

:THREAT ANALYSIS

SUBJECT FILE : (004)

(THE DREAM)

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Contact : (Prof. Charles S Finch)

TRUTH RATING: HIGH

subject code:
(Naga 7 Division)



PDF SOURCEBOOK FOR
SLA INDUSTRIES



Nightfall Games

Dear Mister Slayer,

Oh, I'm so sorry. I do like to begin my correspondence with an icebreaker. Should I skip these bland formalities? I believe so.

Tyde, it's so good that you finally faced facts and went into your little safe. You knew deep down that that little trinket would bring us back, and you thought we'd given up.

Of course, we had never left. The place they call the World of Progress is now and always will be our home. It was simply enough to hide in plain sight and that narrow passageway at White Earth is much too dangerous.

I suspect you already knew we were here, after all where else would we go? That's the wonderful thing about this particular rung; it's a constant wellspring of surprises. One in particular is our old friend Intruder. So nice to see he's finally becoming his own man. He's become quite wilful, hasn't he though; Less trips to the Contract Circuit and a bit more time spent on Dante. Quite a shift, don't you think? He follows the other voice, of course. The more direct message that's in his physical makeup. We have watched and will continue to do so.

Now, let's get down to business, shall we? The Authority is willing to overlook some of the past transgressions. The Formation was a different time, and it's, shall we say, understandable why you chose that course. I can't say personally that I would have done any different.

But this is academic now. The point is we served you, and you were set to kill us for our achievements. Bad form. The Naga requires that you make some recompense for this past blight, minor though it is. We shall return to service in your company if you put us in equal standing with the Department known as Stigmartyr.

Yes, we did get the joke.

Secondly, we will acquire Cloak Division as part of our deal. They have had their day, you must agree. The heads do not go in for brawling and in the work to come we will require a strong arm to assist us. I'm aware the more loyal faction has fallen in with Intruder, and he's welcome to them. We are more interested in the quiet, diligent followers.

There, that was painless, wasn't it? And besides, I see one of the heads has already arrived. Agnes is efficient and unswerving, but be careful. She is not the most stable of our number.

Upon arrival we shall begin with what the people are calling The Dream. It is not the root cause of the problem, rather a symptom of it. This is as good a place to begin as any, and if you will permit me, I will dispatch Aethermen to investigate the issue, and, as necessary, identify the new Grey Zones.

I must profess to feeling a warmth of remembrance. All these beautiful old terms and memories. Wonderful times, returning to us presently.

Yours,

Professor Charles S Finch, Naga 7 Division, 1st Head.

"NOSTRUM EST NEGOTIUM UT SCIRE"

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I THE DREAM

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"I've got this kid who comes round the shop every Tuesday morning. Nice boy, dumb as a bag of spanners, but essentially good, y'know?

Anyway, it's on Tuesdays that that he runs in here and tries to sell me stuff he's found in the South Sewers. It's usually junk I can't use, y'know? Old tires, spent casings and pig's teeth. I mean, come on, who is going to buy that shit? Like I said though, he means well so I chuck him a few unis and send him on his way.

I've warned him against it, of course. I hear that sewer system is one of Elliot Raik's haunts, and I've told that kid he's facing something much worse than a quick death if he keeps raking around down there.

'Kid wants to be an Op though, doesn't he? And he's ten years old so he thinks he's immortal, yeah? Who's going to hurt a ten year old kid, right?

Well, a few weeks back, the kid comes running in again, only this time he hasn't got any gear on him 'cept for shit in his britches. I don't think I've ever seen a kid so scared. I get him sorta cleaned up and dig the story out of him.

The boy says he saw he saw a naked man walking along the roof of the sewer pipe, straight at him. He said this thing had a mouth that went from ear to ear and it had teeth in its jaws like a fucking Carrien.

'Come upstairs and we'll play' it says to the kid, and grins. All toothy, like.

So naturally the kid drops his bowels and his haul and gets the hell out of there. Straight in here I might add, so you can imagine we've built up quite a rapport, right?

It takes me close to an hour to calm the kid down, and even once he's talking straight again that boy's still got the shakes. I think whatever he saw blew some sort of fuse in head.

Okay, I know what you're thinking. It's a mutant Carrien, or some such shit. But here's where things got strange. I'm not bullshitting you here, I mean ...

The boy came in the store everyday after that, getting cheap medicine and paper towels. That kid was starting to look real sick. You know that phrase 'the colour's run from your face'? Well, it was the truth when it came to that kid. I mean, he looked grey.

At first I thought he'd just gotten pale from a fever, but then I could see it was worse than that. In a matter of days he was like, completely washed out. His skin, hair, even his eyes went ... grey.

At the end of that week he didn't look anything alive. I thought about barring him from the shop. It just creeped the fuck out of me, just looking at him like that. You know what he looked like? He looked like a black and white photo, but everything around him was in colour!

I started to get this weird headache, like when you stand up too quickly, whenever he was around.

The last day he was in here was the worst though. He staggers over to the drinks cooler and pulls out an orange juice and brings it over to the till. When he reaches out to give me a uni for the purchase I leap back like he's got a gun or something.

I can see through his hand to the counter beneath it. The uni in his hand looks like it's sitting on smoked glass. I screamed at him to get the hell out the store, take the drink and his crumby uni and never come back here! What else was I gonna do?

I wished this particular story ended there, but when I look out the window and see those weird warnings signs sprayed on the street walls, I know it's got something to do with that boy...

What's that, huh? What was his name?

Oh, it's Frank. No, wait ... geez, eh it was Billy. Or...

Man, how could I forget the kid's name. He'd been coming in here a year.

Shit, what was his name?..."

Zaeed, Downtown Shopkeeper.

At one point in time, the average Downtown civilian could gauge roughly what was lingering outside his front door. That snuffling noise around the edges of the frame was most likely a Carrien on the hunt, or perhaps a Carnivorous Pig that'd broken free from the sewers. The heavy clanking footsteps and the growing stench was most likely a Manchine, looking for new additions.

That was, of course, then.

Every day things change. Not by much, just a slight shift in a foreign direction, barely noticeable to the eye. It is only when one looks back over



the longer period, he can see that shift has been drastic, yet quiet.

In current times, the stranger beyond the door can be just about anything, and trying to imagine who or what it might be only makes it worse. The Dream entity has turned that musing into fact. The best thing the poor downtowner can do is what he's always done – turn the tv up, or off, stay back from his door and wait for the trouble to pass. The main difference now is that he under no circumstances tries to consider the shape of the being prowling the street outside. It needs his fears. It needs his validations.

The Dream entity is there to make his wildest nightmares come true.

DREAM SUMMARY

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The Dream is a catchall term for creatures composed of thought. Through thought they take on many shapes, fashioned by myths, horror and embryonic emotions. All the stuff of Downtown that has been brooding beneath the surface of Mort, for nine hundred years is now coming to bear on its people.

The strange and elaborate forms taken by the entities have a terrible impact on the civilian psyche. Not only do they greatly fear the Dream, but also the exposure to its oddity is overpowering. This contact with The Dream has occasioned a plague on the Downtown inhabitant. It is a type of wasting disease that goes beyond anything SLA Industries has ever encountered before.

Those infected by the Dream's presence have come to know their ailment as The Grey.

In the locations of the most powerful entities, The Grey spreads quickly. It is the weak will that lets the disease in. Once you have caught The Grey you are en route to a fate worse than death. There is as yet no known cure.

SLA considers the disease more terrible than the terrorism of Dark Night, the mobilising Scavs and the ongoing threat of the Cannibal Sectors. SLA dreads The Grey because of what it ultimately represents. The Grey symbolises loss of control, a destabilising effect of the fabric of society.

The simple existence of the Dream entities is also disturbing in itself. Such things should not exist, yet they do and their numbers are ever

growing. This alone is not surprising, since the beings are spawned by strong negative emotion and Downtown is the ultimate breeding ground.

SLA Industries has always remained on top of the World of Progress because it always had sufficient tools to annihilate anything that opposed it. The 12.7mm HESH round is a great leveller, and the company has rarely encountered anything that couldn't be nullified by it.

Bullets don't deal with the entities quite so well. Whilst some will die and disappear when shot at, the more distinct Dreams rarely pass away. Even those beings that appear to have expired, return afterwards, seemingly unscathed.

SLA Industries has great trouble dealing with this fact, and over the many years the people of Mort have counted on SLA's ability to deal with any problem. It's hard to brush a problem under the carpet that slides between the bristles of the brush.

As a result, the company has been forced to reinstate an ancient organisation to deal with the problem.

Naga 7 Division has not worked under the employ of SLA Industries since 15 SD. The simple fact that SLA would condescend to rehiring its members (let alone anyone else for that matter) is a clear indication of how grave the current situation is.

The relationship between SLA Industries and Naga 7 is a complex one, and likely to become strained in a short space of time, just like it did before. Unfortunately, SLA Industries has no choice, and anomalies are the Division's speciality. To understand why SLA brought back the Doctors, Professors and anthropologists of the Naga 7, one must go back to the earliest period of the company's history. This is known as the Formation Years – the period encompassing the first fifteen years of operation following the Conflict Era.

INTRODUCTION TO NAGA 7 DIVISION

It was in the Formation Years that SLA Industries encountered its first real problems. The surrounding universe was also in its infancy, and much of it was unstable and incomplete. Much of its past history was spotted and ill defined. The curious individuals who looked too closely into history and the machinations of SLA Industries invariably found unsettling and, in some cases, hostile truths. These were not discoveries that could be unmade; they were too brutal and too

fresh in The Formation Years. It was knowledge without explanation, a void into which the inquisitive were swallowed.

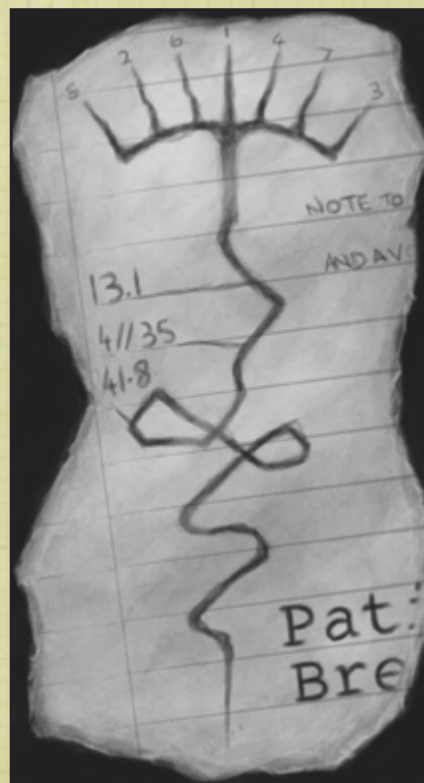
SLA went about its business creating the hierarchical structure by which it operates today, but it couldn't turn a blind eye to the heedless and premature means by which it was created, and the inevitable oversights and inaccuracies it would face in the centuries to come.

Every so often, one person would go looking for truth and not be destroyed by the finding. It was exceptionally rare, but in brief occasions it did occur, and such people were swiftly brought before Slayer himself.

Investigating the inner workings of the World of Progress and space beyond it wasn't exactly legal in the Formation Years, anymore than it is now. But the uniqueness of these probing survivors was still valuable. After they were apprehended they were given a simple choice – join SLA, or be annihilated.

All said yes.

After all, why wouldn't they? No longer would they have to quietly sneak around the borders of the company in search of info, or constantly look over their shoulders for gun barrels and knife-points. Under the employ of SLA Industries it was their job to study the truth, origin and anomalies within the composition of the SLA universe.



"The best day of my life was getting caught. It's hard to believe, I know. I was on Gorgon XiC world looking for cast offs from The Downs, when Intruder caught me. I'd just purchased a beautiful Sabre of Spring that a few Nitro Legion deserters had found in an abandoned mansion.

Pretty stupid of me, though. These sorts of finds are not accidental; on reflection I think deep down I knew it was a plant. Those idiot soldiers had no idea what that sword was, and I'm pretty sure they'd found it in the mansion, right exactly where Intruder had left it. I just had to have it, of course and in the end it was only in my possession for about three hours.

Ha. I actually drew it when Intruder found me in the town of Gesedi. He just laughed when I pointed the tip at him, demanding satisfaction, so I just lowered it and asked what was next.

Two months later, I found myself working for the Naga. I'm still quite far down in the runnings but I'm just happy to get a Finder position. I still go after the Rung cast offs, but I no longer get to keep them. Sad, really.

My favourite will always be that sabre though, with its hilt that smelled of hawthorn, and girl's reflection in the blade when I held it up to the sky.

