

We'd spent weeks trailing him, certain he held the key to recovering the lost operative. We had it all planned out - the ambush, the capture and the interrogation. It wouldn't be pretty, but time was short and we had to get Emma back. Little did we know that when we finally sprung our trap, we would be the ones held captive - trapped in a situation none of us could have anticipated. We were lost in a hostile and alien place where the rules of reality no longer applied and all our careful preparations went out the window. Our myriad priorities coalesced into a single, vital goal - to get back to the world we called home.

The tables had turned. The man we'd planned to take captive - whom we'd spied on, tracked and attacked - was now our captor. Worse yet, he was also our only potential ally, the only one who could help us find our way out of this place. No matter how unlikely it was that we could convince him to aid us in freeing ourselves, we had to try. The other alternative was unthinkable: that we might be trapped in this place forever.

COLLECTION

OF

HORRORS

NO ESCAPE

A Storytelling Adventure System anthology for Hunter: The Vigil

WHITE WOLF PUBLISHING, INC.
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STONE MOUNTAIN, GA 30087

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Special thanks to our voice actors for giving up a Saturday to help us out:
Anna Albano, Nathan Binder, David Bounds, Natasha Bryant-Raible, Priscilla Kim, Vincent Lombardo, Orrin Loria, Weston Reid, Rich Thomas, Michelle Webb

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Check out White Wolf online at <http://www.white-wolf.com>

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No Escape

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL SOCIAL ..

Overview

In **No Escape**, characters follow a strange man into an even stranger place. Their investigations have led them onto the trail of Robert "Bob" Nikolaidis, a nondescript individual who was reportedly involved in the murder of a number of hunters and the disappearance of another. All evidence indicates that Bob himself is not much of a threat, and although those who have put him under surveillance aren't exactly sure what he is, they don't expect that bringing him in will be too difficult of a task.

Bob, however, has no desire to be taken in, and the wily suspect has an ace up his sleeve. He has a supernatural connection to a location that seems to exist outside of normal space – a bizarre expanse of hostile wilderness which he alone controls entrance and exit to. To make things worse, he can open a doorway to or from this space almost anywhere.

When Bob realizes he's being followed, he uses this supernatural door to attempt to escape. His pursuers are faced with a choice: let their target get away or follow him through the door he's opened into a place that should not exist.

Description

You think you've got him now. It's a dead end, you're blocking all the exits and there's nowhere for him to go. Strangely, he doesn't seem too worried about it. He's looking over what appears to be a boarded-over doorway, and you think for a minute he's considering breaking through it. There's no way he could tear off the layers of wood before you could get to him, though. But then the area around the door starts to glow with a weird green-yellow light and the door itself seems to fade back into shadow. Bob puts his hands in the middle of the door - or at least where the door was - but instead of pressing up against the wood, he sinks into the shadows up to his elbows. He grins over at you, and then steps entirely into the pool of

shadow that has appeared inside the glowing green outline of the door. As you look into the dense shadows, you see weird outlines, like shrubs or trees, with ropey vines hanging down. The glowing outline begins to slowly fade after he's stepped through, but beyond the doorway the bushes still slowly rustle in the wake of his escape.

Bob's Cabin

The small cabin appears to have been formed entirely of organic material: deadfalls and old branches held together by still-living vines and tendrils. Some more-or-less horizontal expanses that might serve as seating and a bed are similarly formed. The only items that appear not to have been created here are small and portable: a footlocker, some dishes, candles and bedding.

Storyteller Goals

The goal of **No Escape** is not only to bring the characters into direct contact with Bob, but also to expose them firsthand to the otherworldly space that he calls home. This may be the first experience the characters have with a completely supernatural environment; the extensive effort required to escape can teach them an important lesson about venturing into unknown territories.

SANCTUARY OR HOLLOW?

Storytellers familiar with changeling: The Lost may recognize Bob's sanctuary as a form of Hollow (though Bob's sanctuary has the Ritual Doorway Merit from Rites of Spring, p. 95). If you would prefer to use the sanctuary as a way of introducing Hunter characters to the Hedge, the relatively limited scope of such a Hollow can be one way to do so while keeping the ramifications fairly narrow.

Incorporating the Hedge in its entirety into your chronicle, on the other hand, is as simple as allowing the characters to discover and open a doorway from the Hollow into the Hedge itself, or (if they manage to interrogate Bob) by having him open a doorway into the Hedge for them to enter through. Keep in mind, however, that the Hedge is a perilous place even for the most wary and experienced individuals. Its thorns are their own danger, ripping away bits of soul and flesh from all who travel through them, and the denizens who dwell within the depths are even more dangerous.

