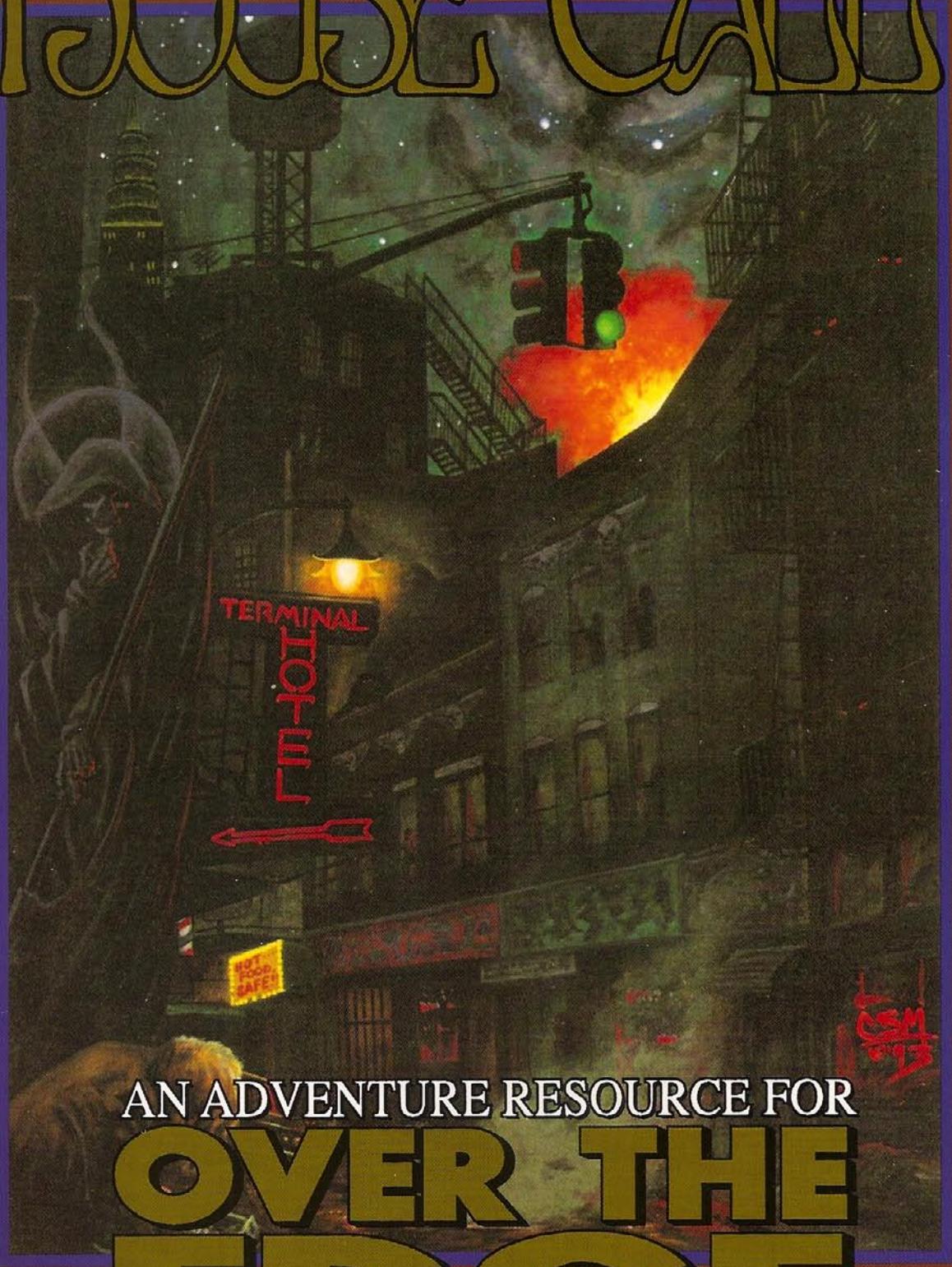


AG2102

HOUSE CALL



AN ADVENTURE RESOURCE FOR

OVER THE EDGE™

by Dustin Browder

House Call

An *Over the Edge*™ Adventure Resource
by Dustin Browder

Contents

The House	3
Entrances and Exits	3
Introduction	3
How it Looks	6
How It Works	7
How It Changes	7
Inhabitants and Invaders	8
The Chosen	8
The Ravagers	10
Other Groups	12
House Call	13
How to Set It Up	13
The Real Story	13
Development	13
Once Inside	14
Conclusion	14
A Possible Introduction	15
The Ravagers and Their Machine	16
The House in Your Series	16
Intersections	16



Credits

Design: Dustin Browder

Editing: Jonathan Tweet

Product Manager: John Nephew

Cover Art and Illustrations: Cheryl Mandus

Layout and Cover Design: John Nephew

Playtesting: Christopher Bare, Jennifer Brock, Dustin Browder, Dan Cox, Mark Malan

***Over the Edge*™ was written by Jonathan Tweet with Robin D. Laws.**

OVER THE EDGE, OTE, CHARTING NEW REALMS OF IMAGINATION, AL AMARJA, and the Atlas Games logo are trademarks of John A. Nephew. Copyright ©1993, 2013 John A. Nephew. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work in whole or part without the written permission of the publisher, except for short excerpts for the purpose of reviews, is strictly prohibited by international copyright law.

OVER THE EDGE and its supplements, such as this one, are works of fiction. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is strictly coincidental, or the effect of your own overwrought imagination. Perhaps it's from the Ravagers' machinations. Just don't blame us.

Digital Edition published under license by Trident, Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games.

Atlas Games
Saint Paul, Minnesota

www.atlas-games.com
info@atlas-games.com

Digital Edition Version 1.0

INTRODUCTION

House Call describes a pocket universe called “The House.” The House can easily be incorporated into any *Over the Edge*™ series and will provide hours of confusion and terror. It can be added to any adventure or situation almost any time you like.