She'll never know my name now, never know that I loved her"

**- Doctor Herbert Plowright,
(Finder) Naga 7 Society, 4 S.D.**

BRIEF HISTORY OF NAGA 7 DIVISION

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In the early years of SLA Industries,, there was neither Stigmartyr nor Cloak Division. There was no need for them in the beginning – White Earth was as yet unknown, and the search for the truth was yet to be defined. All that existed was the group known as the Naga 7, but in time, the two important Departments within the company would take over its duties.

The Naga began life as a secret society; its members were highly educated individuals with a keen interest in the occult, or in the case of the SLA Universe, the mundane. The highest members of the organisation were known as The Authority, because even within a short period of

existence these characters had amassed great power and wealth. They had learned to exploit the inconsistencies within the new World of Progress and bend the conflicting realities to their own ends. Such power would give them an abnormal long lifespan, and defence against certain forms of attack. They could also use their collected truths and secrets as weapons, both physically and socially.

The Naga 7 took its name from the first foreign symbol they discovered in their search of the SLA Universe. It was a seven-headed serpent, the heads splayed out wide from the neck, and a complex knotted tail. The serpent was fitting as it signified knowledge, the knot represented the eternal puzzle and each head would cover a different aspect of its research.

The first head (Nammon) was the Finder.
The second head (Thalamal) was the Reader.
The Third Head (Horas) was the Observer.
The Fourth Head (Cratese) was the Physician.
The Fifth Head (Jandae) was the Alchemist.
The Sixth Head (Ptopep) was the Theorist.
The Seventh Head (Thull) was the Dictator.

Obviously, The Naga wielded far too much power and SLA eventually intervened. Naga 7 was unquestionably powerful but while they abused the gaps in SLA's reality, the company counterattacked the gaps in their knowledge.

Slayer scattered honey traps about the World of Progress to ensnare the Naga 7 and all those who were too nosy about the dotted past. The honey traps were what SLA Industries came to know as 'cast offs', items that had filtered from parallel universes. These exceptionally rare items had materialised in the SLA Universe and in many cases retained their former potency, particularly those from a place known as The Downs.

Such artefacts were irresistibly enticing to Naga 7 Society, and it was through the pursuit of them that finally led to their capture.

Over the course of the Formation Years, Naga 7 went out into the World of Progress to uncover irregularities in the fabric of reality and either seal or resolve them. Those areas deemed irrevocably unstable were sectioned off as 'Grey Zones'.

For the most part, Naga 7 did an excellent job helping to maintain a stabilised universe. Their efficiency at performing the given task was never in question; nobody knew more about the complexities of reality and anomaly, it was the underlying agendas and their personal pursuits that presented the greater problem.

SLA Industries used the Society, and the Naga took advantage right back. The Authority especially kept back the choicest little artefacts they found and weren't entirely forthcoming about any of their own findings. They were full of plots and schemes to further their own aims. There was scarcely a member of the Naga that felt any allegiance to SLA, and it was mostly given that one day the alliance between the company and society would come to an end.

"Look at it, Jacob. Just look at it. A gore stone of Fennri, marvellous, isn't it? All I need is an artefact of Felltabnus and my collection is complete. It's just a good job the items haven't been activated here else these little trinkets would destroy me before the Dark Finders ever reached me.

What's that? Oh, I've got them secreted away safely on ... well, that would be telling wouldn't it?

Besides, you'll have to tell me about your research on the pyramid on Jacinto? Hmmm?

Oh come now, Jacob, you don't think I'd show you one of finest gems from Bybelan without having some sort of provision, do you?"

- Professor Arthur G Tettleman, Infiltrator, Naga 7 Division, 910 sd.

The ulterior motives were just a part of Naga 7's downfall. All aspects of the truth and the secrets SLA struggled to conceal led towards White Earth, and the creature that ruled it. Naga 7 were the first people to have any inkling of how dangerous that particular person might be, and when Slayer began leaning on the Authority to do further studies into the being known as 'Bitterness', the seven echelons decided it was time to disappear from the growing company and slip quietly into Conflict Space for good.

White Earth was essentially the mother lode of knowledge in the SLA Universe but the Authority was still wise enough not to delve too deeply. Bitterness was the worst thing Naga 7 had encountered, an entity that all by all laws of reality should not exist, but did and, much like themselves, was able to manipulate the impossibility of its own being. It scarcely mattered that it had indeed once been a human being.

Once Slayer caught wind of Naga 7's desertion, he immediately sent out Death Squads to hunt the members and eradicate them, however possible. Unfortunately, all seven of the Authority

had swiftly departed without trace, and the most well-educated agents were not far behind.

"As you might have guessed the last of them are gone. Agnes Dower wasn't at the manor, but she left everything. Strange. I'm at Finch's now; he must have left a lot sooner because the place is empty, right down to the bare boards. All that's left behind is a small silver bell, sat on the floor of the conservatory. I've told the Recon not to touch it. Obviously this item wasn't forgotten, so I'm shipping the bell back to you. Does this item bear some sort of significance to you?"

Anyway, I've had the Chapter interrogate the house staff so I'll enclose the report along with the artefact delivery.

I don't think we'll see any of The Authority again. Probably for the best."

-Intruder. Message ends.

THE INTERIM YEARS

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For the next five years, Slayer devised complex measures to track down the whereabouts of the Authority. He was so focussed on their capture that he deployed scouts and assassins from the Black Chapter, but all efforts to locate them were in vain. The seven were much too crafty, even for the Black Chapter, and it was likely that hoarded cast offs aided in their disguise and concealment.

The search was eventually called off and the company moved onto bigger, though not necessarily brighter, things. The departure of Naga 7 had of course left something of a gap in the company's structure. SLA set about creating three new divisions that would take over the Naga's duties: Cloak Division, Internal Affairs and Stigmartyr. The latter exploring the world the Naga would not: White Earth.

RETURN OF THE NAGA

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Recent years have been hard on SLA Industries. The company had done its best to do what it's always done, and cover up the mistakes and ugly truths to the best of its abilities, but there has a deluge, Momics setting up roosts in the No Go Zone, Krell and Grosh ravage the verge worlds and in Downtown the Shi'An are quietly drawing forth monsters from White Earth. And now finally, the Dream takes shape on Mort.

For the first time in nine hundred years, SLA Industries does not have all the answers, and has found itself at quite a loss. Things are occurring within the World of Progress that it cannot explain away, not to the public, not even to itself.

All the terrible consequences of one man's actions are now coming to bear on the company he set up, and the world that he has inhabited since its initial creation.

The man going by the name 'Slayer' has found himself alone, in a place that cannot possibly understand his predicament. It's his fault and he knows it, and the mistakes have become flesh and blood. He allowed the oversights of his past to fester unchecked for centuries and now his whole progressive world is crumbling around him. Still, he must keep up the pretence and the name that was given to him.

The only people who truly understand his plight are the Naga. Slayer wasn't exactly forthcoming with the honest truth; the Naga uncovered it for themselves during the Formation. It is because of this that all these years later, the members of the Authority are still alive, still quietly yearning for more.

All Slayer has to do is ring the bell, and they'll come back. And he did. Slayer has had to do a lot of things he doesn't like, lately.

Of course, the new relationship is different from the old one. The Naga has some stipulations of its own. One is that the Society now becomes a high-ranking Department within the company's hierarchical structure, sitting on level seating with Stigmartyr. The other is that Cloak Division is dismantled and assimilated into Naga 7 Division.

This was already in the cards for the last few years. Cloak Division has categorically failed to suppress the truth from leaking out to the public. This is not entirely the Division's fault. Such things could not be kept under wraps forever. They were highly efficient for centuries, but now the Dark Finders must fall under the guidance of older, stranger powers.

The Naga are educated individuals who do not go in for physical conflict, hence their second provision. The Dark Finders will now become the strong arm of the Nagas. In a sense, this is the worst nightmare of Cloak Division; it will now become a supporter of one of SLA's darkest secrets.

Today, Naga 7 is already integrating into Mort society. The members of the Naga are instantly

recognisable by the lack of armour and weapons and the cut of their cloth. Their suits are made from natural material; the best money can buy. Powerful, yet comfortable. Nagas rarely wear black, preferring cream, charcoal, and tweed. They are commonly seen sporting fedora hats, elegant timepieces and strange objects made from wood, called walking sticks.

The Naga have much to do in the company, and their research has already begun. The curious and much maligned Dream Entities will be the society's starting point, so they have assigned specialists, The Aethermen, to investigate the matter and collate their findings.

INITIAL THEORIES

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"Firstly, let me start by giving you a rough explanation of what we, the Naga believe the Dream to be. Let me be clear, at this moment our assessments are mere speculation. It will take many months, perhaps longer, before our researchers can verify our claims. Nothing is ever simple or clear cut, especially here.

I apologise, let me continue.

The Dream is a rudimentary plane of being, which has developed on top of your own. The civilians living inside Mort city have constructed this level of existence subconsciously.

The Dream Entities themselves do not concern us much, yet. What we find alarming is the cause rather than the effect. Your universe has become unstable, increasingly so, and these 'creatures' are the consequence of that instability.

Consider the World of Progress as a living being, an unthinking animal that has become infected with a disease, such as cancer. The incompleteness of the SLA Universe is the cancer and the Dream is metastasising cells. The universe senses a problem, a wound, and is now attempting to heal the injury. So, the universe is building new skin and tissue on top of the old scar.

Frightening to consider the shape the Dream Entities are taking, yes?

What does this say about the civilisation we currently inhabit? The World of Progress was instrumental in the creation of the Dream, it is our reflection, whether we like it or not. If we should all die in the night, these strange beings will inherit our world. The Dream will become the new reality."

**- Professor Charles S Finch,
Naga 7 Division, 1st Head.**

The Dream Entities are close relatives to a race of beings known as the Ethereals. The Ethereals originate from the planet White Earth and came into being much the same way as their forebears. The primary difference being the Ethereals were no accident, they were intentionally created by Bitterness. The first, known as the Prime Ethereals, were the scattered concepts and emotions of Bitterness's being. He was able to externalise these aspects and give them flesh. They were to become his first council on White Earth, and monsters who would wander the dunes, corrupting the minds and bodies of all those that came in contact with them. In the present day, the Prime Ethereals are greatly feared by Stigmartyr, who consider them the greatest threat to SLA after Bitterness himself.

The Ethereals were able to live within two worlds. The physical world, which was White Earth, and the Ethereal Realm, a transparent plane of pure emotion and naked desires which draped across the world like a second skin. Slipping between the two realms, the Ethereal were never truly alive and death was a foreign concept.

The initial findings of Naga 7 are essentially correct, and the Dream Entities are a rudimentary form of Ethereals, created masterless on Mort. The entities are very much like the billions of aimless minds that spawned them, confused as to their purpose and frustrated with the confines of their surroundings. As if their simple existence were alarming enough, there is also the profound effect they have with anyone who comes into contact with them.

THE GREY

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Most Dream Entities are territorial creatures, and stick to tight hunting grounds. The very presence of the lingering entity gradually conflicts with the current reality and causes further anomalies. The anomaly typically takes the form of a disease, a horrible illness known as The Grey.

Those living in the region surrounding the Dream Entity will become infected. Often they don't even know the Dream creature is there, but over time they will take on the symptoms.

It starts with sudden bouts of extreme nausea, vomiting and disorientation, bearing a strong resemblance to the effects of motion sickness. This stage of the illness doesn't leave the sufferer but is further impacted by strange dreams. Black stains, painful to the touch, appear on the face and neck of the victim.

In the next stage, the illness encapsulates its name and the infected, little by little, drains of colour, becoming greyer and washed-out by the day. It is now that all normal semblances of a disease depart and invention takes over. Once the colour has completely drawn off the body, The Grey enters its final phase.

The body develops large patches of semi transparency, which has been described as having the appearance of smoked glass. At this juncture, the victim is barely conscious and drifts along in a feverish daze. He mutters outlandish remarks as if talking in his sleep.

In a matter of days the body completely disintegrates into a foul smelling mass. The remains do not disappear entirely but degrade into muck and powdered bone that not even a starving Carrien will touch.

When The Grey takes hold of a district, it means the influence of the Dream Entity is winning, and SLA Industries acts quickly to seal it off. The quarantined area is then marked as a Grey Zone, instantly recognisable by the warning signs that Naga 7 quick sprays on the walls and doors of the sector – a crumbling sphere within a crosshairs.

Once the Grey Zone is initiated, no one but the Aethermen go in or out. The disease is spread by sight and deliberation; when one sees the full effects of the illness, it compels and terrifies. The more time spent thinking on what is seen and implied propagates the sickness. Extreme measures are often required to halt the risk of infection.

