

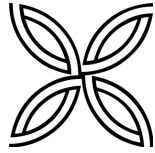


Old roleplay stories & fiction

by André M. Pietroschek



Andrè M. Pietroschek



OLD ROLEPLAY STORIES & FICTION

- unpaid prose of a mediocre gamer -

UUID: f6a8a5c8-bd95-11e8-9121-17532927e555

This ebook was created with StreetLib Write

<http://write.streetlib.com>

Table of contents

DISCLAIMER	1
PERSONAL NOTE	2
MY CTHULHU & LOVECRAFTIAN FICTION	3
Blood on my touchscreen	3
Banish with Laughcraft	7
The simple twist - Facing my stalkers	19
VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE	22
Poison what you can't conquer!	22
Humorous: Brouhaha - Last Man Standing	28
Shadow-wrested, 3 at price of one	31
Shadow-wrested, clumsy starter draft	38
Dreams from within Ceoris	46
SHADOWPUNK & CYBERRUN... ..	59
Family affairs... ..	59
Drunken-humored: Totemic riddle red riding hood	60
Shadow friends (ebook version)	63
YE OLDE D&D FANTASY	65
Vudash Hexenwahn - The guild... ..	65
Deviants & Red, horned dragons	70
2 Ravenloft quick-writes	71
BONUS CONTENT	75
Lone stars, warpstone sixguns, and red orc tomahawks... ..	75
In bed with professor Hammersmith	79
My KULT: Conjurers & Conjunctions (compatible with most editions)	90
WFRP: Strigoi dreams & Strigany wishes	94

DISCLAIMER

WORDS SUPPOSEDLY PROTECTING US FROM LAWYERS & ATTORNEYS..?

No warranties. My prose, rants, and ebooks, are offered solely for personal contemplation purposes. The author and publisher are not offering it as legal, accounting, or other professional services advice. While best efforts have been invested in preparing my stories, excerpts, and poetry, along with its sub-context; The author and publisher make no representations or warranties of any kind, and assume no liabilities of any kind with respect to the accuracy, correctness, or completeness of the contents and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of safety, functionality, reliability or fitness of use for any specific purpose. Neither the author nor the publisher shall be held liable or responsible to any person or entity with respect to any loss, harm, incidental or consequential damages caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information, prose, ideas, and opinion contained herein. No warranty may be created or extended by sale representatives or written sales materials. Every personality is different and the worldview, moods, prose, and conclusions contained herein may not be suitable for your situation or anyone's well-being. This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, events, and locations are fictitious or are used fictitiously. Any resemblances to actual persons or events, living or dead, are entirely coincidental.

- Precaution: The background picture I used as cover was declared a free download, and all further editing, layout, and placing of the streetlib icon were done, manually, by me, André Michael Pietroschek.
- The bee on the cover (upper right corner) is my whimsical reminder that our honey-producing buzzers are short of extinction due those harmless toxins & environmental violations of our own planet!

PERSONAL NOTE

PRETENDING ANY CUSTOMER WOULD EVER READ IT..?

My first ebook sold badly, and my stand-alone short stories on other platforms were not too appreciated either. But, as noted before, I really publish this without any expectations. And I got curious about which improvements STREETLIB implemented during my absent years.

This ebook is a collection of files I want to delete or store compressed, as my technological changes go from USB data sticks and PC or notebook to mobile devices and Micro-SD data cards (smaller and more efficient by now). Files like drabbles and flash fiction written straight on websites or in APPS of a smartphone are excluded. But in case you purchased this you can be certain it does help me to re-motivate myself, and continue sharing more freely.

Thank you, and please be reminded that certain technical issues are beyond what I, the author, can influence. I would have done that before publishing, as I appreciated the efficiency and comfort of professionalism. Even, if my own skill level is not, or not yet, at world-best ranking.

I will not sort the files by publishing date, or my personal meaning, but by the roleplaying sub-genres, so all Cthulhu stuff gets after each other before any Vampire or D&D inspired sermon interferes, and ShadowPunk & CyberRun are contemplated due the conflict of my copyrighted own words versus the trademark notes and choices of NOT allowing official fan-fiction for some years from certain publishers. No need to provoke cease and desist letters, or academic dates at legal courts of law. ;-)

- One reason why I wanted to test how much I can write in readable style while 'inventing' it was: Being the Storyteller, Game-Master, and Dungeon-Master of any roleplaying group had always demanded that much more. We, mostly, are not in luxurious comfort positions, but part of the normal folks, and often the poorer part. Still the narrative tradition, fantasy roleplaying, and the written word can be combined. One of my author quotes for several years: "I won't lose overweight by somebody else doing workouts - I gotta do my own!". The same is true for self-publishing, self-marketing, and enduring the wake-up-kissing from reality, as most of us won't ever live a Hollywood-induced-dream.
- **If you did find this on any illegal pirate page, please consider paying the € 0,50,- cent price anyway, via: <http://paypal.me/AMPietroschek>**

MY CTHULHU & LOVECRAFTIAN FICTION

TENTACLOID COSMIC HORRORS & STUFF...

Blood on my touchscreen

Published one day before I was kicked from the platform...

Blood on my touchscreen

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

"When you have bewitched or assassinated the unwelcome, then whoever remains, however useless & boring, must be the only audience you still have left!"

Quote from my: Warlock Holmes, the Cumber-Batching speech

Further: Please note that I would appreciate helpful customer-oriented-reviews, as no preview of files makes them superfluous, for all my published files at each of the vault affiliate sites. A decent review is usually between 200 and 500 words, so potential customers can decide, if buying that stuff is their own gusto.

Story:

It is the fifth of April in the year 2015. I am writing this in a hurry, as a certain pressure makes me expect to be seriously distracted soon. My name is Morton Bryce. I am the son of Walton T. Bryce and Emma-Maria Whiteley. While many would have called me a hopeless scoundrel, a vagabond, and a seriously outclassed small-scale criminal such had never been my true calling.

I was a born believer, a cultist for a real cause, not the mere madness or drug-crazed dreams of the modern, urban folks. And I can proudly note that I will stay that to the very moment of my own death! Like many rural people I had childhood full of hard work, folklore, and familial closeness I actually had to accept as my burden, just as most other folks had to.

Since Al-Hazarded published that book for the bored morons trapped in ignorance, and choosing to stay so, I was part of a living community hellbent on more than the mere survival, cattle herding, and dying on our family farm. And yes, that Necronomicon hysteria blinded shockingly many to the very fact that more than ninety percent of those who dabbled in it met a premature and disastrous nemesis soon thereafter.

My own core suspicion was that the book, combined with Al-Hazarded's personal madness, maybe due the ordeal of reaching his publisher or escaping the equivalent to a book-burning

church chorus eager to prevent that, made it a beacon to forces not even cultists would easily sympathize or associate with. But that is just something like bible sermon to Christianity. It makes every yokel barely able to recite a punchline seem like he is a major player involved in global and divine schemes of utmost importance!

I am no necromancer, I am not capable of summoning greater cosmic powers, personalized or abstract, and neither did I ever go insane enough to attempt such. The gruesome years von Junzt needed to learn communicating with ghouls should have made it clear that each cult needs a focus, and enough sanity left to actually survive mundane and cosmic threats. A struggle which usually ends with the cultists loosing it.

Our opponents, envious schemers, and foes work hard to publicly insist such proves we fight on the wrong side of the wrong cause. I always thought such might come from a faint resemblance to the American Civil War, and the psycho-social or cultural aftermath it made people live in. I could err though! All of some decent education or life experience and maturity will, once contemplating it, realize that we actually just do what mortality demands from everybody who was born, survive and prosper, or die trying. Human nature within the laws even larger powers cannot undo completely.

Additionally I am used to both, introspection and retrospection. Many cults, and several cultists, actually never waste a minute of their lifetime on learning the wisdom of such. I think we are the rural peoples dark side of independence. We are, oft depicted, partly criminals, partly manipulative pseudo-clergy, and free from the shackles of a society only accepting us as underpaid laborers, maltreated lackeys, or not at all.

Old letters, letters are predecessors to email, fax, or "What'sApp" kinda technological communicating, and diary notes or family heritage do indeed mention the subtle notes it takes to become a cultist and learn communicating with powers beyond, below, or in cosmic anomalies we fail to understand. Just that nobody promised it is easy, harmless, or guaranteed to be good for us.

My own grandparents heard the vivid memories of their elders, of things manifesting, of barely surviving the first encounter, of feeling the power so much worthier than the farm-life we had to be content with. Many of us actually shared in the joy of mum or dad proudly retelling how they acquired their first real occult book, or how they met the one stranger who was not just babbling the insane sermon of escapees from psychiatric institutions.

When it runs in the family, then it is usually either more freaky or more comforting than the solitary start. Many think us alike the cults doing nothing but indulging perversion or insanity, still those are the people who forget that some of us long succeeded into gaining patronage or tutoring from more powerful minds than those humanity cares to muster. My grandparents spoke of surviving two World Wars. Rarely ever about anything occult or beyond.

It was due the fact that I was born without mutations or signs of dire degeneration that allowed me to participate in the normed society, like kindergarten or base school, middle school, high school, and some university. Henceforth I had my personal expertise about what I disliked about society, why I was not satisfied being a lackey or soldier, especially an underpaid one, and stay content with that.

Noteworthy though is that degeneration, violation, and unintended results are lifelong calamities we have to be cautious about. I think that a major factor of explaining is that the forces we attune with have a habit of making the same reality we all know and rely on in scientific routine has moments, like an ebb and flow, but through the atmosphere and never along the scientific definitions of physical laws.

The moments the real forces manifest or bring about changes are, to mortal creatures and

mammals, usually overwhelming, discomfoting, or outright pandemonium. Lesser cults hence remain on the same proverbial food-chain like any human, but react differently to those whims of natural law and mayhap the God we once prayed to in church.

Back to me, Morton Bryce: My life went its way, and it is my own decision to write this confession. Because that it is what it comes down to, a confession. Even though I do not even know, if the auto-share will ever upload and spread it. My conscience rested easily, and lived well with producing dozens of what nowadays is called targeted individuals or conspiracy theorists. One of our income sources is providing a service for hire, and terms like gang-stalking, invisible-touch-torment or cyberstalking may be inspired by it.

Sometimes it is a family who just purchased a house 'where we cannot afford witnesses', or have that 'need to remain undisturbed'. Seriously, sometimes we are not at all about home invasion, family-massacring, or normalcy-crushing. But targeted psycho-social harassment, intimidation, and causing alienation to people who found out or witnessed certain procedures actually spawns from the same root, as the decision to kill in cold blood or burn a house down without warning the inhabitants, so the fire-fighters and insurance have a more believable scene to find.

Skilled cult leaders sort their assets, avoiding to discomfort them too far, as risk of discovery, opposition, and angered contract partners are tasks our middle-management is duty-bound to handle. Damn, it is just that, subtle threats, pure intimidation, or brute force, kidnapping or poisoning, if compliance could not be enforced in the first rush. Certainly one reason we are met with distrust and vigilance instead of smiles and the proverbial open arms!

It has something weird how much can become routine to the human mind, and how many changes we can rationalize away, until we realize they are what made us fall from grace. Once we realize that even those who play with dirty tricks can be nailed by consequence, competition, or life itself a lot becomes so much more adult about it... I myself chuckled more than once, lately even about the insight that I actually might die like a figure in one short story written by some Howard Philip Lovecraft, who is rumored to have been member of 'some dilettante social club' reading works like that Necronomicon, and dabbling in anything to snatch attention and easy money.

These memories and thoughts surge up into my mind, because I am ashamed of the blasphemous simplicity which would be my confession! Really, merely typing the words fails to make transparent how one little outrage of bloodthirstiness caused a wrong I never meant to cause, and harmed people I did not want to be harmed, whereby it may indeed be that only due the way consequences made reality turn out to be I found that guilt-ridden lethargy to accept my supposed fate instead of using my skills to escape or undo it.

No apology, no 'forgive me!', and no 'I am sorry' would mean that the family gets their beloved wife, mother, sister, and daughter back. No ritual I ever discovered would even help to recompense them, so they could mourn their loss without the social and financial troubles it already caused in addition. Therefor I made me the weird hermit sitting in a small apartment and awaiting 'that which comes up the stairs'.

I only know due investigative work that my hunter, the man sworn to end my life, was forced out of everything he cherished due my deed. I understood that I had slaughtered his Cthulhu, that I had made his 'magic' leave his world forevermore. For that is what love was to the journalist that man had been before his nervous breakdown, and the aftermath of my outrage, reforged him into another violent prone fate-maker and life-taker.

The wood oft used for stairs in proletarian social classes makes less noise, when one avoids stepping into the middle of each stair, as that pressures it more than stepping on the left or right of a stair, where the structure is more reinforced.

I harshly heard my hunter approach, and I can only hope that he will be far away, when those who would attempt to punish me for a job gone bad show up. Seeing the blinking of my USB surfstick I know this file went online, and talking of the mundane, it is the shadow of a simple golf-club I see as the final hint and herald to my own demise...

The end

Bonus – Poem: Beyond that point of no return

Original & variant © André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

Beyond that point of no return

where lusts and loves are damned to burn

I stand, as wreckage of my former self

stuck like an old book into another shelf

Time passes by, tears come and go again

Life, now so bleak, once I was its big fan

Memories of torments from my own past

I still feel young, but yet aged damn fast

Beyond that point of no return

where only anguish and defeat remain

Our cause once vivid, true, and radiant

Now just an altar of more lurking pain

The spirit of urges made one more stand

But all within me longs for that final end

I do something exotic, suppressed a while

as I simply focus life with a honest smile

Beyond that point of no return

where I had always to survive on my own
Abandoned by my friends and god alike
Yes, once it did make me cry and frown
But deep within the indomitable remains
Unimpressed by all those scars and pains
Life will go on nonetheless, and so did I
Condemned to attempt anew until I die
Beyond that point of no return
Cause cosmic evils deserve to burn!

Banish with Laughcraft

Decades older, originally my first award-winning prosaic story (abstract one)

Banish with Laughcraft

First story to win me a roleplayer award, for contributing... Nearly two decades old by now.

