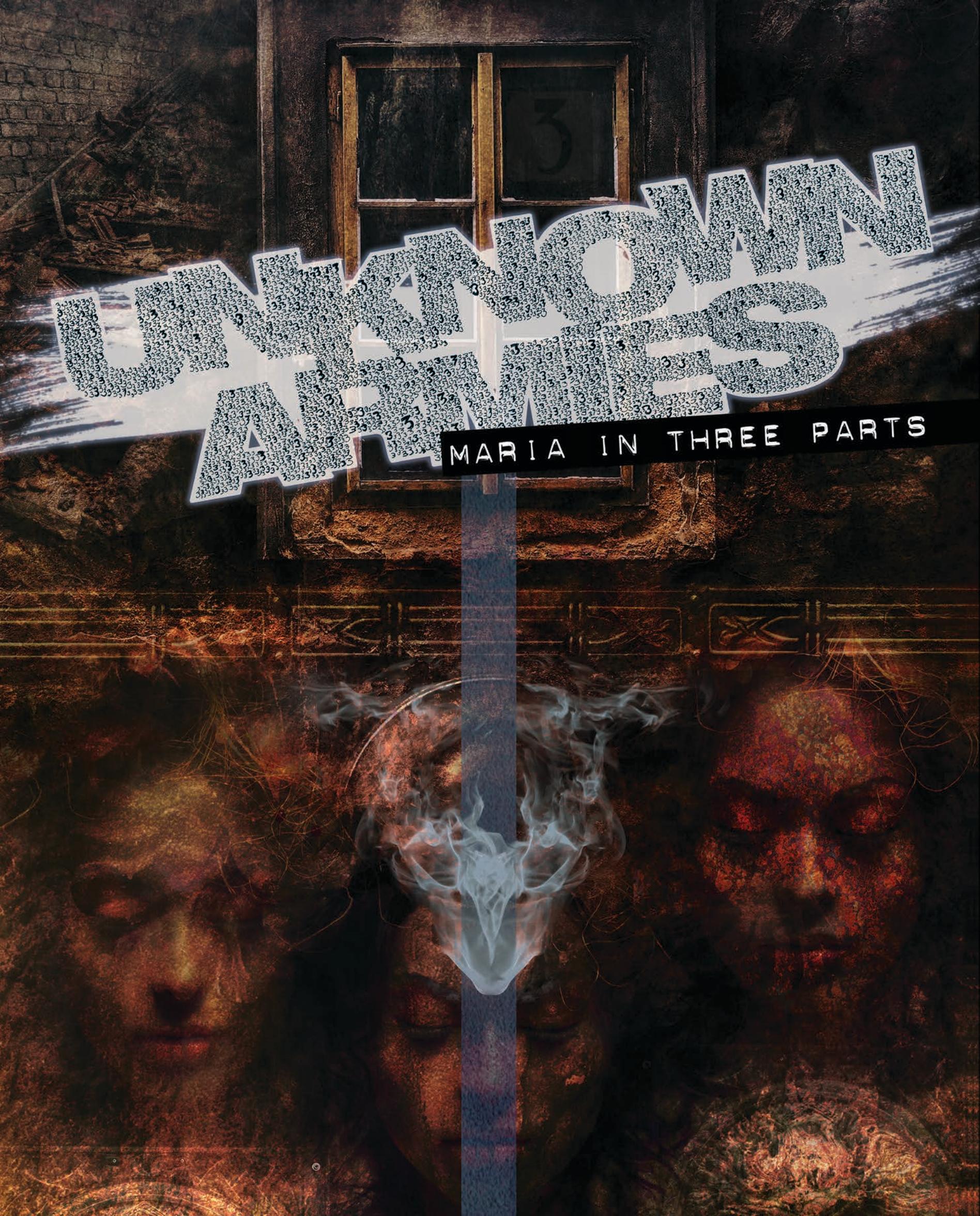


MARIA IN THREE PARTS



THE WORLD

On the surface, the world of *Unknown Armies* looks like modern day reality. The same person's the president, most of the same shows are on TV, and the Internet works the same way, near as anyone can tell. People drive cars and pay taxes and whine about partisan gridlock.

It is a world where physical laws are studied and trusted, where exceptions to cause and effect simply are not accepted. It appears to be a rational, steady, objective world where coincidences are just things that happen at the same time, not events influenced by secret skeins of meaning.

It is a matter of great cultural confidence that there is no such thing as magic. Sure, people are free to believe whatever they want, no matter how illogical or unprovable or transparently *wrong*. But, you know, fuckin' *grown-ups* don't believe in magic.

You believe in magick.

That is, your player character has had personal experiences with powers that chortle at everyday logic while murmuring, "How *quaint*." You've seen science with its pants off and realized it's stuffing its shorts when it goes onstage. Magick-with-a-k is willpower times understanding equals *get your wish*, which is why it's spelled differently from the word that indicates the stagecraft practiced in Las Vegas and at children's birthday parties. The latter is a performer pulling a rabbit from a hat. The former is a psychic surgeon pulling a tumor out of your brain.

People think the world is consistent and rigid, but you know it is pliable and tattered and full of holes. Sometimes you can slip into a hole and come out the other side somewhere wonderful. Sometimes you step in a hole in the dark and it snaps your ankle like a chopstick.

The world must change, and you don't have to be rich, or born special; you don't have to be brilliant, you don't even need to be white. You just have to know enough of the truth and believe enough of it to fix it.

CREEPY WEIRDOS

There are cults out there that want to usher in a new dark age with literacy as a hereditary privilege. There are scary racists running magickal training camps. There are mystics so attuned to their cosmic patrons that they regard the laws of physics as a sometimes-food; there are others who have no idea what mystics are but who have still amassed hundreds of followers willing to kill or die or vote as a bloc.

There are people who never die.

These weirdos know each other. They're going to know you. If you're lucky, tough, and demented enough, you'll get to know them too.

There are hundreds of flavors of occultist, but if you have to break them down into broad categories, the hierarchy's determined by power. Of course it's power. What else would you expect?

Chargers: The people in charge, and it's no accident **charges** are the current and currency of magick. A charger is someone who has proven power to kick something that's usually immune to human tampering, whether that's a law of thermodynamics or the inchoate longings buried deep in the human heart.

Checkers: The experiencers, people who saw something otherworldly and responded by paying attention and moving closer. That alone puts them way above the people who ignore the strangeness and instinctively withdraw from it. In all likelihood, the PCs are checkers.

Pony is the current occult term of contempt. They're vehicles, stooges, and patsies. Nobody with any self-respect calls himself a pony and saying it to someone's face is the kind of humiliation that can make even a mouse roar.

THE SECRET MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Invisible, disembodied *things* watch this world and influence its trends and progress at the highest levels. Their power is undetectable... almost. It's so thoroughly baked into the nature of reality that it looks like physics or mass psychology or good ol' coincidence. But you can see their shadow passing over the world in dreams, in symbols, in sudden outbreaks of order when events ought to be chaotic.

They are called the **Invisible Clergy** and even a tinfoil hat won't protect you.

Individuals within the Invisible Clergy are called **archetypes** and they aren't human. They used to be, but they fulfilled some broad, necessary social role so perfectly that they were plucked out of the coarse, gross realm of matter and taken up to a place where probability becomes manifest. This higher realm is known as the **Statosphere**.

The way it seems to work is, if you embody something that enough people recognize as a social role — the Mother, the Hunter, the True King — you **ascend** from mortality into existence as an undying, archetypal representative of that principle. But if someone else comes along and does a better job at being the Necessary Servant or the Naked Goddess or the Captain, the sitting archetype gets ousted and returns to being a mere human.

There's only so much room at the top though. The Invisible Clergy only holds 333 former people, and as soon as it's full they scrap everything and start again. The archetypes merge into one great grisly creator/destroyer, they eject everything in the world like a menstruating uterus and start over, fertile and renewed and ready to be impregnated by 333 archetypes, starting the cycle once more.

AVATARS

If archetypes are the distant, unavailable political insiders in this mythology, they have their ward-heeling activists in **avatars**. Or if you don't like that metaphor, avatars are the rabid fans to the archetypes' rock stars.

One becomes an avatar through imitation. Those who walk the walk work the archetypes' will in the world. It's not deliberate in the sense of taking orders, but because overlap between what the avatar's actions support — and what the archetype stands for — are very near to complete congruence.

The more an avatar resembles the archetype, the more the archetype is able to bend reality and make things go right for his mortal do-boy. Usually this takes subtle forms — psychological effects, intuitions, or "coincidences" that only help. But some more powerful and determined avatars can straight-up fly, survive *decapitation*,

The rules for Gutter Magick are on page 181 of Book One: Play, in case one of the players decides they want to slum it. For the purposes of Maria in Three Parts, they shouldn't need to.

Everything shock-related starts on page 19 of Book One: Play.

or order car crashes to go to their room and think about what they did.

Two of the pregenerated characters — **Vince Kirkland** and **Jada Parker** — are avatars.

ADEPTS

If avatars are the folks skipping to the front of the line because they're dressed right, **adepts** are the guys getting thrown out the back screaming about how they'll start their own goddamn nightclub! With klezmer music!

Adepts have magick and they can Do Stuff. Every adept is obsessed with something important that most people take for granted, and every adept insists that everyone but them has it wrong. Sex, cars, guns, being clean, you name it, somebody's using it for magick.

The pregenerated characters **Ellen Kaloudis** and **Greg O'Neil** are adepts.

GUTTER MAGICK

Most of what murdanes would call **rituals** — effects that you could duplicate with half the effort and trips to the local pharmacy or hardware store — still hold their appeal, and some of them actually *can* produce effects that science would call impossible. If you don't want the long, hard road of the avatar or the complicated paradoxical life of the adept, and if you don't mind getting really smelly, you might have a shot at magick.

CHARACTERS

Characters in *Unknown Armies* are defined by a number of game stats. Here's an explanation for what these are and how characters work in this game.

For more on characters, see *Book One: Play*. Creating new characters is handled with a group session managed by the GM; that's described in *Book Two: Run*. For *Maria in Three Parts*, we have provided you with a cabal of four pre-generated characters. Their information and character sheets appear later in this book.

HANDING OUT THE CHARACTERS

There are two avatars (Jada Parker and Vince Kirkland) and two adepts (Ellen Kaloudis and Greg O'Neil). When handing out the characters, give players this quick explanation on how avatars and adepts differ so they know what they're getting themselves into:

- Avatars have fewer magickal powers, but they can use them repeatedly for free.
- Adepts have more magickal powers, but they need to pay for them in charges.

WHAT YOU'VE SEEN: SHOCKS

Every *Unknown Armies* character is a broken person, somebody who has been through a lot before the game even starts. We measure this with something called the **shock gauge**. The shock gauge is comprised of five **shock meters**, and they're a record of the absolute worst things that have happened to your character.

Helplessness: Times you've been unable to take action you felt was necessary.

Isolation: When you've been cut off from society or loved ones.

Violence: Pain, injury, death.

Unnatural: Experiences that challenge your perception of reality.

Self: Your most personal failures and violations of your deepest beliefs.

Each meter has space for five **failed notches** and ten **hardened notches**. A failed notch indicates your progression toward burning out. A hardened notch indicates your progression toward becoming callous.

Your shock meters are affected by trauma in the form of **stress checks**. Fail a stress check,

get a failed notch. Succeed and get a hardened notch. The more hardened notches you get, the bigger the stress check required to affect you.

WHAT YOU DO: ABILITIES

Abilities measure a character's raw talent at broad swaths of activity. They're untrained and instinctive, and they can change during play.

Every character has percentile ratings in ten abilities. These ratings are based on the shock gauge. Five of them are derived from hardened notches, and five are based on open notches. No ability ever drops below 20%, or goes above 60%.

Connect: Forging an emotional connection.

Dodge: Getting out of the way.

Fitness: Using and abusing your body.

Knowledge: Measuring your relationship to the truth and making sense of it.

Lie: Using deceit and deception.

Notice: Paying attention to the world around you.

Pursuit: Running away from or after others.

Secrecy: Hiding objects, ideas, or yourself from others.

Status: Acting as if you belong and capitalizing on the trust of others.

Struggle: Handling yourself in a brawl or fight.

WHAT DRIVES YOU: PASSION AND OBSESSION

The keys to an individual are in what motivates and drives them. Characters in *Unknown Armies* have four such keys: three **passions** and one **obsession**.

Fear Passion: What scares you the most, be it as concrete as crocodiles or as abstract as dying unloved. It always threatens a specific shock meter.

Rage Passion: What bugs you the most, the intolerable irritant that you can't shut up about and strive to thwart, wreck, and harm.

Noble Passion: You at your best. It's what can make you face your fears and set aside your anger.

By acting in tune with your passion, you can re-roll your dice once per session, or you can **flip-flop** the roll — read the tens die as ones and vice versa — if that new result would help you.

Obsession: All player characters in *Unknown Armies* are obsessed with something. It's the lens through which they regard the world, and the bedrock upon which their assumptions rest. An obsession may scare them or anger them sometimes, it may lure them away from their better natures, but in the end, they can't leave it alone. Even moreso than their passions, it's who they *are*.

Your obsession ties directly to an identity (see below) that fits with it. Whenever you roll that identity, you can flip-flop the dice. Not just

once a session like the passions, but *every time*. You can't redo failed rolls though.

WHO YOU ARE: IDENTITY

The final component of your PC are some self-defined capacities known as **identities**. You roll these to accomplish actions that are in doubt or when you're in a stressful situation.

What's an identity? Could be anything. Parachutist. Police Detective. Manslut. Accomplished Pianist. House Painter. Assassin. Whatever it is, you get a percentile rating. If you have the identity House Painter 35%, you have a 35% chance of doing anything a house painter reasonably might in the course of painting houses while under stress.

Every standard identity substitutes for at least one ability, by default. Some can substitute for more. Substituting for an ability, after the first, is an example of a **feature**. Each identity gets two free features, the most common of which are substituting for an ability when you'd normally roll that ability and substituting for an ability when making **stress checks**. There are other possible features, however, but right now, consider identities the stats you're going to roll most often.

The best way to know if you can substitute in your identity is if you'd say, "Of course, I can _____, I'm a _____. Of course I can tell if the music's any good, I'm an accomplished pianist. Of course I can run that license plate, I'm a police detective.

Magickal identities, including avatar and adept identities, are a special exception. They provide access to magickal powers and do not have an "Of course I can" element. They don't substitute for abilities and have limited features.