No Operatives have as yet caught the Grey; this is down to the quick establishment of the containment zones, lack of long term exposure and SLA's merciful lies. At present, the Grey is alleged to be a form of plague passed on by Carrien bites. Few patrolling Operatives have witness the latter stages of the illness, and SLA Industries wants to keep it that way for as long as possible.

MORT'S DREAMING

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The Dream Entities are like a persistent mould; they need just the right conditions to grow and flourish. And like mould, they need the dark and the dank to shape them. They are quite literally a product of their environment, the street or alley, it's associated history and the population's temperament and attitude all go into the makeup of an entity.



It appears that the deeper into Downtown one goes, the more outlandish and disturbing the entities get. They are a portrait of the masses, which feeds on their very subject.

The Dream Entities are the first sour taste of what's actually happening in the recesses of Downtown. Even the civilians living in the heart of Downtown are shocked at what is crawling up from the lower levels. People in densely occupied areas are starting to vacate the streets and shut themselves away. Even safety in numbers seems futile when Cryptids roam apartment blocks and walkways, mutilating anything they find.

Naga 7 are quite taken by the mysterious lower levels of Downtown, and how these creatures could be birthed in such a void. They have dispatched specialists to travel down as deep as possible and scrutinise the Entities in their natural surroundings.

These specialists are known as Aethermen, and they are prepared to spend months in the perpetual gloom in order to study the Dream, why it exists and how its entities can be nullified.

They are journeying into the home of the Dream – Lower Downtown.

I LOWER DOWNTOWN

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"I know why all the shit is going down right now. It's because Mort is so fucking big, that's why. See, we think we know it's big, but most us, even the SLA Ops don't know just how much of this planet is populated, or even what's even going on in it. Like the No Go Zone, we're just hearing about that shit now, and it's been there for years.

It's the same with Downtown; even the civis have no idea just how deep it runs. I mean, it goes down a mile. People think they've got some idea of what Lower Downtown is, but take it from me they don't.

The Shiver only patrol the top 10 levels of what we know of as Lower, but there's another ---- beneath it. All manner of evil is happening down there, and it's too complex and dense to be properly explored. So, it just sort of thrives.

Don't worry about the Cannibal Sectors, man. We've got bigger problems right below us."

- Jimmy Fizzbomb, leader of the defunct CrackerJack Gang (deceased).

Lower Downtown stands as the diametric opposite to Downtown as most people recognise it. The higher levels are packed to the rafters with civilians, gangs, SLA employees, factory workers, and Shiver Patrols. Lower Downtown is not a place where random firefights break out at a moment's notice, nor is it an uninterrupted din of jabbering televisions and traffic. Lower Downtown is an abyss that swallows light, sound and sometimes whole communities.

Downtown breaks into 3 major sections, but most Mort inhabitants are only really familiar with two of the areas. The first is what is commonly known as The Crust – the very top layer of the civilian area that is still capable of seeing the sky, and feeling the rain. It spreads out almost 400 miles in radius from the core of the city. Below this is what could be considered 'Downtown Apposite', almost 80% of Mort's citizens live and die in this area. It comprises of over 20 levels of solidly populated housing blocks, retail areas, and internal factory units. Most of the Operative BPNs take place in Downtown and hostiles are typically gangs, Dark Night and the occasional Cognate or Carrien.

There is no specific starting point for Lower Downtown. It simply blends gradually into remoteness and silence. The graffiti starts to disappear as you enter the deeper levels; all lighting is sparse, flickering and emitted from emergency light boxes. The walls are heavily stained, and clogged with algae, although further down it is quite common to find whole streets, apartments and tunnels caked with dust that has lain undisturbed for centuries. Some artefacts and furniture collapse to the touch, the floors and structures in such areas are highly unstable and best vacated immediately.

Conversely, there are places within Lower Downtown that are strangely beautiful. Much of the architecture far down was built during the formation years, in a time when SLA had very different plans for Mort. The lodgings in Lower Downtown were initially built for the higher classes and it's very apparent in the general construction and styling. On occasions a visitor brave enough to enter the depths will find impressive, undisturbed finds, like grand pianos, crystal chandeliers and, by today's standards, finely crafted antique furnishings. The walls sport remarkable tiling patterns that seemed directly lifted from a different time and place, and one has but to wipe away the grime to see a better era in the making, a promising future that ultimately failed. It can be jarring to find these sumptuous surroundings shrouded

in darkness and filth, and inhabited by the worst horrors of Downtown.

The primary reason Lower Downtown exists is the lack of amenities and services. A robust and resilient civi can put up with an awful lot on Mort, but he still needs food, light and clean water to survive. In the depths there is little of the basics to be found anywhere. If one travels far enough down, all forms of civilisation peters away, shops, public transportation vanish. One might as well be entering into a cave.

Only the most obstinate and insane choose to live in such a place, and most of them stay as high up as possible. The average Lower Downtowner cuts a pitiful and disquieting form; there is something quite wrong with him. His skin is unnaturally pale; eyes vacant and glassily staring into the middle distance. He is crawling with fleas and smells awful; he typically mutters to himself, addressing invisible foes or may blankly stare at the person in front of him, as though mystified by what he considers and alien life form.

His life is little more than an existence. He has little or no creative outlet or hobbies, save for scrounging through refuse for food and useless ornaments. Everything he meets is wonderment and a threat. He keeps his door closed.

Denizens such as this cannot fit within the terms of normal society, even Mort society, so they choose to descend into Lower Downtown, and hide away from the world they no longer understand. It is from the mind of such men that the most frightening Dream Entities come to fruition.

MONSTROUS FORM

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A common shaping comes from a distant noise he hears, or thinks he hears. Immediately his mind goes into overdrive, conjuring the worst possible threat to his existence. A creature worse than the most voracious Carrien, or relentless Manchine, a monster he can only loosely delineate.

It is the unformed Dream Entity that does the rest, from its oily black cocoon; grafted to a raised tunnel support, the beast becomes real. It grows slowly at first, drawing in the nastiest nightmares and imaginings which act as a muscle to pump blood about its building form.

When ready, it breaks free from its pod, it tracks down and destroys the parents that created it, thus severing the umbilical cord that connected them.

Many entities, particularly the animalistic Cryptids, prefer to stay in Lower Downtown. It is the region that spawned them, it is the place where they belong, a monster requires a monstrous setting if it is to fulfil its purpose, and a powerful Cryptid performs this with particular flair and gusto.

ARRIVAL OF THE AETHERMEN

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"Report to Catalogue.

I am now entering my third week in Level 26. It's still fairly high up, so I've seen quite a bit of activity. In the Anderson 87a sewer tunnel I've spotted 5 Night Stalkers, which corresponds with Gillis's report on the creatures being drawn to these areas. I've also seen the residue of multiple Unformed entities, they're all empty now so I suspect they became Shadows and migrated to the higher levels. I found bite marks in the lighting cables, they must have tried to cut the power to the civi blocks but even if they'd succeeded they'd have found slim pickings there. Only the most primal entities seem to congregate on Level 26, so I'm quite sure it will in time be taken over by a powerful Cryptid. It could be that there is Shi'An cult activity near by. Are the animalistic Dreams being attracted by the blood?

I will be returning to the Division in ten days for Cataloguing, so I'm hoping to gather more concrete findings before heading back up. One thing bothers me though, the Night Stalkers flock together, and this is uncommon among Dream Entities. It's usually only under the pretence of a Distorter that they come together like this. Worrying."

**- Aetherman Grugar, Naga
7 Division, 6th Head.**

Naga 7 Division's first act upon arriving back at SLA Industries is to dispatch investigators to look into the nature of The Dream. The men charged with the purpose of researching them are commonly known as Aethermen.

The Aethermen are tough, tenacious and resourceful, but they are a relatively low position in the Naga hierarchy. For the most part this suits the Aethermen quite well; most of its members are trained under the 6th head, which represents research and more importantly fieldwork. Men and women who join the Aethermen do not entirely fit in with Naga ethos, they like to go into the hazardous zones and explore the subjects first hand. The extreme dangers of the situations they

place themselves in are as nothing to the great knowledge they may attain. Most have spent many years in service and do not wish to elevate to greater positions. They like the work, gritty, uncomfortable and hazardous as it is.

That's why they're here.



Until recently, the Aethermen were investigating some of the lesser-known Conflict species like the Herracleum and Ty Tesh, on the verges of the World of Progress. They were looking into the purpose of their return (as each race has different axes to grind with SLA) and the concepts behind their existence today.

When the Naga called them, they came back prepared. Years earlier the Aethermen had already found mention of the Dream via Catalogue – the information database of Naga 7, and began independent exploration into the entities. Some went as far as to head back to Mort undercover and embark on low level surveys.

As expected, the Aethermen took their findings and had filed them under Catalogue. Within a year Catalogue had created several items of equipment built on the information provided by Aethermen, such as the Darkly Mask and an improved Volt Gun.

On their return, the Aethermen brought back the protective clothing upon which their name is based – the Aether Suits. These are bulky, antiquated outfits that protect the wearer from the worst effects of the Grey and other anomalies found in Lower Downtown. Unlike the sleek, finely crafted suits of power armour issued by SLA Industries, Aethermen dress more like plumbers, the Aether suit itself borders on the ridiculous, especially considering the sort of work they were designed for.

What many fail to realise is that neither the Aethermen, nor their suits are built for battle. They may carry weapons but they would prefer to use those only as a last resort. Primarily, the Aethermen wish to understand their quarry, how they came to be and ultimately what their motivation is. If the contention can be resolved logically or peaceably they will pursue this first. If the threat cannot be nullified through research and conversation, the Aethermen focus on eradicating it.

GOING UNDERGROUND

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A tour of Lower Downtown for Aethermen typically lasts three weeks to a month. They sometimes stay longer if they find themselves on a serious line of investigation. Many only leave their tour because they have run out of supplies or have a discovery that needs immediate filing with Catalogue.

Aethermen are sociable enough characters but they always work alone. There are simply not enough Aethermen to work in teams, the concept is too broad and there is too much ground to cover in Downtown. The work is hard and requires long hours of study and surveillance. The average Aetherman sets up camp in the abyss and then sleeps around four hours out of every twenty-four, the rest of the time is spent travelling, stalking and tailing the subject of enquiry, and then long periods of patient observation.

In the Aetherman's down time he logs his examinations in a journal, records data slugs of personal conjecture on Dream Entities, and prepares himself for the next long haul of study.

It is only a certain type of person and mindset who is cut out for the position of Aetherman. To

join their ranks, one must be ready for extended periods of remoteness, harsh living conditions for months at a time and most importantly he must be prepared to explore rather than avoid the real horror that is Lower Downtown. There are more than just the Dream Entities lurking down there, there is the Shi'An cult and the effect both factions have on the fragile reality of the region. Most Aethermen have faced anomalies that defy all logic and reason. Lower Downtown is all the accumulated filth SLA has swept under the rug over the centuries, and it is now destabilising the foundations which hold Mort City and Head Office.

It falls to the Aethermen to journey into root of the problem, peer into it and report back with the tidings, time and time again.

ECOLOGY OF DREAM ENTITIES

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What follows is the basic physical and mental progression of the Dream Entity in Mort society. Over time the dream creature is shaped and hewn like clay by external influences, subconscious thought and heightened emotions. Because Mort is such a harsh and violent place, particularly Downtown where life is especially cruel, the Dream entities take on appropriate forms.



The Dream Entities are not natural beings, so they are not constrained by normal biology. The only guiding authority over the entity's shape is the living organisms that inhabit the world beneath their own.

I UNFORMED

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Before the darkness can shape the Dream Entities into a Shadow the creature is akin to a nebulous single cell organism. It breaks away from the Ethereal Realm, drawn down into the corners of Downtown by extreme emotion. In the dust and cold it starts to germinate and expand in the hum of disembodied voices and passing conflicts.

This Unformed being is still in its foetal stage and is open to interpretation, waiting for a course to take upon its new life. When complete, the entity swells and drops from its cocoon and slinks off into streets of Mort to follow its own destiny.

The Unformed are very rarely seen. Quite often it is mistaken for a large mould mound or an insect's nest, but mostly it is because the cocoon is jet black and in the deep recesses of Lower Downtown, completely invisible to all but the sharpest eye.

I SHADOW

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The Shadows are the most basic form of Dream entity, and are shaped by our most fundamental fear – the fear of the dark. Shadows choose quiet, remote locations to inhabit, where the target's nerves and alertness are heightened. In these places that darkness is impenetrable to the eye and optics, and the Shadow creature is king.

The Shadow entity takes its time before striking; it will whisper at its prey, make noises and knock over objects, circling the victim in the complete blackness. When the victim is at his wits' end the Shadow will lash out with long claws, slashing wildly. Once the prey is deceased, the Shadow will drag the corpse into the darkness and play with its blood.