The first part details the pocket dimension, what it looks like, how it feels and what goes on there. It also discusses the methods of entering the House and how to get out if you happen to get stuck inside.

The second part talks about the various organizations, secret cults and conspiracies that have interests in the House or who wish to see it destroyed. This extreme weirdness is probably better left to more experienced PCs who have seen a lot of the more mundane stuff and are itching for something serious. Many of the organizations, on the other hand, are simple enough to be involved with burger PCs.

Finally, the last part has a sample adventure that you can tack on to any of your own work. This scenario will get your PCs involved in the plots and excitement around the House. It also goes into a few other adventure ideas and offers a suggestion or two on how to handle this pocket universe in your own series.

THE HOUSE

In which we explore a dark, strange corner of reality that lies behind every door

“The House,” as it is called by its inhabitants, is a small pocket universe, pinched off from our own and tucked quietly away in a small, dark corner of infinity. It is separated from our own universe by its physical rules, which do not conform to Newtonian physics. It is closed off by the very fabric of space and time, which has a few holes by which its inhabitants can pass in and out, and through which “guests” may enter.

The pocket universe is inhabited by all manner of strange and bizarre creatures, many of whom are from our own dimension and even our own planet. Those who do not wish to live elsewhere or those who are oppressed and are not allowed to live elsewhere eventually find their way here. Here they live out eternity under the guidance of their great leader, Yuolandrlja, who may be the progenitor of the House itself.

Entrances and Exits

There are three gates to the House, each random and unpredictable.

Alien Oddities

The first and easiest way to gain entrance to the House is to go to Alien Oddities, a strange little store deep in the Edge. Here two very strange men watch over the shop, day and night, and rarely say a word to each other, though it always appears as though you have just interrupted some important conversation they were just in the middle of. The shop never has any customers.

Alien Oddities is packed with little odds and ends, brass dragons, bottles of herbs and chemicals, umbrellas, old books in strange tongues, tiny figurines, ancient weapons, simple stone tools, animal hides, bone statues, quills, and rolled up papyrus. The list is endless.

The tear in the wall between universes is stable here, and some of the pocket universe spills out into our own world. In order to enter you simply must walk deep into the aisles of the shop, which seem to extend miles back into the store. Once you turn around and try to leave, you find that you have only walked a few paces and that the shop does not look quite the same anymore.

Over the Edge™

Now the shop owners look monstrous, though they still don't speak. Outside the world is different, very different.

PCs may try to snag a few things from the shelves as they walk through; nobody is watching, and really nobody cares. Many of these things are magical or supernatural in origin. However, many of them have only minor powers or are even slightly cursed. Many more of these items will never appear to have any real power at all and the PCs may never figure out what they do, if they do anything. Following are a few examples to help you out. Let the PCs find only those items that you are willing to let into your series.

Astral Barometer

At apparently random times, the gauge on this little, blobby, iron device just jumps around. It measures the "pressure" of the "atmosphere" on the astral plane. Particularly powerful astral storms register as "low" on this barometer. People's tempers get shorter and violence increases during astral storms, and bizarre coincidences and inexplicable events are more frequent. The PCs, however, may never even figure out what the silly gauge means.

Atlas of Worlds

An incomprehensible book containing hundreds of maps, all in a strange language. The Atlas was in fact made by the alien civilization (now long dead) that lived on a planet orbiting Cygnus X-1 and used the black hole located there to travel across the universe. The Atlas contains a complete documentation of every place they discovered (both within our universe and outside). Earth is on one of the pages, though the map depicts it as it was eighty million years ago. Eighty million years ago, the Americas, Asia and Africa were four blobs around a small central sea. Australia was starting to break off from Antarctica and India was wandering north and east from Africa where it will later collide with Asia. Europe was nothing more than a little island between North America and Asia and the Pacific covered more than half the globe. Only a character with some background in paleontology or geology is likely to recognize the map as depicting earth.

Movers' Lexicon

One in a series of tomes that explains the entire history and goals of the Movers. The entire thing is a fabrication by one of the Movers and none of it is true, or is it?

Hjahelmet

Looks much like an ordinary, Roman helmet. In fact, the Hjahelmet is a prison to one of earth's most evil spirits. This ancient and nameless entity will control the body of anyone who wears the helmet. If someone removes the helmet the spirit is forced to release control.

Useless Items

These abound, such as a small pink, dusty bottle filled with little yellow leaves that are a euphoric in the Andromeda galaxy but inert to the metabolisms of creatures in this galaxy. The PCs can find a lot of useless junk here.

As you can see, some of these items might be useful while others might be even dangerous or at best useless. Never hand out fantasy "magic items" through this curiosity shop. All the items should have very subtle powers and many should be next to useless to anybody but an extremely creative and experimental PC.

The Sentinels

Guardians of Alien Oddities

One has a long, horizontal scar across his forehead and the other has a scar on his throat and little scars all over his body. They only talk to each other, only in hushed whispers, and never in the presence of others.

These "men" are in fact dual-dimension beings, with a presence both in the House and in our own universe. They were cursed ages ago to stay at this gateway and guard it against those who should not be allowed in. Supposedly Yuolandrlja controls them, and it is rumored that they hate him dearly for it. In our universe they look as they are described above. However, in the House one has a third eye in his forehead while the other has a second mouth in his throat and little mouths all over his body (where the scars are).

Vaguely Oriental men, appear to be 40 years old, 155 cm, 75 kg. They both have short black hair, and wear a hodgepodge of clothing that looks like it comes from several different centuries (which it does). They are both greasy, dirty and unkempt, with teeth falling out and bald spots dotted around their heads.