WHO YOU KNOW: RELATIONSHIPS

You're not in this alone. You have friends, allies, people who mean something to you. Your relationships — **Favorite**, **Guru**, **Mentor**, **Protégé**, and **Responsibility** — can be used in place of an identity or ability (Connect, Lie, Notice, Status, or Struggle) whenever that person's the subject of the roll.

Each pregen lists another PC as the subject of one of the five relationships. Before starting the scenario, players must explain how their character relates to the one listed on their character sheet. The other character doesn't have to accept this definition; this is solely how the first character feels about the second.

Then pick one of the empty relationships and add "Cabal" to show how that character feels about the group. If Ellen's player picked Protégé for the cabal, Ellen thinks the group looks up to her. The reality could be different. Two characters can have the same cabal relationship.

Extensive explanations and discussion of abilities begins on page 30 of Book One: Play.

Book One: Play has a whole section explaining identities including examples and descriptions of features, starting on page 42.

Stress checks are how you protect your shock meters. More info on these is on page 4..

Check out page 9 of Book One: Play for more on passions and obsessions.

Your character sheet has two relationships filled out but you can choose more. See page 37 in Book One: Play.

THE RULES

The rules of *Unknown Armies* are not complicated. When the GM tells you to roll an ability or an identity or to make a stress check, we want that to be easy. So, it's always a **percentile roll**.

PERCENTILE ROLLS

You roll two ten-sided dice, usually numbered 0-9, and read them to get a number from 01-100. The double-0s are read as 100. It has to be clear which die is the tens place and which is the ones, because getting a 91 is very different from a 19.

If you're told to add a modifier like +10% or -20%, apply it to the rating before you roll.

RESULTS

When you roll, you're rolling against something with a percentile rating. Maybe you have a rating of 40% in an ability or identity. If you roll a 40 or lower you have succeeded, to some degree. If you roll a 41+, you have failed.

You only get asked to bust out the dice when it's interesting for an issue to be in doubt or when the situation is stressful.

Often, the outcome is not just binary success or failure. There's some nuance to your roll.

THE FUMBLE (00)

Any time you get a 00 result, you failed a lot. You got a **fumble**. Even if your chance was 100% (in which case, why did you roll?), a 00 means a perfect confluence of bad luck and poor action. Your GM can inflict any vaguely plausible bad outcome, short of death.

SIMPLE FAILURE

If you roll something higher than your ability or identity, but the dice don't match, that's a simple failure. If it's necessary to know which of two simple failures is worse, it's the higher number.

STRESS CHECKS

A **stress check** is a roll to determine whether one of your shock meters picks up a hardened notch or a failed notch. Stress checks are always related to one of the five shock meters, and always come with a rank from 1 to 10. For example, a character might be asked to make a rank 2 Violence check.

Hardened notches equal to or greater than the stress check's rank keep you from needing to roll.

Stress checks are rolled against an ability or, if you have a feature like "Protects Violence" or "Protects Self," you can use that identity instead.

Tables of sample stress check ranks are provided on page 21 in Book One: Play, as well as in the free GM screen download from atlas-games.com/unknownarmies.

MATCHED FAILURE

With a matched roll — 99, 77, 55, anything where the dice are the same number — something unusual happened. If that matched roll is also a failure, it was something unusually bad.

SIMPLE SUCCESS

If you rolled equal to or under your ability or identity but didn't get a match or roll 01, it's a simple success. You got what you sought after or did what you tried. If it's important to know which of two simple successes is better, it's the higher number. You want to get close to your score without going over.

MATCHED SUCCESS

As with matched failures, successes where the dice are 11 or 33 or 22 are unusually good.

THE CRIT (01)

Not only did you succeed, you *clobbered* it. The outcome was the best you could reasonably hope for — maybe even a little better than that.

FLIP-FLOPS

A flip-flop is when you can switch the places of the dice so that you succeed. Or sometimes just to get a *better* success — flip-flopping a 10 into an 01 can make a big difference.

The most common occasions when you can flip-flop your die roll are when you are acting in accordance with your passions or rolling your obsession identity. You can flip-flop on each passion once per game and flip-flop your obsession any time you roll that identity.

The default ability to defend against each type of stress is as follows:

- **Helplessness:** Status
- **Isolation:** Connect
- **Self:** Notice
- **Unnatural:** Knowledge
- **Violence:** Fitness

If you succeed, mark off the lowest unchecked hardened notch on the shock meter. This changes your abilities that are linked to that shock meter — your positive ability goes

down by 5% and your negative ability goes up by 5%.

If you fail, mark off the next failed notch on the shock meter. Decide if you suffer from **panic**, **paralysis**, or **frenzy**.

If you panic, you run away at high speed. You can take no action except to run full out in the direction farthest from what made you panic. If you get stuck, you have to continue to fruitlessly search for an exit or try to force your way through a barrier.

On the other hand, disturbing events often produce paralysis: indecision, terror, and a general “deer in the headlights” effect that persists until the stimulus ceases. This can be completely silent or accompanied by screams and moans.

Frenzy is what it sounds like. You attack the source of discomfort with any means at your disposal. You can’t dodge or attempt any fancy moves, like multiple attacks on a single target. You just shoot or punch or start biting.

When you fail a stress check, you panic, are paralyzed, or frenzy until the stress that triggered the behavior is gone — or, at least, until its immediate manifestation ceases. You can’t change your reaction once you’ve chosen it, so choose carefully.

COERCION

Coercion is this game’s term for non-violent attempts to change people or their actions. There are two ways this can go. One is that they back down and do as you say. The other is that they defy you and face the consequences.

Because we have the handy shock gauge to measure internal trauma, that’s the target of coercion attempts. Every coercion roll works like this:

You establish a credible threat, and you roll the relevant identity, relationship, or ability.

If it fails, they don’t believe you’re serious. You can carry out your threat and inflict consequences on them, but that becomes an entirely separate matter.

If the roll succeeds, the person has a choice. They either acquiesce and keep their shock gauge intact, or they don’t and take a stress check. The rank of the stress check depends on what you rolled.

- Simple success yields a rank 1 check.
- Matched success or crit yields a rank 2 check.
- Add +1 for each of your passions that is in play.
- Add +1 for each of the *target’s* passions that is in play.

When you’re in one of these states, you don’t have to make any more stress checks. You’re too screwed up to process any other stresses.

GETTING CALLOUS

Cops, coroners, and case workers know all about getting callous. When you’ve seen enough horror, it loses its power to horrify you. The more hardened notches you have on a single meter, the more it takes for that kind of stress to rip up your head. Once you have nine hardened notches on a meter you’re so jaded about it that only the most extreme and heinous incidents can endanger you.

When your total sum of hardened notches is twenty-five or more, you become **burned out** — cut off from a broad range of emotional experiences that everyone else shares. You can no longer use your passions. You just can’t relate to them anymore, and you don’t get to flip-flop those passion-related rolls.

If you’re an avatar who becomes burned out, you cannot use your avatar identity until you get treatment. Avatars rely on an empathic connection to the global unconsciousness, and burning out slams that particular door shut.

There’s a lot of information on the consequences of failing stress checks on page 26 of Book One: Play.

WHEN YOU CAN COERCE

Shifting someone’s nature is not simple. You need to possess some kind of leverage that makes the target take *your* demands seriously. You also, as mentioned previously, need to roll a success on a relevant identity, or possibly an ability. Relevant kinds of leverage are described for each meter in the sections below.

Also, can *always* substitute a **relationship score** for any attempt to coerce. If you know someone well enough that she’s your Mentor, your Guru, or a Favorite, you know exactly how to push her buttons.

HELPLESSNESS

To attack someone’s Helplessness meter, you need to make them believe you can disempower them. You attack it with the Connect ability, by making the person feel you are communicating, honestly and directly, the legitimate consequences of contravening your will.

The leverage for a Helplessness attack arises from authority. If the threat’s plausible and the roll succeeds, the target either agrees to do what you’ve demanded, or faces a Helplessness roll as they suffer sleepless nights worrying about the future that’s been taken out of their control.

Coercion gets an extensive treatment on page 57 of Book One: Play but this summary is sufficient for playing Maria in Three Parts.



ISOLATION

Isolation attacks convince the target that unless they make you happy, you're going to make them an outcast. Threatening to cast someone out is rolled with Status, as you present yourself as the repository of the cultural capital they need to live that good life, with a manicured lawn and plenty of character witnesses.

Leverage for this form of coercion comes from commonality. If you have that connection and roll well, the target has to agree with you or face the loss of prestige.

SELF

Attacks on a target's Self have to appeal to the target's better nature and convince them that you understand what the right thing to do actually *is*. You roll this with Knowledge, because it takes confidence that you know what you're talking about.

The leverage is your understanding of their wrongdoing or their feelings of guilt.

This is what you use to plead for your life! If someone's pointing a gun at your face, you can beg them to look into their heart and just leave. If you make your point and have the right guilt for the trip, the target either agrees with you or enters an existential nightmare of neurotic self-evaluation.

VIOLENCE

This one's simple. Want to threaten somebody? Roll Struggle to present yourself as someone who knows a thing or two about hurt.

The leverage is looking as if you could really do it. That means having something to threaten violence with, or a reputation of violence.

If you succeed and seem dangerous, the target either meekly complies or faces a Violence check as they hyperventilate and panic, scared that they're about to get manhandled.

UNNATURAL

Attacks on the Unnatural meter aim to convince the target that the world really doesn't work the way they think it does, and challenges what they think is real. The ability for coercing someone's Unnatural meter is Secrecy. Roll it to seem plausibly satisfied that you have the hidden answers.

But you can only make that roll with the leverage of unnatural events. Using magick usually does the trick. If you roll right amidst inexplicable events, the target either goes along with you, or is haunted by the fear of the uncanny.

COMBAT

Unknown Armies is the kind of game where combat is dangerous, brutal, and can completely change the lives of anyone involved in it. Just like in real life! Most of the time it's *best to avoid a fight*. You can surrender, try to disarm the other guy, call 911, or even run away. But in some cases, the player characters are confronted by violent forces they have to fight against. If that happens, use these rules.

Unknown Armies typically defaults to the players and GM taking turns in an organic fashion based on who is doing what and who is reacting to it. Other games call this **initiative**. If it becomes a question of knowing who is going to do something first, use the identity rating that's most appropriate for all characters involved in the fight. Highest identity percentiles go first, then the next highest, and so on. Break ties with Struggle or just roll off. Taking your turn to do something is called taking an **action**.

Book One: Play has a lot more about combat and things that affect its outcome. The rules in this book should be enough for *Maria in Three Parts*, however.

ATTACKING

You want to harm someone? Roll the appropriate identity or fall back on Struggle to punch and kick. Shooting at somebody calls for an identity with **Provides Firearm Attacks**. If you roll a success, you inflict **wounds**.

If you roll a matched failure on an attack, you've made a tactical error. Your GM can either penalize you with -10% on your next roll or give an enemy +10% if they immediately take advantage of your misjudgment.

If you roll a fumble on an attack, you've done something screwy. If you're firing a gun, it's jammed now and you're going to have to take an action to clear it. If you're punching and kicking, you got hurt — maybe you strained your shoulder with a missed punch, maybe your knuckles hit the wall, or maybe you stumbled while approaching and tweaked an ankle. The GM inflicts 1-5 wounds on your character.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

If you're ever rolling to do bodily harm it means that *things are serious*. Those numbers on the character sheet represent your chance to complete that task under life-and-death circumstances. There's no need to add in lots of modifiers, just use the raw number.

That said, when there's something that is unique to one character and which makes things substantially harder on her, then a penalty is sensible. If she's tied to a chair, that's going to be worth a -20% penalty. If she's barefoot on an uneven surface sprinkled with

broken glass? -10% penalty. Blindfolded? Well, maybe the GM won't let her make a roll at all. But if everyone's fighting in the same inferno of combusting industrial waste, nobody needs any *particular* penalty. Just assume that if you're fighting in a cloud of tear gas, their movement is impaired as much as your aim.

Sometimes, however, things go your way. You might be on a balcony with a fire ax and your enemies have to climb up to reach you. That might give you a +10% bonus. If you're in a really superior position, like firing from a comfortable enclosure at people who are fleeing across open ground with nowhere to run, that's good for +20%.

By and large though, penalties and bonuses are a spice to use lightly. They should be the exception, not the norm.

RUNNING AROUND

In addition to punching and shooting and fire-axing people, you probably want to move around during the fight, if only to get within swinging range of your next target.

You can move across a medium-sized room in a round and still roll for another action. If you want to move more than that, declare that you're running and make a Fitness roll. On any success, you can move all the way down a long corridor, or across a big room. If you get a simple fail, you move half that. Matched fail? You can't move any extra distance. On a fumble, you fall over and takes an action to get to your feet after stumbling, too.

DODGING

If you do nothing other than try to not get struck, you don't have to roll. You just say you're doing it and you penalize everyone else's rolls to attack you. If the identity you're using, or your Dodge ability, is less than the attacker's ability or identity they're using to attack, that penalty is -10%. If your Dodge or identity is equal to or greater than the ability or identity your foe is using to attack, or if it's your obsession identity, the penalty is -20%.

DAMAGE

The GM keeps track of damage in the form of wounds. This is a big change from most games, but it's a crucial part of the horror that is *Unknown Armies*. Knowing that you've taken 11 wounds and that you have a **wound threshold** of 50 is clinical and abstract. Your GM should never use numbers to describe injuries, except possibly when she tells you how many lightning-quick jabs your face absorbs.

You can take wounds up to half your wound threshold without any long-term effects and won't feel it until you're out of the high-adrenaline

Jump on over to page 60 of *Book One: Play* for a lengthy explanation of how to handle scenes of violence and aggression, including how to avoid it.

What if you don't have **Provides Firearm Attacks** and you shoot a gun? All you can do is create suppressive fire — roll **Struggle**, and on a success your opponents need to make a **Violence (3) stress check** to come at you. See page 66 of *Book One: Play* for more details.

fight scene, at which point you start finding all of those bruises, scrapes, and cuts.

As soon as you take wounds equal to half your wound threshold (25 wounds, in most cases) you feel sore and exhausted when you go to bed, and you get up feeling tight, weak, and rickety. Expect a lot of joint pain and headaches.

When you take wounds equal to or greater than three-quarters of your wound threshold (38 or more for most people), that's a very dangerous situation and the GM should make it clear that you're badly beat up. Depending on what got done on you, you could have blurred vision, painful breathing, seeping lacerations, or broken bones. Those are all nature's way of telling you to get your ass to urgent care.

