw open; he could hear the tendons snapping and the bones breaking as she pulled his mouth open wider and wider. She kept pulling at his jaws, rolling the flesh and sinew back. She yanked it over his skull, down his neck, past his shoulders. She kept pulling until she had turned Georges Charlebois inside out.

In the morning she awoke. She climbed out of Georges's sleeping bag and exited the tent. Outside a man stood leaning on his corroded Shepherd's crook, the cold wind whipping his black robes around his emaciated body. He spoke her name, *Demoiselle Nocturne*, and explained her purpose as one of DEMON's Inner Circle. The woman, newly born from nightmare, laughed. She took the Black Shepherd by the arm and they departed.

Personality/Motivation: *Demoiselle Nocturne* has the goal of turning the world into a nightmare, but she couldn't articulate that goal. It's not something she's chosen consciously; it's simply a part of her nature. A creature out of nightmare, she is like anyone in a new home — she attempts to make it familiar and comfortable. But what she calls home is something that would cause a dreamer to awake in a cold sweat, and if she succeeds, there won't be any awaking from *Nocturne's* nightmare.

Compared to the other members of the Inner Circle, *Demoiselle Nocturne* cares little for the day-to-day command of members of the *Maleficia*, *Morbans*, and the like. She can oversee such matters if she must, but generally prefers to give her higher-ranking underlings free rein... until their actions imperil her or DEMON itself.

Quote: "To sleep, perchance to dream... to dream of horrible, terrible creatures out of nightmares..."

Powers/Tactics: *Demoiselle Nocturne's* powers involve her ability to manipulate dreams, and her most impressive power is the ability to take on the form and powers of something out a person's nightmare. This goes deeper than simply becoming a big monster — although she can do that. She can use her VPP to recreate any experience typical to nightmares. She can also take on powers that seem likely for nightmare figures. For instance, if a character has nightmares about dragons, *Nocturne* could become a fire-breathing dragon even if the dragon from the character's nightmare never breathed fire. Typically, she uses her Telepathy to determine a character's fears, then changes into the form of that fear. (And to come up with good uses of her VPP, be sure to check out the character's Disadvantages before running a combat involving *Nocturne* — surely a PC has nightmares about a villain exploiting his weaknesses.) As she changes, she makes a PRE attack against the character.

Three or four Night Terrors (page 74) always accompany *Demoiselle Nocturne*.

Campaign Use: The most likely way the PCs encounter *Nocturne* is if they capture a *Morbane* — at which point, *Nocturne* journeys through the Dreamzone to kill the prisoner. If she decides to Hunt a PC, she frequents his dreams, and the PC can expect to have many a disturbing nightmare



during this haunting. She toys with the Hunted for as long as she can get away with it — she's more interested in driving people to despair than hurting or killing them. But eventually she'll lower the boom.

To increase Nocturne's power, consider giving her an ability, either Change Environment or Images, that allows her to change not only her own shape, but also her immediate environment. To decrease her powers, simply reduce the points in her VPP.

Appearance: Demoiselle Nocturne's physical form is amorphous, as she unconsciously assumes features out of the nightmares of those around her. When she's not using her The Shape Of Nightmare power, these features are never exactly out of an individual's nightmare; instead they are vaguely reminiscent of such fears. They evoke feelings of unease, anxiety, and inchoate dread; oftentimes the person never even realizes why. This phenomena is not something she can control. Nocturne isn't a woman possessed of free will; she is a creature out of nightmare, and in many ways has no choice but to act accordingly. When she is not around others and not using her Powers, she appears as she did when she first appeared to Georges Charlebois: the photonegative version of an attractive young woman.

HERR DOKTOR PANDEMONIUM

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1,600 kg; 6d6 [3]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
24	INT	14	14-	PER Roll 14-
24	EGO	28	14-	ECV: 8
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
10	PD	4		Total: 25 PD (15 rPD)
10	ED	5		Total: 25 ED (15 rED)
4	SPD	9		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	2		
50	END	0		
60	STUN	17		Total Characteristics Cost: 180

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers **END**

174	<i>Die Meistersprache:</i> Mind Control 20d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Works On Humans (-¼) plus Major Transform 2d6 (person to person with new 25-point Disadvantage; heals back normally), BOECV (+1), Works Against Ego, Not Body (+¼), Area Of Effect (11" Radius; +1), Improved Results Group (different types of Disadvantages inflicted; +¼), Partial Transform (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No Range (-½), Limited Target (humans; -½), Linked (-½)	0
40	<i>The Teeth Of Der Kehlkopf:</i> HKA 4d6; No STR Bonus (-½)	6
20	<i>Exoskeleton:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +6d6 (12d6 with STR); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	3
45	<i>Exoskeleton:</i> Armor (15 PD/15 ED)	0
15	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Qliphothic Taint:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0

Perks

8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Talents

5 Eidetic Memory
 3 Lightning Calculator
 4 Speed Reading x10

Skills

6 +3 OECV with *Die Meistersprache*
 7 Bureaucratics 15-
 7 Computer Programming 16-
 7 Electronics 16-
 11 Inventor 18-
 7 Mechanics 16-
 3 Paramedics 14-
 3 Security Systems 14-
 3 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-
 7 KS: Scientific World 18-
 4 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 15-
 3 Language: English (completely fluent; German is Native)
 3 PS: Scientist 14-

HERR DOKTOR PANDEMONIUM PLOT SEEDS

Pandemonium has just seen the Slug on television... and it's love at first sight, for it was the Elder Worm his ancestor once served. He defects from DEMON and swears his eternal loyalty to the Slug; then the two set about transforming the people of Berlin into Elder Worms. Can the PCs stop this team of servants of ancient evil? And DEMON won't let Pandemonium go without a fight....

Pandemonium decides to bring *die Meistersprache* to the world at large, and commandeers a cell phone provider's satellite network to do so. Whenever a person speaks into his cell phone, his words are translated into the Master's Tongue, driving the listener insane. The plague is just now spreading, and before word gets out, a PC's cell phone rings....

Pandemonium's son, Uwe, has just hit puberty — but the changes to his body are somewhat beyond the norm. Pandemonium is so proud — constant exposure to the Master's Tongue has made the boy into one of the masters! His arms fall off and seven tentacles protrude from his torso; his legs grow together and become slug-like; his head sinks into his torso and all that remains is a gaping, fleshy orifice filled with sharp teeth. And then he grows fifty feet tall. That's when the rampage begins.

- 3 Scientist
- 4 1) SS: Anatomy 16-
- 2 2) SS: Anthropology 14-
- 2 3) SS: Archaeology 14-
- 2 4) SS: Astronomy 14-
- 2 5) SS: Biochemistry 14-
- 5 6) SS: Biology 17-
- 2 7) SS: Chemistry 14-
- 5 8) SS: Genetics 17-
- 2 9) SS: Mathematics 14-
- 6 10) SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology 18-
- 2 11) SS: Physics 14-
- 5 12) SS: Robotics 17-
- 8 13) SS: Psychiatry 20-
- 8 14) SS: What Man Was Not Meant To Know 20-
- 6 15) SS: Zoology 18-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 469

Total Cost: 649

200+ Disadvantages

- 30 DNPCs: The Hofer Family 14- (Group DNPC, Incompetent)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 20 Distinctive Features: Der Kehlkopf Strapped To His Face (Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Hungry For Forbidden Knowledge (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Self-Centered And Amoral (Common, Total)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Erich Hofer) (Very Frequently, Major)
- 299 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 649

Background/History: In 1986 Erich Hofer, a young psychiatrist just graduated from Universität Bonn, stepped into the hospital's nursery to see his newborn son. He walked between the rows of babies quietly sleeping in their cribs when suddenly, for no apparent reason, every one of the babies awoke and began to wail.

Herr Doktor Hofer stood frozen, listening to the screaming babies with his head cocked to the side and eyes closed in concentration. His hands involuntarily closed into tight fists. He felt overcome by some primitive urge to fight — an animalistic reaction far more ancient than civilization that demanded he find the threat to these newborns and stop it. As a nurse came into the nursery to see what was wrong, Hofer chose the field of study he would devote his career to: the effects of sound on physiology and emotional states. But he did more than just devote his life to the phenomena — it quickly became his obsession.

Hofer's discoveries were of some interest to scholars and his fellow psychiatrists, but of little practical use. That changed in 1991 when the government invited him to join the Office of East German Assessment. The office was a part of the nation's plans to unify West and East Germany, and Hofer was to investigate and evaluate East German research into psychology and related fields. What he found was Project Master's Voice, a program under the control of the Stasi, East Germany's secret police. It was a continuation of the Third Reich's experiments in the aural manipulation of humans. Nazi scientists hypothesized that the "mongrel races" were once servants of the Aryan race, and the members of these races possessed inborn traits that forced them to serve Aryans... but these traits had atrophied due to disuse. What they discovered was that all of mankind possessed these traits — in other worlds, all men were born to servitude and their masters weren't Aryans. (Of course, this isn't what they reported to their superiors.) The Stasi further refined the techniques the Nazis had used, developing a theoretical ultra-complex language that could be used to communicate a wide-range of commands. And Herr Doktor Erich Hofer made this theoretical language real... but not without paying a price.

It was 1996 when Hofer made his breakthrough. He had just tightened the last screw in his new creation: *der Kehlkopf*, the Voice Box — a device that would replace his own inadequate jaws, tongue, and larynx so he could speak the impossible syllables of *die Meistersprache*, the Master's Tongue. He attached *der Kehlkopf* to his face and neck, then tightened the straps behind his head; he felt the tendrils extrude from the mouthshield and drill themselves into his jaw and through his tongue. He began to speak. For the first time in eons *die Meistersprache* was heard in the world, and as he continued, a second voice joined his own. Hofer turned around. Behind him stood a man in black robes, leaning on a corroded Shepherd's crook. Somehow this man spoke the same language as he. Then the genetic memories came flooding back, just glimpses into an ages-old past long for-

gotten by mankind, but enough to break his sanity. Hofer knew his ancestor's role back then — that ancient antecedent had been a *kapo*, a man who had betrayed his own kind to serve as an overseer for the masters. At that moment Hofer knew more than any human could know and hold onto his sanity — he knew what man was not meant to know.

Then the Black Shepherd spoke to him. He called Hofer by his new name, Herr Doktor Pandemonium, and took him away to assume his rightful place among DEMON's Inner Circle.

Personality/Motivation: A need to know, especially to possess knowledge not meant for mankind, drives Herr Doktor Pandemonium, and he goes to any length to uncover such forbidden fruits. Unlike his fellows among the Inner Circle, Pandemonium has no desire to demand power from the Kings of Edom. He is, instead, glad to be their slave. Driven insane by the memories of his long-dead ancestor who was a willing servant of alien evil, Pandemonium is a more-than-willing subject of the Kings. In a way, he feels he's only carrying on the family tradition.

Pandemonium is incredibly protective of his family — his wife Greta and two children, Lise and Uwe. Though constant exposure to *die Meistersprache* has made them weird in the extreme, they go through the motions of being a typical German family. Pandemonium longs for the day when Uwe is old enough to serve the masters alongside his father, and has already prepared a *Kehlkopf* for the twelve-year-old boy.

Quote: “To see a wolf at night, even in this day of civilization when man has left dark forests behind, to see its eyes glowing yellow in the pitch black darkness, to hear it growl or howl — it makes a man, even a strong man, weak in the knees, *nicht wahr?* A primitive urge, a genetic memory of times of danger, but there are older things than wolves and mankind is one of them... and mankind's ancient masters are another, so bow now to the voices of those masters... *Gorna! Gorna il brok vyrthlun!*”

Powers/Tactics: Herr Doktor Pandemonium's powers stem from his discovery of *die Meistersprache*, plus *der Kehlkopf* that allows him to pronounce the language's stomach-churning syllables. The words awaken racial memories in the target and compel him to obey the speaker. Genetic memories of a time when mankind lived in servitude to unspeakably evil beings seem to bubble up from the collective subconscious. Prolonged exposure (*i.e.*, the dice of the Transform equal to twice the character's EGO) results in a character developing a new Disadvantage. The Disadvantage is worth 25 points, and can be whatever you think is appropriate. For example, if the character's ancestor was a rebel in those long-gone times, maybe the character gains Berserk. If a slave of evil, he gains a Psychological Limitation: Servant Of Evil. Perhaps the character's ancestor wasn't wholly human, and he begins to develop Distinctive Features like webbed fingers



and an incredibly unsettlingly, totally unconcealable worm-like appearance.

Pandemonium himself isn't immune to these effects. In fact, just the opposite — prolonged exposure to the Master's Tongue has not only driven him insane, but his body has grown degenerate as well. His physical infirmity has grown so bad he developed an exoskeleton to hold himself together. The exoskeleton is bolted to his own skeleton, with wires running under the skin and connecting to his nervous system. The exoskeleton has a power supply; under a shirt and jacket it resembles a low hump, as if Pandemonium had a slight hunchback. Like *der Kehlkopf*, this isn't a Focus; removing it would require surgery and likely result in the Doktor's death.

Pandemonium has the Science Skill *What Man Was Not Meant To Know*. This serves as a Complementary Skill to other SSs, providing him with an intuitive understanding of weird sciences that depend on mystical theorems, arcane geometries, and other magical devices to function — sciences that by rights shouldn't function at all and seem nothing more than gibberish to more mundane scientists.

Campaign Use: You can use Herr Doktor Pandemonium in situations where a PC has made an amazing scientific discovery — so amazing, in fact, it's hard to believe it's really possible. Any such event attracts Pandemonium's attention, so if a third party makes a wondrous discovery, the

PCs can also come into conflict with Pandemonium and his Black Scientists (see page 68).

Moreso than his fellow Inner Circle members, Pandemonium actively works to achieve DEMON's goals as set out in Chapter Two. Any plot involving science in some way (however weird that science may be) likely features Pandemonium in addition to the standard complement of Morbanes and their congregations.

As a Hunter, Pandemonium likes to lure his quarry into a trap. He uses what he knows, maybe having a Black Scientist give a lecture on a topic sure to attract the PC's attention. Once he has the PC in his clutches, he springs his trap.

To make Pandemonium more powerful, consider making his exoskeleton function more like powered armor so that it increase his Characteristics, allows him to fire arcano-techno energy bolts, and so forth. Alternately you could give him a small Magic Power Pool. To weaken him, decrease his Characteristics and/or the strength of his main powers.

Appearance: Herr Doktor Pandemonium is a tall, large man with a paunch. He keeps his blond hair cut short, and there are dark circles under his sunken blue eyes. He usually wears rumpled clothes under a doctor's jacket. Der Kehlkopf is permanently attached to his face. The mouthshield, a thin piece of grey metal shaped to the contours of his chin, jaw, and mouth, covers the lower part of his face. The main part of the device, a rectangular metal box, hugs his neck and is strapped around his head. Four wires run from the sides of the box; two terminate at his forehead, plugged into each temple, and the other two run inside his ears and wind their way through the ear canals to the auditory part of his brain. In the middle front of the box is a metal iris, and behind that three rows of sharp steel teeth and a tongue made from segmented rings of metal that looks like a worm — it's these that allow him to shape the inhuman syllables of the die Meistersprache.

DYER VANDER BLEEK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1½d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
22	INT	12	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 19 PD (15 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 19 ED (15 rED)
4	SPD	18		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	8		
40	END	10		
30	STUN	11		Total Characteristics Cost: 99

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
37	<i>Black Magic:</i> Multipower, 75-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), and Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	
4u	1) <i>Domination:</i> Mind Control 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
4u	2) <i>Befuddlement:</i> Mental Illusions 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
4u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment:</i> Ego Attack 5d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
4u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror:</i> Drain PRE 5d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
4u	5) <i>Hellfire:</i> Energy Blast 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
4u	6) <i>Hellgate:</i> Teleport 15", x16 Noncombat, x8 Increased Mass, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	3
4u	7) <i>Spell-Shattering:</i> Dispel Magic 16d6, any two Magic powers at once (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	7
4u	8) <i>Call Demonling:</i> Summon 32 233-point Demonlings (<i>The HERO System Bestiary</i> , page 51); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	7
45	<i>Spells Of Warding:</i> Armor (15 PD/15 ED) 0	
20	<i>The Demons' Gift Of Warding The Mind:</i> Mental Defense (24 points total)	
20	<i>The Demons' Gift Of Warding The Spirit:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	
13	<i>Spellsight:</i> Detect Magic 16- (Sight Group), Discriminatory	0
5	<i>Darksight:</i> Nightvision	0

- 47 *A Favor From The Archdemons*: Summon 1000-point demon; Incantations (-¼), No Conscious Control (-1), 1 Charge (-2) [1]
- 62 *Artifacts From The Vaults*: Variable Power Pool (Gadget Pool), 50 base + 25 control cost; Focus (all powers bought through VPP must have at least -½ worth of this Limitation; -½), Can Only Be Changed At The Bleek House (-½) var

Perks

- 8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Skills

- 15 +5 with *Black Magic* Multipower
- 7 Analyze Magic 15-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 7 Conversation 15-
- 5 Cryptography 15-; Translation Only (-½)
- 9 High Society 16-
- 5 Interrogation 14-
- 7 CK: Johannesburg, South Africa 17-
- 10 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 20-
- 10 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 20-
- 10 KS: History 20-
- 7 KS: The Mystic World 17-
- 3 Language: Classical Greek (completely fluent; English is Native)
- 3 Language: Latin (completely fluent)
- 5 Oratory 14-
- 25 Power: Magic 25-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 420

Total Cost: 519

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 15 Hunted: Luther Black 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Hunted: DEMON's Inner Circle 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Paranoid And In Fear For His Life (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Very Frequently, Major)
- 25 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders From The Archdemons (Very Frequently, Severe)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 174 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 519

Background/History: Dyer vander Bleek is a survivor, or so he tells himself. When his father informed his eighteen-year-old son the family fortune was gone, and he would have to make his own way in the world, Dyer survived. Not only survived, but thrived after he discovered DEMON and his talent for magic... and his love for evil. He survived the purges of the Years of Red Nights, keeping his Demonhome in Johannesburg, South Africa intact. He never allied himself with any of the leaders, and so never made an enemy of either side. He merely went on with his Satanic ceremonies and continued to amass power... and when the dust settled, he was still alive. He even survived the Demonflame Incident — and few Morbanes who were there can claim the same — and escaped Boston during the chaos in the aftermath of the demonic invasion. But now, nearing the age of 65, when most men retire and enjoy their twilight years, Dyer vander Bleek wonders if he can survive for much longer.

When the Black Shepherd came to him, Dyer was overjoyed to be raised to the Inner Circle, the heights of power in DEMON. But then he met the other members of the Inner Circle — every one of them seemed a supernatural being, something far more than a man, even a man who wielded mystic power. The next few years only proved Dyer's suspicions. In power — even in capacity for evil — Dyer vander Bleek was overmatched. That's when he made his first deal with the Archdemons. Since then, he's made more. And more. And more....

Dyer knows how this works — how the demons are getting him more and more in their debt. He is, after all, not just a black magician, but a Morbane who used the same techniques as the demons to draw men to the depths of evil. But he sees no other way to survive, and Dyer vander Bleek is a survivor.

Personality/Motivation: Dyer vander Bleek is a desperate man caught in a war between powers far beyond his ability to control. He knows he's a pawn of the Archdemons, that they plot DEMON's downfall, and that if his allegiances are found out, he'll die a horrible death. But to make matters worse, he knows if the Archdemons have their way, he'll still die a horrible death. So he's left with a dilemma: die today, die tomorrow, or figure some way out of his situation. To do the latter, he needs to stay alive, so continues to play the Archdemons' game, dancing to their tune. So far, he has yet to come up with a plan that gets him off the hook, but he never stops searching for a way.

If he weren't such an evil man, with a long history of murder and inhuman crimes to his credit, he'd be worthy of one's sympathy.

Quote: "Yes, yes... I agree. I have already said I agree to your terms. I have said that several times now. Will you please simply send me the two demonlings as I requested?"

DYER VANDER BLEEK PLOT SEEDS

Vander Bleek figures out a way to transfer the stains on his soul to one of the PCs. When the PC goes to church and finds himself in bodily pain, will he figure out what happened? And when an Archdemon comes calling, looking to collect on a favor vander Bleek owes him, what will the PCs do?

Vander Bleek arranges a fight with the PCs and fakes his own death. Sadly, the only people who buy that old ruse are superheroes, and the PCs won't buy it for long. Both the Descending Hierarchy and DEMON believe vander Bleek has disguised himself as one of the PCs, and they come looking for their pound of flesh... will the PCs be able to find vander Bleek and hand him over before the worst comes to pass? Should they even hand him over? And could the bad guys be right... is vander Bleek disguised as one of the PCs?

At long last one of vander Bleek's Wandering Magi has rediscovered the Basilisk Orb! More than anyone other than Luther Black, vander Bleek understands the power of the Basilisk Orb, since he's spent years researching one of the most powerful artifacts the world has ever known. He's convinced the only way he can survive is by using the Basilisk Orb to create a future where he lives to a peaceful old age... but Luther Black has heard of the rediscovery and the race is on! Will vander Bleek use the Orb to create the future that benefits him? Will Luther Black use it to create the future where he without a doubt succeeds in his goal? Or will the PCs... or some supervillain... beat both of them to the fabled relic?



Powers/Tactics: Dyer vander Bleek possesses powers of black magic similar to the Morbanes to whose ranks he once belonged. He's more experienced than the average Morbane, so his spells are generally more powerful (and/or more easily cast), but most of his experience is reflected in his Skills.

If confronted with a situation beyond his ability to handle, he has A Favor From The Archdemons, a Summon with 1 Charge. To activate it, vander Bleek simply mutters an incantation. The Archdemons quickly assess the situation and dispatch a demon to help him. The Archdemons decide what exactly arrives — it doesn't have to be 1000-point greater demon. Depending on the situation, a demon of the winds might arrive to spirit vander Bleek away from danger, or a big brute of a devil could show up to kill his attackers. In fact, the Archdemons could chose not to send a demon — but they have yet to do this. Every time Dyer vander Bleek calls on them means one more favor he owes them.

As leader of the Wandering Magi, the Rite of the Maleficia given the task of finding artifacts, Dyer vander Bleek has access to a wide selection of enchanted objects stored in the vaults below his sanctum. These are minor artifacts at best — powerful ones that DEMON has figured out how to use are either taken to the Thirteenth Floor or given to a Morbane so they can be put to good use furthering DEMON's goals.

Campaign Use: Dyer vander Bleek is the linchpin in the Descending Hierarchy's plan to bring DEMON (and Luther Black's plans) crumbling down. Sadly enough (for the Descending Hierarchy, at least) their plans are still formless — mainly because some Archdemons want to take over DEMON for their own use, while others want to crush the organization completely... and Archdemons are known for neither their ability to cooperate nor their willingness to compromise.

Dyer vander Bleek isn't nearly as important as the Archdemons think. Put in charge of the least powerful of the Rites in the Maleficia, with Luther Black contriving to limit his influence over the Morbanes, and consumed with protecting his own life, Dyer vander Bleek is a good source of information — a good mole for the Descending Hierarchy, in other words — but not actually in a position to cause serious and permanent harm to the organization. (This could quickly change if the Descending Hierarchy realized Dyer's actual position and pushed him to take a more active part in DEMON's leadership....)

Although he grows increasingly neglectful of his duties, vander Bleek is still in charge of the Wandering Magi, and if the PCs come into possession of a magical artifact, they may find themselves confronting Dyer vander Bleek and his agents. Only two circumstances might lead to Dyer Hunting a hero: an artifact, or if Dyer believes the hero can help him with his situation — as he grows ever more desperate, this might even include defecting from DEMON, but only in the most dire of circumstances.

To make vander Bleek more powerful, give him more Multipower slots, or perhaps convert his Multipower into a Variable Power Pool that he can change fairly easily. To weaken him, reduce his Multipower reserve and the Active Points in its slots.

Appearance: Dyer vander Bleek is a short, slender man in his mid-sixties with white hair and a slightly receding hairline. There are dark bags under his blue eyes, which are constantly shifting from the side-to-side as if he expected a demon to jump out at any moment and collect on a favor, or worse yet, DEMON members to reveal themselves and kill him. Healthy and well-groomed, he usually wears a three-piece suit with a watch chain. When outside, he wears an overcoat and fedora, and carries a silver-topped cane.

SANCTUMS

Each of the Inner Circle members has a sanctum, a place only he or she knows the location of. A sanctum serves as an Inner Circle member's place of power and a base of operations for the activities of the Rite of the Maleficia he controls, including the location of the Maleficus Rex (see page 67). Each is staffed with servitors conditioned by both mystical and psychological means to be absolutely loyal to the Inner Circle member.

As with Luther Black's Thirteenth Floor, discovering the location of a sanctum should be an important event in your campaign, a task only accomplished after many game sessions and by the most experienced or powerful of groups... and such a heroic feat is likely to bring down the full wrath of DEMON on the PCs' head afterwards. (The PCs might also find themselves caught up in tangled web of treachery, deceit, and manipulation as one or more Inner Circle members maneuver to take advantage of one of their rival's impending fall from power.)

The five sanctums are:

Henry Francis Krueger: Born eight years ago to a middle class family in Wichita, Henry Francis Krueger had a twin while in his mother's womb... at least he did until he strangled his brother with his own umbilical cord in the days before birth. Since then he has caused the deaths of his best friend (when Henry convinced the boy he could fly and told him to jump off the roof), a family (when he set fire to their home), and countless dogs and other pets. The boy was born evil, and Demoiselle Nocturne has carved her domain out of Henry's murderous dreams, which so often end in blood and fire with the little boy dancing among the dead. During her leisure time, Nocturne travels through the boy's dreams, encouraging him to greater evils, and she makes her plans for him when he has reached adulthood.

The Slums of Calcutta: Miles of slums spread around the Indian city of Calcutta, called by some the City of Magic, and deep in their midst is a one-room hovel with walls and a roof of corrugated steel that the Dalang calls his home. No non-Indian can walk through the slums without word of his presence spreading through the district... and always the Dalang, revered by his neighbors, is among the first to know. Calcutta has long been the center of the Kali cult and its assassins, and under the ground the cult dug a labyrinthine network of tunnels during the Raj, when the British attempted to

stamp the cult out. These tunnels not only provide the Dalang with an escape route and means of moving about the city secretly, they're where he spends much of his time while about DEMON's business and houses the Maleficus Rex for his Rite.

Banco Nacional de Rio: The Coin Collector keeps his sanctum in his workplace, the National Bank of Rio. The sanctum is a sub-basement that was built by the government thirty years ago to protect important files (and a stockpile of gold bullion) in case of a nuclear war. The government has since forgotten about the place, and since it was originally top secret, no records of it exist. The facility is extensive, almost 100 feet below the earth, and consists of a series of vaults that only the Coin Collector knows the combinations to.

Einsatzgruppenbunker X: In the waning days of World War II, the Nazis established hidden bunkers across the territories they still controlled. In these bunkers they hid their scientists' newest creation: der Hartherzig Soldaten, the Hard-Hearted Soldiers. These were SS commandoes who had been grievously wounded during combat, but thanks to Nazi science now had a new lease on life as cyborgs. Knowing the war was lost, the cyborgs entered primitive stasis tubes to await the rise of the Fourth Reich. There they remained until the coming of Herr Doktor Pandemonium. Located in the Alps, Einsatzgruppenbunker X is an underground bunker with eight-foot-thick walls of steel. It has extensive laboratories and a powerful generator. Add to that loyal Nazi cyborg soldiers, and the bunker is everything a mad scientist could hope for. Pandemonium has searched for other bunkers, but has yet to find any.

The Bleek House: The Bleek House is the single possession Dyer vander Bleek is most proud of. His family lost it many years ago, selling it because it was haunted. At the turn of the century, a massacre happened here — instigated by a patriarch of the vander Bleek family also named Dyer — and the dying men and women cursed the vander Bleeks. After they were buried in an unmarked mass grave, their ghosts returned to haunt the place. Just after he was raised to the ranks of the Inner Circle, Dyer vander Bleek came to the estate... and he bound the ghosts to his will. In truth, it was his last happy moment. He still resides there, guarded by the ghosts who once swore vengeance on his family, not only because it reminds him of happier days, but because it thrills his evil heart to torture the ghosts by making them serve his every whim.

USING THE INNER CIRCLE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The identity of the Inner Circle's members is a very big secret, and while these are exactly the sort of secrets that come out over the course of the campaign, you should be careful not to show your hand too soon if you choose to have the PCs encounter an Inner Circle member in the flesh. One thing to keep in mind: the PCs are familiar with the Morbanes and their Demonhames... but most of the Inner Circle is a far cry from these, not only in power and appearance, but also in the agents they use and in the plots they hatch. As long as an Inner Circle member doesn't announce his status and affiliation to the PCs — and none of them would under normal circumstances — it might take a while, at least several adventures or game sessions, for the PCs to put two and two together and realize this new villain is one of DEMON's leaders.

RELATIONS AMONG THE INNER CIRCLE

It goes without saying the Inner Circle members do not get along. Their backgrounds are far too divergent, their evil souls far too foul, their lust for power far too overwhelming, for the five of them to work together happily. Political machinations among them are not just frequent, but entirely and absolutely necessary to maintain a grip on one's power. (Of course, none of them know for a fact that Luther Black would step in before things got too out of hand, and only Demoiselle Nocturne and the Dalang suspect that is the case.)

The Coin Collector, born to the predatory world of big business and high finance, has chosen as his targets the two members he perceives as weakest: Herr Doktor Pandemonium and Dyer vander Bleek. His plans for Pandemonium's Black Scientists involve selling their secrets (many stolen from legitimate research projects) to increase his financial holdings and influence — in other words, he would like to turn the Rite into big players in corporate espionage. The Coin Collector's plans for vander Bleek are inchoate; he merely scents the man's weakness, like any predator would, and wishes to expand his influence over DEMON and its operations.

The Dalang's gravest concern is Demoiselle Nocturne. He finds her powers a threat to his Rite, for how can he guard his agents' dreams, let alone his own? Furthermore, he frequently works with the Morbanes and their Demonhames to accomplish his goals, and he wishes to expand his

power by increasing his hold over the Morbanes. Nocturne and her Night Terrors, who spy on the dreams of members in their role as DEMON's secret police, make that objective difficult to accomplish.

Demoiselle Nocturne has her eyes set on a bigger prize than the others: she wishes to remove the Edomite from power. Unlike her peers she grasps the extent of the Edomite's control over DEMON. She travels the Morbanes' dreams, and in them she can sense the Edomite's presence, often dormant but still lurking in each Morbane's soul.

Herr Doktor Pandemonium is far too caught up in his obsessions with the supernatural origin of mankind to devote much time to plotting, but he responds swiftly and surely to any attempts to encroach on his Rite's domain. The Coin Collector has asked one too many questions about Pandemonium's researches when he has requested funding, and Pandemonium has resolved to teach the man a lesson.

Dyer vander Bleek is a desperate man surrounded by enemies... and whose only allies are demons whose league with him, if discovered, would result in his absolute destruction, body and soul. He plots against all of his fellow members of the Inner Circle — in fact he devotes so much of his time and effort to plotting against them that he often neglects his own Rite. After eight years vander Bleek knows full well that the abilities of every other member are greater than his own, and he dedicates most of his efforts to defending himself from their machinations, whether perceived or actual.

THE MALEFICIA



The Maleficia (Latin for “the wicked ones”) serves a dual purpose in DEMON. First, its members are the personal agents for the Inner Circle. Second, it carries out operations that Demonhames would normally find difficult, if not impossible: planting a mole in a rival organization; long-term tasks like directing one of DEMON’s corporate holdings that’s too valuable to risk exposure when a Demonhame is discovered; missions by agents who work better independent of a Demonhame.

The Maleficia divides itself into five sections, one for each of the Inner Circle members. Each section is called a Rite. The five Rites are: the Black Scientists; the Bogeymen; the Wandering Magi; the Moneylenders; and the Night Terrors.

THE MALEFICIA AND THE DEMONHAMES

Some overlap exists between the activities of the Maleficia and the Demonhames. For instance, an UNTIL or PRIMUS office might have agents for both the Bogeymen and the local Morbane planted among the staff, and these agents may not even know of each other’s existence. DEMON’s leadership doesn’t concern itself overly much with such situations — it considers them failsafe measures. But if a Demonhame develops a valuable asset (for example, a Morbane recruits the owner of a company the Coin Collector feels has great potential for exploitation), or an existing asset suddenly becomes useful because of a new plot, DEMON transfers it to the Maleficia.

The specifics of this handover depend on the circumstances, but usually the Morbane receives a visit from the Black Shepherd, who tells him to have no further contact with the asset. If the Morbane protests or otherwise disobeys, the Inner Circle takes steps to bring him in line and remind him of his loyalties. Alternately, a Morbane might request help from the Inner Circle, which then decides to take over the asset. This happens most often in the case of the Black Scientists (when the Morbane simply can’t understand the details because of their scientific nature) or the Wandering Magi (when the Morbane can’t determine how to use an artifact).

MALEFICUS REX

The Maleficus Rex, the wicked king, serves to tie the Maleficia to the Inner Circle. Despite its grandiose title, it is not a fate anyone wishes for himself, since it means having one’s soul bound and chained to the purpose of the Inner Circle. Each Inner Circle member has his own Maleficus Rex, and it allows the Inner Circle member

to maintain communications with the agents in the Maleficia. In a way, it serves the same purpose as the Soul Gems, but is a far cruder tool. A Maleficus Rex also allows his Inner Circle master to communicate with his fellows and the Edomite through the Black Shepherd, and from there deliver instructions to the Morbanes and their Demonhames. The Inner Circle has not met in the flesh since it was founded. Instead, when a matter requires the members’ full attention, they discuss it via their Maleficus Rexes, each Inner Circle member never leaving his sanctum.

Luther Black created the Maleficus Rexes when he founded the second Inner Circle, and has not needed to create new ones since then. Each is a man or woman bound to an X of crossed wooden planks, with mystic runes carved into his flesh from head to toe. The cuts are narrow and shallow, and continuously seep blood as they do not heal. Each Inner Circle member keeps his Maleficus Rex in his sanctum.

Communicating With The Morbanes

Because of Luther Black’s need to keep the Inner Circle and Maleficia separate from the Morbanes, communications between the two groups are difficult.

In an absolute emergency, Luther Black senses the problem via the Soul Gem, then relays the situation to the Inner Circle. He is loathe to do this, however, because it’s evidence of his close ties to the Morbanes.

An Inner Circle member communicates with a Morbane by dispatching an agent to the Demonhame, then simply communicating via the Maleficus Rex using the agent as an intermediary. This keeps the Inner Circle member’s identity secret. An expendable agent, preferably one with limited knowledge of DEMON, is usually chosen for the task. To deliver short messages and sets of instruction that don’t require the Morbane’s input, the Inner Circle member can use his Maleficus Rex to contact the Black Shepherd and from there the Morbane.

A Morbane can get in touch with the Inner Circle through the methods described below, which are specific to each Inner Circle member. The magic of Maleficus Rex empowers each of these arcane tasks, and they only allow for a short message — little more than “please get in touch with your servant” and general details concerning the situation. The Morbane doesn’t know precisely where the message goes or anything else about what happens after he sends his message; he only knows how to make contact based on the nature of the problem.

For all the Morbane knows, his message is delivered to some bureaucracy in Hell and then travels up the hierarchy until it reaches his secret leaders.

These methods only works for Morbanes and are keyed in to their individual Mystic Auras. (Although, at your discretion, the PCs might discover a magical ritual they can use to disguise one of them as a Morbane.) If the Inner Circle begins to feel too many people outside of DEMON know the procedures, they change them.

The Coin Collector: The Morbane goes to any bank and makes a deposit addressed to Mammon. He does this for any matter related to finance or corporations.

The Dalang: The Morbane must act out his message with puppets, anything from sock puppets to marionettes. One puppet represents the Morbane; the other must appear as a demon. He does this for any matter related to enemy agencies like UNTIL, PRIMUS, the CIA, or VIPER.

Demoiselle Nocturne: The Morbane places a message addressed to Old Night under his pillow when he goes to sleep. In the morning the message is gone. He does this for any matter related to a DEMON member's suspected betrayal.

Herr Doktor Pandemonium: The Morbane must go to a pay phone, dial the Number of the Beast, and speak his message before the operator comes on the line. He does this for any matter related to research projects or science.

Dyer Vander Bleek: The Morbane attaches the message to the leg of a raven and commands it to fly to the Netherworld. Soon after taking wing, the raven and message disappear. He does this for any matter related to magic or artifacts.

THE BLACK SCIENTISTS

Under the command of Herr Doktor Pandemonium, the Black Scientists are the Rite of Knowing. In this age of rising magic, science has grown strange and some of its most phenomenal discoveries have as much to do with magic as science. Despite this subtle arcane nature, these discoveries are beyond the ability of most magicians to understand, and that's where the Black Scientists come in. The Black Scientists are experts in "weird science" and well-versed in knowledge man was not meant to know. It's their duty to discover any advancements that might benefit DEMON.

Agents

Black Scientists come from the ranks of disgruntled scientists who have arrived at impossible conclusions and still believe absolutely in those conclusions, even though their peers hold them in contempt. These scientists run the gamut from anthropologists who believe humanity as a species isn't native to Earth, to physicists who believe dark energy isn't a natural phenomena and is instead proof of Hell's existence. The disgruntled scientist receives a visit from a DEMON member and is told everything he believes is true (whether it is or not). He's invited to join DEMON with promises of funding for his research.

Most of the members of the Black Scientists aren't very talented — if they were, they would've used their impossible theories to create the necessary equipment to make themselves supervillains and the like. A Black Scientist's primary value is that he possesses the credentials to obtain a position as a mid-level researcher in a scientific project, and then can report on the project's progress to Herr Doktor Pandemonium.

The elite among the Black Scientists are those like Pandemonium who have actually proven their crazy theories and developed technologies based on them — but of course, they're driven insane by their success and become even more loyal to DEMON.

Sites And Operations

Kendrium: The Black Scientists are convinced that the metal Kendrium (see *Champions Universe*, page 57) not only has supernatural properties, but is in fact closely related to mystical metal, orichalcum. They have attempted on numerous occasions to secure the process used to create Kendrium, but have failed each time. They have made numerous requests that DEMON kidnap Professor Darryl Kendrick, but leadership is leery of approving such a high-profile crime.

The Ra Group: The Ra Group is a think tank sponsored by NASA and dedicated to the task of designing a space probe that could reach the Sun. Their work is highly theoretical with no practical results as of yet, but the Black Scientists have turned one of Ra's members and have hopes to use some sort of

BLACK SCIENTIST PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 INT
4	+2 EGO
3	Deduction (INT Roll)
3	Inventor (INT Roll)
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
3	KS: The Scientific World (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Greater Mysteries Of DEMON (INT Roll)
2	PS: Scientist 11-
5	SS: What Man Was Not Meant To Know (INT Roll + 2)
4	Any two other SSs at 11-
24	Specialty Skills (see below)
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (Maleficia)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 63

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Driven Insane By Discoveries (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (varies) (Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

SPECIALTY SKILLS

Archaeologist: This Black Scientist specializes in ancient cultures, his studies leading him to those that predate recorded history. His obsession is often the unknown origins of mankind — is the species from another planet or dimension, or the creation of elder gods?

SS: Archaeology (INT + 2), SS: Anthropology (INT), KS: one ancient culture (INT + 2), KS: History Man Has Forgotten (INT), Language: one ancient language (completely fluent), 5 points of additional skills.

Architect: This Black Scientist seeks to use the mystical theorems of ancient builders in new constructions and is convinced of the spiritual powers of arcane geometries.

SS: Architecture (INT + 2), SS: Physics (INT), KS: Buildings And Materials (INT + 2), KS: Draftsmanship (INT), 8 points worth of additional skills.

Geneticist: This Black Scientist is convinced genetic codes exist in the human genome that can do everything from unlock racial memories, to revert man to a primitive state ranging from little more than apes to what is essential a divine (or infernal) being.

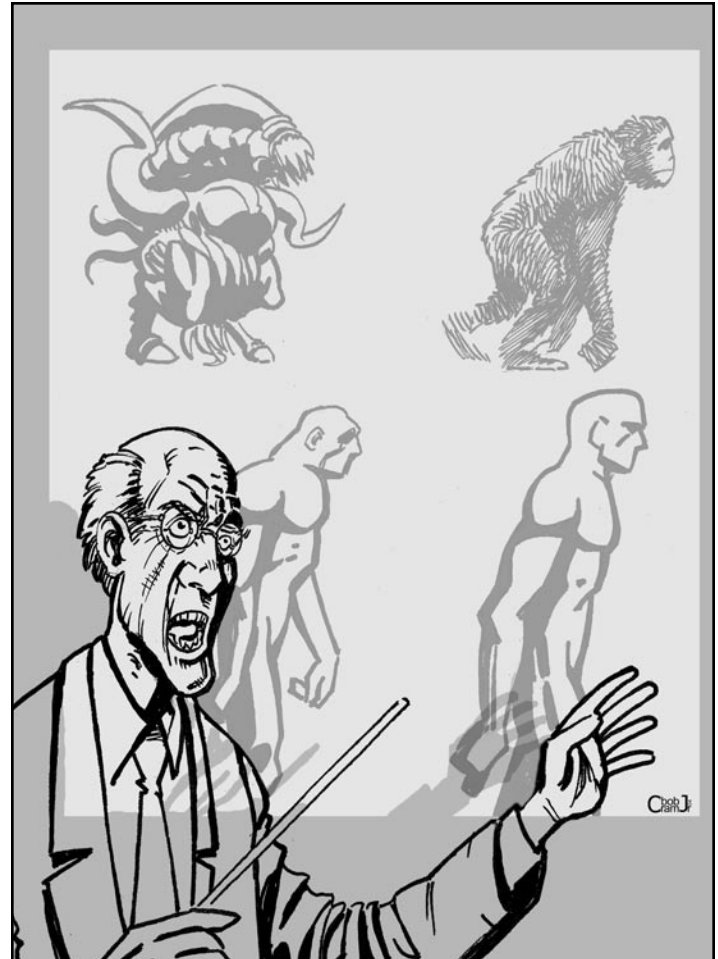
SS: Genetics (INT + 2), SS: Biochemistry (INT), SS: Biology (INT), Paramedics (INT + 1), 8 points worth of additional skills.

Psychologist: This Black Scientist studies the effects of magic and the mystic on the human psyche, often coming to believe that other-worldly powers are responsible for a host of conditions and ailments.

SS: Psychology (INT + 2), SS: Sociology (INT), KS: Phobias (INT), Conversation (PRE), Interrogation (PRE), Persuasion (PRE), +4 PRE.

Roboticist: This Black Scientist has come to believe the true way forward for robotics is to integrate human souls with machines, creating a new form of life.

SS: Robotics (INT +2), SS: Metallurgy (INT), KS: Robots (INT +1), Mechanics (INT), Electronics (INT), Computer Programming (INT), Systems Operation (INT).



probe to alter the fundamental nature of the Sun. The project is still very much in the planning stages — the Black Scientists aren't even sure what they want to do to the Sun — but it has a grandiose nature that appeals to many of them.

Project Two-Step And Project Jetsetter:

Project Two-Step is VIPER's project to develop teleportation technology; Project Jetsetter is the U.S. military's project to develop the same technology. The Black Scientists have an interest in both. They don't want to steal the technology — any magician worth his salt can accomplish some form of teleportation, and DEMON has little interest in such technology — but they hope to turn the projects into means of piercing the barrier between this dimension and the Qliphothic, ideally in some sort of "accident" that lets loose a flood of Qliphothic energy.

THE BOGeyMEN

Under the command of the Dalang, the Bogeymen are the Rite of Guarding. The Bogeymen infiltrate intelligence agencies and rival organizations — including UNTIL, PRIMUS, and VIPER — and undermine their efforts to discover information about DEMON. In other words, the Bogeymen are the counter-espionage division of DEMON. They don't go to war with these rivals — they leave that for the Demonhames, and if they need to destroy something or assassinate someone, they assign a Morbane to the task — but instead the Bogeymen undermine these rivals' findings about DEMON, sabotage their databases, feed them misinformation about DEMON's purpose and nature, and generally keep an eye out for people who know too much about the organization.



Agents

Two groups make up the ranks of the Bogeymen: handlers and moles.

Handlers act as go-betweens for DEMON and the moles. They're usually recruited from the ranks of cult members who don't possess the mystical ability a Brother requires, but do have a talent for subterfuge and espionage. They have innocuous jobs — any profession that keeps their name out of the news and seems far removed from intelligence work, like accountant, file clerk,

or gas station attendant — and they generally keep a low profile. They often have a few minor magical items to help them with their tasks. The accompanying Package Deal represents a handler.

Moles are people who already work for the target organization. They're recruited with promises of money or power, depending on the circumstances. Rarely, a mole simply falls into DEMON's lap when he joins a Morbane's cult — in these situations, especially if the person is employed by UNTIL or PRIMUS, the Bogeymen work fast to get him away from the cult and into their direct employ (an event that often leaves the Morbane bitter about the whole thing). On some occasions, the Bogeymen use Morbanes to infiltrate organizations (like they are with VIPER; see below) — but only when they need someone who has a modicum of mystical power and is absolutely loyal to DEMON to work as a sleeper agent.