Languages: unknown

Attack: 5 dice, X2 damage

Defense: 5 dice

Hit Points: 60 (dual nature)

Astral Pool: 6 shots



Traits

Ancient Warriors, 5 dice — They have the skills of many different war traditions from humankind's past, making them very dangerous in combat and very unpredictable (giving them a bonus die against narrowly-trained opponents). (strange body language)

Dual Nature — Since they are creatures of two different universes, they are nearly impossible to kill. You must kill both of their presences in each dimension at the same time (if one can indeed synchronize attacks in the two universes). If they are killed in one universe but they live in the other one, their presences slowly reform where they were slain. First they are like ghosts, but over time they become more substantial. (slightly transparent)

Dimensional Gate, 4 dice — Besides controlling the only reliable gate to the House, the Sentinels can open smaller gates at will, thus causing some of the other universe's material to flow into our own. This can have some very strange effects, especially if they open a door to the House in our own universe. Technology (which requires precise rules of nature) may stop working, creatures may flood in or whatever the GM wishes. They only use this power if they are sorely pressed to keep invaders outside of Alien Oddities. (gate comes from their mouths when they use the power)

D'Aubainne and Victory

Another entrance to the House is to catch a cab at 1:15 A.M. at the corner of D'Aubainne Avenue and Victory Highway. It must be the right cab driven by a very special cabbie (a mutant combining human and dog forms). If you find this cab it will drive you out of the city and then turn around and drive back in. Once you are dropped off, you may find that what you thought was Al Amarja has changed. This cabbie has been known to show up at other places and other times. There is a small chance every time you get into a cab that it will be the cab going to the House. However, if you really want to go, and you want to go now, you had better be at D'Aubainne and Victory by 1:15.

Back Doors

The final method of entering the House is to go in the back door. This can only usually be found by seeing "people" from the House leaving the House through the back door and then entering before the door closes. The back door has a single location in the geography of the House ("Sad Mary's"), but it opens up at no fixed location in our dimension. It always opens into

our universe through a building's back door. The back door of a bar or restaurant is the most common, though sometimes House creatures are seen coming out of back doors of people's houses.

If you want to get in through the back door, you must wait beside a back door long enough and hope that some of the House's occupants decide to leave. This is extremely unlikely, however, as many of them are no longer able to leave the House, they have become so dependent on it for their own safety. The back door also shows up at random moments, either as you leave by a back door or by entering a building. After going through, you may suddenly find yourself in the House. The back door only works at night and when you look through it you may just catch a glimpse of the House inside.

Exploiting the House's Entrances

Enterprising players may think of clever ways to take advantage of the quirks surrounding the House. They may find the back door and prop it open, they may try to kill the mutant cab driver and take control of the cab, or they may spend hours carting away items from Alien Oddities and never get involved in the adventure you spent so long in preparing.

Don't let them get away with it. The House has a mind of its own, and you can't cheat it. If they prop the door open, whatever they propped it with breaks, or gets moved. If they go away, it happens mysteriously; if they watch it carefully, it happens by apparent accident. If the PCs kill the cabbie, the car breaks down, or takes them to a dangerously wrong place. The cabbie reappears in a new cab the next night.

Alien Oddities is filled with lots of things, most of them useless, some of them dangerous. If a few bad experiences don't teach the PCs to let things alone, have a creature or a machine chase them from the shop. Maybe there is an alien assassin robot who activates when approached and chooses a PC as a target. Maybe a creature is released from a box or a cage which might spray a smell on the PCs which is almost impossible to remove.

In short, you can't cheat the House. It knows, it has a mind of its own and it is capable of manipulating events and using extraordinary forces to protect itself and its interests. Use this flexibility to keep the story moving.

How it Looks

This little universe's buildings, streets, shops, vendors and parks all bear a striking resemblance to those of the Edge. However, some things are very, very different. The inhabitants, for one thing: They are all creatures of the night. Supernatural, magical, psychic, or alien, they all gather here where they are understood and may carry on with life without hiding their true nature. They call themselves the Chosen in recognition of their special status as inhabitants of the House. English is the most common language here, though Etruscan, Old High Venusian, and Byrethian Sign Language (which requires tentacles to speak) are also popular.

When looking for a map of the House, simply look at the map of The Edge (OTE, p. 62). The geography is exactly the same, however the people are not. All the buildings are nearly the same, but they are often slightly different in appearance. Below is a list of things that can make a building seem slightly different, without making it so strange that the entire city looks like a giant montage of the bizarre. Make most changes barely noticeable. "Hey, from this angle that building looks kind of like a human head!"

Appears to be breathing	Painted Flesh Color
Wider at top than at the base	Glows
Strange Geometric Shape	Resembles human body part
Very tall	Building appears to be "fat"
Physically impossible	Crows cover every ledge
No windows or doors	Strange noise
Strange Smell	Hums song
On fire, all the time	Has leaves and branches
Looks like a snail shell	Covered in runic graffiti
Filled with bugs	Oozes blood or other fluid
Everything is broken	Covered in statues
Foundation has wheels	Looks like your house

Of course, buildings may look different to different people. On the other hand, the entire city may consistently look like one of the above suggestions, sort of the dimension's "theme" for that visit.

The streets look fairly similar to the Edge's streets, only they are always cracked and broken. Furthermore, few of the street lamps work, which makes the city very dark at night. Unfortunately, it is nearly always night in the House. There are at least two moons (sometimes more), and no one remembers seeing a sun. Sometimes when a third moon rises it looks kind of like a very dim sun, only it does not give off

enough light to even cast shadows. It look like the sun seen through smoked glass.

When three or more moons are up, the sky sometimes changes to a yellow-olive complexion. Otherwise the sky is almost always black, with the exception of the stars, which are extremely bright and seem to have a variety of extra colors that we don't see here on Earth. The constellations are all wrong. If you stare at the sky long enough, you begin to see faces staring back at you (recommended only for the marginally sane).

When looking for specific locations in the House, simply refer to OTE. There you will find a host of already strange and bizarre locations. In order to make them fit into the House, simply twist them out of shape. For instance, Ahmed's Kwik Klinik could be the practice of a very insane fringe scientist who performs all sorts of bizarre experiments on passersby. Cesar's Hotel might cater to the more attractive members of the House who come here to engage in a wide variety of strange games of chance. The Chrome Dome might be full of psychics who are all listening to "the Music of the Spheres," though nobody else can hear anything. You'll get the hang of it.