When you take wounds equal to 90% of your wound threshold (45 for most people), you fall unconscious.

When you reach your wound threshold (50 unless your identity says otherwise), you're dead.

FISTS AND FEET

If you punch and kick someone successfully, you do damage equal to the total of the dice. That is, if your success is a 32, they take 5 wounds.

There's only one special result you can get with unarmed fists and feet. If you get a critical success, you get a choice. You can knock the guy out, leaving him unconscious for one to five rounds and then unable to fight for one to ten minutes, or you can kill him.

MELEE WEAPONS

As soon as you pick up a hand-held weapon of any kind, the situation changes for the worse when it comes to damage and effects. Wounds inflicted by melee weapons start out the same as for fists and feet (add together the tens digit and the ones digit from your roll), but go up by +3 wounds for each of the following qualities: big, sharp, and heavy.

As soon as you're using a weapon big enough to give you a wound bonus, no matter how slight, things get more complicated with your results.

If you're the type who loves big charts of weapon stats, go to pages 64-65 in Book One: Play.

MEDICINE

Medicine is provided by people with medical identities. It could be M.D. 50% or Holistic Healer 70% or Combat Medic 20%, as long as it's got the Medical feature, it can use the rules below to get rid of wounds.

Of course, if you can't access those sorts of treatments because emergency rooms tell the cops about gunshot wounds, you can just self-medicate. Any time you perform medicine on yourself, it's at -10%.

If you get a fumble, you hit yourself. You take 1d10 wounds.

If you fail and get a match, the weapon somehow went flying out of your hands. Either an enemy disarmed you, or you clumsily disarmed yourself.

If you fail, you missed. Sharp weapons do 1 wound even if you roll a failure, though.

If you get a success, the weapon does damage normally. 3 extra wounds each are dealt out for sharp, heavy, or big weapons.

If you succeed and get a match, the weapon does damage like a gun, i.e., the result of the roll instead of the total. If you rolled a 33, you deal out 33 wounds.

If you get a critical success, the guy that you hit? He's dead.

GUNS

Here's how those work: if you hit with any success, it does damage equal to the roll. You hit with a 31, you inflicted 31 wounds.

If you get a critical success, you do maximum damage for that weapon (see the damage cap, described below)

If you get a fumble, your weapon's jammed and you need to waste an action clearing it or checking it.

Guns have limits on their ranges and they also have a **damage cap** which simply means there's a maximum amount of damage that they do, regardless of what you roll. A .22 bullet is not going to do as much damage as a .45. Bigger bullets are bigger.

Ranges are defined narratively, rather than in strict yards, for simplicity's sake. **Short range** means it's accurate about as far as you can recognize someone's face, or as far as you can throw a flying disk on a still day. **Medium range** is about a city block — you can hit someone when you can clearly see arms and legs. **Long range** means you can hit someone who's just a tiny little speck off in the distance... as long as you're firing from something stable and aiming through a scope. A super-costly, super-accurate .338 Lapua rifle is a medium range weapon when fired from the hip.

GOLDEN HOUR TREATMENT

The golden hour is the first sixty minutes after an injury occurs. If someone provides treatment, even first aid, in that crucial early juncture, it helps a lot. If not, the patient has time to bleed out or get infected or be gnawed on by opportunistic scavengers, none of which help him get better.

So! If you're rolling a medical identity within the first sixty minutes, here's what happens:

Fumble: The patient takes another 1-5 wounds (1d10, divided in half) and passes out.

Matched Failure: The only thing your patient gets out of your first aid is a Violence (3) stress check.

Failure: You've covered the problem with gauze and tape, but it's not helping much.

Success: Your patient heals wounds equal to the tens place of your roll. You rolled a 34? Three wounds are erased.

Matched Success: The patient heals wounds equal to the sum of your roll. If you got a 22, that's 4 wounds, and if you got a 44 it's 8 wounds.

Crit: The patient heals 20 wounds!

This roll presumes that you've got him somewhere fairly safe and motionless, and that you've got access to first aid supplies. If you're doing it on the deck of a rolling ship, you might get a -10% on your roll.

HOSPITAL STAYS

If it's been longer than an hour and the person is admitted to a hospital, a person with a medical identity can perform surgery. This can only be attempted once per injury.

Fumble: The patient just took 1d10 wounds and is unconscious.

Matched Failure: The patient's wounds remain unchanged.

Failure: The patient heals wounds at the standard daily rate of 1 wound.

Success: The patient heals wounds equal to your roll. If you rolled 49, he can erase 49 wounds. This cannot heal the very last wound. Only bed rest cures that. They're probably not up to any detailed interrogation or mental gymnastics.

Matched Success: Same as a success, but the patient also feels pretty good and is capable of thinking critically and answering questions intelligently soon after the operation.

Crit: The patient heals all but 1d10 wounds (or recovers wounds equal to the roll, if that would leave them with fewer wounds).

Once a patient's been taken care of initially at a hospital, they recover the remainder of their wounds at the standard rate of 1 wound per day.

If the patient never actually goes to hospital, they recover at the standard rate, but they might get worse and worse depending on their circumstances (and the GM's whim).

Getting rid of wounds and other physical or mental ailments is described on page 75 of Book One: Play.

THERAPY

Healing the mind is not much different from healing the body but requires an identity with the Therapeutic feature. You put in the time and effort and you pay attention and make gentle, encouraging suggestions until the patient's psyche is reassembled. If you don't have the Therapeutic feature, you're stuck nodding and scratching your head.

You cannot use any therapeutic identity on yourself.

IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

The best time to treat someone for a psychological shock is soon after it occurs, because that's when you can frame it properly and demonstrate a healthy way to think about it. People who've been shocked aren't in the best position to calculate the healthiest way to regard their own damage, so having outside guidance is very useful. Talk them down in a calm, soothing voice, and roll.

Fumble: The target now *also* has a Self (3) check to contend with.

Matched Failure: If you have a relationship with the patient it drops by 5%.

Failure: No change or effect.

Success: You can erase a failed notch and change it into a hardened notch instead, if the person being counseled agrees.

Matched Success or Crit: You can erase a notch the person took, hardened or failed. It's as if they never faced the stress check. If the patient doesn't want to be helped, nothing happens.

AVATARS

Many more archetypes are found in Book One: Play (available in print or digital format), Book Four: Expose (digital only), and Book Five: Mine (also digital only).

Go to page 106 in Book One: Play for the full description and channels of the Guide archetype.

An avatar is a person who walks the path of one of the archetypes in the Invisible Clergy. Everything they do in life has to align with what their archetype does, or else they lose their power and the connection to that archetype. The more they walk the walk, the greater their rating in their avatar identity, which in turn increases the sort of magick they can channel to change the world. Indeed, a **channel** is what avatars call their magick.

THE GUIDE

ATTRIBUTES

We've all had that time in our life when we weren't sure which direction to take. Perhaps we lost faith in our religion after a tragedy, perhaps a bad breakup drove us to the banks of the Thames with thoughts of suicide. This is where the Guide steps in. From the person who drives a taxi to the wise mentor we remember from our youth, the Guide lights a path for us to follow. It may be something as simple as getting directions to an address we're seeking, or it might be advice that changes our lives.

The Guide understands the path. His role is not to complete that path, but to show others the way. The Guide is a facilitator in its better aspects. In its worst, the Guide is an instigator, for not all Guides send us on the path we wanted or even the path we needed to find.

Cult leaders and proselytizers alike can be Guides. One instills hope while the other brings obedience through fear. Both embody an idea they may not fully understand. The Guide is a vessel through which others come to know the path they must take. Cartographers make maps which guide us around the world. In their own way, so does the travel show host. The concierge at that nice hotel in New York might have been an avatar of the Guide.

We see them on the corner — strangers who point the way to the job interview we would have otherwise missed. We see them on TV — mega-preachers offering salvation through broadcast media. The scale is not important. What counts is that Guides get people on a certain path. Finding the right specific person often becomes their life's work. Whether for a moment or a decade, the avatar of the Guide has a place in time where he must reside and wait for that lost person to arrive, seeking help.

TABOOS

The Guide never completes the path he helps others along. The cabbie does not get out at the stop. The preacher does not live like the

Maria in Three Parts has two avatar characters available to the players. Their archetypes are provided here.

Each archetype listed includes important attributes of the avatar who follows the archetype, the taboos that the avatar must avoid, and the magickal powers they get based on their rating. "The Guide" or "The Warrior" refers both to the names of the archetypes and the avatars that follow them.

poor he seeks to help. The wrestling coach does not compete on the mat at the tournament.

A Guide, therefore, never becomes that which he knows so much about. He is always the one who helps a journey, but never finishes it. Those who cannot do, teach. This can't be overstated. As soon as a Guide begins to walk the path himself, he gives up his connection to the archetype. The Guide is that which lights the way, he is not the way itself.

CHANNELS

Vince Kirkland, the Guide player character, has 55% in this identity. This gives him the following powers:

Inherent Direction: No matter where the Guide is, mentally or physically, he has a chance of sending someone in the right direction.

This channel can only work when someone else activates it by asking for advice, guidance, or instructions. The results are as follow:

With a fumble or matched failure, the Guide gives guidance that seems reasonable enough, but which directs the recipient to disaster. If it's at all possible, this should be ironic, backhanded guidance that fulfills the letter of the request while transgressing its spirit violently.

With a failure, there's no advice to give.

With a success, the Guide gives helpful directions, though maybe a little vague.

One a matched success or a crit, the Guide gets a sense, not only of where to go, but some intuition about the challenges or obstacles along the way.

Advisor: The Guide can offer solid advice to anyone, on any subject, once a day with a successful roll of his avatar: Guide identity. He has to specifically tell someone what to do or, if they know what they want, how to accomplish it. If the person so advised does as the Guide says, they gets to flip-flop their next roll.

Moreover, the Guide has a special connection to anyone who treats her as a mentor or guru or anyone she has designated as a protégé. Once per day, by dispensing some kind of cryptic, gnostic, ambiguous whizz-dumb, the Guide can roll percentiles and give the people on the other side of those relationships the outcome of this roll to use as the outcome on one of *their*

THE WARRIOR

ATTRIBUTES

People have a natural inclination to hate and fear outsiders. Maybe it's genetic — an atavism from apes who excluded many cousins for fear their illness might pollute the pack. Or maybe it's psychological, a necessary downside to affection for society and family. Or maybe we're all sinners, living in a fallen world.

In any event, the Warrior is someone who exists to eradicate some problem, policy, or people he deems dangerous to society. He is a spirit of uncompromising extermination. While he might die for the cause, he's far more interested in killing for it.

As warfare became more complex and sophisticated, other archetypes muscled in on the Warrior's territory — but really, the pie of human butchery had enough slices for the Unknown Soldier and the Bloodless General too. The Warrior is distinguished from more recent military types by his ideological purity — though of course, the ideological killer is as fresh and modern as yesterday's headlines.

The dark side of the Warrior archetype is easy to see — look at a photo of the grinning triggermen of the Third Reich, standing over a kneeling rabbi. Examine old postcards of Ku Klux Klan lynching picnics. Visit Syria.

But at the same time, in an age notable for cynicism and compromise, the Warrior is one figure who draws a line in the sand and says "No further." There were a few medical Warriors when smallpox was still an accident and not a weapon. Their philosophical descendants battle AIDS today. The War on Poverty didn't attract as many avatars as the War on Drugs, but they were there. They're involved in the War on Terrorism, too — for better *and* for worse.

next rolls. This is called a **hunch roll**, and it's the recipient of the hunch roll who gets to decide when to use it next.

The restriction that this can only be done once a day is per person. If eight people ask the Guide for direction, she can roll eight times, but never more than once per person per day.

TABOOS

Each Warrior avatar must choose something he's against. It can be a people or a gender — or, more attractively, a social ill or malignant philosophy. Compromise with the enemy is the Warrior's taboo. Take, for example, a DEA agent who is a Warrior against drugs. If his own son is found with a single marijuana seed in his car, even if there's a plausible explanation, the Warrior agent must still insist that the car be seized and the boy charged with possession.

Zero tolerance means zero tolerance. Similarly, an avatar who declared war on illiteracy would break taboo if she gave up trying to teach an adult who couldn't read — even if said adult had no interest in learning and was actively, abusively resisting.

CHANNELS

Jada Parker, the Warrior player character, has 60% in this identity. This gives her the following powers:

Stalwart: The Warrior does not need to make stress checks while directly pursuing her purpose. A Daesh Warrior makes no Violence checks while fighting against (or murdering) Americans. Similarly, a crusading Warrior against poverty can bypass the sort of Helplessness check that less committed do-gooders must face.

This does not mean that the Warrior automatically gets a hardened notch. The meter doesn't change at all.

Inspiration: The Warrior's passion and ferocity inspire those around her. Anyone who fights for the Warrior's cause at her side gains a +10% bonus to a relevant ability or identity. Note that the Warrior herself does not get this bonus.

The complete list of channel abilities and other information for the Warrior archetype starts on page 123 of Book One: Play.

ADEPTS

Practitioners of magick who follow specific traditions are called adepts. They have to embrace the paradox of their tradition in order to build up minor and significant **charges**, which they can use to cast minor and significant **spells**.

In *Maria in Three Parts*, two of the player characters are adepts. Each adept starts the game knowing all of the spells provided here for their tradition. There are more spells for these traditions in *Book One: Play* — we just included the five of each that we thought were most interesting for *Maria in Three Parts*. Each

also starts with eight **minor charges** to use as they see fit. To cast a spell, the adept rolls their adept identity. If they succeed, the spell works, and the charges are spent. If they fail, the spell doesn't work, and no charge is spent. Each spell explains what happens when it works and sometimes what happens when it doesn't.

To get more charges, adepts must perform the activity listed under Generating a Charge.

Adepts may also access major charges and cast major spells, but in the interests of space we've left them out of *Maria in Three Parts*.

The complete list of spells and information about major charges for the Cinemancy tradition can be found starting on page 150 of Book One: Play.

CINEMANCY

AKA AUTEURS, CLICHÉS, TROPPERS

Because many writers are lazy, and because many moviegoers seem to prefer it that way, many movies have the same conventions, clichés, and tropes. These tropes have been driven into the collective mind of humanity, like ruts driven into the ground by the same damn car riding on the grass.