BOGeyMAN (HANDLER) PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 INT
8	+8 PRE
3	Acting (PRE)
7	Bribery (PRE + 2)
3	Bureaucratics (PRE)
7	Concealment (INT + 2)
5	Deduction (INT + 1)
3	Disguise (INT)
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT)
5	KS: Espionage World (INT+2)
3	KS: Lesser Mysteries of DEMON (INT)
7	Persuasion (PRE + 2)
5	Seduction (PRE + 1)
7	Shadowing (INT + 2)
7	Stealth (DEX + 2)
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 81

Magical Items

Cost	Power
10	<i>The Briefcase Of Forged Documents:</i> Cosmetic Transform 2d6 (blank paper into official document), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); IAF (-½)
11	<i>Gloves Of Stolen Fingerprints:</i> Shape Shift (Sight and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); IAF (-½), Must Touch Hands Featuring The Fingerprints To Be Copied (-1), Only Fingerprints (-2)
5	<i>Earpiece Of Lie Detection:</i> Detect Lies (INT) (Hearing Group), Discriminatory (user can tell how big a lie, but not determine the truth); IAF (-½)

Total Cost Of Magical Items: 26

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Paranoid (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (varies) (Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Sites And Operations

Operation DEMON Snake: DEMON has sought revenge on VIPER since their interference in the Demonflame Incident, and now the Bogeymen have finally found the chink that will allow them to subvert the organization — the Snake Cult. Slowly but surely Morbanes have been assigned to join VIPER and take up leadership positions within the Snake Cult. This has led to new insights about VIPER and its nature. More and more, DEMON's leadership wonders if it truly is a mundane agency, or if there is some deeper plot, mystical in nature, at work behind the scenes.

Operation Exorcist: Operation Exorcist is a top-secret PRIMUS project the Bogeymen have repeatedly failed to discover any information about. The name itself is provocative, and it was reportedly initiated in the immediate aftermath of the Demonflame Incident.

Project Hermes: The Bogeymen have long had moles within UNTIL's project dedicated to understanding the Mystic World, and they've become one of DEMON's main sources of information about happenings within the Mystic World. However, the Bogeymen are very cautious with the moles. Because of the project's mystics, they must rely on old-fashioned methods of subverting agents — such as money, sex, and blackmail — and cannot establish a mystic hold on the moles. They rarely use the moles to feed UNTIL false information about DEMON. Moles don't know who they work for; they only know they get a good price for "sharing" information with their handlers.

THE WANDERING MAGI

Under the command of Dyer vander Bleek, the Wandering Magi are the Rite of Finding. They locate magical items lost during the ages of low magic. They travel the world visiting auctions and pawnshops; they work in museums and universities, searching through their storage warehouses for artifacts filed away and then forgotten. They don't seize artifacts they find unless they can do so without raising anyone's suspicions. Instead, a Demonhame handles the problem of "acquisition." The secondary purposes of the Magi are to locate lost places of power, and to search through dusty tomes and determine the properties and use of artifacts that defy the understanding of the Morbanes.

Agents

Members of the Wandering Magi possess no mystic ability. They are instead talented scholars who are fascinated with the occult, possess a capacity for evil, and find themselves in league with DEMON. If they actually had the talent to become magicians, DEMON would put them to much better use as Brothers, Initiates, or Morbanes. Usually they come to DEMON on their own, already reasonably well-versed in the arcane and search-

ing for more knowledge, although sometimes one is recruited from the ranks of a Morbane's cult. A secondary reason for their lack of magical powers is that it keeps the Magi in check — a Wandering Magi may have access to considerable number of artifacts of unknown powers, and the possibility that a Magi might exploit one of these artifacts for his own advancement, but perhaps DEMON's detriment, is ameliorated by his lack of talent.

WANDERING MAGI PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
6	+3 EGO
8	+8 INT
3	Concealment (INT)
5	Cryptography (INT+2); Translation Only (-½)
3	Interrogation (PRE)
7	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT + 4)
5	KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON (INT + 2)
7	KS: History (INT + 4)
5	KS: History Man Has Forgotten (INT + 2)
5	KS: The Mystic World (INT + 2)
3	Language: Latin (completely fluent)
3	Language: Classical Greek (completely fluent)
3	Language: another language (completely fluent)
5	Oratory 14-
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)
4	Speed Reading x10

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 77

Magical Items

Cost	Power
5	<i>Eyeglasses Of Magic Detection:</i> Detect Magic (INT) (Sight Group), Discriminatory; IAF (-½)

Total Cost Of Magical Items: 5

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Finding Out Secrets (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (varies) (Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

Sites And Operations

Global Energies: Members of the Magi operate Rudolf von Recker's old company, Global Energies. The company searches the world, from the icy wastes of Antarctica to the deepest jungles of the Amazon to everywhere in between, looking for exploitable sources of energy. During its explorations it sometimes finds lost cities and artifacts, and forgotten places of power. Once the company was quite large and profitable, but now it's small and operates most years at a loss (its funding is kept up by the Moneylenders). This mediocre management is intentional — DEMON does not wish anyone to take undue interest in the company.

The Lapis Exilis: When Lucifer fell from Heaven, the Archangel Michael struck at the rebellious angel's



head and knocked a gemstone from his crown. That green gemstone fell to Earth and now resides in the possession of DEMON. Some stories say the stone was used to fashion the Holy Grail; others that it will rest in the Antichrist's crown when he is ordained king of the world. DEMON has had the stone for nearly a decade but hasn't determined its use. However, Dyer vander Bleek's demonic allies continually urge him to fashion a coronet for the stone and crown himself. Vander Bleek has yet to do so, but if his situation becomes desperate enough he just might.

The Hellstone: Luther Black is fixated on the fate of the Hellstone, the weapon used to slay the Archmage, and he has passed this obsession onto the Wandering Magi. Despite the man-hours devoted to tracking the Hellstone down, the trail stops dead just after the death of the Archmage in 1908 when the Russian military occupied the area of Tunguska. No one has uncovered any further reports about what happened next.

The Book Of Artifice: It falls to the Wandering Magi to keep a record of all the myriad Profane Regalia the Brothers create during their initiation into the mysteries of DEMON. This includes a description of a device's abilities, as well as instructions on how to create it. The Magi record these descriptions in the Book of Artifice. The "book" has grown to several volumes, and Morbanes can request descriptions from it (or even to be sent specific items, though the Inner Circle has to evaluate and approve all such requests).

THE MONEYLENDERS

Under the command of the Coin Collector, the Moneylenders are the Rite of Funding. Their primary responsibilities involve money laundering and illicitly diverting funds from legitimate sources to DEMON projects. The Moneylenders generally work in support of or at the behest of other parts of DEMON. For instance, they might provide a Morbane with funds to establish a new Demon-home by bringing pressure on a local loan officer to give a loan to a nonexistent person, the monies actually going to the Morbane. Or the Black Scientists might discover a company making interesting scientific discoveries, and the Moneylenders would arrange to purchase it.

Agents

More often than any other Rite in the Maleficia, Moneylenders are ignorant of their true affiliation. They are simply businessmen, most often bankers, who have made a deal with the Coin Collector. Some of them suspect they have figuratively made a deal with the devil, but few of them understand the extent of the evil they associate with. They rarely have positions that are overtly powerful — they are instead more likely to hold a job in

MONEYLENDER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
6	+3 EGO
5	+5 INT
5	+5 PRE
2	+4 COM
3	Bribery (PRE)
7	Bureaucratics (PRE + 2)
3	Conversation (PRE)
3	Deduction (INT)
5	High Society (PRE + 1)
3	Interrogation (PRE)
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
5	KS: Business World (INT + 2)
2	KS: Lesser Mysteries of DEMON 11-
5	Persuasion (PRE + 1)
5	PS: Accounting (INT + 2)
5	PS: Banking (INT + 2)
5	PS: Finance (INT + 2)
3	Seduction 13-
7	Trading (PRE + 2)
2	Additional +2 to either PS: Accounting, Banking, or Finance
5	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)
6	Fringe Benefit: Wealth

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 94

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Do Anything For Fun And Profit (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (varies) (Frequently, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 35

middle management and the like from which they have more control over day-to-day operations (*i.e.*, more control over where exactly the money goes) than higher level executives.

Sites And Operations

The First Bank Of Hong Kong: The First Bank of Hong Kong, once controlled by Inner Circle member Randolph Xiao, serves as the hub for DEMON's financial transactions. After he killed Xiao, Luther Black took control of the institution, then passed it on to the Coin Collector. Through a complicated web of corporate holdings and dummy corporations, the Coin Collector's National Bank of Rio is the primary owner of the First Bank of Hong Kong. Nothing illegal goes on at the First Bank; it merely owns, controls, or otherwise influences all the institutions where illegal activities do go on.

ARGENT: The Coin Collector hates the fact that he essentially controls a support apparatus. He finds it insulting that a person of his caliber should be relegated to such a secondary position. His failures to take control of the Morbanes and Demonhames, most dramatically in Millennium City, have proven that expanding control within DEMON's hierarchy might not bear fruit. Instead he now looks to ARGENT, an organization operated in many ways like a holding corporation, and has begun to acquire shares in companies he suspects of involvement with that villainous organization.

Witching Hour Entertainment: DEMON has a long history in Hollywood and the moviemaking business. From Sydney Golden's Studio Lot 0 in Hollywood's earliest days, to the months just prior to World War Two when Luther Black sent his followers to infiltrate the movie business, to Marcel St. Luke's Tenebres Films, DEMON has spent decades acquiring production companies and making movies that terrorize audiences and give some audience members a glimpse of evil and Satanism that entices them, teases them with evil's power, and eventually leads them into DEMON's embrace. Since the founding of the second Inner Circle, Luther Black has given all his assets in filmmaking over to the Coin Collector, who has consolidated them under the umbrella corporation of Witching Hour Entertainment. As the name implies, it specializes in horror movies, generally straight-to-video, always bloody, often with WHE's trademark Satanic orgy scenes.



THE NIGHT TERRORS

Under the command of Demoiselle Nocturne, the Night Terrors are the Rite of Watching. To them falls the job of ensuring the loyalty of the Morbanes and their congregations. To do this they travel the dreams of DEMON's members spy on their innermost secrets (both desires and fears). The Night Terrors act as DEMON's Gestapo, and they are every bit as brutal and feared, if not moreso, as secret police forces throughout history have been.

Agents

There are no humans in the ranks of the Night Terrors. Each one of them is the monstrous creation of Demoiselle Nocturne, who pulls them from the nightmare of a sleeping victim and gives them an unnatural sort of life.

Sites And Operations

Dreams Of The Kings Of Edom: The true purpose of the Night Terrors, unknown to the other members of the Inner Circle, is to search for the presence of the Kings of Edom in the dreams of DEMON's members. Imprisoned long ago, the Kings can only communicate with the faithful through dreams. Luther Black's plans require him to keep DEMON free of the taint of the other Kings of Edom, but at the same time he cannot simply explain this to the Morbanes — he needs them both faithful to his purpose and ignorant of the true state of affairs. Instead he must rely on the Night Terrors to ensure that another King of Edom — such as Vulshoth — isn't exerting undue influence on the organization. It's not an arrangement he's comfortable with,

but it's the best he can do.

If the Night Terrors detect the presence of the Kings in the dreams of a Morbane — and such a visitation echoes through the Dreamzone, making it easy for the Night Terrors to track — nothing happens at first. Even if the Morbane begins to gain Edomite powers, the situation is allowed to develop until the Morbane starts to work at cross-purposes to Luther Black's goals. Then the Morbane is eliminated. So far all has gone as planned, but Demoiselle Nocturne grows increasingly suspicious of Luther Black's true goals, and there's always the possibility a Morbane will get too powerful too fast to be stopped.

Dyer Vander Bleek: By rights the Night Terrors only police the dreams of Morbanes, Initiates, and Brothers, but this hasn't stopped Demoiselle Nocturne from searching for the dreams of the other Inner Circle members. She's only found Dyer vander Bleek's, though. She knows he's in league with the Archdemons, although not the extent of dealings, nor even the details of why the Archdemons seek to bring down DEMON. She has yet to decide what to do with this information.

Georges Charlebois: Somewhere, cast adrift in the Dreamzone (and perhaps drifted into the Astral Plane proper) is the murderer whose apathy and nightmares gave Demoiselle Nocturne life. She would like to find this man and either kill him or at least make sure he's not a threat to her. Her feelings about him are intuitive, but she suspects that if he were to somehow return to the Material World, it would be bad for her.

NIGHT TERROR

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	7		Total: 10 PD (6 rPD)
10	ED	7		Total: 10 ED (6 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	12		
50	END	10		
30	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 111

Movement: Running: 0"/0"
Flight: 12"/24"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost	Powers	END
60	<i>Manipulate A Person's Dreams:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve	
6u	1) <i>Unearth Secret Fears And Desires:</i> Telepathy 12d6	6
6u	2) <i>Dream Manipulation:</i> Mental Illusions 12d6	6
6u	3) <i>Your Worst Nightmare:</i> Ego Attack 6d6	6
33	<i>Enter The Dreamzone:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension [the Dreamzone], corresponding to the point character is at in this dimension), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
6	<i>Unnatural Body:</i> Damage Resistance (6 PD/6 ED)	0
10	<i>Inhuman Mind:</i> Mental Defense (13 points total)	0
36	<i>Flight:</i> Flight 12", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
-12	<i>Can't Run:</i> Running -6" (0" total)	
-2	<i>Can't Swim:</i> Swimming -2" (0" total)	

Skills

15	+5 with Manipulate A Person's Dreams
12	Navigation (Dreamzone) 16-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 176

Total Cost: 287

200+ Disadvantages

25	Distinctive Features: Monstrous Creature Out Of Nightmare (Not Concealable, Always Noticed, Cause Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
20	Hunted: Demoiselle Nocturne 14- (Mo Pow, NCL, Watching)
25	Psychological Limitation: Inhuman Evil (Very Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To Demoi- selle Nocturne (Very Common, Strong)
25	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Severe)
20	Susceptibility: to dream catchers and other traditional means of guarding one's dreams, 3d6 damage per Turn (Uncommon)

Total Disadvantage Points: 335

Description: Demoiselle Nocturne brings a Night Terror to life by drawing out the stuff of a person's nightmare and giving it physical reality. A Terror appears as a limbless tendril of swirling grey and brown, approximately five feet long, that ends in a monstrous human head. It can move freely between the waking world and the Dreamzone, slipping in and out of reality as it pleases. Terrors' powers affect both sleepers and targets who are awake, the Mental Illusions taking the form of a waking dream and the Ego Attack taking the form of a person's worst nightmare, suddenly remembered in shocking detail. Despite their monstrous appearance the Night Terrors are intelligent (although they must communicate via Telepathy).

chapter four:



**MEPHISTOPHELEAN EVIL
MEMBERS OF DEMON**

RECRUITMENT NETWORK



DEMON, as most superheroes know it, is an organization with four tiers: its recruitment networks (including the cults it establishes); and the three levels of membership (Brother, Initiate, Morbane).

At the outside of DEMON's hierarchy are its recruitment networks. Unlike other secret societies and occult organization, DEMON actively recruits new members. One of the responsibilities of its current membership is to go out and find people who are suitable to join — and it's a responsibility members take seriously. In a very real way, this active recruitment is at the heart of DEMON's strength and goes deeper than simple "strength in numbers." Its large and diverse membership provides it with influence and contacts at all levels of society, not just the Mystic World. A single Demonhome might have members with criminal, academic, law enforcement, and business backgrounds. It might have both wealthy and poor members. This diversity lends it strength, allows it to implement a wide variety of plots, and makes it an incredibly invasive organization difficult to remove entirely once it takes root in a community.

FOUR CATEGORIES OF RECRUITS

In broad terms potential recruits fall into one of four categories:

THE DISENFRANCHISED

These recruits feel either they haven't gotten a fair shake in life, or that society has gone wrong (or will go wrong if allowed to continue down its current path). In other words, the Disenfranchised find themselves dramatically disagreeing with society's mores. Because of this, they've already begun to question the existing order and are willing to explore other options. The recruits DEMON wants are those willing to commit violence to change society and make it more suitable to their tastes.

DEMON has mixed feelings about this sort of recruit. On one hand, the Disenfranchised's readiness to commit violence, however bloody, to achieve a goal is a definite plus. On the other, the majority of them already have a very specific view of how the world should be, and breaking them from this view where it's contrary to DEMON's own can prove troublesome. But the Morbanes usually find a way to succeed....

AT ROCK BOTTOM

Some recruits have hit rock bottom. They've lived their life in whatever way they chose or however they were taught to live, and it's all gone very badly. Now they're looking for a new way to live. They haven't just begun to question the meaning of everything and anything they know — they've already questioned that meaning and found it entirely lacking. They are more than ready for a new way of life, and anyone offering them that new way — one that leads up from the bottom — quickly catches their attention. DEMON loves this sort of recruit; not only are they very malleable, but there's something evil about taking advantage of them that thrills a DEMON member's tainted soul.

THE POWERHUNGRY

These recruits are hungry for power, especially the sort magic can give them. Maybe they have little power in their own life, or perhaps they have plenty and want more. What really thrills them and attracts them to DEMON are the possibilities of magic — it's beyond the natural order, more than just having authority and wealth in mundane society. They've heard the legends, read the myths and fairy tales, watched the crimes of mystic supervillains on television, and believe nothing lies beyond the powers of magic. And to the Powerhungry, at least before they've tasted the price of black magic, that makes it the ultimate goal in their quest for power.

BORN EVIL

It's questionable whether anyone — anyone human, at least — is actually born evil, but DEMON isn't interested in such debates. Let the philosophers and theologians wrestle with that issue. All DEMON needs is someone who has either lived an evil life and might as well have been born evil; or more commonly, someone who wants desperately to believe he is born evil, maybe because he thinks it's cool or makes him feel special, unique in a world where so many people seem the same and are treated the same. DEMON especially loves recruits who have an urgent need to prove how evil they are. Someone like this who possesses the necessary mystic talent quickly moves up the hierarchy into the ranks of the Brothers. They tend to become disappointed in typical cult gatherings pretty quickly — they spend a lot of time asking where's the blood and thunder, where are the demons eating virgins, and so on — but the power they do obtain is usually enough to satisfy them.

RECRUITING METHODS

DEMON uses both active and passive recruiting methods.

PASSIVE

This sort of recruiting makes the best use of DEMON's reputation and the public nature of many of its plots by luring the recruit to DEMON. In the Champions Universe, if a person has a taste for magic and a taste for evil, DEMON's the most likely choice. It's very visible, so while calling it a household name might be an exaggeration, if someone's interested in magic or supercrime, he's heard of DEMON. It's widespread, so a potential recruit doesn't have to travel the world looking for a member — chances are he can find one in most major metropolises. And most importantly, DEMON's the only occult society willing to take someone off the street.

Anyone asking around about DEMON who shows some persistence and gives DEMON the chance to do some investigating is directed to the cult.

ACTIVE

In this sort of recruiting, DEMON goes out and looks for potential members. All current DEMON members engage in recruiting to some extent, with cultists (see below) doing the most and Morbanes doing the least (although some Morbanes love getting out there and "pressing the flesh," so to speak). The first step to finding recruits is identifying places they're likely to go to and organizations they're likely to belong to. Some include:

Bookstores: The recruiter lurks in the New Age/occult section and waits for someone to pick up a book related to Satanism or magic, then obliquely mentions the cult and see if the prospect bites. Many a Demonhame secretly owns and operates a used or occult bookstore, which it uses as a recruiting front. The two best signs of a potential recruit: walking up to the counter with a copy of a book by Aleister Crowley (for Born Evil sorts) or a book on mystical healing (for those at Rock Bottom).

The Ku Klux Klan (And Other Militias): This depends on the Demonhame. Some are little more than a secret rite in the KKK already, with the local lodge acting as a cult; others don't buy into white supremacy and consider it ridiculous, which presents a problem for conditioning cultists. In any event the KKK is an excellent place to find Disenfranchised willing to commit violence. A DEMON member must simply wait for a potential recruit to be a little too in love with titles like "the Grand Wizard."

Street Gangs: Street gangs and other small criminal groups can be fertile recruiting grounds. On the one hand, a street gang is suspicious of strangers; on the other gangsters are willing to commit violence, making gangs a good place to find Powerhungry and Disenfranchised recruits. They also provide DEMON with recruits who can expand the organization's criminal networks — always a plus.

Larger criminal organizations have proven to be bad news. They have a strict hierarchy of leadership

and grow incredibly suspicious if current members, even just a few, start joining a cult. In other words, recruiting among the Mafia doesn't work out well and usually ends in bloodshed... unless of course the Morbane is already mobbed up.

Prisons: More than one Demonhame has benefitted from starting a "branch" of the cult inside a penitentiary under the guise of something innocuous like a reading group, then bringing inmates into the main cult when they're released. The prison system is a good source for recruits of all four types: two-time losers at Rock Bottom; convicts who feel unjustly persecuted by society for the Disenfranchised; convicts who commit crimes for a sense of empowerment or out of simple greed for the Powerhungry; and violent sociopaths for the Born Evil.

FROM THE FILES OF UNTIL: THE MILLENNIUM CITY RECRUITMENT NETWORK

At a recent large-scale arrest of DEMON members occurring in Millennium City in 2001, PRIMUS was able to question a number of low-level members of the organization and has shared that information with us.

Concerning the means by which DEMON recruits members, the Millennium City Demonhame had five main sources of recruits, some of which it owned and operated. These were:

The Great Beast Bookstore: An occult bookstore in the Waterfront district, the Great Beast Bookstore carried a selection of commercially available books and occult paraphernalia. Follow-up investigation into the suppliers of the store's stock reveals no suspicious activity.

You Can Do It! These were a series of weekly seminars on personal empowerment given at public libraries in Millennium City. To all reports the lecturer, Dr. Martin Hudgens (no record of his doctorate exists), was unaffiliated with DEMON. Instead recruits were informed of the cult by fellow attendees.

The Millennium City Young Executives Club: Investigators concluded there was no conspiracy to turn the club into a DEMON apparatus. The Demonhame's leader, Monica Knowles, was a businessperson and member of the club; she identified potential members through club-sponsored activities.

The Better World Halfway House: The Halfway Home helps recovered drug addicts, primarily heroin and cocaine users, reintegrate with society. From reports the recruiters approached residents having difficulty returning to society and directed them to the cult as a source of "spiritual guidance" with praises of its "virtues."

The Survivors' Support Group: Established for those having difficulty dealing with the trauma of Dr. Destroyer's destruction of Detroit in 1992, this support group evolved to also help residents deal with the city's dramatically changing landscape during the Millennium Project to rebuild the city. Recruiters seem to have targeted the members who felt especially weak and vulnerable in the face of Destroyer's attack, and then those "disenfranchised" by the new face of their home.

THE CULT AROUND THE WORLD

The information here pertains to the cult as it exists in First World, predominantly Christian, societies. The cult takes on the features of the society and culture it draws its members from, and since DEMON is a worldwide organization, this can take many different forms. For ideas about some of these cults, see *DEMON Around The World* on page 125.

One important general distinction: the cult described here is generally how DEMON goes about setting up its recruitment network in a permissive society that believes in and protects the right to freedom of religion. In more restrictive societies, ties between the cult and the Demonhame are much closer, with the cult almost always becoming an extension of the Demonhame and its operations out of a need for secrecy. These tend to be more like the cults described in the section *A More Sinister Cult*.

The Unemployment Line: People standing in the unemployment line have often reached a desperate point in life. The loss of a job can cause a person to question a lot of things, and make him feel like walking the straight-and-narrow is for rubes, since all that leads to is the unemployment office. The recruiter stands in line and strikes up a conversation with those around him. Then he mentions how much more successful and happy he's been since he joined the cult.

Soup Kitchens And Homeless Shelters: DEMON has a long history of operating soup kitchens and homeless shelters. The people who visit such places are truly at Rock Bottom. While some of them are too incoherent to make good DEMON recruits, others are open to almost anything.

Magic Stores: Places that sell stage magic books, illusionist tricks, and the like are often great recruitment centers. The recruiter simply waits for someone to ask, "Don't you wish magic was real?"

Fraudulent Occult Societies: These are almost too easy, since they've already done much of the legwork for DEMON. Simply debunk the current leader and give the members a taste of real magic, and they'll knock each other down to join the cult. Related to this are the parlors of fortunetellers and the waiting rooms of New Age healers.

Support Groups: Perhaps the most tragic of all sources for DEMON recruits, support groups serve as a place where DEMON finds hopeless, desperate people and promises them the world. Recovering alcoholics and drug users, persons with cancer or who have a loved one with cancer, people who have recently been divorced or lost a child, people who feel they lack confidence or have any other failing — all of these are susceptible to DEMON's pitch, its mephistophelean evil.

WELCOME TO THE CULT

The cult DEMON establishes stand at the heart of its recruiting network. The cult system also separates the recruits, at this point cultists, from those initiated into DEMON's mysteries — the Brothers, Initiates, and Morbanes — and erects a barrier between the recruiting network and the Demonhame proper, helping DEMON identify anyone attempting to infiltrate its ranks.

THE CULT'S TEACHINGS

The cult always teaches an illicit religion — Satanism is the most predominant, but any religion the mainstream doesn't accept, even some forms of Christianity, serves DEMON's purposes. Getting the cultist involved in an illicit religion teaches him not to trust the mainstream, gets him to break with what society has taught him, and hints at the possibility that everything else he knows is wrong too. It gets him questioning his beliefs and prepares him to accept new beliefs — new truths about the world and existence the Morbane will provide to him.

In the specifics, the cult's teachings take on myriad forms. The one thing the Satanist cults DEMON organizes have in common is that the leader teaches that Satan is very different from what's normally believed. Some borrow from Gnostic belief, changing it to suit their purpose, and teach that the material world is evil — its creator, known to man as God and to Gnostics as the Demiurge, was insane — and that Lucifer's fall was in truth a descent into the material world so he could save mankind from the Demiurge. Some borrow from the psychologist Carl Jung and teach that Satan is a trickster figure, an agent for change in the world, who ultimately works to improve humanity's condition. Some simply teach "Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the law..." and make it up as they go along. Some teach that current organized religions are stifling, leading to unnatural and unhealthy repression of perfectly natural human wants and desires, and that the worship of Satan is only a symbolic rejection of the moribund and repressive teachings of mainstream religion.

In the end, in a variety of shapes and forms, some more sophisticated than others, what the cultist learns is: They (with a capital "T") have conspired to keep the average man in the dark about the Truth of the world. They have done this on purpose, because They want to keep the common man in chains, so They can continue to rule. The cult leader is the agent of Satan, who was also persecuted by Them in the form of God (whether a metaphysical entity or symbolic being), and he does Satan's work, attempting to free the cultist from those chains.

Then the cult leader gives the cultists a taste of magic to drive home the truth of his words....

CULT ACTIVITIES

The cult itself does *not* participate in any illegal activities. In some cases, of course, there are subtle distinctions. For example, the Demonhame in One Dog, Arizona has for a cult a biker gang

named Satan's Savages. The bikers are criminals, working as drug runners, smugglers, and whatever other jobs come their way. The distinction here is the cult *per se* is not the cause or instigator for the illegal activities (*i.e.*, it doesn't urge its members to commit crimes), and it's not engaged in illegal activities as a part of its ceremonies. In other words, the members are criminals, but the cult has nothing to do with it — with or without the cult, they would still be criminals. If one of Satan's Savages is arrested, the authorities don't blame the cult or suspect it of being the instigator (at least they can't prove any of that, though they might suspect it) — the cult is just one more facet of the biker's depraved personality.

In most cases, cultists gather once or more a week and perform ceremonies. The ceremonies a cultist learns are the same a Morbane uses to summon demons, sacrifice innocents, and perform other evil acts, but none of these evil acts go on at the ceremonies. At the cult level the ceremonies are toothless, and the cultist is merely learning the words and gestures — a sort of programming that plays a part later if he ascends to the ranks of the Brothers. (Depending on the cult, some ceremonies involve activities society frowns upon like sacrificing animals and orgies — all of this is just part and parcel of getting the cultist to reject what society has taught him and act against its mores.)

The only unusual occurrence at a cult gathering is that the members are given a taste — just the barest taste — of magic. They're shown enough magic to prove its existence and prove that the leaders of the cult possesses such abilities, but never enough to impress a skeptic. For instance, the Morbane doesn't parade down the aisle during a Black Mass with a leashed demon or call lightning down from the sky — these are dramatic enough that even a skeptic might come to a cult gathering to check it out. Instead, maybe the Morbane provides the cultists with an Aid to PRE to make them feel more confident after the gathering. The Aid slowly fades during the time between cult gatherings, the confidence fading with it, then suddenly returns after the next gathering. This can be done with other Characteristics to make the cultists feel a variety effects from more young (END) to more attractive (COM). More dramatic Morbanes might use Images and Mental Illusions to create images in the smoke rising up from the braziers and candles of black wax. But whatever the exact effect, it's enough that the cultist believes it's more than a trick, but outsiders can easily dismiss it as a trick or claim the cultist's only seeing what he wants to see — a fine line admittedly, but it's important to keep in mind most cultists are already prone to believe, and most skeptics to disbelieve.

THE CULT'S PUBLIC STATUS

The cult leader tells the members to keep the cult a secret. He points to centuries of persecution and warns the cultists the same can happen to them — maybe it won't be as savage as witch-burnings, but the mainstream authorities, even in this day and age, brook no challenge to their control of the



BILKING THE CULTISTS

A Morbane may find it tempting to fleece his cultists of all the money he can, but he's taught to avoid this. To recruit the widest number of people, it's important the cult doesn't develop a reputation as a scam. The purpose of a cult isn't to make money and provide a livelihood for the leader (DEMON has other, more nefarious means of doing that) — it's to find likely candidates for DEMON membership. Furthermore, the relatives of bilked cultists are more likely to complain to the authorities. While relatives and close friends are willing to write off membership in a cult, which costs little money, as idiosyncratic (or at worst silly and naive), they take lost money more seriously. If a Morbane is going to tangle with the authorities, he'd rather it happened in a more dramatic fashion than having the IRS audit his cult.

He does, however, take donations (reasonable ones) — the giving engenders a sense of loyalty in the giver — and this can generate a tidy profit. And, of course, despite all warnings, some Morbanes just can't resist taking a wealthy cultist for all he's worth.

world and want to keep people like the cultists in the chains of ignorance. He also tells them magic, at least the type worked in the cult to the benefit of its members, is a subtle and private thing — if dragged out into the harsh light of a skeptical and jeering public, it often fades and becomes powerless. The implicit threat is that the cult leader will disappear if brought to the public's scrutiny.

That said, the leader also tells members to invite their friends and families to the cult if the person shows a genuine interest or need, so the existence of the cult is semi-secret — not to be talked about casually, but there for someone truly in need.

THE CULT'S MEETING PLACE

Where the cult meets depends on the Morbane involved. Those who tend to recruit from among criminals might meet in an abandoned warehouse or factory. Those who have a more Satanic bent meet in abandoned churches or monasteries, or break into churches at night. Those who style themselves modern-day witches and warlocks meet out in the woods to hold Sabbats. Whatever the place, it needs to be private — the cult is semi-secret, after all, and nothing breaks the mood for the cultists more than gawkers. Usually the Morbane avoids publicly available facilities — American Legion and union halls, small auditoriums at hotels, and the like — but some have been known to use these, changing the location with each meeting to keep the owners of the facilities from asking too many questions. In one particularly infamous case from the mid-Nineties, a Morbane in Omaha, Nebraska rented church halls, the desecration of the holy and the dangers to him from the nearby consecrated ground giving him a wicked thrill — chances are he isn't the only Morbane to do the same.

THE CULT'S NAME

Cult names tend to be meaningless with spiritual overtones. Some are overt in their reference to Satan, but most Morbanes quickly learn to avoid this. First, if any superheroes are looking for DEMON, the Second Church of Satan might as well be called Look For DEMON Here. (Although some Morbanes have taken to establishing such cults as false leads for pesky do-gooders. One well-known and high-profile California Satanist, totally ignorant of DEMON but having received more than one large donation from the Morbanes, has received many a visit from superheroes after DEMON performs some villainy.) Second, the name of Satan scares away some potential recruits before they've even arrived at the ceremony — once they've come, then introduce the topic of Satan, since most people feel too sheepish to get up and leave in the middle, they instead stay to hear the whole ceremony and in the end get a taste of magic — often just enough enticement to keep them coming back for more.

Here are some sample names: The Church of the Inner Light (of the Cleansing Flame, of the Pure Knowledge), The Second World, The Gift of Knowledge (of Wisdom, of Truth), The Brothers in

Wisdom (in the Secret Truth, of the Inner World), and The Fellowship of Hidden Truth.

THE CULT LEADER

In general, there are two types of cult leaders in DEMON: the cut-out and the Morbane. If the Morbane uses a cut-out, the cult leader has no ties to DEMON. The Morbane then lurks in the shadows, either posing as a cultist or simply observing the ceremonies while invisible or otherwise hidden. Acting from the shadows, he performs magic as need be and searches out potential recruits. Suspicious and paranoid Morbanes tend to use cut-outs; so do Morbanes who have grown so evil they bear the palpable marks of a wicked soul and those who simply lack charisma. Megalomaniac Morbanes, who enjoy being the center of attention, tend to lead the cult themselves.

THE LIFESPAN OF A CULT

Morbanes are taught to keep the lifespan of a cult short. Gather the cultists, select the potential members, get them initiated into the mysteries of DEMON, then discontinue the cult and start a new one after two to twelve months have passed. In an ideal case, a cult's lifespan is no longer than year. Sometimes, a Morbane gets lazy and fails to do this... and usually ends up in prison shortly thereafter.

FROM THE FILES OF UNTIL: THE MILLENNIUM CITY DEMON CULT

Moving from the recruitment network up the hierarchy, PRIMUS analysts report the individual identified for potential membership is then directed to an organization, an entity of unofficial status, normally spiritual in nature, seemingly unaffiliated with any worldwide network. Whether DEMON exploits an existing organization or creates its own is unknown — contradictory reports exist. In the case of Millennium City, a man going by the name Jared Sheffield established an organization named the Fellowship of the Hidden Path. Jared Sheffield escaped in the aftermath of the Demonhame's discovery, but investigators have circumstantial evidence linking him to the Morbane, Monica Knowles.

According to captured DEMON members, they were directed to the cult as a way to improve their current life. The Fellowship of the Hidden Path taught personal empowerment, the "inner confidence to succeed in the material world" focused through ceremonies dedicated to the "archetypal figure embodied by Satan who taught mankind the means of surviving in the material world when he delivered the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge to Eve, the story being a metaphor for growing up, the childlike Adam and Eve becoming adults and Satan handing down his wisdom to them." At some point Monica Knowles approached a potential recruit after a cult meeting, and after a lengthy conversation, invited the person to join the "inner mysteries of the Hidden Path."

A MORE SINISTER CULT

The sections above describes a utilitarian method of establishing a cult with the main goal of finding potential members, and then slowly but surely reprogramming them for initiation into the mysteries of DEMON. In DEMON's history these have proven the most successful — they both gather more members and are more likely to go undetected, so more and more, this is the method DEMON favors. However, not all Morbanes have such a utilitarian and cold-blooded attitude toward their cults.

A Morbane is a fanatic worshipper of dark gods, and some can't stop those characteristics from influencing the creation of the cult. His evil is a part of his very soul and it taints everything he touches, including the cult. Practical considerations are too petty to be worthy of concern — what's important is the worship of the dark glory of evil, especially when the Morbane is the focus for that worship.

Cults these Morbanes establish take a decidedly more sinister bent. They are little more than extensions of the Demonhame, with cultists and Brothers kneeling side-by-side during full-blown black magic ceremonies featuring demon summonings and blood sacrifices. The cultists are Satanists, plain and simple. The cult leader doesn't try to justify Satan's worship in positive terms. Satan is evil, he demands blood and souls in sacrifice, and in return grants great power to his worshipers. The Morbane casts himself as Satan's earthly emissary. He doesn't end the cult for fear of being discovered — he simply lets it grow and grow.

This sort of cult mostly attracts the Powerhungry and Born Evil recruits — it holds little appeal to those at Rock Bottom and the Disenfranchised. (Too squeamish in the face of all the blood running from the altar, accompanied by a choir of wildly screaming cultists who sound like something out of Pandemonium, they usually end up as sacrifices to Satan.)

In most cities and large towns, the authorities discover the cult and stamp it out... but if any single member remains free, he begins a new cult elsewhere, because by this point he's fanatical about his worship of Satan. These cults work best in places like small, isolated towns where most of the citizenry comes under the sway of the Morbane and outsiders are rare (and even more rarely leave the town alive). More than one small town in the United States — from northern factory towns fallen on hard times when the factory closed, to midwestern rural communities where the farmers have lost their land to big corporations, to old southern and New England hamlets that have suffered attrition as the young move where the jobs are — has fallen completely under DEMON's control, every citizen either having sworn himself to Satan or been murdered for his lack of faith. These more sinister cults can also thrive in economically depressed, crime-ridden neighborhoods of major metropolitan areas — places where people have seen so much violent crime, one more murder matters little and goes ignored, and the authorities not only have little interest in policing the neighborhood, they are scared to police it.

AMONG THE BRETHREN



The DEMON Brothers, called as a group the Brethren, comprise the lowest level of the organization. They know the least about its mysteries and stand on the front lines in battle against superheroes — the men in the trenches, so to speak. They are DEMON's spine, and by far the most numerous group in the organization. They all have two things in common: a latent potential for magic; and a willingness to commit evil acts, however violent, bloody, or blasphemous, at the command of a Morbane.



DEMON BROTHER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
12	INT	2	11-	PER Roll 11-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
3	PD	1		Total: 9 PD (6 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 9 ED (6 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
21	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 21

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

14	<i>Brazen Wand:</i> Multipower, 35-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 8 Charges on entire Multipower (-½)	[8]
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast:</i> Energy Blast 7d6; OAF (-1)	
2u	2) <i>Deadly Blast:</i> RKA 2d6+1; OAF (-1)	
12	<i>Amulet Of Protection:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-½)	0
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection:</i> Power Defense (5 points); OIF (-½)	0

Perks

1	Fringe Benefit: Membership (Brother of DEMON)
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Skills

1	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 8-
2	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 11-
2	PS: DEMON Brother 11-
3	Stealth 11-
3	Streetwise 12-
9	Choose three Skills from the following list: Concealment, Conversation, Cryptography, Disguise, Forgery (3 points' worth), Gambling (3 points' worth), Interrogation, Persuasion, Survival (3 points' worth), Tactics, 3 points' worth of KSs/Languages/SSs/TFs/WFs, 1 3-point Combat Skill Level with Brazen Wand

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 54

Total Cost: 75

50+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Feature: DEMON Robes (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 10 Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To DEMON And Its Ideals (Common, Strong)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
- 5 5 more points' worth of Disadvantages appropriate to individual Brother

Total Disadvantage Points: 120

Description: This character sheet represents a typical DEMON Brother just initiated into the Lesser Mysteries of DEMON. He possesses no spellcasting abilities, but does have an enchanted Amulet Of Protection and a Brazen Wand. The Amulet Of Protection can take on many shapes and sizes; usually it's oval with a brass setting and an inexpensive, typically red, gemstone. Crudely etched runes and glyphs decorate the amulet's brass setting, and when it works its magic, a black light seems to shine in the depths of the gemstone. The Brazen Wand is a brass rod, two inches in diameter and one to two feet long. Like the amulet's setting, runes and glyphs are crudely etched into the wand's surface from top to bottom. The wand ends in a carved figure or shape, usually with Satanic significance, the specifics of which depend on the Demonhame the Brother belongs to. The figure serves as a symbol of his membership in that Demonhame. Some possibilities include: a goat's head (or a raven's, snake's, or wolf's); a demonic face with curling horns (or a crown); a scaly claw (either open and clenched into a fist); a pentacle or pentagram; a robed figure with a hood drawn over his face; the torso of a naked woman with snakes for hair or bat wings; an angelic face with fangs; the torso of a man with reptilian wings,

A Brother wears plain robes, the same shade of brown as dried blood. The robes have a hood that he keeps pulled over his head, and he wears a simple domino mask to hide his face. The breast of his robes bears a goat's head embroidered in black thread.

INITIATION

The Morbane culls candidates for the Brethern under his command from among his cultists. During the rituals and ceremonies, he uses his Spellsight to search the souls of the cultists for arcane talent. This is no easy task, for in adults a potential for magic ignored for decades of mundane life is often buried deep. The Morbane might miss it the first time he sees the cultist, and even several times thereafter. For days and sometimes weeks, he must search for that kernel of latent mystic ability he can nurture with blasphemy and cause to come into its full infernal bloom.

Once a Morbane has spotted the potential candidate, he investigates his background. If he finds nothing suspicious, he takes the candidate aside before or after a cult meeting, but always when other cultists aren't around. The two speak, often for more than an hour, and the Morbane uses both his social skills and mental powers to plumb the depths of the man's mind, often giving just the slightest taste of Touch Of Terror to impede the prospective Brother's ability to dissemble (*i.e.*, the power lowers the candidate's PRE and thus his Social Skill Rolls). The Morbane searches for signs the cultist is willing to commit violence and evil acts: statements of his desire to inflict harm on people who have done him wrong, of his faith in the Satan he has learned about from the cult leader; testimonials about how much he loves the cult; casual mentions of a violent past; a fascination with the magic he has witnessed during cult ceremonies; and the like.

After this interview the Morbane makes his decision. If he finds the candidate acceptable, he asks him if he would like to learn the true secrets of the world and universe, and if the candidate says yes, his ascension — or more properly, descent — into the ranks of DEMON begins. If he says no, the Morbane arranges to have the candidate killed as quietly as possible.

The first rite of initiation for a candidate who accepts a Morbane's offer is the creation of his Profane Regalia.

THE PROFANE REGALIA

After the candidate accepts the Morbane's invitation — and at this point he still doesn't know he's joining DEMON — he's told to return home and go about his day-to-day business as if nothing happened. The Morbane also instructs him to tell no one about the meeting. If the candidate does mention it to someone, more often than not he never proceeds to initiation. To DEMON, if the candidate cannot keep a secret as small as this, then how can he keep the much darker secrets he'll learn as a DEMON member? The Morbane also assigns Brothers to spy on the potential recruit.

The moment comes, usually a week or so later, when DEMON Brothers abduct the candidate. If he lives alone, they kidnap him in the dead of night while he's asleep. If not, he's usually kidnapped on his way to or from work. His kidnapers are brusque and refuse to answer any questions. They search him for weapons, microphones, and the like,

but don't hurt him. Finally, they pull a black sack over his head — the sack is magically augmented to make sure he can't see or hear out of it. They sit to either side of him in the back seat of a car and take him to the Demonhame.

Once the candidate arrives at the Demonhame, the Morbane gives him a simple robe to put on and a chalice to drink from. In the chalice is a concoction Luther Black long ago developed for the initiation of Brothers. There's nothing magical about it — similar to absinthe and laudanum in its constituents, it contains both wormwood and tincture of opium, and produces hallucinations that make the imbiber mentally malleable. The concoction is blood-red in color, and as the candidate drinks, the Morbane informs him he partakes of the blood of Satan on this night.

The drink quickly affects his vision. The effects depend on the person, but the standard ones are these: everything has a blood-red glow, purplish sheen, or glistens as if wet. Things seem to move in slow motion, stop motion, or have "afterimages." The drinker sees the world through a fisheye lens, or his vision collapses so he can only focus on one thing — and on it the intensity of his focus seems preternatural.

After the candidate is thoroughly under the drink's effects, the Morbane teaches him how to create the Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection. He only gives verbal instructions — the Morbane tells him how, then has the candidate repeat it back. This goes on until the candidate has memorized the instructions perfectly, both the chants he must speak over the items — for the Brazen Wand, the chants give thanks to Satan and praise his glory; for the Amulet Of Protection, they're petitions to Satan for him to intervene and protect his faithful servant — and the actual physical tasks he must perform to engrave the wand and amulet with mystical runes.

Finally he is led to the workroom in the Demonhame. There, set out on a piece of black velvet, are a plain brass rod and an amulet (usually with an inexpensive gemstone like a garnet or quartz in a brass setting) alongside the acid solution used to etch the metal. Somewhere nearby is a glass, vase, or some other breakable object. When the candidate thinks he's done, he's to point his Brazen Wand at the object and destroy it. Then the Morbane leaves the candidate in the workroom, closing the door behind him, and the candidate sets to work.

It takes a minimum of twelve hours to complete the work, the repeated chants beseeching Satan's aid occupying most of the time. Two guards stand outside the workroom. The candidate takes as long as he wants — some require as long as two or three days to create the Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection. For many candidates, completing the work is the hardest thing they've ever done — drawing the magic from out of one's soul, even in these days of rising magical energy, is no easy task.

Failure

The only sustenance given to the candidate as he works is the hallucinogenic drink, and this he drinks every six hours as the effects of the last one begin to wear off. If the Morbane finds the candidate asleep when he delivers the drink, the candidate fails. If for whatever reason the candidate exits the workroom without a working Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection, he also fails.

A failed candidate is knocked unconscious — usually the Morbane does this with an Ego Attack, but in more violent Demonhames, the candidate is beaten. Brothers again pull a black sack over his head, and then dump the unconscious candidate somewhere near his home, but far away from the Demonhame.