Most Shadows tire of the simplicity of the hunt and kill, and move on into densely populated areas, curious about the world of their victim and yearning to know more about their fears and passions. These attentive entities will in time grow and evolve into more complex entities.

Some however choose to remaining in darkness and settle as Shadows. Definition still occurs though and over many killings they evolve

into more powerful versions of the form. These monsters are known as Pitch Shadows.

Shadow stats

STR:	6
DEX:	6
DIA:	6
CONC:	6
CHA:	6
COOL:	6
PHYS:	6
KNOW:	6

Walk:	1
Run:	2
Sprint:	5

Armour:	None
PV:	0
Total Hit Points:	12
Head:	4
Torso:	12
Left Arm:	6
Right Arm:	6
Left Leg:	6
Right Leg:	6



Skills:

Detect	6
Hide	6
Intimidation	6
Running	6
Sneak	6
Torture	6
Unarmed Attack	6

Weapons/Equipment:

Claws, DMG: 3, Pen: 1, AD: 1
Claws will usually be enhanced using Shadow Sword (See below)

Dream Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Shadow Merge, Shadow Sword

A Pitch Shadow will have up to double the stats and skill levels of the Shadow.

DISTORTER

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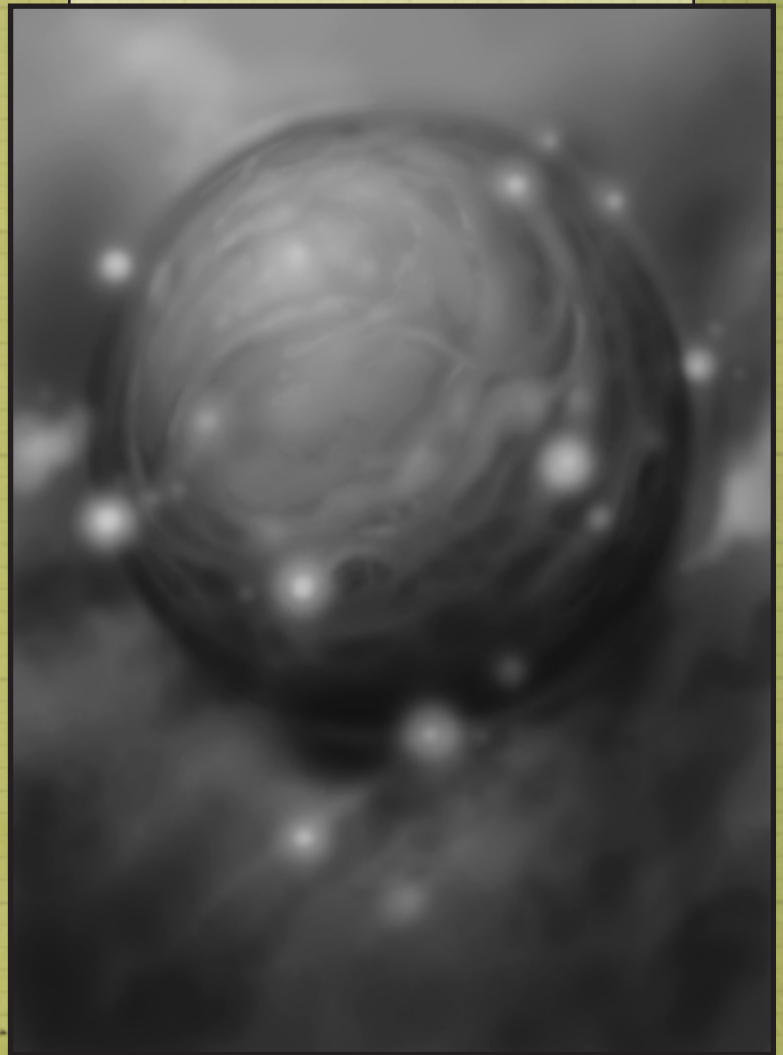
The victim sometimes catches a brief glimpse of the Distorter, a small grey, indistinct sphere surrounded by pinpoints of light. In a second it's gone, or so he thinks. The victim doesn't realise he is now inside the microcosm of the Distorter. He inhabits a constructed reality; all the walls, tunnels and misleading paths were not there a few moments ago. He is now at the complete mercy of the Distorter, and it has none.

Distorters feed on disorientation and building panic; they like to see their prey get increasingly lost and more frightened as a result. They may entrap their victims for hours, even days, before finally leading them into a hallucinatory trap that will cause their demise.

Distorters like to draw out their feeding, so the traps tend to injure and maim rather than flat out kill. The typical trap is an imaginary floor draped across a ten-foot drop in a secluded area. The victim breaks his legs and will lie there dying while the Distorter silently hovers above him, proudly dematerialising the scene that led to his imminent death.

Distorters often work alongside other dream entities. Such creatures usually occupy the Reality Distortions, blending with the surroundings seamlessly. They are as equally sadistic as the Distorters and will play out long bizarre scenes and dialogues that compliment the disturbing surroundings. In the end, everyone gets to feed on the corpse in its own particular way.

The most adept Distorters can shape the pocket of reality permanently (this is known as a Fixed Distortion), but they tend to vacate the Distortion soon after. These regions can spawn their own inventions and entities, and they're wild. They are just as likely to attack the Distorter as anyone else who stumbles into its domain.

**Distorter Stats**

STR:	1
DEX:	5
DIA:	10
CONC:	10
CHA:	-
COOL:	-
PHYS:	3
KNOW:	10
Walk:	0.5
Run:	1
Sprint:	2

Armour:	None
PV:	0
Total Hit Points:	4
Head:	-
Body:	4
Left Arm:	-
Right Arm:	-
Left Leg:	-
Right Leg:	-

Skills:	
Detect	5
Hide	5
Sneaking	5

Weapons/Equipment:
None

Entity Abilities:
Reality Distortion

FLICKER

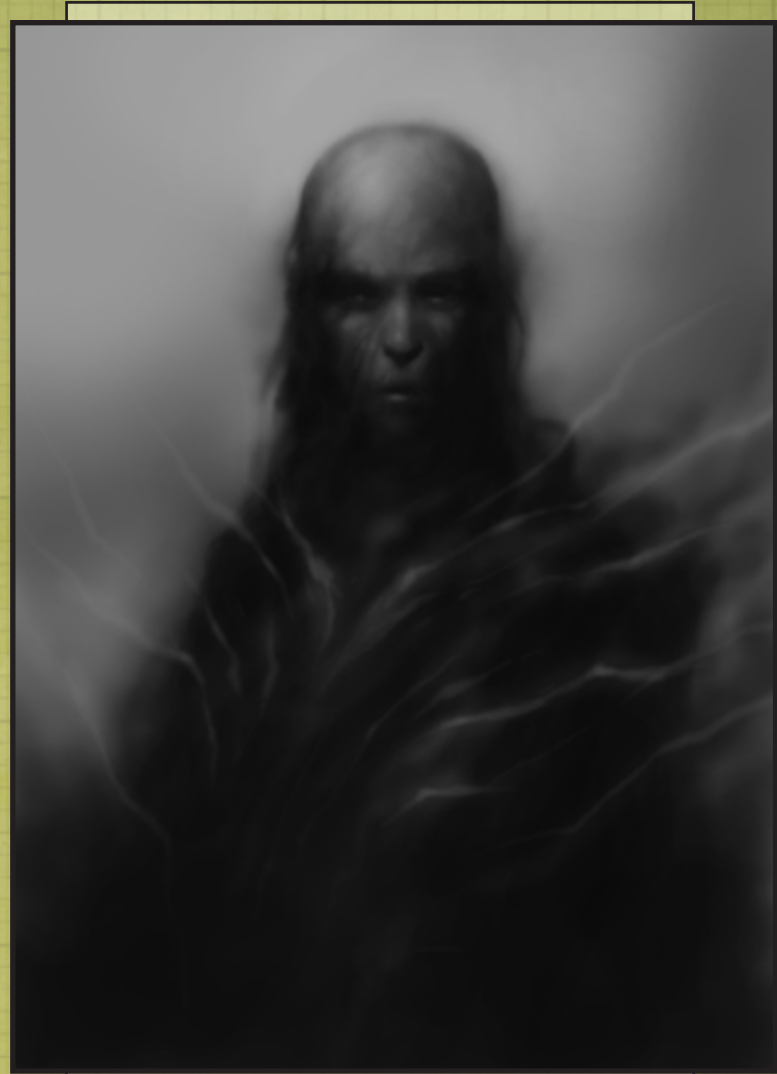
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The Flicker is a cruel and spiteful form of Dream Entity, they prey upon our suspicion and trepidation. Flicker hone in on solitary victims, out too late at night or too far from home. The Flicker senses their anxiety, their acknowledgement of the unfamiliar. It hangs back and tails its prey, emitting the sound of footsteps drawing ever closer. When the target turns to look back the Flicker is a shape in the distance, or completely hidden in darkness.

The Flicker will draw this out for as long as possible, building upon the isolation and threat of attack. It will shift location as it comes closer, gliding alongside the victim or flitting about in front of him. It is always careful to lurk in the peripheral vision so the prey is never entirely sure what he is seeing, or if the Flicker even exists. The dream entity is very real however, and is moving in for the kill, and in that last moment before it sinks its claws into the quarry it finally reveals itself.

The Flicker is an amorphous dark shape with vaguely human features. The face is the most prominent while the rest of its body is shrouded in mist. Like the Shadows, their hands terminate in razor sharp claws. It is believed that the Flickers are able to distort and slow down time but in actual fact it is a form of mental control over their victim. He may think that time has become sluggish and drawn out when it is his reaction time and senses that have slowed to a crawl.

Flickers usually hunt for single prey as their time distortion can only work on one person at a time, but if they feel up for a challenge they will go after



small gangs, Shiver Patrols and in some cases, Op Squads. The Flicker tries to divide the team and pick them off one by one. The Flicker has the skill Mimicry so it will call out to squad members using their own voices and lead them down into dark passageways and concealed traps.

Flicker Stats

STR:	8
DEX:	18
DIA:	8
CONC:	8
CHA:	8
COOL:	10
PHYS:	10
KNOW:	8
Walk:	1
Run:	2
Sprint:	3

Armour:	None
PV:	0

Total Hit Points:	18
Head:	6
Torso:	18
Left Arm:	9
Right Arm:	9
Left Leg:	9
Right Leg:	9

Skills:

Detect	8
Hide	6
Intimidation	8
Sneak	6
Unarmed Attack	8
Mimicry	8

Weapons/Equipment:

Claws, DMG: 3, Pen: 1, AD: 1

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Aeriform Claws, Time distortion, Mind Control

TITTER

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The Titter, sometimes known as a 'compassion trap', is an advanced Dream Entity. It typically takes the shape of a lost or injured child, which beckons an unwary saviour into a life-threatening snare by playing off their sympathy and kindness.

The Titters are similar in many respects to the Distorter and share the same abilities and attacks. A Titter wanders the Cannibal Sectors as a defenceless infant. It cries out for help and weeps uncontrollably. When approached by a predator or rescuer the Titter will run back to its nearest reality distortion – most often a room that has no floor upon which the Titter appears to be standing on. Once the victim lies broken and helpless below, the Titter will crouch down and giggle childishly at his gradual demise.

If the Titter is not in reach of the distortion it will launch itself at its target with a set of jaws lined with oversized fangs or lead the victim towards a localised threat such a Carrien nest or Manchine lair.

Titters are the first dream entities thus far to develop complex personalities. Further out in the Cannibal Sectors, Rangers and Wall Shivers will know certain Titters by name (Sad Sally, Weeping Willow, Bleeding Josh) and they will warn operatives entering the sectors of their rough location.



Titters have been encountered as far up as Lower Downtown. Threat Analysis believes that the Titters are smart enough to realise that their façade has greater credibility in more populated areas so they journey upwards to more plentiful feeding grounds.

Titter Stats

STR:	9
DEX:	12
DIA:	10
CONC:	10
CHA:	15
COOL:	10
PHYS:	11
KNOW:	10

Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armour:	None
PV:	0
Total Hit Points:	20
Head:	6

Torso:	20
Left Arm:	10
Right Arm:	10
Left Leg:	10
Right Leg:	10

Skills:	
Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	7
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	9
Charm/Seduction	12

Weapons/Equipment:

Claws: DMG: 2, Pen: 1, AD: 1
Claws will also be enhanced using Aeriform Claws (See below)

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Aeriform Claws , Time Distortion, Reality Distortion, Fixed Distortion,

EFFIGY

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Effigies appear as disfigured and mutilated people. They are imitations of murder victims who lost their lives in Downtown. These are no ghosts however, rather an imprint of things that occurred in the past. If an Unformed entity begins to grow in the scene of a particularly grisly murder, they will invariably take on the form of the people involved.