Everyone knows you can cure amnesia with a blow to the head, right? Except you can't. That only causes more brain damage. But it's been used as a cheap writing technique in so many movies that it's become part of our collective knowledge. More importantly, people believe in that amnesia cure. If only a few people believed that, no biggie. But so much of humanity has seen that cliché so many times, the illusion is more real than the truth.

That's where cinemancers come in. Not only do they see those ruts in the ground, they can get other people to agree that it was caused by a 1998 Nissan Sentra that wouldn't start when a monster was creeping up on it. Cinemancy uses magick to make clichés real. After all, everyone knows about them already. Magick just gives the tropes a push needed to manifest in our world.

The central paradox in Cinemancy is that movies are fake but more accepted than reality. When you think of a newborn, chances are you picture a pink, impossibly large baby of several weeks old rather than the tiny, jaundiced wad that a newborn really is.

Cinemancers are often called clichés or troppers. They like to call themselves auteurs, but other people only use that term when they've been properly scared.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Much of a cinemancer's power comes from humanity remembering these clichés. Thus, when they

get someone to remember and describe an overused cinematic cliché, the troper gets a minor charge. Thinking about it isn't enough; it must be described either verbally or in writing. Neither the cliché nor the person can be reused until a week has passed. Quoting a memorable line is typical, though it has to be verbatim, acted out, and can't just be repeating what the auteur says.

Generate a Significant Charge: Scenes and plots are not the only clichés used in Hollywood. Many times, entire characters are walking clichés, their role in the film easily recognizable the moment they come on screen. A cinemancer can build a significant charge by acting as one of these stock characters for five straight hours. This doesn't have to be a specific character from a movie, just the type of character. Examples of these cliché characters include the Hardboiled Detective, the Manic Pixie Dream Girl, the Dumb Jock, and many more. The mask cannot drop or the cinemancer must start from scratch.

Taboo: Because cinemancers are dependent on these tropes manifesting in real life, they cannot see the beginnings of a cliché and not fill whatever role is necessary to ensure the cliché finishes. If a cinemancer is driving in a chase and sees a fruit cart, she must ram it. Otherwise, she loses all power. They tend to be polite but reserved in order to avoid the entanglements of the dreaded meet cute, as the behavior of a character in a romcom is usually legally actionable.

CINEMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

DOES THIS SMELL LIKE CHLOROFORM?
Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: In reality, chloroform won't knock someone out in seconds. The chemical starts to degrade as soon as it hits air, it can take several minutes to kick in, and even then, it has a nasty tendency to cause heart attacks. But that's not how it works in the movies, so that's not how it works for a cinemancer. With this spell, you don't even need the actual drug. You just need a white cloth and to come up behind your target unawares. Then you can cover the victim's mouth with the handkerchief, cast the spell, and the poor sucker drops into a deep sleep for about five minutes. Anything that would wake someone from normal sleep breaks the spell.

STOCK WARDROBE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Hollywood often gets the outfits of police, military, doctors, and similar professionals at least partially wrong. Not all doctors wear blue scrubs, and soldiers don't usually wear fingerless gloves and mismatched camouflage. Yet no one in the movie seems to notice, so why should anyone else? If the cinemancer dresses in the traditional outfit of a professional — police, soldier, doctor, and so on — no matter how laughable the disguise, she's viewed by others at that professional's job as legitimate. A cinemancer could dress up in a police costume with a plastic badge and the wrong patches, but still get accepted down at the precinct house. ("Her? New gal, I think. I'm sure she's fine.") Note that accepted is not the same as blanket privileges. But as long as she doesn't give people a reason to suspect her, she can wander freely as normal for the role.

One requirement is that the cinemancer only speak in jargon and clichéd dialogue related to that profession. ("Move along, now. Yes, I have a warrant. You have the right to remain silent...")

This lasts for thirty minutes and can be extended in thirty-minute increments, up to three hours, by spending more charges.

Also note that it only works on people in the mimicked profession. The civilians are going to notice that *one* of those alleged soldiers is fifty pounds overweight and carrying an airsoft gun instead of a real rifle.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG

Cost: 1-7 minor charges.

Effect: What happens when a character in a movie says, "We'll be fine!" or "What could go wrong?" Right, they get attacked, hit, arrested, lost, or beat down.

Anytime someone else predicts something like, "X won't happen" and this spell is cast, whatever "X" stands for happens. How much it costs depends on that variable. The bigger the event, the more it costs. Here's a guideline:

- 1 charge: "We're not going to run out of gas."
- 2 charges: "Like I'm going to run into my ex-wife at this strip club." Note that this spell can't be used to violate anyone's free will.
- 3 charges: "It's not like I'm going to get arrested."
- 4 charges: "Calm down, I'm not going to get shot."
- 5 charges: "It's not like a freak snowstorm will trap us in this cabin."

Vague predictions like, "Nothing bad's gonna happen" or "We'll be fine!" cause a serendipitous injury with 1d10 wounds per charge, up to five charges. These dice are added together like hand-to-hand damage.

The cinemancer can't cast this in response to something she says herself. If cast in response to someone who knows how the spell works, there's a 2-charge surcharge, because artificial serendipity is a lot harder for magick to tweak than the real thing.

This spell only causes coincidences! "She'll never fall in love with me" is not subject to this enchantment. It changes circumstances and objects, not people's feelings or thoughts.

But within those parameters, the only negative that cannot be made real is something incredibly nasty or deadly; no spending five minor charges to kill someone or whip up a hurricane. Any event that lasts a while, like a freak snowstorm, ends after one hour.

CINEMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

AIN'T GOT TIME TO BLEED

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Whether the hero of the movie gets thrown through a window, mauled by a tiger, sliced up with a knife, or even tossed from a moving vehicle, chances are he stands up, brushes off some dirt, and is ready for action. Just as heroes can ignore injuries that would incapacitate normal folk, a cinemancer can use this spell to ignore the effects of any non-lethal injury. The wounds are still taken, but no Violence check is necessary and the wound does not affect any other abilities or activities: they can walk on a broken leg, a cut closes that would normally bleed out, a sucking chest wound doesn't suck, etc. Any lethal injury is still that — no walking around with their decapitated head in their hands.

In order to activate the spell, however, a cinemancer must say a bad joke or pun related to the injury or scene. If they were thrown from a car, they could say, "Was it something I said?" or, "Glad I know how to roll with it." But don't worry, it just has to be a quip. It doesn't have to be funny.

HE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME, ISN'T HE?

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: You already know what this spell does just from the title, don't you? See the power of Cinemancy? If the cinemancer wants to find someone, he turns his back on a doorway, road, hall, or similar path and starts talking shit about that person. Not just something disrespectful, but downright mean. The kind of stuff that you'd be thoroughly embarrassed to be caught saying about that person. When the charges are spent and the cinemancer says the magic words ("He's right behind me, isn't he?") the universe quickly and quietly arranges to have that person

come up behind the cinemancer. This isn't some kind of teleportation. Events are just changed so the guy you're talking about just happens to have been nearby all along, and walking up behind you was a natural procession of events for his day.

Be careful about the repercussions that a given person might bring. Use this spell to bring the President of the United States of America up behind you, and say hello to all the nice, heavily armed agents from the Secret Service. Busting someone out of jail can also have ugly blowback.

FULMINATURGY

AKA ARMIGERS, GUNSELS, SLOPPY SECONDS

Despite the name, this is not a school about violence. The thousand-yard stare of the gun mage is fixed, not on some sordid squabble, but on the disconnect between the crystal-clear individual and the amorphous mass of humanity. In the frontier era, one could take a rifle into the wilderness and thrive or perish, separate from civilization. That's less of an option now, but the gun within the city is still the tool that steels the individual to resist coercion when outnumbered... or that forces him to knuckle under... or that culls him when his resistance is insufficient.

Fulminatures are known to each other and their friends as armigers. Those with less kindly inclinations towards the school call them gunnels or sloppy seconds in what is presumably a reference to the Second Amendment to the US Constitution.

Fulminatures often have multiple firearms, sometimes entire arsenals, but there is always one gun that is *theirs* in a uniquely meaningful way. This is referred to as their **totem weapon**, and it's critical to their charging and taboo structure. A fulminature must have their totem weapon to cast any spell, though it doesn't necessarily have to be out and brandished. If you've got the gun in your purse, it can stay there.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Any time the fulminature moves around in a public place openly carrying their totem firearm, they get a minor charge. They can amass a minor charge once every two hours by doing this. For charging purposes, it must be visible. For this, you *can't* be carrying it in your purse. The fulminature's own home is usually considered public as long as it's visible from a road. If some stranger could

drive by and see her marching around armed, that's good enough.

Generate a Significant Charge: The significant charge also depends on the prized totem gun. Carrying the weapon secretly, for ten hours or more outside their home, generates a significant charge. It does not matter if the weapon is spotted or briefly revealed, as long as the fulminature knows that he is carrying it hidden from common view. Naturally, this is a lot easier if your totem is a small derringer than a sniper setup. That said, carrying a disassembled totem rifle in a briefcase works fine. The weapon can be in pieces, as long as all the pieces are present. It doesn't even have to be loaded.

Taboo: There are two main strains of Fulminaturgy, and their philosophical divisions are reflected in their taboos. The faction Ellen Kaloudis, the fulminature in this book, belongs to regards guns as the means by which she offsets encroachment by over-reaching authority. She loses her charges if she is ever disarmed. Any time she leaves her house or vehicle without some form of firearm, her charges dissipate.

She also loses her power if anyone else takes her totem gun.

FULMINATURGY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

STAND ALONE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: The fulminature stands out from the crowd. He is distinct and worthier of attention than those around him. He seems, in a word, important, or at least significant. There are times when being noticed is the last thing you want, of course, but when you want to catch someone's attention, Stand Alone makes you

seem to matter. This can give a +10–20% bonus to a relevant roll if the situation fits.

SERIOUS Demeanor

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: The fulminaturge is no trifling figure, but rather someone of grave appearance whose words have weight and whose opinions must be carefully considered. Attempting to laugh at, demean, or dismiss an armiger who has Serious Demeanor in effect forces a Helplessness (4) check as the mocker realizes the gravity of his foolish actions.

Serious Demeanor lasts a number of minutes equal to the casting roll.

STEADY HAND, STEADY HEART

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: The armiger can cast this spell as an instinctive response to a failed stress check. A hand flies to her totem weapon and in that moment, panic fades and clear thought resumes. The gun mage still takes the failed notch, but does not have to decide between fleeing, freezing, or fighting.

FULMINATURGY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

.45 CALIBER EXORCISM

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: For a number of minutes equal to the casting roll, the fulminaturge can shoot demons, immaterial spirits, and similar unnatural entities

with normal bullets. She can use any firearm for this, not just her totem weapon. It still requires a successful roll on something relevant, but it does damage just like a gun does to the living. This does not allow anyone else to harm immaterial entities, nor does it give the caster the ability to perceive spirits that aren't already visible.

NOW I'M A GUN

Cost: All remaining charges (minimum of 1 significant charge).

Effect: To cast this spell, the armiger has to point a firearm at her target and say something like "I'm a gun" or simply "Bang."

The gun does not go off, there's no sound or muzzle flash, and no ammunition is expended, but the target hears a shot and sees smoke and flame from the weapon. The target feels the sledge-hit of impact, the shearing of flesh, and the spray of hot blood. The pain is — to the target — entirely real. To everyone else, it's entirely hallucinatory.

This spell ignores armor, and possibly light cover; it leaves no forensic traces, and it can set the target up for Helplessness or Self checks when doctors insist that he's fine and it's all in his head. The target, meanwhile, continues to see a bloody, seeping wound. Dodging does not protect against this spell. There is no damage cap.

The target can perform first aid on himself, but no one else can diminish the wound with mere science. Magickal healing can fix it, however.

RITUALS

Rituals are like magick recipes. Anyone with the Casts Rituals feature can use them. Anyone with an adept or avatar identity has Casts Rituals, so all four of the pregenerated characters can use them.

There are a few problems with rituals. Nobody can make new rituals, and nobody's sure where the old ones came from. Most rituals have been lost.

Many don't work anymore, either because of transcription errors or just because people don't *think* the right way to understand them. Some don't even do what they say.

Most rituals are taught to people by demons, who always lie.

HOW TO CAST MINOR RITUALS

There's a ritual in *Maria in Three Parts* which lets the player characters summon a pair of entities called authority figures. Maria, once she's whole, can teach it to them. They might want to cast it. Here's how.

Avatars can roll their avatar identity if it's better than their Secrecy ability, since an avatar identity has Casts Rituals as a freebie feature.

Adepts can spend charges and roll their adept identity, complete with flip-flops, unless for some freak reason another option is better, since they too have Casts Rituals as a freebie.

There's also a ritual to summon Fancy Pants, a demon, but that's not going provided by anyone in this scenario.

If you'd like to read more about rituals and how to use them, go to page 175 of Book One: Play.

THE CABAL

A group of PCs working together is called a **cabal**. In this scenario, each player character knows at least one of the others, and the four of them together constitute a cabal. The following backgrounds and roleplaying tips may be photocopied or reproduced together with the character sheets at the end of this book. See page 2-3 for additional information about assigning relationships.

ELLEN KALOUDIS

Ellen was 19 when she signed up with the US Navy, happy to leave behind her boring family and job at the Palm Beach Gardens mall. She was trained as a hospital corpsman and fought in the Gulf War, losing her right leg below the knee to a landmine in Kuwait. That led to drinking, which led to alcoholism, which led to some mostly successful 12 steps. She's been sober(ish) for one year, and she has a healthy relationship with her sponsor, Andre D.

However, that alcoholism has hurt her. She worked her post-war years as an EMT, but a few months ago, she made one too many mistakes while drunk and almost killed a man. Now, no hospital or private ambulance company will touch her. She's running out of unemployment benefits soon and has no idea what to do next.

Back when she was an EMT, she was called to a bar where two avatars of the Warrior got into a huge fight. She witnessed some magick there, which opened her eyes to the occult.

That's also where she met Detective Jefferson and Jada Parker (who was one of the fighters). When she explained this to her sponsor Andre, he revealed himself to be a fulminaturge. He is now training Ellen in that school.

Ellen knows she is at a crossroads but without much direction. She's excited about fulminaturgy and is considering taking a job as a mall security guard. The urge to drink is getting stronger.