He may return to the cult if he wishes — no one gives him the evil eye or anything of the sort. No one he talks to, including the Morbane, admits to having any recollection of an initiation ritual. Most candidates never say a word about what happened. Between the powerful hallucinations (which cause him to question the reality of everything that what went on) and the embarrassment he feels because he failed, the candidate is perfectly happy to forget the whole thing.

THE BLACK MASS

With the work completed, the Morbane takes the Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection from the candidate. The two go to the chapel in the Demonhame where all the Brothers and Initiates have gathered to welcome the new member, and the candidate, nearly a full-fledged Brother, takes part in his first true Black Mass and learns the secret truth of Satan.

The Black Mass is similar to the ceremonies the candidate learned in the cult, so despite his mental state — he's been up for at least twenty-four hours, taking powerful narcotics and crafting a magical items for the first time, so to say the least he's shaky — he performs the gestures and chants automatically, conditioned from his days in the cult. As the chants come to an end, the candidate participates in the sacrilege of the profaned Eucharist, where he partakes of the blood and body of Satan. The host, Satan's body, is a black and triangular piece of unleavened bread or sometimes a shriveled turnip. The blood is again a red liquid, but this one is equal parts hallucinogen and stimulant, and it has the tangy, leaden taste of blood. After completing the chants and rituals, two of the Initiates drag out a sacrifice and lay him across the altar. From under his robes, the Morbane pulls out a sacrificial dagger and plunges it into the sacrifice's chest. He soaks the candidate's newly-crafted Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection in the blood, then asks the candidate, "Whose work do you do?"

All the eyes of the congregation study the candidate, waiting to see what he does next. If he reacts badly to the human sacrifice — or even hesitates to answer the Morbane's question — the DEMON members converge on him, knocking him unconscious as described above for failing to create the Profane Regalia.

DEMONIC CHANTS

Here are some fragments of chants spoken during Black Masses and other evil ceremonies held in the Demonhame's chapel. You can use these if your pesky PCs eavesdrop on a DEMON ritual.

"Oh great Satan, fallen from Heaven, your faithful, loyal in profanity and obscenity, beseech you to lend us your strength and allow us to bask in your dark glory. Strengthen our arm so that we might crush our enemies. Give us power enough to make our enemies weep with despair. We swear to make our revenge greater than the crime. We swear to punish the innocent. We swear to do your work. Oh great Satan, lend us your aid."

"Oh Ten, who rule in the name of our lord, look upon us with profane favor and let us witness your unholy benevolence. Have we not deceived those who search for truth? Have we not tormented those who seek to do good? Have we not been cruel to those who are merciful? Have we not punished those who offer us forgiveness? Oh Ten, whose legions dance among the flames, reward us for our wicked works. Show us, our lord's faithful, that we have done his work in the world and reward us with power, so that we might perform greater works in his name."

"Our Father who wert in Heaven, unhallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom is come, thy will is done, on Earth as it is in Hell. Give us this day your power, and punish us for our trespasses, as we punish those who trespass against us. And lead us into temptation, so that we might be delivered into evil."

However, if he answers the question, "I do Satan's work." The Morbane gives the newly-annointed Brother his Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection, then tells the Brother the true secret of the universe: Satan is evil. He is no trickster figure or anything else. He rewards those who do evil in his name and further his dark glory. The rewards for faithful service are power and wealth — not in the afterlife, but in the here-and-now. The candidate is told he is now a member of DEMON, Satan's greatest servants... "unhallowed be Thy name!"

And the celebration welcoming the new Brother into the Demonhame begins.

The Sacrifice

The Morbane performs a human sacrifice during the initiation of a new Brother for two reasons. First, it makes the Brother complicit in a serious crime. If after a good night's sleep he has second thoughts about his membership in DEMON, he must deal with the fact that he's an accomplice to murder, and that after watching the murder, he participated in a celebration — usually quite debauched and orgiastic — before calling the police. Second, the new Brother is in a fragile mental state at that point in the initiation, and nothing drives home DEMON's evil — and so the Brother's own evil — more than watching a murder take place right before his eyes.

The truth behind the sacrifice, though, is that a human isn't killed. Either the Morbane uses Mental Illusions to disguise some animal as a person, or if the Morbane lacks that power, the sacrifice is a lifelike mannequin with a packet of blood below its shirt, and the drug-addled candidate, easily affected by the power of suggestion, takes it for a human being. Though no Morbane is squeamish about taking a human life, the risk is too great. Kidnapping and murdering someone every time a Brother joins DEMON would likely get law enforcement's attention — best to save the human sacrifices for special occasions (like when a Brother ascends to the ranks of the Initiates). And this way, if the new Brother freaks out, the Morbane can show him the dead animal or mannequin to calm him down — at least calm him down long enough for the Morbane to plot a good way to rid himself the soft-hearted fool he's had the misfortune of allowing into his Demonhame.

TYPES OF BROTHERS

While DEMON's main thrust in training Brothers is teaching them the arcane arts, and the organization is far from a paramilitary one like VIPER, Brothers do tend to take on certain roles in a Demonhame in accordance with its needs and their personalities. On the character sheet at the beginning of this section, 9 points remain for Skills and 45 Character Points remain to be spent as the Brother progresses through DEMON's ranks. For each of the ten personality types, the accompanying text box presents a possible way of spending those points. With all the Package Deals in this section, replace the Powers and Skills on the character sheet with the ones listed in the Package — the adjusted figure is included to make it easy to refer to on the fly during a game.

THE ANTICHRIST WANNABE

The Antichrist was born to evil... at least in his mind. He's scoured his birth charts looking for the ill-omens that marked his birth, and if he didn't find any, he made some up. He's not particularly beholden to DEMON — if he weren't in DEMON, he'd join some other evil organization. Because that's what he is... Evil, with a capital "E," pure and simple. This desire to be born evil is a result of the Antichrist's vanity. In his mind evil is cool, glamorous and alluring, and he desperately wants to be cool. He may not have truly been born evil, but by the time he's joined DEMON, he might as well have been, because at every opportunity he pushes himself to choke down on any human emotions, so he can prove just how evil he is. He tends to focus his studies on magic that leads to tangible results, like increasing the power of his Brazen Wand, so everyone can see how evil he truly is. He often takes an active role in dealings with mundane criminals and the like, since illicit activities are appropriate activities for an evil person.

ANTICHRIST WANNABE PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
9	+3 DEX
2	+2 INT
2	+2 PRE
25	<i>Brazen Wand</i> : Multipower, 50-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast I</i> : Energy Blast 10d6; OAF (-1)
2u	2) <i>Eldritch Blast II</i> : Energy Blast 5d6, Area Of Effect (6" Cone; +1); OAF (-1)
2u	3) <i>Deadly Blast</i> : RKA 3d6+1; OAF (-1)
6	+2 with Brazen Wand
3	Interrogation 12-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-
4	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 13-
5	Stealth 13-
7	Streetwise 14-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 68 points (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE BORN-AGAIN SATANIST

This DEMON Brother has been born again in Satan. He's not in it for the money or power; he's in it because he believes in Satan and all his teachings. He might have been a lost soul, looking for answers before finding them in DEMON. He might be a convert from another religion, one that never sat well because its dictates asked too much of him. Whatever his origins, he's found Satan and constantly lets his fellow Brothers know about it. In the Demon-hame he's the one who speaks the fall from grace at meals; on the battlefield he's the first and loudest to praise Satan when the Brothers defeat some superheroes; and in between those times, he works twice as hard as anybody else at recruiting new members. Satan has given this Brother's pointless life meaning, and the Born-Again Satanist wants to tell the world. As he progresses he learns all he can about Satan and hones his ability to convince others of the truth he has embraced — not just with his words, but also his nascent mental powers.

BORN-AGAIN SATANIST PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
2	+2 INT
6	+3 EGO
2	+2 PRE
15	<i>Domination</i> : Mind Control 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3	Conversation 12-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-
4	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 13-
4	PS: DEMON Brother 13-
5	Oratory 13-
5	Persuasion 13-
7	Power: Magic 14-
3	Seduction 12-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 59 points (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE CONSPIRACY THEORIST

The Conspiracy Theorist likely first heard of DEMON while reading about its ties to the Freemasons and the Kennedy assassination. The money is nice, the power doesn't mean much... what the Conspiracy Theorist wants is the secret history of the world, and he's convinced (mainly because the Morbane told him so) that by ascending DEMON's hierarchy, he can learn more and more of those secrets, until he finally discovers the identity of the Rex Mundi, the secret ruler of the world. Learning secrets drives him, and he spends much of his time pestering the Initiates and Morbane to tell him more, because whatever he learns, he knows there's more to it, that there has to be another conspiracy somewhere. The Conspiracy Theorist is often dispatched to research new plots — obtaining blueprints or researching the public record — and search for artifacts, and thus develops a wide range of skills in his researches. His paranoid mentality tends to focus magical energies on the Amulet Of Protection.

THE CONSPIRACY THEORIST PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
2	+2 INT
2	+1 EGO
20	<i>Amulet Of Protection</i> : Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½)
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection</i> : Mental Defense (8 points total); OIF (-½)
5	Bribery 13-
5	Bureaucratics 13-
3	CK: City Of Operations 12-
5	Concealment 13-
2	Cryptography 12-; Translation Only (-½)
5	Cramming
5	Deduction 13-
4	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
5	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 14-
3	KS: Secret History Of The World 12-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 69 points (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

SATAN'S GOLDEN BOY

This Brother is the Morbane's pet — the worst and the darkest among the Brethern at the Demon-hame, and the one who shows the most talent with magic. He crafted his Profane Regalia in record time; during his initiation he helped the Initiates hold down the sacrifice and then helped the Morbane plunge the dagger when he made the sacrifice. Everyone knows this Brother has a future with DEMON, because the Morbane's told everyone so time and time again. But all this praise has gone to his head. He patronizes his Brothers, tends to be reckless in combat, and has an ongoing rivalry with the Initiates, many of whom resent his talents. Because of his skill with magic and his natural leadership abilities, he often becomes an Initiate's second in command, if not officially then simply because he's the least likely to lose his head when superheroes show up on the scene.

SATAN'S GOLDEN BOY PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
2	+2 INT
6	+3 EGO
20	<i>Brazen Wand</i> : Multipower, 40-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast I</i> : Energy Blast 8d6; OAF (-1)
2u	2) <i>Eldritch Blast II</i> : Energy Blast 4d6, Area Of Effect (3" Cone; +1); OAF (-1)
2u	3) <i>Deadly Blast</i> : RKA 2½d6; OAF (-1)
15	<i>Black Magic</i> : Multipower, 30-point reserve, all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	1) <i>Domination</i> : Mind Control 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	2) <i>Befuddlement</i> : Mental Illusions 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment</i> : Ego Attack 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror</i> : Drain PRE 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	5) <i>Spell-Shattering</i> : Dispel Magic 8d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3	+1 with Brazen Wand
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
3	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 12-
7	Power: Magic 14-
3	Tactics 12-
3	Teamwork 11-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 75 points
 (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE SATANIC TOADY

As a child, this Brother watched a monster movie, pointed to the mad scientist's hunchbacked henchman, and told his parent that's what he wanted to be when he grew up... and, lo and behold, he was true to his word. The consummate yes-man, he follows the Morbane around the Demonhame, echoing his commands and praising his leader's power, wisdom, appearance, and whatever else the Morbane wants praised. He always volunteers to clean up the chapel, no matter how bloody the sacrifice made the night before, or to take the most dangerous assignments. Following the Morbane around has made him good at his job, and he's picked up a lot of occult knowledge along the way. Scurrying around after the Master... errr, the Morbane has also made him quick on his feet.

THE SATANIC TOADY PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
9	+3 DEX
2	+2 INT
2	+1 EGO
5	+1 SPD
15	<i>Black Magic</i> : Multipower, 30-point reserve, all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	1) <i>Domination</i> : Mind Control 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	2) <i>Befuddlement</i> : Mental Illusions 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment</i> : Ego Attack 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror</i> : Drain PRE 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	5) <i>Spell-Shattering</i> : Dispel Magic 8d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
5	+1 DCV
4	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
4	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 13-
4	PS: DEMON Brother 13-
9	Power: Magic 15-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 64 points
 (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE SELF-CENTERED SATANIST

This Brother joined DEMON for the power and wealth, and nothing but the power and wealth. In the worship of evil, those are fine motivations — so long as the Brother never forgets who's providing the rewards. He performs the rituals and chants with as much heart and zeal as anyone in the Demonhame, because like one of Pavlov's dogs, he's learned DEMON will reward him for his faithful service. But if this Brother doesn't ascend in the ranks — if the rewards never grow greater — he either becomes bitter or takes matters into his own hands. Concerned with getting his way, he has focused his efforts on gaining the mental powers that come with learning black magic.

THE SELF-CENTERED SATANIST PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
2	+2 INT
6	+3 EGO
2	+2 PRE
10	+1 SPD
15	<i>Black Magic</i> : Multipower, 30-point reserve, all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	1) <i>Domination</i> : Mind Control 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	2) <i>Befuddlement</i> : Mental Illusions 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment</i> : Ego Attack 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror</i> : Drain PRE 3d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
1u	5) <i>Spell-Shattering</i> : Dispel Magic 8d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3	+1 with Brazen Wand
4	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
4	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 13-
3	PS: DEMON Brother 12-
7	Power: Magic 14-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 61 points
(+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS

This Brother feels his talents — his genius for evil and impressive magical abilities— go unnoticed in the Demonhame. Maybe no one is particularly impressed with the fine etching on his Brazen Wand, or has noticed the slight tinge of verdigris on the brass that indicates his increasing magical prowess. Maybe no one listens to his plans to get the superheroes, or agrees he'd make a great Initiate. Despite the fact no one recognizes his genius for evil, he continues to point it out — and Hell help the Demonhame if the Unrecognized Genius saves the day or successfully performs some important task, because he doesn't let the rest of the Brothers forget it and never stops talking about it. While there are indeed many Unrecognized Geniuses who never progress beyond the starting character sheet, some work so hard they become talented Brothers — just never as talented as they think. Because of their need to prove to the world (at least the world of the Demonhame) how talented they are, they focus on the outward manifestation of their power, the Brazen Wand. Because they are constantly suggesting new plots and courses of action, they eventually develop some skill with tactics — if nothing else they get better at making their brilliant plans sound brilliant.

THE UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
9	+3 DEX
2	+2 INT
2	+2 PRE
25	<i>Brazen Wand</i> : Multipower, 50-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast I</i> : Energy Blast 10d6; OAF (-1)
2u	2) <i>Eldritch Blast II</i> : Energy Blast 5d6, Area Of Effect (6" Cone; +1); OAF (-1)
2u	3) <i>Deadly Blast</i> : RKA 3d6+1; OAF (-1)
6	+2 with Brazen Wand
3	Interrogation 12-
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
3	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 12-
7	Persuasion 14-
5	Tactics 13-
5	Teamwork 13-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 75 points
(+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE VICTIM

It's not his fault. His parents failed to raise him well. His teachers didn't like him and ignored him in class. He lost his job and couldn't stay away from the booze or drugs. He couldn't find a new job, because they keep harping on the last job he was fired from. He had to resort to a life of crime, because none of the jobs he could get would pay well enough. Society hasn't taken care of him; it's kicked him in the teeth again and again. It's not his fault he joined DEMON and became a servant of Satan. What else could he do?

While in the Demonhame this Brother is just fine, but if superheroes ever capture him, they had better find a gag, because he's going to rattle on about all his troubles, whether or not he thinks it will get him off the hook. Always on the lookout for people who want to do him injury (further injury, to be precise), the Victim becomes quick on his feet and his magical powers tend toward defensive abilities. Of course, his relatively high defenses lead to him being on the front lines of battle against superheroes and their ilk.... the Victim just can't catch a break.

THE VICTIM PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
9	+3 DEX
2	+2 PD
2	+2 ED
15	+2 SPD
17	<i>Brazen Wand</i> : Multipower, 35-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast</i> : Energy Blast 7d6; OAF (-1)
2u	2) <i>Deadly Blast</i> : RKA 2d6+1; OAF (-1)
20	<i>Amulet Of Protection</i> : Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½)
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection</i> : Mental Defense (7 points total); OIF (-½)
6	+2 with Brazen Wand
5	Concealment 12-
5	Stealth 13-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 88 points
 (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE VIOLENCE JUNKIE

There's something about inflicting pain on a victim, about spilling blood, that this Brother finds addictive. The suffering of others, especially those suffering because of something he did, gives him a feeling of euphoria. He might not have been a sadist before joining DEMON — in every other way, he might have even been a nice guy — but joining the organization has laid bare his true soul and given him a taste for blood. It's made him into a Violence Junkie, someone who inflicts harm not for revenge, nor for power, but simply for the rush it gives him. The Violence Junkie becomes very good at dishing out physical punishment, his arcane abilities expressing themselves as increased strength, speed, and toughness. In the Demonhame, he often becomes an enforcer, and unlike most DEMON members learns more about using his fists than his magic to get his way.

THE VIOLENCE JUNKIE PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities			
5	+5 STR			
9	+3 DEX			
6	+3 CON			
2	+2 PRE			
	<i>Martial Arts: Dirty Infighting</i>			
	Manuever OCV DCV Notes			
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 30 STR
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	2½d6 NND (3)
4	Punch	+0	+2	6d6 Strike
5	Roundhouse	-2	+1	8d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	4d6 + vel/5, Target Falls
4	+1 Damage Class (already added in)			
1	WF: Blades			
2	Streetwise +1 (13-)			

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 53 points
 (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

THE WORKING JOE SATANIST

This Brother calmly and routinely goes about the business of being a DEMON member. He has faith in Satan (after all, he's seen more than one demon summoning, and maybe even been bound to a demon himself) but he's quiet about it. He doesn't revel in the evil and wickedness, nor take a dark delight in his newfound power... at least not out loud with diabolical laughter. He simply does as his leader tells him. This doesn't mean he isn't talented — the Working Joe Satanist might possess the patience and tenacity to go far in the study of black magic — it just means he's calm and methodical about what he does. He often supports the other Brothers as they go about their tasks, and he slowly but surely improves at a little bit of everything.

THE WORKING JOE SATANIST PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Abilities
3	+3 STR
6	+2 DEX
2	+1 CON
2	+2 INT
2	+2 PRE
6	+1 SPD
20	<i>Brazen Wand</i> : Multipower, 40-point reserve, all OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast</i> : Energy Blast 8d6; OAF (-1)
2u	2) <i>Deadly Blast</i> : RKA 2½d6; OAF (-1)
16	<i>Amulet Of Protection</i> : Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (-½)
6	+2 with Brazen Wand
3	Interrogation 12-
2	Cryptography 12-; Translation Only (-½)
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-
3	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 12-
1	Language: Latin (basic conversation)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 79 points
 (+45 points to Total Cost of character sheet)

SECRET GREETINGS

Here are some secret greetings used among DEMON members. Most are in the form of a question and answer.

Q: Whose work do we do?

A: Satan's work!

Q: What blessing for our enemies?

A: Requiem aeter-nam dona ei, Domine nefande! (Translated: Give him eternal rest, O infernal Lord — a perversion of a traditional blessing spoken over the dead.)

Q: And if you should meet the serpent in the garden?

A: Then I shall take his fruit and eat of it!

Q: Who rules?

A: Satan!

Q: And who is Satan's regent in this world of sin and temptation?

A: DEMON!

AMONG THE INITIATES



The next rank in DEMON's hierarchy is the Initiates, who command the Brethren. Studying at the feet of the Morbane, an Initiate has begun to delve the dark depths of sorcery, and can now work magic on his own without the aid of a magical device or ritual. He also has increasing responsibilities at the Demon-hame. The Morbane has put him in charge of various day-to-day duties, and some Morbanes even allow their Initiates to plan minor criminal activities.

An Initiate begins to learn the nature of the infernal cosmogony, his knowledge of Satan evolving along with his mystic prowess. He learns of the Archdemons and their names. The Initiate begins to see Satan as more of a symbol, or perhaps a dark god much too powerful and glorious to interact with his followers. Now he knows that the ten Archdemons are the ones who grant DEMON its power — he knows this for a fact, for it has fallen to him to work the infernal summons and bind Brothers to demonic spirits in return for power.



DEMON INITIATE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 16 PD (10 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 16 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
26	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 70

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
30	<i>Tarnished Wand:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve, all slots OAF (-1), 16 Charges on entire Multipower (-0)	[16]
3u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast I:</i> Energy Blast 12d6; OAF (-1)	
3u	2) <i>Eldritch Blast II:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (7" Cone; +1); OAF (-1)	
3u	3) <i>Deadly Blast:</i> RKA 4d6; OAF (-1)	
20	<i>Amulet Of Protection (Initiate):</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½)	0
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection (Initiate):</i> Power Defense (5 points); OIF (-½)	0
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection (Initiate):</i> Mental Defense (8 points total); OIF (-½)	0
20	<i>Black Magic:</i> Multipower, 40-point reserve, all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	
2u	1) <i>Domination:</i> Mind Control 8d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	4
2u	2) <i>Befuddlement:</i> Mental Illusions 8d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	4
2u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment:</i> Ego Attack 4d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	4
2u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror:</i> Drain PRE 4d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	4
2u	5) <i>Spell-Shattering:</i> Dispel Magic 10d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	4

Perks

- 3 Fringe Benefit: Membership (Initiate of DEMON)

Skills

- 9 +3 with Tarnished Wand
- 2 Cryptography 12-; Translation Only (-½)
- 3 Interrogation 12-
- 3 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-
- 4 KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 13-
- 1 Language: Latin (basic conversation)
- 1 Language: same as Morbane's (basic conversation)
- 2 PS: DEMON Initiate 11-
- 11 Power: Magic 16-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 3 Teamwork 12-
- 2 WF: Common Melee Weapons
- 2 Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH) 12-
- 30 Choose 30 points worth of Skills and abilities from appropriate Brother Package Deal

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 180

Total Cost: 250

150+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Feature: DEMON Robes (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 20 Hunted: UNTIL (or like organization) 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
- 10 Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To DEMON And Its Ideals (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Very Frequently, Major)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)

Total Disadvantage Points: 255

Description: This character sheet represents a typical DEMON Initiate. His increasing mystical might has made his Brazen Wand more powerful, but the wand is no longer bright and shiny. Dark green verdigris has grown over its surface, tarnishing the metal — the Initiate's inner corruption finding outward expression in this change to the wand. He has also learned a smidgen of Black Magic. He does not cast spells with the ease of a Morbane, but the effects are still potent. His increasing arcane talent has one more benefit: his body itself is also changing, growing faster and stronger as his soul grows more wicked. Over the brown robes of a Brother, the Initiate wears a black chasuble — a sleeveless outer robe, trimmed in scarlet silk with a goat's head embroidered on the breast in silver thread.

SUMMONING DEMONS

The most important responsibility an Initiate has is summoning demons to serve DEMON's purposes. Since the days when the Descending Hierarchy, those rulers of the infernal, passed the edict that their subjects were to help DEMON no more, demon summoning has become very dangerous. Now a Morbane typically allows his Initiates to handle all summonings, for he fears to lose his own life in a conjuration gone awry.

It's an easy matter to identify a Brother ready to ascend in DEMON's ranks: his Brazen Wand has become a Tarnished Wand. But to complete his rise to Initiate, he must successfully perform a human sacrifice and summon a demon. The human sacrifice is proof the Initiate has abandoned any morality he may have had when he joined DEMON. The successful summoning is proof of his strength and talent in the arcane arts, as well as his strength of will and his fearlessness in the face of mortal danger.

THE RITUAL

Held in the Demonhame's summoning chamber, the ritual is small. Only the Morbane, two Initiates, and the candidate attend. The Morbane does not want the other Brothers to witness the price of failure and discourage them — knowing something bad happens, and seeing it happen, are two different things, especially when failure can result in the demon tearing the Initiate's soul from his body and dragging it down to the Netherworld.

The Initiates hold the sacrifice to the altar. The Morbane speaks the Black Mass. When he has finished, the candidate makes the sacrifice. Then begins the summoning itself. The summoning goes quickly; there are no second chances and the additional power granted to the candidate from the sacrifice must be used soon or lost forever. To prove his power over the summoned demon, he must command the demon to kneel to him, then command the demon to return to the Netherworld and deliver the new Initiate's regards to his masters, the Archdemons, and inform them a new sorcerer walks among mortals.

THE PRICE OF TRAFFICKING WITH THE INFERNAL

One cannot summon the infernal and go unscathed. Trafficking with demons leaves a taint on a person's soul, a dark stain on whatever it is that makes him human. Immediately upon successfully calling forth a demon, the Initiate gains the following Disadvantages:

Value Disadvantage

- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)

WHEN SUMMONS GO AWRY

Multiversal laws and cosmic axioms bind demons, and they have no choice but to obey certain properly-performed summonses. So no matter what edict the Descending Hierarchy passes, demons must still come to the Material World and perform as commanded when a black magician successfully summons them. But they don't have to make it easy, and Heaven help the black magician who fails.

First, the summoner must *always* defeat the demon in a Skill Versus Skill Contest using EGO Rolls. Once demons were content to work evil in the world at the behest of a DEMON member, the performing of wicked acts in the material plane being their *raison d'être*. Now they only do so kicking and screaming because a demon knows the Descending Hierarchy cares little about excuses concerning cosmic axioms, and will punish the demon for doing DEMON's bidding on principle.

Second, normally if the summoner fails his Magic Roll, nothing happens — the demon just ignores the improperly performed summons. If a DEMON member fails, such is not the case: the demon takes the opportunity to punish the DEMON member. What precisely happens depends on how much he fails his Magic Roll by, as indicated in the accompanying table.

FAILED MAGIC ROLL TABLE

Failed By...	Result
1-2	Summoner gains the Disadvantage, <i>Unluck 2d6</i>
3-4	Summoner gains the Disadvantage, <i>Psychological Limitation: Insane (Very Common, Total)</i>
6 or more	Summoner loses his soul to the infernal and dies. (Usually a ghostly claw reaches forth from the summoning circle, passes through the summoner's chest, and a ghostly image of the summoner, the claws piercing this image through and through, is dragged into the Netherworld.)

What Happens Next?

If the candidate for initiation fails to control the summoned demon, he must fight the demon. The Morbane and other two Initiates don't help. If the candidate survives the fight, he is raised to the ranks of the Initiates. Perhaps his magic is weak, but DEMON can find a use for any candidate who can survive a one-on-one fight with a 350-point demon.

If the candidate fails by 1 to 2, he returns to the ranks of the Brethren. He might be given a second chance; he might not. It depends on circumstances, the most likely of which is a need for Initiates in the Demonhame because of attrition. If the summoning drives him insane, it depends on the sort of insanity. Catatonia leads to either the Morbane having him committed or using him as a sacrifice in a later date. If the candidate suffers from insanity that isn't crippling, he returns to the ranks of the Brethren — he never gets another chance at becoming an Initiate. If the summoner loses his soul, the Morbane disposes of the body.

THE DEMON-BOUND

Because of the problems with summoning demons since the Demonflame Incident, DEMON has had to create a new way of tapping into the power of the infernal and exploiting it in their plots. Demons have long been an important weapon in the DEMON arsenal, and the organization was in dire jeopardy if denied access to them. Luther Black, seeing his plans in jeopardy, dispatched the Black Shepherd to teach the Morbanes the secrets of demon-binding.

In a demon-binding, the black magician summons forth an infernal spirit, but doesn't allow it to take material form. Instead the summoner forces it to occupy the body of a mortal. The mortal gains some powers, usually less than what the demon would have if fully materialized, but still enough to challenge superheroes and their ilk. Even better, the summoner doesn't risk having his soul dragged down into the depths.

In DEMON it falls to the Brethren to serve as mortal vessels for the summoned demon. (Some volunteer for this, eager to wield the power of a demon; others are tricked or forced into the role.) The ritual takes place in the Demonhame's summoning chamber. The Brother lays down in the pentacle inscribed in the floor, his head and limbs at the star's points. The Initiate summons the demon's spirit, which flows into the Brother's body.

Demon-Binding: The demon-binding is a powerful Transform with the *Trigger Advantage*. The Trigger is a word, usually the name of the Archdemon whose servant has been bound to the Brother. The binding lasts a single day. If left untriggered, the demon's spirit returns whence it came when the Brother goes to sleep — a nightmare-wracked slumber to be sure. If triggered, the demon-binding takes effect instantly — in other words, on the Initiate's Phase — and lasts until the Brother is Knocked Out, goes to sleep, or is forced onto holy ground or subjected to an exorcism or similar ritual (the *Accidental Change Disadvantage*; see *Types Of Demon-Bound* below). The Brother cannot change back to a normal human at will — *i.e.*, he cannot order the demon spirit from his body — nor can he switch back and forth.

(The Power is technically a part of the magic of the summoning chamber, described on page 118, but is included here for the sake of completeness.)

Major Transform 17d6 (DEMON Brother into Demon-Bound, heals back as described in text) (standard effect: 51 BODY), Trigger (variable trigger; +½) (382 Active Points); Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Side Effect (Major Transform 1d6 [see text], affects subject not caster, always occurs; -0). Total cost: 80 points.

The Dirty Secret

Most Brothers are squeamish the first time they're demon-bound. The subject is laying in the middle of a pentacle, after all, and that doesn't seem a good place to be when an Initiate is beseeching dark gods and demanding a demon appear. But once a Brother's been through it, he quickly overcomes his fears. While sharing his soul with a demon, he retains his personality and seems to suffer no adverse effects the next day. Some even grow to enjoy the power it gives them, quickly volunteering whenever word goes around that the next plot will require Demon-Bound. But Brothers are new to black magic and largely ignorant of its insidious costs.

Each time a Brother shares his soul with a demon, the demon leaves something of his infernal being — a shard of his profane soul, if demons had souls — in the soul of the Brother. It's just a small piece of supernatural evil, but each time the demon adds another piece until the Brother is changed. He becomes the perfect home for a demon, exactly the kind of place where an infernal creature could take up a permanent residence.

This Side Effect of demon-binding is a Major Transform 1d6 of the Spirit that works against the target's EGO. The effect is cumulative, and can be healed only through certain rare and powerful rituals of holy magic. Once the total on the Transform dice is double the target's EGO (on average this requires seven demon-bindings), the demon-binding doesn't end. Instead the demon takes up residence in the Brother. The new creation is different than the original, oftentimes more powerful, and the Brother's personality changes. He doesn't become exactly a demon; instead his personality traits, especially the violent and evil ones, become more extreme.

This might seem like a great thing for DEMON, but inevitably the permanently Demon-Bound either attempts to usurp the Morbane's authority or defects from the organization. Furthermore, Luther Black is suspicious of this and suspects the Descending Hierarchy of having a deeper plot, so the Morbanes have orders to limit the number of times a Brother undergoes demon-binding... but still the effects are unpredictable.

Types Of Demon-Bound

This sections describes several types of Demon-Bound. The Transformation grants approximately 200 Character Points' worth of Powers to the Brother, and you should add these to the Brother's character sheet. The Brother can still use his Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection while Demon-Bound, as well as any other abilities he might possess.

All of the demons provide the following in addition to the specific abilities described for each type of Demon-Bound:

Cost	Power
5	+5 STR
18	+6 DEX
6	+3 CON
10	+5 BODY
6	+6 PRE
0	+1 PD (from adjusted STR)
0	+1 ED (from adjusted STR)
4	+4 REC (includes points from adjusted STR and CON)
14	+2 SPD (includes points from adjusted DEX)
10	+26 END (includes points from adjusted CON)
9	+19 STUN (includes points from adjusted STR, CON, and BODY)
18	<i>Tough Skin:</i> Armor (6 PD/6 ED)
20	<i>Infernal Vitality:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, 25%

Total Cost Of Powers: 120 points

Value	Disadvantages
10	Accidental Change: 11-, back to human form when on consecrated/holy ground or subjected to holy ritual like an exorcism (Uncommon)
25	Distinctive Features: Aura/Appearance Of Utter Evil (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
20	Susceptibility: to holy objects/places, takes 1d6 STUN and BODY per Turn (Uncommon)

Total Value Of Disadvantages: 55 points.

Beautiful, Glorious Evil: Sharing his soul with a servant of Belphegor, the Demon-Bound has an unearthly beauty. Even though he's obviously evil, few can resist being attracted to him. DEMON usually uses this for infiltration and the like, rather than combat. The Demon-Bound's beauty is so distracting that even when the target resists the Mind Control, he still finds it hard to injure such glorious features (thus the DCV bonus).

Cost	Power
10	+20 COM
60	<i>Unholy Beauty:</i> Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Area Of Effect (9" Radius; +1¼); No Range (-½), Set Effect ("love me, don't hurt me"; -1)
10	<i>Difficult To Harm:</i> +2 DCV

Total cost: 80 points.

The Devil In Mind: Sharing his soul with a servant of Adam Belial, the Demon-Bound grows small horns from his forehead, his teeth become decidedly sharp, and his tongue forks. He gains power over men's minds and can compel them to dark deeds, give them a glimpse of the horrors of the Netherworld, or burn their minds with terror.

"BUT I'M INNOCENT..."

"...I was abducted by Satanists and given to the Devil. Please sir, let me go home! I need deprogramming, not handcuffs!"

This used to be the standard line a Demon-Bound gave to superheroes who defeated him (after he regained consciousness, of course). It worked very well for a while. However, as with any scam, the superheroes got wise to the ruse. In Indianapolis, the Speedway Six fought Brothers from the local Demonhame. After the Brothers recovered, they pulled the "But I'm an innocent victim!" schtick, and the superheroes gave them the number of a counselor specializing in cult abductions and let them go on their way... or so the DEMON Brothers thought.

The Speedway Six followed the freed Brothers, who eventually led them to the Demonhame. The rest didn't go so well for DEMON.

Since then, DEMON Brothers are leery of pulling the trick. Some enterprising Morbanes have begun using innocent victims as Demon-Bound to mix things up a bit and keep superheroes on their guard, but the problem with innocents is this: just because they're bound to a demon doesn't mean they have to obey DEMON. The Morbane and Initiates must use Mind Control to keep them in line, and many times that's more trouble than it's worth.

Cost Power

- 14 +7 EGO
- 41 *Blandishments Of Belial*: Multipower, 62-point reserve; all slots Activation Roll 14- (-½)
- 4u 1) *Infernal Control*: Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼); Activation Roll 14- (-½)
- 4u 2) *Infernal Images*: Mental Illusions 12d6; Activation Roll 14- (-½)
- 4u 3) *Infernal Seeking*: Mind Scan 12d6; Activation Roll 14- (-½)
- 4u 4) *Infernal Terror*: Ego Attack 6d6; Activation Roll 14- (-½)
- 9 Mental Defense (9 points + EGO/5)

Total cost: 80 points.

The Doppelganger: Having given himself over to a servant of Satan-Moloch, the double opposed to divine unity, this Demon-Bound can mimic the powers of a target. The powers are never exactly the same — instead they're a twisted version, with an appropriately changed special effect. The Demon-Bound has a second face on the back of his head, a more ugly version of his true face, and the sneering, grotesque face darkly mimics the expressions and echoes the words of the true one.

Cost Power

- 70 *Demonic Doubling*: Variable Power Pool (Mimic Pool), 50 base + 25 control cost; No Skill Roll Required (+1); Requires Successful HTH Attack (-½), VPP Mimics Target's Powers (-½), Powers May Only Be As Powerful As Target's Powers (-½)
- 5 *Two-Faced*: 360-Degree Perception for Normal Sight
- 4 +2 OCV with Hand-To-Hand Attack

Total cost: 79 points.

The Evil Quintuplets: Sharing his soul with a servant of Satan-Moloch, the Demon-Bound can create four exact duplicates of himself to fight alongside him. He has a glowing brand on his forehead in the shape of pentagram, and when he splits he and each duplicate bear one of the pentagram's points. Each duplicate has the *Teamwork* Skill as well as the other abilities of the Demon-Bound. (75 points for Brother + 120 points for general Demon-Bound abilities + 9 points for *Teamwork* = 204-point Duplicate.)

Cost Power

- 51 Duplication (creates four 204-point Duplicates)
- 20 Mind Link, specific group (Duplicates) of up to any 4 minds, Psychic Bond
- 9 *Teamwork* (DEX Roll + 3)

Total Cost: 80 points.

The Face Of The Gorgon: His soul the home of a monstrous child of Lilith, the face of the Demon-Bound grows scaly and his hair turns into living tendrils that whip around his head. He can turn a man into a statue with just a glance. His power has the Advantage, *Partial Transform*. When it does enough BODY for a Cosmetic Transform, the target's skin turns darkish grey. When it does enough for a Minor Transform, the target's limbs grow

heavy and stiff, and he suffers a -2 penalty to OCV and DEX-Based Skills.

Cost Power

- 67 Major Transform 3d6 (man into statue, heals back normally), Partial Transform (+½)
- 12 +6 OCV with Transform

Total cost: 79 points.

The Fallen Into Flames: One of the fiery demons who serves Asmodeus has come to reside in the Demon-Bound's soul. Great fiery wings sprout from the his back and his whole body is wreathed in blood-red hellfire.

Cost Power

- 24 Elemental Control, 48-point powers
- 24 1) *Wings Of Demonic Fire*: Flight 24"
- 27 2) *Infernal Mantle*: HKA 1d6+1, Damage Shield (does damage in HTH Combat; +¾), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No STR Bonus (-½)
- 4 +2 with Flight

Total cost: 79 points.

The Healing Touch Of Astaroth: The palms of the Demon-Bound bleed and drip blood as small bony hooks break through his skin. He gains the ability to heal and aid his fellows... but only at the expense of others. This ability is bought as a Transfer with a new Advantage, *Transfer To Other* (+½). This means that when the character uses the Transfer, he does not Transfer the Character Points removed from the victim to himself, but to another person whom he touches (or who's within range, if the power has the *Ranged* Advantage; *Ranged* applies to both the "Drain" and "Aid" functions of Transfer if purchased for this form of Transfer). If there's no one to whom the character can Transfer the removed points, the power has no effect. If the character wants to be able to Transfer to either himself or another person, he should buy two Transfers (perhaps as a Multipower).

Cost Power

- 72 *Demonic Healing*: Transfer 2½d6 (target's BODY to character's BODY, STUN, or END), Ranged (+½), Variable Effect (either BODY, STUN, or END, one at a time; +¼), Transfer To Other (+½); Activation Roll 15- (-¼)
- 8 +4 OCV with Demonic Healing

Total cost: 80 points.

The Horror In The Dark: Sharing his soul with a servant of Lucifuge, the Demon-Bound is cloaked in ebon darkness... from which he can strike his foe with fangs grown long and unnaturally sharp.

Cost Power

- 7 +3 DEX; Only In Darkness (-¼)
- 35 *Shadow Mantle*: Darkness to Sight Group 3" radius, Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No Range (-½)
- 30 *Fangs*: HKA 2d6 (3d6 with STR)
- 8 +4 OCV with Fangs

Total cost: 80 points.

The Infernal Deceiver: A host to a demon from the domain of Adramelek, the Demon-Bound gains the ability to create large-scale illusions and warp space around him, deceiving the eyes of his enemies and making their attacks against him miss.

Cost Power

- 51 *Adramalekian Manipulations:* Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Group Images, -3 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (8" radius; +¾)
- 27 +8 DCV, Costs Endurance (-½)

Total cost: 78 points.

Mired In The World: With a servant of Nahema residing in his soul, the Demon-Bound gains the ability to trap his target in the material world... by causing the very ground to rise up and hold him.

Cost Power

- 60 *Infernal Bindings:* Multipower, 90-point reserve, all slots Defense Depends On Materials Used (-½)
- 6u 1) *The First Binding:* Entangle 9d6; Defense Depends On Materials Used (-½)
- 6u 2) *The Second Binding:* Entangle 6d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½); Defense Depends On Materials Used (-½)
- 6u 3) *The Third Binding:* Entangle 4d6, Area Of Effect (Any Area; +1¼); Defense Depends On Materials Used (-½)
- 2 +1 OCV with First Binding

Total cost: 80 points.

The Size Of The Behemoth: With a demon loyal to Lilith residing in his soul, the Demon-Bound can grow huge in size, and his face becomes monstrous with long tusks jutting from his mouth and curling horns. Curling bone spurs pierce through the skin of his hands and wrap around his fists.

Cost Power

- 15 +30 END
- 13 +13 STUN
- 45 *Behemoth's Blessing:* Growth (+45 STR, +9 BODY, +9 STUN, -9" KB, 50,000 kg, -6 DCV, +6 PER Rolls to perceive character, 16 m tall, 8 m wide)
- 7 *Behemoth's Fists:* HA +2d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)

Total cost: 80 points.

The Spirit Of Evil: Giving himself over to a demon in service to Nahema, the Demon-Bound gains the ability to become insubstantial... and by exerting his will, he can affect the physical world while in that state. His form when Desolidified is mutable, his face and body running like hot wax, and even when solid his body seems to shed itself, dripping insubstantial images of itself as he moves.

Cost Power

- 50 *Infernal Spirit Form:* Desolidification (affected by magic), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 20 *To Touch The World:* Affects Physical World (+2) for 10 STR
- 9 *Blink Intangibility:* +4 DCV; Does Not

- Work While Desolidification Is Active (-1), Does Not Work Against Affects Desolidified Attacks (-¼)
- 1 Increase KS: Arcane And Occult Lore to 11-

Total cost: 80 points.

The Strength Of Legion: One of the mighty demons of Baal Chanan's domain has come to reside in his soul, and the Demon-Bound's body has become a grotesque caricature of a muscleman's, with bulging muscle atop bulging muscle, all of them constantly flexing and rippling under his skin like overgrown worms.

Cost Power

- 45 +45 STR
- 20 +10 CON
- 0 +9 PD
- 7 +9 ED (includes points from adjusted CON)
- 0 +11 REC
- 0 +20 END
- 0 +27 STUN
- 8 +4 OCV with Punch

Total cost: 80 points.

The Trod Upon Servant Of Demons: Giving a home to one of Astaroth's hordes, whose only purpose is to entertain the infernal with their suffering and feed their powers with their very existence, the Demon-Bound gains the ability to boost the powers of his fellows, but only at the cost of his own abilities. The Demon-Bound's shoulders grow hunched and his back bent. His face becomes an awful vision of inhuman suffering, his mouth an impossibly large, gaping O of pain and his eyes bulging as if the pain of his existence were attempting to escape.

Cost Power

- 70 *Blessing Of The Demon-Bound:* Aid Demon-Bound 8d6, any Demon-Bound ability one at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½); Side Effect (character suffers 3d6 Normal Damage, always occurs; -½), Others Only (-½)
- 10 +5 OCV with Aid

Total cost: 80 points.

Wielder Of Hellfire: Sharing his soul with a demonic tender of the furnaces in Asmodeus's fiery domain, the Demon-Bound's hands grow clawlike, with three long, taloned fingers, and flames flicker across his palms. He can throw hellfire as an attack and use it to create a fiery shield.

Cost Power

- 60 *Hellfire:* Multipower, 60-point reserve
- 6u 1) *Hellfire Blast:* Energy Blast 12d6
- 6u 2) *Hellfire Cone:* Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (7" Cone; +1)
- 4u 3) *Hellfire Shield:* Force Wall (0 PD/8 ED), Transparent (physical; +½) **plus** RKA ½d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½); No Knockback (-¼), Linked (-½)
- 4 +2 OCV with Hellfire Blast

Total cost: 80 points.

MIGHT OF THE MORBANES



Atop the hierarchy in a Demonhame, like a spider lurking at the center of its web, is the Morbane. The Morbane has given himself over to evil, both heart and soul. He has climbed through the ranks to achieve his position, rising from the cult to the Brethren, from there ascending to the Initiated, and finally reaching his current malevolent position. Along the way he has given up his humanity and even his soul. He knows DEMON as well as anybody outside of the Inner Circle. He is a black magician weaving evil spells, a dark priest who instructs his congregation in the ways of wickedness, and a criminal mastermind plotting DEMON's next move and putting his pawns in play.