Revised Version for my "My Cult of Thoolhoo"

Author: André M. Pietroschek © All rights reserved

pietroschek@gmail.com

At first, some hints to readers who never read H.P. Lovecraft's „Shadows over Innsmouth“, August Derleths „The Star Gate“ and are unaware of Cthulhu style Role-playing Games. Lovecraft "used" his sickness to inspire the myth of evil, chthonic deities, who interacted with planet earth since it came into existence. Small groups or single individuals stumbled across the myth, went insane, suffered a horrible death or came to the shocking realization that they were part of the myth and set apart from all humanity. Main idea is that the myth cannot be understood or countered by neither science, religion nor occultism. Every insight concerning the truth is another step into madness. Please excuse my short cut version, sample is free, but without money no full version will be published. Readers shall be aware that in reality there is no evidence that I write truth about real persons in my fantasy texts. Cthulhu as role-play usually includes the following experiences: The chance to emulate a classic, one could nearly say archetypal, character of your choice. See how it develops in a (for now) loyal team. Yes, emulate, not mimic or transmute into. Role-play style happens with imagination and not like theater. That is LARP. Next, the chance to game in the era of prohibition and gangsters colliding with the unspeakable and cruel reality of myth. The summary of shock, madness and inescapable Destruction via a cosmic and tentacled nemesis and its minions.

Producing a radio audio and computer game remains among my goals. Since I made a sneak preview for my "Grunt the Vegetarian" at <http://nvwvault.ign.com> I proved that it works. Surprising how my small files would already fill a full game. Please be assured I write by my own style, I never tried to imitate Lovecraft and am aware that I lack his talent for making the reader realize what is about to happen without ever really typing it straight onto paper. I will try to learn this though for it makes for a really intense addition of reading pleasure. If you don't know my other files, be reminded that I tested difficult approaches to writing to test my petty skills. This was my first finished short story intended for publication. Be lucky you didn't have to read my early files, as those I did handwrite for a german role-play game when I was twelve. Back then I was perfectly free of any talent at all. Just a mindless urge and good intentions. I don't make my income by being an author, so I keep to looking for better solutions, of course. I plan anyway, to indulge into making a computer

game and one of those solo-adventures for cellular phones. Playing as such is low priority to me; it becomes interesting only when it furthers my own approaches. I met several creative minds and I learned from them as best as I could under the circumstances I have to call remnants of my life.

If you don't have any of the backgrounds I mentioned above, it might help you, to scroll down to the add on info and read it before you read the story. In the German version I name here a link to a short quickstep rulebook and adventure of Cthulhu role-play. I don't know one as good in English and sadly, translating it would violate copyright and my oath of not without earning money...

This is a FICTIONAL e-text, inspirational file originally intended to become a video game & radio audio tale. But luckily I got excluded from society, and returned with different priorities.

I admit my translation reduced the quality, am just a prosaic German university-dropout & ex-bum.

'The Arkham Instigator, short summary

Today, 01.06.1923, the investigations of the police ended. The last month were filled with a nearly incomparable effort to illuminate the disappearance of the well-known persons struggling versus preternatural incursions. The small town, by the name Dunseith became the stage for an unsolved crime. The central persons: Adriano Putana, Sebastian Crowley and J.T. Presque remain missing. Few hours after the local police was alarmed the government ordered that Dunseith was to be secured by forces of the US army. The scarce evidence comes down to a torn, bloodstained coat, blood and two bullet holes of handgun caliber. Police declared that the assumption of a cult crime might be realistically. With the end of the investigations, the flags were lowered to half-mast. Arkhams greatest newspaper willingly covers all expenses of the investigation and further search for evidence.'

Story: For years, the occultist and small time actor Sebastian Crowley, the business lawyer J.T. Presque and the ex-monk and pulp writer Adriano Putana got drawn into situations, which would shatter the mind of the average citizen. The activities of obscured cults and alien entities left tracks to a horrifying truth that is confronted by inspired people. Sanity threatening discoveries of forbidden lore hint at the possibility that earth is suffering the dark plots of maniac, chthonic deities who undermined humanity for eons. The myth was detected in multiple places and again and again the survivors faced the problem of knowing the truth, while being surrounded by oblivious neighbors, tellurium energy, insane entities and their bloodthirsty minions. Anxiety and pressure of ignoring the unacceptable facts, take their toll. Yet some myth-sleuths gained special insights, which proved beneficial. One of those valiant groups operated in the light of publicity and scored admirable successes in series. They became a symbol of inspiration and prudence for entire humanity. Of course the tentacled conspirators flayed them alive before this story started. Survivor of this bunch was Adriano Putana.

After the death of his fiance he was trying to compensate trauma by indulging in masculine fallacies. The Old Ones had other plans in mind though. In 1918 he was dismissed from the Corpo di Armato and realized gain of initiative.

Confronted by overwhelming forces he decided to deal crucial damage as long as he could. His journey on the fruitless road of retribution. He was seen gazing at a burning tarot card. The desperate assault of a single brave soldier. Illusions of heroism and glory were not for him anymore. A

long termed and painful struggle against forces one couldn't defeat was his more realistically answer. Yet he was aware how many times outgunned individuals stood forthright against cults, criminals and crazed scientists. Where they succeeded they were called heroes, where they faltered they were labeled fools. The necessity of introspection was not to be overseen. In battle with horrors from beyond there was no reason to grant them further advantages due ones own mental instability. Of course such insights came the hard way in a mans younger years.

The three protagonists had their first meeting in 1922, Calcutta, India as they were drawn into a revival of the thug activities and the masterminding influence behind it. Through a lack of subterfuge in the thuggish actions, they found out about occult meaning of their vile crimes. Supposed accidents and sicknesses could be proven ritual murders of this heretic, abstract local cult of hierophants.

Deluded that the goddess Chalice asked to re-establish the cosmic balance with Shiva, there was assassinated whoever stood in the way of the vicious hierophants and their deranged plans. Crowley valiantly stepped up to face the blood magick, Putana welcomed the escape from boredom, and Presque wouldn't allow a bunch of crazy, strangle-cord and knife-wielding wackos to spoil his investments in this region.

When they discovered first signs that a surprising outbreak of disease was the dirty work of these religious madmen, even the British advisors could no longer hesitate. Need of circumstance and Presque's political influence allowed them to join forces with the responsible military of the Commonwealth. Weeks passed in the draining heat and short of the breaking point they eavesdropped information about a ritual gathering and even managed to identify some thugs. They followed those cultists and discovered their hideout. Caverns in derelict parts of the country and minor camps along the roads. Duty on side of the British soldiers and grim resolve of the three made them charge into the caverns. During the first phase of infiltration they managed to rescue Dr. Derek Nail from the fangs of a dark courtesan who planned to ritually feed upon him in service to that which lurked in darkness.

Nails natural gift of seduction had blinded him, overconfidence for the price of seeing women only as sex-toys. For the three myth-snuffers it didn't matter, the cult had to be stopped and if Nail was foolish enough, he would continue to reap forbidden fruits until the consequences tore him apart. After their first case was solved they were honored by the British embassy and the society of early human culture. They had by chance not only fought the cultists, but by their raw courage alone casted a minor banishment versus the dreaded influence from beyond. Now such villains had to expect repercussions if they dared to stomp on law and humanity. Dr. Nail was brought forth to the best asylum of the western world, to purify his shredded self from the torment of his recent experiences. While the media entitled them heroes it was Colonel Fleming who earned this.

It was his tenacity and disciplined leadership that made them prevail, even when body and soul were at stake. The memories were clear enough to still shake all of them. In those dark and dreaded caverns they suffered the sight of a lower servitor, which's stench and insane chanting, full of soul-pain and sorrow, haunted their minds for a long, long time. In midst of those stone carved cavern walls full of ceremonial symbols a strangling feeling hit their guts.

They would never know, if some incense or the alien atmosphere shocked them more. As they entered they had still believed to fight down some thugs, arrest the cults guru and go home. A notch

from the truth they were.

As they charged on they encountered the abomination, which the cult worshiped. For an instance insanity kicked God himself from the throne and seemed all-consuming. A second later they had to fight for their very souls. The handful of soldiers prepared for battle while Crowley studied the painted walls. Putana, who was pretty shaken by this intense situation, realized this was no problem solved by simple firepower. Presque, influenced by this thing, was drowning in a wave of horrid self-pity and soultrash. Unable to fire his reliable handgun again, he stared like a drunken peasant who realized he just kissed his cow. Crowley focused on countering the strange rituals formula and achieved some form of banishing power.

The German-Sicilian bastardo guarded the occupied occultist, but couldn't shake free from the grasp of shock completely. As the magical effort overstretched Crowley's mental balance and the first soldiers got seriously wounded, Putana focused his self. Mistaken to be the effect of Crowley's ritual incantation, the banishment of the horrid creature came completely surprising to all of the shocked eyes. The creature faded from flesh to ethereal, much like an overcome nightmare. In this moment of triumph it was Adriano's realism that shocked his companions. He explained that the creature was neither destroyed nor arrested, capable of returning after a short phase of recovery. While their psyches were marked by this night, they fell into a cheerful victory mood, everyone busy to rationalize these haunting moments.

The look in the eyes of Colonel Fleming was all which spoke of this chapter ever after. After they had withdrawn from the caves, short after the first full night of sleep, the next setback awaited.

Embittered they had to swallow that further investigation was impossible, cause the British army decided to detonate caves in this area to secure the local villages and avoid further spread of this wicked disease. They had saved hundreds of people and gave their very best, yet they felt like beaten dogs as they left India. Presque rapidly ventured back to the United States. An old acquaintance, by then a high-ranking diplomat had asked him to interfere with a political crisis. Gunter von Gotha had manipulated the economy to revive his dream of the German Kaiser Reich. Presque coordinated and led several executives to deal with this mundane danger. This time there were no signs of mysterious influence to be found. Aiding the USA shortly after the Great War proved valuable nonetheless.

The public was pleased and the media celebrated Presque as a defender of western culture. The Arkham Instigator entitled Presque as „a Star shining brightest“. Crowley compared this with his astrological data and made some divination concerning the destiny of JT. Putana was less euphoric and remained silent.

After they had left India some month of recovery and calmer life took place. In February 1923 the three met again, as they dared to intercept some uncommon occurrences in Japan. Work on a planned road brought forth a discovery of some strange relic, which seemingly summoned a group of spooky, pale cultists out of nowhere.

The chanting and dancing of these people irritated the workers and when the heart of a work group leader was found on some savage altar, it was no longer prejudice what spoiled the climate here. The real horror started when a small mountainside monastery was discovered to be the head-

quarter of some weird Asian sect. Far from the shores there was just one village close by and so the monastery was still filed as deserted in the official Japanese reports. An illusion that was falling apart, as Sgt. Koromiko arrived with a squad of soldiers.

Patient information gathering and his personal cunning made Koromiko realize a sense of weirdness about this mission. Maybe support from Iteki was seen as more appropriate than risking more Japanese soldiers. Officially the honor that Iteki like Presque were allowed to join up on this investigation is nearly inexpressible to western barbarians. Adriano was somewhat uncertain about the usefulness of Japanese infantry equipment for securing a building. This insight should prove real. Koromiko's decision made them clash with the lunacy of a culture that was nearly as strange to them as the vile web of the Old Ones.

While the first monk cells still somehow resembled something human, every step towards the center made the foreboding sense of danger more intense. Dirty, degenerate and hideously desecrated was this scene.

The acumen of Crowley would be the only chance of escape for the trio, yet this was totally unknown to them at this point. Anyway, without the glorious sacrifice of the Japanese soldiers, they would have been condemned to a painful slow death. Confronted with an abomination of myth horror and battle ready thugs of this entity it should come to a tunnel fight which equaled the German-French trenches from 1914-1916 in all bitter aspects which fighting wreaks upon human existence. The scene turned into utmost torment for flesh, Ki and Do which was hardly to top. A gory skirmish through the narrow corridors of the monastery was about to begin. As the first wave ended in those tunnels, the adventurers split to support some soldiers.

Sebastian concentrated, forming an astral blade, resembling the dagger he wielded. Thereby he gained the chance to hurt the essence of ethereal beings as well. Joined by two soldiers he entered a corridor, advancing in flickering light and surrounded by nerve ripping sounds.

Close to the end of the passage he recognized an arcane symbol and while the soldiers thought of a dead end, Sebastian chanted versus the walls. Due his talent with Magick he was able to energize the symbol and opened a secret door. The soldiers were struck by surprise due to his innate abilities. Crowley expected the natural, an attack of a dark adept. The bloody dance of blades would demand toll from them. Toll that Crowley was more than willing to pay. The soldiers could fire once before it became close quarters. Meanwhile Presque led another two soldiers and marched on. The dirty gibberish at the walls left him totally unimpressed. Instinct was, what made him survive such situations. The slot eyed cultists felt so superior in their ambush, that the massive counter-strike of JT caught them unprepared.

As he had expected those degenerates never before encountered resistance. His automatic clip pistol brought death to some of them and another one was smashed down by a powerful punch even before the soldiers could fully react. Boxing, bleeding, shivering and blocking they survived this altercation. For a while the illusion of a glorious victory would offer itself. Putana stood close to Koromiko, watching. Giri and Courage couldn't make the confusion go away. This was no typical mission for soldiers. The men sensed that they wouldn't survive such a place much longer. Adriano sneaked into a corridor. Fear tried to strangle his confidence and it demanded an act of willpower. Two times his intuition made him throw grenades into sections he felt to be dreadful. The following

deathcries made his doubts vanish. In his guts cramps started, this was not only fear.

This place was not part of their *via fatum*, whatever lurked here, his awareness failed to reveal anything about the deeper levels. Surprised by his own skill he perceived himself blocking the knife of a cultist and countering by a move he adapted from the few month of Wong Chen Kung Fu he once decided to practice. Calm but dedicated did he cut his gratitude into the flesh of this cultist. While Putana expressed his allergy to vice, the tables began to turn. The minions launched an organized assault and the pure strength of numbers drove them backwards. When defeat became obvious the remaining soldiers grouped, giving evidence that mere mortals are as heroic, to allow Crowley the chance to grasp through a breach of reality and save his companions.

Weeks later Crowley honored the sacrifice of the Japanese squad by a play in the Noh theater. Adriano chose silence as a suiting honor and never mentioned anything about this, except that Wakino, who translated for them in the village, escaped her shame via traditional suicide. The survivors took care that the few captured scripts and warding symbols were handed to proper instances. When the evacuation of the village was coordinated they found some weeks of time to flow with their *mushien*. They met a Miko and even found an ancient Kitsune scroll, which they copied and handed to a museum. While Adriano had nothing more to offer he found some emotional link to the female side of Japan. Here he learned that not all women taste like rotting fish. Crowley studied the scripts and practiced some *Tantojutsu*. Again their interference had cost them much and they spend month for recovery. Adriano chose to visit his place of birth, Giardini and enjoyed the Italian monastery close to Monte Casino.