Incidentally, if you try to walk away from the city, you find that after about a hundred yards you find yourself facing the city again. Space at the borders of the pocket universe curves and twists back upon the dimension, making it impossible to leave. It's not like there is a wall or anything, there is just nowhere to else to go.

How It Works

When the House was created from the basic fabric of our own universe, it acquired many of our universe's characteristics such as gravity, electromagnetic radiation (including light) and a host of other properties that we all take for granted. However, many of these laws become distorted and confused within the House, making it very different from our own universe.

It is impossible to hide one's true nature in the House. Everyone's true appearance comes out, whatever that may be. Many mortals may find this disconcerting. Brave men find out that they are in fact cowards, strong men discover that they are weak, and beautiful people may find that they are really quite ugly. Each PC shows his true nature after spending a long time in the House, and this may reveal some secrets. This may provide a serious incentive to get out of the House quickly for those who have secrets that they cannot allow to be revealed.

Time passes at different rates depending on subjective experience. When people are separated and re-united, they may find that a different amount of time has elapsed for each of them. The temporal order of events may even vary according to the observer.

Magic and psychic powers are especially powerful in the House, though this power may be too unpredictable for someone new to the house to use safely. If you need a rule of thumb, double the shots in PCs' Psychic Pools and double their dice with fringe powers. You may have more fun simply winging this increased power, and letting the PCs' abilities vary at your whim.

The House operates under different rules of physics. Coincidences, synchronicity, strange events, and so on are more common here. If one lives in the House long enough, one adjusts to the physics there, and existence in our world becomes painful and even life-threatening.

How It Changes

The House can change in whatever way you wish as time goes on. Remember that appearance and time are fluid inside the House. Perhaps when the PCs enter a second time they arrive back in the House's remote past, before it was discovered by many of its inhabitants, perhaps before the first days of humanity.

Another idea is to change the basic geography. Maybe the House takes on the appearance of whatever city you entered into the dimension through, or perhaps it takes on a woodland appearance. If the PCs are too comfortable with the Edge, perhaps you want to change the city to a completely imaginary one filled with buildings and monuments from the world over. The Library of Alexandria sits next to the Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower stands against the dark sky.

Alternately you could make the city exactly like your home town. This has some obvious advantages, like you will know where everything is. On the other hand, one's home town is rarely frightening or eerie and this can take away some of the effect.

Change the House any time you like to suit your own needs. Do not feel obligated to follow any of the information presented here, use it only as you want it or to take your imagination in new directions. If every time the PCs enter the House they find it a new challenge, your series will remain fresh and exciting for many sessions.

INHABITANTS AND INVADERS

Wherein we meet those who live in madness and those who wish to

The House is power. Its mad, incomprehensible laws make it useful to those who wish to create something that would not work or is hard to make here in our own universe. Many wish to conquer the House so that they may use it as their own home, or for more sinister purposes. Conspiracies and counter-conspiracies surround the House; those listed below are just a few.

The Chosen

“I’m here because I’m dead. What’s your excuse?”

—Zombie from the House to an uninvited visitor

Type: Supernatural Club

Rep: Very exclusive. Very few people know they exist.

Brief: The Chosen are the inhabitants of the House. They live there and they are ruled by a great being called Yuolandrlja. The Chosen is made up of a huge variety of creatures, many of which are one of a kind. They are generally friendly.

Allies: Earthlings, True Believers

Enemies: Neutralizers, Ravagers, Hougans

The Chosen have a tough time of it. Their dimension offers power to a great many people who are already very powerful and would love to have it for their very own. Yuolandrlja is a great being who watches over the House and who leads the Chosen during times of crisis. These times of crisis have become more and more frequent as pressures in our own universe force many supernatural creatures to attempt entrance into the House to escape persecution or to obtain power.

The Chosen come from a thousand different locations and have a thousand different origins. Anything is possible, so feel free to let your imagination roam. In an emergency, steal ideas from films or books. Horrible Aliens or little Gremlins are just as likely as anything else in the House. There are some general levels of organization among the Chosen, however. Each organization has its own aims and each one has its own methods of controlling or fighting with the other groups.

The **Lions** are predatory members of the Chosen. They have adopted the practice of stalking and hunt-

ing prey interminably before making the kill, so as to get as much enjoyment out of each kill as possible. (If they killed too many of their fellows, they would be expelled from the House.)

The Chosen known as the **Rangers** seek safe methods to leave and return to the House. They also sometimes go on missions for Yuolandrlja into the outside world (in which case they are given special drugs to survive the trip). It is the Rangers who have begun to learn the rudimentary art of moving one’s spirit across the universes and possessing someone in our own universe. The science is still young, but they are improving. If the PCs get stuck in the House, they should come and see these guys for the easiest ways out (like any of the three entrances).

GMCs

Connie Adam

Chosen Lion

Connie was born without a heart. None of her organs work. She is, for all practical purposes, dead. Her parents put her up for adoption when they discovered her “problem.” Twenty years later, one could find her in a circus for the very rich and jaded. The creatures held for display were always bizarre, hideous, and often sentient. Two years later, Connie fled to Al Amarja, and she found her way to the House.

Connie requires violent emotion to survive. She has no emotions of her own (she has no heart, both literally and figuratively) and she needs the emotions of others to live. Thus, she runs with the Lion prides of the Chosen so she can be there when death and pain come upon the Lions’ victims.

Anglo woman, age 22, 180 cm, 55 kg. A thin, beautiful woman with short, pale blonde hair and a cold, blank look on her face.