MORBANE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	3-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	6		Total: 20 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 20 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
35	STUN	6		Total Characteristics Cost: 114

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
30	<i>Black Magic:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	
3u	1) <i>Domination:</i> Mind Control 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
3u	2) <i>Befuddlement:</i> Mental Illusions 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
3u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment:</i> Ego Attack 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
3u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror:</i> Drain PRE 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	0
3u	5) <i>Hellfire:</i> Energy Blast 9d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	2
3u	6) <i>Hellgate:</i> Teleport 15", x16 Noncombat, x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	6
3u	7) <i>Spell-Shattering:</i> Dispel Magic 16d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)	6
2u	8) <i>Call Demonling:</i> Summon four 233-point Demonlings (see <i>HERO System Bestiary</i> , page 51); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	6

- 15 *Enchanted Mace*: HKA 1d6 (1½d6 with STR), +2 STUN Multiplier (+½); OAF (-1) **plus** Drain CON 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼); OAF (-1), Linked (-½), 8 Charges (-½) 2+[8]
 - 12 *Defensive Spells*: Armor (4 PD/4 ED) 0
 - 12 *Enchanted Robes*: Armor (6 PD/6 ED); OIF (-½) 0
 - 3 *Soul Gem*: Mental Defense (9 points total); OIF (-½) 0
 - 3 *Soul Gem*: Power Defense (5 points); OIF (-½) 0
 - 10 *Spellsight*: Detect Magic 13- (Sight Group), Discriminatory 0
 - 5 *Darksight*: Nightvision 0
 - 30 Individual Morbane abilities, created by GM
- Perks**
- 8 Fringe Benefit: Membership (Morbane of DEMON)
- Skills**
- 9 +3 with Black Magic Multipower
 - 3 Analyze Magic 13-
 - 3 Concealment 13-
 - 3 Conversation 13-
 - 2 Cryptography 13-; Translation Only (-½)
 - 3 High Society 13-
 - 3 Interrogation 13-
 - 3 CK: City Of Operation 13-
 - 3 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
 - 5 KS: Greater Mysteries Of DEMON 15-
 - 3 Language: Latin (completely fluent)
 - 2 Language: another ancient language of GM's choice (fluent conversation)
 - 3 Oratory 13-
 - 13 Power: Magic 18-
 - 5 *Soul Gem*: +4 to Power: Magic Roll; OIF (-½)
 - 3 Stealth 13-
 - 5 Tactics 14-
 - 5 Teamwork 14-
 - 2 WF: Common Melee Weapons
 - 2 Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH) 13-
 - 30 30 points' worth of Skills of the GM's choice (including those he developed as a Brother)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 261

Total Cost: 375

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Mystic Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
- 20 Hunted: Trismegistus Council 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 10 Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Self-Centered And Amoral (Common, Total)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (varies) (Frequently, Major)
- 15 Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1" of a holy object (Common)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 25 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 375

Description: This character sheet represents the standard Morbane, recently initiated to his rank. He has learned diverse uses for his Black Magic, from mentally dominating souls weaker than his to throwing blasts of fire called up from Hell itself. He no longer wields a Tarnished Wand; instead he wields a melee weapon from the Profane Regalia, in this case an enchanted mace that saps the strength from whomever it hits. He has traded his plain brown robes for those suitable to his station — most often robes of scarlet and black bombazine, the silky fabric sorcerers and black magicians traditionally wear. Over his robes he wears a chasuble of black velvet, trimmed with silver lamé. On the chasuble's breast is a goat's head embroidered in silver thread; its ruby eyes seem to glow with an inner fire. Nor does he wear a simple domino mask to hide his features — his mask is of worked ebony wood decorated with silver filigree, with two spiraling horns of silver jutting from it.

CLIMBING THE RANKS....

...on a ladder of dead bodies doesn't occur as often in DEMON as in organizations like VIPER. Plotting against one's leaders in DEMON is a touchy thing. It is punished severely if it's a Brother plotting to supplant an Initiate — if the Brother manages to kill the Initiate (or get him killed), death is the penalty. Ascending to the ranks of the Initiated is not a matter of available openings, but of knowledge and ability with magic, so murdering an Initiate doesn't guarantee anything. The most common punishment for a Brother who kills an Initiate, especially if it's a power grab, is this: the Morbane and the Initiates take the Brother to the summoning chamber and force him to summon a demon. Chances are, unless something very strange is going on, he fails. Then the Morbane summons a demon, regardless of the consequences of a failed summoning, and tells the Brother he must defeat the demon if he wishes to live. No Brother has ever survived.

An Initiate who successfully plots against a Morbane is another matter. Once Luther Black discovers his Morbane dead, he dispatches the Black Shepherd to investigate. After that he judges the matter. On one hand an Initiate with cunning enough to do away with a Morbane is an asset... but such a lack of loyalty is not. If the Morbane "deserved" to die, Luther Black orders the Initiate initiated into the ranks of the Morbanes. If not, Luther Black dispatches Jack Fool to kill the Initiate and a Morbane to take over the Demon-hame.

GOING STRAIGHT TO MORBANE

In decades past, it was common for a black magician to come into DEMON as a Morbane. It was simply a matter of how much magic or influence he wielded. Such is no longer the case.

In the Mystic World, the word is out that DEMON's goal spells the end of the world — though it took a while, Luther Black finally found out that some were on to his plans. Since then, DEMON has slowly withdrawn from the Mystic World. Although it still allies itself with or manipulates mystic supervillains and the like, it keeps them out of its inner workings. These “security procedures” include only initiating Morbanes who come up through the ranks. Luther Black is insanely worried that a mystic (or worse) will infiltrate DEMON, and the surest way to guarantee that doesn't happen is to make a person start at the cult level and work his way up.

However, sometimes a person is simply too tempting a recruit. In this case initiation into the ranks of the Morbanes most often takes place on the Thirteenth Floor, and of course the recruit isn't told where he is. With Jack Fool and the Left Hand standing by in case of trouble, Luther Black and the Black Shepherd work together to delve the recruit's soul. If a person can hide his intentions from both the Black Shepherd and Luther Black, then he deserves to bring down DEMON.

Of course, you as GM may need to adapt this

INITIATION

It becomes painfully obvious when an Initiate is ready to ascend to the ranks of the Morbanes: his Tarnished Rod, grown a sickly green with verdigris, disintegrates into a pile of dust. The minor magical item can no longer contain the arcane talents and profane power of the Initiate; he has burned it out by trying to force too much of his might through it.

Soon after this event the Black Shepherd arrives. None know whence he comes, or how he knows to come. One night, as the Initiate sleeps, the Black Shepherd simply appears in his room — whether in the Demonhame or elsewhere, it matters not — and the initiation begins, a hellish night where the candidate suffers the torments of the Netherworld, but is also given a taste of the rewards he will one day receive for faithful service. Thanks to the Black Shepherd's powerful Mental Illusions, this is more than a view of both — the Morbane feels as if he were actually experiencing the torments and, more importantly, the rewards.

The Black Shepherd has already used Telepathy on the candidate before awaking him, and so appears in whatever form the candidate finds most disturbing — an inhumanly beautiful fallen angel with reptilian wings, a red-skinned Satan with great black horns curving from his forehead, a globe of primordial ooze with writhing tentacles surrounding an unblinking eye with two misshapen pupils. The form matters not; what happens next is important.

The Black Shepherd invades the Morbane's mind. Using Mental Illusions, he tortures and torments him, testing his soul for weakness. Then after this suffering, which to the Morbane seems to last for eternity, the Black Shepherd shows him the reward of the faithful... and the reward is always exactly what the Morbane wants. Then begins the reading from the *Liber Terribilis*, the Harrowing Book, during which the Morbane learns of the five dark gods DEMON truly serves. He learns their epithets. He is told the five were imprisoned eons ago and long for freedom, and that whoever frees them shall receive the great rewards the faithful deserve, the fulfillment of the obedient servant's darkest desire. If there was anything human left in the Morbane's soul, the Black Shepherd's words shatter it and sweep it aside.

How does a candidate successfully complete his initiation? He need only hold onto his sanity until the morning — at least, hold onto enough of it to keep the Black Shepherd's words, the torments of Hell, and the blasphemies of the Harrowing Book from rendering him catatonic. If he survives, the Black Shepherd teaches him the ways of the Morbanes — how to build a Demonhame, what lies to tell to the cultists, Brothers, and Initiates, and more — and then in the darkness just before dawn, the Black Shepherd pulls out from inside his robes a Soul Gem and presents it to the candidate, now a Morbane.

What Now?

Most commonly, the Black Shepherd orders the Morbane to move to another city and set up a Demonhame, and the Morbane leaves his current Demonhame without telling anyone about his elevation or future home. Sometimes a Morbane is told to help his current Demonhame expand its membership — in this case he is subordinate to the senior Morbane — or to establish a new Demonhame in the same city (in which case he's in direct competition with the senior Morbane). On rare occasions he is given some other task than setting up a Demonhame — these depend on DEMON's current plots and plans.

THE MORBANE'S CAREER

Most Morbanes are perfectly happy to reside in the same Demonhame for the rest of their lives. They exult in being the intermediary between worshippers and dark gods, and revel in the respect, often verging into worship, their congregations give them. Furthermore, they enjoy the increased powers they get from their congregations. Plotting and planning is their life. They get a wicked thrill from expanding their criminal networks through the city's underworld, and increasing their influence into other areas — the business world, the academic world, law enforcement, wherever they can find a chink. And this is how most hope to spend their lives until the new age of mankind has come and they receive their just desserts for faithful service.

Others, either because of their unique talents or disposition, do not spend their career with DEMON that way. Some possibilities include:

- An expert in setting up Demonhames. For whatever reason, likely his social skills, this Morbane is excellent at establishing new Demonhames. Typically, he journeys to a city where DEMON wants influence, establishes a Demonhame, then once an Initiate ascends to the ranks of the Morbanes, the founding Morbane leaves the Demonhame in the new Morbane's care and moves on to set up a new hame.
- An agent for the Inner Circle. Luther Black allows this to happen because it helps him keep an eye on the Inner Circle. Currently the Dalang needs Morbanes for Operation DEMON Snake, and typically the Coin Collector likes to use Morbanes as company CEOs or on boards of directors where they can employ their mental power to influence the decisions of other board members. Demoiselle Nocturne never uses Morbanes, and the other two usually work through the Demonhames local to a specific project.
- Special agents for Luther Black. Luther Black always keeps a few Morbanes — sometimes alone or in small groups, sometimes with entourages of Brothers and Initiates — free of the entanglements of operating a Demonhame, and if needs arise, he dispatches them on missions.

TYPES OF MORBANES

As with Brothers, Morbanes tend to fall into certain personality types, and these are described below. You can use these to give a Morbane your PCs encounter more depth, or as inspiration for own unique creations. Included with each description are some possible Disadvantages you can use; simply swap out one or both of the standard Morbane Psychological Limitations for the listed ones.

THE BOOKWORM

Compared to other members of the Mystic World, the average Morbane is poorly schooled in arcane lore, and most sorcerers and magicians consider him entirely ignorant of the occult (though oftentimes dangerous in that ignorance). This Morbane is the exception to that stereotype. He spends most of his waking hours studying dusty tomes and grimoires, and has a hunger that often leads him to neglect his other duties, including the quotidian tasks required to keep a Demonhome operating smoothly. But one thing rouses him from his study: word of the discovery of a new artifact or tome. And in this case, he moves swiftly, sometimes rashly, to secure the magical object, but always brutally and without concern for risk. Unlike other Morbanes, it's less the promise of power that motivates him than a hunger for knowledge and secrets.

Possible Disadvantages

Enraged: if he fails to obtain artifact (Common), go 11-, recover 11- (20 points)

Psychological Limitation: *A NEED To Know* (Common, Total) (20 points)

THE COLD, CALLOUS LEADER

This Morbane is a methodical planner who sacrifices anything... and anyone... to succeed. Nothing is too dear to him. No matter what his feelings about something, it's expendable when it comes to accomplishing his goals. He sacrifices Brothers out-of-hand; he pauses briefly to consider an Initiate's talent before sacrificing him, too. He lets heroes expose his Demonhome if it furthers his plan. And innocents? They may as well not exist. Even his own life is expendable if sacrificing it furthers a plan he deems important — he'd throw himself into the Netherworld, where he know full well an eternity of torment awaits him, without a second thought. DEMON leadership is always very careful about what plans they give to this Morbane — for all-important schemes, there's no hesitation, but if a plan's not all-important, best give it to someone a little more cautious.

Possible Disadvantages

Enraged: if he fails (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11- (20 points)

Psychological Limitation: *Total Disregard For Everything, Including His Own Life, Except The Plan* (Common, Total) (20 points)

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Despite all evidence to the contrary — the sacrifices he's performed, the souls he's sent to the Netherworld — this Morbane still rationalizes his evil actions. Maybe he feels he's been put on this Earth to counterbalance the forces of good, or even to test them and make them stronger. Maybe he still blames society, his parents, his ex-wife, everyone he has ever known for making him become a Morbane. He simply cannot accept that of his own free will, he chose to live a wicked life for no other reason than his own betterment at the expense — no, not just the expense, the terrible suffering — of others. He has an irrational need to explain his evil to those he causes to suffer, and grows enraged when someone questions his "explanation."

Possible Disadvantages

Enraged: if motivations questioned (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11- (20 points)

Psychological Limitation: *Need To Rationalize His Actions* (Common, Total) (20 points)

THE DIABOLICAL LAUGHER

Many DEMON members get their first glimpse of Satanism, devil-worship, and black magic via entertainment media, and that glimpse sets them on the road to true evil. Most DEMON members quickly abandon these notions after initiation... but not this Morbane. If anything the soul-wracking sights he has witnessed as a black magician and dark priest have made the Hollywood images of evil more firmly entrenched. His Demonhome has all the pomp of a movie set. His plots are just as convoluted and questionable as the B-movie villains he models himself after. If he were spilling fake blood on the altar, it would be almost laughable — but it's not fake blood, and whatever this Morbane's foibles, the evil he commits is often grandiose and extreme.

As the name indicates, this Morbane's signature is his diabolical laughter. Always unique, it's instantly recognizable, and when plotting or anticipating evil, he can't stop himself from laughing. Evilly.

Possible Disadvantages

Distinctive Features: *Evil Laughter (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)* (5 points)

Physical Limitation: *Cannot Stop Himself From Laughing When Evil Is Involved (Frequently; Slightly Impairing)* (10 points)

Psychological Limitation: *Must Act The Part Of Evil Person From Movie* (Common, Strong) (15 points)

THE EVIL NEXT DOOR

Despite his position as black magician and dark priest, and the need to hold rituals and rites during the Witching Hour when most normal people are asleep, this Morbane attempts to keep the rest of his life as humdrum and everyday as possible. The why of this is hard to explain, for he is without a doubt evil. Perhaps only the normalcy

Continued from last page

procedure to your campaign — the intensive interrogation might interfere with your plans, or existing events concerning DEMON in your campaign. There are plenty of reasons DEMON would still accept a outside mystic into its ranks, and there is one very good reason Luther Black wouldn't interrogate the mystic. If he has seen in his vision of the future that the mystic will be a member of DEMON, he does not interrogate him. He simply allows him to join (but this doesn't mean he doesn't spy on him). The risk of adversely affecting the future is too great for him to chance the interrogation. He merely lets the mystic go about his business, even allowing him limited betrayal of DEMON, unless the mystic becomes too much of a threat. If that occurs, he takes his chances and has the mystic eliminated.

of every other aspect of his life keeps him sane in his demonic doings. Maybe he simply wants the best of both worlds: the loving family and the powers of black magic. He likely has a family — one that doesn't necessarily share his beliefs — and he grows enraged if someone threatens to disrupt his normal life.

Possible Disadvantages

DNPC: His Family 8- (Incompetent; Unaware of character's Social Limitation: Secret Identity) (20 points)

Enraged: if normal life threatened with disruption (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11- (20 points)

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF EVIL

He's not in it for the power or wealth, or any other petty concern — this Morbane is a faithful servant of evil and only desires to serve his masters. In many ways he's the most dangerous opponent for superheroes and law enforcement in DEMON. His motivation is ambiguous and his plans come in many varieties. So long as evil is done, and terror brought to the common man, he'll consider any and all plots, making it difficult to determine where he might strike next... and his plan are terrible indeed, for he might not have any other goal than to crush the spirit of ordinary people. He grows enraged if accused of base motivations, and his loyalty to DEMON's leadership can be his undoing if he gets caught up in a plot between the Inner Circle and Luther Black.

Possible Disadvantages

Enraged: if "purity" of motivations impugned (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11- (20 points)

Psychological Limitation: Absolute Loyalty To DEMON Leadership (Common, Total) (20 points)

THE FIERCE COMPETITOR

Competition between Morbanes exists in DEMON, but is rarely an immediate thing. A Morbane usually doesn't know the exact locations of other Demonhames, nor the activities of most other Morbanes. Those who work together are chosen because they complement each other in both magic and temperament. In general a Morbane believes he competes with others of his ilk for rewards and more arcane secrets... but since he's rarely in the presence of others, this is more a nagging thought always in the back of his head than the primary motivation for his actions. Not so for this Morbane. Even when no other Morbanes are around, he's competing with the Morbane he imagines is outdoing him. DEMON's leadership often takes advantage of his competitive nature. When they want to spur their Morbanes to greater efforts at establishing Demonhames, the Fierce Competitors are the ones chosen.

Possible Disadvantages

Enraged: if he "loses" (Common), go 8-, recover 14- (10 points)

Psychological Limitation: Must Turn Everything Into Competition (Very Common, Strong) (20 points)

Rivalry: Professional (with other Morbanes; Rival is Aware; Rival is numerically superior; Seek to Outdo, Embarrass, or Humiliate Rival) (10 points)

THE MANIAC

All Morbanes change dramatically after their initiation into the ranks. Most are simply stripped of any remaining morality. Others go insane — and though they can still function as leaders, they're far from normal. This Morbane is one of those, and unlike the Diabolical Laugher, there's nothing remotely humorous about his insanity. He has long periods of dark brooding when he's insensate to the world, any expression totally absent from his face, and his eyes fixed on some far-off, nonexistent object. When he comes out of this state, he moves with furious energy to accomplish some villainous plot. Whether the plot is of his own devising, or some other-worldly entity delivered it to him, is open to question — but whatever the scheme's origin, it's diabolical in the extreme. The question DEMON's leadership frequently asks about this Morbane is not whether to assign him some task — it's whether to allow him to go on living.

Possible Disadvantages

Hunted: DEMON 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching) (+5 points to existing Disadvantage)

Psychological Limitation: Manic-Depressive (Common, Total) (20 points)

Reputation: possible pawn of other-worldly powers, 14- (Extreme, Only A Small Group) (15 points)

THE PUPPETMASTER

While all Morbanes are plotters, they tend to take an active role in their plots, and are not averse to simply storming a place and seizing what they want. This type of Morbane's just the opposite. He's almost never seen, and instead prefers to manipulate people — Initiates, Brothers, innocents, whom-ever — to get his way. Nothing pleases him more than when he gets exactly what he wants, but everyone else did the work (and it's a particularly sweet victory if he manipulated people outside DEMON into doing what he wanted). His Demonhame is a nest of rivalries and infighting, but he manipulates the individuals so it never gets out of hand. The cause for his unreasonable urge to manipulate could be cowardice, or perhaps he needs to prove he's more cunning than everyone else. Sometimes his convoluted plots get out of hand and backfire, resulting in problems that he could easily have avoided if he simply took a straightforward approach.

Possible Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation: Coward (Common, Total) (20 points)

Psychological Limitation: A Need To Over-Plot (Common, Total) (20 points)

THE TRAITOR

This Morbane has treachery lurking in his heart. It hasn't yet expressed itself — if it had he would either be dead or in hiding. But the seed for betrayal is there, simply waiting for the rain. Maybe he's too hungry for power and willing to do anything for it (including betraying DEMON). Maybe he's been a Morbane for a long time and is bitter about his lack of reward. Maybe even he's found a conscience and wants forgiveness for his sins. Whatever the case, this Morbane is only waiting for an opportunity to turn on DEMON — usually one that benefits him as much as possible — and when it comes along, he'll betray his masters. Until then, he buries his treachery deep, always suspicious that someone knows he's become less than faithful to DEMON and its goals.

Possible Disadvantages

Psychological Limitation: Paranoid (Common, Total) (20 points)

Social Limitation: Has A Dirty Secret (or: Has Secretly Turned On DEMON) (Frequently, Severe [death is the penalty for betrayal]) (20 points)

THE MAGIC OF THE MORBANES

The character sheet on page 96 represents a standard Morbane who's learned what he knows about the arcane arts through DEMON, and not any outside source or through his own initiative. He has a variety of magical powers to represent his lack of formal training — a utilitarian group of abilities. Listed below are ten more specific sets of spells Morbanes can have instead. Each section describes up to 83 Character Points' worth of powers; that way you can simply swap the ones below with the *Black Magic* Multipower and 30 points' worth of individual powers on the character sheet for a standard Morbane. Also in the sections below, under the heading of *Minor Specialty*, are 30 points' worth of spells you can give to the standard Morbane to quickly add an interesting wrinkle to his abilities (and thus keep the PCs on their toes). Where possible, the spell sets below follow the guidelines set forth on the standard character sheet — a Multipower with a 60-point reserve primarily with 3-point ultra slots — so you can easily swap spells from one Multipower to another to create unique combinations.

THE BLACK MAGICIAN (MINOR SPECIALTY)

Because of the need to traffic with demons and the like, most magicians who focus on types of magic listed below have a minor specialty in Black Magic.

Cost Power

- 24 *Minor Black Magic*: Multipower, 48-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Befuddlement*: Mental Illusions 7d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 1u 2) *Touch Of Terror*: Drain PRE 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 3) *Spell-Shattering*: Dispel Magic 12d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 1u 4) *Call Demonling*: Summon 233-point Demonling (see *HERO System Bestiary*, page 51); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE CITY MAGE

The magic of cities is nothing new — the sorcerer-priests of ancient Sumeria designed their city streets to draw power from the unwilling masses to fuel their spells. Even without a conscious design, or maybe because of that, cities gain a magical essence all their own. Morbanes whose Demonhames are located in urban environments sometimes find themselves practicing a form of this magic. The offensive spells cause the city itself to strike at the Morbane's target — falling powerlines (or even electrical cables bursting from ceilings), collapsing streets, and exploding gas mains strike the target. The defensive spells cause the city to protect the Morbane — streets rise up, concrete cracking, to form walls; the city whispers to the Morbane to tell him who and what is around him.

Cost Power

- 30 *City Magic*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Fallen Power Line*: Energy Blast 4d6, Indirect (always from above; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), NND (defense is ED Force Field or being fully insulated; +1); IIF (power line of opportunity; -¼) Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 2) *Exploding Gas Main (Small)*: RKA 2d6, Indirect (always from below; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½); IIF (gas manes of opportunity; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 3) *Exploding Gas Main (Big)*: RKA 1½d6, Indirect (always from below; +¼), Area OF

- Effect (3" Radius; +1); IIF (gas mains of opportunity; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 4) *Flaring Light Bulbs*: Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1); IIF (light bulbs of opportunity; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 5) *Collapsing Street*: Tunneling 3" through 6 DEF material, Usable As Attack (does not work on characters with Tunneling, Desolidification, or Power Defense; +1), Ranged (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 6) *Wall Of Pavement*: Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED; 6" long and 1" tall), Opaque (Sight Group); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only In Paved Areas (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 1u 7) *Pass Through Walls*: Desolidification (affected by any attack); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1)
- 2u 8) *Travel Along Electric Lines*: Teleportation 30"; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Between Conductors Or Through Wires (-½)
- 2u 9) *Draw Upon The Spirit Of The City*: Aid END 4d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 10) *The City's Warning Whisper*: Danger Sense (INT Roll) (any danger, general area); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

- | Cost | Power |
|------|---|
| 20 | <i>Minor City Magic</i> : Multipower, 40-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 2u | 1) <i>Flaring Light Bulbs</i> : Sight Group Flash 4d6, Area Of Effect (2" Radius; +1); IIF (light bulbs of opportunity; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 2u | 2) <i>Wall Of Pavement</i> : Force Wall (5 PD/5 ED; 3" long and 1" tall), Opaque; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only In Paved Areas (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 1u | 3) <i>Pass Through Walls</i> : Desolidification (affected by any attack); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1) |
| 2u | 4) <i>Travel Along Electric Lines</i> : Teleportation 20"; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Between Conductors Or Through Wires (-½) |
| 2u | 5) <i>Draw Upon The Spirit Of The City</i> : Aid END 4d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 1u | 6) <i>The City's Warning Whisper</i> : Danger Sense (INT Roll) (any danger, immediate vicinity); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |

Total cost: 30 points.

THE DIVINER

A black-haired woman with silver bangles placing Tarot cards on a table face up... a man in grey robes with grey hair and a long grey beard studying astrological charts to read the future in the stars... a Gypsy woman peering into a crystal ball. These images, and many like them, are what people picture when they think of Diviners and Divination, but those aren't the only forms of reading the future — just the least bloody. This Morbane specializes in *haruspicy*: slaughtering black rams and other mammals, slitting open their stomachs, digging his fingers into the flesh, and reading their entrails. And no sacrifice provides a more accurate reading of the days to come than a human one. The Diviner has studied Time so extensively and performed these bloody divinations so often, he seems to no longer live in the present — instead the immediate past, present, and immediate future are all visible to his eyes, and he's gained power over time itself.

Cost Power

- | | |
|----|--|
| 30 | <i>Divination</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 3u | 1) <i>One Day In One Second</i> : Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is temporal/dimensional manipulation powers or Life Support [Diminished Sleep]; +1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 3u | 2) <i>Slow Time</i> : Drain SPD 4d6, Ranged (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 3u | 3) <i>Fast Time</i> : Aid SPD 4d6, Ranged (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 3u | 4) <i>One Night's Sleep In A Second</i> : Aid END 6d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 1u | 5) <i>One Step Ahead Of His Enemies</i> : +5 DCV; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 2u | 6) <i>One Step Out Of Phase</i> : Desolidification (affected by temporal/dimensional attacks), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½) |
| 3u | 7) <i>Step Forward Through The Seconds</i> : Teleportation 24", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 2u | 8) <i>Rapid Healing</i> : Simplified Healing 5d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 2u | 9) <i>He's Seen This Moment Before</i> : Luck 10d6; Only Once Per Battle (-0), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) |
| 1u | 10) <i>A View Of The Future</i> : Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Group), Precognition; Gestures (-½), Incantations (-½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), No Range (-½), Precognition Only (-1) |

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost Power

- 25 *Minor Divination*: Multipower, 50-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *One Step Out Of Phase*: Desolidification (affected by temporal/dimensional attacks), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)
- 2u 2) *He's Seen This Moment Before*: Luck 10d6; Only Once Per Battle (-0), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 1u 3) *A View Of The Future*: Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Group), Precognition; Gestures (-½), Incantations (-½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), No Range (-½), Precognition Only (-1)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE ELEMENTALIST

Elemental Magic was once an unusual specialty for a Morbane to pursue. Since it had little to do with the infernal, and few associations with the Satanic, DEMON's leadership looked askance at it. But since the Descending Hierarchy's edict, the Elementalist is becoming more common — it's simply safer to summon an elemental than an infernal denizen. Make no mistake, however, the Elementalist is just as evil as his peers... and the elemental spirits he summons, having no love for humanity, are malicious in the extreme. The Elementalist has some talent with all four elements.

Cost Power

- 30 *Elemental Magic*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 1) *Fire Blast I*: Energy Blast 12d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 2) *Fire Blast II*: Energy Blast 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 3) *Self-Immolation*: HKA 1d6, Damage Shield (does damage in HTH Combat; +¾), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), No STR Bonus (-½)
- 3u 3) *Trapped In A Block Of Ice*: Entangle 6d6, 6 DEF; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 4) *Earthquake*: Energy Blast 8d6, Explosion (+½); Only Affects Targets On The Ground (-¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 5) *Wall Of Stone*: Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED; 4" long and 1" tall), Opaque (Sight Group); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 6) *Carried By The Winds*: Flight 12", Ranged (+½), Usable As An Attack (defense is Flight or Power Defense; +1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

- 3u 8) *Summon Elemental*: Summon 240-point elemental, Expanded Class (any elemental; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost Power

- 24 *Elemental Magic*: Multipower, 49-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Self Immolation*: HKA 1d6, Damage Shield (does damage in HTH Combat; +¾), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), No STR Bonus (-½)
- 2u 2) *Wall Of Stone*: Force Wall (5 PD/5 ED; 4" long and 1" tall), Opaque; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 3) *Carried By The Winds*: Flight 12", Usable As An Attack (+1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE HALF-BORN

Not all those born to woman are human through and through. For countless millennia the worst among humanity has trafficked with foul beings from other-worldly realms in a mad quest for power over their fellows. This other-worldly heritage passes down through the generations, watered down in each successive one but never washed away entirely, until something calls it forth in all its obscene glory. The Half-Born is one of these — exposure to the Qliphothic has brought out the worst in him. And like Luther Black himself, who gave up his Black Magic to wield the power of the Shining Darkness, the Half-Born has begun to take control of his Qliphothic heritage also (though at this point he only has a Minor Specialty in an arcane art).

Within DEMON's ranks, the Half-Born walk a fine line, and at the first hint of betrayal — of becoming the pawn of alien evil — the leadership has a Half-Born killed. But until then, they're valuable, for they are the very embodiment of bringing the Qliphothic into the world, and even their appearance strikes horror into the hearts and minds of men. The fate of the Full-Born — Morbanes who have lost all of their humanity (including their intellect, memory, and soul) to degeneracy — is to be driven from DEMON like lepers, cast out into the world to cause terror and bring suffering to the mundane world until slain.

The forms of the Half-Born are infinite, though always terrible to behold — triangular, kite-like wings protruding from the boil-infested flesh of their backs, a second mouth dripping with bloody saliva that extends from their human mouth, a slug-like lower body of pulsating, mucous-coated flesh, and so on. The one described in this template is a person whose flesh has become like rotted meat and sloughs from his body, revealing a new layer below. He still has arms and legs for now, but has grown five fleshy tentacles the color of congealed blood — three from his chest and two

MORE EXPERIENCED MORBANES

In addition to taking slots from the various Multipowers presented here and adding them to the *Black Magic* Multipower to create more experienced Morbanes, you can also combine the Multipowers for the Horrorist and the Master Of Hellfire, add a slot for Summoning Demonlings, and replace the Multipower on the character sheet for a standard Morbane on page 96 to create a more experienced or mystically talented foe for your PCs. You could also just add more slots to the *Black Magic* Multipower to increase the Morbane's combat flexibility; increasing the size of the reserve (and/or converting Fixed Slots into Flexible Slots) so he can use multiple slots at once also makes for a more powerful Morbane.

from his back, prefiguring greater changes to come. The merest touch of the tentacles sucks the life from the target, and the Half-Born can send them whipping around the hexes adjacent to him.

In addition to the abilities listed in this template, you should give a Half-Born a *Distinctive Features* Disadvantage (though he can hide the changes under his robes so long as the hood is drawn up). The Minor Specialty (a "Quarter-Born," so to speak) is a Morbane who has only begun his transformation.

Cost	Power
4	+4 PRE
-5	-10 COM
19	<i>Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼) plus Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Linked (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼) plus +15 STR; Only With Extra Limbs (-½)
30	<i>The Life-Sapping Energy Of The Qliphothic</i> : Multipower, 30-point reserve
3u	<i>Single Tentacle</i> : Drain BODY 3d6
2u	<i>Whipping Tentacles</i> : Drain BODY 1d6, Area Of Effect (2" Radius; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Selective Target (+¼)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost	Power
4	+4 PRE
-3	-6 COM
19	<i>Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼) plus Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Linked (-½), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼) plus +15 STR; Linked (-½)
10	<i>The Life-Sapping Energy Of The Qliphothic</i> : Drain BODY 1d6

Total cost: 30 points.

THE HORRORIST

Rather than exploring many arcane subjects, the Horrorist has taken one field of Black Magic and made it his specialty. He has focused his studies on the horror-inspiring spells among the repertoire of the standard Morbane and made them even more effective. Whether this is because he's a sadist and simply enjoys causing terror, or because he feels intimidation and fear are more effective than brute force, depends on the individual.

The Horrorist's Multipower has a 75-point reserve to better represent his extreme focus on one type of spellcasting. There's no 30-point Minor Specialty for this archetype.

Cost	Power
37	<i>Horror Magic</i> : Multipower, 75-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
4u	1) <i>Domination</i> : Mind Control 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

4u	2) <i>Befuddlement</i> : Mental Illusions 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
4u	3) <i>Spell Of Torment</i> : Ego Attack 5d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
4u	4) <i>Touch Of Terror</i> : Drain PRE 5d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 53 points.

THE MASTER OF HELLFIRE

The Master Of Hellfire has chosen one aspect of his Black Magic to develop to the exclusion of others, because he believes brute force equates to power. The hellfire he wields now burns hot enough to flash-fry flesh from bone, and he can shape it to give it Advantages like *Affects Desolidified* or *Auto-fire*. He can hold himself aloft with fiery wings, or cross vast distances through a burning ring of hellfire. Among other Morbanes the Master Of Hellfire is known both as a cretin in the magical arts and a useful asset when fighting superheroes.

The Master Of Hellfire's Multipower has a 75-point reserve to better represent his extreme focus on one type of spellcasting. There's no 30-point Minor Specialty for this archetype.

Cost	Power
37	<i>Hellfire Magic</i> : Multipower, 75-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
4u	1) <i>Hellfire Blast I</i> : RKA 4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3u	2) <i>Hellfire Blast II</i> : RKA 2d6+1, Variable Advantage (+½ Advantages; +1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3u	3) <i>Hellfire Blast III</i> : RKA 2d6+1, Area Of Effect (8" Cone; +1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), No Range (-½)
3u	4) <i>Fiery Wings</i> : Flight 20", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
3u	5) <i>Hellgate</i> : Teleport 15", x16 Noncombat, x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 53 points.

THE NECROMANCER

Necromancy has long held a perverse fascination for black magicians, for the desecration of the dearly departed has an evil all its own beyond most other wicked acts. Morbanes are no different than other evil sorcerers through the ages, and Necromancy is common pursuit for many. Furthermore, in some places, Necromancy is the preferred arcane art for Morbanes — this is an especially prominent specialty among those who use Voodoo or blasphemous worship of Kali to attract new members. Because of the cost of creating zombies, the Necro-

mancer's Multipower has a 72-point reserve.

Cost Power

- 36 *Necromancy*: Multipower, 72-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 1) *The Death Touch*: RKA 1d6+1, NND (defense is Life Support [Longevity] or Regeneration; +1), Does BODY (+1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 2) *Life Stealer I*: Transfer STUN and BODY 2d6, take two Characteristics at once from target (+½), grant two Characteristics at once to caster (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 3) *Life Stealer II*: Transfer END 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Ranged (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 4) *Command The Undead*: Mind Control 14d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Versus Undead (-1)
- 2u 5) *Destroy Undead*: RKA 4½d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Versus Undead (-1)
- 2u 6) *Raise Skeleton*: Summon 179-point Skeleton, Slavishly Loyal (+1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Must Have Bones Or Body Present (-1)
- 2u 7) *Raise Zombie*: Summon 178-point Zombie, Slavishly Loyal (+1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Must Have Body Present (-1)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost Power

- 27 *Necromancy*: Multipower, 54-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Command The Undead*: Mind Control 10d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Versus Undead (-1)
- 2u 2) *Raise Skeleton*: Summon 179-point Skeleton, Loyal (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Must Have Bones Or Body Present (-1)
- 2u 3) *Raise Zombie*: Summon 178-point Zombie, Loyal (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Must Have Body Present (-1)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE OTHER-WORLDER

The Other-Worlder specializes in the study of extra-dimensional places. For most Morbanes only power in the material world has any allure — even their dealings with other-dimensional denizens serves only to further their worldly power. The Other-Worlder takes a different approach, searching other realms for power and other things of interest. Other DEMON members, especially the

leaders, look on the Other-Worlder with suspicion — extra-dimensional entities, especially the Archdemons, have subverted more than one Other-Worlder who found himself caught up in their plots and treacheries. The Multipower below leaves the exact dimension undefined for you to fill in; for obvious reasons Other-Worlders specializing in the Infernal Regions are common.

Cost Power

- 30 *Other-World Magic*: Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 1) *A Blast Of Other-Worldly Energy*: Energy Blast 12d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 2) *A Blast From Above*: Energy Blast 8d6, Indirect (always from above; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 3) *Peek Through The Dimensions*: Clair-sentience (Sight and Hearing Group), Dimensional (single other dimension, defined when the power is bought), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 4) *Other-Worldly Movement*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension), x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 5) *A Quick Getaway*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension), Trigger (variable; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 3u 6) *A Quick Trip*: Teleport 15", x16 Noncombat, x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 7) *Summon Other-Worldly Denizen I*: Summon 300-point other-worldly denizen (choose one type); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 2u 8) *Summon Other-Worldly Denizen II*: Summon 300-point other-worldly denizen (choose different type); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 3u 9) *Summon Slavishly Loyal Other-Worldly Denizen*: Summon 150-point other-worldly denizen (choose one type), Slavishly Loyal (+1); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost Power

- 20 *Other-World Magic*: Multipower, 40-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Peek Through The Dimensions*: Clair-sentience

- tience (Sight and Hearing Group), Dimensional (single other dimension, defined when the power is bought); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 2) *Other-Worldly Movement*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension), x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 3) *A Quick Getaway*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in a single dimension), Trigger (variable; +½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 4) *A Quick Trip*: Teleport 12", x8 Increased Mass; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 1u 5) *Summon Other-Worldly Denizen I*: Summon 200-point other-worldly denizen (choose one type); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 1u 6) *Summon Other-Worldly Denizen II*: Summon 200-point other-worldly denizen (choose different type); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE SUMMONER

In these days of the Descending Hierarchy's animosity toward DEMON and its members, Summoners are rare among the ranks of the Morbanes. Once they were common, but many Summoners gave up the art for other pursuits, or had their souls dragged screaming into the Netherworld. But still some wield the magic of Summoning. Maybe the Morbane has been with DEMON a long time and refuses to give up the old ways. Or maybe he pursues Summoning because of the cachet it gives him among his fellows — they all know he's either powerful or suicidal, and neither makes them comfortable in his presence.

The *Amicable* Advantage is used for Summoner spells to represent the strength of the Summoner's magic and the force of his will, rather than the friendliness of the summoned demon. The Minor Specialty for Summoning involves doing the extensive preparation necessary — individualizing each rune and glyph to the demon's nature; learning the demon's True Name — to bind a single minor demon to the will of the Summoner.

The Summoner's Multipower has a 76-point reserve due to the cost of Summon-based spells.

Cost Power

- 38 *Summoning*: Multipower, 76-point reserve; all slots Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 1) *Call Shadow*: Summon 366-point Shadow; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)

- 2u 2) *Call Demon Steed*: Summon 250-point Demon Steed, Amicable (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 2u 3) *Call Demon Hound*: Summon 240-point Demon Hound, Amicable (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 3u 4) *Rushed Call Demon Hound*: Summon 240-Demon Hound, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½)
- 2u 5) *Call Demonling*: Summon 233-point Demonling, Amicable (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 2u 6) *Call Imp*: Summon 224-point Imp, Amicable (+½); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)
- 2u 7) *Dismiss Demon*: Dispel Summon 25d6; Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Only Works Against Summoned Demons (-1)

Total cost: 53 points.

Minor Specialty

Cost Power

- 30 *Call Specific Demonling*: Summon 250-point Demonling, Slavishly Loyal (+1), Specific Individual (+1); Gestures (-½), Incantations (-½), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3)

Total cost: 30 points.

THE THAUMATURGE

Most super-mages in the Champions Universe practice a form of magic called Thaumaturgy. Thaumaturgy allows the practitioner to cast a great variety of spells and utilize his extensive knowledge of magic. But Morbanes are not known for their extensive knowledge of magic, and rarely have an extensive arsenal of spells at their beck and call like a supermage. This type of Morbane is an exception.

You can find spells appropriate to this character in the Multipowers described in this section, as well as in Chapter Three of *The Mystic World*. Also most of the spell slots for Morbanes' multipowers can be used for the VPP. The Variable Power Pool requires the Morbane spend 27 of his 30 unspent points on the power.

Thaumaturgy: *Variable Power Pool, 62 base + 31 control cost (93 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Magic (-¼). Total cost: 80 points.*

Minor Specialty

Minor Thaumaturgy requires 31 points; you can either drop the *Summon Demonling* slot from the *Black Magic* Multipower or fudge the points a little.

Minor Thaumaturgy: *Variable Power Pool, 24 base + 12 control cost (46 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Magic (-¼). Total cost: 31 points.*

SUPERVILLAINS



DEMON has always had ties to mystic superhumans, but the relationship was usually an uneasy one. DEMON always had an ulterior motive for the team-up — seizing the mystic villain’s artifact, turning him into a slave, double-crossing him, or something else. In the end the alliances usually took a turn for the worse when one side or the other betrayed his partner, only proving the aphorism: “there’s no honor among thieves.” But since the edict barring demons from working with DEMON, the Morbanes have had to resort to other methods to bolster their forces. One of these is the demon-binding described on page 92; the other is recruiting superhumans into DEMON’s ranks... or creating them.

The problem with recruiting is: the superhuman doesn’t fit comfortably in the Demonhame’s hierarchy. He’s usually only familiar with DEMON’s lesser mysteries, but possesses enough power to challenge the Morbane for supremacy — an intolerable conflict.

Creating them works better, but isn’t as simple as it sounds. No Morbane trusts a permanent Demon-Bound, since it’s likely the Demon-Bound is an agent for the Archdemons. Furthermore, even when a loyal Brother gains superhuman powers, he may still wind up challenging the Morbane. (Morningstar, described on pages 182-184 of *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*, is an example of this.) The other way of creating supervillains is via mystical artifacts, but those don’t exactly grow on trees.

But despite these difficulties, a supervillain is an asset to a Demonhame that a Morbane, no matter how concerned with holding onto his power, can’t resist. This section has three supervillains you can use to bolster the forces of DEMON in your campaign.

CLOACA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
12	CON	4	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 20 PD (15 rPD)
5	ED	3		Total: 20 ED (15 rED)
6	SPD	26		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	4		
40	END	8		
40	STUN	14		Total Characteristics Cost: 137

Movement: Running: 6”/12”
Flight: 6”/12”

Cost Powers END

82	<i>The Corruption In Her Soul:</i>	Multipower, 82-point reserve	
7u	1) <i>Corruption Blast:</i>	Drain Defenses 3d6, PD, ED, DEF, Armor, or Force Field one Power at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½) plus Energy Blast 5d6; Linked (-½)	8
7u	2) <i>Strangling Tendril:</i>	Drain STR 3d6, Ranged (+½) plus Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Entangle And Character Both Take Damage (+¼); Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Linked (-½)	8
7u	3) <i>Whipping Tendrils Of Withering:</i>	Drain BODY 2d6, Area Of Effect (5” Radius; +1), Selective Target (+¼), Continuous (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
7u	4) <i>Whipping Tendrils Of Will Sapping:</i>	Drain EGO 2d6, Area Of Effect (5” Radius; +1), Selective Target (+¼), Continuous (+1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
17	<i>A Flood Of Corruption:</i>	Endurance Reserve (100 END, 10 REC; for Multipower); Personal REC (-½)	0
45	<i>Protective Shell:</i>	Force Field (15 PD/15 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5	<i>The Bottomless Depths Of Her Soul:</i>	Mental Defense (8 points total)	0
5	<i>Alien Physiology:</i>	Power Defense (5 points)	0
18	<i>Levitation:</i>	Flight 6”, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0

Perks
3 Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)

CLOACA PLOT SEEDS

The police report that a mass murder occurred at a local art auction — all the attendees and the auctioneer were found dead, having suffered from heart failure. One item was missing from the inventory — a painting called *Untitled* by an unknown artist named Monica Johnson. Could the painting that triggered Cloaca's transformation have powers of its own? And who has the painting now?

The Qliphothic in Cloaca's soul begins to find its outward expression, corrupting her body. She becomes an amorphous creature, her form comprised of her polluted soul-energy... and as the change occurs, anything human left in her is expunged. Now she's far more powerful and on a rampage.

A young man shows up on the PCs' doorstep. A painter, he used to be Cloaca's boyfriend in college and he's convinced he can save her. All he needs to do is get her to paint an image, a shape or form, and this will cleanse the evil from her soul. Is his head muddled with foolish notions, or does he have a good idea? And are the PCs willing to put his theory to the test?

Skills

- 9 +3 with *The Corruption In Her Soul* Multipower
- 2 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
- 2 KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 11-
- 4 KS: Painting 13-
- 4 KS: Art History 13-
- 4 PS: Painter 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 228

Total Cost: 365

200+ Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: Palpable Aura Of Evil (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
- 20 Enraged: by the sight of beauty, including superheroes with high COM (Common), go 11-, recover 11-
- 20 Hunted: Trismegistus Council 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)
- 20 Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)
- 10 Hunted: DEMON 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Nihilist Corrupted By The Qliphothic (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Rivalry: Professional (with other painters; Rival is Aware; Rival is numerically superior; Seek to Kill)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Monica Johnson) (Frequently, Major)
- 15 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 365

Background: In her last year of art school, Monica Johnson attempted to paint an imageless painting. Not just abstract, but totally free of any shapes a viewer might interpret as being something... anything. She worked on it day after day, and at the end of each evening, she asked her fellow students to find something in the wild whorls and jagged streaks of browns, greys, muted reds, pallid greens. Each night a student found something, pointing to amorphous blob in the thickly-layered pigments: a horse's head, a foot, a lion's tail, a lumpen circle, a crooked square. They would tell her what she wanted to accomplish was impossible. It was like looking at clouds — no matter what Monica did to obliterate the images, they could find something if they wanted to just by squinting hard enough. Again and again, obsessively, Monica returned to the canvas until finally she stopped letting others see her work.

Near the end of the semester, Monica finished her painting of pure nothingness. She came to class one last time to show her work. When she pulled the cloth from the painting, her classmates gasped. One man moaned, and with a hand over his mouth, vomit drizzling through his fingers, staggered the room. The instructor stumbled, then fell to the floor as he suffered a seizure. And Monica studied her painting, knowing she had

failed. She hadn't painted pure nothingness, she had painted a portrait of her soul. The whirls of corruption and streaks of pollution were like a cloaca, a sewer, laid bare for her to see — and for the first time she knew herself truly.