Time went by and the memories where no longer so haunting to them. When Putana met tourists he couldn't ignore the self-righteous ignorance that transformed so many humans into a twisted bunch of swine. Crowley told them at the departure he would visit Egypt and indeed, Adriano received two letters. The first covered Crowley's first week in Memphis and described his attempts to teach basics of the real myth to his adepts. Unknown to Putana his brother-in-arms Crowley was busy countering the spreading of a cult of Apophis. From the moment that he stepped out of the plane Sebastian was sure that something was lurking for him here.

The atmosphere and bustling streets could no longer delude a skilled occultist from sensing the telltale signs. Sebastian asked subtle questions, observed and bribed his way to get more detailed information right away. When he finally investigated in the poorer districts, he learned to translate the lore. It was Anuthotep who had decrypted the necromantic Lore from the books of the dead into a distorted way. Unsurprisingly, even in Egypt people got angry, when some deranged fanatics dug out their ancestors, had sexual intercourse with them, and finally swallowed the remnants of their brains. By the sheer stupidity of the brain eaters one could discard the idea of gaining the wisdom of the dead through such depravity.

Fallacy, which became dangerous by the latent criminal potential of this psychopathic brotherhood. Being on his home turf Crowley made the police do their job and launched guerrilla war on the Apophis cult. Falcon and Sphinx would become fundamentals of his later works.

To Putana's astonishment the second letter arrived from the Hürtgenwald, where Germany meets France. Crowley sent some greetings and wrote he played sheep dumb tourist. Mentioning his plans to visit the US of A by the way. Sebastian's physical vessel, tool of the higher self he con-

stantly dabbled about, needed further recovery. At that moment Adriano sensed a vague menace between those lines. Rovinato C. needed his aid, although he seemed to be yet unaware of this himself. Adriano busted his low finances to dash towards the border of Austria and purchased a train passage to Germany. Stress and forbidden knowledge could even hamstring Sebastian, part of the existential limits of a human being. The natural area of the Hürtgenwald was turning into a place of dread for in the last month several wanderers and women had been victims to a psychopathic murderer. Police was working over-shift, yet an area of this size was near impossible to cover by the dutiful cops. Putana cursed himself that they ventured so ignorant concerning retaliation from the minions or even setups from petty criminals.

Carlisle D. Wardstone, an anthropologist, had unleashed the madness as he stumbled upon scripts of the forbidden cults. Fascinated by old tales, which Germany had plenty to offer, he couldn't resist. Encouraged by his academically backers he was too stubborn to notice how much their urge to harm him was source of their advice. Even the major warning didn't even make him think: Do never conjure such, which you cannot banish or destroy, nor summon ever, what can conjure such forces, which you cannot ward yourself against.

As a man with scientific education Dr. Wardstone didn't want to admit, how much his darker impulses had clouded his brain. His triumph of superiority came in form of a ghoulish nightmare, which instantly fed on the hapless academics. The moment the last notch of common sense reached Wardstones jelly brain he started fleeing for his life, leaving his fellows and ritual trappings behind. The murders and Wardstones following suicide left the police more than a bit puzzled. The doctor had pushed his head into a coal oven after slitting his wrists. Newspaper conjured a demonic meaning into all of this and the sects of psychoanalysts wanted to establish themselves by offering their questionable help.

This time, Crowley and the cultists of the Old Ones arrived, both eager to get close to Wardstones daughter and capture the remaining notes of the deceased. This was even subtle from both parties, because none would benefit from the police finding a certain pattern in this. What he lacked in subterfuge and stealth Crowley made up with divination. Gaining the information yet caught in a cauldron of hostile adversaries all on his own.

Both Sebastian and Putana came to the conclusion that the summoning will manifest most damaging here through a human with repressed violent temper. Adriano did a desperate search for Sebastian, hoping to find him in time. Looking back, he was exhausted by the intensity of memories. He visualized the final flashbacks.

The Hürtgenwald after sunset, Putana marched along the ways, sneaked through the vegetation and stumbled under the light of the crescent moon. Fresh forest air, atmosphere, fatigue and doubts faded into oblivion the moment he heard a cry of agony from Crowley. The visualization became most lucid the moment Putana swung the axe to end the unwanted duel between Crowley and the psychotic criminal.

Weeks of hide and seek only to compensate Crowley's weakness in self preservation. Again Adriano's life didn't benefit from any of his efforts. A shine of hope struck the frowning Sicilian. Perhaps he would never again have to bury body parts at least. The departure was of a blasphemous mundanely flair this time. They send some letters to Presque and went their own ways again. In No-

vember 1924, JT had withdrawn to his Landhaus for recovery from business; news of two well-known people asking for him reached his ears.

This time the news lines of the Arkham Instigator clashed brutally with those of the Miskatonic Mirror. The attention of mankind was turning towards Dunseith. The third major joint venture of the three myth snuffers was about to begin. They prepared again to resist the greedy talons of tentacle-horrors.

Putana perceived bad rumors from a coastal cluster named Dunseith. Proclaiming to work on a new novel he ventured to Washington. Adriano was busy gathering information, comparing notes and checking archives for weeks.

His natural gentleness made him get access in a smooth way, although his shock to realize that he still was able to socialize with normal people shook his emotions. The librarians whispered about his dedication while studying the dusty tomes in the stuffy atmosphere of the old buildings. Comparison of the notes made him admit that again forces from beyond were storming into human society. In the end, his introspection would make the situation clearer to him. As he lay on the bed of his cheap hotel room, he perceived mental images and began to understand some of their meaning. The haunted spot Dunseith nearly cried out the challenge to those willing to dare. Putana would conclude that an old signal tower, once build upon the place of atavistic hermits, was the source of the strange coincidences. Adriano expected another set of cavern tunnels. Emotionally shaken by his mental efforts, he took a night walk through the foggy streets delving into the autumn wind. He admired the architectural wonders for several hours, praising the spirit and skill of craftsmen and visionaries.

The architectural wonders were clad in the typical dresses of females. Hit by surprise he was later informed that Sebastian Crowley was in town. Escaping the embrace of his favorite dance girl, he started his way to the Miskatonic Residence motel. As many times before they sat in a darkened room, exchanging news and contemplating the dangerous, alienating myth. Putana watched the smoke rise from his Gimel cigarette and playfully flattened his softpack. Overwhelmed by memories and melancholia. Crowley remained silent in such moments and this was one reason for Adriano's respect.

Putana was busy wondering if his feelings were an obstacle or the longing for things he failed to establish. Crowley studied his notes and charts, muttering arcane syllables. He recovered his mental clarity when Crowley became agitated. Sebastian suspected that it wouldn't be a tunnel, but rather some alien kind of portal that they sensed. Freudian assumptions mentioned the symbol of portal as linked to the female abdomen, relating to some childhood traumatic experience of Crowley being unable to attain sex with his mother. The myth just meant a gate to another realm of existence though. Adriano worried why he could sense resonating of truth in statements while most other were seemingly oblivious to such insight. Anyway, to him the myth was a replacement of his average life.

Unlike Thoth and Crowley he was not drawn, but born into this myth. His lifestyle was similarly nemesis and sanctum to him. Without his few talents he would be just another cocaine crazed puritan or a petty criminal. Such realizations sucked him into an emotional abyss, but today Crowley would prevent him from drowning there. A litany of encrypted chanting was intoned by Crowley and Putana was again amused how easily he could suffer this, to him totally meaningless, gibber-

ish. While the occultist checked his equipment Adriano planned to ask for support from Presque. Ambient atmosphere of the nightly drive towards the corporate building set a new expression (to the mind of the reader and the graphic I want created for my PC game).

The choice of employees was one sign that Presque's clear; sharp cutting mind was needed for this venture. Although Adriano couldn't deny that money and a comfortable limousine would perhaps be among his considerations, too.

The clean rooms granted a relaxing mood and while Crowley told the constellation of stars wouldn't hint at Adriano getting laid with the secretary, the Sicilian was in deep, passionate trance, his gaze transfixed to her... aura.

Back in his mind he remembered Crowley's symbolism. The sword of determination, the staff of desire, the coin of valor, and a cup full of insight. Putana wouldn't like to miss his Gimel cigarettes in all of this. Metaphoric. Nearly like stars, which were synonymous to humans in this occult dabbling. Entire libraries full of such crap should ensure that adepts were kept from the few useful insights of this studies for eternity. On the other hand was the idiocy to paint pentagrams and chant evocations in ancient languages, at secret spots of ritual meaning, a misinterpretation that begged to be punished.

For some short moments the serious threat of the surreal situation could be ignored and resembled a vacation. Even when they had any prove at all, they were forced to choose wisely whom to trust with this forbidden lore. Crowley recruited from his adepts, JT and Adriano had seen them fail, fall into despair and suffer before, though. Adriano acted on intuition, yet solitude was the better choice manifold. Putana had seen remnants of the women he loved locked away in the Arkham Asylum or buried in another dusty grave. Presque never mentioned anything since his wife was killed. Contemplation was smoothly shoved aside by the entry of Jeffrey Ronald, personal assistant of JT. The scarce evidences were discussed in absence of Ronald due to precautions taken before. JT radiated coolness, but couldn't hide his enthusiasm for long. A deathwatch, or the political less correct realization that the own survival instincts were no longer valid. Preparations were made and two days later Presque drove the impressive limousine gallantly.

Dunseith, where Gods light denies to shine, the place where unspeakable abominations crawl through shadows pursuing unexplained goals. The arrival at the outskirts of Dunseith was done. In light of street lanterns they walked towards the meeting point that they had arranged per messenger. Police found the messengers half-eaten corpse a bit too late for our protagonists' story. Dunseith was a run down, nearly rotten village. The air smelled of salt, smoke and fish. When they perceived the first dwellers their mood turned to vigilant. The inhabitants displayed certain stigmata of the insane myth and it's toll upon the human body and soul.

Fat, anxious and nervous with a dumb or piercing gaze in their eyes they weren't people they wanted to meet at all. Crowley noticed that the erratic thoughts were not concealed by their facial masque. Even the professional welcome by the villages' leader couldn't banish the foreboding sense of dread from their minds. The only tavern was used as the meeting hall and Presque started the negotiation. In this small, atmospheric setting the three stood surrounded by villagers, like heroes of old folk tales. Years later these moments were still held in memory by the people. While Adriano played Presque's advisor, JT had noticed years ago, that Putana's insights were not based on pure

acumen or psychoanalysis, but strange insights into the application of the myth.

His essays and quotes were sometimes shockingly strange, yet he could score successes that none whom Presque had ever met could match. JT learned over the years to sense which of this ramblings were to be taken serious and which delved into metaphorical blasphemies. Seemingly, Adriano strived to a path that would banish the Old Ones and supply compensation for the bitter years they had to survive. Sebastian was prone to fall into a nervous glossolalia from time to time and JT would bet that Putana kept a low profile concerning occult studies in respect to Crowley. The last years repeatedly evidenced what power the ethereal beings wielded against humanity and thereby versus Presque's investments so that their skills were useful addition to the repertoire.

His employees never understood, why JT invested in a pulp writer like Adriano. Even the best among his workers couldn't deal with the smallest insights he handed to them. If JT needed a competitor crushed, he made sure that he received Adriano's less fictional writings. Presque's attention circled back to the villagers dabbling. He enjoyed the taste of his coffee and analyzed their smarter ideas with an honest smile upon his lips. When the discussion transformed into articulation of paranoid superstition JT cutted it short and arranged last minute preparations. Meanwhile Putana managed to get Crowley out of the waitress bed. They made their way across the only worn off road towards the goal of this investigation. The place itself was mundane as it could be. Nothing mystical, no bad vibrations. Short of the door to the signal tower Crowley drew out a blade with carved symbols, which remained enigmatic to JT and Putana, even after their initiation.

JT took his Automatic Clip Pistol out of its luxurious package and Adriano made himself look foolish, as he clumsily tried to handle his brass knuckle, flashlight and revolver while opening the door. The door opened and in the pale, yellow light of their flashlights they entered the conic formed room. While stairs led upwards, their senses foretold it would be here to search for another way. They started checking some chests and looking around carefully.

Thoth found a crowbar among some chests and caught a medic kit a while later. Crowley borrowed the crowbar and Adriano found a trapdoor in the floor. They took their positions and opened the door, prepared for whatever they could prepare for. The intense smell of fresh wood hit their noses. This was not what they had expected, no sense of dread, no rotten smells. Giving hand signs they coordinated their moves and Adriano sneaked downwards. He was aware that pleasant sensations could cloud ones perception, too.

He entered a room of surprising width and looked around. Short before he perceived the first creature his senses warned him of danger. It would be a fight, soon. In the light of his Taschenlampe stood a creature that he perceived like a ghoulish nightmare turned real.

The pale gray skin looked unfamiliar and metallic teeth reminded him of sharks he saw in Japan. The creature moved gentle, exuding a sense of menace. Adriano's body felt numb and he was aware that martial arts would be no good to him here. With a clumsy punch he launched the brass knuckle on his left towards the head of this creature. He had needed the few seconds to deal with adrenalin and fear and therefore couldn't yell any warning to his companions. He felt Crowley arriving and thought him outflanked by another of these ghoulish freaks. Crowley reacted like a samurai of legend, cutting a chunk out of the flesh of his aggressor before he was pushed into defense. The magus spend daily hours in physical training and contemplation, here it had just saved

his life. JT was on the stairs, alerted by the sounds. He suppressed a scream of pain as a third ghoul bit his back bumpers (yes, his ass). Before pain made him stumble he shot. Two bullets precisely through the sneaky ghouls eyes.

Putana was pushed into infighting and landed blows as he took them. For an instance he thought time stands still, so he could hear the sound of his blood splashing against the walls. The unreal moment should fade back into a painful reality. Adriano launched a brutal combination of punches until he fainted in a fog of exhaustion and pain. Crowley and JT covered their backs and made the creatures pay blood.

Putana awoke the moment the metallic drums could be identified as gunshots again. He felt the shakes, pain and fear in a weird mix of perceptions. A look at the source of an unknown smell made him realize that his pocket watch and parts of his belly were bitten away. Bandaging himself while watching the bruised Sebastian shove his blade through the brain of the last ghoul and the grim Presque busy tending his wounds.