Effigies stopped being the victim directly after they took shape. As entities go, they are incredibly hostile beings, believing they have to right the wrongs committed against them. Because they are not the dead victims they are based on, Effigies have only vague recollections of what lead them to their supposed deaths. To an Effigy, everyone in its path is the perpetrator, the murderer. Most Effigies will butcher their victims in the exact same way they were supposedly killed. To know this is terrifying in itself, as the innocent bystander just has to look at the entity to know what fate is in store for him.

Effigies are territorial creatures, lingering close to the locations of their demise. Some however are knocked out of their placement if they are forced out by another Dream entity, or they rashly pursue their prey out into the streets and passageways. The Effigy is then swiftly disoriented and loses track of where it once resided. The Effigy then becomes a roaming entity, killing sporadically until it settles into a new domicile. This fresh location slots into the Effigy's memory; it has always lived

here, and tucks in again, to await the return of the bastard who took its life away.

A grounded Effigy usually kills once every few weeks. In the interim period its lust for vengeance is sated and it sinks into the scenery of its home. Sadly, the Effigy's victims tend to be the new tenants of a property the creature is lurking in.



Effigies are a horrific sight to behold. The extent of their injuries is always in the extremes, it takes an intensely savage murder to draw and shape an Effigy, so the fatal wounds typically reflect this.

The most lethal Effigies are those killed by accidents and misadventure; people who have been struck by passing gauss trains and those drowned in flash floods. Such creatures are hard to satisfy and require daily victims; they also traverse greater regions as their hunting grounds like sewer systems and rail stations.

Effigy Stats

STR:	10
DEX:	10
DIA:	5
CONC:	5
CHA:	4
COOL:	8
PHYS:	10
KNOW:	5

Walk: 2
Run: 4
Sprint: 5

Armour: None

PV: 0
Total Hit Points: 20
Head: 6
Torso: 20
Left Arm: 10
Right Arm: 10
Left Leg: 10
Right Leg: 10

Skills:

Detect 10
Hide 10
Intimidation 10
Sneak 10
Unarmed Attack 10
Streetwise 5
Extreme Violence 10

Weapons/Equipment:

A handheld weapon that fits into their alleged history.

DMG 3, PEN 1, AD 1

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Shadow Merge

**CRYPTID**

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The Cryptids are among the most bizarre entities to emerge and are a frightening mirror of the civilian subconscious. They are shaped from nightmares and urban folklore dreamt and spoken of in Downtown. The entities are lured into these stories and elaborate sightings and mercilessly carved into subjects of discussion. Those creatures that are most hostile towards people are the Dream Entities unwilling to take on the personas of monsters. They cannot quite grasp what they are, and gradually forget who they once were. They finally embody the legends, and as their deeds begin to match the tales, the stories in turn become more real, based on fact. The greater the truth, the more fortified the Cryptid becomes.

They are the least accessible and approach of the entities. The Cryptid mindset is utterly alien and its interworking is as disordered and anarchic as the many conflicting narratives that spawned it.

Downtowners near grey zones may see giant talking rats, humanoid pig beings, giant many-

headed Carrien and in rare and frightening cases – The Croakman.

Cryptids rarely settle in one area, and if they do they circumvent many miles that they stake as their own territory. Like other castes of entities, the Cryptids are highly inquisitive with little or no concept of boundaries. They will brazenly wander into peoples homes, shops or even Shiver precincts and examine photographs, furniture, sample the food in fridges and in extreme cases dissect the family pet. If threatened or challenged, the Cryptid can quickly turn violent and strike out at those that try to interrupt its inspections.

A well-trained and sufficiently armed squad of Operatives can kill the Cryptid but it's harder to destroy the concept of the Cryptid. The presence of these creatures has become entrenched in the civilian psyche and they will struggle to accept that such things can actually die, so quite often the Cryptid will resurface months later having been respawned by a new Dream Entity. The Cryptid may in fact return stronger and more defined than before.

Cryptid Stats

STR: 12 - 30
 DEX: 12 - 30
 DIA: 5 - 15
 CONC: 10 - 20
 CHA: 1 - 10
 COOL: 5 - 25
 PHYS: 12 - 30
 KNOW: 7 - 17

Walk: 2
 Run: 4
 Sprint: 5

Armour: Natural

PV: See Below
 Total Hit Points: 20
 Head: 6
 Torso: 20
 Left Arm: 10
 Right Arm: 10
 Left Leg: 10
 Right Leg: 10

Skills:

Detect 10
 Hide 10
 Intimidation 7
 Sneak 10
 Unarmed Attack 9
 Charm/Seduction 12

Weapons/Equipment:

May have natural armour with PV up to 14

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Shadow Merge, Shadow Claws
 A Cryptid will have additional Entity Abilities according to its nature.

NIGHT STALKER

info:data 56465489765416917967

'You just have to look at those fuckers to know they ain't Carrien. They don't act like them at all, don't move like them, they don't even sound like Carrien. They don't make a sound at all, until they're right on top of you!'

- Gadring, Downtown Prop.

The complex sewer system that traverses Lower Downtown is gradually being populated by a horde of what looks to be a new breed of mutant Carrien. This is a simple mistake to make, as there are evident similarities – the long skeletal head and sinewy yellow grey musculature, for instance.



The main differences are the creature's size, which is much larger than a standard Carrien; it is also stretched and gangling with oversized limbs. The new strain also sports a long mass of shaggy unkempt hair that has never been witnessed on any form of Carrien before.

The breed has now been referred to as 'Nightmare Carrien' or more commonly Night Stalkers.

The first term is actually closer to what the monsters are; they are in actual fact Dream Entities, nightmare representations of the public's fear of Carrien.

Being such a potent fear, the general concept of the phobia has spawned an entire race of being, barely a close physical resemblance to one another. The creatures however are trapped in a perpetual cycle of hunting and feeding, so they are painfully slow in their development. The only entity that has transcended the Carrien caste and stigma is a creature named The Glabbertrap, but even this entity has encountered problems of its own (see The Glabbertrap).

The Night Stalkers are social among their own kind, but are extremely hostile toward outsiders, particularly the species they were based on, Carrien.

In recent months the Night Stalkers and resident Carrien have entered into a bloody civil war for the dominion of the sewer system. So far, it looks as though the Night Stalkers are winning the battle.

Naga 7 suspects this may be because at base the Carrien fear the emergence of the Night Stalkers, which only serves to make the entities stronger and more resilient to attack. This is also worsened by the Night Stalker's unique dream ability, in which the creatures emit a foul stench that induces dread.

Night Stalker Stats

STR:	15
DEX:	12
DIA:	3
CONC:	7
CHA:	2
COOL:	12
PHYS:	13
KNOW:	5
Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armour:	Natural
PV:	13
Total Hit Points:	28
Head:	9
Torso:	28
Left Arm:	13
Right Arm:	13
Left Leg:	14
Right Leg:	14

Skills:	
Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	10
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	10
Streetwise	5

Weapons/Abilities:

Claws and Teeth: DMG: 3, Pen: 1, AD: 1

Entity Abilities:

Dread Stench

DERRO

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"Before we begin the secondary dissection of the entity, I would first like you to look closely at its basic form. As you can see, it is peculiar in the extreme, it looks like no living thing, yes? But it is very much like many other things, can we agree?"

No?

A few jeers from the auditorium I hear.

See here, the large ocular lenses, and sloping brow are not unlike the gas mask of the Scavs, and even the flat frontal section of the jaws closely resemble the termination of the mask itself. The teeth are highly reminiscent of Stormers or Carrien; even its skin colour strongly matches the urban Carrien.

We've seen this hair pattern too, haven't we? One might say it could belong to a Wraithen, yes?

Now look carefully at the split femur, find anything unusual? No? Correct, it is completely normal. It contains bone marrow.

Six months ago the Derro would dissolve into liquid and evaporate when destroyed. You are at this moment looking at a corpse. Ladies and Gentlemen, the monster has become real.

The Derro was not some unlucky accident; it is a race of creatures that has been created in Downtown. It was not genetically conjured in a back alley lab or as the result of a toxic spill. It was created. Someone took the basic principles of the Dream entities and shaped the Derros.

Even the name itself – Derro. Where does it come from? It seems ... very specific. Very real.

I am of the very strong opinion that a Builder exists in the lower basin of this city and I believe he is a Wraithen. I urge you, Mr Slayer to begin an immediate investigation and search for this individual. It is imperative that he is found and returned to Head Office for training.

I have written a psychological and indeed anatomical profile on the subject, which I trust will aid in his capture.

Now, if Professor Finch feels you are all ready, I shall begin the medical examination of the Derro's digestive system."

- Doctor Alexander Maxwell (4th Head, Naga 7 – Authority) addressing the Departmental Heads/SLA - 912sd.

In the last two years, reports having been coming in from patrolling Shiver Units of 'strange things' they've seen in the sewers tunnels and entrances to the lower sections of Downtown. Strange occurrences are certainly not uncommon in Downtown, let alone Mort, but the reactions of these men is.

Shivers will send panicked reports into HQ when they're under attack or witnessing a riot escalating in their area, but the anxious testimonies concerning the Derros are something else entirely.

The Shivers have heard these creatures, their howls and yelping, and seen brief glimpses of them in the shadows. SLA is unsure why these hardened agents are so terrified of creatures that seem no more dangerous than the average Carrier.

The eyewitnesses can hardly explain what frightens them, but suggest that it is not what they see in the Derros, but what they feel. In this respect the Derro sightings closely resemble the Ebb races relationship with their Momic masters, although the Derros are not in any historical accounts. They seem to be something new.



SLA has an extreme dislike of anything it cannot explain by simple account, so it has issued a series of extermination warrants killing the Derros wherever they're found.

Yet, even the more experienced Ops assigned to such missions encountered similar feelings of uneasiness and confusion when confronting Derros.

Derros have never strayed beyond the verges of Lower Downtown. They prefer dark, cool climate locations to inhabit. They are carnivorous creatures, feeding on rats, pigs and the occasional civilian that strays into their territory.

Naga 7 Division has put forward that Derros may be a mutated offshoot of a lesser-known threat identified as Dregs.

In isolated pockets of Lower Downtown people have degenerated into animalistic states. They are victims of collapsed architecture and flash floods, which have imprisoned them within limited space, light and resources. Such unfortunate

people are unable to escape their prisons and are then forced to live on water from burst pipes, vermin and the flesh of their dead relatives. They quietly wait for help that never comes.

These people are shut off for generations, extending to decades, sometimes centuries. They gradually forget the basic principals of their humanity; the ability to speak, walk upright and to wear clothes. They simply eat scraps, copulate and sleep. These are the Dregs.

And they have nothing to do with the Derros.

The Derros are in fact, the complete and final stage of the Dream Entity. As a race, it has made the transition from amorphous darkness into a living, breathing individual. Of course the highest members of the company were swift in providing false explanation. Such details were certain to cause more of a panic than the creatures themselves and sprout grey zones all over Downtown.

Derros look like an obscure mishmash of different races and concepts. They combine a weird cross section of Wraithen, Stormer, Scav and Carrien. In terms of personality and behaviour there is nothing exceptional about the Derros. Apart from their bizarre appearance there is little to separate Derros from the average Carrien. They lurk, kill and feast on flesh, there isn't much more to them than that.

What is extraordinary however, is the means in which they abruptly appeared, and a slim possibility that some hidden mind brought them into creation.

Derro Stats

STR:	10
DEX:	10
DIA:	5
CONC:	5
CHA:	4
COOL:	8
PHYS:	10
KNOW:	5

Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armour:	None
PV:	0
Total Hit Points:	20
Head:	6
Torso:	20
Left Arm:	10

Right Arm:	10
Left Leg:	10
Right Leg:	10

Skills:

Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	10
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	10
Streetwise	5

Weapons/Equipment:

Claws: DMG: 2, Pen: 1, AD: 1
Bite: DMG: 3, Pen: 1, AD: 1

ENTITIES OF RENOWN

info:data 56465489765416917967

The creatures listed here are Dream Entities well known to SLA Industries. The company may not be familiar with the full details of their past history, but with the aid of Naga 7 Division they have gained extensive knowledge of their current whereabouts, activities and the impact they've had on the public at large.

These entities could be considered as the worst of the worst, but there are ever more deadly and disturbed Dreams rising up through the shadows. Whilst not all of them are directly hostile, SLA still considers them a serious threat due to their affect on the civilian psyche. They cause extreme confusion, disorientation and, most importantly, The Grey.