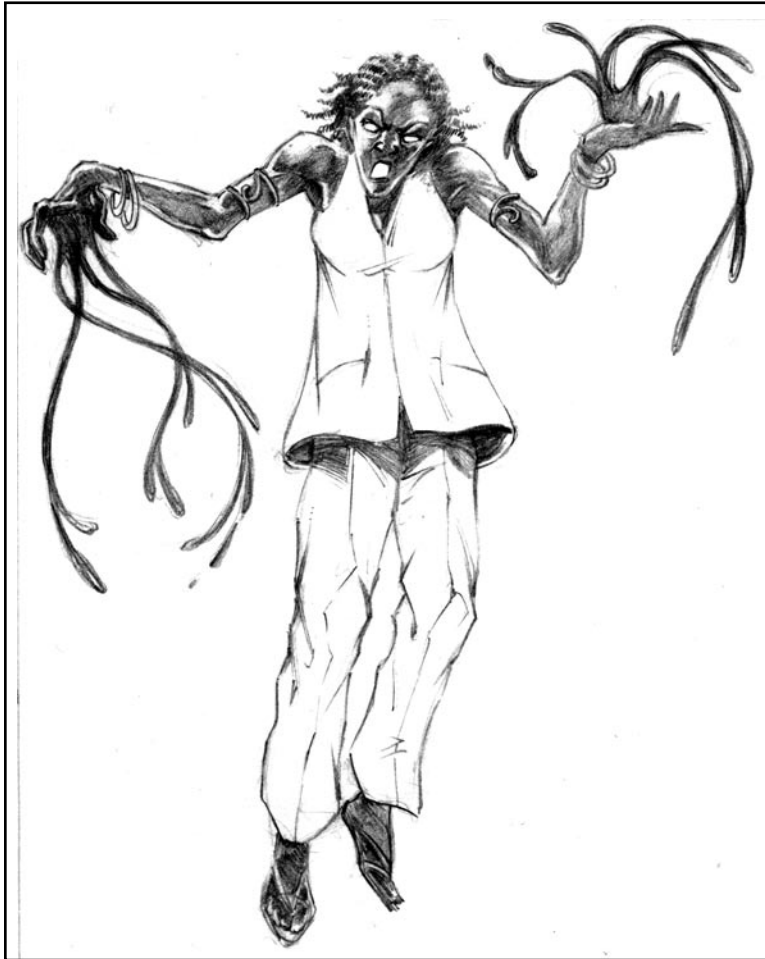
From every pore of her body slithered tendrils of energy the same color as those she had used in her painting. Whipping around her they sought victims from among her classmates. The tendrils flopped on the floor and writhed and wrapped themselves around the necks of the young men and women who were too slow to run away. And when they were dead, Monica Johnson left the classroom. Shortly after that Monica came to DEMON. She was searching for answers, and when the Morbane told her she was a child of wickedness it seemed the first true thing she had ever heard.

Personality/Motivation: The Inner Circle members aren't the only ones tainted by the touch of the Qliphothic. DEMON has allowed the Qliphothic to seep into the material plane many times over the last century, and that energy has found a home in people around the world. Cloaca is one of the people touched by the Shining Darkness and made into something less than human. And if DEMON is allowed to go about its foul work, there will be many more like her as 2012 nears.

Cloaca is a nihilist. As a painter she eschewed concrete forms for the abstract, until finally her obsession with nothingness expressed itself on canvas. But she didn't find the void. What she found instead was evil — corruption and foulness. Now she simply wants to destroy everything, and it's all the Morbanes can do to keep her from lashing out in a berserk rage at everything around her. In the times between battle, she quietly seethes with loathing for this world. She no longer paints; instead she purchases canvases from local art shops and takes a sharp knife to them — those hollow, sentimental, sacchrine images that fail to capture the evil all around, in everything, creeping over souls like strangling vines.

Quote: "I was taught an artist looks beyond the surface and brings what she sees there out for the world to see... Let me show you what I found when I looked beyond my surface!"

Powers/Tactics: Cloaca possesses the ability to physically manifest the corruption in her soul. This "soul-energy" seeps out her very pores, usually from her palms, and she can use it to create tendrils of energy that flow and roil like the filthy water found in a sewer. This energy has a perfidious effect on its target, depending on how she uses it. The Corruption Blast weakens defenses — corroding metal and eroding stone, insinuating itself into Force Fields and creating fine hairline cracks, even lapping against superhumanly strong flesh and leeching its vitality. It strikes with the force of a water blast, and though superheroes might find the first or second hit a mere nuisance, by the third it has a more dramatic effect. The other two slots in her Multipower, the Whipping Tendrils Of Weakness and Of Will Sap-



ping, involve tendrils protruding from her whole body, seeping out from all her pores, and writhing around her to latch on to any target she wishes. While the Whipping Tendrils Of Weakness often have a limited effect against superheroes, she uses it to put innocents in harm's way and hold them hostage. She uses the Whipping Tendrils Of Will Sapping in support of Morbanes and Initiates, increasing the effectiveness of their mental powers by lowering the EGOS of the enemy. When she activates her Force Field, it appears as a semi-translucent shell of filthy browns, dirty greys, faded reds, and pallid green swirls covering her body.

Only initiated into the Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON, Cloaca doesn't realize the source of her powers is the Qliphothic. She believes she can tap into her corrupt soul and use its pollution for her powers, and that her corrupt soul is not unique, but in fact the human condition, a foulness that lurks in every man's soul and is the true motivation for his actions.

Campaign Use: You can use Cloaca with any Demon-hame as superhuman support for a Morbane and his congregation. Discovering the evil inside her, Cloaca searched out those who could not only explain this evil, but nurture it. She fell in with DEMON because it was everywhere and anywhere, and relative to other occult societies easy to find. The Qliphothic corruption in her soul only make her an even more tempting morsel to whatever Morbane employs her.

Cloaca is most likely to Hunt a superhero with an especially optimistic outlook on life. She wants to bring the evil she sees in everyone to the attention of the world, and such a rosy personality seems to deny the truth she knows about life. The best prey for Cloaca is a significant other who's also a painter, especially those who paint pastoral scenes of idyllic tranquility and the like.

Cloaca's big weakness is her low CON and relatively scant defenses. The easiest way to toughen her up is to boost her CON to 18-20 and her Force Field to 20 PD/20 ED. To increase her power, give her a slot in the Multipower that's a straightforward Drain BODY 5d6, Ranged (+½). You could also increase the size of her Multipower reserve and the Active Points in the slots, but be careful about making the Drains too powerful. To decrease her power, lower the reserve of her Multipower and adjust the slots accordingly.

Appearance: Cloaca is a small, slender black woman with a heart-shaped face and shoulder-length braids. She'd be attractive if her expression weren't so foul and menacing. She eschews the robes of DEMON members, wearing instead loose pants and an artist's smock. She often levitates inches above the ground, and when she does, it appears as if puppet strings hold her aloft — her head tilts at an awkward angle and rests against her hunched shoulders, her arms and fingers move stiffly.

DEVIL DOG PLOT SEEDS

In the middle of a fight, the Devil Dog suddenly stops, stands stock-still, and asks, “Where the heck am — OOOO!” Having dropped his Damage Reduction, he’s knocked across the battlefield and put in a coma. Now that the PCs have him, what do they do? Do they look into his past? And if they do discover what happened to the Junkyard Dog, are they willing to travel to the Netherworld to rescue his body from the Archdemons?

The Peacemakers are turning up dead, their faces pounded into pulp, and it falls to the PCs — maybe in Chicago visiting or called from their campaign city — to stop the Devil Dog once and for all. But what if it isn’t the Devil Dog committing the murders....

Residents of Chicago’s Southside have reported seeing a mysterious junkyard dog, huge in size, lurking in alleyways... could this be the same dog that bit Harry Zatarski and gave him his powers? And if so, what is it, and why has it returned? Is it a supernatural entity, maybe some sort of modern totem spirit, come for its former servant (and if so, why)? Or is it something less benign, perhaps one of the hounds that runs in Hecate’s pack? Whatever the beast’s nature, it’s up to the PCs to figure out what’s going on.

THE DEVIL DOG

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
15	PD	10		Total: 15 PD (10 rPD)
15	ED	11		Total: 15 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
12	REC	6		
100	END	30		
60	STUN	17		Total Characteristics Cost: 203

Movement: Running: 6”/12”

Cost Powers END

21	<i>A Helluva Right Hook:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +5d6 (10d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	2
35	<i>A Helluva Right Hook:</i> Find Weakness 16- with HTH Attack	0
10	<i>Thick-Skinned:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)	0
30	<i>Pain Is Meaningless:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
60	<i>Pain Is Meaningless:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, +50% (75% total); Costs Endurance (-½)	9
7	<i>Iron Willed:</i> Mental Defense (10 points total)	0

Perks

1	Fringe Benefit: Membership (DEMON)
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Talents

18	Combat Sense 14-
4	Lightning Reflexes: +4 with A Helluva Right Hook

Skills

6	+3 OCV with A Helluva Right Hook
1	KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 8-
2	KS: Boxing 11-
2	PS: Boxer 11-
2	PS: DEMON Brother 11-
5	Sleight Of Hand 15-
3	Stealth 11-
3	Streetwise 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 210

Total Cost: 413

200+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Feature: DEMON Robes (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
15	Enraged: at mention of Junkyard Dog or The Peacemakers (Uncommon), go 11-, recover 11-
20	Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
15	Hunted: DEMON 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

15	Psychological Limitation: Loyal To DEMON And Its Ideals (Common, Strong)
25	Psychological Limitation: Partial Amnesia (Very Common, Total)
20	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Harry Zatarski/Morgan Schaffer) (Very Frequently, Major)
15	Susceptibility: to holy places and objects, takes 1d6 damage per Turn when on holy ground, in a holy place, or within 1” of a holy object (Common)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Holy/Divine Magic (Uncommon)
63	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 413

Background: “Just get out! I’ll hold ‘em here!” “But...” “I’ll get out in time... just go and close that Gate!” And with that Junkyard Dog turned away from his teammates.

He stood on a pitted and cratered landscape where small tongues of fire grew from the ground like hellish grass. A horde of demons cavorted and writhed before him, their number beyond counting, all of them slobbering for a taste of his mortal flesh, but Junkyard Dog wasn’t going to let them pass. He wouldn’t leave this fight alive — something he didn’t tell his teammates as they rushed through gate back to the world and Jonesboro, Indiana — but none of those demons would pass.

The demons tried to bull through him, but he stood his ground. One gored him with its horns. Junkyard Dog muttered, “I’ve been knocked on my butt by Sugar Ray — you think that hurts?” Then he knocked the demon out. Another tried to fly over him. His left hand shot out, grabbed the demon’s throat. He gave the red-skinned creature a taste of his right hook — “a helluva right hook” one sportswriter called it. “Maybe I wasn’t much of a contender, but I’m good enough for you!”

In the end there were too many and they dragged him down. At the bottom of the pile-up, Junkyard Dog strained to look back. There he saw the gate closing, and despite the split lip and missing teeth, he gave his trademark grin, the same good-natured smile he wore after every professional match he lost.

But his last thought was: *What happens to a dummy like me that dies in Hell? Can his soul get out? How’d that prayer go... Dang, I can’t remember. Ma was right. Should’ve stayed awake during Mass. What’s that thing... Lo, though I walk in the valley of death... no, that ain’t right....*

And then Junkyard Dog passed out.

“Rise, Brother Morgan. We have much wickedness to work this night and have need of your demon-bound strength.”

He heard the Initiate’s words, but didn’t know who this Brother Morgan was. He was the Devil Dog. But it didn’t matter; working wickedness was what mattered. They could call him chopped liver for all he cared....

Personality/Motivation: Junkyard Dog didn't die in the Netherworld. A mortal body is a rare treat for the Archdemons, and to kill a person who came willingly into their infernal realms would be a waste. Instead, Junkyard Dog had his skin flayed from his body. He had brimstone ground into his raw flesh, and hellfire burned through his arteries and veins. These torments and many others lasted twenty years, and now he's had his soul torn from his body.

During a failed demon-binding, an Archdemon sent the soul of Junkyard Dog, infected through and through with the infernal, back into the world to occupy the body of Brother Morgan Schaffer in the Chicago Demonhame. The two souls sharing the body have forgotten their past. They only know the name "Devil Dog," how to fight, and that they have a taste for violence and inflicting pain. The Morbane suspects Devil Dog is an agent for the Archdemons, but for the time being thinks it better to "keep his friends close, and his enemies closer." Besides, the Devil Dog is too valuable an asset to just throw away... at least for the time being.

The Devil Dog is a rough-and-tumble sort, with more of Junkyard Dog's personality than the Archdemons would like to admit. Though he's forgotten his past, he grows enraged at the mention of Junkyard Dog or the Peacemakers — for now he simply writes this off to hating superheroes and do-gooders — but more and more, memories from his past rise to the surface and soon his rationalizations will grow too thin. Only time will tell who'll win the fight for supremacy, Harry Zatarski (the Junkyard Dog) or the Devil Dog... but Junkyard Dog never had much of a history of winning. Brother Morgan seems to have been obliterated in the struggle, his personality absent entirely, but sometimes appearances can be deceiving.

Quote: "Grrr... let me show you how I broke the Hitman's nose before he got the TKO... wait.. the Hitman?!?! Who am I!?!?"

Powers/Tactics: The Devil Dog's tactics are straightforward: he charges up to a superhero, usually a brick, spends END to activate his increased Damage Reduction, Finds Weakness, and then starts pounding on the hero with his Helluva Right Hook. He keeps doing this until one of them drops.

Campaign Use: The Devil Dog makes good muscle for a Demonhame, and his backstory turns him into an interesting adversary if the PCs decide to investigate his past.

There are two reasons the Devil Dog would start to Hunt a PC. First, he might do so at the bidding of the Archdemons. Second, if he feels one of the PCs has ties to his past, he might track the hero down. Maybe the PC is a boxer, or has links to the Peacemakers. The question then becomes: is the Devil Dog hunting the PC because he wants help to remember his life before becoming the Devil Dog; or is he trying to kill any reminders of his murky past?

To increase Devil Dog's power, improve his Find Weakness roll and increase the dice of his HA. Don't give him Boxing as a Martial Art, though. Before he became a superhero — a junkyard dog bit him one night on his way home from the gym; the origin of the dog or his powers was never discovered — he was never a very good boxer. He could just take a pounding. To decrease his powers, lower his Damage Reduction bonus so that it only increases to 50%.

Appearance: The Devil Dog took possession of Brother Morgan's body and has made some changes (though he doesn't look exactly like Harry Zatarski). His face is brutal with a prominent brow and a pulped, crooked nose. His jaw is square and scarred, and he keeps his blonde hair in a crew cut. He stands five-foot-ten and has large, stocky body. He wears the same DEMON robes a brother wears, but doesn't carry the Profane Regalia — they no longer function for him, another sign that Brother Morgan has passed beyond. The Devil Dog keeps his hands wrapped in bandages, splotted with dark stains from old blood. The only sign of his demonic nature are his eyes, which glow red when he uses his powers.



PROFESSOR SAMEDI PLOT SEEDS

For over a week someone has been stealing bodies from local cemeteries, and now those bodies turn up: they attack a local museum displaying a traveling exhibit of ancient African artifacts. Can the PCs fight their way past the zombies in time to stop Professor Samedi and Narcisse from stealing the Walking Stick of the Stranger, a mysterious artifact of unknown powers?

Mardi Gras starts soon and Narcisse just read an article about how profitable the video series, "Girls Gone Nuts," has been for its producers. Now he's wondering how many drunken revelers he can fit into a 10 meter radius room, and how nuts they'll go listening to Professor Samedi's music. Didn't a hero's DNPC say she was going to New Orleans for Mardi Gras?

One morning Samedi tells Narcisse in no uncertain terms: "The title is Baron." Has Professor Samedi finally lost it? Or has the Baron come to reside in Louie Fontenot? The PCs had better figure it out soon, because "Baron" Samedi is talking about a paradisaical world where the living and dead dance hand-in-hand, all of them cavorting to Samedi's tune.

PROFESSOR SAMEDI

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
10	PD	8		Total: 20 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	7		Total: 20 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	25		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	6		
40	END	5		
40	STUN	15		Total Characteristics Cost: 123

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

37	<i>Tunes From The Ebony Violin:</i> Multipower, 75-point reserve, all slots OAF (-1)	
4u	1) <i>Like Nails On A Chalk Board:</i> Ego Attack 6d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1)	3
3u	2) <i>A Catchy Melody:</i> Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼); OAF (-1), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼)	7
3u	3) <i>A Terrifying Tune:</i> Drain PRE 2d6, BOECV (against Mental Defense; +1), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1)	0
87	<i>The Danse Macabre:</i> Multipower, 175-point reserve, all slots OAF (the ebony violin; -1)	
7u	1) <i>The Living Like The Dead:</i> Mind Control 10d6, Area Of Effect (13" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), No Range (-½)	0
4u	2) <i>The Dead Like The Living:</i> Summon four 178-point Zombies (see <i>HERO System Bestiary</i> page 127), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Slavishly Loyal (+1); OAF (-1), Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Corpses Must Be In Locale (-½)	0
20	<i>Amulet Of Protection:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½)	0
3	<i>Amulet Of Protection:</i> Power Defense (5 points); OIF (-½)	0
10	<i>Strange, Mystical Mind:</i> Mental Defense (14 points total)	

Perks

1 Fringe Benefits: Membership (DEMON)

Talents

3 Perfect Pitch

Skills

9 +3 with *Tunes From The Ebony Violin* Multipower

1 KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 8-

2 KS: Lesser Mysteries Of DEMON 11-

4 KS: Voodoo 12-

2 PS: DEMON Brother 11-

5 PS: Play Piano 13-

12 PS: Play Violin 20-

5 Stealth 13-

5 Streetwise 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 227

Total Cost: 350

200+ Disadvantages

25 Dependence: must keep the Ebony Violin with him at all times, or take 3d6 damage per Hour (Uncommon)

20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture)

15 Hunted: DEMON 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)

15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal To DEMON And Its Ideals (Common, Strong)

15 Psychological Limitation: A Decidedly Unnatural Attraction To The Dead (Uncommon, Total)

15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Louie Fontenot) (Frequently, Major)

10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Sonic Attacks (Uncommon)

10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Sonic Attacks (Uncommon)

25 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 350

Background: The Devil and fiddle-playing have a long history together, from Niccolo Paganini's fiend-inspired virtuosity, to Johnny down in Georgia outplaying the Devil for a golden violin. Professor Samedi is just the latest chapter.

Louie Fontenot was a blues pianist and DEMON Brother in the New Orleans Demonhame, the Crossed Bones Hounfour. Not very talented, he made a living giving tourists a taste of the Delta blues in bars and hotels — and identifying tourists traveling alone with few family ties who'd make good sacrifices for the Demonhame. Despite his lack of talent, he was the only Brother with any knowledge of music. When the Morbane, Maximilian Narcisse, a self-styled *bokor* and *malfacteur*, got hold of a violin — made of glossy ebony wood and chased with gold — purported to be the same the Devil gifted to Paganini in return for his soul, Narcisse gathered his congregation. He told them the violin's history, called Louie to the front of the chapel, and asked, "Can you get music out of this?"



“What?” Louie asked. “You making me into Robert Johnson? You gonna put a hellhound on my trail?”

The Morbane laughed. “Brother Louie — there are already hellhounds after you.” And Louie couldn’t help but notice that Narcisse hadn’t answered his question.

The Morbane handed over the violin. Louie picked up the bow and drew it across the strings. It made a haunting dirge-like music. Then he began to play.

The Morbane resisted the effect of his music, but that wasn’t true of the rest of the lesser men and women in the chapel. They began to dance wildly as if demons possessed them. Louie smiled. His face had changed, his skin drawing taut over his skull. His voice was deep and hollow like a grave. He told the Morbane, “Take me to the graveyard....” And once there, he played again and this time the dead danced to his tune. After that the Morbane gave Louie a new name — Professor Samedi.

Personality/Motivation: Louie Fontenot was an introvert who kept his desire to harm others — those who ignored him or rejected him, anyone at all who didn’t treat him with the respect he felt he deserved — to himself until he discovered DEMON.

He was, for lack of a better word, a loser with nothing and no one. He was even a lackluster pianist, only getting jobs because he was dependable and inoffensive to tourists. Joining DEMON gave him a secret means of acting on his dark desires, but his transformation into Professor Samedi has worked a dramatic change on his personality. As time goes by, he becomes more and more extroverted, always laughing at secret evil thoughts — a deep and evil chuckle — and perfectly willing to share his twisted love of the dead with anyone who listens. Encouraged by Maximilian Narcisse, Louie has begun to believe himself the vessel for the loa, Baron Samedi, and the god of the dead’s chosen emissary on the world. The truth of this is a matter of some con-

jecture, but Narcisse has noticed the more Louie believes it, the more powerful he grows, so he continues to encourage the belief. (It also makes the Brothers and Initiates believe Narcisse, the bokor, commands Samedi, thus increasing their respect for him.) Louie has a Dependence on the Ebony Violin and has taken to sleeping with clutched in his arms.

Quote: “*Mon ami*, it is the dance of the dead you hear, and you will dance with them for the living... the dead... they are all the same...”

Powers/Tactics: The Ebony Violin provides Professor Samedi with a variety of mental powers, both against individuals and groups. By drawing the bow against the strings he can produce a harsh screeching noise that causes pain to the listener (the Ego Attack). If instead he plays a lovely melody, he can compel a target to dance in place (the Entangle). And by playing a haunting dirge, he can instill unnatural terror in the target. His greatest powers are his ability to make the living

obey his commands, and cause the dead to rise up and serve him. His Mind Control is Continuous — so long as he plays, he can continue to give commands without making another ECV Attack Roll (all he has to do is succeed with another Effect Roll if he changes the level of command required to control his victim).

In combat, Professor Samedi tries to remain in the background and take cover; he has no interest in open combat or proving himself “superior” to superheroes. Then he uses his powers to take control of his enemies (ordering them to defend him, if necessary) and otherwise wreak havoc to aid his DEMON comrades.

Campaign Use: Professor Samedi is an example of a supervillain DEMON created via an artifact. His powers and background provide plenty of story hooks.

The Professor makes an unlikely Hunter, but might Hunt someone whom he thinks has done him wrong, or perhaps a superhero who has an origin rooted in Voodoo. If so, he attempts to locate the superhero’s family and loved ones — living or dead — and take control of them. If he succeeds, he uses them to attack the superhero.

New to the Ebony Violin, Professor Samedi has yet to put it to use on a grand scale. Under Narcisse’s leadership, he’s committed several robberies at restaurants and bars in New Orleans — Professor Samedi commanding the victims to

hold still and hand over their money — and both men now have several zombies serving them in the Demonhame. These have only been tests of the violin’s powers; soon enough Narcisse will think of an appropriately grandiose plot that takes full advantage of Professor Samedi’s powers. He also wonders what effect a recording of Samedi’s music would have on the listener.

Professor Samedi’s main weakness are his low Defenses and STUN; to toughen him up you should raise both of these. Furthermore, you can add slots to his *Tunes From The Ebony Violin* Multipower, including Flash and Mental Illusions. To lower his power, reduce the dice in his Mind Control so it’s less likely to affect superheroes, but keep the dice high enough to affect civilians so he can use them against the PCs in combat.

Appearance: Louie Fontenot is a tall, thin man of indeterminate race and ethnicity, his complexion a medium tan. Possession of the Ebony Violin has made his face skull-like, with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks. His body has grown wizened, and in his finely-tailored black silk suit and coat with tails, he looks like an overdressed scarecrow. Reaching from cheek to cheek, his wide, toothy smile is unsettling, and on his bald head he wears a top hat with a rhinestone band.

chapter five:



THE DEMONHAMES

THE DEMONHAME



Both temple to dark gods and center for operations, a *Demonhame* is a place where DEMON members assemble to plot to accomplish the organization's goals. However it's more than simply a base like a VIPER Nest — it's also a Morbane's sanctum, the center of his power. Standing in his chapel, the Brothers and Initiates gathered before him and chanting dark rites, the Morbane can feed off their energy to bolster his own. Standing near the altar, he can draw upon the stored blasphemy of sacrifices made to demons and increase the potency of his spells. Confronting a Morbane in his Demonhame should be a task no one takes lightly.

RESIDENCY

The Morbane always lives in or very close to the Demonhame. It is, after all, his sanctum.

Whether the other members live in the Demonhame varies from place to place, often depending on the culture, the age of the Demonhame, and the population density of the environs. In general, older Demonhames and those in high population areas like cities are more likely to have members living in the Demonhame, as are those in the middle of nowhere founded to secure a place of power. Newer Demonhames have yet to build living facilities, and those in places like medium-sized towns and small cities are less suspicious when they don't have members coming and going at all hours. (It's difficult enough to keep the coming and going for less-than-routine tasks out of sight from neighbors with nothing better to do than keep track of what goes on outside their windows.)

FUNDING THE DEMONHAME

All Brothers, most Initiates, and even some Morbanes have "day jobs." This is an important part of their efforts to recruit new members — disgruntled employees are a fine source for recruits, whether they want revenge on their bosses or a way to get ahead — as well as one means through which DEMON infiltrates society (what better way to gain influence in a mundane World in the Champions Universe than to have a job in that World?). But these day jobs hardly provide enough money to fund a Morbane's plots.

To make the money a Morbane needs, his Demonhame involves itself in criminal activities. These crimes also provide DEMON with influence in the underworld and give it access to illicit networks, which it often uses to smuggle magical artifacts or DEMON members running from the law across national borders.

As a rule of thumb, DEMON engages in criminal activities that serve the dual purpose of

providing funds and creating international networks for smuggling. It's rare for a Demonhame to indulge in illegal activities simply for money. For example, the typical Morbane doesn't hire himself and his congregation out as assassins to a local crimelord on a regular basis. Maybe he would in trade for an artifact, to lay the groundwork for a larger plot, or the like, but not just out of greed. If anything it's usually the other way around — the Morbane hires hitmen in the employ of the local crimelord to murder mundane troublemakers. The attention such activities can potentially bring simply isn't worth it, and the Inner Circle frowns on them. Better to have a patsy.

That said, a DEMON member considers any activity that results in human misery gainful employment. Some of the criminal activities common to Demonhames include:

Stolen Art: All Demonhames have a contact in the black market for art, and often they're an integral part of the business in their local area. This includes not just stolen paintings, but *objets d'art* and relics from all periods of history. Too often dealers in stolen art buy and sell illicitly-obtained items, which sometimes happen to be magical artifacts, and therefore a smart Morbane keeps at least one finger in that particular pie. Also, the networks established to transport stolen art are perfect for smuggling artifacts.

Illegal Drugs: The main reason to get involved in transporting and dealing drugs is that the drug culture is an excellent recruiting ground for new members. But it's also profitable, and the networks for transporting large quantities of drugs serve well for artifacts too. Finally, more than one Morbane's plot has involved some form of drug, its infernal effects, and bringing terror to the mundane world. You can find examples of some of DEMON's dealings with drugs in their plots *Shanghai Satanism* (page 10) and *A Snowball's Chance...* (page 21).

Gunrunning: Gunrunning is a rare activity for a Demonhame, but it does go on and does provide a viable smuggling network. It's almost exclusively the purview of Morbanes who had criminal connections before joining DEMON. DEMON isn't more involved in gunrunning because weapons dealing doesn't provide a platform for plots — at least not those natural to a Morbane's thinking. Certainly gun violence brings terror to the common man, but few DEMON schemes use guns as the method of delivery.

Several Morbanes, children of the modern age, have some ideas though. One Morbane, who supplies untraceable guns in Miami using a minor spell

that erases identifying marks, is researching “ghost bullets.” They raise the spirit of anyone killed with the bullet as a ghost to haunt the area. Another, in San Jose near the Winchester Mansion, is attempting to free the spirits trapped within the labyrinthine home Sara Winchester built around the turn of the century. He wants to compel them to haunt the buyers of his illicit guns, thus driving the gun-owners to madness which would end in violence.

Slave Trade: Of all of DEMON’s illicit activities, the one that ties the most Demonhames together is the slave trade, which is important to the operations of a Demonhame because it allows a Morbane to acquire sacrifices. Usually the Morbane obtains these poor souls locally, but if the authorities crack down on criminal activity or suspect there’s a Demonhame in the area, the Morbane can’t risk abducting someone off the street. In that case, it’s safer for the Morbane to obtain his much-needed sacrifices through the slave trade. DEMON maintains two hubs for its slavery networks: a Demonhame called the Reconciliation in Taqiristan; and a second, called the Good Samaritan Mission, in Lugendu.

Human Organs: If Morbanes didn’t need living humans for sacrificial purposes, DEMON would abandon the slave trade entirely and instead pursue a more vigorous course of action in the trade of human organs. With advances in medical technology, transplants become an increasingly viable option for some patients. The only difficulty is human organs are hard to come by. However, once the sacrifice is complete, a Morbane has some organs on his hands, and which he can sell for a profit. It’s a business the Coin Collector thinks of as a “growth industry,” and he’s encouraged Morbanes to get involved. A few Morbanes even use organs in their arcane arts. More disturbingly, a Morbane in Mexico City is attempting to discover a means of influencing the recipient of an organ, so he can control that person from a distance. He’s currently focusing his efforts on binding a demon to an organ.

Pornography And Snuff Films: Pornography can be a great money maker for DEMON. The Morbane simply sets up a camera during a Black Mass and records it — some have also been known to do this at cult gatherings, an activity the Inner Circle frowns upon for the same reasons it doesn’t want Morbanes bilking the cultists. After viewing the film to make sure the location and identities of the participants are unidentifiable, the Morbane sells the recording to adult movie sites on the internet.

While this doesn’t establish criminal networks for DEMON, it increases the organization’s profile among a certain depraved segment of society. It’s obvious to the viewer that either actors are dressed up like DEMON members, or they’re actually DEMON members — and those who enjoy pornography and snuff films with a Satanic bent are ripe for DEMON’s recruiting efforts. On occasion a Morbane also uses his Mind Control ability to force people he wants to blackmail into making compromising movies, then when the person balks he releases the video to his current buyers.

DEMONHAME COMMON FEATURES

Demonhames vary considerably from city to city and nation to nation, and their outward appearance depends greatly on the Morbane and the locale. Strangely understaffed floors of skyscrapers, falling-down mansions in old seaside towns, ancient temples of forgotten civilizations far from the habitations of man, abandoned churches allowed to fall into disuse... all of these and more can serve DEMON’s purposes. But all Demonhames have features in common: the Chapel; the Summoning Chamber; and the Workroom. (You can find suggestions for the “interior decorating” of a Demonhame in *Anatomy Of A Black Magic Plot* on page 145.) Each of these locations has special powers it can grant to or use on the Morbane (these are powers of the Base — the Demonhame — itself, not of the Morbane, but where appropriate he activates and uses them with his own CV on his own SPD, as he would with the equipment on a Vehicle).

THE CHAPEL

The chapel is the center of a Demonhame’s activities. Here the Morbane conducts rituals and practices human sacrifice, and it’s also where your PCs likely confront the Morbane when attempting to cleanse their city of the evil that is DEMON.

The frequent rituals performed in a chapel serve a greater purpose than simply instilling DEMON members with a sense of loyalty and belonging. Taught to the Morbane during his initiation, the rituals also imbue the chapel with magical powers he can tap into and use to increase his power... especially when do-gooders break into the Demonhame and attempt to put an end to his villainy.

Life Stealing: All the rituals the Morbane leads the Brother and Initiates in serve to tie their souls to his own, and while standing in the chapel he can drain their life-energy to bolster his own. Whether the Morbane requires an Attack Roll depends on his Brothers and Initiates — most willingly sacrifice some of their life-energy for the Morbane’s benefit.

Transfer 3d6 (target’s BODY, STUN, or END to Morbane’s BODY, STUN, or END), Transfer from one Characteristic at a time (+¼), Transfer to one Characteristic at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (112 Active Points); Only Usable By Morbane Attuned To It To Draw Life-Force From Members Of The Demonhame (-1). Total cost: 56 points.

The Altar: The altar, oft-soaked in sacrificial blood, has powers all its own. It acts as a sort of mystical battery the Morbane can draw on in times of need. He can use it to bolster his own magic (the Aid Magic) and to fuel his now more potent spells (the Aid END). He must be standing in hex adjacent to the altar to tap into these powers. The Charges on

the Aid only recover with a human sacrifice, one sacrifice per Charge. (Note: to increase the slots in his Multipower, the Morbane must first increase the reserve of his Multipower, then the individual slots. With the *Variable Effect* Advantage he can raise both the reserve and one slot at the same time. See page 111 of *Hero System 5th Edition Revised* for more details.)

Aid Magic Powers 5d6, any two Magic Powers at once (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (100 Active Points); OAF Immobility (-2), Self Only (just the Morbane attuned to the altar; -½), Requires A Magic Skill Roll (-½), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 20 points.

Aid END 4d6, Delayed Return Rate points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF Immobility (-2), Self Only (just the Morbane attuned to the altar; -½), Linked (to Aid Magic; -½), Requires A Magic Skill Roll (-½), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 11 points.

THE SUMMONING CHAMBER

The summoning chamber is smaller than the chapel, but no less unholy. Here Initiates and Morbanes call forth demons and perform demon-bindings. At the center of the chamber is always a binding circle — typically a pentagram inside a circle. The circle is set into the floor in silver (or more rarely, and only for the most important Demonhames, orichalcum), with runes and glyphs painted in red pigments mixed with human blood, both that of the sacrifice (assuming there is one) and of the Morbane. Near one of the walls is an altar, almost an exact copy of the one in the chapel but smaller and without the powers described above. The summoner uses it to perform sacrifices that increase the potency of his summoning as described below. The chamber grants the Morbane the following abilities:

Demon-Binding: *Major Transform 17d6 (standard effect: 51 BODY) (DEMON Brother into Demon-Bound), Trigger (variable; +½) (382 Active Points); Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Limited Target (DEMON brothers; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 73 points.*

Demon-Summoning: *Summon 750-point demon, Expanded Class (any demon; +¼) (187 Active Points); Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 37 points.*

Sacrifices

Sacrifices made at the start of a summoning improve the summoner's chances of success. One of two types of sacrifices can be made, animal or human. The animal sacrificed is one appropriate to the demon (or a black ram, if there's no specific animal associated with the demon). In game terms this type of sacrifice offsets the penalty to the summoner's Magic Skill Roll from the Active Point cost of the Demon-Binding (-19) or Demon-Summoning (-19). A demon cannot easily resist a human sacrifice, no matter the edicts of the Descending Hierarchy, and if a Morbane truly needs to summon a demon and bind it to his will, a human sacrifice improves his chances considerably.

Animal Sacrifice: *+10 to Magic Skill Roll (20 Active Points); Only For Summoning Demons (-1), Requires Animal Sacrifice (-½). Total cost: 8 points.*

Human Sacrifice: *+16 to Magic Skill Roll (32 Active Points); Only For Summoning Demons (-1), Requires Human Sacrifice (-2) (total cost: 8 points) **plus** Amicable (+¾) for Demon-Summoning (112 Active Points); Requires Human Sacrifice (-2) (total cost: 38 points). Total cost: 46 points.*

THE WORKROOM

The workroom is always present in a Demonhame, but comes in various shapes and sizes, from a small shed to a full-blown forge, depending on the proclivities of the Morbane. Members use the room for creating the items in the Profane Regalia. It holds various mundane and occult materials from acid solution for etching metal, to the wormwood and opium used to make the drink Brothers imbibe during their initiation, to hemlock for crafting deadly poisons, to the blood of other-worldly entities used in crafting weapons.

The Workroom: *Magic 14- (total cost: 13 points) **plus** Alchemy 14- (total cost: 13 points) **plus** PS: Forge Enchanted Items 14- (total cost: 7 points). Total cost: 35 points.*

SAMPLE DEMONHAMES



Here are two sample Demonhames: the Redbrood Demonhame in New York City; and Studio Lot 0 in Los Angeles. The Redbrood Demonhame provides an example of a traditional center of DEMON operations that you can easily transplant to most major metropolitan areas; its location is an old church long ago abandoned by the faithful and left to DEMON's tender mercies. Studio Lot 0 is a less traditional Demonhame located on an abandoned movie lot from the 1930s once owned by Sydney Golden, one of DEMON's first Morbanes. You can relocate it with a little bit of work (mainly, you have to explain why a bunch of movie set pieces have ended up in a warehouse in the campaign city; see the text box, *Studio Lot 0 Elsewhere*, for advice.)

THE REDBROOD DEMONHAME

The Redbrood, on New York's lower Eastside, is the most storied Demonhame in DEMON — it served as the site for the organization's founding in 1918. A church built in pre-colonial times, it was known as the Church of the Holy Blood to the residents of New Amsterdam, and they abandoned it when poor immigrants came to reside in the neighborhood during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For more details see page 11.

Last active in the early 1980s, the Redbrood Demonhame has recently re-opened at the behest of Luther Black, who feels it's important to keep it operational because of the place's mystical significance — if not in general, then at least where it concerns DEMON and the organization's well-being, for beginnings and birthplaces have a power all their own. The Edomite has assigned two of DEMON's most promising Morbanes to re-establish the Demonhame and make it a power to contend with on the United States's eastern seaboard.

THE MORBANES

Two Morbanes, known only as the Fathers Confessor because they very much enjoy listening to the sins of their congregation, command the Redbrood Demonhame. They share responsibility for the sixty Brothers and Initiates just as they've shared everything in life, including abandoning their priestly studies to embrace Satanism.

The Mortezi family adopted the two when both were six months old and named them Giovanni and Luciano. Though they were not blood relations, and in appearance were quite different — pale blue-eyed Giovanni having a fair complex-

ion, and dark brown-eyed Luciano a swarthy one — they were kindred spirits and became as close as identical twins. They did everything together, including going to divinity school at The College of the Empty Sepulcher in upstate New York. An old school, the college taught the venerable ways of Catholicism, including the practice of exorcism — not just to complete a future priest's knowledge of his religion, but also how to recognize the proper time to conduct one — as well as a study of the black arts so the priest could identify its baneful effects on his parishioners and better protect his flock. For Giovanni and Luciano Mortezi this exposure to all things infernal and the black arts led them away from a life of Godly service to DEMON's embrace.

The brothers spent their first few years in DEMON tempting their fellow divinity students to sin and wickedness, but they possessed great magical talents and left the College of the Empty Sepulcher when raised to Morbane. Immediately following their initiation, the Black Shepherd sent them to Manhattan to re-open the Redbrood Demonhame.

Giovanni is a Horrorist, and complementing his brother's deficiencies, Luciano is a Master Of Hellfire. Both have Minor Specialties in Thaumaturgy. They hold the Black Mass in Latin, an almost perfect perversion of the traditional Catholic Mass. Giovanni is known as a plotter; Luciano, the one who puts the plots in action. Though the Brothers see Giovanni (whom they call the White Goat for the goat mask of white-lacquered wood he wears during rituals) as aloof, and Luciano (whom they call the Black Goat for his goat mask of ebony wood) as approachable, both Fathers Confessor are evil through and through.

RECRUITMENT AND CULT

Possessed of a driving ambition, the Fathers Confessor have grand plans for their Demonhame, and what follows below is only a part of their network. The presence of two other Demonhames in New York's five burroughs has limited them to recruiting only in Manhattan... but they're working on a way around that.

Recruitment Network

The main recruiting tools Redbrood uses include:

The Books Of The Healing Spirit Reading Group: This weekly reading group dedicates itself to the study of books concerning New Age mysticism and spirituality; it meets at the midtown Manhattan outlet of a large bookstore chain. DEMON members come and go from the group, only staying long enough identify potential recruits and direct them

to the cult before disappearing. The Fathers Confessor try to make sure the same face doesn't appear twice at the reading group's meetings.

The Sisters Of Perpetual Help Orphanage: When the Mortezi brothers left divinity school, claiming to have suffered a crisis of faith, the Church wanted to put the abilities of such talented and seemingly faithful young men to good use. It offered them a position as administrators at an orphanage in Clinton — jobs the brothers quickly accepted and have used as recruiting tools ever since. They have yet to bring Satanism to the staff of the orphanage, but it's only a matter of time.

Greenwich Blood Bank: Redbrood has many members that volunteer at this blood bank located in Greenwich Village. Not only do those down on their luck frequent the place to give a pint of their blood for money — people at rock bottom looking for answers DEMON is always ready to provide — but it also serves as a good place to identify people without family or close relationships because of the applications donors fill out, as well as a source of human blood for various occult purposes.

The Cult

The Fathers Confessor borrow from two thousand years' worth of theology the Holy See has judged heretical for the teachings of their cult. Still possessed of a love for religious thinking despite their evil, they constantly tinker with the details of this new heresy synthesized from millennia of old ones. The fundamental belief, borrowed from Gnosticism, supposes an evil material world. But instead of equating the Demiurge, the world's creator, with Satan as the Cathars did, the cult places Satan in the role of Sophia, the wisdom of the divine fallen into the world to enlighten humanity, using as proof the etymology of the name Lucifer as light-bringer (and also borrowing somewhat from Luciferianism).

Currently the Fathers Confessor are exploring the belief that when the sinner sinks deeply into wickedness, God's eventual redemption of him only increases His glory because the sinner has strayed so far from the path of righteousness. In other words, the Fathers Confessor have discovered that orgies and debauchery prove more popular with cultists than long-winded sermons on the evils of the material world. The cult goes under the name the Disciples of the Redeemer and meets in large suites at various hotels, a different one each week paid for by donations from its members.

FUNDING

The Redbrood Demonhame's main sources of funding are twofold. First, it does a brisk business in stolen Church goods — holy water, communion wafers, blessed vestments, and so on — usually sold to talentless would-be black magicians (or, less frequently, a talented would-be black magician, who's quickly recruited into DEMON). Second, it does a lucrative trade in "stolen" relics. The relics are fake, a business that has gone on since the beginnings of Christianity, and the background of the Fathers Confessor allows them to come up with convincing

histories for the forgeries. It's a very safe form of illicit activity since these fakes are sold to wealthy eccentric collectors who know the purchase is illegal, so no one's likely to complain even if he discovered a relic was fake.

So far the Fathers Confessor have kept their Demonhame free of other criminal activities for fear of becoming entangled with the other two Demonhames in New York... but it's only a matter of time before they start selling orphans into slavery, and they already have plans in place. They intend to kidnap eighteen-year-olds just put out of the orphanage because of their age and sell them — it's far from unheard of for those just out of the Sisters of Perpetual Help, now on their own for the first time, to disappear.

Physical Description

The Redbrood Demonhame is a small church of red brick with a steeped roof of shingles blown loose from wind and storms. Surrounded by a thirteen-foot-high wall of dirty fieldstone topped with broken glass, its desolate lot is overgrown with weeds and brambles and strewn with decades of trash — old newspapers, empty potato chip bags, and shattered liquor bottles. The gate through the wall is black wrought iron and welded shut. The double doors into the church are covered with flat pieces of particle board, a faded condemned building notice from over a decade ago tacked to the wood. The stained glass windows are broken and covered with wooden planks, and the outside walls are covered with graffiti, from anarchy symbols to the tags of graffiti artists. Rising from the steeped roof is an empty belltower that's become a haunt for crows and is covered with bird droppings.

The inside of the church is just as dilapidated as the outside. A threadbare carpet of faded scarlet leads down the central aisle with pews of scratched wood badly in need of refinishing to either side. Some of the pews are shattered from fights with superheroes and the remains still lie scattered about. The walls are also covered graffiti, but here it takes a darker tone with spray-painted thanks to Satan and chants praising Lucifer's glory running up and down the exposed brick. At the far end of the church, a crucifix lies broken in two, its pieces leaning against the wall, and protruding from the shattered wooden image of Christ are hundreds of large rusty nails. Only two signs exist that DEMON still uses the place for a chapel. Covering the altar of filthy white stone and chipped gilt — once put to holy use, but long-ago defiled after decades of shed sacrificial blood — is a drop cloth with bright red stains, and hanging from the ceiling are crucified toads, their limbs spiked with iron nails to small crosses and hung upside down from the rotted rafters with fishing line.

Behind the false back of a rotted wardrobe in the chapel's sacristy, the room where the priest changes his vestments, is a ladder leading down to the Demonhame proper. There are three levels below ground, each with a similar floor plan: a large room shaped like a pentacle, circumscribed

REDBROOD DEMONHAME PLOT SEEDS

During a recent plague of vampires, the PCs were forced to use some questionable contacts to obtain the holy water they used to fight the undead. Now that they've stopped the vampires, one of the superheroes is finally wondering how the supplier got all this holy water. Will they investigate and eventually uncover the Mortezi brothers and the greater evil of DEMON? Or will they simply shrug their shoulders and go on about their business, thankful that they have a supplier of holy water in case of another outbreak of vampires?

The Fathers Confessor have decided the best way to bolster their recruiting efforts is to eliminate the competition — not the other Demonhames in New York, but all the Christian churches in Manhattan, those rivals for the souls of the spiritually inclined. Churches start going up in hellfire explosions as a spree of vandalism shakes the city to its foundations, terrorizing Christians and forcing them to hold their services in secret. And will the superheroes uncover the culprits in time to stop them from blowing up St. Patrick's Cathedral, one of New York's most famous landmarks?

A wealthy and notorious real estate mogul has recently joined the Disciples of the Redeemer, and the Fathers Confessor have big plans for their newest cultist. They seek to turn his latest building project, an ugly structure along the Hudson River that New Yorkers wholly disapprove of, into a mystic structure to transform Manhattan into a place of power.