A moment of silence made Crowley bark out his theory that these creatures were manifestations of their darker aspects. Facing the threat of hearing further dabbling about Magick, JT enjoyed his cigar and Putana braced himself, faking unconsciousness. The morbid humor of perceiving the melodramatic occultist in this bloodstained room shook their egos. When pain became tolerable they stood up, used what the medical kit had to offer and thought about this situation. Mental images of unspeakable horrors, eternal torment and torture of the flesh began haunting them. Of course no angel came to save their souls. Desperation of incomparable quality invaded their minds and the onslaught of mind flaying impressions was as greedy as Ute and Carole, the village whores. The atmosphere began humming with unknown energies and a shift of energy shook their bodies.

While a simple flashlight was high tech in this time, the three were quite calm the moment that shock and despair made way to reveal a shining door. Crowley proclaimed this to be a dimensional gate and they stepped through. For an instance that seemed eternal, they struggled to gather their courage. Then advancing to the final challenge that was now part of the heroic mood, they used to subdue their common sense. For the last time their minds, like a nutshell on the stormy sea, attempted to cross the ocean of madness and nausea. Within moments the steps were done.

A single house close to the edge of a European forest was Adriano's first mundane perception after his eyes got used to the moonlight. He couldn't tell any difference to his general condition, although he was quite focused and aware. The insight that Crowley was by now within the house he looked at came as no surprise. He was too fixed upon his Magick, never willing to realize that confronting his problems would have granted him, what he longed for in this occult crap. Presque landed a few yards away and displayed himself as a mutating and degenerating ball of flesh, bone and body fluids. When he reached the state of bloody pie, the moaning and screaming ended. Finally the cosmic goat had caught him, Adriano had tolerated his flawed existence for quite some time. J.T. never wanted to accept that his compulsive sticking to normalcy caused fears and flaws that, logically, took their toll from him.

His greatest merit, machismo beats reason, had become the key to his critical failures. A pie of blood and feces, the last shine of the Presque he liked, grateful that he landed far away so Adriano didn't have to smell this. A movement along the edge of the forest made Putana look up in surprise.

Astonishing, after so many years?

Whoever came from there was initiated into the myth and for the first time, Adriano met someone who also learned the practical application. Now, where the moment he wished for his entire life had become reality, his mind noticed the total lack of joy within. A silent agreement. Heinrich Kremser, ex-cop, wanted to eradicate the degenerate minions, just like Adriano.

A dominant insight reached his brain, breaking through the silence like a hammer through thin wood. Adriano felt the fear and pain only long enough to enjoy the meaning. He would die here, pretty soon.

Kremser handed him a Gimel fluffy flavor and Putana ignored reality to allow a last onslaught of memories. Gimel, the first he smoked after the most passionate night with Verona. One of the three women he had met, who fascinated him via personality and sex appeal alike. Again a minor confusion and pain struck him. He never realized that he had found his personal grail, so many years ago. A tribute to the phantasm, which had made him, survive years of disgrace and suffering. Now the time to release the salts, which still bound him to this degenerate existence, was reached. Human existence had a final end. Well, the thought that some mad scientists or cultists would one day summon him back to earth made him smirk.

Sincerely, Azel, Shrub and Nylonthotep really begged to get a mental steelbrush shoved into their astral asses. With a deathly-pallor, shivering and cramped, he inhaled from his Gimel, although the lungs were filling with blood and the distaste spoiled much. Bleeding from old scars and shaking by nervous shock he finally collapsed. This story and Adriano's life end here...

It's not so dead what can there eternally lie
In these strangest eons even death may die
We strike dead our masters on an icy night
We claim the power cause the stars R right

'The charade of occult fallacy found it's silent end

Excerpts from "The Miskatonic Mirror": 01.06.1923: H. Kremser, official speaker of the police admits, that Dunseith was the place of the last chapter in a story of the by now notorious, exalted occultists. The questionable investigations of preternatural affairs, conducted by Sebastian Crowley, Adriano P. and J.T. Presque ended in a mysterious disappearance, which is suspected a staged act of the publicity-addicted neurotics. Vigilant readers will have already noticed what weird topics our journalists had to work through in the last months. We further advise all reasonable people to avoid, or use with utmost precaution, the writings of Adriano Putana. These novels have been declared upsetting and mind threatening by concerned experts of the Church and well-known Doctors of Psychoanalysis. The Mirror will collect all evidence, to prove that the only cultists of alien chthonic deities were the three unstable persons, who are by now missing. Populace of Dunseith is unharmed and police could not even find minor evidence of secret cults or unbelievable abominations from beyond.'

Recommended Reading & movies:

Checking with web-pages which mention original Lovecraft sources (i.e. The Lovecraft archive),

plus Call of Cthulhu rituals or reading the official books, sure won't hurt too much. I don't delve deeply in it, for I am not certain if it would need licenses. Further the game guide who feels inspired to indulge in my cults of Thoolhoo will most probably include what he or she finds proper anyway. I would say reading "The case Charles Dexter Ward" with the perspective of a cultist in mind. "WoD Antagonists" has some interesting chapters ("The Thief" or occultists). Lovecraft's "The horror at Red Rock", "Nyarlathotep" and "Dreams in the Witch-House (our own?)".

Movies: Evil Dead, In the mouth of madness & Lord of Illusions. The Ring 1&2 ??? Double Vision – Five Hells was a noteworthy Asian flavor style to me.

The simple twist - Facing my stalkers

Totally not pasting-in of a failure to fill pages..?

The simple twist - Facing my stalkers

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

"When you have bewitched or assassinated the unwelcome; Whoever remains, however useless & boring, must be the only audience you still have left!" Quote from my: Warlock Holmes, the Cumber-Batching speech

I had learned early that it is a long and hard process to work oneself up in society. It had taken me a while to actually really accept it, and live-up to it. City-life seems complex and dreadful to rural folks at start. I had been the victim of violent crimes before. It did not get easier with repetition. Well, for me at least. I had relocated myself to the big city. A new name and a new job along with it. Sometimes I mourned that I could not contact any of my old companions and sometimes the solitude burdened me with a pressure which I could hardly ignore. I had a high price to pay for it. My social life was wasted, and when I felt that the age to sire children, and educate them properly, had become real, then I would always struggle between my selfish craving for luck and relationship versus my responsibilities.

We village-born have a fierce spirit about sticking to our own ways. Like cherishing proverbs, and the words of our elders, so much more than any academic book, no matter, how well written it may be. In my theory that is how we struggle with feeling homesick. We craft ourselves an ego fortress to protect mind and emotions, yet sometimes this fortress does indeed imprison or alienate us so much more than it benefits us. Self-sufficiency is learned early on in our lives. Most neighbors are good folks, it is just that trouble usually engulfs us, when we are unprepared or outnumbered. One could call it a tradition rooted in survival wisdom.

I lived a small, meaningless and bleak life during those early years in the big city. I had so much work, so many problems to contemplate, that I harshly noticed that a decade had passed me by. Aging, the price mortals pay. And so it started. Subtle and harmless, as the early phases tend to be, when the nasties lack complete supremacy. A neighbor had heard something weird rumored about me here, a threatening phone call there. The Nasties see such as success. It encourages them to grow nastier and nastier with their misdeeds. And that was what happened. My letters began to disappear after I had them stamped and thrown into the postage boxes, which our country has within each city block.

The service personnel who delivered letters and packages was most certainly threatened repeatedly, too. The official one from the State-Post-Office still fulfilled his duty, yet had developed a drinking habit, which no divorce could explain. Further it is science which states that there are no

real coincidences. Factors seeming to be random could all be explained, if one has the proper perspective and scientific education. An education I lacked aplenty. The nasties had many successes. Yet they were oblivious to certain facts, too. The more terror and threats I had to handle, the tougher my ego developed, and a thirst to see justice & vengeance dare their allegorical marriage was growing within me all along with enduring it.

I got the suspicion they attempted to make me suffer a heart-failure from the stress and anxiety they caused. I based that on the fact that some unknown instance had replaced my medications with placebos on one occasion and with hallucinogenic drugs during the next onslaught. Home invasion is a brutal comfort spoiler. But I was not frozen in fear and made use of my assets. I did not only study the law and resist again. I turned out the lights to practice self-defense from unarmed brawling to armed melee, since I had seen the vile eyes of my new neighbors staring at me in unlimited hatred and spite from across the streets. While the first nights during which I had been followed were just one stalker who wanted to get noticed for the intimidating effect the nasties expected it to cause, I considered it a warning. I henceforth studied my enemies. From the handbook of victimology to self-help sites on the Internet, I prepared to be ready for justice, when it was inevitable. The nasties went on, faking accounts and discrediting me from craven anonymity. All to waste my time and spoil my resources.

My suspicion was that they wanted to blame their villainy upon the paranoid personality disorder which they actually worked to inflict unto me. But they were not flawless. I had some evidence against them and I was by far not stupid enough, to rely on a law which had already looked away on their violations for years. No, I noted that justice could be done. It needs no corrupted and bribe-addicted law for that. Actually I would not be surprised, when I would see the nasties exchange the proverbial secret handshake with the law office and the judge. The guerrilla handbooks had taught me how many regimes and sects commit such crimes, as if routine. Why should I ignore the facts and submit to propagated utopianism then? Who cares... Few.

I had to lose my job, as that is what happens, when an employee becomes trouble. Companies do not care about justice, just about their personal profits. Twelve years of my life quite sabotaged and the nasties seemingly immune to repercussions. I had to wait a long time indeed. Yet then luck was with me, as it seemed. The next night I will turn the tides. This next night I will fight back with everything I can do to bring them to justice. I will neutralize them or die in the trying! For finally, finally Yog-Sothoth has opened the gate I awaited, and the stars are right! After twelve years of torment I can finally use the forbidden salts and speak the words again. Oh, "Cthulhu F'thagn i'äh i'äh!", for OUR savior and messiah does answer our calls! And I will do it. I will even send the ghouls to feast on their bodies' meat and I will send their wretched essence outward into the transient void, or else I die trying...

THE END

Bonus: Poetry

Death deserved – Cthulhu flavored

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

Elder gods, what have you wrought?

An insane, aural rapture of betrayal,
as our tentacled high priest writhes.

Once we all drank of divine bliss,

equally, untainted, and idealist,
but your desire contaminated,
our once ideal pact of balance!
Now raging fiends and defilers,
as we embittered haunt your chosen,
Splendor lost to rot and decay.
In a mindless storm of vengeance,
ending all creation we were denied,
horrid price of our hurt & your pride.

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE

OLD WOD, NEW WOD, MY FREESTYLE ANYWAY!

Poison what you can't conquer!

Oldest, Setite sympathizing drug-friend sermon

Vampire the Masquerade: Pietroschek's Poison what you can't conquer!

© Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved This is revised prosaic & foreign roleplayer sermon, not one more copy-catted plagiarism!

Helpful LINK: http://whitewolf.wikia.com/wiki/Vampire:_The_Masquerade_20th_Anniversary_Edition

Author's mindset: I write Pietroschek-Prose, and stemming from one more dysfunctional family background, being one more problem child, pariah, ex-criminal, university dropout, and ex-bum: I really think that expecting elite university standards from me is alike a Malkavian prank on my critic's expense. The first edition of 'Vampire the Masquerade' was still recent, and I was still the martial art trained student, and not the overweight wreck I am by now, when I already noticed: "Goddamn, none of the cool clans belongs to the pasta faction aka Camarilla!"

After I returned from the urban homeless, where I ended after being stalked, late-night targeted for armed assault (actually junkies trying to rob a supposed drug-cache), and having been on TV, for one of the chosen few who survived a winter sleeping on asphalt and other concrete PLUS making it back into society the legal way; I had the pleasure of serious health issues, impairing monetary troubles, and the joy of me at age 44 and 45 still being forced to accept minimum-salary aka minimum-wage jobs to pay my debts and make a living in lowest proletarian worker ranks.

To cut it short: A lot changed, but one truism remains: No matter what life dishes us, we have to learn handling it, or die trying. Looking back on that loudmouth attitude, partially inspired by my own temper in young adult years, I can gladly say I am toughened & wizened, though my estimated life expectancy is below 5 years now, too.

- As a non-native speaker my English is not without problems. I really regret that it spoils the readability for some people. Still Pietroschek-Prose is all I offer, and I am not at school here anyway. All may read it, nobody is forced to do so.

"Their chanting about Set is dementation to Kindred ears, Their worship a dumb mimicry of thaumaturgy, But long ago they looked so cool doing it!"

I might give you my name, yet it wouldn't be for real. Sincerely, I change them at my whim. Fifteen years ago I was initiated into the existence of House and Clan Tremere. A fascist, hermetical lodge of wizards [Erich Fromm, the anatomy of human destructiveness]. That is, of course, for the unknowing. I was ghouléed by an undead vampire sorcerer, for my unique skills should have served this bloodline of vampires until I either qualified for the Embrace, or got killed. How did it come to

be? I hardly know. Something I did, or perhaps something I am, attracted its attention. Please don't get me wrong, it was a step forward.

I went thru life pretty aimless, taking whatever job I could get to make my living, a notch too fascinated by cocaine, and struggling with a certain habit of getting drawn into the occult crap. In a way it paid. Maybe it really was due one of my works showing a potential, or maybe I was so overwhelmed with new experiences, back then, that I couldn't grasp what made me become his ghoul. I remember how it started though. I came back from a shift as a security guard, pure cannon fodder. As I checked my post box I had a strange invitation among bills to pay, and loads of advertising. I trusted my intuition and changed working shift so I could go there. After I masturbated, and took a shower, of course.

I heard some hours of dabbling about occult topics, yet a bit too close to Hollywood's brain-dead misconceptions. Every time I sensed it reaching a useful insight the speaker switched, as if shunning away from a truth he, or she, could not accept to be. The moment I wanted to stand up and speak myself, a strange thought reached my mind. Pearls before swine, isn't it? Of course today I know that several kindred can speak to the mind, yet back then I could have sworn it was my own idea. My feelings guided me to look around. In the back row one of the listeners seemed to agree with my unspoken thought.

That could save my evening. I waited a while, till a new speaker of some very important, very hermetical, and, of course, purely white magical order of cognitive-stillborn moved up to the stage. This break I used to switch places, nodding a greeting to the stranger while struggling with insights about his financial superiority.