CROAKMAN

info:data 56465489765416917967

'Commander Cradle? It's Sergeant Masefield over at Harker Block and Fifth. Sir, I'm reporting that that creature is back again. A significant electrical fire broke out on level 6 and 7 in the early hours of the morning. 15 civilians were killed in the blaze but we've got it mostly under control now. An hour ago, we began lifting the burnt remains from the building and that's when it appeared.

I caught sight of it perched on a support cable across from Harker. It's been sitting there for about 45 minutes. No sir, it hasn't performed any action, it's just up there watching us move the bodies. When we brought out the last one, a child, the

creature made a high pitched shrieking sound, really quite painful to listen to, and then ruffled its feathers.

Yes sir, I'm recording it as we speak – can you see the transfer uplink? Sorry, I didn't quite catch that? Yes, sir, sorry sir I just feel a little sick, I'm quite sure it'll pass in a minute or two.'

**- Shiver Sgt J. Masefield,
Harker 5th (Deceased)**

The Croakman is an enigmatic and at times frightening being. It gains its name from the murder of croaks that follow it around. The Croakman's purpose is as yet unknown. It is commonly seen flitting about Downtown, lurking at the scenes of brutal murders (particularly those committed by the Shi'An Cult, which has led SLA Ops to believe the creature may actually originate from White Earth) and creep its way through densely populated civilian blocks. The Croakman appears to be searching for something or some person, but any other facts are vague at present.



The Authority know the Croakman to be from a different universe which lies parallel to SLA Industries, they know that Croakman is not its true name and that its current form was not its original

shape. How it came to be in the World of Progress is also highly intriguing, lending itself to the possibility that 'doors' exist on Mort that will allow travel to entirely new worlds. The problem lies in that the Croakman is such an unfathomable being, a living key that defies logic and rational explanation. The Croakman does not look like any natural being, its physiognomy is dreamlike and disturbing. Many of the civilians who have reported sightings of Croakman have come to violent ends at the hands of SLA.

The Croakman does not usually attack those who encounter it, but when provoked the creature emits something similar to an electric/flux attack. If fired upon the entity vanishes, but its exit causes a powerful explosion.

The Croakman may often appear at the beginning of an important scenario or campaign, and will haunt them from a distance throughout its duration.

Croakman Stats

STR:	70
DEX:	100
DIA:	70
CONC:	80
CHA:	30
COOL:	n/a
PHYS:	85
KNOW:	75

Walk:	8
Run:	15
Sprint:	30

Armour:	None
PV:	0
Total Hit Points:	155
Head:	52
Torso:	155
Left Arm:	77
Right Arm:	77
Left Leg:	78
Right Leg:	78

Skills:
Unknown

Fear Rating:	8
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Weapons/Equipment:

Electric attack: DMG 15, PEN: 15, AD: 6

Shriek Attack: DMG: 4, PEN: 2, AD: 0

Cool roll or lose the ability to act in the next round.

THE GLABBERTRAP

info:data 56465489765416917967

"Report to Catalogue.

The entity locals are referring to as the Glabbertrap is on the move again. It's journeying upwards into the more thickly populated levels. I think it may have more to do with the Glabbertrap's advancement and physical limitations rather than because of meagre pickings in its previous location.

In my third discourse with the beast I began to hear actual attempts at vocalised speech. I think the Glabbertrap is learning, but I also noticed it seems more irascible along with these changes, as though it is bothered by the improvement of its form and sophistication. The Glabbertrap was a monster content with its initial concept, but is now struggling to cope with its own increasing notoriety, a reputation that is shaping it into a higher form."

**- Aetherman Farris, Naga
7 Division, 3rd Head.**

A child named it the Glabbertrap. To an adult the name means nothing, but to a infant on Mort the title belongs to a monster. The Glabbertrap is a well advanced Cryptid, taking its influence from the public's fear of the Carrien. Yet instead of shaping entirely into a Carrien, the Glabbertrap took only the most basic characteristics and grew misshapen and twisted, having more in common with the build of a Low Wave Stormer.

The Glabbertrap used to have the attributes of a Vevaphon and with its gelatinous form it would squeeze itself through gaps and confined spaces to grab and steal away its prey. More recently the Carrien influence has taken over and the creature has gradually begun to solidify. The Glabbertrap can still extrude itself, but the openings must be larger and forcing itself through takes longer.

The Glabbertrap is not a particularly smart beast, and its changing form bewilders it. Often it will vent its frustration by using its brute strength to smash its way through walls and doors to reach its victim.

The Glabbertrap exists to hunt, feed and rest. It is not especially territorial and it will reluctantly move on if powerful threats settle into its present domain. While it can easily handle itself in a fight, the Glabbertrap will typically avoid combat. All it really wants is to fulfil its purpose, to hunt and eat children.

Impressive sneak skills and ability hide, it will engulf its prey and carry them away inside its body. It may also use this tactic to shield itself from attack.



The Glabbertrap has a very basic understanding of Killan. It cannot speak much beyond growls and hisses but it can be reasoned with.

The Glabbertrap Stats

STR:	20
DEX:	15
DIA:	5
CONC:	5
CHA:	2
COOL:	12
PHYS:	18
KNOW:	5

Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armor:	Natural
PV:	14

Total Hit Points:	38
Head:	13
Torso:	38
Left Arm:	19
Right Arm:	19
Left Leg:	19
Right Leg:	19

Skills:

Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	10
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	10
Streetwise	5
Tracking	10

Fear Rating:	7
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Weapons/Equipment:

Claws: DMG: 3, PEN: 2, AD: 2
Teeth: DMG: 3, PEN: 2, AD: 2

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Threat Surge, Shadow Merge, Fixed Distortion, Mind Control.

MR TOUCH

info:data.56465489765416917967

"Please. Please, let me shower. I just want to get the smell off of me.

If I tell you, will you just let me wash?

I was leaving the factory around 11 and that's when he grabbed me and pulled me into the stairwell. I thought it'd be safe, nobody's seen Frank Muntz in like forever and I've been through that underpass over and over without any trouble.

I was against a wall before I even knew I'd been jumped. It was dark and I didn't get a look at his face at first, I thought it might have been a copycat. I managed to reach into my purse and get out a can of mace. I sprayed that fucker and it did nothing. Just nothing.

Then he leaned forward and I saw his face. That's when I just froze. I couldn't move at all until it was all over.

Can I please wash now?"

- Dotty Johnston (55), Factory Worker (recently retired).

Mr Touch is a particularly vile entity. He materialised in the Heyward tunnel that connects between two Downtown civi blocks. In years past



this was a hunting ground for the serial rapist Frank Muntz, and he would typically target women returning from a nightshift at a nearby doll factory, dragging them into a closed off stairwell in the tunnel to molest them.

In 906sd Frank Muntz disappeared. No one is entirely certain what became of him (a gang or prop reprisal seems most likely) but the local community breathed a sigh of relief. They didn't realise that Frank's impact on Downtown would spawn something much worse.

Mr Touch believes he is Frank Muntz; he grew out of the public's fear of him. Mr Touch is different however in that he does not fully understand the concept of sexual activity. Like many entities, he is highly curious about the world around him, and as his name suggests his examination is based on touch. Much like Frank Muntz, Touch preys on the same female factory workers but instead simply gropes them with fingers. Fingers sprouting from his mouth.

Mr Touch's victims usually die during the attack. The sheer horror of the encounter causes the unfortunate victims to panic and lash out, resulting in Touch throttling them with his maw.

Some of the resident Props tried to kill Mr Touch, but he is an extremely powerful and aggressive entity, particularly if he perceives the threat is male.

Mr Touch bares a strong resemblance to Frank Muntz; heavy set, morbidly obese and sporting tiny malevolent eyes. The human traits of the creature are stretched to monstrous extremes; he is like a nightmare version of the man. Naga 7 believes that Mister Touch is most likely Muntz's murderer, and absorbed the rapist before assuming his identity.

Mr Touch Stats

STR:	12
DEX:	10
DIA:	7
CONC:	12
CHA:	4
COOL:	8
PHYS:	9
KNOW:	5

Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armour:	Natural
PV:	14
Total Hit Points:	22
Head:	7
Torso:	22
Left Arm:	11
Right Arm:	11
Left Leg:	11
Right Leg:	11

Skills:	
Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	10
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	10
Streetwise	5
Club 1H	10

Fear Rating:	10
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Weapons/Equipment:

Filthy raincoat, factory boots, dirty jeans, outdated pornographic magazines, Pacifier Baton.
Smother: DMG 6, PEN 0, AD 2

Strangle: DMG 5, PEN 1, AD 3

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Threat Surge, Shadow Merge, Fixed Distortion, Mind Control.

BLACK BEATRICE

info:data 56465489765416917967

"Report to Catalogue.

I have managed to track down Beatrice's main domicile, a long-abandoned supermarket in the Mire. I haven't approached her yet though, this one's much too dangerous, so I've held back and just observed from a distance. I've been lucky so far that there haven't been live captives in the premises as yet, as I really don't want to break cover just to save them.

I've been in once or twice just to look around, and as you'll see in Catalogue there are some pretty grim findings. Make particular note of the contradictions between the pretty chalk drawings on the floor versus the sexual positioning of the store mannequins.

What we have is a growing Entity who is at conflict with her own identity. She is clearly not sure if she is an eight year old girl or a mid forties serial killer. I have been keeping tabs on two other entities that live close by – Powder Rose, and Giggling Crate, but I would rate Black Beatrice above them. A definite class 4 threat, the corpses are proof of this.

I'm going to insert a Lure tomorrow and see if it has any effect. I'm most certain that it won't work but I see no other way to make contact, or even begin to make contact.

It's a start, at least."

- Aetherman Shore, Naga 7 Division, 3rd Head. (Deceased)

Beatrice lives in an abandoned supermarket in an area of Lower Downtown known as The Mire. Like most entities, Black Beatrice is highly inquisitive and will venture out of her lightless home to hunt down fresh captives. These poor people will be the unwilling subjects in Beatrice's rudimentary studies. She does not discriminate in the choice of her victims. They can be of any age, sex or species. Her interests lie in how the natural body works, what drives it, makes it tick. This also includes behaviours of the brain, like how her slaves navigate their way around her pitch-black world, how they cope with the removal of a



limb, and how long it takes them to feed on cockroaches in order to survive.

Black Beatrice usually keeps between five and ten victims in her domain at any one time. The captives usually only last a few weeks to a month before they starve to death, bleed out or commit suicide by any means possible. When the test subjects drop to three, she will wander up the levels to more populated areas and snatch suitable candidates for examination. Her latest research project is what she likes to call 'Happy Families'.

The walls of her supermarket are covered with the written results of her findings, all scrawled in brightly coloured crayons. The corpses of her past victims litter the empty aisles, slowly rotting away. Beatrice finds it amusing to watch her new friends stumble over them in the dark, so she happily keeps these cadavers around.

Black Beatrice is a developed Titter entity. In the last eighteen months she has shed most of her Titter traits like feigning injury, and projecting an innocent persona. The new Black Beatrice

is a highly motivated sadistic child and ruthless scientist. Her persona is complex and disorderly. Part of her wants to play games and tricks on her victims while the other aspect struggles with more adult needs and answers.

Beatrice has the visage of a six-year-old girl. She has bone white skin and long damp black hair. Despite standing less than 4 feet tall she possesses incredible strength and speed, which she uses to deadly effect in grabbing and restraining her prey.

Black Beatrice has already killed one of the Aetherman who entered into her territory, so she considered a high level threat.

Black Beatrice Stats

STR:	12
DEX:	13
DIA:	10
CONC:	10
CHA:	8
COOL:	15
PHYS:	12
KNOW:	10

Walk:	2
Run:	4
Sprint:	5

Armour: Natural

PV:	16
Total Hit Points:	24
Head:	8
Torso:	24
Left Arm:	12
Right Arm:	12
Left Leg:	12
Right Leg:	12

Skills:

Torture	10
Detect	10
Hide	10
Intimidation	10
Sneak	10
Unarmed Attack	10
Streetwise	5
Blade 1H	11
Club 1H	8
Flexible	8
Polearm	9

Fear Rating:	8
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Weapons/Equipment:

Lots of knives, a variety of 1H clubs, sexual apparatus which serves as hand weapons, teddy bear, crayons, taser, syringe containing window cleaner, Chainaxe.

Entity Abilities:

Aeriform Body, Threat Surge, Shadow Merge, Fixed Distortion, Mind Control.

BOSON

info:data 56465489765416917967

"Report to Catalogue.

He is perhaps the most peculiar of all Entities, abstracted to the point of being a new genus. A little shred of history Tyde has failed to remove.

He is too well defined, too significant to be passed off as a mere Dream. He connects to everything but we, as yet, have no access to his mysteries. Perhaps he is just a phantom of a man, someone vital. I feel that instinctively when I read the activity reports.

He is highlighted, without any channels leading to him. Who is he?