STUDIO LOT 0 PLOT SEEDS

Lucifer Clive, the leader of the Unholy Order of Satan, discovers his association with DEMON and freaks out. He shows up on the superheroes' doorstep, claiming to have just been in it for the money and never meaning for those who joined the cult to end up as human sacrifices. Can the superheroes believe him, or is this a trap?

Hector Snipe has finally secured funding from the Coin Collector for a film project — a movie that will have a dramatic and unnatural affect on its viewers. But for his script to work, he needs to cast real superheroes. He chooses the PCs for the role. Will they accept? And if so, how will they react when the movie begins to deviate from the sentimental script the superheroes were first shown — the one where they save the day — especially when the latest new scene has the superheroes captured and killed by a group of Satanists? And why does the director keep mumbling about *cinema verité* anyway?

Weeks ago a young person the superheroes know ran away from home and struck out for Hollywood to become a star. He's recently been in touch and told the PCs he's joined the Unholy Order of Satan. If this weren't enough to make the PCs suspicious, he suddenly disappears. Has he come to a bad end — pressed into prostitution or sold into slavery — or has he come to an even worse end and joined DEMON?

by a circular hall. Creaking wooden doors bound in brass lead from the circular hall to rooms. The first two levels have rooms for Brothers and Initiates (all but ten of the sixty live in the Demonhome); the pentacle chamber on the first level is used as a mess hall, the one on the second as a planning room. The third level has quarters for the Fathers Confessor, the summoning chamber, workrooms, and storage. The entrance to and from the Demonhome runs to the second floor; a member can reach the place from both the sewers and a nearby abandoned subway station.

STUDIO LOT 0

Sydney Golden, one of DEMON's original seven Morbanes and a student of the occult who studied with Luther Black when he was still a member of the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, founded Studio Lot 0 in 1934. It took its name from a joke the moviemakers of the day played on a new employee, who was told to report to Studio Lot 0 for work in the morning. Of course, there was no lot numbered zero and the new employee was left wandering around asking for directions to a nonexistent place. Golden funded the Demonhome's construction with monies diverted from his production company, Silver and Gold Films (named after its founders Adam Silverman and Golden, himself), and it was built on that company's land.

Silver and Gold Films is long gone, and the properties, both real and intellectual, it once owned are now held by various companies Witching Hour Entertainment (page 73) has a controlling interest in. The Demonhome is still active and has been since the late 1950s, when Luther Black re-started DEMON operations after the war years. Currently a Morbane named Hector Snipe commands the Demonhome.

THE MORBANE

A member of DEMON for the last fifteen years, Hector Snipe was groomed from his earliest days to take over leadership of Studio Lot 0, and finally did so four years ago. He began his Hollywood life as an aspiring screenwriter and fell into DEMON's embrace when the Morbane promised him success in the movie industry — and revenge against the producers and directors who insulted his work. The Morbane fulfilled his promise in a way, and for the last ten years Hector Snipe has worked as a gossip columnist for a movie tabloid.

STUDIO LOT 0 ELSEWHERE

Below are some ideas you can use to fit Studio Lot 0 into your campaign city.

- A television studio lot
- A private warehouse for wealthy collector, now deceased
- A storage warehouse for the local museum of modern media
- A sort of mystical black hole where somehow, some-way old movie sets end up

He has reputation for vitriol and bile unsurpassed in the movie industry's history, and very few Hollywood luminaries are willing to get on his bad side. The job works out well for Snipe since he can write his columns from the Demonhome; and he rarely needs to appear in public since he frequently uses cultists as his sources.

Snipe is a short, middle-aged man with a receding hairline and a foul expression that never leaves his face — pinched lips, hollow cheeks, sallow skin, and one of his bloodshot eyes is always squinting while the other is open wide, giving him a distinctive cock-eyed look. Whether his job as a mud-slinging gossip columnist or his evil acts as a black magician were what soured his features is a matter for debate. He's a powerful Morbane well-versed in magic, with a character sheet similar to Dyer vander Bleek's (page 62), but lacking access to artifacts and a Minor Specialty in City Magic.

RECRUITMENT AND CULT

Like any long-standing Demonhome, Studio Lot 0 has an extensive recruiting network that works with almost machine-like precision. Not only are the lives of most who come to Hollywood predictable — arrival with high hopes that are quickly dashed, followed by depression — but the rise and fall of Hollywood stars is just as predictable and fraught with moments that make them particularly susceptible to DEMON's recruitment methods.

Recruitment Network

The main recruiting tools Studio Lot 0 uses include:

Elysian Fields Center For Mental Health: Elysian Fields got its start as a "rest clinic" (*i.e.*, sanitarium and addiction treatment facility) for Hollywood stars and starlets during the 1950s. By the 1960s, was nothing more than a recruiting ground for DEMON. The people on staff find people truly at their wits' end and direct them to whatever cult Studio Lot 0 operates at the time, giving them a new addiction... Satanism.

The Zen Performance Group: The Zen Performance Group is an actors' studio that teaches its members Zen meditation techniques and New Age mysticism in an attempt to improve their acting abilities, mainly by easing tense nerves. DEMON members are frequent participants in the seminars and classes; they recruit anyone who takes an interest in the mystical aspects of the group's teaching for their own sake rather than just to improve their chances of landing a part.

We're Here To Listen Hotline For Runaways:

DEMON operates this free hotline through a not-for-profit group. Operators speak with callers briefly, then direct them to nearby cult members who "help" them. Unpromising runaways are sent home to their parents (thus maintaining the hotline's good reputation with stories of successfully reunited families), while the recruiters bring promising ones to a meeting of the cult. Those brought to the cult have some common features — typically they're alcohol or drug-abusers from single-parent



homes where the guardian is also an alcohol or drug-abuser and the runaway accuses the guardian of abuse. The cult member volunteering for “counselor” duty at the hotline is told not to send the runaway back to a bad home and instead bring him to the next cult meeting. From there the runaway either winds up as a member of DEMON, becomes a sacrifice, gets pressed into the Demonhome’s prostitution racket, or is sold into slavery.

The Cult

The cult for Studio Lot 0 is the Unholy Order of Satan, a rather public cult for DEMON, but one that barely raises an eyebrow in Southern California. The cult leader is Lucifer Clive (real name Harold Barry) who has no knowledge of DEMON. Clive is quite the showman, possessed of great charisma and the perfect speaking voice, and a meeting of the Unholy Order is an impressive piece of performance art: a full orchestra playing haunting music; Lucifer Clive with flapping reptilian wings attached to his back lowered to the stage from a crane; blazing blue and green fires shooting up at dramatic moments as Clive discusses the worship of Satan; thick curling mists drifting across the floor during moments of silence.

Though the cult is a secret, numerous reporters have infiltrated it, but all of them have left thinking it more spectacle — and an impressive one at that — than substance. In the end, most investigators judge the Unholy Order quite harmless. It’s been in operation for almost three years now, and Hector Snipe knows it’s time to move on. But since the Unholy Order has become such a good source of gossip, with people from all levels of the Hollywood hierarchy attending its meetings, he plans to keep the Unholy Order in operation so it can serve as a cover for the true cult again someday.

FUNDING

Studio Lot 0 has numerous and diverse sources of funding, from drug dealing to a prostitution ring that caters to both male and female Hollywood stars to human slavery, all of these developed over decades of operation. The one unusual criminal endeavor it involves itself in is the transport of illegal immigrants, who also make a convenient source of human sacrifice (this also provides a good network for smuggling artifacts and wanted DEMON members into the United States from Mexico, and vice-versa). Studio Lot 0 has had such success with illegal immigrants that DEMON leadership is encouraging Demonhomes all across the Southwest and Texas to get involved in the illicit activity.



Physical Description

Located on a lot surrounded by chain link fence topped with barbed-wire in a low-income neighborhood in Los Angeles, Studio Lot 0 is a rectangular building of corrugated aluminum, the beige paint dusty and chipped. The building is 40 feet (6") high by 80 feet (12") wide by 160 feet (25") long. Two large sliding doors, over which is the faded stenciled name of Silver and Gold Films, and a smaller personnel entrance lead inside.

Inside the large space, its ceiling an exposed framework of pipes, are old sets from many of Silver and Gold's famous monster movies (all of which were derivative works that sought to profit from more popular films). Against the far wall is the mad scientist's lab complete with a long flat piece of metal with thick leather straps and working Jacob's ladders from *Doctor Hammerstein's Monster* and *Son of Hammerstein* — the same lab where the doctor raises his golem made from parts of human corpses into the stormy heavens and gives him life, both the original monster and the smaller version intended to be the monster's son and teach him humanity. Near the entrance, standing on a raised platform with rusty wheels, is the gypsy hut where Don Laney receives the curse of lycanthropy from the old gypsy woman after he abuses her daughter in *Curse of the Full Moon*, and where he returns later in life when his son exhibits signs of lycanthropy in *Curse of the Werewolf's Blood*. Against the west wall is the immense, baroque, still-working pipe organ that the murderer in *He Haunts the Theater* loved to play; and against the east wall are the five coffins in a stone crypt exposed on two sides that served as sleeping places for Prince Trakul and his four silk nightdress-clad vampiric mistresses in *The Vampire Strikes!* (not to mention the popular sequels, *The Vampire Strikes Again!*, *Revenge of the Vampire's Lovers!*, and *A Vampire Cannot Die!*). In the center is a movie set never seen on the silver screen: an

amphitheater of wood painted to resemble stone with enough space to seat at least fifty men, and at the center of the amphitheater is a black stone altar where Hector Snipe performs human sacrifices in the name of Satan.

Members access the lower levels of the Demonhome via the metal tray in Doctor Hammerstein's lab. It moves down through the floor and descends through the eleven levels below. Levels one through ten all have the same floor plan: four rooms off a circular entrance chamber. On the walls of each entrance chamber is painted a scene in the modernist style (and some Brothers claim the artist was Pablo Picasso himself). Each scene comes from DEMON's infernal cosmogony: on the walls of the first floor are images of opposites — man and woman, beautiful man and ugly man — holding hands; on the walls of the second floor, a scene from Goethe's *Faust*; the third, sorcerers throughout history studying dusty tomes; the fourth, prostitutes soliciting patrons; the fifth, images of gruesome punishments from a man drawn and quartered to the guillotine; the sixth, incubi and succubi hovering over men and women in bed with the sheets thrown back and their arms open to embrace the demons above them; the seventh, the image of Lucifer seated on a throne with men and women of all ethnicities and nationalities bowing to him; the eighth, a man ascending a spiral stairway made of corpses; the ninth, men and women copulating with monsters from gorgons to chimeras to dragons; and the tenth, a city in flames where demons and devils caper through the streets waving severed heads and arms. On these levels, there are enough bunks for forty Brothers (four to a room) and eight Initiates (two to a room) with other rooms serving as storage, meeting rooms, and the like.

The walls of the entrance chamber on the eleventh level are painted a glossy black, and here are quarters for the Morbane as well as Studio Lot 0's summoning chamber.

DEMON AROUND THE WORLD



DEMON is the largest occult society of the modern era, perhaps the largest in all of mankind's history, and its Demonhames can be found worldwide. Though it's most common in North America, specifically the United States, DEMON and its evildoings are not unique to that continent. Luther Black's plans for apotheosis require DEMON to secure as many places of power as possible. Furthermore, loosing the Qliphothic into the world does not depend on (or stop at) national borders, and when one wishes to terrorize the common man, it matters not where he comes from.

WHERE DEMON ISN'T

Despite its willingness to take on the local culture, DEMON does have problems insinuating itself into some societies. In general, these places have one thing in common: some other secret society, usually an occult one, already runs the place and the populace knows so. The perfect example of this is Haiti, a site of not insignificant mystic power. In several places in the United States, most notably New Orleans, Vibora Bay, Chicago, and Brooklyn, DEMON members use Voodoo in their cults, and on several occasions DEMON has dispatched newly-anointed Morbanes from these places to Haiti to establish Demonhames. All of them have failed. The *houngans* and *bokors*, the Voodoo priests in the Bizango society, who influence much — if not all — of life there simply put out the word not to join DEMON, under whatever name it's operating, and the populace does as they say. Then the Morbane finds himself at war, both mundane and mystical, with an enemy he simply can't find.

Other such areas include: large areas of Africa; parts of China (but see below); Tibet; and Russia (but see below).

NORTH AMERICA

North America sees the largest amount of DEMON activity, and its recruitment primarily takes the form of Satanism (as discussed elsewhere in this book).

The United States

America is the center of DEMON's power, and the scene of its most important activities. In addition to the Redbrood Demonhame and Studio Lot 0, here are some of DEMON's other facilities in the United States.

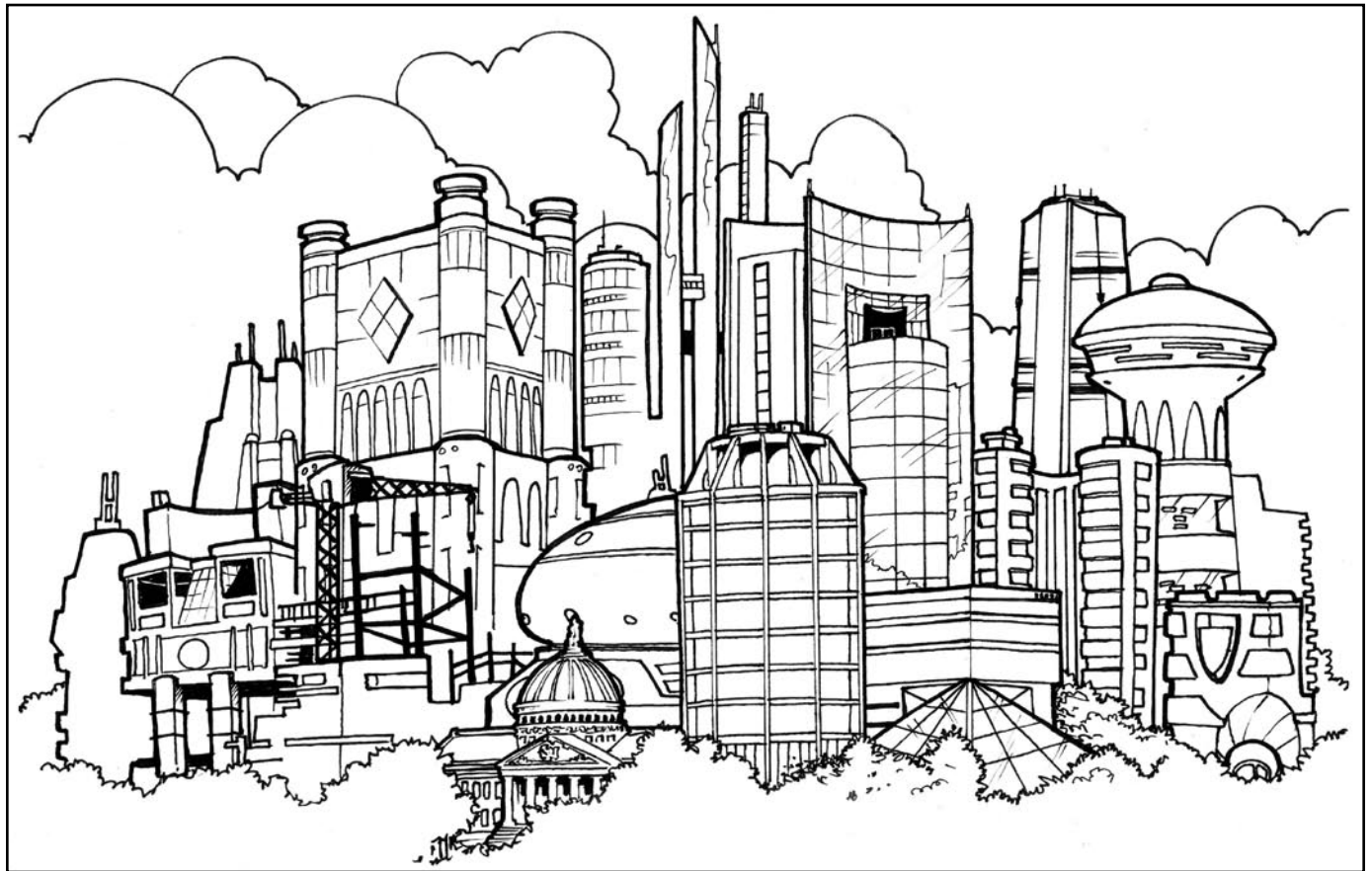
Grover Mills Penitentiary

Located in South Dakota, Grover Mills Penitentiary is semi-famous for the riots that occurred there in 1998 where inmates killed, often in grisly and slow murders, nearly three-quarters of the correction officials inside. The riot continued for three weeks, with guards dying daily, until it was violently put down by the state's National Guard. Since then Grover Mills has been out of the news, but many people still remember the list of atrocities reported after the riots were stopped. What no one reported was that the warden, T. Edward Hill, was the instigator of the riots, and the guards killed were the ones who weren't members of his Demonhame. Now everyone on staff belongs to DEMON, and the suffering they inflict on the inmates is almost beyond human belief. The inmates do, on occasion, get complaints out, but officials remember the riots and don't listen to them. The barrier between dimensions at the site is slowly but surely weakening, as year after year Warden Hill commits increasing horrors on the inmates. It won't be long now until the place has become a mystic site where the Qliphothic seeps out into the world.

Millennium City

In 2001 DEMON's presence in Millennium City suffered a severe blow when the Champions destroyed the Demonhame. The Morbane, Monica Knowlton, escaped, and now DEMON's struggling to re-establish its presence.

Knowlton got herself caught up in a bid for power made by the Coin Collector, who was trying to both increase his influence with the Morbanes and infiltrate the Millennium Project. He could see the potential profitability of taking control of many of the corporations then rushing to revitalize Detroit, and wanted to get in on the ground floor. The Coin Collector made one of his deals with Knowlton and turned her into a loyal follower. The



event forced Luther Black to move quickly to blunt the Collector's bid for power, so he leaked word of Knowlton's plot to the Champions. Knowlton's survival surprised him, but he's let it stand since he doesn't want to seem too concerned. Instead he sent three loyal Morbanes to Millennium City to revive DEMON there, and has forced Knowlton to report to all three.

One of these Morbanes, Sebastian Sarrazene, has recently secured the Delacroix Mansion for his Demonhome, and has recruited the mystic supervillains Lady Crow and the Gryphon. A dwelling with a long history of evil, the Delacroix Mansion served not too long ago as the place where the Black Paladin plotted to return his lover, Chantal, to the world of the living (see *Shades Of Black*). Sarrazene heard the tale from the supervillainess Talisman, and eventually Luther Black also learned what happened. Black wonders if this Chantal might not be his fifth Inner Circle member, and debates whether to approach the Black Paladin.

Sarrazene is a Morbane with a Minor Specialty in Necromancy. He's active in gunrunning and has ties to the Mafia — his uncle was *consiglieri* to a New York godfather. His current plot involves rais-

ing the bodies never recovered from the rubble of demolished Detroit as undead.

New York City

New York City, the site of DEMON's founding, is a hotbed of DEMON activity. As of 2004, it's home to three Demonhomes. The first, in Brooklyn, derives much of its teachings from a malign form of Voodoo. The second is the Red-brood Demonhome (see page 119). The final one uses as a front the Smiley and Sons Circus Museum, located in Queens.

Smiley and Sons Circus is still alive and well, though its traveling troupes of performers no longer tour the United States doing DEMON's work (they tour elsewhere, however; see *Eastern Europe*, below). The Museum is a profitable little business for its owners (DEMON, of course). It displays numerous oddities from the circus's colorful past, including a so-called mermaid, Celia the Bearded Lady's fake beard, a framed suit formerly owned by Jake the World's Heaviest Man, footage of the circus back in its heyday... and the preserved bodies of Jebediah and Obediah Jefferson, conjoined twins joined at the back of the head and Satan-Moloch in DEMON's first Inner Circle.

The guide happily tells visitors the story of the twins' rise from freakshow exhibit to owners of the circus, and how they expressed their desire to travel with the circus even after their death — which is how they ended up embalmed, their flesh peeled back and skull chipped away to show the one brain growing between two heads, and then displayed in a museum for the disgust and amusement of visitors.

What the guide doesn't tell people is the consciousness of the twins still inhabits their bodies, their souls trapped and their mental powers limited to being able to feel the viewers' morbid curiosity and deep revulsion toward the twins' bodies. But every once in a while their powers reach out and touch a particularly disgusted and weak-willed visitor... and then a young child points to the twins and screams, "He's looking at me! Stop him from looking at me!" and leaves the museum with a little piece of evil stabbed into his heart. In those rare and all-too-brief moments, the twins almost enjoy their tortured existence.

One Dog, Arizona

The small town of One Dog is the site of the "apostasy" known as the Demons, a biker gang that once terrorized both long stretches of highways in the desolate areas of the Southwest and the poor neighborhoods of cities across the nation. When Luther Black set to putting his house in order after the Years of Red Nights, he dispatched the Black Shepherd to visit the Demons' founder, Charlie Brimstone, rather than kill him out of hand. The biker gang had extensive networks and contacts Black thought potentially useful, but the idea of calling the gang "The Demons" was too much — far too easy to put two and two together and arrive at the connection between the Demons and DEMON. Charlie Brimstone, knowing when the gig was up, happily agreed to all of Black's terms, and to this day is in charge of the Demonhame there (which is located in a dug out area below the One Dog Pub, the oldest building in town). He maintains the Demons' former contacts through the Satan's Savages, a much smaller biker gang but nonetheless effective.

Charlie Brimstone is a powerful Morbane and still practices Summoning. Across his face, running between his eyes, is a scar in shape of large cross. Years ago when riding with the Demons, his gang terrorized a pastor and his family on vacation and driving to California. Convinced Charlie was the devil, the pastor pressed his cross against his attacker's face — and witnessed the proof of his belief when Charlie's flesh began to burn and he screamed in agony. (The rest of the gang took care of the pastor after that.)

Nearby One Dog is an ancient site of power once used by Native American magicians, but predating those tribes. The site is marked by a megalith geologists have called a butte eroded by weather until it was only a tall, narrow piece of sandy stone jutting from the flat desert. Charlie knows better and draws power from the site, which he prosaically refers to as the Devil's Member — usually in less polite language.

Vibora Bay

Vibora Bay is a city with more mysticism in its background than most, so it's been of great interest to DEMON for decades. Currently there are two Demonhames in the Vibora Bay area. The oldest and largest, known as the Plantation, occupies a decrepit old ruin of a plantation house located deep in the swamps outside the city proper — a place long forgotten by anyone but DEMON. Run by a Morbane known only as Salt, its cult and rituals draw heavily upon voodoo traditions and similar occult philosophies. Salt herself is a Diviner with a minor specialty in Necromancy (though some of her necromantic spells, particularly her abilities to create and control zombies, are as powerful as those of Morbanes who fully specialize in that discipline). She's a careful planner and schemer who's kept her Demonhame secret for many years due to her circumspection and cleverness, and who's kept her position as its leader during that time because of her ruthlessness and skill at manipulating those who try to supplant her.

The other Demonhame is located within the city proper (in and underneath an "abandoned" warehouse owned by DEMON via several corporate fronts) and is more modern in tone. Founded in the early 1990s, it's led by George Whitman, who's the very definition of the "Evil Next Door" style of Morbane. During the day he works in one of Vibora Bay's up-and-coming high-tech firms; at night he leads his cult (with the help of his wife Audrey, an Initiate). He's a Thaumaturge, with a minor specialty in City Magic; some of his recent projects have focused on efforts to manipulate computer and security technology with magic.

Canada And Mexico

While not home to as many Demonhames as the United States, Canada and Mexico are nevertheless important to DEMON. For reasons discussed in Chapter Two, Mexico City is important to DEMON's future plans and currently has three Demonhames. Two of the Demonhames practice Satanism; the other one worships the Aztec gods. The latter Demonhame doesn't attract many faithful, most Mexicans having long ago given up worship of the gods of their ancestors, but Luther Black makes sure the Demonhame continues its bloody rites just in case it becomes useful in the future.

In Canada, the most important Demonhame is located in Guelph, near Toronto; it's disguised as a publishing company specializing in books about Orientalia. Its Morbane, a man named MacKinnon, leads his followers in the worship of the Triple Goddess, Hecate, recast in somewhat more diabolic form. He believes strongly in the mystic significance of 3, and tries to define and categorize the entire world by threes. His schemes and plots always involve 3 somehow, whether bringing three things together or committing a crime or performing a ritual at a site numbered 3.

SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

In the rest of the Americas, DEMON takes on traditional Satanism and twisted versions of Voodoo, as well as a profane form of Candomble that after DEMON gets done with it has much in common with the organization's version of Voodoo. The most interesting developments in the area have been the rise of the Odessa Demonhome in Argentina and the latest plot by the Red Braid Demonhome in the Bermuda Triangle.

Buenos Aires

In what is essentially neo-Nazism mixed with Satanism, the members of the Odessa Demonhome all claim to be descendants of escaped members of the Nazi Party. The Morbane calls himself Salvador Hoess, and the members of his congregation have taken to adopting German last names as well. Only Argentinians with light complexions may join, and newly initiated Morbanes from the Odessa Demonhome have traveled to Peru and Chile to set up their own Demonhomes along the same lines.

The Bermuda Triangle

Located in the Bermuda Triangle on an uncharted island where sunken ships are mystically inclined to wash up and a person can find unlikely wreckage like holed Egyptian barges from the Battle of Actium and strange alien vessels of unknown alloy, the Red Braid Demonhome is a sort of gulag for disgraced Morbanes. DEMON must secure the mystic site for its purposes, but it's located so far from civilization that it holds little appeal for members who join DEMON out of a thirst for power over their fellow man.

Five Morbanes currently reside in the Red Braid Demonhome, and they've recently launched a plot that can't go well — one involving a sailing ship crewed by the undead. Called the *Drowned Mathilda*, the ship is made of rotted wood with tattered sails and magically propelled by a bound air elemental. Surrounded by a permanent fog, the *Drowned Mathilda* prowls the seas looking for other ships to raid (mainly cruise ships filled with passengers touring the Caribbean). All of this wouldn't necessarily be a bad idea for bringing terror to the populace, except for two things. First, the Morbanes plan to eventually have the undead pirates kidnap tourists from the cruise ships — sure to bring down the wrath of superheroes. Second, they have made a very powerful specter the captain.

The zombies among the crew were raised from the bodies of dead sailors washed up on the island's shore, but the captain is another matter entirely. The Morbanes only think they have raised him. Given the name of Captain Red Braids, the specter is far beyond the ability of the Morbanes to control — although he hasn't let them know that yet. His origin is unknown, but judging by his power, he is an ancient wickedness returned to the world to cause horror and suffering.

WESTERN EUROPE

DEMON has a long history in Europe, where it uses Satanism to attract members and its influence is both extensive and perfidious.

Castle Nevermore

If a person walks north through Scotland until his feet are wet and then turns to his left, he'll see a crumbling pile of blasted rock that leans from a cliff jutting out over the grey waters. If a person stares long enough, eventually he sees that the pile of rock is actually a castle. And if he squints through the cold fog, he might be surprised to see flickering torchlight coming from the tops of the towers. But if he stares too long, he'll definitely be surprised to see bat-winged creatures take flight from the towers and come swooping down to rend him with stone claws.

That pile of black stone is Castle Nevermore. It has served as the MacBain family curse since just after the Scots learned the English word for curse (as well as English curses). But the last MacBain is dead, murdered over a decade ago. The current Lord MacBain is the son of the last lord's steward and a Morbane in DEMON — a man really named Danny Walsh who, despite not even being Scottish (let alone a MacBain), started calling himself the lord of Nevermore after he killed the final scion of that ancient line.

The Demonhome proper is in the castle where Lord MacBain lives. At the end of the path leading up the steep slope to the castle is a small hamlet of fifty souls, all of them dedicated to wickedness and loyal to Lord MacBain and DEMON. The curse of the MacBains was that the gargoyles decorating the castle, from grotesque faces set above archways to the large statues lining the highest edge of the walls, shouted insults about the MacBains at all hours, day and night, and trumpeted the current MacBain's peccadilloes at the top of their stoney lungs. With the death of the last MacBain, the curse ended — but a MacBain would be tickled to hear that the gargoyles have now been cursed themselves. The Morbane has cast his spells and worked his magic, and now the gargoyles have no choice but to serve his will.

Lord MacBain is content with his current life, but sometimes sends a gargoyle off to steal a sailor from a ship passing in the night to hear of current events — and obtain a sacrifice for his dark gods.

Paris

The largest Demonhome in France is located in Paris. Page 10 (*Le Roi Secret De La Cité*) describes events that occurred during the French Colonial Exposition of 1931, when the Morbane Guillame Courau attempted to work a ritual to tie the city to his soul. Thought killed during the event, he actually survived in a coma — and he lives to this day, his life tied to the life of Paris itself. The current Morbane in Paris, like all those before him, takes care of Courau and attempts to discover a way of furthering his power through the catatonic man.

Berlin

In Berlin there are two Demonhames, the largest of which is the Hexenhaus, a dance club popular with young adults in the city. The Morbane in charge of the Hexenhaus calls himself Otto von Himmel, and his current fixation is buying up buildings formerly used by the Stasi as interrogation sites. After purchasing one, von Himmel investigates its mystic potential — he believes the pain and suffering of suspected political dissidents could have worn down the barriers between dimensions. So far he's found nothing to support his theory. But he did stumble on the Reichswert (page 10) buried in a vault in the days before the Soviet Union reached the city. He knows what he has, but is not convinced the artifact has any powers.

EASTERN EUROPE

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, DEMON has expanded into Eastern Europe. Its “missionary” to these countries has been Monsieur Night, ringmaster for Smiley and Sons Circus's last troupe of circus performers that actually uses tents, a big top with three rings, and all the traditional accouterments of traveling players. Monsieur Night (who in his early days modeled his persona on Mister Dark from Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, although he has since developed “foibles” all his own) is the Morbane in DEMON best at establishing Demonhames and leaving them in capable hands, and he's honed his skill to a fine art in the decade since the collapse of Communism.

The entire circus is a Demonhame, each part carried in a separate trailer along with circus tents and attractions, and the visitors to the circus become its cult. Those he recruits into DEMON travel with the circus while learning the magical arts; Initiates who attain the rank of Morbane travel with the circus until it returns to the Morbane's old home. The new Morbane then leaves the circus to set up a Demonhame in familiar surroundings.

Monsieur Night has the magical abilities of a Horrorist and Summoner, as well as many of his own spells designed to heighten circus-goers' experiences. He feels the Demon-Bound have made his freak show the best in the history of circuses. His troupe continues to come closer and closer to Russia itself, and Luther Black struggles to make a decision: dispatch one of his best Morbanes into the deathtrap that Russia has been over the years, or keep him doing DEMON's work west of that country. Compounding the problem is Monsieur Night's undue influence over the Morbanes he trains, which gives him both knowledge and control over an unusual number of Demonhames. Black wonders if Monsieur Night might serve better on some other continent....

Russia

Russia has long proven a thorn in Luther Black's side. In the earliest days, while he was establishing DEMON, he lost a talented apprentice in Saint Petersburg — a pogrom broke out in the neighborhood of the Demonhame and all its members were killed. The pogrom was strangely small, only on the Demonhame's block and several of the neighboring ones. Then in the sixties there was the international incident sparked by the so-called Rasputin (see page 14). Most recently, Morbanes dispatched a year ago never even made it out of the Moscow airport. Their whereabouts remain unknown to this day; the Moscow police suspect Chechen terrorists.

Those are only some of the more explicable events — other Morbanes have simply disappeared without a trace. Luther Black is convinced some supernatural agency guards Russia from DEMON. Whether it's the mythical Baba Yaga, the ghost of Bohdan Stanislawski, or some third party, he doesn't know... but he's determined to uncover its identity and crush it.

AFRICA

Africa is a very mixed bag when it comes to DEMON's activities. Over the decades a pattern seems to repeat itself: DEMON makes great strides, and then suffers great setbacks. Whether this is simply the nature of the nations, the people, and the continent itself, or there's some mystical agency working against DEMON, is a mystery. Currently DEMON is strongest in Morocco and South Africa, where its presence hasn't flagged for nearly forty years. Regardless of what happens in the next few years — currently it's experiencing a string of successes — DEMON will continue to attempt to expand into Africa. There are too many mystical sites, far from the eyes of superheroes, for DEMON to leave the Dark Continent alone.

Cairo

The Great Pyramids and the Sphinx are obviously important mystical sites, but public awareness of them has always interfered with DEMON's attempts to secure them for its purposes. Within the last year a Morbane has put in action a plan with some potential for success. Working under cover of a group that leads tours of the site, Occidental Tours Unlimited, the Morbane has been planting artifacts that will hopefully divert energy from the Pyramids and Sphinx to his Demonhame. The artifacts are small amulets — shallow, curved discs engraved with hieroglyphs for theft and magic around the inner edge — made of orichalcum. The find of a lifetime, the orichalcum was for sale in a Cairo bizarre where the Morbane quickly snatched up the metal, paying the junk dealer the exorbitant amount he asked — almost two American dollars! — without even bothering to haggle. He hammered the mystic metal into shape, not bothering to investigate its providence. Whether his amulets and eventual theft of mystic energy will go undetected — or even if he'll divert the energy — remains to be seen. And it's possible someone will come looking for the orichalcum....

WESTERN ASIA

In the Middle East, DEMON often takes on one of two forms. One is a perversion of a Kurdish belief which teaches that Lucifer and God reconciled. In DEMON's version Lucifer never repented of his wicked ways, and God merely came to accept Lucifer's evil. As a token of apology for eons of punishment, God gave the world to Lucifer. The other form is that ancient Arabs were the rulers of the Djinn and that Mohammed led the Arabs away from the Djinn, thus depriving them of their greatest asset — an asset that would free the Middle East from Western influence. DEMON claims it seeks to lead Arabs back to rulership of Djinn — it's theirs by right of birth — and thus control of their lands, if not the whole world.

Tel Aviv

DEMON currently maintains a small Demonhome in Tel Aviv, mainly comprised of foreigners brought into the organization elsewhere and then sent to Israel. The Demonhome serves as the launching point for the establishment of a Demonhome in Jerusalem that will secure the Temple Mount. It's tried twice in last decade. The first time its nascent Demonhome was identified as a terrorist group and raided by the Israeli Defense Forces. Israeli officials extradited the captured DEMON members to their home countries to face trial. The second time it was identified as part of the so-called "Zionist Conspiracy" and a Palestinian suicide bomber blew it up, killing all members.

The current Morbane feels his Demonhome must blend in better with the surrounding culture. He is studying the Satan as depicted in the Book of Job, looking for ideas on how to change his cult to appeal to Israelis alienated from Judaism. So far his best idea is to present DEMON as an agent for testing mankind's faith, but how he'll explain pentagrams, black magic, and demon summoning is a thorny problem.

EASTERN ASIA

DEMON's presence in Eastern Asia had long been limited to Shanghai before World War II and Hong Kong afterwards. But recent years have seen DEMON making inroads into the area, most prominently in Japan.

China

Using Hong Kong as a launching point, for the last decade DEMON has infiltrated China under the guise of Christianity. (The fact that DEMON is using what could pass for traditional Christianity to spread its evil makes many Morbanes smile wickedly.) DEMON's made progress, but every time it stands on the verge of securing a site of power or otherwise cementing its beachhead something happens. The last time it was the Tiger Squad rounding up its followers. This incident was reported internationally as the arrest of political dissidents who belonged to the Church of the Sacred Heart, a DEMON front unwittingly funded by many charitable souls and organizations including several churches in the United States. Before that, it was the entire Demonhome in Beijing found dead — a massacre Luther Black suspects the Cult of the Red Banner committed. But DEMON continues to worm its way into the Middle Kingdom, and each time it experiences more success than the last.

India

Lately DEMON has had great success establishing itself in India, in no small part because of the Dalang's input on what would appeal to his disgruntled countrymen. DEMON now disguises itself as a perverse form of Kali worship, claiming its antecedents were Thugees persecuted under the British Raj. Its leaders tell their followers to reject the perfidious influence of Western culture, which is nothing more than a holdover from the days when India was a slave state. The cult and Demonhome are virtually inseparable, with cultists sometimes acting as "arm-holders" for the Morbane as he strangles the person during sacrifices in the Demonhomes — strangulation being the preferred method of killing to Kali, who eschews shed blood.

DEMON's presence is strongest in Bombay and Calcutta, and recently it founded a Demonhome near Kailassa Temple, securing that mystic site. More closely connected than Demonhomes elsewhere, the seven primary Morbanes in the country are planning to defile the Taj Mahal, a mystic site embodying love and many other qualities that DEMON would like to see expunged from the world. (For more about the Taj Mahal in the Champions Universe, see page 68 of *The Mystic World*.) DEMON has yet to come into conflict with the Indian hero Rashindar, who's attempting to convince the Mystic World he's the best candidate for the Archmage. The conflict will occur eventually; the only real question is whether Luther Black will hear of Rashindar's candidacy.

Japan

Mount Fuji is too tempting a target for DEMON to pass up — it has longed to place a Demonhome in Tokyo for decades. At the turn of the millennium it succeeded. The vehicle for this infiltration is a cult, similar to Aum Shinrikyo, called in English Om Hidden Wisdom. Using a mixture of esoteric Buddhism and Satanism, Om Hidden Wisdom has grown popular under the guidance of Zachary Satomura. American by birth, Satomura joined the San Francisco Demonhome in 1988 as a runaway, and quickly rose through the ranks. Infiltrating Japan using Aum Shinrikyo's philosophy was his idea; he's considered one of DEMON's brightest stars. He has an irrational hatred of his Japanese heritage and wants only to bring wreck and ruin to the country.

The Inner Circle gives Satomura a lot of leeway, and has assigned a Black Scientist to work with him on his current plan, the invention of the Ghost Press. Satomura wants to create a large machine of gears and printing plates that turns the ghosts of the dead into counterfeit yen. Once the money has spread wide, he plans to reveal the truth to the world in a public broadcast, reading a list of the spirits turned into currency — ideally at the exact same moment when he commands the ghosts to communicate their pain and suffering to whoever holds the counterfeit yen at that moment. This blasphemy should crush the spirit of many Japanese.

AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA

DEMON is moderately active in Australia, where its main priority at the moment is to secure Ayres Rock — a plot sure to attract the attention of the mystic Walkabout, and a site that might be more than the Morbanes can handle — and New Zealand where the Morbanes hypothesize about ways to taint the island's beautiful environs. But its most important Demonhome is located on Pohnpei in Micronesia.

Pohnpei

Nearly forty years ago the lost city of Nan Madol was the sight of Luther Black's vision in the Basilisk Orb. Now it's the site of a Demonhome where foul and unnatural activities are underway. When Black seized the Basilisk Orb, elemental spirits were called upon to invade the island. Those spirits made their bodies from the slime and muck at the bottom of the surrounding ocean, and when the Sentinels thwarted DEMON's plans, the elementals retreated and seemingly disappeared from the world.

The malevolent spirits, called in the local language Muck-Dwellers, have colonized a site under the waters. Over the decades their forms grew increasingly human, and now they have made contact with the inhabitants of Pohnpei, acting through the intermediary of the Demonhome maintained on the island specifically for this purpose. The Muck-Dwellers want human children, boys and girls they can take to the bottom of sea and raise as their own. In return they would give the inhabitants of Pohnpei Muck-Dweller children to raise, elemental changelings that to all outward appearances are human — at least as long as they're children. The DEMON members have promised the Muck-Dwellers this event will come to pass... regardless of how the inhabitants feel about it.

All of this elemental strangeness is an expression of the Qliphothic's corrupting influence on the Material World. During the upheavals caused by Luther Black's use of the Basilisk Orb, a sinkhole opened in the ocean's floor. The sinkhole seems almost bottomless, and here the dimensional barriers wear thin, the Shining Darkness spewing into the world and rising on the ebb and tide of the ocean currents. The Qliphothic has infected the Muck-Dwellers and given them this strange desire to exchange children with land-dwellers. Their ultimate goal is unknown... but DEMON is only interested in polluting the world and cares little about why.

chapter six:



INFERNAL DEVICES AND MALEVOLENT MAGICS

THE PROFANE REGALIA



Profane Regalia’ is the general term DEMON uses to refer to the magical items members create within the Demonhome. Since these items serve as an equalizer and allow DEMON to battle superheroes despite a lack of high tech equipment, Morbanes encourage all members to spend considerable time in the workroom. Despite this, and the fact that all DEMON members have enough talent to create the Brazen Wand and Amulet Of Protection, only a few Brothers have a true talent for the art. The higher a person goes in DEMON, the more talent he likely has, and all Morbanes have enough at least to craft a magical weapon (such as the Enchanted Mace on the character sheet on page 96).

Like the Brazen and Tarnished Wands and Amulets Of Protection, the items below are Personal Foci, so only the person who crafts one can use it. At your discretion, you can “stretch” this rule a bit to allow other DEMON members, as well as perhaps a mystic PC who can channel his magical might through the object, to use an item for the duration of a combat. If an item is separated from its owner for an extended period of time, usually a week or two, it crumbles to dust.

You can use the weapons described in this chapter to increase the combat effectiveness of DEMON when it battles your PCs. As a rule of thumb, if you’re using DEMON as presented in this book, Initiates are more likely to have an item than Brothers, and Morbanes more likely than Initiates — Morbanes always have at least one weapon from the Profane Regalia. As a rough guideline: one in six Brothers has an enchanted weapon in addition to the items on his character sheet; one in three Initiates has a weapon (either the base version he created as a Brother or the Initiate’s version listed in the *Options* section) in addition to the items on his character sheet.

DEMONIC WEAPONRY

THE ARGENT WAND

Effect:	Energy Blast 12d6; Energy Blast 6d6 with various Advantages; RKA 4d6; Sight Group Flash 6d6
Target/Area Affected:	Varies
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Varies
Charges:	32
Breakability	12 DEF

Description: While moving up the ranks, Morbanes lose their Tarnished Wands when their magic grows too great to channel through the simple magical item. Some, having grown accustomed to carrying a wand, create a new one. Since brass is too base a metal for one of a Morbane’s rank, they craft a wand of silver (or gold as described below for the Auric Wand). The wand has much the same abilities as an Initiate’s Tarnished Wand, but the energy bursting from the wand gives off sparks of silver, and the wand has more Charges and slots in the Multipower, representing the Morbane’s greater ability to shape the wand’s eldritch energy.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
37	<i>Argent Wand:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve, 32 Charges on entire Multipower (+¼), all slots OAF (-1)
3u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast I:</i> Energy Blast 12d6; OAF (-1)
3u	2) <i>Eldritch Blast II:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (7” Cone; +1); OAF (-1)
3u	3) <i>Eldritch Blast III:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, Variable Advantage (+½ Advantages; +1); OAF (-1)
3u	4) <i>Deadly Blast:</i> RKA 4d6; OAF (-1)
3u	5) <i>Dazzle Blast:</i> Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (7” Cone; +1); OAF (-1)

Total cost: 52 points.

Options

1) **Auric Wand:** This wand is a gold version more experienced Morbanes use. Increase Multipower reserve to 70 points, and adjust the slots as appropriate. Total cost: 58 points.



THE BACK-STABBER

Effect: HKA 1d6, Indirect
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: 170"
END Cost: 3
Breakability: 7 DEF

Description: An enchanter creates the short-bladed Back-Stabber by engraving the blade with sigils for “bad man” and “hidden,” then thrusting the blade through a dead criminal who turned fellow criminals over to the cops. The enchanter leaves the blade in the body from one new moon to the next to complete the creation. As the wielder attacks with the Back-Stabber, the blade disappears. It reappears any distance away from the wielder, up to the attack’s range, often behind or above the target. Once it strikes, the blade then reappears attached again to the hilt.

Game Information: HKA 1d6 (up to 2d6 with STR), Ranged (+½), Indirect (+¾) (34 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 17 points.

Options

- 1) **Initiate’s Version:** Increase damage to HKA 1½d6. 56 Active Points; total cost 28 points.
- 2) **Morbane’s Version:** Add Affects Desolidified (+½) to Initiate’s Version. 69 Active Points; total cost 34 points.

BATWING BLADES

Effect: RKA ½d6, Penetrating
Target/Area Affected: One Hex
Duration: Instant
Range: 100"
Charges: 8 Charges
Breakability: 4 DEF

Description: The enchanter creates this small knife, which has a hilt shaped like spread bat wings, by using it to crucify a bat to a cross of olive wood, then hiding the still living creature on consecrated ground. The enchanter retrieves the crucified bat a fortnight later. In battle he can throw the blade, and as it screeches and whistles through the air it duplicates until it fills a hex. The knives fly through the air wildly, seeming to find every nook and cranny in a target’s defenses when they hit. Typically a DEMON member carries eight of these blades.

Game Information: RKA ½d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Penetrating (+½) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½). Total cost: 8 points.

Options

- 1) **Initiate’s Version:** Increase to RKA 1d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
- 2) **Morbane’s Version:** Increase to RKA 2d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 24 points.
- 3) **Autofire Version:** Rather than spreading into a cloud of knives, the knives line up one after the other right before hitting the target. Change Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½) to Autofire (5 shots; +½) and 8 Charges (-½) to 40 Charges (+½). 25 Active Points; total cost 12 points.

WHY MELEE WEAPONS

There are several reasons DEMON uses melee weapons. The first is simplicity. A member must only enchant a single weapon, and then can continue to use it. Enchanting missile weapons often requires enchanting missiles that lose their effectiveness after being fired, then trudging back to the workroom to enchant some more.