Roleplaying Tips: Ellen comes across as negative and pessimistic a lot (but not all) of the time. That's because she gave up alcohol without changing her viewpoint or behaviors. However, she can be surprisingly cheerful at seemingly random times. She's one of those people who confuse being honest with being untactful — and she likes being honest. When it comes to guns, she's a staunch Second Amendment defender and honestly believes an armed society is a safe society.

JADA PARKER

Jada grew up in the only African-American family in a small Oklahoma town. Her grades were too low for college, so she did a few odd jobs in Oklahoma City before taking a job with a Pest-N-Critter Defense, a small chain of pest-control franchises. Here, Jada finally found a purpose for her life. Not only was she very good at her job, she took an overgenerous view of her role. She didn't kill bugs — she was a stalwart defender of people's homes from unseen dangers.

She moved around a bit, always heading to where a new job existed in the company. These days, Jada's job is her life. She happily works 10-hour shifts and tends to bring up pest control at every party or date. This has led to her being mostly alone. Instead of giving up, she redoubled her efforts and came across as too friendly and talkative.

Jada recently broke into the occult underground by helping a katharourge (an adept obsessed with cleaning things) named Marilyn Gibbs keep her home pest-free. As part of her

payment, Marilyn explained how Jada was likely an avatar of the Warrior. Jada has since fallen seriously in love with Marilyn's ditziness, and for the first time since becoming a pest-control worker, she feels that fire of understanding her purpose in life.

After learning about her avatar status, Jada went on a bender looking for fights. She ran into another avatar of the Warrior and picked a fight to see what would happen. Detective Jefferson showed up and probably saved her life. Now, the two are decent friends, and Jada calls her to ask for advice.

Roleplaying Tips: Jada is full of energy and life. She's the type who enters a party and instantly starts talking to people, dominating the conversation and eventually turning it towards something she knows. For her, that's often pest control but not obsessively so. She does have some social skills, after all. She also wants to impress people with how she wants to protect them from danger.

GREG O'NEIL

Greg's parents were compassionate, loving, and supportive — and they died while driving drunk when he was just two years old. His uncle Pat raised him, although that is being kind. For the most part, television raised Greg. His uncle put food on the table but was too obsessed with football and the local bar to pay much attention to his nephew.

Greg graduated college with a BA in film studies and quickly went to work as a newspaper film critic. However, his acerbic and sometimes faulty criticisms prevented him from staying too long in that role. Instead, Greg has created a small business with his site and YouTube channel Brutally Honest Films. It doesn't make him rich or famous, and it wouldn't pay the bills if he didn't supplement his income with bribes.

If a director or studio wants a favorable review, they have to pay Greg. He doesn't ask for too much, but without at least a barter or something, he'll create a savage and damaging review. His viewership increases when he posts such reviews, giving him some leverage. One

time, a negotiation over a bribe got physical and he called 911. That's how he met Detective Renee Jefferson.

The two talked a lot, although Greg did most of the talking. He texts her now and then if he expects another negotiation problem. He thinks Renee looks up to him because he's a self-made man. She doesn't.

Trevor Hale is his pet project. This young kid has started posting film reviews that are as nasty as Greg's. Although Trevor doesn't understand a decoupage from a denouement, Greg thinks the kid has potential. The kid is also a budding cinemancer and clued Greg into the occult underground and the mysteries of cinemancy.

Roleplaying Tips: Greg is a jerk online, but in real life, he's mostly a decent guy. His jerk behavior's usually directed at wait staff, retail salespeople, and others who can't be mean back at him without putting their jobs in jeopardy. But to people he considers his peers (such as the cabal) or people in charge, he's almost too friendly and polite.

VINCE KIRKLAND

Vince grew up with six brothers, one mom who couldn't decide whether to get addicted to alcohol or meth, and three different dads over the years that mostly ignored him. He eventually learned to be a mother to his siblings when Ma Kirkland took off for a few days to party. That was preferable to when she was home, as she would scream at her kids and blame them for all the troubles in the world.

During high school, he sought out social misfits and had some close friends — until his mom was arrested for selling meth at the school. Vince lost a lot of friends that day. When she was released on bail and got home, she and Vince had a huge fight. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore. He called Child Services and reported her for neglect and emotional abuse. After that, the brothers were split and sent to different foster homes. They all now hate Vince and blame him for the situation.

Detective Jefferson helped Vince and the brothers find decent foster homes, so she

became a mother-figure for him. As they kept in sporadic contact after he exited out from the home, she saw signs of his power and explained the occult underground to him. Knowing he's an avatar of the Guide has brought a direction to his life that he lacked before.

Besides helping others, Vince absolutely loves live music, especially old-school punk. He became friends with a scene kid called Josh Lucas, who loves Vince like an older brother. (And maybe a bit more.) He's also run into Ellen Kaloudis from time to time and has developed a small crush on her. That she vaguely looks like his mother makes him feel weird.

Roleplaying Tips: Vince is a gentle giant of sorts, but he has a lot of pain that can manifest as violence. He's also protective of everyone to some degree but especially younger people (like his friend Josh). He'll hold up his end of a conversation, but start talking about music, and he becomes overly talkative.

MARIA IN THREE PARTS

SUMMARY

A Blue Line helper (see sidebar) goes missing, and the players must find her. The helper was split into three parts by an artifact, one for each passion, and now some unnatural entities are after her. Worse, her triplets are wreaking havoc at the local hospital. Meanwhile, the demon responsible is on its way to kill a local Blue Line leader.

BACKGROUND

Maria Menchaca hates being wrong. She also hates bureaucracies. Combined together, it's no wonder she impolitely asked to leave the police department after only four years. But during that time, she saw a few weird cases and became chummy with the Blue Line.

As the years passed, she turned into a very useful Van Helsing (a nickname for Blue Line friendlies who know a lot about the occult). In fact, she was able to give important info

on many different unnatural topics that led to successful busts and saved lives. Blue Line considers her a treasure. If someone needed to know about some occult weirdness, Maria could help them understand it.

What the Blue Line doesn't know — and would be horrified to learn — is that she gets her spookily accurate information from a demon who calls itself Fancy Pants. When Blue Line asks for something she doesn't know, her obsession to be correct drives her to summon Fancy Pants and ask it for one of its secrets. Rather than let the demon possess her own body, Maria brings home men she meets anonymously online and lets Fancy Pants possess them. In return, Fancy Pants uses its new meat suit to cause chaos around town, then returns to Maria's house to give the man's body back.

Summoning demons, even for good ends, is morally precarious business, and Maria's conscience has been bothering her. A week ago, she summoned Fancy Pants to end their arrangement once and for all. The demon convinced her to let it control its current host for a few weeks so it could track down a magickal artifact to protect Maria in case the men it had previously possessed with Maria's help come back for revenge.

Demons have a way of making even terrible ideas sound convincing, so Maria reluctantly agreed. It turned out to be an artifact called the Del Rubio Necklace, which, instead of protecting her, violently split her into three versions of herself, one for each of her passions (fear, rage, and noble). After the split, Fancy Pants ran away to find a person Maria talked about a lot, one Detective Jefferson, who Fancy Pants now plans to hurt in order to punish Maria further.

THE BLUE LINE

Police often come in contact with the occult underground, so the Blue Line is an unofficial, mostly unorganized group of law enforcement officials who know magick is real. They rely on each other for help. In Blue Line terms, Maria is a Van Helsing. That means Blue Line members contact her to explain the weirdness they saw on the job. From what an avatar is to how best to kill a demon, Maria helps the Blue Line's members survive out there.

1: WHERE'S MARIA?

Before starting the scenario, ask the players to read aloud or summarize any parts of their characters' backgrounds that they are willing to share. This helps the players realize and assign the relationships stats between the characters. Then announce they all get the same text from someone they all know, Detective Renee Jefferson: "Blue Line needs your help. Call me ASAP."

Renee arranges for a conference call between herself and the PCs to cover the following:

- A Blue Line resource named Maria Menchaca lives in the PCs' hometown.
- She's very important to Blue Line because she tracks down any info they need within a few days.
- However, she's not answering her usual phones. That never happens.

- Just in case, go to her house at 2117 W. Pine and carefully check in with her.

Renee emphasizes her words carefully and explains Maria is not only a former police officer, she can be difficult if not treated with respect.

All characters have a relationship with Renee, so it shouldn't be a problem convincing them to go. Unless players do something weird, they will all arrive at the same time.

For much more on the Blue Line, go to page 16 in Book Three: Reveal.

The address is a typical low-income house on a bland residential street. What's atypical is how a corner of the house is missing and police, EMTs, and the fire department are on hand. Part of a wall has blown out, and a dark and half-destroyed kitchen is plainly visible from the street.

If the players want to investigate the house, they need to make some rolls (such as Connect, Status, Lie, or a relevant identity) to get past the police. Greg the cinemancer could use Stock Wardrobe, while Ellen could use Serious Demeanor to intimidate some poor cop. Name-dropping Renee wouldn't hurt, but the officers at the scene have no idea where she is. Any call to her phone goes straight to voicemail.

If they ask about Maria, a gruff police officer says they can find all three triplets at St. Mattis Hospital. Since they found three unconscious versions of Maria, they assumed all three were sisters and sent them in an ambulance to get treatment for second-degree burns and minor injuries.

Inside the house, everything looks pretty normal except for two rooms: the kitchen and the basement.

- The kitchen is where Maria split into three, so it's a mess. Dark scorch marks cover the light wood cabinets and white tile floor. All electronics are burned out. With a successful Notice roll, the PCs can find the singed and soggy remains of a small gift box and some orange and blue wrapping paper. (This held the Del Rubio Necklace.)

- The basement is home to what at first looks like a BDSM playset with rope, chains, locks, and even a large wooden St. Andrews cross. This is where Maria would tie up gentleman callers and summon Fancy Pants.

The ritual to summon this particular demon requires a pair of colorful pants, six candles of different colors, and a photo of Bob Hope. All of these are in abundance down there.

Since the PCs are part of the occult underground, they might know this is part of a demon summoning ritual. A successful roll using Knowledge or Secrecy (or an adept or avatar identity) reveals:

Success: The PC knows this was likely used to summon a specific demon.

Matched success: As success, plus the PC can tell multiple people were likely brought here for the demon to possess.

Critical success: As matched success, plus the PC has vaguely heard of an old chaos-loving demon with weird pants that fits the bill.

At this point, the cabal has two places it can go. If they want to find Renee, go to It's Her Day Off on page 24. If they would rather start finding Maria, go to Welcome to St. Mattis Hospital below.

If the players don't get that they need to collect the three Marias, Renee calls them The PCs hear gunshots in the background (she's fighting Fancy Pants) and Renee's desperate pleas to get Maria and bring her to the police station. Then the line dies.

2: WELCOME TO ST. MATTIS HOSPITAL

There are three versions of Maria at the hospital. Each looks identical except for they each have different injuries. Their necklaces only have one diamond each and clearly are missing two.

Splitting Maria into three people ruled by a single passion creates a sort of influence-field that affects those nearby. The nature of the passion defines the effect. The three of them together in one building created chaos.

As people started to get angry, afraid, and noble in the same ward, the Marias woke up in separate ER rooms and went to follow their passions. Here's where each triplet went:

- Fear Maria was obviously mentally ill, so she was sent to the psych unit on the third floor. She's still there, hoping she doesn't hurt anyone.
- Rage Maria overhead two nurses talking about the stifling bureaucracy of the administrators, so she went to the admin offices.

- Noble Maria wanted to see people struggling and winning, so she wandered into the NICU: The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

ABOUT THE THREE MARIAS

Maria has enough occult knowledge to figure out roughly what happened to herself, so her triplets aren't clueless. They're just beholden to their passions and unable to think clearly about how to fix this problem.

Until they arrived at the ER, all three Marias were unconscious. Now they've woken up.

If one conscious Maria ever sets eyes on another conscious Maria, they each feel drawn to one another. See Maria Made Whole below for details.



EMERGENCY ROOM

The emergency room is chaotic. A pair of nurses are yelling at a clerk over the price of insulin, a doctor is painfully twisting the arm of a junkie, and two patients with sprained ankles are limping around trying to get medical help for everyone else.

If the scenario has been moving quickly, spend some time having the PCs deal with fear-, rage-, and noble-influenced people. If the players spent too much time at Maria's house, the GM shouldn't drag the story down with such encounters.

The PCs can speak to a noble-influenced nurse or doctor who says that one triplet was sent to the psych ward, while the others are in treatment room two. Of course, that room is now empty since the other two Marias went elsewhere. If the cabal can speak to a relatively calm person, the person says they saw someone matching Maria's description.

- One witness says a woman matching Maria's description heard about the high price of insulin and said she'd teach those pencil-pushers a lesson they won't forget.
- Another witness says a Maria with a calm smile on her face talked about the strength of parents and headed up the elevator somewhere.

The cabal can easily learn the layout of the hospital from the ER: Admin is on this floor and a good walk down the length of the building, the psych unit is on floor three, and there's a birth center in between the ER and admin. The NICU is on the fourth floor.

Since Vince is an avatar of the Guide, he can get vague directions for all three Marias but not exactly where they are located. In other words, the PCs can figure out what ward to visit but not what room.

It doesn't matter where the cabal heads first. Fear Maria, Rage Maria, and Noble Maria remain where they are until the PCs can get there. While the Maria in each location reacts differently if another triplet shows up, the scenario still runs the same. That means the players can decide where to go without ruining things for the GM.

AUTHORITY FIGURES ARE COMING

In each place where a Maria is busy (psych unit, offices, NICU), the unnatural entities known as authority figures eventually show up. Their goal is to capture each triplet. See Authority Figures on page 27 for their stats and details.

What if the PCs stand and fight the authority figures? These unnatural entities are not that tough, and any weapon hurts them. If killed, they turn into a dark mist and disappear, only

to come back around a nearby corner in five minutes.

If the authority figures find a two-part Maria, (see page 23) they suddenly stop and stare at the ground in motionless embarrassment. However, they return to their normal stalkerish ways in a minute. If they see a complete Maria, they look sad and walk away to disappear around the nearest corner and never be seen again.

PSYCH UNIT

St. Mattis Hospital doesn't have a fully staffed psych unit. Instead, it uses a small section of the third floor for patients clearly showing signs of mental illness. However, things are not well up here. Fear Maria's influence is spreading.

When the PCs arrive, they see no one. The nurse's station has half-eaten sandwiches and cold coffee, implying people suddenly left. The light is strong and bright here.

The nurses and patients are all hiding in rooms struggling to deal with their strong phobias. As with the ER, use this scene to help throttle the speed of the mission. If things need to be slowed down, send them a nurse with mysophobia so bad she's literally scrubbing her skin raw to get rid of germs.