While I had to be happy wearing some polyester shirt along with my baggy pant, he was clad like a pretty rich sucker. Today I recognize this as a subconscious hint, too late. His suit looked more expensive than my entire lifestyle, more important it matched his personality, or what I perceived as such. He felt smooth, yet a look into his eyes spoke of more than that. I felt some fear, mixing with joy. Without much speaking we listened for further thirty minutes. It was already clear that the evening was a failure. I used the time to wonder about my reaction, and compared sympathy to homosexual urges. I don't think that gay sex was my goal. Strange, I cannot remember what we spoke about, and how we left the hall.

I remember walking along an alley with my new-found companion, and indulging my mood of lucid fascination. His thoughts tried to push me and many of his questions were aiming to get answers, which I simply hadn't. Today it would be a warning sign, yet I wasn't experienced, nor strong enough, to deal better with it back then. He analysed my way of thinking, checked knowledge, and interests. Even psychological stuff. For the first time in my life I even enjoyed talking about my job. Disturbingly he listened intently. Nobody ever wants to hear about this kind of job. He did. A moment later he asked me, if I would give my opinion concerning a building he inherited from his family. When I agreed, I didn't know that it turned into my chance to drive in a car, which I could never afford. Limousine XL is my description for it.

Nightly drives set my mood to contemplation, and I honoured that my companion disturbed me only once. The questions were about my private situation, yet I thought he just wanted an excuse to peer at me. I was a loner back then and had no problems telling it. Still I could not ignore that his entire friendliness had something lurking about it. I disliked the thought of brawling with a pervert rich boy, and nearly ignored the realization that I did not even know his name after hours of chatting. As the car came to a stop, I was already impressed enough to make my senses fail.

The area was clean, no street trash, living or material, atmosphere here was calm and cool. I saw a building, which looked like one from the B-movies. No, it didn't, my mind gets clouded when I try to remember details about the time. I argued that Satanism, to me, reflects the same principles

that humanity puts into effort versus reality. As humans developed out of the caves, so did heretics, and occultists, attempt to break the dogmatic thinking of the church. And in praxis, to gain power over their worldly limitations set upon them by god? God hereby as entity, or symbol for reality. Headaches accompanied my few good ideas. When we entered a room in the basement, I had to struggle for self-control.

How could someone so smart, and definitely better educated than me, make such a mistake? Was it a mistake, or some test about my reactions? These little followers of Crowley, and similar freaks, would have called it a ritual chamber. Piss into their skulls.

Yes, some symbols. And the very well known chalice, rod, blade, and pentacle. My words splashed out of my mouth. What a stupid little misconception. This room is a waste, the elements hiding behind the archaic symbols are for regressive psychological components, it would mean that a magus would enforce change of reality, display of power, or what, by focussing his mind, perhaps his, or her, will. But only narcissist-fools believe that spooking through such a room would give them magic power, except for a straight-jacket maybe.

While I realized that I just insulted my companion, he just looked me in the eyes, and said “precisely”. A relieved smile tried to spread across my face, but never got the chance. A wave of dizziness reached my mind, and I felt intense pressure building in my guts, then pain shook me. My body overheated with rapid speed, and I stumbled, already busy falling to the ground.

I awoke a while later, pain crushing my thoughts, and the taste of blood in my filled mouth. [I don't mean blood cauldron here] Filled with my severed tongue, as I soon would find out. My eyes were damaged, my sight reduced to shades, and blurring forms. I could die of this, but what was it? His hands were empty, and he merely touched me. Insane humour came to my mind, hinting that this may have been the lurking part of him. He asked me something and I finally could understand what he said. My ears operated somehow. How long does this need to heal? I replied that, if I survive, it would be at least three weeks, perhaps with several mutilations remaining. If I could give you the power to heal it within just three nights, would you accept? Lord in Hell, I laid defenceless on the ground, bleeding, and crippled. What did he expect, me enjoying an extensive debate? I admit that my first thought was about even serials making more money than me though. I drank, what he gave to me, the first night it was Vanilla Coke!

No, it was his vitae, yet the taste of my blood, and the amok in my mind, made me swear it is Vanilla Coke. Today I can give even more sincere oaths which I not even consider keeping. I experienced a harrowing of hurt flesh, and mind-malfunctions for three nights, but it worked. While I felt emotional pain without comparison, in the middle of the third night, I recovered. My flesh operated, my eyes just needed to be cleaned from remnants of my blood, and my ears were nearly ok. Yes, my little trouser snake turned from a badly scorched sausage into the original again, too. I became ghoul to him without further troubles. After I masturbated, and took a shower, of course. I learned about powers, which I never knew. Luckily Rosicrucian pseudo-spirituality was not part of the crap.

As a ghoul my primary gifts of Caine were physical. Simplified, I could heal my body at enhanced speed, my muscles worked extremely well, martial arts, which I only clumsily executed until then, became easy, and I rarely tired. To my masters' astonishment I could boost my senses, as we found out, when I had to gasp that night I perceived a Nosferatu neonate, breaching his minor skill with obfuscate. I guarded my master, and with some months of successful duty, even the outer ring of a chantry. Due to my way of thinking I grew into my new-found role, yet the fact that I failed some tests, and that I easily frenzy when mind-control is at task, reduced my future considerations. I had my flaws, too. I began eating more than I needed, and my sexuality turned from long periods of torpor to a feverish greed to practice Erich von Goethas collected works. But let's not spoil

my works with glorification of the competition. Indeed I enjoyed my time with House and Clan Tremere, one of the most powerful bloodlines among the children of the night.

What did make me turn traitor? Some quite realistic insights, and necessities. My ego! As my reader already notes, I react more on intuition and feelings, which explains my talent with Auspex, but gives me a disadvantage with Dominate and Thaumaturgy [remember flaws like Thaumaturgical Inept]. Simplified, I could learn only petty rituals (i.e. Blood Mastery, check the rulebook, ghouls can learn it), but no real powers. It is good luck to me, if my potential hadn't been discovered to be castrated here early on, the Tremere would have hunted me with much greater dedication.

Please be reminded my advantage in Auspex has gained new side effects due to my sacred bloodline. As a disciple of Seth I am a bit easier blinded by light. I disliked the sun even as a mortal, developing an allergy against its rays, and avoiding swimming, and stuff. This means without sunglasses a car, or a flashlight, make me blinded for a while, even at night. A while long enough to stake me, or sink your fangs into my flesh. I explain my failure as Tremere with being still too mortal as a ghoul. Maybe I only learned psychological rituals, because I was limited in my existence, not just in thoughts.

Well, I stumbled across ghouls from different masters with the time, and indulged spare time visiting a sub house of my former line. I would say that I just had more of a Setite about me than about a Tremere in my life. This is from a subjective point though. I may have become a Brujah, yet I at least knew that bad temper, and lack of self-control, beg for certain unpleasant repercussions. The Setites made me accept the embrace by the truth they told me. Yes, I fell prey to some lies, I was defenceless against their power to manipulate emotions, and I was easily tempted, too. To me, the Tremere hit my way of understanding and thinking, but the Setites suited my way of un-life. Well, my stigma of being the little unimportant security guard is still with me. I am what others call a Warrior-Setite.

This means that, to suit our one-dimensional stereotype, I do ten minutes of sit-ups, and shadow-boxing, for every night spend on drugs, vice, and tempting the cute Camarilla ghouls and neonates.

I just have found my place here, it's that simple. The Setites subconsciously admire the Tremere power, and while they are not half as good with magic, their power increases social success, and nightly survival. What few seem to realize is that tempting is hardly our mission. We are seen as hedonistic and corrupt, yet we survived throughout the centuries with much more success than many of the unenlightened. The celestial guidance of Set gifts us not only with unique, innate abilities, but also with a growing confidence in our power, and dominion. I never saw Egypt, and I don't care. Seth is entity and symbol in one, the simple fact that we go the path of success. Do we tempt? You think and claim so; maybe we just show people that they belong to us by their very own ambitions. Corrupting others without being corrupted oneself. What does it mean? To me it meant indulging cocaine, having sex with the best women I could get laid with, and gaining money without hard work, nasty consequences, or repercussions. I learned the truth soon enough. What is this conscience of the Camarilla anyway, but a theoretical construct that frequently fails, even in our absence. I was never willing, nor ordered, to invade your haven, diablerizing whomever I could mug or attack while off-guard.

I am not guilty of proving to your ghouls that our lifestyle grants them much better gratification for their duties. Is it my fault that Toreador lack the discipline to satisfy their ghouls sexual urges? Our bodies are dead, we won't die of aids, nor do we need much to heal injuries that a prick headed ghoul causes while doing the wild thing. We ask for religious dedication to Set which you think is evil, but both sects ask of joining a holy war against each other even from the freshly em-

braced.

We do not follow a theory of such kind; we live as we are to the limits of our unlife. Yes, we are weak vampires. As weak as the Brujah, and Toreador, which found that hanging up with mortals is not only more fun, but indeed a power base we exploited, logically. Perhaps they are tools, but why then do we treat them as equals, mostly? Because they may grasp the wisdom of Seth, they can be of use, and what is wrong about it? We are not the ones running around breaking a masquerade here, selling out Sabbat bishops there. We are despised, and accused, paradoxically, for the agents of hedonism and corruption kept more of their integrity from the clutches of the beast than any other line. If our ways are dangerous, what about better solutions? And who brings the peril? Is it the Setite drug priest who causes havoc, or is it people incapable, and unwilling, to handle it? If I deal you the vitae of a garou, is it my fault that you frenzy by devouring what you asked, and paid, me to deliver? How is it that we interact with your needs without prejudice?

Set taught us wisdom and self-mastery in ways, which the Camarilla is too stupid for, and the Sabbat is twisting into monstrosity. There is no place on earth, no kindred society, and no Elysium, which we cannot find our way into. Why not, we adapt with more respect to your rules than you to ours. Are you aware that we were not fighting you? Conflict arose because your intolerance made you judge our way of unlife, and turn hostile.

Yes, we are a notch more humane than a vampire should be, but that is the way of Seth. Our lord could rule over kindred, and kine alike, this is just one more sign that there is wisdom in our very words and deeds. But this dabbling leads nowhere. Let's check for my evil and degeneration, don't forget heresy. I live with a feeling of guilt and fear of repercussions from the warlocks. I wished I would have had a better option, but I was tempted, yet responsible for it. With the Tremere only my thoughts were compatible and yes, I owe them manifold for the gift of their blood gives me powers which ensure my survival even as part of the competition now. As a ghoul I once played this video game where mage, and priest, fight side by side, it should work for us, I hoped. Yes, this is weakness, we must fight a jihad, and kill vampires of other blood. No, it could be one great Malkavian prank!

I protect our temples and places, I fight to protect my allies, and I guide my servants and disciples to the very best of my abilities. Of course for a price, they take my time, dedication, and contemplation away from my goals. I turn my ideas into weapons, establishing the cult of plague monks as easily, as exchanging ideas on how to deal with our existence. Plague spreaders, what should this be? My answer to an idea that mortals grasped even in the dark ages, and practice happily and much better than this Morbus sect of our own blood. One could not only weaken a foe by this, but also make him, or her, outright perish. Against mortals, and Camarilla alike, this proves extremely useful, infesting their territory with disease spreading beings. The Sabbat is a bit harder to get, yet we are part of it, like the Nosferatu. We grew from our centre into the Camarilla, as into the Sabbat. Like it, or not, we grant this freedom, as long, as the service to Seth is not betrayed. I feel accused by kindred who commit all the crimes they try to blame me for. We did not forget who we are. We are not children of Caine. We are children of Seth, thereby the synthesis from mortals, and followers of Caine.

We can be the poison that destroys them, but we are willing to be the guide that grants them a better way into a future that is worthwhile. What you declare venom may just be the only antitoxin you might ever find. I think we are already an overseen pillar of the Camarilla, too. We are subtle enough to keep to the masquerade, further we even like this. We enjoy humans, not slaughtering them before TV cameras to prove our powers. Yes, maybe I am too fresh to understand, or perhaps I bath in my foolish dreams to ignore that I am an elders pawn myself. Who of us isn't?

I enjoyed being close to my paramour, was it so selfish to get her away from artwork and

scheming? Maybe, yet in case of success it would have been prove that she didn't really care for what her elders pushed her into. Was it my strategy? My feelings hurt, where I should be cold and predatory. I miss her; yet accept her decision at least for this century. In our kingdom there is no need for manipulation, but for the glory of my sake, I will endure even this. Running with the Brujah is a refreshing, though simple-minded experience. Yes, it asks for trouble. Yet they can be quite close to us, and no I didn't supply their parties.

We share some similarities, not by talking about them, but living them for real. Lepers, the ugly little rat-kissers. Among the most familiar experiences is their way. They spread nearly like us, just hiding for other reasons, and in other places. I could teach them some joy, and even a notch confidence. They taught me rat-catching and we had a good time, no matter the bad sides. I still meet them on friendly terms, mostly.

Sadly, this fails with the Giovanni. This necrotic bunch of workaholics, followers of Apophis for sure, makes me vomit. Not enough that they raid the mortals for money, they even raid their coffins. Sacrileges against the soul. The dead have to be honoured, and prepared for the afterlife, where Setite sorcerers steal their power, it is not just their very soul, but part of ours at stake. Dangerous they are in their mastery of necromancy, and everything they say attempts to crush my mind to suit their will. But is this the blood, or just those few I stumbled across? Prejudices can poison my awareness, a risk we are taught to avoid.

We won't end up like this bloke Horus. I do spend my unlife, as I like it. I enjoy all I can get, practice my skills, and contemplate as much, as I can. I sincerely wished that I had gained the sorcery of my former master, yet I got this one trick at least. I was wise enough to cover my greatest weakness early on. As children of a peaceful god, we were not really made for war. That may explain why we just can't face every threat up front. I grew tougher through training, and practice. Devotedly even keep an inner distance from certain habits of kindred society. Yet I feel weak. My problem about it is we are mistaken to parrot faith. This is not the case.

We do not half as much worship Set, as we preach to make the ignorant realize that his teachings supply us with useful insights, and realistically solutions to archetypical problems of vampire existence. Of course there are other ways to gain such, yet our way works fine. I admit that I couldn't be a priest. Their caste has duties, and rights, which I just cannot personify. I am busy building my little place in the world, recruiting and teaching servants, securing my place, and dealing with my job. Yes, the blood bond felt like abuse for me, too. We all dislike being enslaved; yet have few problems doing it to mortals, and other kindred. I went through ten years with my sire, and then she fell in the line of duty. His tutelage, and resources, gave me compensation for this early.