Languages: English

Attack: 3 dice

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 40 (no pain)



Traits

Bestial Fighter, 3 dice — Connie has an animal's instinct for survival, which leads her to a barbaric and ferocious fighting style. It is the only time that she seems to be emotional (in fact she is only aping anger to frighten opponents). (cat-like walk)

Survival, 4 dice — Connie knows how to survive: how to steal, sell her body, or whatever is necessary. She is good at hiding and at obtaining whatever she needs to live. (looks very nervous and observant)

Emotion Drain, 3 dice — In order to live, Connie must drain emotions from others. She must be close to her target, at least within a few yards. Whatever emotion the target is experiencing simply drains away within a ten to twenty seconds. Connie has found that emotions have flavor, despair and fear being her two favorites. This can help her in combat because she can drain an enemy's will to fight, giving her an edge (target gets a penalty die). (blank eyes)

No Heart — Makes it very difficult to kill her. It also makes it impossible to make her fall in love, become angry, or become afraid. (extremely logical and un-emotional)

Shal

A chosen Ranger

Shal was the only member of his civilization that thought escape was possible (or even necessary) when his home planet's star went nova. Shal escaped with his own invention that allows him to move across vast distances by skipping across reality, entering a non-reality space, or another dimension as he goes.

Several thousand years (and light years) later Shal arrived at our planet looking for a place to live. He tried to adapt to our culture. Unfortunately, he had been driven quite mad over the countless centuries of wandering and he was unable to adapt to humans' strict society. He changed his body shape by creating a machine out of the remains of his dimensional transport. Once he found he could not fit in, he attempted to rebuild his dimensional ship and escape to somewhere else, but his device was on its last legs and it could only take him as far as the House before it came to rest on alien soil for the final time.

Now Shal lives in the House, obsessed with rebuilding his long lost culture, or somehow finding a way to go back through time and space to rejoin his ancient roots.

Very average European male, apparent age 35 (actually 5,000 years plus), 177 cm, 70 kg, black hair,

Over the Edge™

average build, very average in all ways — too average, in fact.

Languages: Any (see below).

Traits

Master Scientist, 5 dice — Shal can build a large variety of devices to do some very strange things. His ship that brought him here and the device that changed him into a human are two good examples. However, he is not used to the strange physics in the House and he has a lot of trouble using his skills here. (always mumbles equations to himself)

Translation, 4 dice — Shal could not keep up with the different methods of communication that he had to learn over the millennia, so he altered his brain to receive messages telepathically from creatures that are trying to communicate to him. (answers questions before they are completely asked)

Madness — Shal has been driven mad by the centuries of exile that have deprived him of his natural home and his chance to die. His race had bizarre and strange rituals that would bring about the death of a member of the society that no longer wished to live or who had become useless. They could not die naturally otherwise. (sometimes talks in his alien language)

Thomas Kelly

Hiding Zombie

Tom lived in Chicago and ran with a gang since he was ten. He never expected to live past the age of twenty, and he was right. At eighteen he was gunned down in the street in a drive-by shooting. That was not the end for Thomas, though. His body was dug up by a woman who changed him. She was a Houngan, a priestess of Voodoo, and she brought him under her control after raising him from the dead.

Tom escaped one night when, in a battle with a rival Houngan, his master was rendered unconscious. Without direct orders he found that he could go anywhere that he pleased and he fled, eventually finding his way to the House, where he hides in fear from his former master.

Young African-American male, Age 18, 178 cm, 73 kg, athletic and well-proportioned. Tom's skin is deteriorating with age, and he looks a little gray.

Attack: 3 dice

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 40 (feels no pain, no important organs)

Traits

Zombie — This gives Tom many benefits. He cannot feel any pain, but he also cannot heal. Any damage

is permanent, and Tom will have to simply cover it up as best he can. He does not bleed. (grayish skin)

Street Fighter, 3 dice — Allows Tom to fight with his fist, knives, and guns. (huge scars where bullets killed him)

The Ravagers

“Let me show you something in a size eleven.”

— Nazi shoe-salesman

Type: Secret supernatural society

Rep: None, secret.

Brief: Evil creatures of the night, formerly in the Nazi ranks

Allies: Movers

Enemies: Neutralizers, Earthlings, a large number of world governments

During the final days of the Third Reich, few would have stood by Hitler and his falling country, few except certain creatures of the night. These entities have a variety of origins and shapes, but they are all after the same thing: humans. For one reason or another these entities like to kill, drink the blood of, eat, torture, or otherwise exploit human beings. That's why they were Nazis. When the Third Reich fell, most of the normal humans got caught, but these villains escaped.

Once they had mastered the art of remaining hidden, they created an organization they called the Ravagers. This strange “club” of monsters kept in touch with each other through a variety of elaborate methods. They left codes to each other in telephone booths, sent signals by flickering the lights in their hotel rooms, and sent messages by killing people in a particular way that was in fact a code to other Ravagers across the country who would see the details in a paper. Thus did they persevered until the present day.

The Ravagers really have no connection to Nazism any longer. These creatures simply need humans for food and they need war and genocide to hide their needs. They have been in Bosnia, in the wars between Iran and Iraq, in Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Kurdistan, and anywhere else where they could torture and kill to their pleasure.

Now these creatures want to escape again. Things have been getting tough on Earth. The Earthlings and the Neutralizers have begun to close in on them, and they need a place to escape to. They discovered the House a few years back, and they have been plotting its capture.

Some of the Movers are now interested in using these Ravagers for their own reasons, and they are

secretly assisting them by holding back the Earthlings and the Neutralizers. The Movers are not aware that the Ravagers are planning on fleeing our dimension. They certainly would oppose any such move as it would remove the Ravagers from their carefully crafted plan (whatever that may be).

GMCs

Frank Muller

Bug-Thing

Frank developed some rather strange tastes during the war. It became rapidly obvious to him that he was not normal. He would sometimes grow large insect-like mandibles from his mouth, and the world would seem to slow down for him. At these times he had strange cravings, especially for human eyes. Fortunately, in the death camps there were plentiful sources. After the war ended, Frank fled to America where he became a shoe salesman.