Character Goals

The characters' primary goal going into **No Escape** is to capture and interrogate Bob. They believe he has information about the whereabouts and condition of someone the hunters are looking for. As a default, you can use the missing hunter, Emma, from the **Horror Recognition Guide** (pp. 191-208), but any Storyteller character with ties to the cell would also work. In either case, the cell should have personal motivations (either through their own ties to the lost individual, being called in by allies to help find her or because of assignments handed down to them from a compact or conspiracy) to get that information.

There is, of course, a chance that the characters may be able to apprehend Bob outside of his sanctuary, at which time they are at liberty to utilize standard social or physical persuasion methods to attempt to glean the information listed in the sidebar "What Bob Knows" (p. 3) from him. He can still, however, use any doorway (including the locked door of any cell he's kept within) to access his sanctuary and escape. This may lead them to sanctuary anyway, even after they've apprehended him for the first time.

If the characters' actions lead them into Bob's otherworldly hidey-hole, they may quickly find their priorities shifted. Interrogation and information-gathering may quickly be supplanted in importance by the task of escaping back into the world they know and understand. It is possible they may be able to achieve both goals, but without finding a way to escape his sanctuary, any information about Emma that they may acquire from Bob will be of little use to them.

The action below presumes that the characters' encounter with Bob takes place in his sanctuary. It is possible that the characters will simply follow Bob through the doorway he creates. If they opt not to follow him into his sanctuary, he is likely to take this opportunity to lay a trap for them, using a doorway or window to ambush one or more of them and pull them forcibly into his lair.

Actions

Finding a Way Out

Once in Bob's sanctuary, the characters may walk back out through the door they came in as long as it remains open. However, it will remain open only so long as someone in the group is actively looking back through it and out into the mortal world. Once all members of the party have lost sight of the doorway, it will close behind them and they must find another exit in order to escape.

The area inside Bob's sanctuary is a lush wilderness, a small portion of which has been cultivated into a rustic dwelling and strange but relatively tamed garden grove. The rest is a wooded glade, heavily overgrown with brush, trees and vines that start out thick and quickly becomes so heavy as to be impassable. Those who manage to navigate through it find themselves emerging back into the open glade from a random direction. The only way out of the glade is to find a gateway or have Bob open one for them.

The vegetation here is alien. Some plants have colorations, leaf patterns or textures that are vaguely wrong compared to their mortal-world counterparts. Other plants are entirely strange: parasitic vines with maws that suck the life from the plants they cling to, flowers whose paper-white petals open to reveal humanoid eyes at their centers or trees with noose-like branches which hold rotting skeletons of their earlier victims.

Upon entering his sanctuary, Bob will immediately attempt to hide from sight, using his superior knowledge of the terrain to avoid pursuit. A successful Wits + Investigation roll is required to find his trail, which will lead to the cabin where he's hiding.

Those who attempt to do so may find food (albeit in a strange and unknown form) and water here by using the standard foraging rules (**World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 77). Foraging and searching for an exit are mutually exclusive activities, however, and stopping the effort to find a way out of the sanctuary in order to forage for food or water resets all the accumulated successes previously garnered to zero.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Investigation

Action: Extended, with each roll representing thirty minutes of searching. Ten accumulated successes are required to identify an active gateway out of the sanctuary.

Hindrances: The character has left the area that contains the doorway he entered through (-2), Bob is actively chasing him or thwarting his search (-3), the character has been in the sanctuary for more than 2 hours (-1 cumulative for every 2 hour block after the first two hours)

Help: The character has not left the immediate area he entered from (+2), the character is ensorcelled by means of a Pledge (pp. 179-180, **Changeling: The Lost**; +1)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: No successes are accumulated and any accumulated successes are halved (rounded down) as the character runs into some sort of strange vegetation or animal life, and is distracted from locating an actual doorway.

Failure: No successes are accumulated towards locating an active doorway out of the sanctuary.

Success: Successes equal to the number rolled are accumulated towards those needed to locate a doorway out of the sanctuary, leading to a random location somewhere in the city. If the number of accumulated successes reaches 10 or more, an active doorway out of the sanctuary is located and the character (and anyone accompanying him) can pass through it to return to the mortal world. The doorway will remain open until no one is looking through it from one side to the other, after which it closes again and cannot be re-opened, except by Bob.

Exceptional Success: Regardless of the number of accumulated successes, the character finds an active doorway out of the sanctuary. As well, the doorway located leads back out to the same location in the mortal world that he left from. The doorway remains open until no one is currently looking through it from one side to the other, after which it closes again and cannot be re-opened, other than by Bob.

Consequences

If the cell manages to convince Bob that they are not working for the individual who abducted him but are only seeking to rescue Emma, he may be willing to open a door to allow them to leave. To do so, he will open a gateway and push them through it, depositing them back in a random location in the mortal world before closing the doorway behind them. If they are not able to convince him that they are in no way connected to his former kidnapper, he will either abandon them in the sanctuary or, if pushed into physical confrontation, will attempt to knock them out and leave them for "the Others" as he did Emma. (In a physical fight, Bob will use the Haymaker ability from Fighting Style: Boxing, p. 111 in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.) Feel free to use this to segue into the next phase of your ongoing chronicle.