Records at the reception desk show a Jane Doe in room 309. As the PCs approach, Fear Maria's influence begins to warp reality. Everyone's heart starts racing and their anxiety spikes. Whatever their fear passion is, they begin to hallucinate that. (For example, Ellen can see an injured soldier in one room, crying for help behind a door she cannot open.)

Each hallucination requires a rank 4 stress check on the appropriate meter — except for Jada who can use her avatar channel to avoid a stress check. Success (or having enough hardened notches) means the hallucination abruptly stops, although they still feel uneasy. Failure means they are lost in the hallucination; the player must choose between panicking, being paralyzed, or going into a frenzy. (For how long? If the other PCs cannot help, remove the effect once it's no longer fun.)

Fear Maria is in room 309, hiding beneath her bed so she doesn't hurt anyone. She knows that she split into three because of that necklace, and she guesses that her existence is based on fear. (Remember that the three passions are game terms, not setting ones.) She feels a compulsion to merge with her other forms, but she is too afraid that leads to violence and tries to coerce PCs into letting her stay in her room.

Once they get Maria ready to go (or if the players decide to leave her behind), the authority figures arrive at the end of a long hallway looking like World War I doughboys, but without rifles. They reach out their arms, which grow impossibly long. This causes an

FEAR MARIA

This triplet uses the same stats as the real Maria but the identity below is the only one she has.

Unnatural Fear Triplet 65%: Coerce Helplessness, Substitutes for Dodge, Substitutes for Secrecy

Unnatural (3) check. As they grow closer, Fear Maria starts to freak out and tries to run away.

If the PCs flee with Maria, the authority figures stubbornly follow until either killed or blocked (like being locked in a room). If another Maria is here, read Maria Made Whole below for details on how the two Marias can merge.

ADMINISTRATION

The administrative section for St. Mattis is found on the first floor on the other end of the hospital from the emergency room. As they head there, they meet a loose group of people running in the other direction. Then they hear the PA system gently announce a code silver in administration. (Ellen knows that "code silver" means a violent person is in the hospital.)

At the start of the administrative section is a circular desk in front of a pair of double doors leading to cubicles and posh offices. As the players reach the desk, they see a secretary lying bloody and beaten behind it. Rage Maria lost her temper over "Do you have an appointment?" and tore into her before heading into the offices.

The double doors are locked, but a successful roll at the desk reveals how to unlock them. Once inside, the cabal sees ten grey office cubicles extending away from them. At the far end are two offices without windows. One has a shut door, the other is open. Right in front of them are two dead security guards who shot each other while under Rage Maria's influence. There's only one handgun.

RAGE MARIA

This triplet uses the same stats as the real Maria but the identity below is the only one she has.

Unnatural Rage Triplet 65%: Coerce Violence, Substitutes for Pursuit, Substitutes for Struggle

Hiding in one of the cubicles is Brandy Freeman, a payroll clerk. She's hiding under her desk and is in shock over what's happening, having watched the two guards kill each other while Rage Maria laughed. Vince can give her immediate assistance with his identity's Therapeutic feature. However, that shock was the only thing protecting her from Rage Maria's angry influence.

How Brandy reacts after therapy depends on the characters:

- If they claim to be police or something similar, Brandy is confused because no one is dressed appropriately. If she stands up, she angrily demands some ID. This lets Rage Maria know they're coming. Then she attacks the PC who first found her.
- If they claim to be civilians trying to help, Brandy carefully accepts the help. She wants to leave immediately, so anything other than that causes her to coerce (Violence) the person who first found her to take her outside to safety. If the coercion fails, Brandy attacks.

Maria is behind the closed door with the payroll manager, Arturo Reyes. Vince could use his Guide powers to tell where she is, but so can Brandy if she's calm since she saw Rage Maria go in there. Arturo, on the other hand, is scared witless after a severe beating by Rage Maria over \$300 pain relievers. He's slowly becoming angrier and angrier about it.

If Rage Maria knows the cabal is coming, she attacks whoever opens the door. (Remember that her identity feature turns Maria's Struggle to a 65%.) If she doesn't, she stops beating Arturo long enough to turn and stare madly at the PCs, waiting to see what they do.

- Do they want to subdue Rage Maria? Good for them. She fights back with the light pistol she stole from the security guard. (If Greg wants to use Does This Smell Like Chloroform to knock her out, he'd have to get behind her first, then have someone distract her.)
- Do they want to coerce her into calming down? Targeting Rage Maria's violence meter just makes her attack. Other coercion can work depending on the credible threat offered by the PCs.
- Do they want to convince her into coming with them? That's not happening, so see coercion above.

If one of the other Marias is with the PCs at this point, the players can flip-flop any roll made to help join Rage Maria with the other(s). See Maria Made Whole below.

What's a riot roll? It's a way to find out what crowds do in response to stress. More rules for riots are on page 98 of Book Two: Run but everything you need to handle this scene is provided here and with the table at the bottom of the page.

Once Rage Maria has been dealt with one way or another, the PCs who leave through the double doors hear police sirens getting closer outside. (Some bureaucrat had enough sense to call 911.) Then the doors they just walked through fly open to a pair of city cops.

These are actually the authority figures trying to capture Rage Maria. When she sees them, she instinctively tries to run away down the hallway leading to the other side of the hospital. If she flees or calls attention to the authority figures, their arms hit the floor and quickly snake their way to her. This provokes an Unnatural (3) stress check.

NICU

To get into the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the PCs must reach the fourth floor and get past a security checkpoint. Then they walk past a waiting area and reach a hallway that runs a large square. Besides a nurse's station and an employee lounge, there are many private patient rooms containing beds, medical equipment, and in about half of them, should be families with sick newborns.

However, the place looks abandoned. No one is in the hallway, and even the security station in unmanned. That's because they all fell under Noble Maria's influence and are listening to her speak in the employee lounge on the other side of the NICU.

Outside the employee lounge door, the cabal can hear Maria's speech. When they open the door, they see parents, nurses, doctors, guards, and even sick babies all crowded together to hear Maria speak like some kind of messiah.

The lounge is crowded, and even babies in pain are quiet. Standing on a plastic chair is Noble Maria, speaking to them about the virtues of altruism in the face of adversity. She alternates between recognizing hospital staff and parents for being amazing and telling stories of the giving people she's met in her life.

When the PCs open the door, Maria suddenly stops and stares. Every head in the room, including the babies', turns to look at the PCs. Then Maria starts talking again and they go back to normal. (Well, normal-ish.)

If the cabal lets her keep speaking, she even brings up the poor men she lured into her house for Fancy Pants to possess, saying they are much better than her for having not come back to kill her yet. The crowd as a whole seems to not hear the whole kidnapping-for-possession thing and focuses solely on how great those men are.

How can the cabal reach Noble Maria? They must deal with the crowd first — and they only want to bask in this Maria's noble glow.

If the characters try to force their way through, make a **riot roll** by rolling percentiles

and comparing the result to the table at the bottom of this page.

The cabal probably cannot survive an attack by several dozen people at once, but thankfully, Maria has control over the crowd and stops any fight before the PCs are killed. If another Maria triplet is present, Noble Maria puts a stop to it after one successful hit by either side.

Talking to Noble Maria can work, but as with Fear and Rage, she's so taken over by her passion that she won't just walk away. A successful coercion roll can work, especially if the scenario is taking longer than expected. If there's time, Noble Maria resists as best she can.

Of course, things are different if another Maria is with the cabal. In that case, Noble Maria wistfully looks at her triplet and slowly walks to embrace her. If they touch, read *Maria Made Whole* below. After Noble Maria combines with one of her triplets, the spell over the crowd is lifted and everyone quietly shuffles back to their rooms and jobs.

As the cabal prepares to exit the NICU, a pair of hospital security guards turn the corner and look at the PCs. These are real guards sent to the NICU because the security station wasn't answering the phones. They only fire their sidearms if the cabal attacks them on first sight. Otherwise, they demand to know what's going on.

Just as that situation is resolved, two unnatural authority figures come around the corner. These look like Catholic cardinals complete with red zucchetto (beanies), black long-sleeved cassocks, big red sashes, and large gold crucifixes. They only want Noble Maria and do not interact with others. If their long snake arms come into play, it provokes an Unnatural (3) check.

MARIA MADE WHOLE

The Maria triplets can be recombined. In fact, the universe helps this happen much like gravity lets stuff fall. Once two Marias are in the same room (or thereabouts), any rolls to help them get together can be flip-flopped.

Each Maria kinda knows they should be joined back together. When separate, their passion overrules this. But when two or more can see each other, they feel compelled to embrace. When this happens, the Marias combine in a blast of light, heat, and pressure like a large firework just went off. It causes damage like a fistfight and triggers such weird feelings in those

NOBLE MARIA

This triplet uses the same stats as the real Maria but the identity below is the only one she has.

Unnatural Noble Triplet 65%: Coerce Self, Substitutes for Connect, Substitutes for Notice

nearby about who people truly are that those nearby must make a Self (5) stress check.

If the PCs are working with a two-part Maria, that Maria's two passions do not leak out into the surrounding population. For stats, use the main listing for Maria.

When Maria is whole again, she pauses for a few seconds before bursting into tears. She's pissed at Fancy Pants for doing this to her, but she's also overwhelmed with guilt: over what she did to the men and what her triplets did in the hospital. If she can be calmed down, she casually mentions how Fancy Pants said he was going to pay a visit to her best friend, Detective Renee Jefferson.

That likely drives the characters to the next scene, but what about Maria? That depends on how the players treat her as she breaks down.

- If they tried to help (such as through on-the-spot therapy), Maria pulls herself together and joins the cabal as they head to Renee.
- If they reacted negatively to her crimes (and to be fair, that's an appropriate response) and tried to get her arrested or something similar, then Maria calmly accepts her fate and even thanks the PCs.
- But if they react negatively and then leave Maria alone for any length of time, she becomes so overcome with grief that she tries to commit suicide. She tries to steal Ellen's pistol (or a security guard's sidearm) and shoots herself there in the hospital.

If Maria survives, she can tell the PCs what the authority figures are and how they also want to get rid of demons. She even knows a ritual to summon them, which she provides to the cabal if they want it.

Page 76 of Book One: Play goes into even more detail about therapy but the rules on page 9 can do in a pinch.

Roll	Result
1-25	The crowd keeps their rapt attention on Maria the whole time.
26-50	Three parents (one with her sick baby) come up to the PCs and quietly ask them to leave. If the PCs don't, the parents will try to gently restrain the characters and get them out of the room.
51+	Babies cry and parents shout obscenities at the PCs and demand they leave right now. One minute later, they attack en masse.

3: IT'S HER DAY OFF

The cabal might visit the local police department in hopes of catching Renee there, but the front desk informs them it's her day off. She was at home when Maria split into three. By the time someone called her to talk about what happened to her friend, Fancy Pants had arrived.

If the PCs already recombined Maria, visiting Renee might be tricky. They might have to explain how Maria was one of the bad guys (and maybe that she's dead). Then again, Maria may be on hand to do that herself — and ask for Renee's forgiveness.

Renee's house is only about 15 minutes from Maria's, albeit in a wealthier neighborhood. It's a two-story home with real brick and a long driveway on the side of the house. The lawn is green, the windows are clean, and Renee's sedan is in the driveway like normal. The front door is locked, but the back door into the kitchen was busted open from the outside.

The kitchen shows signs of a struggle, with several bullet holes in the wall near the door. The entire first floor is empty save for the usual items found in an upper-class home. Inside in the second-floor bedroom are Fancy Pants and Renee.

When Fancy Pants showed up, he saw Renee making coffee in the kitchen. He broke in and attacked, using his demonic powers to overpower the police detective. Then he dragged her upstairs, improvised some restraints with clothes, and tied her down, spread-eagled, to the bed. He planned on torturing Renee because, in its mind, all police are worthy of a slow, agonizing death because they enforce tyranny.

If the cabal makes a ton of noise or bursts into the bedroom without any subtlety, Fancy Pants drops a kitchen knife he was holding and backs up against a window in the far wall. If the cabal sneaks up there with some good Secrecy rolls (or Greg's identity feature), make an urge roll for the demon. If he succeeds, he senses the humans outside the open bedroom door.

FACE-OFF WITH FANCY PANTS

Fancy Pants has been making deals with humans for almost a century now, so either way, it tries to strike a deal for its life.

- First, it asks if they know Maria and if they want to know how to save her.
- If that doesn't work, it speaks to one PC and offers up some secret of value. Pick one player who hasn't done too much so far. Ask the player what they think their character would most want to know. Because demons know secrets, Fancy Pants knows that.

- It can offer to take possession of someone they hate and then do what the PCs want.
- Or it can just threaten Renee, if it doesn't look like the PCs are buying its spin.

The ideas above are things Fancy Pants can actually do. But past that, this demon offers just about anything it thinks the PCs want to hear regardless of whether it can grant that or not.

GETTING INTO A FIGHT

Some players may want to let fists and magick do the talking. It's a good idea to establish an order in which players and the demon take action. As soon as any player initiates a fight or starts to use magick, compare Fancy Pants' urge of 65% to the ability or identity the PC is using. If the demon's urge is higher, it sees what's about to go down and goes first. Otherwise, the player goes first. Other PCs can go after Fancy Pants has a turn.

Fancy Pants uses its unnatural phenomena to confuse the PCs and its urge skill to attack if it can spread some chaos. (A straight punch? That's boring, so Fancy Pants only gets the usual 20% chance. Knocking one PC into another so they both fall down? Use the 65% urge chance instead.)

RITUAL CASTING

If the cabal knows the authority figure-summoning ritual (because Maria taught them), they can try it here if they have the right ingredients. Any one of them can do this as Casts Rituals is a feature of their avatar and adept identities.

It won't take long, but Fancy Pants instantly know what it is if it sees a PC starting the ritual. Other PCs need to run interference on the demon. Authority figures summoned here try to capture Fancy Pants and disappear, taking both the demon and its human host with them.

WHAT NEXT?

Renee is unharmed (unless the players wasted too much time in the house). Once freed, she thanks the players and lets them know that the demon used an artifact necklace to split Maria into three people. Fancy Pants couldn't help monologuing after tying her down, so Renee knows about the necklace and Maria triplets.

If Maria is alive and with the PCs, Renee is relieved. If they haven't been the hospital yet, they should go now.