In fact, Frank is part of an ancient attempt by an alien species to breed with humans. The plan failed and the aliens died off, lacking proper females because of a disease that spread among their people. Yet some of the aliens' genes have been passed recessively down through time and at random Frank's parents were both carriers of the genes. They combined in him. The physical effects did not manifest themselves until Frank finished the violent hormonal swings of puberty.

Now Frank is part of the Ravagers' secret underground. He wishes to escape this world, which is nothing but a torment for him now. All the eyes seem to be staring at him all the time, they are always looking, looking at him. Calling him a freak with their silent, staring eyes. Their delicious eyes.

German man, age 71 (appears to be 50), 160 cm, 60 kg. A short, balding, chubby little man who wears an old tan suit and a brown shabby little hat.

Languages: German, French, English

Attack: 4 dice, X2 damage with claws and mandibles

Defense: 4 dice (2 dice if not transformed)

Hit Points: 28 (primal fury)

Armor: 1 die of chitinous armor (when transformed)

Traits

Transformation, 3 dice — Frank can change himself into a horrible monster with insect mandibles, a thin carapace, and long, sharp claws. When in this shape he is very fast and very dangerous. He will often go

berserk in this form and lose all control of his anger in his madness. (big eyes and dry, hard skin when in human form)

Blending In, 4 dice — Frank has spent so much time on the run from Nazi hunters and the Mossad that he has gotten very good at blending into a crowd and disappearing. He can disappear into a city very easily and never be found. He has a variety of aliases that are ready to use whenever he needs them, and he is a master bluffer. (several sets of I.D.)

Terror, 3 dice — Frank often causes terror in his victims, especially when he eats someone's eyes (bonus die for him). This terror is caused by a human racial memory of Frank's ancestors. Those who fail a roll against Frank's "terror" suffer a penalty die on all actions. Non-humans are immune. (aura of fear)

Eye Eater — Frank is obsessed with the idea that he is being watched and that people are staring at him. If he doesn't conquer this paranoia periodically by eating someone's eyes right out of their head he will have a break down and enter a manic rage or a deep depression. (always watching other people and making eye contact while licking his lips)

Kaala

Ravager Fungoid Colony

Early in Earth's history, many organisms developed and were wiped out by the tidal forces of evolution that eventually overcomes all species, great and small. However, the Kaala, as it calls itself, still clings to life. This fungus was no longer able to compete with other organisms that fed off of dead animal and plant tissue, but one single colony out of millions was fortunate enough to mutate and gain the ability to invade a host animal.

Over millions of years, this same colony has invaded host after host, evolving along with its host bodies until it could inhabit a human body and have enough of a collective intelligence to survive in human society. It has tried many times to create new colonies but with no success. It has joined the Ravagers because it hopes that some creature in the House will be useful as a host for a second colony.

(In the body of a...) Bulgarian man, age 29, 175 cm, 71 kg, slightly stooped, dresses modestly.

Languages: Has learned countless languages, but mastered none, over the centuries.

Hit Points: 21 (ferocious survival instinct)

Traits

Drive to survive — Kaala has an amazing survival instinct that allows it to struggle on through incred-

Over the Edge™

ible adversity. Should the creature's life be seriously threatened, it can perform feats of strength and athletics that would not seem possible. It gets a bonus die on any physical action it wishes, though at the cost of 1 hit point each time (because of the strain). (snarls when threatened)

Alien Intellect — Kaala does not think like most beings on the planet. Its primary purpose is survival and reproduction. It has no interest in morality, religion, the afterlife, or anything else that bothers other sentient creatures. This may give the creature advantages or disadvantages depending on the situation.

Infection, 3 dice — Kaala can infect a new host body and abandon the old one when it grows old or is threatened. Kaala needs a moist environment, and since it is fungus it cannot move by itself. Frequently it will bite its new host and transfer as many cells as possible through the mouth and into the victim's wound. Once inside, the fungus gains control of the nervous system and spreads into the brain case. Here Kaala assumes control of all motor functions and slowly consumes the brain. The victim, a helpless prisoner, goes insane and fades away as his brain slowly disappears, without even being able to cry for help to those close to him who haven't noticed anything wrong.

Rakskan

Bio-engineer

Not all races develop mechanical solutions to their problems. Rakskan's race began their technology with biology. As the years progressed they made everything from living organisms to serve them, even space ships, and they developed a star empire. Rakskan was an engineer, but his people did not approve of his experiments or his methods. He was to be executed. He coded his DNA into a small capsule and with a reconstruction of his brain he sent it into space. There it slowly reconstructed his body long after he had been executed. The capsule drifted for millions of years in the cold of interstellar space, finally caught by the gravity of one small, yellow sun....

Rakskan has no natural form, and he changes his current one with bizarre devices whenever he likes. Recently he has preferred the shape of a tall, elegant woman with red hair and green eyes.

Attack: 2-4 dice, depending on how aggressive a shape he takes on.

Defense: 2-4 dice, again depending on his shape.

Traits

Body Change — Rakskan changed his body somewhat when he had it reconstructed in space. By eating DNA, he can use it to change his own shape. By recombining it with other DNA he has already eaten (and added to his DNA "library"), he can produce some very strange and interesting results. This allows him to change into a variety of creatures, many of which he makes up for the occasion. It takes from three days to a week to change shape, depending on how drastic a mutation it is.

Other Ravagers

It's impossible to summarize completely as diverse a group as the Ravagers, but they do have some traits in common. They all had to be able to pass for normal in the Third Reich. Not only must they be able to assume or mimic human form at the least, they also be able to look European. (No African leopard-men among the Ravagers...) A typical Ravager gets 3 dice in combat, has 21 hit points, and has some strange kind of fringe power: domination, invisibility, vibration control, telepathic powers, or poison gas glands. They also, without exception, prey on humans, often sating unspeakable tastes.

Other Groups

Several other groups wish to know more about the House. Here are a few quick ideas for you to chew on.