Now I have more freedom, but less support. The first year alone in the dark had plenty of setbacks, shortcomings, and failures prepared for me. It slowly goes better now, and luckily, I can easily be bound again. No real threat is easily dissolved. I still plan to bargain a degree of neutrality, or minor cooperation, with my former master. I could fight the warlocks, yet I am aware that they can much easier take me out. Maybe this urge is even his mind-control calling me towards a trap, I really don't know. I seem to be too mortal still, patience I measure in month, where kindred plot for centuries. This could be my damnation, as followers of Caine see it.

Perhaps I can't find peace, even if my lusts and pleasures were not provocation to some. No regrets for this, I don't have a choice and my mortal life is gone forever. Making base at the edge to Assamite territory is nearly as risky, as a vacation in Vienna though. Switching place was no good, my problems accompany me anywhere. Great Lord, my strengths, and virtues do so, too. I was very unimportant to the warlocks, and I can neutralize those few witnesses. I have found hideouts, when

other kindred made me their target, and I may be low on allies, but servants, and disciples, stand by my side. Already paying the price for treachery, I can now swap my petty rituals to gain access to the rituals of my own bloods sorcery. I may be cursed to be the eternal little security guard, but a handful of our sacred rituals could spice up my existence.

And I can accuse/abuse/seduce you in ways that you never knew. My servants will support me in freeing ghouls of the warlocks from their dumb-hearted masters. Money will flow, as long, as we supply weapons to the unarmed, and drugs to all those who just do not want to bear this rotten existence they face. Founding the Erich von Gotha society for gentleman, paid off too. Then I somehow feel willing to support this bunch of Salubrious. Selling tomes and artefacts, trading my powers for those I desire, and keeping long-term agreements might even secure my position entirely. Many people who dislike the embrace still like being ghouled, boosting them without denying them to partake in their chosen society. Self-mastery will not be forgotten, my habit of contemplation, and meditation, accompanies me from the first night. The same on the women of our kind, they can be deadly venom to me, but also a refreshing alternative to the Holy Grail. Maybe this is an addiction, one I would not get rid of until I manage to hide my heart in heaven... Trust and you'll be trusted!" - whispered Set to Ventrue.

Humorous: Brouhaha - Last Man Standing

Midlife crisis among roleplayers, not their characters...

World of Shadows: Brouhaha – Last Man Standing!

Vault version © André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved This is prosaic & foreign roleplayer sermon, not one more copy-catted plagiarism!

Author's mindset: I write Pietroschek-Prose, and stemming from one more dysfunctional family background, being one more problem child, pariah, ex-criminal, university dropout, and ex-bum: I really think that expecting elite university standards from me is alike a Malkavian prank on my critic's expense.

There comes a moment, when the own ego no longer bathes us in ignorance, and we realize that midlife crisis is just another mainstream simplification. Real life rarely looks as polished, as the movies. Real life hurts us with or without justification, and that real life was worth it for a while, as it brought all the joy, all the sex, and all the indulgence we loved, too. For some of us letting the own facade down is difficult in precisely the solitude which would allow us to keep it secret. Still it is not just another misery loves company. It is one of those social rites which even the non-occult-crazed can understand. Some by instinct, some by gut-feeling, others due observation or prudence. The little talk is set in generic city, and specifically into a cheap generic diner of it. Even the protagonists admitted that they ain't special enough to craft out a unique background!

The optimal way of mixing a Brouhaha is a personal comfort, or semi-accurate memory due ego, mix of the Brujah clan for style, the Malkavian clan for minor problems of the personality, the Tzimisce clan for our ways of mercy and forgiveness, the Baali clanbook on faith & folly, or 'Freak Legion – A players guide to the Fomori' for our joyful surroundings through the years, factories, and offices. But the protagonists are the roleplayers, so skip the preternatural powers and remain a mere mortal, coward! ;-)

The diner by night – kinda title & stuff

Adrian: Another coffee, please. Lots of lactose-free milk and sugar.

Waitress: You sure they'll show-up at all?

Adrian: *shrugs*

And while customers enter or leave, and the waitress does her job, Adrian stares into the nightly sky, drifting into the tear-jerking nostalgia once more. A decade since his cat had died, and years after the loss of Huggy Woman. Life's been the longest road this bum ever had to walk and stumble. Life, oft beloved, sometimes feared, hated here and there, or even shunned away from.

Dodging his own tears his eyesight falls upon the Brouhaha T-Shirt they all purchased for their meeting. 'Better dead than uncool!' its slogan. What foolish, youthful pride they had once made them fall for such cheap sales-tricks. Well, roleplayers of 'Black Dog marries White Wolf and their bestselling World of Wolf-Shadow RPG'... It really changed the way we lived, and prevented a handful of suicides. Or worse.

Chan Wei: You still owe me money!

Adrian: Mistaken identity, sir?

Chan Wei: Not again...

Adrian: Sorry, stock market courses, global porn-strike, and a dire need for drugs!

Chan Wei: Seen the doctor?

Adrian: Yes, as if gut-rot wouldn't be enough. It is DJ LC early on stage.

Chan Wei hesitates for one blink of an eye. But then he regains his composure.

Chan Wei: So the afterlife-mafia may come gunning soon?

Adrian: Do the séance on demand, Chan.

Chan Wei: Oh, dammit. You forgot ten university graduations and fifty ex-wives with one heart-failure, but the one thing you remember is...

Adrian: The darkest secret of all who ever came close to me.

Both chuckle, as the minor quirk of occult babbling & role-swapping did stop worrying Chan Wei decades ago.

Brakeman: If I wouldn't know better than I'd say that my business associate has fallen for another bum's tragic tale!

The voice of Brakeman makes both other Brouhaha jumpy. It is clear to see.

Chan Wei, still clad in business clothing: Please, Sir, gimme a coin!

Adrian, still clad in bum shelters rag tag mix: Dear Mr. Brakeman, did my office fail to inform you that our business appointment has been shifted to the 30th of February, and from London to Tokyo?

Brakeman: Hm... *suspicious look* followed by mutual chuckling from all three chit-chatters.

Now three Brouhaha chuckle, and one waitress summons her 'no-nonsense composure', delivering a coffee to Adrian and asking the other weirdos what they want to order. The Fennesea-Role-play sermon they discuss DOES make the waitress pray for a Nerd-Slaying serial killer, but so far none shows up.

Chan Wei: Vanessa?

Adrian: Wasn't she pregnant?

Brakeman: Her husband considers it ill-suited to know her associated with the Brouhaha any longer, I daresay.

Adrian: Daresay, that is his version of 'I guess'. And how he left his seductive skill unmentioned here!

Brakeman: *stares the traditional daggers into the eyes of the lowborn loudmouth*

Adrian: Didn't you two, both, marry your roleplaying wives? Queens of Hearts and stuff?

Chan Wei: My oldest boy is feverish. Had no choice.

Brakeman: Business calls on the morrow, sorry.

Adrian: Any sense in waiting for Bestial and K?

Chan Wei: Bestial seems very busy doing body-building since the methadone project helped him.

Brakeman: And even we uncovered some of your TOTALLY harmless notes about the state of the art concerning K! *glares at Adrian*

Adrian: mea culpa, mea maxima culpa! *poses theatrically* yet with clenching fists.

The bumper fetches a menthol-cigarette from a package, and lightens it afire. Inhaling, coughing, inhaling once again, though slower and focused on it, struggling.

Chan Wei: That is really a new low.

Brakeman: I had hoped you felt tempted to point-out being different, but that's really it. Lung cancer due those useless tobacco sticks, and not the slightest regrets?

Adrian: I regret a lot, being me has never been part of that though.

Uncomfortable silence lurks for one moment, but decades of practice let the trio snap-back into the spirit of the True Brouhaha instead!

Adrian: Twenty years on psychology websites, and not one with a solution. Most with the same stereotypical explanation. Dammit, Vamp-Ire the Mars-Parade was simply the best lifestyle cheer-up & routine breaker we could achieve or afford, no more, and no less.

Chan Wei: Oh, that night the Sabbath struck I really thought we were dusted!

Brakeman: I must have been absent.

Adrian: Aye! Absent due carnal athletic competitions of your younger years.

Chan Wei: Yeah! A thousand Toreador poems which were never written...

Adrian: Nothing hit us harder than that fairy tale crossover! Accursed trolling.

Brakeman: Except the next adventure, maybe.

Adrian & Chan Wei: True!

Brakeman: And then you decided to switch sides, Join the Sabath, any memories why you did so?

Adrian: No, truly none. Maybe the inner turmoil of being one of the two Satanic Brouhaha anyway? Nah.

Brakeman: Hm... that deep fall you took does indeed remind of the Baali Clan.

Chan Wei: And now two Corporate Brouhaha listen to the Devilish Sermon of the one Satanic Brouhaha?

For a mortal in midlife crisis it does make so much more sense. In secrecy most of us had heard songs like 'Forever Young' or 'Who wants to live forever', too. Few above age 40 wouldn't consider a Faustian Bargain to become a Brouhaha Brawler Punky instead of withering away, lost in their routines of career, family or failure. It DID all become alike somehow. Mortality is a burden to live with, and it grows more heavy with every day we grow older, and thus grow consequentially weaker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHIATt0BaM> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TsOPjZEF6E

Adrian: Dreams of today are ego-bursts of tomorrow, it is cola time!

Another social rite is indulged

Adrian: A toast, for those forced to go before their true time had come!

Chan Wei: A toast, to the society which hosts us all the way!

Brakeman: A toast, to the future awaiting us!

Adrian: Now let's shake-off this sentimentality, as if any of us would have ever aspired to be part of the Brouhaha!

And so it was done. Right in time for a cellular-phone call to reach Brakeman.

Emotionally-touching moment my prose failed to get written ;-)

Brakeman: Sorry, I have to leave early, but one last thing, Adrian, care to accompany me to the car?

Adrian: Until this becomes another gay-sex orgy we never had for real!

Brakeman: *eyes rolling*

Chan Wei: Don't worry, I drive our lil Bummer home (yeah, it still bites – the author)!

Brakeman: Good, but that's not it. Let's go.

Adrian and Brakeman walk towards the parking lot.

Brakeman: So you die like a stubborn mule instead of asking any of us for help?

Adrian: I was tempted, kinda allergic to pain, but it is the price for my own choices made.

Brakeman: Can't you imagine that somehow WE ALL see that a bit differently? No man is left behind creed once held real meaning, you know?

Adrian: Sorry, never had a course on how to save, or live, a life the casual & cultivated way, I daresay.

Brakeman: We pay the best doctors money can buy, and you will struggle against the cancer, as much, as you have struggled against every damn norm in your entire lifetime!

Adrian: Ay...Ouch!

The Bummer Brouhaha is visibly wracked by pain, crashing to the ground.

Adrian: *cough*... I am fine!

Brakeman: Yeah, THAT is clear to see.

Adrian: Olaf, get home well, greetings to your wife, and be ready, when your newborn needs a father!

Brakeman: Well, err, thanks. I 'guess'. Are you crying?

Adrian: Nah, just a tear-jerking from the pain! Now saddle-up, cowboy!

Brakeman: Until next time then!

Adrian: Yes, until we meet again, dear corporate Brouhaha!

Returning to Chan Wei in slow motion the face of Adrian displays an enervated, tired composure.

Chan Wei: So we came to save a life tonight. Did we?

Adrian: God may know. Time to drive home.

Chan Wei: Yes, milord.

Adrian: Yes, milord, let's eradicate those degenerate devil-worshipers once and for all!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhScW3PkaH4>

The car drove with maximum speed, clearly ignoring the laws. Both passengers were pressed into their seats.

Chan Wei: Does he know?

Adrian: Will we live long enough to find out for sure?

They both popped some pills, swallowing greedily...

Chan Wei and Adrian looked at each other...

Chan Wei: You still doubt any chance of an afterlife?

Adrian: Outside of porn or anti-gay word-games? Yes!

The impact killed both of them quickly, as they stopped being 'uncool'...

Shadow-wrested, 3 at price of one

Short stories, spontaneously written prose...

World of Darkness – Shadow-Wrested 2 (3 short stories - one price)

Fellow, I go bang your mother!

“The prince of the city board-game had inspired me to limit the number of real powerplayers in a scenario, as a typical roleplaying group has 3 to 6 members, and a typical session takes four to ten hours. And in case you wonder what made me attempt to identify with a certain faction: Vampire became a global bestseller by doing precisely that, not by fearfully shunning away and hiding in some ephemeral political correctness!” ~ André M. Pietroschek, reciting myself here...

Amaru had taken position, as ordered, two hours ago. Keeping a close eye on the Westerner dwelling in one of the apartments, and hence watching from window to door, and from door to window. The guy had become fat, still even a fat brute takes more effort to kill, when alerted and thoroughly provoked. Plus, he was a smoker, not a drug addict, and certainly no junkie. Nigh impossible to deceive Kemal or his crew on that, as they controlled that business. It must have to do with a Western mindset developed from childhood on, thought Amaru. Few of them ever even tried to sneak through the parking lot. And the backyard wall, actually barely high enough to separate the cars from the kids' playing field, even the slim ones would not jump or climb over it to shortcut unseen through the block! They were like that, though in his first week after arrival from Dubai he went through the same inability to believe it.

Even the police expected criminals to stay as predictable, as the next best officially selected moron in uniform needed them to be, means easily arrested or eagerly presenting themselves, as cooperative & ever submissive bad guys. The notion that some criminals actually had their own ideas about why they commit crimes had no place in the predominant psychology of their academic masterminds. Amaru knew that was no real racism, it was exhaustion from their idiotic attempts to become people free of racism instead. These infidels had been proud, ignorant, lazy, and corrupted, when Amaru's ancestors steered pirate ships, and a nigh thousand years later only their costume had been changed. The West had been made America's willing little bitch, and it had begun to rot in that life-defying role.

A year ago, when the stranger had arrived, suspicions were much more erratic, and the alertness was still legitimate. By now it had become a routine job, and Amaru could have sworn it was the most boring routine job of his lifetime. It was the new way to kill the less volatile infidels slowly. Neutralizing the secondary targets and potential threats. Western people were blind to such, as the media's so called signal overflow actively destroyed their higher brain functions 24/7. That one was some mixed blood himself, and a Satanist. Not a Neo-Nazi collaborator, as first suspected, and not in contact with any of their active forces either. By now Amaru's bosses had ultra-violet and night-vision-green videos of him meditating, of him practicing martial arts or weapon wielding, and of him rising from slumber only to have a conspicuous meeting with a rabbit or a bat in the dark of night. Rest of the time he sat before some disgustingly cheap piece of computer, so cheap not even the most desperate junkie could mistake it for loot, and did some meaningless Internet stuff.