Game stats for Fancy Pants are on page 27 of this book.

Demons do pretty much everything with their Urge skill. See page 106 of Book Two: Run for more on demons.

4: ALL'S WELL THAT (MOSTLY) ENDS WELL

By now, the cabal should have finished chasing three Marias in St. Mattis Hospital and dealt with Fancy Pants at Detective Jefferson's home. Here's how to wrap up this scenario in one or two short scenes, and what effects the PCs efforts may have on their relationships and other stats.

MARIA IS WHOLE AND ALIVE

In this outcome, play out a short scene with Maria (and Renee if she survived) in which the PCs are confirmed as trusted allies. Maria says she's going to start therapy; the Blue Line begins to thrive.

Add 5% to the Renee relationship and add Maria as a new one (Responsibility is a good choice).

MARIA IS WHOLE BUT DEAD

If the cabal helped Maria recombine but she killed herself, play out a short scene between Renee and the PCs wherein Renee expresses her distrust of the PCs. Although the PCs likely rescued her from Fancy Pants, she's concerned that the Blue Line suffers from the loss of its best Van Helsing.

Depending on how this plays out, the Renee relationship for each PC could decrease by as much as 10%, but it may even go up if the PCs convince Renee that Maria was the author of her own fall.

THE AUTHORITY KILLED MARIA

If the cabal failed to prevent authority figures from destroying one or more Marias, but Renee was rescued, play out a short scene in which Renee reveals her fear for the Blue Line.

The PCs may be able to assuage Renee's worries and gain +5% in their relationship with her, especially if they volunteer to carry the torch.

RENEE IS DEAD

If the cabal failed to save Renee, play out a short scene where the cabal learns that local police are hell-bent on finding them, probably spurred on by the Blue Line.

If Maria did not survive, the Blue Line might even blame them for Renee's murder, and the PCs are forced to go underground.

If Maria lived, she can cover for the PCs with the Blue Line, but might advise them to lay low.

Renee is, of course, lost as a relationship if she is dead. The PCs can cross it off their character sheets and use that vacant relationship for another character in the future.

FANCY PANTS ESCAPES

If Fancy Pants escaped (or was allowed to leave), the PCs read the news in a few weeks about how six city employees have mysteriously gone missing.

You might play out a short scene where the PCs regroup to agree to a new objective: find and destroy the demon.

FANCY PANTS IS CAUGHT OR KILLED

If this happens, there are no negative consequences. No one cares about a demon. However, you might play out a short scene where a surviving ally (Maria or Renee) recruits the PCs to a Blue Line task force to seek out other demons.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Beyond just changing relationships, If this one-shot morphs into the start of a longer serial campaign, players can also improve their characters.

For any identity that a roll failed (such as Jada rolling Pest Exterminator in place of Pursuit and rolling too high), the player can roll 1d10 and add half that roll (rounding up) to that identity. Just be sure to review any changes to abilities brought on by changes to the hardened notches on the shock gauge.

Long term play in Unknown Armies is managed by using a system of objectives. You can read all about them beginning on page 12 of Book Two: Run. You can also learn about the antagonist phase, which is what the GM does between sessions, on page 38 of that book.



APPENDIX

MARIA MENCHACA

Maria's face is chubby with thick eyebrows, but she is otherwise fit for being a 38-year-old sedentary person. Her long dark hair has streaks of blond in it, and it often hides very large and gaudy earrings. She always wears a strong, red lipstick color on her lips. Maria favors comfort over style with her clothes, leaving her looking more overweight than she actually is.

Obsession: Proving herself correct. She can handle being wrong if she looked hard for proof she was right and found none.

Wound Threshold: 50.

Beat Cop 55%: Provides Firearm Attacks, Substitutes for Pursuit, Substitutes for Struggle.

Fear Stimulus: (Self) Giving in to her violent nature. Maria's temper has cost her jobs and friends over the years.

Noble Stimulus: Motherhood. She feels that she failed her sister, so she's more than willing to help children and mothers.

Rage Stimulus: Bureaucratic rules that end up hurting people. Seeing firsthand how government rules about welfare and Medicaid hurt her family, she flies off the handle when someone hides behind regulations instead of helping.

Van Helsing 65%: Provides Initiative, Resist Unnatural, Substitutes for Knowledge.

Possessions: None.

Maria was born in the slums of Mission, TX. Her family life was not idyllic by any means, but her parents were loving and tried hard. It's just that her neighbors were less than helpful. They teased and corrupted her older sister Sofia. Before too long, her sister tried mixing retail and escorting until she caught HIV and rapidly died.

After high school, Maria applied to the police academy and was rejected. Five applications later, she finally passed the tests and became a police officer. She was never the best cop, but she was certainly determined and rarely gave up on a case until it was truly hopeless. The neighborhood she patrolled found her to be crude and off-putting but capable.

That changed when Maria tried to arrest an agrimancer for animal cruelty. When little stone

creatures rose up from the earthen cellar and attacked her, she completely lost her cool and emptied her clip into the agrimancer. A review board found her not guilty thanks to the policeman's code, but she had decided to quit by then anyway.

She dabbled as a private detective, but then the Blue Line asked her for some info on agrimancy. In return, they tossed some seized drug-dealer cash her way. Maria's obsession to prove herself right combined with almost being kicked off the force had led her to a new job as a Van Helsing for Blue Line.

DETECTIVE RENEE JEFFERSON

Renee is tall and wide, like an offensive tackle. She is light-skinned for an African-American woman, with short-cut black hair slicked down over her head. On the job, she wears pantsuits and long jackets. Off the clock, she favors long dresses with simple prints.

Obsession: Protect the city from criminals. Renee has ignored her social and romantic lives in her quest to be the best damn cop she can be. That includes working hard for Blue Line.

Wound Threshold: 70.

Fear Stimulus: (Self) Being hurt by making a stupid mistake. Cops should be careful, but Renee worries she'll one day make a small mistake that gets her in serious trouble.

Noble Stimulus: Non-magickal people struggling against the occult. Although she loves working with Blue Line, she will sacrifice to help normal folk beat magick.

Rage Stimulus: Criminals who are freed and know they got away with it. The smug smile on a released criminal who got off on a technicality makes her burn inside.

Blue Line Leader 50%: Casts Rituals, Resist Unnatural, Substitutes for Connect.

Just a Cop 70%: Provides Wound Threshold, Substitutes for Fitness, Substitutes for Struggle.

Possessions: Police heavy pistol, pepper spray, police radio, handcuffs, contact info for several Blue Line members.

MARIA MENCHACA

Shock Meter	Hardened	Failed	Abilities	
Helplessness	3	0	Fitness 50%	Dodge 30%
Isolation	2	0	Status 55%	Pursuit 25%
Self	4	2	Knowledge 45%	Lie 35%
Unnatural	5	2	Notice 40%	Secrecy 40%
Violence	6	1	Connect 35%	Struggle 45%

DETECTIVE RENEE JEFFERSON

Shock Meter	Hardened	Failed	Abilities	
Helplessness	3	1	Fitness 50%	Dodge 30%
Isolation	2	0	Status 55%	Pursuit 25%
Self	1	0	Knowledge 60%	Lie 20%
Unnatural	3	1	Notice 50%	Secrecy 30%
Violence	5	1	Connect 40%	Struggle 40%

FANCY PANTS

Fancy Pants has possessed the body of James Bell, an overweight grandpa. He's 59 years old, dark skinned, and has thick hands and a double chin. He's wearing a Tommy Bahama shirt tucked into his jeans and a Panama hat.

Wound Threshold: 65.

Urge: Cause chaos 65%.

Turn-of-Last-Century Anarchist 55%:

Coerce Self, Substitutes for Pursuit, Substitutes for Struggle.

Powers: Three times per day, Fancy Pants can create a minor unnatural phenomenon. His favorites are dizziness and localized technology fails.

Once per week, he can create a significant unnatural phenomenon. He loves spatial distortions that confuse people.

Fancy Pants can also foster dissent in large groups of people. He adds +10% to riot rolls.

Possessions: None.

In life, Fancy Pants was an Italian-American anarchist named Errico Tombari active in the late 1890s. He blew himself up while trying to create a bomb to assassinate President McKinley but could not let go of his anarchist obsession. In time, his passionate political desire warped into a love of chaos. He still loves taking down governmental figures, but he lives to spread chaos and confusion. He especially hates police departments, which he considers to be tyrannical enforcers of an evil government.

He's more powerful than most demons, but he isn't a leader either. He's just been careful to please whoever summoned him. By making himself useful, he's gained some experience and even a few humans who came to think of Fancy Pants as a helpful pet. They died painfully under Fancy Pants' hands.

Why does he love his namesake decorative trousers? In his life, everyone wore drab, boring clothes. He discovered colored pants in the 1950s and is now obsessed with any pants that are unusual and colorful.

AUTHORITY FIGURES

These unnatural entities show up when someone exists that should not. This includes demons, but it usually means individuals who magicked their way into existence. For example,

an adept who uses a ritual to make a doppelganger might attract their attention, to both the original *and* the copy. Think of these creatures as the universe's editors and executioners.

They're called authority figures because they always appear as pairs — one male, one female — of powerful or dominant people from their target's culture. Authority figures don't seem concerned with matching the era of their appearance, though. Chargers in the US have described these entities showing up as 1920s G-men, a Colonial-era missionary priest and nun, and two CEOs straight from the '80s.

Their purpose is to capture the person that should not exist and disappear with them. Then they do the same to the person who created the non-person. They have an unnatural ability to know where such people are. Authority figures would love to do the same with demons, but they can only detect them if one passes nearby.

Authority figures appear walking around a corner near but not next to their target (and never in the same room). Then they ceaselessly walk towards the target. Others are ignored unless they interfere; then the authority figures attack until the interference is gone or they are killed. Of course, "killed" is a relative term for them. Five minutes later, they reappear as new authority figures and begin the walking chase again.

When they close with their target, their arms grow impossibly long until they hit the floor (provoking an Unnatural (3) check). The arms keep growing, but now they snake towards their target. If an authority figure grabs its target, the arms coil around them and then quickly withdraw back to the authority figure. Once the target has reached them, they smile and kiss the target on the forehead. Then they both disappear.

Authority figures might be unnatural, but their bodies are mostly human and suffer from attacks as normal. However, one hit by anything that can exorcise an unnatural entity will make the creature disappear, not to return for five minutes.

Authority figures may be sent away with a variation of the ritual that summoned them, or by resolving the unnatural phenomena they are targeting (banishing a demon, re-uniting the Marias, etc.)

AUTHORITY FIGURES (MAJOR)

Wound Threshold: 40

Kidnap the Should-Not-Be 60%: Provides Initiative, Substitutes for Pursuit, Substitutes for Struggle. Their attacks are usually not harmful. Instead, they attempt to use their extremely long arms to coil around the target (with a successful Struggle roll) and bring them in for a kiss. However, they defend themselves and cause standard melee damage (two d10s added together) plus an additional 6 wounds per hit.

THE DEL RUBIO NECKLACE

Power: Major

Description: Three diamonds in a column held by a silver band attached to a silver chain. It was created in the 1930s, so the style is a bit outdated by modern standards. A small inscription on the band reads, "To my girls. Love, Bob." Although it can be traced back to the singing Del Rubio triplets, it is unlikely to have created them since they worked well together.

Effect: This is one of those "oh please do not put this on" kind of artifacts. When the necklace is worn around the neck, the wearer is paralyzed. As they go through a minor seizure, their body begins to look out of focus while everything else around them looks normal. In around three minutes, there's a tremendous burst of light as a shockwave blasts outward.

The wearer has now become three identical and unconscious people. The only exception is the trio of necklaces, which now have only one diamond each. Witnessing this provokes an Unnatural (6) stress check. Each triplet is based on one of the three passions: fear, rage, and noble. An hour or so after they are split, the triplets wake up about five minutes apart from one another, in the above passion order.

If one conscious triplet sees another conscious triplet, it is driven to reunite with them. Otherwise, once the triplets are awake, they aggressively pursue agendas directly related to their respective passion.

In order to work, the Del Rubio Necklace must be voluntarily worn by the target. Forcing someone to put it on does nothing but jazz up an ensemble.

RITUAL: CALLING THE AUTHORITIES

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Ritual Action: Draw a six-foot square in coins or salt on a level floor. In that box, place a hat belonging to some kind of authority figure (policeman's cap, firefighter's helmet, or crown), a book on leadership, and a drawing or stuffed animal of a mythological creature. Urinate on all three, being careful not to wash away the box. Then everyone present must turn their backs on the box and together say, "There are no monsters, only people."

Effect: After the magic words are spoken, two authority figures appear in the box. They stand there blinking for about a minute. If there is an unnatural entity nearby, the authority figures calmly but determinedly walk towards it, hoping to embrace and disappear with the entity. If there are no such entities nearby, they attempt to embrace a random human they can see.

This ritual can be reversed by casting it again but this time cleaning the items in the box with soap or detergent, turning toward the box, and repeating the original incantation.



Artifacts come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, and power levels. Read more about them on page 86 of Book One: Play.

Name: **ELLEN KALOUDIS**

Cabal: Friends of the Blue Line

Current Objective: Find out what happened to Maria.

Distinguishing Characteristics: You're in your forties but alcoholism makes you look older. Your skin's dry, but your brown hair is long, curly, and healthy. You favor dark yoga pants, loose Hawaiian shirts, and sensible shoes. Your totemic pistol, a Glock 26 9mm handgun, is usually in a concealed holster at your waist. You wear contacts because your vision's so bad, and though it's hard to tell your right leg is prosthetic.

Detective Renee

Jefferson

45 % Favorite (Status)

% Guru (Notice)

% Mentor (Connect)

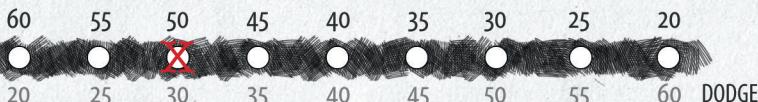
Jada

60 % Responsibility (Knowledge)

% Protégé (Fitness)

HELPLESSNESS

FITNESS 60



FAILURES



Defend with Status Attack with Connect

ISOLATION

STATUS 60



Defend with Connect Attack with Status

SELF

KNOWLEDGE 60



Defend with Notice Attack with Knowledge

UNNATURAL

NOTICE 60



Defend with Knowledge Attack with Secrecy

VIOLENCE

CONNECT 60



Defend with Fitness Attack with Struggle

IDENTITIES

I'm a GULF WAR HOSPITAL CORPSMAN

, of course I can

40 %

Substitutes for Ability: Struggle

Feature: Medical

Feature: Provides Firearm Attacks

I'm a RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC

, of course I can

20 %

Substitutes for Ability: Secrecy

Feature: Protects Helplessness

Feature: Protects Self

I'm a

, of course I can

%

Substitutes for Ability:

Feature:

Feature:

I'm a

, of course I can

%

Substitutes for Ability:

Feature:

Feature:

RAGE Taking the blame for someone else's mistakes.