If the characters are successful in interrogating Bob, they may gain access to any or all of the information listed in "What Bob Knows." The facts are accurate, as far as Bob knows, and you are encouraged to add or subtract information to mesh this scene with your story.

WHAT BOB KNOWS

- Bob considers himself one of "the Lost," a group of folks who have apparently been kidnapped, tortured and escaped their captors. He refuses (regardless of torture or other motivations) to say anything specific about who or what kidnapped him, but it is clear that he fears being recaptured more than anything else.

- A few months ago, he began sensing that he was being watched. At first he assumed the surveillance was not focused on him, but he later came to realize that it was more than just FBI monitoring his workplace for drug sales.

- He came to the assumption that those who were watching him were working for an individual who had previously kidnapped and tortured him.

- He contacted his allies, and the surveillance team was "dealt with." He doesn't know how, he wasn't part of the attack, but he assumes (and is comfortable with the idea) that it was a lethal use of force.

- Emma was one of those who avoided being "dealt with." Bob recognized that she had escaped and was waiting for those who had dealt with her companions to finish the job when she followed him into his sanctuary.

- Convinced she was working for his previous kidnappers, Bob "neutralized" Emma.

- Bob did not kill Emma, but "she's not coming back."

- Bob refuses (regardless of torture or other motivations) to give Emma back. If pressured, he will say that he *cannot* get her back, that "the Others" have already taken her and he has no way to contact them.

COLLECTION OF PICTURES



Quotes: “You shoudn’t have ought to followed me in here. This ain’t some place you should be.”

"You the cops? I ain't talkin' to you unless you shows me badges or paperwork or somethin'. I know my rights."

"You're gonna make me do this the hard way, aren't you? I hate the hard way."

Virtue: Fortitude. Bob has endured much to get where he is, and does not easily give up on a task or thought once he has sunk his teeth into it.

Vice: Gluttony. Whatever changed Bob invested him with a deep hunger, one that he frequently indulges himself in.

Background: Four years ago, Bob Nikolaidis disappeared. He was kidnapped, held prisoner, and allegedly a simulacrum took his place for almost a year. Bob returned a changed man, in more ways than one. His captivity made him jumpy, surly and reclusive. His simulacrum has been “dealt with” and he’s taken up his old life, although he often finds it a poor fit since his return. He works part-time, mostly under the table, dealing with seedy underworld types and two-bit criminals. His days are filled with running errands and trying to remain unobtrusive as much as possible.

Description: The same imprisonment that changed Bob's attitude also warped his physical form. While he still wears the illusion of his former self, when near an open gateway to his sanctuary (or within its confines) his real body is revealed. His skin takes on a grey color, and its stony texture becomes apparent. Although his profile is always notably flat, this feature is accentuated when his true-self appears, becoming remarkably bulldog-like in appearance. His arms lengthen until his knuckles almost drag the ground, and he gains an increased height and bulk that was not apparent before.

HUNTER

ET THE VIGIL

Name: Robert Nikolaidis
Concept: Otherworldly
Glutton

Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Gluttony

Profession:
Compact:
Conspiracy:

Intelligence	●●○○○	Strength	●●●●●	Presence	●●●●○
Wits	●●○○○	Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●○○○
Resolve	●●●●○	Stamina	●●●●●	Composure	●●●●○

SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Computer	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	●●●●●
Weaponry	
<input type="checkbox"/> (Improvised)	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasion	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Streetwise	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Subterfuge	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/>	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/>	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/>	●●●●●

MERITS

[illegible]

HEALTH

WILLPOWER

A number line from 0 to 10. The first 8 boxes are filled with black circles, and the last 2 boxes are empty.

TACTICS

FLAWS

_____ 00000 Morality 5
FLAWS Size 5
Speed 14
_____ Defense 2
_____ Initiative Mod 8
_____ Armor _____

NOTES

Derangements: Paranoia

Dread Powers: Balefire 3, Crushing Blow 3, Fury 3, Strange Form 5

Notes: Bob suffers from the derangement Paranoia (World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 98) and will assume that anyone spying on or trailing him is an agent of his former captor, until convinced otherwise.

Storytelling Hints: What Bob wants most is to be left alone. He didn't have an active hand in Emma's disappearance, although he knows (or at least strongly suspects) what her fate was. He is, however, paranoid and will interpret any pursuit or surveillance as coming from agents of his former captor, reacting to protect himself from re-abduction. If convinced that the characters are not working for his kidnapper, he will relax a bit but won't be overly helpful, retaining his secretive side and desire to be left alone. Bob is not a cruel man, but neither is he friendly or especially kind-hearted. He's pragmatic and will do what needs to be done to retain his own privacy and freedom.

Map