The Houngans are a group of Voodoo wizards and priests who have lost many of their zombie servants to the House. These zombies are forever tied to their masters and their magic, but in the House they can hide safely. Thus, the Houngans wish to break into the House and steal their servants back.

The True Believers are a secret group of ordinary humans who want to become supernatural. Many believe that if they can find the right magic, they can live forever or have powers over ordinary men. They discovered the House many years ago by accident and wish to become one of the Chosen so that they can have all the special fringe powers that they always wanted.

HOUSE CALL

In which the PCs discover sinister plots

How to Set It Up

Go ahead, plan your next few adventures, and while you're thinking about those, weave this plot into them. *House Call* requires a few bodies. Dead ones are preferred, though those in extreme pain (it has to be *really* bad) will do. Whenever the PCs have finished a fight and they are standing around looking at the people they have just killed or maimed for life, have one of them suddenly jerk to her feet and say "Come to the House, we need you." Then the corpse falls down and finishes dying. Do this a couple of times; it will drive them nuts.

The Real Story

The Chosen are under attack. The Ravagers have a machine that allows them to get into the House for short periods of time. While they are there, they are trying to find a way to stay their permanently. Kill Yuolandrlja? Use the special drugs or magics of the Rangers? Treat themselves with a special ritual? Take cosmic measurements to refine their machine's settings? The Chosen haven't been able to stop the Ravagers, and they have been forced to go to the outside for help. Thus the Rangers leave their bodies and roam around in our world, looking for bodies to possess so they can communicate.

Unfortunately the Rangers can only inhabit bodies whose spirits are weak, and the weakest spirits are those that are leaving their bodies. Once the spirit leaves, the body dies and the Ranger cannot reanimate it to make it talk. Thus the Ranger has a narrow window of time in which he can possess a dying body and get off his message before the body actually dies.

The Rangers will talk to anybody, but the PCs are the most helpful people who seem to be around dead bodies a lot. The PCs may also have some fringe power that makes their help particularly useful. (The PCs may not even be aware that they have this power.) What the PCs can do to help (and why the Rangers are trying to contact them) really depends on the group and your style of play.

The Rangers are also not able to give out any important information while possessing another's body. When the Ranger takes over it experiences the pain of death along with its host, thus it can only force itself to scream out its most basic and emotional message. This results in nothing but a desperate plea for help and perhaps saying something about a house or some Nazis.

Development

Since the Chosen are trying to get at the PCs, the Ravagers will try to keep them away. Whenever the Chosen show up to inhabit a body, the PCs start to notice that they are being watched by someone. This someone is a Ravager agent who is trying to make sure that the Chosen don't get any help. If one of the Chosen ever gets close to getting off a complete or coherent message this Ravager agent attacks with normal or fringe powers, as he deems necessary. At first the PCs may think that the bodies were just enemies who were still alive and that the Ravagers are allies. Hopefully, they will catch a clue. The Ravagers are in town for a shoe salesman convention, and they will always use their aliases when trying to deal with suspicious PCs.

Setting up this conflict between the Rangers and the Ravagers can be tricky, but you can take it any way you want. The Ravagers might have devices or powers to let them track the disorporate Rangers, so every time a Ranger tries to talk to the PCs, the Ravager is there to "help finish off that guy." Or maybe the Rangers get their message across to a GMC, who promptly shows up dead (with his eyes eaten out?). The PCs investigate, and that's how they get caught up in all this. Or the PCs hear some guy buying several drinks because dead people keep talking to him. At first this seems like an amusing incident, but when he winds up dead the next day, the PCs take notice. And it gets especially creepy when dead and dying people start talking to the PCs, and they figure that they're next on the hit list.

Eventually the Ravagers miss, or the PCs stop them, or one of the Chosen inhabits a body that has a little longer to live. In this way the Chosen can explain a little bit more to the PCs about the attacks by the Ravagers, and she can tell the PCs one of the entrances

Over the Edge™

they can go to in order to get into the House. The PCs are in the dark about the actual nature of the House until they get there.

Or, the PCs might never catch on. The pleas from the corpses get more and more frantic, the shoe-salesmen show up in greater and greater numbers and soon the bodies stop calling out to them. The Ravagers win. The House, under the mental influences of its new inhabitants, becomes a living hell, and maybe some day the Ravagers will come back to our dimension for their own purposes...

Once Inside

Now you can use all those cool GMCs you read about in the last section. The Chosen generally ignore the PCs. Lions may stalk them or bizarre creatures may freak them out, but there is no organized group to meet the PCs at first. Just let them wander around for a little bit and wonder what the hell is wrong with the Edge.

Just as the PCs start to wonder what was so bloody urgent, someone approaches them (pick your favorite GMC or make up your own). This "person" explains about the Ravagers and what they are trying to do to

resist. What you plan for your conclusion will govern what will happen from here.

Conclusion

The way this plot ends depends on how you like to play. So, a few options are listed below. The reward that Yuolandrlja offers depends on what you want your group to have. Magical or psychic training? Weird science or magic devices? Information? Uranium (very valuable, but how do you go about selling it)? Maybe just a ticket home, if you're the stingy type.

- Yuolandrlja has been seriously wounded by the Ravagers. If Yuolandrlja dies, the House is surely doomed. The PCs must find a way to heal him. Perhaps one of them has a fringe power that might do it, or maybe they need to get a certain item (from Alien Oddities perhaps). Worse it could be some very rare item that must be begged, borrowed, or stolen in Al Amarja or from a location somewhere across the globe.
- The PCs can negotiate with the Ravagers, threatening them with something (perhaps with something they don't even have). The Ravagers only want a



A Possible Introduction

Here is a plot that you can use to introduce the House to the PCs. Essentially, this plot provides the dead bodies needed to let the Rangers contact the PCs. If you have your own plans for generating dead and dying GMCs, skip this section.