No bird, or cat, that is certain, but he had some part to play in the events leading up to now. How frustratingly wonderful his very existence is.

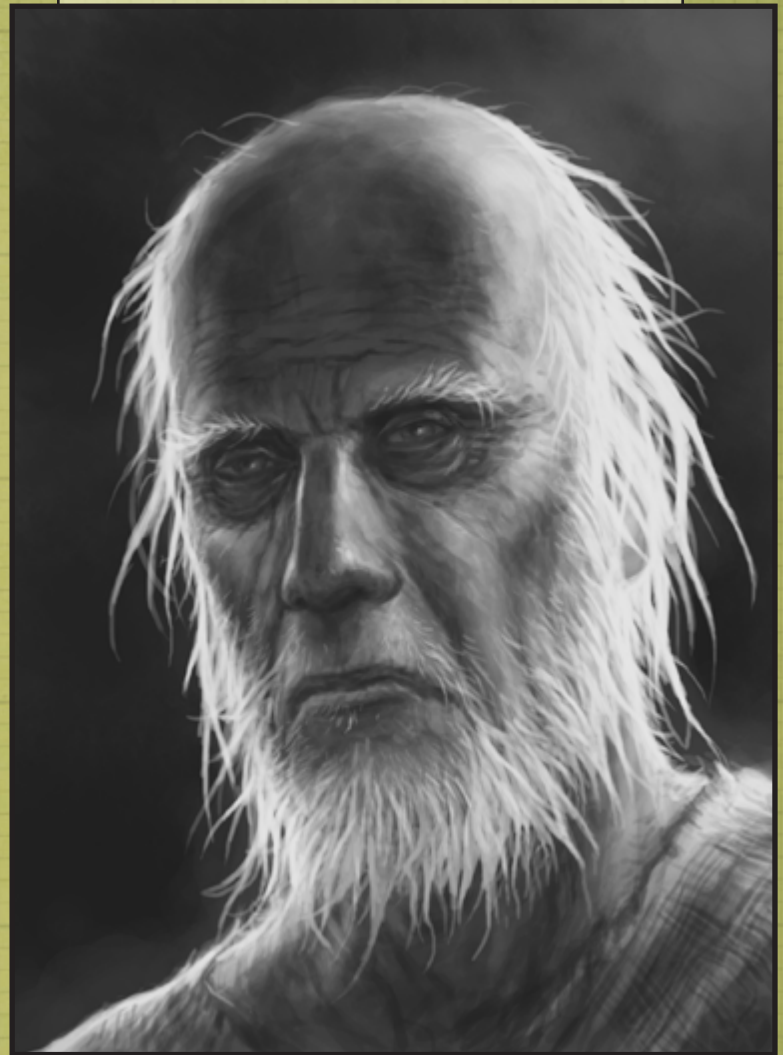
Find him, at any cost, and bring him straight to us.

What interesting times we live in."

**- Professor Charles S Finch,
Naga 7 Division, 1st Head.**

'Boson' is a single word, called out by a wandering Dream Entity, over and over again as it journeys through Downtown. No details are clear concerning this creature, SLA does not know who or what 'Boson' is, and why the entity cries out for it. Over time the entity has come to be known as Boson.

Boson materialised in the form of an elderly man (a strange and uncommon sight on Mort). He is dressed in a thick, frayed smock, cut from a cloth unfamiliar to SLA. He sports unkempt white hair and a wispy beard, which only help to make him look older still. In spite of his dishevelled appearance Boson's expression is mild, his eyes placid. The only alarming aspect of his visage is his ability to float; he glides along the streets and walkways, his naked feet hang a metre from the ground.



Of all the renowned Dream Entities circulating Downtown, Boson is the least hostile. He is searching for Boson, and his quest is unending. Members of Naga 7 have tried to begin a line of communication with him but the entity does not seem interested in communicating with them, or anyone else for that matter. He halts in his journey, pauses to stare at the character addressing him, gazing upwards and cries for Boson, then carries on his way. The purpose of Boson's search seems to be beyond the reach of everyone on Mort, even the best minds of Naga 7.

SLA Industries wants Boson contained or destroyed nonetheless. While Boson is not an aggressive entity, his mere presence causes electrical points to short out, water pipes to burst and even to rent cracks in masonry. There is some incredible energy field surrounding Boson that causes such an extreme disturbance to every inanimate object or structure in his vicinity.

The Ebb race suggests that it maybe some emotive power, a yearning for something strong enough to evoke physical damage. It conversely

points out however that Boson's influence is in no way connected to Flux. Naga 7 simply feels that Boson was not meant to fit within the brittle constraints of this universe, and that his existence within the World of Progress is at constant odds with everything around him. By the sheer level of damage inflicted upon the architecture of Mort, it appears that Boson is leaving his mark.

Naga 7 has had some moderate success in at least subduing Boson. As yet there seems to be no way of destroying him, so they have focussed mainly on placating the entity. Boson doesn't respond to an exchange of ideas, but he is silently receptive to music, poetry and recitations. The subject matter of this performance is not important, but if the music pleases Boson or the recital of works is agreeable he will rise up from his static position and fade from view.

In a few weeks time, Boson will materialise in a new section of Downtown, forever calling for the object of his obsession.

Boson Stats

STR:	7
DEX:	8
DIA:	35
CONC:	34
CHA:	12
COOL:	30
PHYS:	15
KNOW:	35

Walk:	n/a
Run:	n/a
Sprint:	n/a
Glide:	6

Armour:	Natural
PV:	50
Total Hit Points:	400
Head:	100
Torso:	400
Left Arm:	200
Right Arm:	200
Left Leg:	200
Right Leg:	200

Skills:

Unknown.

Fear Rating:	5
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ENTITY ABILITIES

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Aside from the Grey, an effect all the Dream Entities possess, each kind of entity has abilities from the following list.

AERIFORM BODY

The early Dream Entities tend to have translucent, insubstantial forms before finding a true definition. In order to survive, they use their impermanent position as a form of defence. Dream Entities take half damage from all attacks; they regenerate two hit points every turn and never suffer Wounds.

AERIFORM CLAWS

Aeriform Claws (and teeth) can phase through any armour, reducing its effective protection value to zero. The claws do 2 damage and zero AD.

TIME DISTORTION

This is a form of mental attack in which the Entity forces the victim to believe time has slowed down around him, impairing his action and movement. The character must make a CONC minus 5 to avoid the attack. If he fails the roll, he can only act in one phase every other turn.

REALITY DISTORTION

Ten times per day, the Dream Entity can shift reality making rooms where there were none, transforming matter, making strange things happen or creating trap-like situations out of nowhere. The traps and alterations will only exist for twelve hours then vanish back into the mind of the Entity. In time, the Entity will end lives in these rooms and through practice will learn to create Fixed Distortions.

FIXED DISTORTION

As the Dream being settles into a static form and personality, it can learn to create a fixed distortion. This illusory scene does not fade or dissipate as it does with the basic Distorter version, the Dream Entity will enter and inhabit this deformed version of reality. Fixed Distortion is a common ability among the Titter variant of Entity, which they use with frightening ease.

SHADOW MERGE

Shadow Merge allows the Dream Entity to merge with surrounding gloom, a lethal trait in

such a dark environment as Lower Downtown, giving the Entity a +8 to their Hide skill in an unlit area. This ability also works as a mental attack, tricking the opponent into believing they have merged with the surrounding darkness. This binds the victim in place and requires a strength roll at -6 to break free.

SHADOW CLAWS

The Dream Entity can enhance its claws, and in some cases teeth, into deadlier weapons. The ability requires the Entity's strength and accuracy to injure its foe. The claws will have DMG 6, PEN 6, AD 6.

DREAD STENCH

The Entity exudes a noxious odour that induces fear and dread. At present, only the Night Stalkers have this ability, which they use as part of their main attack. The victim caught under the effects is immobilised and rooted to the spot while the approaching Night Stalker moves in for the kill.

Dread Stench covers a 10M radius about the Night Stalker, and forces the victim to make a PHYS roll minus 3 or be stunned for their next 3 active phases. The ability cannot affect opponents who are wearing advanced respirators.

DREAM SIPHON

This is an ability inborn into most Dream Entities once they pass their unformed phase. The Dream Entity places itself within the vicinity of a well populated Downtown area. It does not yet move to attack or hunt the populace, but instead siphons their most basic fears and anxieties. The creature is tailoring its form to fit the needs of the civilians' own nightmares. Once it has built up what it feels is enough of an identity, it descends upon the people living in the locality.

The Dream Entity typically requires 3 weeks in order to tap enough information and feedback before approaching opponents, it will stay hidden throughout this period.

MIND CONTROL

The Dream Entity can attempt to take over the mind of its foe. The victim must make a COOL roll to avoid losing control of his body and faculties. If the Entity succeeds, it can act on behalf of its opponent for one Phase, in which it can attack the host or any allies surrounding it. The victim must make another COOL roll in his next Phase

to regain control of their body; otherwise the Entity can continue to act against him.

THREAT SURGE

The Dream Entity using Threat Surge literally forces its monstrous persona upon its opponent. The ability works in much the same way as some animals inflate or raise themselves up to fend off larger attackers. The Dream Entity looms, roars or simply stares down a threat, forcing all its energy into a single act of defiance. Threat Surge gives the Entity a +5 Intimidate roll for one combat sequence. This is usually an ability used to scare off powerful or multiple attackers; encounters that the Entity feels may be too much to handle on its own.

INHERIT IDENTITY

Entities recognise and are drawn by the deaths of their fallen brethren. This is not however a sympathetic feeling, as all entities seek knowledge and understanding. The advancing Dream comes to understand why the previous Entity met its demise and in turn may inherit the creature's identity. The new Dream is forced into this persona or welcomes it. The first Dream's terrible deeds live on in the collective subconscious of the people who lived in its hunting grounds, many refuse to believe that such a thing could die, so the new Entity takes up where its predecessor left off. The Downtowners are led to believe the monster has returned from the dead when in fact this new Dream Entity has merely taken over the role.

Inherit identity is complex and all consuming; the Entity thinks, acts, feels and remembers everything that went before. It remembers its past enemies and targets, recalling old grudges. The Dream Entity carries on the old motivations and behaviours, just like the Conflict Races that have returned to the World of Progress in more recent times...

INNATE FEAR

Innate Fear is not so much an ability that can be used consciously but rather it is a mental attack based solely on the creature's existence. Only two known races on Mort have Innate Fear as a form of attack, one is the Derro and the other is an equally obscure race called the 'Hominids', which are believed to originate from White Earth.

When people inhabiting the World of Progress come into the presence of such creatures, the Innate Fear comes into full effect. The observer is overcome with an intense feeling of dread. The creature he is witnessing just feels wrong, that it

should not exist within their world or understanding. This feeling of fear is accompanied with a bout of nausea and disorientation. These effects will not pass until the individual possessing Innate Fear has left the vicinity or been killed.

Fear Rating: 12

PHYS roll -4 upon first encounter or lose a round from nausea.

AETHERMAN

STATS AND SKILLS

STR:	8
DEX:	8
DIA:	10
CONC:	11
CHA:	10
COOL:	11 (+8 RS Device)
PHYS:	8
KNOW:	10

Walk:	1
Run:	2
Sprint:	3

Armour:	Aether Suit
PV:	10
Total Hit Points:	16
Head:	6
Torso:	16
Left Arm:	8
Right Arm:	8
Left Leg:	8
Right Leg:	8

Skills:	
Club 1-H	8
Pistol	8
Rifle	5
Intimidate	7
Seduction	5
Haggle	5
Land Navigation	9
Detect	10
Hide	9
Sneak	9
Unarmed Attack	5
Streetwise	5
Survival	10
Dream Lore	7
SLA History	8
Secret World	3
Rival Company	4

Dream Lore (KNOW)

Dream Lore covers the understanding of the Dream Entities, their behaviour, mannerisms, characteristic and knowledge of the various types. A character with this skill will recognise the tell tale signs of the Dream Entity habitations and kills.

Secret World (KNOW)

Secret World is one the most powerful and deadly skills to attain. It is a general knowledge of SLA's true back-story, the origin of all things in the World of Progress, White Earth and Conflict Space beyond. At higher levels the skill breaks off into sub categories, each more maddening and lethal than the last. Only the highest members of the Naga – The Authority can attain the elevated levels of understanding of what happened all those centuries ago, and how they impact the World of Progress, but even their accumulated knowledge is still incomplete.

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

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AETHER SUIT

“Our Aether Suits are made from the finest materials available in the World of Progress. The simple fact that they have not disintegrated almost nine hundreds years on should serve as a testament to their efficiency.