NOBLE Being honest when a lie would be easier.

FEAR (Helplessness) Failing vital tasks.

Jada

60 % Responsibility (Knowledge)

% Protégé (Fitness)

FAILURES



Defend with Status Attack with Connect



Defend with Connect Attack with Status



Defend with Notice Attack with Knowledge



Defend with Knowledge Attack with Secrecy



Defend with Fitness Attack with Struggle

WOUND THRESHOLD

50

OBSSESSION IDENTITY
56070

1a. Adept School FULMINATURGY

1b. Percentage **60**

4a. Spell Name: Stand Alone

4b. Cost: 1

4c. Effect

Makes you look more important or notable, adds +10%–20% to relevant rolls if situation fits.

5a. Spell Name: Serious Demeanor

5b. Cost: 1

5c. Effect

Laughing at, demeaning, or dismissing you while this is in effect forces a Helplessness (3-4) stress check.

6a. Spell Name: Steady Hand, Steady Heart

6b. Cost: 2

6c. Effect Can cast as instinctive response to a failed stress check. Hands goes to firearm to calm. Still take failed notch but don't flee, freeze, or fight.

7a. Minor Charges

When you're in public openly carrying your totem firearm you can earn 1 minor charge every 2 hours. It must be visible and on your person.

7b. Significant Charges

Carrying your totem firearm secretly for 10 or more hours outside your home earns 1 significant charge.

7c. Major Charges

Note: This identity has the Cast Rituals feature.

Name: **JADA PARKER**

Cabal: Friends of the Blue Line.

Current Objective: Find out what happened to Maria.

Distinguishing Characteristics: You're in your late thirties, dark-skinned, and curvy. Your hair's real short and dyed fire-engine red. You wear large sunglasses, tight blouses, loose A-line skirts, brightly-colored flats. On the job, you wear a jumpsuit with Pest-N-Critter Defense in large black letters on your back. You have a shiny can of bug spray and several smaller aerosol bottles.

RAGE Parasites (more figurative than literal).

NOBLE Helping the clueless.

FEAR (Self) Being left alone with your thoughts.

Greg

55

% Protégé (Fitness)

Detective Renee

Jefferson

45 % Mentor (Connect)

% Favorite (Status)

% Guru (Notice)

% Responsibility (Knowledge)

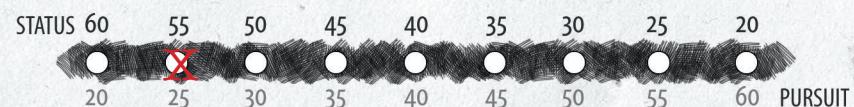
HELPLESSNESS



FAILURES

Defend with Status
Attack with Connect

ISOLATION



Defend with Connect
Attack with Status

SELF



Defend with Notice
Attack with Knowledge

UNNATURAL



Defend with Knowledge
Attack with Secrecy

VIOLENCE



Defend with Fitness
Attack with Struggle

IDENTITIES

I'm a **PEST EXTERMINATOR**

, of course I can

60 %

Substitutes for Ability: Notice

Feature: Substitutes for Pursuit

Feature: Coerce Helplessness

I'm a **, of course I can**

%

Substitutes for Ability:

Feature:

Feature:

I'm a **, of course I can**

%

Substitutes for Ability:

Feature:

Feature:

I'm a **, of course I can**

%

Substitutes for Ability:

Feature:

Feature:

WOUND THRESHOLD

50

00386

OBSESSION IDENTITY

1a. Archetype **WARRIOR**

1b. Percentage **60**

2. Taboos

Zero tolerance against pests and other unseen dangers. Driven to pursue and eliminate them.

4. Channels
1%–50%:

You don't need to make stress checks when you're directly pursuing your purpose.

3. Symbols

Helmets, blood stains, fire.

71%–90%:

91%+:

5. Notes

You're driven to eradicate one of society's ills, and in your case, it's pests (and that includes metaphorical ones). You can interpret that however you like, but they have to be feeding off society or humanity in some way to count as parasites.

This identity has the Cast Rituals feature.

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Form **AVATAR G M5**

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Name: GREG O'NEIL

Name: Cabal Friends of the Blue Line

Current Objective: Find out what happened to Maria.

Distinguishing Characteristics: Most people notice your gummy smile or strong chin first. You started going bald in your twenties; ten years on, most of it is gone. While you've got a surprisingly large beer belly, the rest of your body is a little thick but otherwise fit. You typically wear a patterned dress shirt under a navy-blue blazer with dark pants and shoes.

RAGE Being dismissed as unimportant.

NOBLE People making quality art.

FEAR (Violence) An argument escalating into violence.

Vince **55** **Detective Renée** **Jefferson**

— % Favorite (Status) — % Guru (Notice) — % Mentor (Connect) — % Responsibility (Knowledge) — % Protégé (Fitness)

HELPLESSNESS FITNESS 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 DODGE

ISOLATION STATUS 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 PURSUIT

SELF KNOWLEDGE 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 LIE

UNNATURAL NOTICE 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 SECRECY

VIOLENCE CONNECT 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 STRUGGLE

FAILURES Defend with Status Attack with Conn

PURSUIT Defend with Conn Attack with Status

LIE Defend with Note Attack with Knowledge

SECRECY Defend with Knowledge Attack with Secrecy

STRUGGLE Defend with Fitness Attack with Struggle

IDENTITIES		
I'm a CROOKED FILM CRITIC	, of course I can	50 %
Substitutes for Ability: Secrecy		
Feature: Substitutes for Status		
Feature: Protects Unnatural		
I'm a	, of course I can	%
Substitutes for Ability:		
Feature:		
Feature:		
I'm a	, of course I can	%
Substitutes for Ability:		
Feature:		
Feature:		
I'm a	, of course I can	%
Substitutes for Ability:		
Feature:		
Feature:		

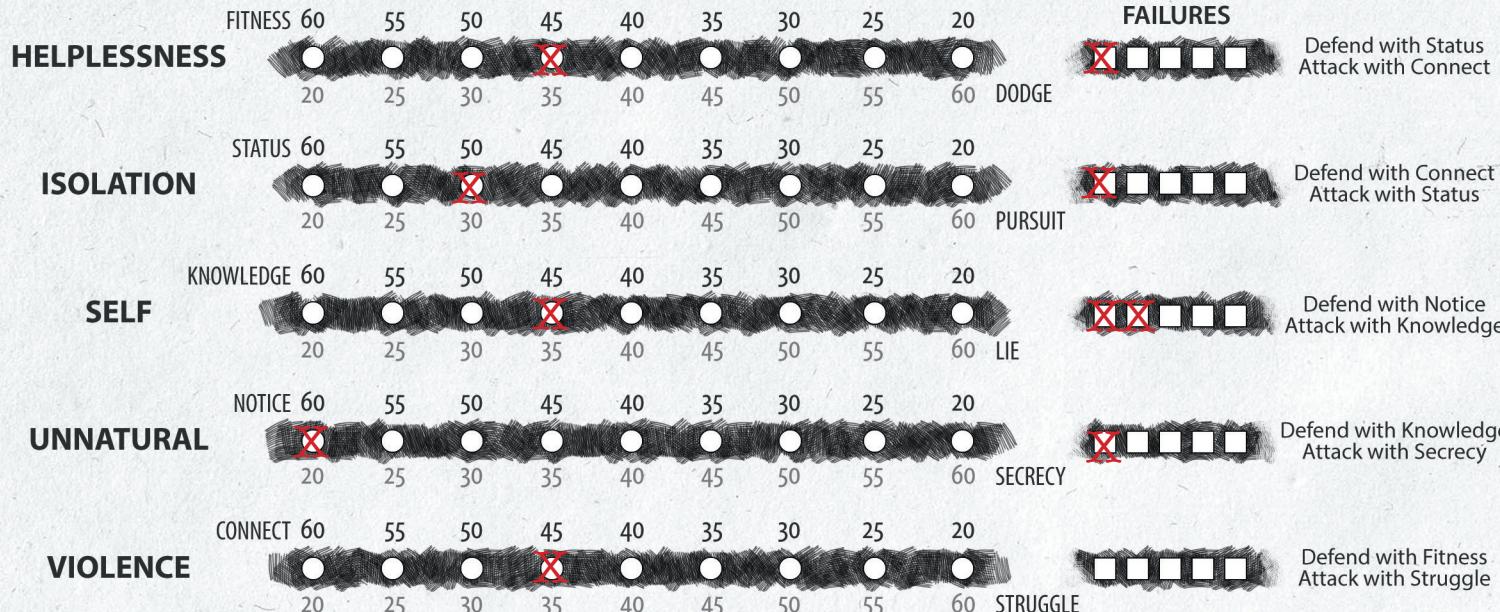
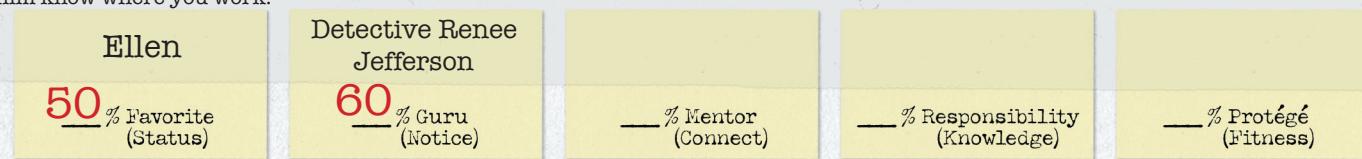
OBSESSION IDENTITY		WOUND THRESHOLD	50
56070		1a. Adept School CINEMANCY	1b. Percentage 70
For Official Use Only GR3-GST-0Z		4a. Spell Name: Stock Wardrobe	4b. Cost: 1
2. Taboos Can't see the beginning of a cliché and not fill whatever role necessary to ensure the cliché finishes.	4c. Effect Dress in traditional garb for a profession and pass as a member of that profession to others in that profession.	5a. Spell Name: What Could Go Wrong?	5b. Cost: 1-7
3. Domain Movie magick – illusions based on popular tropes, genres.	5c. Effect When someone says X won't happen, spend charges to make X happen; +2 charges if that person knows how this spell works. 6a. Spell Name: Does this Smell like Chloroform?	6b. Cost: 2	6c. Effect Cover somebody's mouth with a white cloth by surprise; drop them into deep sleep for five minutes, even without actual chloroform.
7a. Minor Charges When you get somebody else to describe or act out an over-used cinematic cliché, including a memorable line from a movie that is acted out by the person who quotes it.			
7b. Significant Charges When you act like a stock character from film for five hours or more, down to every stereotype and cliché; if you drop the mask you have to start over.			
7c. Major Charges Note: This identity has the Cast Rituals feature.			

Name: **VINCE KIRKLAND**

Cabal: **Friends of the Blue Line.**

Current Objective: Find out what happened to Maria.

Distinguishing Characteristics: You look like you're around 16 years old, but you're actually 25. You're a basketball coach's dream: 6' 7", 230 lbs, lean, muscular, and lanky. But your mangy orange hair, dark eyes, and acne scars make you look less "Corn-fed Hoosier phenom" and more "Don't let him know where you work."



IDENTITIES	
I'm a	PROTECTIVE BIG BROTHER
, of course I can	
55 %	
Substitutes for Ability: Dodge	
Feature: Substitutes for Struggle	
Feature: Therapeutic	
I'm a	, of course I can
%	
Substitutes for Ability:	
Feature:	
Feature:	
I'm a	, of course I can
%	
Substitutes for Ability:	
Feature:	
Feature:	
I'm a	, of course I can
%	
Substitutes for Ability:	
Feature:	
Feature:	

RAGE People giving up.

NOBLE People who know who they are and are happy with that.

FEAR (Isolation) Having no friends.

Form **AVATAR G M5**

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WOUND THRESHOLD

50

00386

OBSESSION IDENTITY

1a. Archetype THE GUIDE

1b. Percentage 55

4. Channels

1%–50%: No matter where you are, you have a chance of sending someone in the right direction. Success is a helpful albeit vague direction; matched success or crit is not only where to go but obstacles and challenges along the way.

51%–70%: Once a day you can give somebody advice on any subject with a successful roll. If they follow your advice they can flip-flop one of their rolls. See Notes below.

3. Symbols

Lights, lines on a highway, GPS on a phone, maps, books of wisdom.

71%–90%:

91%+:

5. Notes

Anyone who has you as their Mentor or Guru relationship (such as Greg O'Neil) has a special bond with you. Once a day per person you can give them some cryptic advice or guidance and then roll percentile dice; they can use the result of that roll as one of their own rolls later on.

This identity has the Cast Rituals feature.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Unknown Armies*. This is an occult game about broken people conspiring to fix the world. It's a game that presents magick as it might exist in a world built out of crime fiction and secret histories, as twisting wrinkles in reality created by greater and greater risk, sacrifice, and obsession.

This game book includes rules, characters, and a scenario called *Maria in Three Parts* that you can play using the third edition of the game. If you want to run this game for your friends, you're the gamemaster (GM) and you should read the whole thing at least once or twice. If you just want to play it, choose one of the four player characters (PCs) provided and find a friend to be the gamemaster.

You will need a set of percentile dice for each player and the GM.

If you'd like to know more about *Unknown Armies*, look it up at atlas-games.com/unknownarmies/ or ask at your local game or hobby store. The game comes in three core rulebooks and there are two additional digital-only books as well. You can get the digital editions of this game at Warehouse 23 or DriveThruRPG or by following the links at our website. Our website also includes more adventure material, gamemaster screen downloads, and character sheet blanks.

For reference, the *Unknown Armies* books are:

Book One: Play—The book for players.

Book Two: Run—The book for gamemasters.

Book Three: Reveal—The book of weird things and twisted ideas.

Book Four: Expose (digital only)—A book of designer Greg Stolze's most unchained creations.

Book Five: Mine (digital only)—A book of miscellaneous expanded rules, characters, and ideas from our writing team.

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