And when he left his apartment it was just as predictable and boring. To work, back, sometimes with a supermarket shopping rush thrown in. Talking walks at day or night, usually after hours before that piece of computer junk. Even the routes were mostly identical. Still a verified target was a verified target. And, as habitual among his people, they had not trusted the estimation, but repeated the test to be sure. Made sense, as some of the crew were already on him, when they killed his cat. And others had the shift threatening to rape or prostitute his daughter. But that was all mundane, or mostly so. One night a local eager to prove himself had the idea of making a tougher kinda fun of it. So they lured some serial butcher type into the hood, and brought him close to the one win-

dow with bright light through the night. Psycho-sensitives are hard to separate from vigilant types, but with their own sensitive on the job it was easy. The skinhead sensed the threat through a barricaded window, removed the barricade to face the threat, and stood trembling in rage and envy, when the psycho had a weapon, but he had nothing to duel the psycho with.

Needless to say he only broke out of his boring routine to gather the weapons he'd considered necessary, and restarted the production of more bleak existence. Some of our watchers judged it craven that they sabotaged his attempts to get body armor. Others argued it will increase the odds of their bets. Amaru was disciplined enough to bear the calm before the storm, and it was easy to predict that a storm was coming, when the own faction was among the most active culprits. One glimpse upward to the window, and Amaru knew he had twenty minutes for phone calls.

'Who is it?' Answered Kemal the phone.

'Amaru.' whispered the watcher.

'What is he doing?' inquired Kemal.

'He just began to fumble combining his Wing Chun punches with a street combo again, but soft way, barely hitting the wall, so he is tired.' reported Amaru.

'Say, anything true concerning the rumors about Merak?'

Amaru swallowed and thought for a moment, then guessed: 'About him losing control of his drug habit?'

'Yeah.' confirmed Kemal.

'Separate him from that new guy he is hanging around with.' advised Amaru.

'You sure that's it?' wondered Kemal.

'Yes, started, when they first met after all.' verified Amaru, then followed up with: 'Say, Kemal, that smart-ass infiltrator who thinks he takes control of the local drunkards and bums...'

'What about him?'

'Can I please take him out?' asked Amaru.

'Sure, but don't step on the jackal's tail with it.' insisted Kemal.

'Thank you.' said Amaru.

Bored by keeping a loner under surveillance Amaru had at least gained permission to handle some other pest quickly. A new scumbag had arrived, unwashed and unkempt, driven by his own need to fund his addiction. The wretch did not even know there are local bosses to ask before starting any scheme in the hood, and hence made himself a target with his outright idiotic ambition to turn the local drunkards into his own, personal legion!

Stealthily knifing some idiot meddler, psycho-sensitive or not, in a dark side alley was a childhood game among his people. A game they all had played to master it thoroughly. But beyond that it came down to a crappy, little blood-power. That unwashed drunkard had the ability to make people lose it about their favorite passion, even far beyond common sense. And his genius rested on the throne of ambition he considered it to brainwash the local drunken wrecks into servitude.

The minor troublemakers, stuck and rotting in their loser delusions, went far beyond calculated risk to get away with erratic attempts to compensate their cravings or earn a position of privilege. A great deal of street-savvy came down to NOT letting people realize that their own ambitions and cravings are surefire ways to collide with an unforgiving reality. The winners did oft build a bridge or ramp from the corpses of losers, carcasses of ignorance, selfishness, and weakness, to make their way into a better living hell.

When the moronic drunkard finally risked his life for his stupor once again, and the darkness of the early evening had kicked in sufficiently, Amaru had already ordered his replacement watcher into position, and made his move. Back alley gymnastics with a knife. It did not feel bad to get rid

of a pest, it never did. Avoiding attention and soft steps were just a part of the complete package. There was a fine mixture of stealth and subterfuge which allowed the higher skilled criminals to actually belong into the surroundings, and seem completely no immediate threat for the short time memory of rushing observers and frightened citizens alike.

Amaru's only regret about making use of one of his own innate powers was that it would bring the gift of deadly silence into the back alley. But it would not neutralize the stench of urine and body odors from people who degenerated quicker than any bum or hobo could. With gloved hands he did close in on his victim, while the splattering sound of urine was still only suppressed due the magick of the moment. Each time one gloved hand covered the stab channel caused by knife stabbing with the other hand. Seriously reducing the amount of possible blood splattering unto his clothing, or into his footsteps. The death struggle of the moron made him think of that fat skinhead meditating. First time his crew had thought he lay dead on his back, as the younger ones lacked the training to understand better. The inner calm and joy of watching that traitorous bastard die screaming, but without the slightest sound to be heard. Those seconds were a rare gift. They were the artful surgery removing a growing cancer from their own surroundings. It was no punishing, it just ended the spawning of further trouble. Absentmindedly Amaru began to clean his knife. Ready to walk casually out of the alley.

Strolling down the street to the kiosk he was just waiting for the one fool it needed. The moment he perceived the first drunk fumbling to open a bottle he strode over and offered his switchblade to him.

'Here, take this, I gotta get myself a new one anyway.'

'Oh, that is so cool, thank you, thank you.' the words from the drunk while Amaru already walked over into a shop to indeed purchase a new knife.

There were no worries about the police. He had a number of hideouts with different identity cards from different nations. And he had long learned to raise himself up from street-level in whatever hood the job had brought him.

'Who's it?' Kemal's voice on the phone.

'Amaru. I go see Jinan and her sister now, we gotta smoke some dope and make the night come to life.' said Amaru.

Nightfall

'They call it survivor guilt and PTSD, and that's it. Written off by the system!' said the hyperactive, blonde fellow on the bar-stool.

'Yeah, but come on, it is alike those targeted individuals! There might really be cases, but just spread the word in a chatroom and a legion of loonies and retards jumps for it with their faked-by-delusion motives.' replied an older patron of the pub.

'You ain't doubting me, too?' managed the blonde fellow.

'No. I do not doubt that the system prefers to sacrifice some people to suppress certain discoveries and truisms. I doubt that you do yourself a favor by being rash, loud, and careless about it.' said the older fellow.

'But someone's gotta do something about it! We can't just pretend nothing happened, when we are already on their hit-list.' outraged the blonde guy.

'Yes, something must be done. But pushing and shouting won't solve the problem.' reasoned the older dude.

'That's coz you got no idea how it is like to be...' argued the blonde dude.

'Are all vampire attack survivors that uncompromising?' intercepted the older guy.

Baffled the blonde man stared back at him. Several seconds passed before he was able to articu-

late a reply.

'That was funny.' the blonde fellow accredited the older dude.

The older fellow smiled. 'Maybe it is time you tell me your name? I am Jarrett Mist!'

'Pascal Svenson. Oh, and thanks, for bringing me here earlier! I mean it, without you it might have been worse.' summarized Pascal.

'Think nothing of it, citizen solidarity.' said Jarrett. 'Dunno, how you feel, but I need a coffee in between those Tequilas we shot.'

'I want some Red Bull instead.' decided Pascal.

Turning to the man casually working behind the bar Jarrett spoke: 'Sir, could we please get a coffee sweet and a bit milky plus one can of... Red Bull?'

Not waiting for delivery the middle-aged guy called Jarrett turned his attention back to the fellow named Pascal.

'So, could you give me a short summary and estimation of what happened now?' inquired Jarrett.

'Sure, I recovered from the shock, I guess.' stated Pascal. 'I was shopping, in need of a new smartphone, when I strode through the city center earlier this evening. Just been window-shopping, when I heard a muffled scream from the alley. Drew out my phone, clicked the camera key and went towards that alley.' reported Pascal.

'Coffee with sugar and milk and Red Bull!' summarized the barkeeper the delivery he was placing on the bar's row in front of the two customers. 'That makes it five bucks to pay. Now.'

'Gladly' came Jarrett's nonchalant reply, while he fumbled for the small change and the few remaining bills aka banknotes of money in his pocket.

'Here is my half' intercepted Pascal, placing two coins unto the bar's row close to Jarrett. Jarrett held a banknote out to the barkeeper and pawed the coins from Pascal. Then both started sipping from their drinks, while the barkeep went off.

Gulping down the mildly steaming brew from his cup Jarrett restarted the conversation: 'So, you were ready to investigate whatever was going on in that alley...'

Placing the can back on the panel of the bar Pascal reacted: 'Was still approaching, when something kinda leaked through the atmosphere, and next moment I see that freaky thug charge me!'

Jarrett just listened, giving no comment.

'Man, I swear, that guy looked like count Karloff from the vampire movie stuffed into some mugger kinda gang-clothing!' added Pascal. 'He body-checked me, and I was knocked off my feet. Before the pain allowed me to get up he was already on me. But instead of kicking my head he stared at me, and then did grind my smartphone under his foot!'

'Weird, but merciful?' wondered Jarrett.

'Man, you have no idea. It means they KNOW what cameras mean. They destroy evidence, so us witnesses stand there as loonies!'

Jarrett stared at his watch, a cheaper fake-gold wristwatch with neon on the indexes making it easier to read the analog timer. But it was Pascal who had become nervous.

'Behind you!' warned Pascal.

But before Jarrett could react a man-sized fiend appeared from behind him, grabbed his head, and slammed it unto the bar panel with visible force. Fangs protruding from his mouth, and again staring at Pascal, the vampire struck Pascal with a steel pipe turned baton.

Pascal attempted to dodge the strike, but before he could the barkeeper had him in a wrestling hold. The vampire struck again, not interested in drinking any blood from Pascal. Felled Pascal's last perception of the bar were giant rats, sitting in the places of patrons, and staring at him with eyes much too intelligent, and twice as hostile!

'For the Masquerade!' squeaked the vampire. Then he turned to the barkeep: 'The bucket.'

The barkeep withdrew swiftly, only to return and unleash the fluid from a bucket unto the still unconscious Jarrett Mist. Icy water, not precisely the favored refreshment of mortals.

Jarrett struggled to regain his composure, but did not hesitate to inquire: 'Master, will we put his apartment under surveillance, or sneak in?'

'Neither. There have been unforeseen changes to the balance of the city. And for now you will only drink this, and be vigilant for intruders and infiltrators! I take care of the important matters myself.'

With those words the master aka vampire handed each of them a little vial, and then left without any further words or gestures. The rats were curiously eyeing the spectacle.

'Yes, master.' spoke the two ghouls in unison.

'Dear guests, feel free to enjoy yourself, it is Pascal's final banquet tonight.' spoke the barkeep with a wickedly grim undertone in his voice.

The rats wasted no time on any words...

Street-Theater

Angry people were shouting in the streets, loud and crude people extroverted their temper tantrums, and egomaniac losers compensated their deficiencies by grasping supposed leadership of the next-best handful of scumbags at every opportunity. Keisha Hawkins stood on her fitness walker, and handled her convertible 2 in 1 pad. The Anarchs were in trouble, and the baron had been silent for quite a while.

Sundown was close, and she could still force herself to wake early. An ability rumored to vanish among the older people of her kind. The Kindred. Still some moronic hothead, or disinterested bureaucrat, had meddled with the boring normalcy some used as cover, or abused as deception for their crimes. The city atmosphere was disrupted, Keisha felt that easily.

Duty blocked her from contacting her Sire, as she had to do her part of keeping the barony independent and functional. Night for night. And she enjoyed it. So far she had held back the one, and hence precious, permission to embrace. Until now her carefully selected ghouls had proven that investing some respect and proper training bred better lackeys than whipping them through some sex shops or pumping them up with drugs.

Keisha did not know too many Brujah worth their vitae. And all that show-off independence and posturing did not blind her to the fact that most Brujah were work-shunning troublemakers, not reliable proletarians. Communism may not be a disease, but it affected the mortals like one, so it had to be kept in line.

Luckily adulthood had finally caught-up with their bloodline of self-worshiping brawlers and gunmen. During the time of the Gangrel defection duty had become a lot tougher, and the Brujah were finally brought to the frontiers and boiling points, no longer merely posing tough in sissy-land. Even the anarch scene had matured due the clashes with foreign blood and Sabbat assaults.

Grabbing her smartphone Keisha prepared to gather a crew to patrol the streets.

'Kneel! Yes, the master has arrived, kneel!' shouted someone outside on the main street.

'Idiot!' thought Keisha, continuing to handle her smartphone.

'Get into light riot gear and meet me in the parking lot!' commanded Keisha without giving any further detail.

It was no longer needed. Her ghouls were dutiful, and naturally all nightly duty had a streak of ASAP (aka as soon, as possible) about it. That was part of the job, especially, when leadership happened to be the more powerful kindred, and with fiercer preternatural powers.

Keisha got into her kevlar army underwear, took a latex pant in expectation of dirty and grue above it, slipped into her lightweight security boots, and snuggled into her stylish, subtly padded

kevlar coat. She decided against the holster, as the light weapons in her cloth did not telltale anything to observers, while holstered weapons were precisely in the spots body moves made them show.

Keeping it inconspicuous to the public eye was usually the preference of the Camarilla, but with the Sabbat, as the bad example gone monstrous, some prudence and preparation could not hurt. Keisha knew that plenty of neonates had to risk their unlife without half the gear, and without trained ghouls giving some fire cover or whatever else back-up was needed.

Keisha was of the Toreador bloodline. A mediator and ghoulish trainer due her former years as one of the Sheriffs hounds aka deputies. In the Camarilla her service was taken for granted, but the contract which made her sign up with the Anarchs had already given her five years of more appreciated work.

She made her way down the stairs, avoiding elevators, whenever erratic people were around. Keisha had survived the questionable pleasure of barely getting out of a burning car wreck, and it had made her less addicted to the comforts and delusions of the establishment.

After a year of emailing customer care the parking lot had finally received improved lighting. The cheap standard solution of cold, blue halogen lights was mixed up to one third with the warmer, yellow light now. Visibility was still clear, and one did not instantly feel a strain unto the own eyes, when bathed in that light.

Keisha had always pitied the mortal security guards doing full shifts under the conditions of state-ordered cost efficiency. Seeing her seven chosen await her made a triumphant smile cross her face. Her own team and a second one, no comparison of going out to face a threat with just one mortal police partner.