The CIA is greatly concerned with the population of some countries. America's reproduction rate has dropped to 1.9, whereas it is much higher in less developed lands. In the next ten years, the third world nations will begin to have enough population to seriously threaten U.S. dominance. Thus, the CIA needs a way to remove these extra people and to keep the third world in line.

To further this goal, the CIA has developed a new secret weapon. It is a combination of drugs and chemicals that, when used in tandem, cause death in a variety of interesting ways. First the base chemicals are introduced to the subject, either through his food, water or some other means. These chemicals are not inherently harmful. But when the second group of chemicals is introduced into the atmosphere of a major population center, all of those people who have taken the base chemicals die.

How they die depends on what base chemicals they were given. Some become delirious and hallucinate. They will kill themselves or others in traffic accidents and similar incidents. Some develop symptoms similar to a local plague and die within a matter of days. Some turn into psychotic killers and go on a rampage of death and destruction before they are killed by the authorities. Naturally the CIA is very excited about this new chemical weapon, and naturally they are eager to test it. So, of course, what is a more discreet place to test it than Al Amarja?

Thus the PCs chase around what appears to them to be some horrible mass-murderer who is killing at random in a variety of ways. Perhaps they discover the chemicals. They may wonder if there is a new drug on the streets that is causing this. In fact, they may never find out the cause. When they find somebody dead you can have the dead get up and talk to them, and thus weave in the House and its plots.

CIA agents are everywhere trying to get the PCs to go away (perhaps by using force), and the Al Amarja Peace Force, of course, is trying to find out what the hell is going on and what the PCs have to do with it.

If you want to take this plot further, ask yourself some questions. Could these drugs be a weapon in the arsenal of a power group besides the CIA? Perhaps the Pharaohs have simply used their CIA quislings to produce this drug, leading the CIA to think it's theirs when it isn't at all. Why Al Amarja? Perhaps a Mover in the CIA has Moved the agents to choose Al Amarja as a test site, knowing that Mover presence there means that they can benefit from the information gained as well. Who else might be seeking the cause of these deaths? The Le Thuys might be quite interested in finding out how these deaths are created, and they could fight with the PCs over the information gained by the investigations. Depending on which plots you wish to develop, you can run with this plot opener in any direction.

place to live, after all; maybe there are other pocket universes lying around that the PCs could locate for them. This would require a method of travel, to investigate these universes. Perhaps the PCs could convince the Ravagers to let them use their Dimensional Machine described below to explore other universes for the Ravagers and try to find some place suitable.

- The PCs go back to their own universe and find out what device or method the Ravagers are using to get into the House. Once this device has been destroyed, the Chosen and the House will be safe again.
- Your PCs may not be altruistic. They may demand favors of the Chosen or they may be creatures of the night themselves, and they may want to stay in the House with all the other weird creatures. Some

groups might even be against the Chosen as a subversive group of monsters who will one day decide to leave their pocket universe and spill out into our own. The possibilities are endless — pick the one that best fits the motivation and goals of your PCs.

The Ravagers and Their Machine

The Ravagers' machine is hidden in a dark recess of the Edge, the catacombs. These were dug during the Roman era and expanded in the early Christian years. They have been closed up for centuries, and there are no entrances to them except the ones the Ravagers have dug. Here the Ravagers' machine hums quietly away to itself, constantly guarded by six Ravagers. Entrances can be found in the sewers or under the Temple of Divine Experience (which is built on ancient holy ground). The Chosen can also tell the PCs the way.

The machine itself is large and made of wood and scrap iron. It is based on one of Leonardo da Vinci's secret designs, the ones he thought he had completely destroyed to keep them from falling into the wrong hands. It measures a good four hundred square feet and is almost eight feet at its highest point. It is powered by steam and a fire made with a strange, specially treated wood which fills the catacombs with a black, acrid smoke. The device is an impossible jumble of pulleys, belts, fans, levers, and gears. To use it one, must power it up, pull a complex series of levers, and step into a strange little booth built into the side of the machine. Then after smoke floods the thick, glass booth it becomes apparent that the booth is empty. The person has been sent to the House.

There are a huge number of dials and settings that would allow one to travel to as many different universes as you can imagine. This the PCs can do with or without the Ravagers' help, or perhaps they should just destroy it, and let its secrets die unknown. (Exploring alternate universes can be highly profitable as well as extremely deadly.)

THE HOUSE IN YOUR SERIES

By its very nature, the House is open to being used in many different ways. It can literally change overnight. If the PCs always run there too often, maybe all the traditional entrances are closed, or maybe the connections between the House and our universe disappear altogether. You only have to include it in your series until it is no longer interesting, then it is simply removed with no harm to the rest of your creations.

If the House has gotten stale, the PCs have figured everything out and have met all the good GMCs you could think of, change it — completely. The House could easily become an entirely different place. Perhaps the PCs start to see some of the GMCs they met in the House wandering around Al Amarja. When approached, these "people" don't recognize the PCs. Why are the Chosen entering our world? Why can't they remember who they are or who you are? Who is living in the House now?

Maybe the pocket universe is collapsing and everyone must escape, or perhaps as it collapses it expels things into our universe. Perhaps a secret group has conquered the pocket universe and they are relocating its citizens. Maybe it is all some plan by the Chosen to

conquer our Earth, or to create another pocket universe for some of them to live in. The choices are up to you.

Intersections

The material in other OTE products may complement *House Call*. Some ideas for combining source material are given below. Atlas Games product titles are in italics.

- The excavations of the Ravagers have uncovered the warrens of the Agaras. PCs expecting vile Ravagers might accidentally slaughter a few peace-loving Agaras. (*New Faces*)
- Hunting through the sewers for the Ravagers' machine can be an adventure in itself. (*It Waits*)
- A cub reporter is sent to cover the shoe salesman convention. (*Airwaves*)
- The drug Broadcast may reveal the presence of well-hidden Ravagers. (*Unauthorized Broadcast*)
- Imagine the House's version of a mental institution! (*Welcome to Sylvan Pines*)