Enchanting firearms is even more difficult — which is one reason Robert Caliburn, the Magnum Mage of Vibora Bay, is a figure of some awe among the denizens of the Mystic World. First, firearms are a relatively recent invention and there isn’t an existing body of lore, added to for countless millennia, for enchanting guns that can help the enchanter in his endeavors. In other words, the enchanter has a harder time cribbing from someone else’s work, since few magicians have done any work in the field. Furthermore, as technological items, guns seem less susceptible to enchanting than “traditional” weaponry.

Second, one of DEMON’s goals is to bring terror to the common man. While for the victim being shot through the heart with a bullet, having his skull pulped with a mace, or having his spine severed with a sword all result in death, for the onlookers witnessing a battlemad DEMON Brother pulping a victim is a horrible sight — a sight that, in this relatively bloodless age (at least in the United States), likely haunts the survivor of a battle involving DEMON and thus brings more misery into the world.

WHERE DO THEY GET THE WEAPONS?

Demonhames usually obtain mundane weapons to enchant via theft or mail order (delivered to a P.O. box). Typically, the Morbane locates an artisan still practicing weaponsmithing — someone who lives out of state or, at the very least, not in the same city — and orders weapons as needed. In previous decades superheroes uncovered the location of more than one Demonhame when they tracked down the individual responsible for crafting the weapons DEMON used and found the Morbane from there. Now Morbanes are more careful.

Some Demonhames have smithies within the workroom itself, but this isn't common.

GHOST KNIFE

Effect: HKA 1d6/Summon Ghost
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
END Cost: Varies
Breakability: 49 DEF

Description: This powerful weapon is a favorite among Morbanes for gaining revenge on an opponent. Its creation requires a piece of the intended target's body — fingernail clippings, cut hair, blood taken from the target at a spurious blood donation drive (a frequent DEMON ruse used to get human blood), and so on. The enchanter places the piece in the hollow pommel of the knife, and with it clutched in his arms, sleeps in a desecrated cemetery for a week. The powers below only work against one target; the enchanter needs to create a new knife for a new target.

When the target suffers a hit from the Ghost Knife, the weapon slightly tugs his soul from his body. This looks like a ghostly image of the target flickering through space a few seconds later than the body. If the target dies by the Ghost Knife, he rises immediately as a ghost slavishly loyal to the Morbane (or whoever killed him). There is no version of this blade for Brothers and Initiates; it's too powerful a weapon for them to create.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
7	HKA 1d6 (up to 2d6 with STR); OAF (-1)
2	Armor Piercing (+½) for HKA; OAF (-1), Only Versus Designated Target (-1)
61	Summon 405-point Ghost (see <i>The HERO System Bestiary</i> , page 120), Slavishly Loyal (+1), Specific Individual (person killed with Ghost Knife; +1); OAF (-1), 1 Charge (-2)

Total cost: 70 points.

HELL-KISSED BLADE

Effect: HKA 1d6+1 plus RKA ½d6, Penetrating, No Range
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
END Cost: 2
Breakability: 9 DEF

Description: To create a Hell-Kissed Blade, the enchanter laquers the metal with a mixture of demon blood, scours it with brimstone and black pumice, then sets the blade in a pyre where human fingernails, hair, and bone burn among brands of ash wood. The blade can ignite, and its fire burns hot enough to sear flesh through thick armor and even Force Fields.

Game Information: HKA 1d6+1 (up to 2½d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 12 points) **plus** RKA ½d6, Penetrating (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Linked (-½) (total cost: 7 points). Total cost: 19 points.

Options

1) Initiate's Version: Increase Linked RKA to RKA 1d6. 55 Active Points; total cost 23 points.

2) Morbane's Version: Increased Linked RKA to RKA 1½d6. 75 Active Points; 30 points.

THE JUGGERNAUT

Effect: HA +5d6 plus Drain DEF 2d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Charges END Cost: 5
Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: The Juggernaut is a large, two-handed mace DEMON members use to break through walls or bust down vault doors. To create it, the enchanter commissions a mace with the end shaped as a ram's head. He completes the enchantment by using the Juggernaut to pulp the head of a large man or the heads of several bulls. The mace deals out considerable damage, as well as Draining the DEF of an inanimate object every time it hits.

Game Information: HA +5d6 (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½) (total cost: 10 points) **plus** Drain DEF 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (if points can return at all, they return at the rate of 5 per 1 Minute; +¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-½) (total cost: 10 points). Total cost: 20 points.

Options

1) Initiate's Version: Increase HTH Attack to +6d6. 30 + 25 = 55 Active Points; total cost 12 + 10 = 22 points.

2) Morbane's Version: Increase Drain of Initiate's Version to 3d6. 30 + 37 = 67 Active Points; total cost 12 + 16 = 28 points.

3) **Superhero-Bashing Version:** Demonhames who frequently fight superheroes often develop a version of the Juggernaut to help them. Change Drain DEF 2d6 to Drain Armor 2d6. Total cost: 10 + 10 = 20 points.

SATAN'S LASH

Effect: Entangle 2d6, 2 DEF plus Suppress EGO and PRE 3d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Constant
Range: 2"
END Cost: 5
Breakability: 11 DEF

Description: The enchanter creates this long, slender whip by braiding hair taken from the mane of a black stallion and a black-haired prostitute. To complete the creation, he takes the whip and strangles a goat (preferable one with a black or dark grey pelt). The whip, over eight feet of supple black braid, saps the will of its victim. As long as the whip remains wrapped around its target the effect continues. Tactically, DEMON Morbanes use these to prepare someone for a Presence Attack or mental attack; typically Brothers armed with Satan's Lash flank the opponent and then hold him with the whip for the Morbane's Touch Of Terror.

Game Information: Entangle 2d6, 2 DEF, Entangle And Character Both Take Damage (+¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1) Limited Range (2"; -¼), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Can Be Escaped Automatically With Modified Contortionist Roll (-½) (total cost: 8 points) plus Suppress 3d6, EGO and PRE simultaneously (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-¼), Limited Range (2"; -¼) (total cost: 12 points). Total cost: 20 points.

Options

- 1) **Initiate's Version:** Increase Suppress to 5d6 dice. 25 + 50 = 75 Active Points; total cost 8 + 20 = 28 points.
- 2) **Morbane's Version:** Add +2 DEF to the Entangle of the Initiate's Version. 37 + 50 = 87 Active Points; total cost 12 + 20 = 32 points.
- 3) **Strength Sapping Version:** This version saps the strength of its target, and Morbane typically use it to secure prisoners in preparation for sacrifice. Change Suppress EGO and PRE to Suppress STR and END. Total cost: 8 + 12 = 20 points.



THE SINISTER BLADE

Effect: HKA 1½d6, Variable Special Effect, Variable Advantage
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
END Cost: 6
Breakability: 12 DEF

Description: The Sinister Blade seems almost sentient in the way it learns the vulnerabilities of its opponent after a moment or two of combat. To create the weapon, the enchanter first leeches the blood from anyone who has broken a holy vow, in this day and age typically a divorcee. (Sadly, for DEMON at least, the victim must either be unaware of the leeching, or unwilling to donate the blood, or else the magic loses its efficacy.) Then the enchanter kills successive blood-glutted leeches with the sword, one each night when the planet Mars is visible, until he's killed twenty. DEMON restricts the use of Sinister Blades to Initiates and Morbanes.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
12	<i>The Blade:</i> HKA 1½d6 (up to 3d6+1 with STR); OAF (-1)
13	<i>Sinister Enchantments:</i> Variable Special Effects (+½) and Variable Advantage (+½) worth of Advantages; +1) for HKA; OAF (-1), Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾)
5	Find Weakness with HKA 11-; OAF (-1)

Total cost: 30 points.

Options

1) **Morbane's Version:** Increase Variable Advantage to Variable Advantage (+1 worth of Advantages; +2). Total cost of Sinister Enchantments 22 points; total cost of item 39 points.

THE SHARD

Effect: HKA 1½d6 plus RKA 1 point
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant/1 Turn
Range: No Range
END Cost: 2/8 Continuing Charges
Breakability: 9 DEF

Description: To create this weapon, the enchanter must scrape the blade during the night of the winter solstice against the tomb or gravestone of a dead black magician who was buried on consecrated ground. Over the night the blade grows rough with sharp metal splinters. When the wielder hits someone with a Shard, a splinter remains in the cut and works its way through the target's flesh.

Game Information: HKA 1½d6 (up to 3d6+1 with STR) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 12 points) **plus** RKA 1 point, NND (defense is Hardened Physical Defense of any kind, or not having a living body [body of stone, of smoke, or the like]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1) (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Linked (-¼), 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn (can be stopped by target taking a Full Phase to dig out splinter; -0) (total cost: 7 points). Total cost: 19 points.

Options

1) **Initiate's Version:** Increase Charges on RKA from 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn (-0) to 8 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Minute (+¼). 25 + 21 = 46 Active Points; total cost 12 + 8 = 20 points.

2) **Morbane's Version:** Increase RKA on Initiate's Version to ½d6. 25 + 42 = 67 Active Points; total cost 12 + 14 = 26 points.

WAND OF FORCE

Effect: Energy Blast 4d6, Double Knockback; Telekinesis (16 STR); Force Wall (7 PD/7 ED)
Target/Area Affected: One character/Varies/1" long by 1" high
Duration: Instant/1 Turn/1 Turn
Range: 175"/175"/175"
Charges: 4/2 Continuing Charges/2 Continuing Charges
Breakability: 7 DEF

Description: A simple long shaft of oak, this wand allows the wielder to project solid blasts of eldritch energy, or create a wall of arcane force. The force the wand emits is usually either the pale blue of a death-kissed body, or the sickly green of rotted meat.

The enchanter creates the wand over the course of a week. During the day he taunts a pent-up ram or goat with the wand, then at night he carves runes and sigils into the wooden shaft. On the last day, preferably a Sunday, the enchanter kills the tormented animal by forcing the wand down its throat. The enchanter can substitute a man who's either boisterous or stubborn for the animal.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
17	<i>Wand Of Force:</i> Multipower, 35-point reserve, all OAF (-1)
1u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, Double Knockback (+¾); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1)
1u	2) <i>TK Blast:</i> Telekinesis (16 STR), Fine Manipulation; OAF (-1), 2 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1)
1u	3) <i>Force Wall:</i> Force Wall (7 PD/7 ED); OAF (-1), 2 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-1)

Total cost: 20 points.

Options

1) **Initiate's Version:** Add slot: Force Wall (6 PD/6 ED; 3" long and 1" high); OAF (-1), 2 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Turn each (-1). Total cost: 21 points.

2) **Morbane's Version:** Change to the following:

Cost	Power
28	<i>Wand Of Force:</i> Multipower, 56-point reserve, all OAF (-1)
2u	1) <i>Eldritch Blast:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, Double Knockback (+¾); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1)
2u	2) <i>TK Blast:</i> Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation; OAF (-1), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½)
2u	3) <i>Force Wall I:</i> Force Wall (11 PD/11 ED); OAF (-1), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½)
2u	4) <i>Force Wall II:</i> Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED; 8" long and 2" high); OAF (-1), 4 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Turn each (-½)

Total cost: 36 points.

WAND OF NIGHT

Effect: Darkness to Sight and Hearing Groups plus Ego Attack 1d6, Continuous
Target/Area Affected: 2" Radius
Duration: Constant
Range: 125"
Charges: 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each
Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: The Wand Of Night is a slender shaft of ebony wood with long wavy gouges running along its length. To make the wand the enchanter must sharpen the finger bones of someone who died insane, then gouge the wood for the nights of the new moon. The wand creates a field of darkness. While in the darkness a person hears an maniacal keening and feels as if burning claws were scratching at his soul. To dispel the darkness before the end of its charge someone must shine a bright light from within the darkness.

Game Information: *Darkness to Sight and Hearing Groups 2" radius (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½) (total cost: 10 points) plus Ego Attack 1d6, Area Of Effect (2" Radius; +¾), Continuous (+1) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Linked (-¼), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½) (total cost: 11 points). Total cost: 21 points.*

Options

1) Initiate's Version: Increase Ego Attack to 2d6. 25 + 55 = 80 Active Points; total cost 10 + 20 = 30 points.

2) Morbane's Version: As Initiate's Version, but increase Darkness to 3" radius. 35 + 55 = 90 Active Points; total cost 14 + 20 = 34 points.

Demon Bones

When a demon takes shape in the Material World, it forms a body from the aether, and when it's "slain" its spirit returns to the Netherworld, its body turning to dust in an explosion of brimstone. But if a magician is quick, he can whisper a short chant that preserves the bones of the bodies demons create. By putting the bones in a jar of blood, he can preserve them for use in arcane craftings. Described below are several common uses for demon bones that DEMON has discovered. Since the Descending Hierarchy's edict against the organization, the Morbanes have found that the bones of slain Demon-Bound, so long as the Brother dies while the demon's spirit possesses him, serve just as well as a demon's own bones.

Eldritch Burst: By imbuing a demon's finger bones with eldritch energy, an enchanter turns them into a sort of grenade. Whispering the triggering phrase and throwing one makes a finger-bone explode.

Energy Blast 6d6, Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken word and thrown bone; +¼) (52 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 16 points.

Hellfire Burst: By infusing a demon's skull with hellfire, an enchanter turns it into a battery for infernal energy. By whispering the triggering phrase as he throws it, he can make the skull explode in a burst of hellfire and bone shrapnel.

RKA 2d6, Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken word and thrown bone; +¼) (52 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 16 points.

Dust Of The Thwarted Deceiver: Grinding up the jawbone of a demon yields a powder that reveals the unseen — in other words, causes invisible superheroes to become visible. The wielder carries the dust in a pouch of fragile cloth; when he throws the pouch it bursts open, filling a large area with the dust.

Drain Invisibility 10d6, Area Of Effect (15" Radius; +1), Range Based On STR(+¼) (225 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 56 points.

Dust Of The True Substance: Similar to the Dust Of The Thwarted Deceiver above, but the enchanter makes the dust from the ground-up eye sockets of a demon. This powder can make Desolidified character solid.

Drain Desolidification 10d6, Area Of Effect (20" Radius; +1), Affects Desolidified (+½), Range Based On STR(+¼) (275 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 69 points.

ARCANE DEFENSES

DEMON ARMOR

Effect:	Armor (10 PD/10 ED)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	No Range
END Cost:	0
Breakability	10 DEF

Description: Demon Armor is pitted plates of black steel strapped to the torso, arms, and legs. The metal is simply steel, but hammered into shape with a human skull hardened by pouring molten metal into the empty cranium, and then tempered in the blood of demons.

Suits of armor are a rarity in DEMON. Most members rely on Amulets Of Protection, mainly because only the most talented members can enchant the Demon Armor. Another problem is that making Demon Armor requires a forge in the workshop, which few Demonhames have.

Game Information: *Armor (10 PD/10 ED) (30 Active Points); OIF (-½). Total cost: 20 points.*

Options

1) Initiate's Version: Increase Armor to Armor (12 PD/12 ED). 36 Active Points; total cost 24 points.

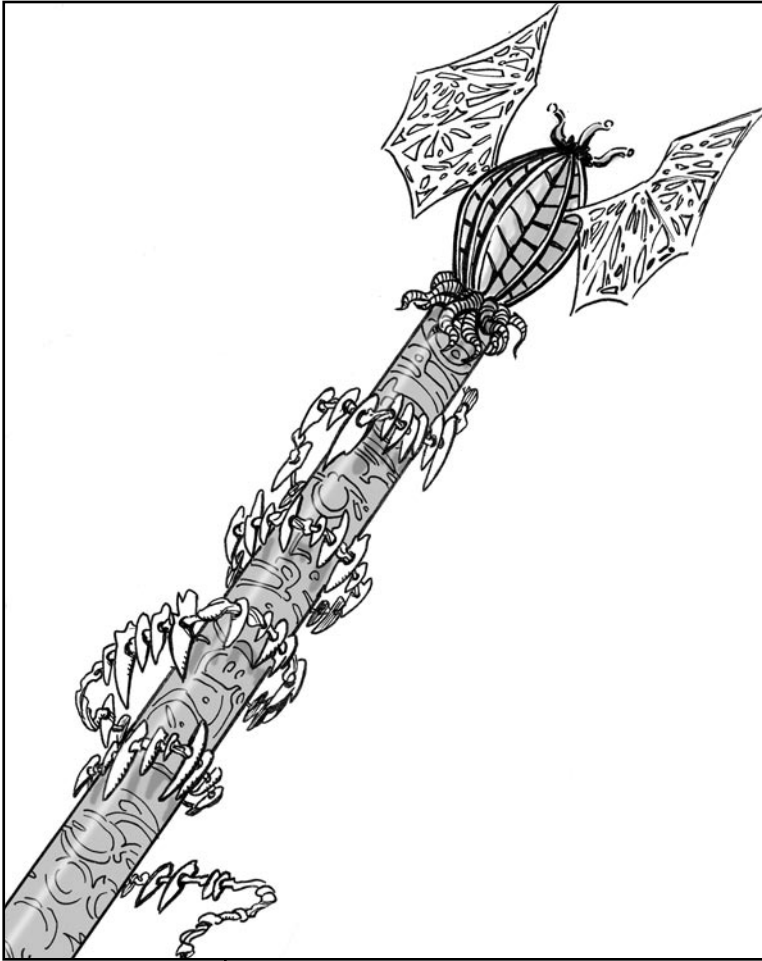
2) Morbane's Version: Increase Armor to Armor (15 PD/15 ED). 45 Active Points; total cost 30 points.

DEMON-BEAR SHIRT

Effect:	Absorption 4d6 (physical, half to STR, half to STUN) plus Armor (20 PD)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability	10 DEF (or 20 PD)

Description: A Demon-Bear Shirt allows the wearer to absorb physical punishment and use it to increase his own strength. An enchanter creates one by sacrificing any large, hairy animal during a demon summoning. Once he has subdued the demon with the force of his will, the enchanter then skins the sacrifice, forces the demon to bow to him, and drapes the bloody pelt on the demon's shoulders. After that the enchanter can begin the month-long ritual of bringing out the arcane properties of the Shirt. This involves situating a magnifying glass so it catches the light of one of the stars in Ursa Major and focuses that light on one part of the Shirt every night.

Game Information: *Absorption 4d6 (physical, half to STR, half to STUN) (20 Active Points); OIF (-½) (total cost: 13 points) plus Armor (20 PD) (30 Active Points); OIF (-½), Linked (-¼), Only Up To Amount Rolled By Absorption (-½) (total cost: 13 points). Total cost: 26 points.*



String Of Demon Teeth: Subjected to repeated blasts of eldritch energies, then strung together with a piece of intestine, a handful of demon's teeth improves the aim of the wielder of a Brazen Wand when wrapped around the haft.

+3 OCV with Brazen Wand (15 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 7 points) **plus** +4 OCV versus Range Modifiers with Brazen Wand (12 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 6 points). Total cost: 13 points.

LIVING ROBES

Effect: Missile Deflection (arrows/projectiles), +4 OCV
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Charges END Cost: 0
Breakability 4 DEF

Description: The Living Robes are sewn from the grave clothes of a man who died from a projectile, preferably to the head. Finding such poor souls is difficult, so DEMON members who wish to try their hand at crafting the Living Robes must sometimes help someone along. When the robes are sewn, the enchanter speaks phrases beseeching protection while Mercury is in retrograde. Two long panels of fabric, one in front and in one back, in the robes can then come alive and snatch missiles from the air before they can strike the wearer. The robes fit easily over the standard robes of a DEMON member.

Game Information: *Missile Deflection (arrows/projectiles) +4 OCV (30 Active Points); OIF (-½), Will Not Work Against Heavy Missiles (-¼). Total cost: 17 points.*

Options

- 1) **Initiate's Version:** Increase Missile Deflection to Missile Deflection (bullets and shrapnel). 35 Active Points; total cost 20 points.
- 2) **Morbane's Version:** Increase OCV bonus of Initiate's Version to +8 OCV. 55 Active Points; total cost 31 points.

HELLFIRE TEMPERED

Effect: Fire Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Day

Description: Superheroes often toss various forms of energy bolts around in battle, and Hellfire Tempered provides a Morbane with a way to protect his Brothers and Initiates. The process is both painful and difficult, and only done when the Morbane knows both the attributes of a group of superheroes and that battle with them is coming soon. It involves a cauldron of boiling oil "spiced" with brimstone taken from the Netherworld. Then the Morbane boils the oil with his Hellfire. Those who are to receive the benefits bathe in the cauldron. Though excruciatingly painful, the boiling oil doesn't leave a mark, and for the next day the bather is highly resistant to fire.

Demonhames use various versions of this spell to protect their members. The ritual itself depends on the special effect involved. For instance, if the Brothers need to be resistant to cold, the bather wallows in a large pit of ice after emerging from the oil. (Morbanses do *not* make a habit of providing

Brothers or Initiates with Magic Damage Reduction, for obvious reasons.)

Game Information: *Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% (30 Active Points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (fire; -½), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Day (-0). Total cost: 20 points.*

MISCELLANEOUS DEVILTRY

THE CANDLE OF UNHALLOWED RADIANCE

Effect: Aid PRE 1d6
Target/Area Affected: 8" Radius
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Charges END Cost: 1 Charge
Breakability 11 DEF

Description: Morbanes use this candle to provide a taste of magic to cultists. When lit and allowed to burn for an hour, its smoke raises the PRE of those in the area, making them feel better about themselves and more confident. The adjusted PRE lasts about a week... just long enough to make the recipient look forward to the next meeting. A Morbane also sometimes uses the candle to bolster the confidence of his congregation.

Game Information: *Aid PRE 1d6, Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1¼), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Week; +1¾) (40 Active Points); IAF (-½), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 6 points.*

DEMON WINGS

Effect: Flight 12", Restrainable
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
END Cost: 2
Breakability 5 DEF

Description: Spun from the wool of black sheep, the Demon Wings is a bifurcated cloak that hangs down to the wearer's ankles. On the inside of the cloak is stitched a patchwork of leather made from the skins of bats. The Demon Wings allow the wearer to fly, the two sections of the cloak flapping behind him.

Game Information: *Flight 12" (24 Active Points); OIF (-½), Restrainable (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Options

- 1) **Initiate's Version:** Increase Flight to Flight 15". 30 Active Points; total cost 15 points.
- 2) **Morbane's Version:** Add the Advantage, *Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)*, to Initiate's Version. 45 Active Points; total cost 22 points.

A GLIMPSE OF HELL

Effect:	Mental Illusions 16d6, Only To Create Visions Of Hell
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	10"
Charges END Cost:	4 Charges
Breakability	12 DEF

Description: The enchanter takes a pinch of dust taken from the Netherworld and sublimates it in the blood of a sacrifice, whether animal or human. He grinds up the crystalized product and puts the resulting dust in a small black pouch. In battle he can throw the dust at someone, who suddenly finds himself in hell — or at least trapped in a vision of the infernal realms.

Game Information: *Mental Illusions 16d6 (80 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Normal Range (10"; -½), Mandatory Effect (must achieve EGO +30 level of effect; -¾), Set Effect (places victim in a vision of Hell; -1), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 15 points.*

ROBES OF INVISIBILITY

Effect:	Invisibility to Sight Group
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability	9 DEF

Description: A powerful and useful item, Robes Of Invisibility allow the wearer to move unseen, going where he would with no one the wiser. The enchanter makes the robes from silk once owned by a person who was killed by his (or her) spouse. The magic only lasts a week before fading away — a fact that has prevented DEMON from exploiting the Robes Of Invisibility more fully.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); OIF (-½). Total cost: 30 points.*

STEP-THROUGH CLOAK

Effect:	Desolidification (affected by magic)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Charges:	4 Continuing lasting 1 Turn each
Breakability	8 DEF

Description: The enchanter makes the Step-Through Cloak from the clothes worn by a person when he fell to his death. The wearer drapes the Step-Through Cloak over his arm and pushes through it. Disappearing momentarily, he reappears on the other side of the cloak now intangible.

Game Information: *Desolidification (affected by magic) (40 Active Points); OIF (-½), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½). Total cost: 20 points.*

SIGNET RING OF INSIGHT

Effect:	Telepathy 8d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	LOS
END Cost:	0
Breakability	12 DEF

Description: A signet ring decorated with a large gemstone and the insignia of the Morbane's Demonhome, this magical item lets the wearer determine if potential candidates for initiation into DEMON harbor any hidden agendas. It's also handy for interrogating captured policemen and superheroes.

Game Information: *Telepathy 8d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); IIF (-¼). Total cost: 48 points.*

VEIL OF MASKING

Effect:	Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any humanoid face)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
Charges END Cost:	7
Breakability	14 DEF

Description: The enchanter makes the Veil Of Masking from the veil of a mourner at the funeral for someone he has killed. When worn, it allows him to change the features of his face and the sound of his voice. When he does so, the Veil disappears, melding into the wearer's new features. The wearer can only maintain a face for a maximum of a day.

Game Information: *Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation, 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Day each (+1) (72 Active Points); IAF (-½), Only Changes The Face (-½). Total cost: 36 points.*

chapter seven:



A GAMEMASTER'S DEMONIC DESIGNS

CAMPAIGN ADVICE



This chapter contains general advice about how to use *DEMON: Servants Of Darkness* in your campaign, including how to adjust the threat level presented by the organization, using DEMON in other genres and time periods, plot seeds, and so forth.

THREAT LEVEL

As presented here, DEMON is a grave but gathering threat, not an imminent danger to the future of humanity... yet. Within a few years, that will change. The foundation for DEMON's future success is well-laid, and the organization has its tendrils spread throughout society, making it difficult (if not impossible) to eliminate completely.

On the other hand, with the goal of freeing the five Kings of Edom described in the *Liber Terribilis* still years off, DEMON is willing to make sacrifices for the greater evil — *i.e.*, if superheroes destroy one Demonhome, the Inner Circle might not seek vengeance and might not even try to re-establish the Demonhome (at least not immediately).

DECREASING THE THREAT

To decrease the threat DEMON poses to the world, change the nature of the Inner Circle. The members of the Inner Circle possess superpowers that make them well suited to their individual responsibilities — better suited than most normal men and women could ever be. If you replace the Inner Circle with mundane counterparts, the Maleficia, and thus DEMON as a whole, becomes less capable of working evil. One way to accomplish this change easily: rather than have Luther Black assassinate the members of the first Inner Circle during the Years of Red Nights, those men and women, or their chosen heirs, continue to guide DEMON in pursuit of its goals. Since they lack superpowers, you could have a “second generation” with three new Inner Circle members who are mystics on par with Dyer vander Bleek and Jebediah and Obediah Jefferson. The influence, contacts, and knowledge of the first generation counterbalance the personal powers of the second.

To further decrease DEMON's threat level, take away the Edomite's power, especially the Soul Gems. The Soul Gems go a long way toward explaining why organizations dedicated to protecting the world like UNTIL and PRIMUS have only had limited success infiltrating DEMON and discovering its secrets. If you remove the Gems, it follows that DEMON would be less widespread because rival organizations could engage in more extensive infiltration and do a better job undermining many of its networks. In this case Luther Black simply becomes a crippled old man — though the spell his mother cast extended his life, it did *not* extend his health — with a great deal of occult knowledge and perhaps even the stolen power of Sharna-Gorak, but lacking the vitality to put that power to use.

INCREASING THE THREAT

The simplest way to increase DEMON's threat level is to move up the last day of Luther Black's life, making it February 29, 2008... or a different date in 2006 or even 2005, maybe a date made significant by some astronomical anomaly dealing with complicated motions of sun and stars to explain why he isn't dying on a leap year.

Now DEMON is no longer a gathering threat, content to suffer a few losses to make it through the coming years relatively unscathed. Now armageddon is imminent, the end of the world nigh. Every action the organization takes directly relates to the Edomite's apotheosis and brings DEMON closer to its goal of freeing the five Kings of Edom. Its members move with zealotry and furious energy to suc-



ceed in their assigned tasks, and DEMON brings its vast resources to bear against anyone who stands in its way.

With DEMON so active, the defenders of the world can't help but realize something is going on — and if it involves DEMON, it can't be good. Soon enough the truth about DEMON comes out, and now the Mystic World learns the hard way it should've taken DEMON much, much more seriously.

The Mooks Of The Mystic World

In some campaigns DEMON's evil is less of the world-threatening nature than it is of the “provide an endless source of henchmen for mystic supervillains” type. Those supervillains may not associate with DEMON; it's just that DEMON serves as a “training ground” and “supply house” for mystic super-criminals while at the same time pursuing its own agenda. DEMON is a quick and easy source of expendable “agents” — cannon fodder — whose *modus operandi* with its Brazen Wands, Satanic battle cries, black and scarlet robes, and black magic aesthetic fits nicely with the supervillain. In other words, your DEMON may be a lot more like VIPER than it is like the organization described in this book.

But after reading *DEMON: Servants Of Darkness*, you may be rethinking DEMON's place and role in your campaign, since (a) the leadership can keep the Morbanes on a short leash, (b) DEMON is very concerned with keeping itself free of infiltrators, and (c) DEMON, unto itself, is as grave a threat to the world as many of the most powerful mystic supervillains. It's not just VIPER with wands instead of blasters, it's something more. But the two visions of DEMON aren't necessarily incompatible.

Even as presented in this book, DEMON is a great source of mooks for mystic supervillains, and one-time team-ups or temporary alliances between the likes of Talisman or Zorran the Artificer and the local Morbane and his congregation are perfectly plausible. DEMON leadership, even the Edomite and the Inverted Trinity, can't be everywhere at once and keep an eye on every moment in the lives of six hundred Morbanes — and even if DEMON's leaders could, why should they protest a temporary alliance that furthers DEMON's goals, even if only inadvertently?

That said, you may want to consider who's expendable in the team-up, as well as who (the mystic supervillain, the Morbane, or someone else) is the true evil behind the plot. Typically the supervillain not only suggests the plot to the Morbane, but also by right of power has the superior position in the relationship. But as should be obvious by now, there's no reason why a Morbane and DEMON couldn't instigate the plot, have the superior position, and treat the mystic supervillain as expendable.

Difficulties arise if you want the mystic supervillain to take permanent control over one or more Demonhames. The Edomite and the Inner Circle

would eliminate any Demonhame an outside agency had subverted, and of course do their best to kill the interloper. If you want something like this to occur in your campaign, there's no reason DEMON's leaders have to move immediately. They can simply isolate the “infected” Demonhame from the rest of the organization and wait a while before taking action (possibly to avoid exposing themselves, or to take advantage of the villain's weaknesses). Once all your plots for the mystic supervillain and his DEMON henchmen have run their course, DEMON's leaders can swoop in, kill the villain and his followers, and take back what's rightfully theirs. The only remaining question is: will your PCs get caught in the crossfire?

ANATOMY OF A BLACK MAGIC PLOT

Plots involving DEMON often take on a particular tone, or feature certain stages or conduct because of the mystic nature of the organization. Here are some suggestions for building scenarios around DEMON and its activities, focusing on (a) the motivation for the adventure, (b) the hook that gets the PCs involved in the action, (c) the structure of DEMON rituals, and (d) the setting for the climax of the scenario.

Motivation

Chapter Two organizes and discusses DEMON's goals and its methods for achieving those goals. It reviews four methods — “As above, so below”; Qliphothic seepage; artifacts; and places of power — that serve as good starting points for figuring out what to do with DEMON in your campaign. Here are some ideas about what kinds of adventures each method might lead to:

“AS ABOVE, SO BELOW....”

“As above, so below...” refers to plots in which DEMON attempts to make the world a place at home in the Qliphothic, thus bringing the two dimensions closer and wearing thin the dimensional barriers. This category serves as a catch-all for any evil DEMON commits that brings suffering, misery, and most importantly terror to humanity. These range from plots affecting the world as a whole, to those focused on one person — since an individual's suffering can have an impact on society if the heights of his terror are great enough.

Plot Seeds

The Real World, In Hell: Imagine thirteen perfect strangers, all of them locked in a large old mansion at an undisclosed location with television cameras everywhere to monitor their every move. When some creature that looks like Satan begins to kill them one by one, week after week, the viewing public is both riveted and terrified. The public's increasing bloodlust keep the show on air — thousands of threats to go on killing sprees if the show is canceled arrive at local television stations.

Obviously some great evil is at work here, inspiring viewers to unnatural heights of rabid fandom. Now it's up to the superheroes to save the people locked in the mansion, but once they find the place can they defeat the evil within... or will they end up this week's casualty on reality TV's latest attempt to cash in on the *schadenfreude* of the viewing public?

The Stepford Succubi: The local Morbane has a new recruiting tool: couples come to the cult meeting, and when they leave, each man has a wife who wants nothing more than to please her husband. Now the cult is spreading like wildfire through the unhappily married men in the community, rumor of its existence traveling through country clubs and corner bars, young professional associations and labor unions... but when those men turn up dead, all their life energy drained from the dry husks of their bodies, the local authorities call in the superheroes. Will the heroes trace the men back to the cult? And if so, what will they find there? And when those widows start turning up pregnant, what kind of children will they give birth to?

Things To Come: At random intervals, but always at least once a day, something takes over all television and radio broadcasts. The voice speaking claims to be broadcasting from March 1, 2012 — the day after Luther Black achieves apotheosis. The voice knows nothing about how the world changed, but describes the place he now lives in, showing scratchy footage of the monsters — strange, horrible creatures that make viewers clench their jaws to swallow down the bile that rises in their throats — who lurk in the wreckage of the city, rounding up humans wherever they find them and sending them who knows where. The voice claims to be a warning to the past, but is it really? It's having the opposite effect on the public. Suicide rates rise steeply, as some come to believe life is hopeless; the social order begins to break down, as others believe there's no point in having jobs... or obeying society's laws. Now it's up to the PCs to determine the truth behind the voice from the future. Is it really from the future? Or is it simply a DEMON plot to break humanity's spirit?

QLIPHOTHIC SEEPAGE

This involves corrupting the Material World with the Qliphothic by allowing the Shining Darkness to insinuate itself into the world's magical weave. Typically a Morbane believes he must pass through the ten spheres of the Netherworld (as described on page 30) to break through to the Qliphothic Realms. This is an overly simplistic universal schema to explain the Shining Darkness's existence and location in creation — or its non-existence and lack of location, as the case may be — but over the decades it has served DEMON well.

Anything short of actually freeing the Kings of Edom is an acceptable goal, and the Inner Circle might even allow a Morbane to attempt to free a King if it would bring forth the Qliphothic and they *thought* they could stop the Morbane before he succeeded in his ultimate goal. But, as we all well know, “the best laid plans of mice and men often go

awry,” and the plans of villains are especially prone to going awry when they get involved with an evil far greater than themselves....

Plot Seeds

Arcanicide: Someone has stolen a deck of Tarot cards, a rare deck from the seventeenth century, from a private collection in the campaign city... and now some of those cards are turning up pinned to the chests of murdered men and women. Eventually the PCs determine each card, as well as each victim, represents one of the ten Archdemons of DEMON's infernal cosmogony — the Lovers reversed pinned to the flesh of a pimp stands in for *Togarini*, where Belphegor rules; Strength reversed pinned to the chest of a former professional athlete banned from the league for throwing games stands in for *Harap Serap*, where Baal Chanan rules. Could the local Morbane be making his sacrifices to the Archdemons and penetrating through the depths of the Netherworld to the Qliphothic? And who will be the eleventh victim — what sort of sacrifice is appropriate to the Shining Darkness?

To Dance With The Devil: One of the PCs' relatives has won a scholarship to a local dance academy for teenagers. The academy has a reputation for bringing new life to old forms of dance, and lately its instructors have been researching the oldest ceremonial dances known to anthropologists and music ethnologists. When the PCs attend a recital, they find the dances strange at first, then deeply unsettling — the awkward motions, the frenzied stamping, the arrhythmic starting and stopping. Nothing profane or lewd — just disturbing at a deeper level than conscious thought. Will the PCs uncover the dance academy's sordid past of witchery and black magic, serving as it has as Demonhame for decades? And more importantly, will they uncover the origins of this strange form of dance, derived from ancient rituals used to wear down the walls between this dimension and the Qliphothic Realms? And will they make these discoveries before the dance company goes on tour for the summer?

Sodom And Gomorrah, Disinterred: “Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire.... and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land in the valley, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke in a furnace.” A Morbane in Greece has come to believe that those two cities were destroyed not only for their wicked ways, but because they had become portals for the Qliphothic, their residents having made a pact with the Shining Darkness. More importantly, he has convinced the Inner Circle of the truth behind his beliefs, and now DEMON mobilizes all its Demonhames in the Middle East in an attempt to secure theoretical locations of the two cities and organize digs on the sites. When a professor of archaeology, an expert on Babylon and the Hittites, disappears from the PCs' campaign city, will they follow the trail to the Middle East... and more importantly, will they arrive in time to prevent DEMON from unearthing

whatever evil lies buried under burned sands at the former sites of Sodom and Gomorrah?

ARTIFACTS

DEMON constantly seeks to discover artifacts and take them for its own use. First, some artifacts grant the owner the ability to work magic on a scale impossible for a mortal. Second, Morbanes, low on the totem pole when it comes to personal power relative to mystic supervillains, can often use even the weakest artifacts to increase their limited arcane abilities.

To provide a framework for your thinking when coming up with an artifact for DEMON to seize, you can group artifacts into one of three categories, and the following sections briefly discuss these. (For further discussion about artifacts, as well as some example artifacts in the Champions Universe, consult pages 87-91 of *The Mystic World*.)

Aid Magic And Endurance Reserve: In many ways this is the most basic use of an artifact, similar to the abilities of the altar in a Demonhame's chapel (page 117). In essence the artifact is a "battery" of mystical energy the owner can draw power from. The Aid increases the Active Points of a Morbane's *Black Magic* Multipower; the Endurance Reserve provides him with a source of END so he can use those increased powers with wild abandon and malevolent glee. This is a good way to quickly and easily increase a Morbane's power to better challenge your PCs (especially if they have previously encountered the Morbane).

Powers Of Its Own: Like the items among the Profane Regalia but unique (and typically more powerful), these artifacts have powers all their own which they grant to whoever wields them. An artifact's powers can be straightforward and brutishly effective in combat like the Barbed Crown Of Asmodeus, the symbol of office for the Archdemon also called the Fallen Into Flames, which gives its wearer absolute mastery over Hellfire. (In game terms, it's a Multipower with a 120-point reserve and slots for using hellfire in various ways.) Or the powers can be more complicated and insidious. A good example of the latter is the 1980s tell-all book about the worldwide Satanist conspiracy, *I Was A Black Magician*. Long banned from bookstores and libraries, most (but never *all*) copies destroyed, the book works a transformation on the reader. It turns him into a sorcerer with a small amount of power and heart full of evil by the time he finishes it. (Major Transform 2d6 [person into person with the Disadvantage, *Psychological Limitation: Amoral*, and a 45-point *Black Magic* Multipower], BOECV, Works Against EGO, Not STR, Extra Time [1 Day].)

These artifacts may or may not provide the owner with an Aid to his own magical power, but they usually provide the owner with enough END to use the powers they grant, cost 0 END, or have Charges. Unlike plot device items, it's worthwhile to write them up in *HERO System* terms so you know exactly what they can (and can't) do.

As Plot Device: These artifacts provide the owner with abilities and powers so vast and compli-

cated that they motivate and/or enable the plot to happen. It's often a lot of fun to try to create plot device items in game terms, but don't feel you have to — often it's better to leave a plot device item's parameters vague so you're not constrained by them as the story develops. But at the very least, you should know how the device works in broad *HERO System* terms (such as "Drain Magic, enough to affect even the Archmage") so you have an idea how the artifact interacts with the PCs' powers. Simply write down the special effects, how much damage (or other effect) it can cause (if appropriate), how often it functions, and the like so you can remember from game session to game session. Pay special attention to time requirements, restrictions on use, and how often the plot device functions, because those factors have the biggest impact on the adventure.

Examples of plot device items from DEMON's history include:

the Basilisk Orb, which Luther Black used in his attempt to make the future conform to his desire (*Extra-Dimensional Movement [world from current timestream to one where owner's desires are true]*, Usable As Attack, Increased Weight [enough to handle the planet]; Extra Time [3 Days], Requires Specific Conjunction Of Multiversal Planes)

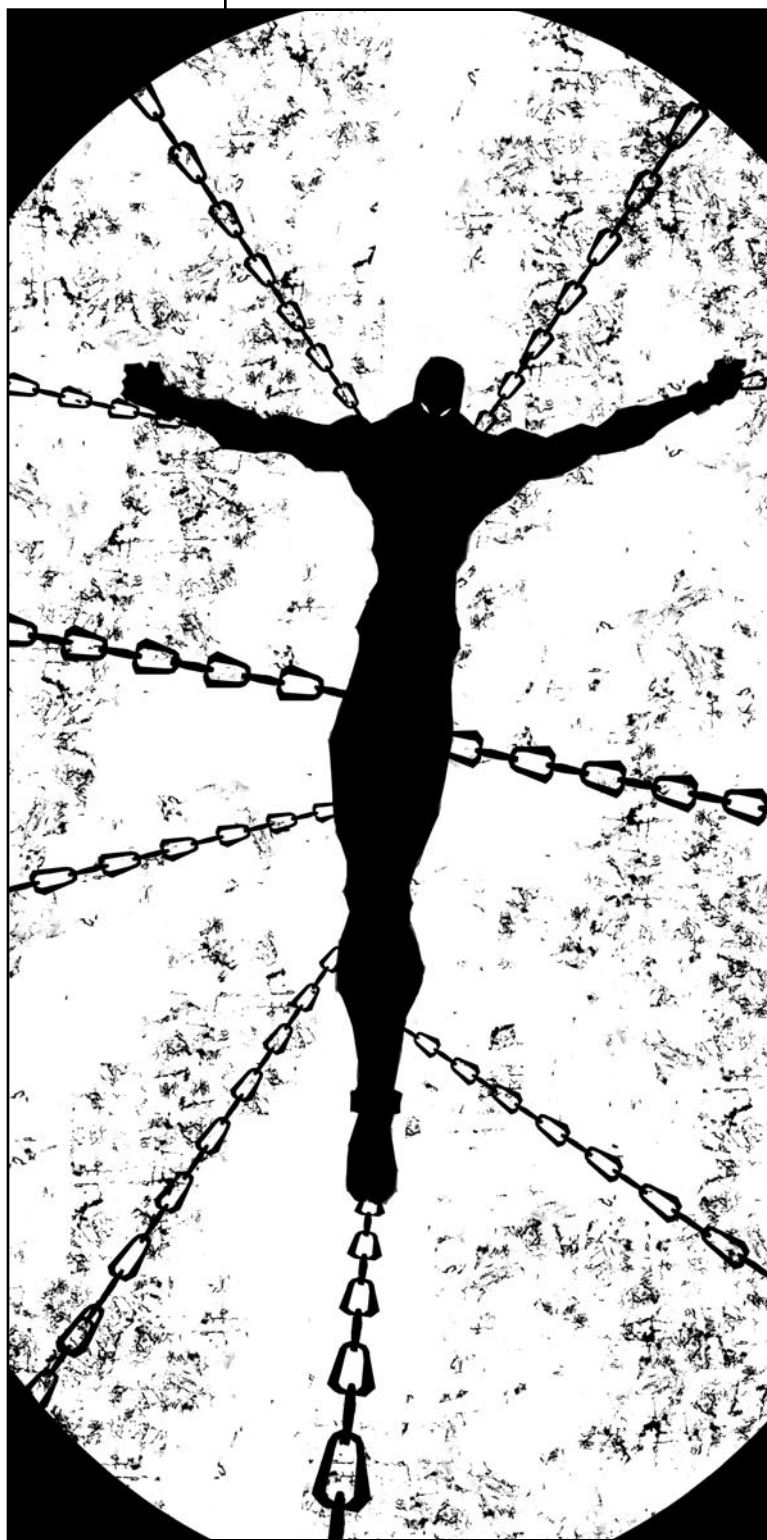
the Brazier Of Dalsith the Orphan, which Black used to bring forth hordes of demons from the Infernal Regions (*Summon lots and lots of Amicable demons, Reduced Endurance [flame must be extinguished and remains of sacrifices put to rest on holy ground; 0 END]*).

Commonly, adventures involving the first two types of artifacts start with the Morbane stealing (or otherwise obtaining) the artifact. The PCs have to track him down and defeat him despite his boosted powers. These artifacts also work well as elements secondary to the main plot. For example, the Morbane wishes to cast a spell to transform the campaign city into a fantasy version of itself, but first he must seize the Archimedes Engine, an intricate clockwork device of brass rods and gears on display at the local museum, and use it to increase his magical might. It's the theft of the Archimedes Engine that tips the PCs off to the Morbane's plans and gets them on his trail.

An adventure involving an artifact as plot device can also start with the theft of the artifact, or it might begin with the Morbane, who already has the artifact, using it to work his wicked will in a dramatic and calamitous way on the campaign city or even the world. Typically, neutralizing or destroying the artifact, or simply taking it away from the Morbane, is the primary goal of the adventure.

Plot Seeds

The Sorcerer's Skull: Every few years a rumor circulates through the Mystic World that the Sorcerer's Skull has found a new owner. A fleshless piece of yellowed bone, the skull has mystic formula inscribed on the inside of the cranium.