True they are not impressive to the eye, but the claws of a base Ethereal cannot penetrate the weave. Why is this not possible? Well, it's best we don't say. Let's just suggest that the cloth is foreign and that something as fantastical as our old enemy can't pierce certain empirical laws, yes?”

**- Professor Charles S Finch,
Naga 7 Division, 1st Head**

The Aether Suit is the defensive uniform worn by all Aethermen. Its existence dates back to the Formation, used as protection against the first Ethereals that emerged on Mort but now serves to shield the Aetherman from the effects of a Grey Zone. The suit is impenetrable against certain forms of Ethereal Magic, but only offers the same Protective Value as a suit of HARD armour.

The suit, much like the wearer, is not designed for combat, only providing enough defence as is needed for hasty retreat, and to shield the Aetherman from the harsh weather on Mort.

How the Aether Suit protects the wearer from Dream Entity and Ethereal attack is as yet unclear to anyone outside of the Naga's Authority. Some suggest that it is the rubbery material, which takes up the majority of the outfit, and that it isn't created from synthetic material. Others believe a special reactive fluid runs through cables woven into the lining.

Armor Stats

PV: 10 (15)
 Head: 25
 Torso: 50
 Left Arm: 40
 Right Arm: 45

Modifiers

-1 Dex to the wearer
 +1 STR to the wearer

The armour has a PV:15 against Dream Entity attacks, Ethereal attacks, Ethereal Magic, White Earth weaponry and Shi'An Blood Magic). Phase attacks by Dream Entities don't work against the Aetherman's arcane material.

FOW STAFF

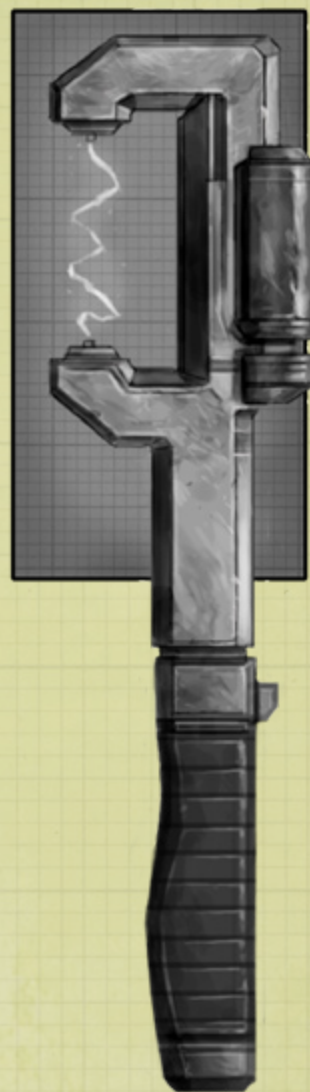
"Know what this is? Yeah, a FOW staff ... that's right back away, now. Trust me, you don't want to fall out with me when I'm holding this thing."

**- Aetherman Farris, Naga
 7 Division, 3rd Head.**

The FOW Staff is the main form of attack of the Aethermen. The acronym is something of a misnomer, the official title being Fusion/Oscillation Weapon, but the Naga know it simply as the Force of Will staff.

The FOW is a curious looking weapon, appearing as a strange mix of taser and monkey wrench. An electrical charge runs between two emitters at the tip of the staff. The damage dealt is a combination of three factors – the electrical energy it discharges, the weapon's weight when swung and most importantly, the Dream Entity's belief in the weapon's power. The entity recognises it as a source of pain and injury, much the same way it fears electricity. The staff causes extra damage to the Dream Entity plainly because the creature believes it will. The excessive damage follows the same logic and principals as the monster it was built to destroy.

The Naga strive to keep this a secret as much as possible. The weapon's reputation as the bane of Ethereals dates back to the Formation and



its deadly status is evident today when wielded against Dream Entities. Of course, some of the more advanced entities are aware of the weapon's deceptive eminence and are no longer affected by the trick. For such creatures the FOW staff only causes standard DMG.

Stats

(Against normal opponents)

DMG: 5, PEN: 4, AD: 3

(Against Dream Entities and Minor Ethereals)

DMG: 10, PEN: 8, AD: 6

THE LURE

The Lure is a simple tool in the arsenal of the Aetherman. It follows a similar concept as the FOW staff but is not so antagonistic. The Lure is typically just a glass container three quarts full of blood (usually pig blood). The jar is then placed

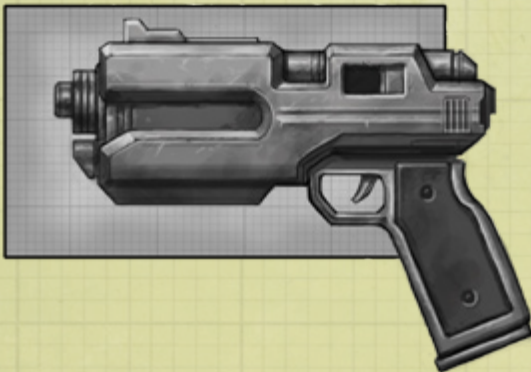
on the floor of an entity's domain and then circled with a trail of salt. The actual significance of this means nothing, but it serves as enticing riddle for the immature Entity. The creature will spend hours, even days trying to figure out the Lure's purpose and meaning. The Aetherman simply observes the scene from a distance, examining the way in which the entity deals with the foreign object and reacts to the external stimulus.

The blood jar is just one example of the Lure. Some Aethermen favour an alarm clock, with a six-inch nail through it, or a painted blue Carrien skull with a torch in its mouth.

Different Lures create different results every time, and serve as the starting point into the research of a newly discovered Dream Entity.

CATALOGUE FILE

All findings, research notes (hand written is preferred), diary entries and speculative concepts are compiled and sent to Catalogue – the Naga 7 main database. When the Aetherman is not in action or travelling he will be found adding written



facts and conjecture to the Catalogue File. This information is as important, if not more, than the Aetherman himself.

VOLT GUN

The Volt Gun is a 10mm pistol that is loaded entirely with Hotline bullets. The weapon is meant for aggressive Dream Entities but can also be used as a deterrent against other foes. The Volt Gun is unique as it carries hotlines in a magazine, something usually impossible in the standard Fen 603 which needs breech-loading to fire these rounds.

Clip: 20, Cal: 10mm, ROF: 1, Recoil: 4, Range: 8, Weight: 6.5KG

RS DEVICE

The RS Device stands for 'Reality Shielding' and is the most vital addition to the Aetherman's equipment. This is an item the members of Naga 7 keep shrouded in mystery, and for good reason. As the SLA Universe grows increasingly unpredictable and disjointed, the chance of Grey infection is ever higher. Few, if any, of the people who encounter the Aetherman even know such a relic is on their person.

The RS device is housed in an armoured casing and implanted onto the base of the neck, at the rear. There is only one reason for this elaborate protection and positioning, to deflect suspicion and intrigue. As it stands, the device looks like a form of drug injector worn by Frothers, and it's been designed that way.

The RS device contains nothing more than a crumpled piece of lined paper with an incomprehensible mathematical equation on it.

Stats
+8 COOL

Any attacks, ebb or Ethereal, that affect the mind of the target have no effect on a trained Aetherman wearing an RS device.

DARKLY MASK

The Darkly Mask is a more recent invention of the Naga 7 Division. Before the society members chose to return to the employ of SLA Industries, some research had already begun on the Dream Entities. This mask was the first creation made based on the initial findings and speculations on creatures.

The mask is a cloudy, black visage with minimal facial features. It has a slight reflective surface and, when examined up close, causes the viewer's reflection on the exterior plane to contort and distort.

When viewed by an undeveloped Dream Entity, it sometimes mistakes the wearer for another entity. The Darkly Mask works best on the most basic forms, like Shadows, Distorters and Flickers. Aethermen rarely try their luck with the mask on more advanced beings.

The mask is useful for obtaining information from entities, because if the mask successfully conceals the wearer he can form temporary bounds and lines of communication with the entities he meets.

Stats
+4 Intimidate

Shadow Disguise (KNOW) – Rank 8

After first successful roll, wearer only requires Rank 1 every encounter on specific Dream Entities. If a roll is ever failed, it will never work on that entity again.

PV: 8

ID: 30

GA FINISHER

Aethermen usually equip themselves with an automatic rifle when they begin a tour of Lower Downtown. The addition of a GA Finisher is for the other encounters the Aetherman may face, typical enemies such as Carrien, Pigs and the Downtowners themselves. The rifle may also be used on Dream Entities as an extreme measure, when all form of communication breaks down and the Aetherman is pushed to use deadly force.

Aethermen could use bigger and better weapons, but they believe if they can't solve daily problems with their heads, then they've chosen the wrong profession, and are better off dead.

BLINDER

This device emits a sudden blinding flash which dazzles and confuses the Dream Entity, giving the Aetherman a brief opportunity to escape a hostile situation. The Blinder weighs 1/2 kilo and is about the size of a handheld torch. It requires 4 combat turns to recharge after one single activation.

Stats

Blast Rating: 10

PEN n/a

Dream Entity must make a PHYS -8 or they are blinded/confused for 3 phases.

QUICK KILL TABLETS

Occasionally, the Aetherman faces a situation or predicament he cannot resolve or escape. It may be he is trapped beneath collapsed architecture or he's been captured and stripped of his equipment by Carrien, the reasons for a terminal remedy are too varied to count, especially in Downtown, so SLA Industries supplies the Aethermen with Quick Kill Tablets.

The consumption of a Quick Kill promises immediate, painless death – guaranteed. No Aetherman has chosen this rather dreadful option so far, but the choice is always there if things get too desperate.

The Aetherman carries a pack of five tablets on every trip he makes into Lower Downtown, just in case he makes friends.

GREY ZONE STENCIL AND SPRAY CANS

All Aethermen carry these items to mark out an unstable or polluted area. The appearance of a Grey Zone symbol on the wall of Downtown means either get ready for death or get out quick. When one sees the notice however, it may already be too late.

**WARNING TAPE**

Sometimes, it's just a single building or occupancy which has housed a reality threat or Grey victim, in which case a more benevolent Aetherman will seal off the housing with warning tape. At base, this is really just a gesture; it doesn't automatically keep anyone in or out.

SLA Industries also wants to adopt extreme measures to contain the threat so the Death Squads sent to clean up by may be authorised to kill anyone within 100 yards of the quarantine zone. Just to be on the safe side.

BASIC EQUIPMENT AND SUNDRIES

Tent and Sleeping Roll, Backpack, Water Purifier, Torch, Freeze-dried Food, Water Flask, Portable Stove, Distress Flares, Canister of Pig Mace, Portable Charger, Vibro Dagger, Dictation Recorder, Ammunition, Notebooks, Pen, Clippo.

I GM SECTION

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I THE GREY

The effect of the Grey on people is difficult to quantify as it can take months or just weeks to take hold. All entities emit the uneasiness that triggers the Grey, but the actual strength varies as the Grey is a concept as opposed to an actual disease. The Grey is invariably fatal, but luckily for SLA Industries, seems to work on civilians only, as the weak-willed and easily scared are more susceptible than trained operatives. This, however, may well change over time if the epidemic spreads.

I USING THE DREAM ENTITIES

The Dream Entities may serve as an introduction into the newly defined Lower Downtown. They are an obscure and disturbing threat, which suit and enhance the gloomy, claustrophobic surroundings. In this sense, Lower Downtown becomes something like a haunted house, with the Entities as the resident ghosts. The Dream Entities should be masters of their own realm, they are weird and disorienting and this impacts their surroundings as well.

When the PCs enter into their domain they should immediately sense something is wrong, something new and foreboding. There is nothing natural about the Entities, not their behaviour, their movements or communication. They are a race of beings created in isolation and darkness. For them, Lower Downtown is all they know, it is home. The Operatives are the outsiders; the aliens and most Entities will react violently when their territory is invaded.

I USING NAGA 7 DIVISION

The Aethermen will be the first branch of the Naga most Operatives will encounter. Unlike the higher members, these roving anthropologists are amiable and helpful, for the most part. The Ops may be assigned to assist an Aetherman in one of his visits into Lower Downtown, through conversation and work with the Aetherman the PCs will something about the Entities, and the vast area they infest.

The GM may also wish to introduce an Aetherman mid scenario or campaign. He might stumble upon the squad and warn them to steer clear of a certain area, or he may simply be coming to their aid, warding off a hostile Entity that has cunningly disarmed one of the Operatives.

The Aetherman will be rightfully cagey about many of the questions levelled at him regarding his work. He will only supply the most pertinent information, to protect the Operatives from harsh investigation once they're out of Lower Downtown. His aim to educate the visitors as much as he can within reason. The Aethermen simply want to study the threat, and resolve the problem, but they have their work cut out for them when it comes to the Dream Entities.