According to the tales, a powerful sorcerer died a sudden death and the arcane secrets his mind held imprinted themselves on the inside of his skull as he died. A mystic can learn all the magical secrets of the Multiverse by placing his eyes to the empty sockets of the skull and reading the formulae, which shift and squirm so the viewer can see all of them. Some claim this is the skull of the slain Archmage, Bohdan Stanislavski; others say it's the skull of a much older — and much more evil — wizard. Now the local Morbane has obtained the skull and begun to read its secrets. He can't help but exercise his new-found powers, and the PCs learn first hand how considerable they are. Can they stop him before he learns all the secrets the Skull holds?

A Drink Of Mimir's Well: A Norse legend has it that to gain his legendary wisdom Odin sacrificed his eye at Mimir's Well, the source of all knowledge that lies under one of the roots of Yggdrasil, the tree that connects the nine worlds of the Norse cosmogony. Now a Morbane has learned of the dimension called Yggdrasil, the Realm of Plant Life. He seeks to journey there, find Mimir's Well, and drink of its wisdom. Has the Morbane confounded the legend with reality, or is he correct in assuming Mimir's Well is located either in the dimension of Yggdrasil or somehow adjacent to it? And can the PCs afford to take the chance that he's wrong?

Mali Loci: The Mali Loci is an ancient device described in the writings of Albertus Magnus for traveling through time and space. It takes the form of many mirrors, each one a different size and shape, with black glass set in a silver frame wrought with the grimacing and leering faces of demons. The mirrors distort the reflection of whoever stands in front of it, presenting a twisted (or more twisted) version. By means of certain arcane rituals, they can transport a person through time — but not to any historical past or likely future. Wherever they send a person, it's always an evil version of the past or future, where the worst occurrences possible have come to pass. Now the local Morbane has captured the superheroes, and they find themselves bound in a room, the walls covered from floor to ceiling with mirrors — then, after a flash of ebon darkness, they're in a place that never was, for evil has run rampant in this perverse version of the world the superheroes know....

PLACES OF POWER

Places of power are where magical energy pools and runs deep. A mystic can tap into these locations to increase his power. DEMON attempts to seize existing locations by placing a Demonhame nearby. This lets the Morbane tap into the mystical energy to fuel his malevolent magic — and on February 29, 2012 it will allow Luther Black to draw on these places of power through the Morbanes. The origins of places of power are myriad, each being unique, but typically they fall into three general types. (For more information, as well as more specific categories, see pages 65-70 of *The Mystic World*.)

■ A natural phenomena caused by the difficult-to-comprehend movements of the Multiverse (such

as Sunday Pond, Maine), or some fluke of natural geography which forms an arcane geometry (like Hecate's Temple near the old Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh).

- The unintentional result of events or actions that occurred at the place and eroded the barriers between dimensions (such as the thin spot between this dimension and the Qliphothic off the coast of Pohnpei), or where heightened emotions of suffering people infused the place with power like (Manaos in Brazil).

- Man-made and the result of occult geometries and arcane architecture, most commonly mystic sites like the Great Pyramids or Stonehenge which the ancients built, but sometimes more recent constructions to harness magical energy for human use (or the use of other, more alien creatures) like the Chrysler Building in New York City.

In broad terms, adventures involving places of power and DEMON fall into one of the following basic plot frameworks: the superheroes must stop a Morbane from building a Demonhome on the mystic site; the superheroes must uncover an existing Demonhome already on the site and demolish it; or a Morbane attempts to create a new place of power and the superheroes must uncover his plot and stop it. One typical twist to the adventure is that the Morbane has increased and/or new powers because of his Demonhome's location — the PCs must defeat him despite his greater power.

Plot Seeds

A New Skyscraper: Skyscrapers are the megaliths of the modern age, and now a new one is under construction in the campaign city's downtown. Like the Tribune Building in Chicago, this building's facade will hold stones taken from famous buildings across the globe — all of which are also important mystic sites. What the public doesn't know is the local Morbane plans to turn the building into a new mystic site. Because of all those stones and bricks taken from Stonehenge, the Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, Angkor Wat, and all the rest, the building will siphon off those place's mystic power and deliver it into the Morbane's eager hands. Will the PCs uncover the plot in time to stop it... and if not, what does the Morbane plan to do with access to his newfound might, and how will it affect the world's magic?

A Proliferation Of Five Points: A "five points" is an intersection where three streets come together (two streets cross and a third ends or begins), forming five intersecting lines and when seen from above and thus creating a shape reminiscent of a pentacle. In the campaign city DEMON has infiltrated the city planning department, and over the course of the last few years has built new streets that convert many intersections into five points. What plan could the Morbane have for these asphalt pentacles? When those standing at the new five points at certain hours of the day find themselves possessed by demonic spirits and going on murderous rampages, will the PCs figure out the cause? And is that

the extent of the evil the Morbane has worked — or is it just an unintended consequence?

The Glomar Explorer II: Recently launched from San Francisco, the Glomar Explorer II is a 63,000-ton deep sea salvage vessel Global Energies commissioned for the purpose of underwater mining efforts — or so the company's PR department says. In truth the crew of the Glomar is a Morbane and his followers, and the ship has the sole purpose of creating a mystic site under the seas, far from the eyes of do-gooders and superheroes. But DEMON isn't the only one to realize the mystic potential of the chosen site — millennia upon millennia ago during the Atlantean Age, a cabal of sorcerers loyal to Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, who called themselves the Order of the Chimera, used the site for much the same purpose. Though the site's energies have dwindled because of the ocean currents eroding the arcane architecture of the pyramids and columns of glassy stone and wearing away the mystic glyphs and runes, the site still possesses enough to keep the sorcerers in stasis — until DEMON uncovers them and frees them, that is.

The sorcerers' first priority is freeing Sharna-Gorak from imprisonment. The groundwork for this great task was laid long ago as a contingency plan in case Sharna-Gorak lost his war with Vondarien. Of course, this isn't a goal Luther Black approves of. Will a mystical war break out between the two factions, dragging the PCs into the middle of it? Or might Luther Black attempt to use the Atlantean sorcerers as pawns in a gambit to steal all of Sharna-Gorak's power, completing the ritual he attempted nearly two decades ago in Boston?

The Hook

The hook for an adventure is both the event that gets the players' characters involved in the action and the introduction to an adventure that grabs your players' attention. Below are three possible types of hooks that are good places to start when creating an adventure involving DEMON.

EVERYTHING GOES WEIRD

With this sort of a hook, the superheroes wake up one day and their whole world has changed. The adventure starts *in media res* from the villain's point of view, since he's already accomplished his plot and succeeded in his goal. Now it's up to the PCs to change the world back to what it should be. Not only do they need to figure out who's the culprit and how they can stop him, but often they need to figure out the new status quo during the course of their investigations — the new world has new laws of reality.

For DEMON adventures that begin this way, the Morbane typically finds a ritual or artifact (one that you use as a plot device) that allows him to change the nature of reality, reverse the flow of time, or some similarly epic magic. Maybe he changed the past, made the past or future the present, made superstitions real (as with the Book of Anti-Reason, page 21), or gave symbolic actions a reality all their own (see the Saturnalia plot seed

below). Whatever he did, the superheroes stand on uncertain ground in an alien world.

Plot Seeds

The Saturnalia: Up is down, down is up, and the social order has reversed itself. Supervillains command the respect of the people and can't lose; superheroes are outcasts and can't win! The Saturnalia was a festival held during the Winter Solstice in ancient Rome when the fool was crowned king and masters served their servants. Now the local Morbane has found a way to make the Saturnalia real — and evil rules while good languishes in the PCs' campaign city. Historically, the Saturnalia lasted a week, from December 17 to December 23, but without a doubt the city and its protectors won't last that long with everyone obeying the supervillains' orders. Now the PCs are on the run from law enforcement, and only they can discover how the Morbane did what he did and how to stop it.

The Future Is Now: The local Morbane was worked a dreadful ritual of subtle evil, the Rite of Time's Befuddlement. The morning after he completes the rite, everyone in a thirty mile radius wakes up with a fey and cursed gift — the ability to see the future. Now present and future become one for the entire city, including the superheroes, but this is no boon. Instead people, untrained in the art of foreseeing, start taking vengeance for wrongs not yet done to them — wrongs that may have never come to pass had they not acted in the first place, for the future is malleable and not set in stone, a fact the untrained do not understand. The city is in chaos, and the superheroes must track down the Morbane and force him to reverse the rite — but how do they capture a foe who knows their every move? How will the superheroes deal with the foreknowledge that they will fail to stop the Morbane? Can they shrug off despair and defy their visions of failure?

Malkuth's Dying Light: On September 29, during the hour of 2:23 AM to 3:23 AM, a green star as bright as Venus shines in the night sky. Low on the horizon, it describes a shallow arc before disappearing again for the rest of the year. The light comes from the other-dimensional star of Malkuth, where dying Loezen creeps ever nearer oblivion, and on this day the movements of the Multiverse bring that world and Earth close — so close the star is visible in the night sky and sometimes inhabitants from each dimension can pass back and forth between the worlds. (See page 41 of *The Mystic World* for more about Loezen and its plight.) The local Morbane has made a deal with some of the denizens of Loezen, granting them escape from their dying world in return for service. But the cosmic laws of the Multiverse require a balance be maintained, so in exchange for refuge for the alien creatures of Loezen, the Morbane has consigned the superheroes and a group of innocents to their dying world. Now the PCs must escape from this other-worldly place — not only escape, but keep the innocents safe from harm. And who knows what damage the Morbane is doing to their home with the city's protectors absent and his power increased by his new allies?

THE MUNDANE WITH A TWIST

Another way to begin a DEMON adventure is with a mundane event (criminal or otherwise) that has a single unusual or inexplicable aspect. Examples include: a series of murders where each of the victims is missing his left hand; a new illegal drug that physically transforms its users (not just a general degeneration, but a definite demonic change to the user's features); and an art show, controversial because of its lewd, profane, or simply morbid paintings, whose attendees have a strikingly high chance of either taking their own lives or those of their spouses.

Typically these events are a part of some ritual or ceremony (or the aftereffect/side effect of one). As you develop your idea, keep these traditional principles of magic in mind:

- First, the principle of *sympathy* — by imitation a sorcerer can produce a like effect. The scale, constituents, or specifics of the imitation aren't important, only that it mirror the intended outcome. In other words, it's appearances that are important, not the actual participants in the imitation. For example, burning a person in effigy causes real harm to the person.

- Second, the principle of *contagion* — a part of something continues to affect the whole even after the two have been separated. For example, by obtaining a person's hair, the sorcerer can affect the person by affecting the hair. As a corollary to this, parts of something, especially people and most especially dead people, continue to embody the attributes of the whole. For example, the eyes of wise man can give their wisdom to someone who possesses them.

- Third, the principle of *symbolism* — symbols have a real power, and by affecting or involving the symbol in his magical endeavors, the sorcerer affects all the symbol the represents. This includes mystic dates and astronomical phenomena. In many ways this principle underlies most magical rituals, going deeper than the principle of sympathy described above. For example, actions performed on the night of the new moon are more likely to remain secret, because the moon, frequently a symbol for knowing secrets, is unseen.

Plot Seeds

The Devilish Delights Penny Arcade: Called a "great nostalgic kick" by one newspaper columnist, the Devilish Delights Penny Arcade has grown increasingly popular since its opening two months ago. Located in a neighborhood known for its nightlife, the penny arcade is fast becoming one of the favorite after-dinner-but-before-drinking spots in the city. Not long after the penny arcade's opening, a spree of sniper killings begins... and when caught, the killers all claim Satan made them do it. Naturally, this gets the superheroes' attention. The PCs soon learn the murderers had one thing in common: they frequented the penny arcade. It seems those who tilt the pinball machine, fail to hit the balloon with a dart, don't hit the target at the horse races with the squirt gun, or fail to outdraw

the animatronic cowboy lose more than just the game and their token... they also lose their souls. Now it's up to the PCs to track down the owner of the Devilish Delights Penny Arcade — not just to bring him to justice, but to find out which other people have lost their souls before they too go on a murderous rampage.

The Judas Goat: One of the PCs experiences a run of bad luck that just won't quit. It begins harmlessly enough — he nicks himself shaving every morning; his cape inexplicably gets caught on a flagpole. But soon enough his bad luck becomes a danger to himself and his teammates: he trips and accidentally strikes a teammate with his energy blast; he passes out in mid-battle for no apparent reason and falls right at the feet of one of his enemies. The local Morbane has made the superhero a Judas Goat, and now whenever something bad would happen to the Morbane, the superhero draws the ill fortune away from him like a lodestone attracts iron. Will the PCs find out what's going on before the superhero's bad luck has disastrous results? What if making the superhero into the Judas Goat was only a part of a larger plan? Maybe the Morbane plans something very risky and dangerous, and when he embarks on the second part of his plan, putting his life in dire jeopardy, how terrible — how deadly — will be the bad luck the superhero suffers?

A Coin In The Mouth To Pay His Way: All around the city someone is digging up the bodies of the buried dead... but he isn't taking the bodies, nor stealing their jewelry. Instead the culprit scissers open the threads that hold the mouth closed, places a silver quarter under the dead person's tongue, and re-buries the bodies. The freshly-turned earth of the grave is the only sign the body's been disturbed. Who's doing this, and why is he so obsessed with honoring this old, no longer observed tradition? Could it be a DEMON Brother knows the plans of his Morbane, has had a change of heart about dedicating himself to a life of evil, and wants to thwart some wicked plot to raise the dead as zombies? Or is it something else entirely?

NPCs

Having an NPC show up is a good way to get the superheroes involved in a plot. Here are six archetypical NPCs appropriate to an adventure involving DEMON, occult occurrences, and black magic:

Deprogrammer/Psychologist

DEMON, like other cults, programs its members to do something — in this case, act as perfect followers of Satan. It makes them repeat gestures and chants over and over again; it constantly informs them of the true history of the world; it demands unquestioning obedience. Members eventually perform these actions or hear these teachings so often, they believe them with all their heart. It falls to the deprogrammer, a psychologist trained in undoing the effects of brainwashing, to help an ex-member return to normal life. The deprogrammer might initiate an adventure (for example, a DEMON member's family hires him to save their prodigal child from DEMON's clutches, and the deprogrammer

needs the PCs' help), or he can get involved in the aftermath when the PCs are seeking someone to help rehabilitate captured DEMON members. But deprogrammers often have severe methods of doing their work — they claim only harsh measure can reverse the damage done — that some people, possibly, including your PCs, might consider too harsh, even inhuman. The question about the deprogrammer is: has he fought monsters too long and in the process become one himself?

Police Detective/Private Investigator

In the course of their investigations, police detectives (and their freelance counterparts, private eyes) often encounter the sordid underside of society — and this includes the infernal depths of the occult underground, that shadowy world of sorcerers, black magicians, and DEMON. When this happens the detective finds himself believing not only in the occult, but also worldwide Satanic conspiracies and the like — beliefs that leave him alienated from the rest of the police force and mainstream society. Typically a detective asks for the superheroes' help when he realizes he's in over his head on a case. His case could start as a murder investigation that turns up evidence of human sacrifice, a missing persons matter that leads the detective to DEMON because the victim has joined or been sacrificed, or a string of robberies from private collectors and museums. Also the local police might ask the PCs to investigate a detective's disappearance, leading to an uncomfortable question: was the investigator murdered because of what he uncovered, or has he gone over to the other side because the evil he's seen lurking in the hearts of men and women twisted his soul?

Psychic

The psychic comes in many forms: a child whose dreams come true; a local fortuneteller who reads a customer's future in a crystal ball or with Tarot cards; a medium who holds seances for private patrons and claims to speak with the spirits of the departed. Sensitive to psychic emanations, maybe possessed of precognitive powers, the psychic can show up to warn the superheroes about the approaching doom orchestrated by the local Morbane. Or you can use the psychic as source of information for the PCs, and a means of getting the players back on track during an adventure if they stray (*i.e.*, the psychic shows up and tells the PCs they're screwing up the future because of their wrong-headed actions). But the psychic is sensitive to the spirit world, his mind laid bare to the mystical to better understand its arcane meanings... and that leaves him vulnerable to malicious spirits and the corrupting influence of the Qliphothic.

Reporter

The reporter explores humanity's darkest corners in his quest for a big story or to discover the truth. You can use him to start an adventure in the same way as you use the detective. For example, the reporter stumbles onto a big story involving DEMON and needs the superheroes' help, or the reporter's goes missing and his editor

asks the superheroes to find him. But unlike the police detective, the reporter's primary motivation isn't the safety of society and protecting the status quo (although those might be secondary motivations). He might have selfish goals — he wants that big story so he can win a Pulitzer — and so the superheroes can't trust him entirely (appeals to his ego and promises of fame might turn even him to DEMON's side). Or he might have an obsession about discovering the truth... and DEMON has a long history of promising to tell potential members the secret truth behind the commonly known history of the world.

Sleeper Agent

A sleeper agent has spent months, maybe even years, in DEMON, but he joined the organization at the behest of his handlers in either UNTIL, PRIMUS, or a similar agency. During his time infiltrating DEMON, he's committed acts of questionable morality to prove his loyalty to the Morbane, and typically his conscience is wracked with doubt or self-loathing because of the sacrifices he's made to climb the ladder and gain access to secrets. He can take on one of two roles in your adventure: either a law enforcement agency asks the superheroes to stop a DEMON plot, and the sleeper agent is their contact within the organization; or the sleeper agent's handler is dead or compromised, and the agent comes to the superheroes because he doesn't know who else he can trust. The lingering question about a sleeper agent is: can the superheroes trust him, or has the other side turned him, making him a double agent?

Wise Man

The wise man can be anything from an ancient master of the occult, to a bookish professor at the local university, to a member of the Trismegistus Council. Well-versed in arcane knowledge — but not necessarily a practitioner himself — he serves as a source of information for the PCs when they're attempting to determine the ways and means of a Morbane's magical plot. He can also start an adventure by showing up on the PCs' doorstep to bring nefarious goings-on to their attention. But sometimes the wise man serves a greater purpose with a hidden agenda, or knows more about what's going on than he tells the PCs, keeping vital information a secret for his own inscrutable purposes.

Structure Of A Satanic Ritual

Chances are, after several adventures involving DEMON, the PCs will sneak into a Demonhome and observe a Black Mass in progress. Below is a basic framework for the proceedings, assuming the Demonhome practices traditional Satanism; you can either use this as is, or as a basis for own unique creation. What's described here takes one hour to complete; typically it's held from midnight to 1:00 AM once a week, preferably on the Sabbath, sometimes more often in Demonhomes where the congregation lives on-site.

1) Prayer At The Foot Of The Altar: The Morbane kneels before the Demonhome's altar and speaks a prayer to Satan, asking him to grant greater power to the Morbane and his congregation.

2) Act Of Proclamation: The Morbane describes the evil acts he committed since the last Black Mass; then the proclamation moves to his congregation, each Brother and Initiate standing up in turn, speaking proudly of their recent sins, and seeking to outdo the others. Anyone who fails to offer a story of evil is booed and hissed. The Morbane finishes with: "Hear us, O Lord Satan, have we not done your work? Have we not proven ourselves worthy of your reward?"

3) Profaning The Gospel: The Morbane takes out a defiled and befouled Bible. He reads from it aloud, making frequent acerbic asides and snide comments about what he reads. His congregation is encouraged to join in this mockery of the holy. At the end the Morbane spits on the pages and carelessly tosses the book aside.

4) Profession Of Belief: The Morbane and congregation chant a statement of their belief in Lucifer. (You can use any of the chants described on page 85.)

5) The Promise Of Future Evil: The Morbane and his congregation discuss what evil acts they will commit in the future. This is a sort of business meeting, although usually phrased as promises to Satan.

6) The Sacrifice: After the promises of evil-doing, the Morbane makes the sacrifice, an offering to the infernal to guarantee success in future wickedness. Usually the sacrifice is a black lamb (a blasphemous stand-in for the Agnus Dei), but it depends on the circumstances.

7) The Unholy Communion: The Morbane consecrates the blood and body of Satan — a chalice of drugged wine mixed with the blood of the sacrifice and either a black turnip or triangular piece of black unleavened bread. Then each Brother and Initiate comes up to the altar individually. He kneels, takes a drink, and eats the bread. Here, if the Morbane heard something interesting in the Promises of Future Evil, he discusses it privately with the DEMON member or arranges a meeting after the Black Mass.

8) The Malediction: The Morbane speaks the Malediction, dismissing his congregation and ending the Black Mass: "May the unholy reward you and keep you. May he cloak your actions in darkness and keep them from the eyes of our enemies. May he strengthen your arm to better punish the righteous and grant you great power. Go now and do his wicked work and bring evil into the world. Glory be his name." The congregation responds: "Satan!" The Morbane says: "And glory to his servants." The congregation responds: "DEMON!"

Preparing For The Climax

The climax of a plot involving DEMON is often the chapel in the Morbane's Demonhome — particularly if the Morbane has anything to say about it, since the chapel is his place of power, where his magic waxes strongest.

When “decorating” the chapel you should keep in mind two things. First, the chapel should be the outward reflection of the Morbane's evil, and as such goes a long way toward setting the mood of the final combat. Second, the chapel, at least as the setting for an adventure's climax, is also a battlefield. By adding features either side can use to its advantage, you create an interesting place to have a fight, as well as add a twist to the combat to keep your PCs on their toes.

For Mood

Here's a list of things you can put in a chapel to set the correct DEMONic mood that have little or no effect on combat.

- Inverted crosses and crucifixes.
- Black wax candles, either melted down and held to flat surfaces by a blob of wax, or impaled on small spikes in wrought iron candelabra or chandeliers.
- Satanic symbols and infernal signs including pentacles and pentagrams painted with red paint (maybe even mixed with the blood of sacrifices) on all the walls, ceiling, and floor.
- Chants and words painted on the walls in red paint. Some of these might even be holy chants or sacred prayers with the letters either inverted or in retrograde to reverse and profane the meaning. The Brothers might also paint alchemical formulas and astrological charts on the walls.
- Tapestries and rugs showing mind-numbing, stomach-turning abstract designs, demonic faces, or scenes out of Hell. Tapestries of black, scarlet, or deep purple and blue velvet hung across the ceiling, hiding the rotted rafters (and who knows what else).
- Paintings, frescoes, stained glass windows, or mosaics showing similar scenes as the tapestries and rugs above — maybe crumbling and faded after centuries of neglect, or maybe brand new.
- Pits dug in the floor and lined with stone where human prisoners and animals are kept before sacrifice.
- Goat horns, with or without the head, make a good motif. Possibilities include: chalices, either metal worked into the shape of a horn or made of an actual horn, used during the Black Mass; the skulls of goats hung on the walls or from chains dangling from the ceiling; goat-headed gargoyles lurking high up in the corners of the chapel; the arms of candelabra and chandeliers wrought into the twisty shape of horns.
- Animals with occult significance, such as hobbled rams or goats there to be sacrificed. An even more dramatic effect would be bats or ravens tied to the rafters by their legs who flap their wings furiously and screech or caw with fear.

That Affect Combat

Here are some possible features of a chapel that can directly impact combat.

- Dangling chains with thick iron links and cages suspended from the ceiling. The chains can be used for swinging, climbing, or wrapping up bad guys. The cages can hold kidnapped innocents that the DEMON members can use as hostages.
- Braziers with burning coals and brass censers with burning incense that smells of brimstone, and torches to cast a reddish light on the room, making the brass objects seemed tinged with blood.
- Torture devices from iron maidens and racks, to cruder devices like thumb screws and brands. These can also hold kidnapped innocents.
- Statues depicting evil subjects: marble satyrs; bronzes of fallen angels; stone images of demons; pieces of ancient Summerian or Babylonian origin (or maybe from a period even more distant). The statues can provide cover for combatants, and some of the statues might be more than mundane — golems that animate at the Morbane's command, for example.
- Pillars of fire, whether magical or mechanical, shooting up at random intervals from the floor, their unnaturally-colored flames — pale blue, pallid green, bruised purple — reaching to the ceiling.
- Mist, whether magical or mechanical, rises from iron grates set in the floor. The mist reduces visibility, and who knows what horrors lie below the chapel beneath the grates?
- The hellish paintings adorning the walls of the chapel might have a life of their own, granted them by the magic of numerous Black Masses. The demonic figures in the painting might reach out with a clawed hand and grab a nearby superhero; or maybe they simply caper, bleat, scream, and wail, adding further confusion to the fight.
- The chapel could be haunted. Maybe the souls of sacrifices are bound to the chapel... or perhaps far older, more malign spirits linger in the place. The ghosts can shout out ridicule, vague pronouncements of doom, or warnings about hidden combatants.

THE CHAMPIONS UNIVERSE



DEMON is a part of the Champions Universe, and so interacts with the other people and organizations who are prominent in that setting (particularly its Mystic World). As discussed in previous chapters, DEMON grows increasingly isolated from other mystics, both because word has spread that its members serve the Kings of Edom, and because DEMON leadership wants to avoid infiltrators. But some mystic supervillains are either too powerful or influential for DEMON to completely ignore, or else have something DEMON wants.

DEMON AND THE MYSTIC WORLD

Here's what DEMON thinks about other notable members of the Mystic World. Naturally, it has nothing but hatred and enmity for "good"-aligned organizations (such as the Trismegistus Council) and superhumans (such as Witchcraft and Rashindar).



INDIVIDUAL MYSTICS

Black Paladin: DEMON's feelings toward the Black Paladin are discussed on page 126.

Dark Seraph: DEMON barely notices the rest of the Crowns of Krim — mainly because Dark Seraph has the whole of its attention. Many Brothers and Initiates look on him with reverent awe, considering him the earthly embodiment of the fallen angel, Lucifer. They've been known to fall to their knees when he appears on the scene. Morbanes feel a bit differently — their eyes, full of longing, tend to drift up to the Crown he wears on his brow. Every Morbane in North America has at least idly considered a plot to seize that Crown; none are likely to succeed. Even a scheme to seize a lesser Crown of Krim would probably fail due to the Crowns' combined power.

Morningstar: Morningstar, a defector from DEMON, still has his life for the simple reason: each Morbane the supervillain encounters would like to have him back in the fold, working in the Morbane's Demonhome. Furthermore, since he was only a Brother when he left the organization, Morningstar knows too little to be a significant threat to DEMON; his defection has gone largely unnoticed by the Inner Circle.

The Slug: Herr Doktor Pandemonium is fixated on the Slug, and it's a fixation that could lead to problems in the future. Most other DEMON members would simply like to get their hands on the Talisman Of The Elder Worm, and have little desire to deal with the inhuman being who possesses it — especially since he's turned more than one DEMON member into one of his annelidoid followers.

Takofanes: A Morbane's fascination with Takofanes begins thusly: he catches a glimpse of the devastation the lich wrought in 1987. He purchases a recording of the news footage of that incident and studies it, amazed that a single practitioner of the arcane arts could cause so much death — and raise so many minions from death. The Morbane resolves to seek out Takofanes. He disappears. When he reappears, he's undead and attacking a Demonhome in some seemingly random city, repeating over and over again, "I shall come for you all soon enough."

But it doesn't matter how many times this happens. Somewhere a Morbane is pushing a cassette into the VCR. He's watching the Undying King's rebirth and wondering....

Dr. Yin Wu: DEMON knows relatively little about the reclusive Chinese sorcerer. It wonders what

connection (if any) he has to the Cult of the Red Banner (see below), and whether it might use him against the Cult to destroy the both of them and leave China open to its own tender mercies.

Zorran The Artificer: Zorran has an artifact that can turn any substance to gold — nothing more need be said about that. If DEMON were to learn of Zorran's Lemurian heritage, it might discover some other uses for him.

MYSTIC ORGANIZATIONS

The Circle Of The Scarlet Moon: “The Circle of the Scarlet Moon is moribund coven of decrepit fools who wielded power during the Age of Enlightenment, and for a little while afterwards, but is of no influence, let alone importance, in the modern world... for the modern world belongs to DEMON.”

That is catechism for nearly every Morbane in the organization. The Black Shepherd relates this statement to them during initiation, and every Morbane is warned: to have dealings with the Circle of the Scarlet Moon is to guarantee his death.

The Circle of the Scarlet Moon knows (or at least once knew) Luther Black — he was a member of the coven, after all. He also, before leaving the Circle, suggested seeking power from the Kings of Edom. And more than one member from back then suspected Luther Black of having an unnaturally long life.

In short, the Edomite does not want the Circle involved with DEMON in any way. Its members, or at least their antecedents, know far too much about his past.

Cult Of The Red Banner: DEMON is currently engaged in a turf war with the Cult in China; see that country's entry in Chapter Five for more details. DEMON leadership knows very little about the organization — for the most part, their knowledge ends at its name and the fact that it's very protective of China. They would dearly love to learn more, mainly so they could use its precepts and tenets in their own cults to spread DEMON's influence across China all the quicker.

The Sylvestri Family: DEMON's dealings with the Sylvestris are minimal, and mostly involve conflict. It doesn't see them as rivals, but rather interlopers and competitors for mystic artifacts; if the opportunity arises, DEMON strikes against the Sylvestris to weaken or confound them.

The Vandaleur Clan: DEMON has little to do with the Vandaleurs. One or two Vandaleurs (that the leadership knows of...) belong to DEMON, but for the most part the clan is too spread out, chaotic, and conflicted to worry DEMON.

OTHER-WORLDFLY MYSTIC THREATS

From the ranks of the Morbanes on down, DEMON is very much mired in the material world. With the exception of the occasional Other-Worlder, a Morbane wants power in this world and not in others. Furthermore, most Morbanes learn all they know of the Multiverse through DEMON — and DEMON leadership has little interest in

Morbanes getting involved in other-worldly power plays. So, for a black magician and sorcerer, the typical Morbane is ignorant of the likes of Tyrannon and Skarn the Shaper.

THE REST OF THE CHAMPIONS UNIVERSE

For the most part, DEMON looks on other superhumans and related organizations with scorn. Naturally, it hates and wishes to destroy “interfering do-gooders” such as superheroes and UNTIL, and the feeling is mutual; the real question is how it gets along with major supervillains and villain groups.

Dr. Destroyer: DEMON has taken great care not to attract the attention of the Destroyer. It regards him as having both the power and the resolve to inflict significant harm on the organization, should he choose to, and therefore doesn't want to anger him (or even make him ask himself how he could “make use” of DEMON). It doesn't participate in coalitions created to oppose him (such as the efforts to stop his attack on Detroit) and doesn't conduct operations in areas he's known to frequent.

Eurostar: Eurostar has no mystic members, and so rarely rates much notice from DEMON. But some European Morbanes wonder whether they might turn the super-terrorists' fanaticism to DEMON's use (for example, by “leaking” information to Fiacho that persuades him to attack a target DEMON wants eliminated). Any such scheme would have to be handled with the greatest delicacy, though; neither Fiacho nor his compatriots are fools.

Mechanon: Since DEMON doesn't rely on technology, it doesn't fear Mechanon the way groups like VIPER, ARGENT, and UNTIL do. However, it has no desire to see him destroy all organic life on Earth (since that would bring its own schemes to a halt), and so would take steps to oppose him if necessary.

Menton: Menton terrifies the Inner Circle and Luther Black. His powers would allow him to infiltrate DEMON with ease, though there's no evidence he has any interest in doing so. For now, DEMON keeps a low profile where Menton's concerned... but if it saw a real chance to kill him, it would take that opportunity.

Teleios: More than one Morbane has wondered what sort of evil he might concoct by recruiting or hiring Teleios to work with demonic flesh and bone. None of them have yet gone so far as to try to contact him, though (at least not so far as DEMON's leadership, which doesn't trust the fiendish biologist, knows...).

VIPER: DEMON and VIPER have unmitigated hatred for one another due to VIPER's participation in the Demonflame Incident (see page 19). To the extent they can, DEMON's members strike back at VIPER whenever possible by attacking its members, revealing what they know of its plans and resources to the authorities, and so forth. VIPER repays the favor with gusto.

DEMON GENRE BY GENRE



DEMON: *Servants Of Darkness* is an organization book for *Champions*, and thus has the most immediate use in a superhero game. But DEMON can find its way into other genres if you see fit. (See also the era-by-era plot seeds in Chapter One for information about DEMON in the Golden Age, Silver Age, the Pulp era, and other twentieth century time periods.)

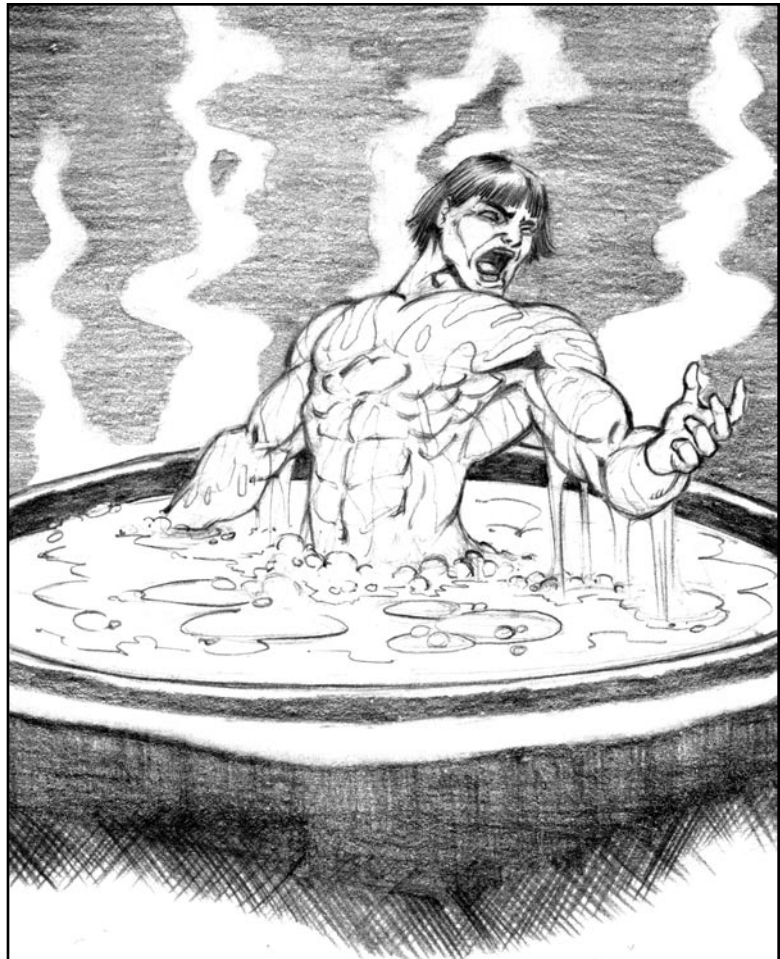
DARK CHAMPIONS

DEMON works wonderfully in *Dark Champions* games. All you have to do is remove the magic, or reduce it to the type discussed on page 315 of the *Dark Champions* genre book. Rather than being a centuries-old mystic with dreams of apotheosis, Luther Black is a criminal and con artist who set up DEMON so he could exploit gullible cultists financially and sexually. The cult is still a cult, but rituals take place while members are under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, and the Brothers wear kevlar under their robes and carry pistols up their sleeves. DEMON itself could be a criminal organization specializing in everything from drug-running to human slavery, and it binds its members together through their religious fervor. Or maybe it's an evolution of the KKK, a neo-Nazi group (and/or a front for survivors of the Nazi regime who want to resurrect the Third Reich), or something else altogether.

DEMON 3000

As presented, DEMON belongs firmly to the modern day. Here's what it looks like if you want to carry it forward into the *Champions 3000* setting of *Galactic Champions*.

In the year 2012, events speed toward a climactic conclusion. The Grehn arise from their slumber, massacre the undersea colony of Last Frontier, and bring war to Mexico's eastern coastline. DEMON's Morbanes find followers among the downtrodden in Babylon's Rookeries, but the discovery of Ril'Syssor fails to have the intended effect. Nonetheless the Morbanes bring war to the City of Man and distract its inhabitants from Luther Black's plans for Earth. Luther Black's agent infiltrates the Millworks of Bromion, but is captured before he can throw the wrench he carries into the gears. However the agent throws himself into the



machine works and accomplishes much the same feat. Then events go seriously awry.

“Wormwood” falls from the sky, but the hero Barnstormer sacrifices his life to save Kansas City. He pushes his flight powers to the limit, and through an incredible act of will holds his body together as he approaches lightspeed. His mass grown huge, he impacts the meteor as it falls from the sky and knocks it off course, saving countless lives at the cost of his own.

Then February 29 arrives, and Luther Black comes to Mexico City under his own power. Though he never obtained the Holy Grail, nor found the Fountain of Youth, he did obtain the Fourth Nail, the last nail intended for Christ’s crucifixion but stolen by a kabbalist. The Fourth Nail alleviates some of Luther Black’s suffering and allows him to stand on the spot where the eagle held the serpent in its beak to complete the final chants of his spell to loose the five Kings of Edom.

But his actions do not go unchallenged. Just weeks before, agents of the Trismegistus Council uncovered the Thirteenth Floor and much of Luther Black’s plot, including knowledge of who he was and, in a crippling blow, his copy of the *Liber Terribilis*. Several members of the Council sacrificed their sanity to understand the words of the Harrowing Book, and now the race is on to stop Luther Black’s plan. It’s an event that shakes the world, as superheroes across the globe rush to find Demonhames and destroy them.

Outside of Mexico City, many super-mystics, both good and evil, gather. They prepare to confront Luther Black, who’s come into the fullness of the powers he stole from Sharna-Gorak. It’s not a fight all of them survive, as both the Inverted Trinity and Luther Black take some of their lives, and none of them leave the scene unscathed. But in the end, it is the Descending Hierarchy — those rulers of the infernal whose minions so often provided DEMON with the power it needed to accomplish its goals — that proves Black’s undoing.

Luther Black never found the fifth member for his Inner Circle, and just months before he had exposed Dyer vander Bleek to the powers of the Shining Darkness. In Mexico City, vander Bleek stood in the presence of the Edomite for the first time, and the Descending Hierarchy’s use for the man who had sold his soul to the Archdemons was revealed.

Mystics later explained that it was the voice of the Edomite that triggered the explosion of hellfire that consumed the Inner Circle and Luther Black. Black didn’t die at that moment. Nor did he truly die when the Qliphothic roiled through the breach in his summoning circle, reaching for its century-long servant. Nor when, like the effect of a collapsing star on the space-time continuum, the closing breach between this world and the prison of the five Kings of Edom sucked the stolen power of Sharna-Gorak from Black’s body, taking what remained of his tainted soul with it.

Luther Black died at long last when Sharna-Gorak took back his stolen power, and in that moment Luther Black’s consciousness and his soul

— everything there was that made Luther Black who he was — was subsumed in Sharna-Gorak’s monstrous being. The returning power sent Sharna-Gorak blazing through the Multiverse, both its infinite spaces and infinite time, like some sort of metaphysical comet... which came to rest in the Material World in the year 3001.

Sharna-Gorak, as prophesied so many millennia ago, finally returned to the world of man.

Now, with Luther Black’s knowledge to draw from, Sharna-Gorak is the Earth’s greatest servant of the Shining Darkness, the one who seeks to free the five Kings of Edom. Once again he seeks to raise an army to shake the pillars of the world as he did in the Atlantean Age... and he calls this army DEMON.

FANTASY HERO

As a mystic organization, DEMON can certainly fit into most *Fantasy Hero* campaigns with only a little tweaking. The two issues you need to deal with are: What separates DEMON from every other mystic cult out there that worships Elder Evil and conducts human sacrifices to further its power? And is DEMON’s pervasive use of magic suitable to your campaign?

On the first point, remember that DEMON isn’t openly serving alien gods; rather it poses under the more mundane guise of a Satanic cult. Maybe the Fantasy DEMON — the Order of the Demon, Black’s Cabal, whatever you decide to call it — is a servant of Elder Evil posing as a faction of another god. The god is evil but also an accepted part of the pantheon, and perfectly acceptable to worship. That makes DEMON’s purpose difficult to identify at first, but eventually the heroes have to root out since it actually serves a much fouler, and in no way acceptable, purpose.

Also, there’s DEMON’s populism. Maybe Fantasy DEMON is just as open to new members as the superhero one. The peasants — poor, ignored folk who are little more than bait for the Orcs to come out of the mountains so the heroes can save them — join DEMON because it gives them a sense of empowerment. For once they’re striking back at the lords who took too much of their food during times of famine... and the adventurers who got in one too many fights at the local tavern. Now DEMON, under the guise of a faction of an evil god, attracts multitudes with its promises of power, recruiting those with a talent for magic which went neglected because of the family’s poverty.

The second point is a matter for an individual campaign. In a High Fantasy game, DEMON might work as-is (though you’ll probably want to change its spells and casting methods to fit your campaign’s magic system). The Brothers likely have little magic, but there’s no reason demons can’t possess them when battling against the heroes, and the magic Initiates and Morbanes wield is pretty standard fare for a High Fantasy setting. In Low Fantasy, Swords And Sorcery, and other campaigns with less magic, you should decrease DEMON’s magic as well.

Allow only the leaders to have spells, and change DEMON's rituals to make them harder and more dangerous to use.

STAR HERO

Of all the genres, DEMON fits into Science Fiction the worst, if for no other reason than the vital part magic plays in the organization. But in far future campaigns that isn't an insurmountable hurdle. Just identify what DEMON needs to function and supply an appropriate technology to fulfill that need.

Brazen Wands, Amulet Of Protection, and the like you can replace with technology. Depending on the tone and atmosphere of your campaign, DEMON tech might have names reminiscent of magical items, and maybe even the form — *i.e.*, a gun engraved with runes and a demon's leering mouth circling the barrel of what is otherwise a mundane particle blaster; personal force field generators that take the shape of Amulets Of Protection; initiation rituals substituting advanced psychotropic drugs and procedures to produce feelings of euphoria; and so on.

A greater difficulty is justifying DEMON's existence. DEMON's purpose is to free the five Kings of Edom from imprisonment in a dimension beyond the "space-time continuum." Its *modus operandi* involves a cult through which it identifies potential members and draws them into evil (or draws out the evil already present in their souls).

Other-worldly and inhuman evils aren't necessarily standard fare in Science Fiction. Sentients who serve such beings, who are only spoken of in ancient books and who only communicate with their faithful via dreams, appear even less often. If you plan to include entities like that, there's no problem. Maybe these are creatures from the depths of Hyperspace whose thoughts pierce the fabric of reality, maybe time itself, and infect DEMON members with evil, or at least thoughts so inhuman many think the beings are evil. Or maybe alien entities from a different galaxy, beings like nothing humanity has ever seen, are manipulating DEMON members to prepare the Milky Way for invasion. In this case, DEMON can pretty much exist as-is, simply exchanging magic for technology, and personalizing the specifics of the organization to your campaign. The initiation rituals, the ranks of Brother, Initiate, and Morbane, DEMON's intent to seize worlds and undermine humanity's societal institutions — all of that still works.

Maybe even the leadership still works as presented here, with Luther Black and the Inner Circle being flesh suits for six beings sent ahead as advanced scouts, their consciousness riding wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation traveling between the stars. Having found a home in a human, only Luther Black has become fully aware of his origin, and he awaits the day when the rest of the Inner Circle finally destroy the consciousnesses of their human hosts and remember their true selves. The purpose of DEMON here is to open an

intergalactic gate and let through the armies of the leaders' homeworld.

If you don't plan to include other-worldly entities in your *Star Hero* campaign, you need to supply DEMON with a new purpose. Is it simply greed that motivates its members? Or is it something deeper like religious fervor? The latter possibility raises the topic of the other sticking point, the *modus operandi*.

When you think of *Star Hero* stories, evil cults probably aren't the first thing that comes to mind... but there's no reason the Solar System, or the Galaxy for that matter, doesn't still have its share. Religion is a universal; it's existed in one form or another since the dawn of civilization, and seems likely to endure until civilization's end. And so long as religions exist, there are likely to be people who wish to take advantage of others' faith to further their own ends. Once you've introduced the possibility of evil cults, you've opened the door to DEMON — a very large, very evil cult dedicated to exploiting the fervor of its low-level members to further the ambitions of the higher ranking members. (For example, maybe the Church of the Infinite Dark, discussed on page 98 of *Terran Empire*, is actually a manifestation of DEMON.)

Cyber Hero

The dystopian, near-future *Cyber Hero* genre is a Science Fiction subtype very appropriate to an evil cult like DEMON. You don't even have to change Satanism to some other religion, though to stay in tune with the subgenre you should tinge the Satanism with Eastern mysticism (such as a heretical form of Taoism).

The question then becomes: who's behind the cult? Is it an mega-corp attempting to create a new opiate for the masses in the form of ol' time Satanism? (If so, just how much control does the corp *really* have?) Is it a nascent Artificial Intelligence playing with humanity, or striving to achieve some higher purpose? Is it a form of rebellion by neo-Luddites or urban primitives attempting to strike back at the mega-corps? Or is DEMON's Satanism simply a cultural meme, the expression of the gestalt resulting from the oppression of technology and death of spiritualism?

Post-Apocalyptic Hero

Assuming a not-so-serious take on the Post-Apocalyptic, like that depicted in the cinema of the eighties, the subgenre is filled with over-the-top recidivism: biker gangs, Nazis, and more. There's no reason Satanist cults can't fit in there somewhere. Again the issue becomes who the leader is. But there might be no leader at all — maybe radiation just makes some mutants put on robes of black and scarlet decorated with goat heads and threaten to sacrifice the heroes to dark gods.

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