'Skip hopes for the mall and the skating loop, mom senses trouble, look, she even wears dad's outdoor suit!' came the chorus from her crew.

'Militant housewives from outer space!' came Keisha's chant.

Moral was well, so her next question would not yield too clear a result:

'Did you notice anything about what meddles with our hood?'

Dario spoke first: 'The water supply was contaminated. Whatever it is, it makes the mortals play count moron and the lobotomized on crystal meth!'

'If you ain't cummin' to Dubai, then Dubai comes to your hood.' added Jerome.

'Seen anyone else under our banner?' asked Keisha.

Samantha stated: 'No, but the Nos ghouls were swarming, so alert is on.'

'Sec level orange on com, less lethal force at your own estimation.' decided Keisha, as the general tactic for the patrol.

'Dario, your team takes both cars. Jerome, we take a walk.' Keisha followed up on her command.

Watching the cars pass her by Keisha inwardly focused on making blood circulate through her skin. She would need a mortal look out there, and she reminded herself to pretend breathing would still be a necessity.

The only warning sign she perceived was a weird blink in the atmosphere, before hell broke lose. Six orientals suddenly stood before them, clearly due some training in obfuscation, and attacked!

The ill-balanced fight was fought brutally, and with no holds barred. A silenced dance with death, as the smell of foreign vitae was easy to sense.

Thanks to her celerity Keisha quick-drew her two telescope-batons, while dodging the oversized knife of her first attacker. Her counter-strikes broke his arm and landed several hits on his head. But already she had to react to the charge of her second assailant.

They clashed, as his two knives impacted unto her two batons, and they both kicked their oppo-

nents abdomen to push each other back. Keisha crouched, while dropping her batons, drawing the stiletto blades she had attached at her lower legs instead.

Once again it was her celerity which allowed her to parry her assailant in good time, and counter with a series of slashes and stabs. Using fencing steps between her two attackers she ensured that both were disabled. For she knew her ghouls would not be in this fight for too long.

Still in the motion of accelerated turning around she barely felt the scimitar passing through her neck. Jerome's killer had been faster, as her ghouls already lay slain, and her unlife was bloodily ended here...

And in this weird line of duty there is a dark truth we all risk to find If the vampires can't kill us they turn us into their blood-bound kind!

Shadow-wrested, clumsy starter draft

Even editing sux, but not in the appreciated ways...

World of Darkness – Shadow-Wrested

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

Author's mindset: I write Pietroschek-Prose, and stemming from one more dysfunctional family background, born one more problem child, pariah, ex-criminal, university dropout, and ex-bum: I really think that expecting elite university standards from me is alike a Malkavian prank on my critic's expense. Still this is not my diary, nor some therapist-couch sermon. It is the mature and wizened, oft-revised World of Darkness!

WoD Antagonists was a book with much potential. Especially for all storytellers who left the stream-lined, dished for money course and dared to craft or create their own stories and campaigns. Same on 'WoD Slasher', as playing it decently, playing a group of those killers who spawn forth an urban legend, only to subsequently play a bunch of young adults growing up in that kinda Sunnydale turned upside down, had rarely succeeded before. Actually, so far, it did not succeed at all.

It is comparably shocking and occasionally intimidating to witness how many mainstream ignorance-victims we can find nowadays, or how fiercely they cling to the delusion that what they are living is a free, adult life in our democracies. Yet who am I to burst their bubbles? Got plenty to do with my own problems, and the fact that my life expectancy is estimated below three years did not precisely make me more of a martyr or social engineer either. But I am still one of those who turn off TV, start some music and write some stuff. Or clean the bathroom, but I never earned a beeping cent with those chores. ;-)

The crows ate bat last night

“Hatred has a calm aspect, too. The depressed or exhausted serenity of an outrage which seriously overpowered the own stamina. And it is important to note that courage includes the word rage, as reacting to any already ongoing or spontaneous threat is a matter of vigilance and reflexes, not of academic contemplation or smart-mouthing. How to trust doctors and professors who prove themselves dumber than our psychiatry escapees or any mugger on the street? Dunno!” ~ André M. Pietroschek reciting myself here...

The middle-aged man in designer clothing running down the alley right now was his own kinda paradox. His moves speaking of the basics of athletics practiced, but his sweating, panting, and stumbling spoke of lacking stamina, or a long phase without training. Behind him, in pursue, was a mob of bearded, younger orientals in the ugliest assortment of street-clothing one could imagine. And with an assortment of clubs, batons, axes, machetes, knives or makeshift weapons wielded.

'Long-haired idiot!' stated the bald, thug-like semi-brute witnessing the spectacle of cheap street slasher style. Twitching, as if proverbially struck by a thought, he faked a smile and yelled: 'Sir, are you Terrence J. Mather, the famous occult artist?'

Terrence was still running for his life, the bearded mob of desert dwellers in close pursuit, when he heard his name being shouted.

'Help! Those robbers must be stopped, call the police!' escaped from the lips of Terrence Jeremiah Mather!

That moment the alley resonated with vibes the sensitives among mortals could perceive. For one moment it was nearly mistakable for coincidental magick! But only one effect manifested. All involved, except the blissful fool Terrence, froze in their movements for an instance.

#

The Islamist bunch of hotheads stopped to discuss, if someone could really be that stupid, or if searching him for designer drugs could be smarter than killing him for what some criminal offer paid on its own. The skinhead stopped, as he was simply gawking in utter disbelief. At least he looked pretty dumbstruck for some seconds.

Then reality remembered its course, and the manhunt turned back into a choreography of crime written by consequence.

'Yeah. Given that not even our asylum escapees are that ignorant about street savvy I supposed you must be Terrence J. Mather indeed.' proclaimed the bald semi-brute, while his hands wrested something from his jacket.

The pursuers, who had by now reached the other two guys in the alley, turned their attention from their supposed target to the item held by the skinhead. It was a cellular phone.

One from the group strode over, reached for the smartphone, and spoke an inquiry about whom he is speaking to. Terrence, still flabbergast about not being the center of attention, wrestled with his own ego. The skinhead did not seem extraordinarily worried, as if expecting a specific outcome for the situation at hand.

Murrak, still holding the smartphone and pressing his right ear to it, took his own phone, a more modern smartphone, from his cargo pant pocket, the one specifically made for phones, and juggled both phones in a routine of bluetooth-alike data transfer.

Kemal, one of the pursuer gang getting bored, considered it the perfect moment to babble: 'You some kinda Nazi, running around like that?' while staring at the skinhead.

'No, of course not, as if there is anything to hate about foreigners. Really, it is just the cheapest haircut available, and I am not a big earner...' replied the bald guy in a way suspiciously routinized.

Kemal spoke something in a foreign language, and turned towards another member of his crew for a moment. 'Yeah, we know that, Farruk just told me yours is the outdated Samsung Galaxy S6, man, while we already have the upper-league Samsung Galaxy S 8!'

The bald man frowned. Terrence looked around in his own attempts to solve a social puzzle his ignorance and lack of streetwise had conjured-up, and Murrak gave back the cheap phone while he gestured to his crew.

'We gotta new deal, and got already paid. Lets head back and get some good dope to smoke.' stated Murrak, resulting in what seemed like appreciation from his crew.

Feeling superior and untouchable about the other two dudes they turned around and simply walked away.

'Was that a street-gang?' wondered Terrence J. Mather.

'No, merely a bunch of locals from the darker side of the law.' spoke the bald guy.

'Didn't we inform you about NOT taking any step away from the route you received?' inquired the skinhead soon thereafter.

'Yes, but it was such an atmospheric walk, and I was tempted by the detailed street-art on the walls.' verified Terrence.

'Wonderful, now the Kairouan Brotherhood will know all about this meeting within 24 hours.' frowned the skinhead.

At the mention of that name Terrence lost control about his mimicry for a moment, staring at his new acquaintance.

'Lets go to a near safe-house. We already had sufficient risks of street-crime!' proposed the skinhead.

'Agreed. And, if you don't mind, would you tell me whom I am accompanying by now, and whom I have to thank for preventing a robbery moments ago?' insisted Terrence, nonchalantly so.

'The name is Anderson Cappado, and like you I share a certain heritage of the blood.' blurted the skinhead, while walking down into another alley.

The duo reached the entry door of an urban apartment complex, and Anderson drew a small chip from his pockets.

'Security door.' was all he said about it.

'I know similar ones, just not made from cheapest plastics.' mentioned Terrence.

'Please, go in.' said Cappado.

The duo entered the building and made their way up some stairs to a specific door on the first level corridor.

'Defect elevator?' wondered Terrence.

'No, high-tech elevator, but additionally a kind of suicide box every criminal knows to avoid.' corrected Anderson.

Terrence sighed. He had studied sufficient psychology to know that empirical knowledge of underworld customs and habits met common sense, when the functional side of streetwise was the topic. It was just that he knew as well that academic analysis could predict certain crimes in a detail which made even veteran criminals swear it was due surveillance or a traitor. A cultivated fellow he decided against burdening his new acquaintance with such insights though.

They entered an apartment of smaller size, and the antiquated looks of last decades' technologies special offers. Terrence wasn't impressed, but he was a true artist and psychic sensitive, so he knew it was above the hellholes most junkies and squatters took as hideouts.

A woman, by eyesight in her late twenties, awaited them, giving a casual greeting to both of them.

'Yeah, yeah, introductions!' recited Anderson. 'Marina this is Terrence J. Mather, and Terrence, this is Marina Rafastio.'

Exchanging looks with Marina Cappado asked: 'The others are on-guard?'

'Certainly.' verified Marina.

Lighting a cigarillo, which instantly gave his toxic stench to the room, Anderson faced the supposed occult-artist. Meanwhile Marina, with a look of disgust on her face, went to open a window.

'Let me give you the swift and brutal summary of why we had to invite you here.' spoke Anderson, smoking to overplay some expression which failed to look fitting due facial features.

'So I won't like what is coming...' second-guessed Terrence, who witnessed a saddened look on Marina's face, but showed no reaction about it.

'We are family, by blood, and I hope you know what that means. Problem is it doesn't change the fact that we had to call you in, as you drew unwelcome attention unto us! Wherein US means us all, each of us, not just us three.' Told Anderson.

'The problem's root here is that a major change of power-players had occurred recently, and that resulted in us losing a very reliable back-up source, and new foreign threats from Italy, Tunisia,

Egypt and Syria roaming the city.' continued Cappado.

'Given the new situation, and our recent losses, we had to secure each person we formerly could leave in peace, as our means to compensate for minor mistakes have been blasted into oblivion.' were Anderson's next words.

'I dunno, why you are named Mather, though I suspected the name being as fake, as my family name Cappado is fake, but we had to worry about you not even knowing why you found it so easy to be a good-looking gentleman, an occult-investigator, and the whore-hound of the latest art galleries all in one.' said Anderson.

Terrence intercepted: 'The nightly lord or lady protecting us was destroyed, or diablerized?'

Anderson started to smile, when hearing that question, and Marina gave a relieved sigh, recognizable to Terrence by her casual way of doing it.

'The established nightly regency was recently assaulted by an unexpected alliance from the South and the East. After a first struggle, so it seems, they managed to bring the blunt of the enemy forces down, into the lower ranks of society.'

Terrence shuddered. 'I heard rumors which spawned some of my own suspicions.' he confessed.

'Bad news to you is we belong to a more independent side-arm of the family tree, so we had very few masterminds we could ask for any reliable information.' stated Anderson with a frown on his face.

'I see.' replied Terrence.

'Given the welcome-committee you attracted earlier I hope I do not have to tell you that some body armor and self-defense tools could be wiser than dying a convinced pacifist kinda death?' inquired Anderson Cappado.

'No, I already realized that. Care to tell me HOW you made them refrain from attacking?'

'As I told you they are hoodlums, they live here themselves, and it was clear they had loot of the monetary kind on their minds. Hence calling one of the crime bosses and reminding of certain neutral zones was all it needed. And as I had time to type while you entertained them with athletics...' chuckled Anderson.

'So we got a cold-war dished, and started in one of its bonus hot-spots. Needless to tell me I won't do the public lifestyle for a while. Still you might rejoice on learning that I earned that place myself, I was not on a mission for any master or mistress of the night, nor else.' spoke Terrence.

'Then you are aware that we must scout the original battlefield of the first clash, and watch out for any change in the power-scale we can find out about?' opted Marina.

'I am unaccustomed to the street-life, but I am not yet lobotomized.' snapped Terrence J. Mather.

'Good. We will rest or meditate with one of us on guard. Just in case we are in for a strenuous job.' decided Anderson.

'Do we all know how to do the success boosting?' wondered Marina.

'Yes, a simple rite I learned years ago.' answered Anderson.

'Indeed, I am quite a career-maker for an artist after all.' replied Terrence.

'Then lets opt for one boosting observation skills, one boosting combat prowess, and one boosting the sensing for anything purposely obscured from prying eyes.'

'It's a plan.' agreed Anderson.

'We can try.' chanted Terrence.

With that the trio did, as agreed unto, and regrouped four hours later to smear a blood-drawn occult symbol unto the ground.

'Do you feel it, too?' inquired Anderson.

Marina nodded instantly.

Terrence hissed: 'Yes'.

The mystical blood which made them of a special, though dark, origin began to surge and for a while the trio was focused on gestures and stared at the symbol on the ground. Once their supposed 'magic' was worked they prepared themselves to leave the apartment, and subsequently the building.

In the ruins of a darkening battlefield

Street-life is always a treacherous and risky ordeal. The laws of mother nature know neither witching hour nor festivity days. And neither do the laws of this world fall to propaganda or brain-washing. Death works 24/7 unto all mortals, with zero need of a regard for species, color, political or religious indoctrination, and actually anything else. It feels like putting the own life on the line, for it is putting the own life on the line.

The trio had used the midday hours to rest and prepare. Now the afternoon was the best so-called time-window they could make use of. Night would allow fiercer predators & parasites to victimize whomever they would get. Aplenty in each city left for dead to avoid media attention on another political disaster burdened unto the populace.

Marina was the most allergic to violence. For she lacked even the ignorance which allowed Terrence to endure the wrecking of his self-celebration gone money-mill. And all three knew the secret and unspoken burden of knowing that behind the sugarcoating and empowerment had to be the one preternatural power which allowed them to get away with it for a while.

Many revenants aka blood-born had experienced their own moments of truth, when the overwhelmingly powerful dark ones were proven to be just as screwed in their own ways. And it did not end there. The blood of the Rafastio flowed through their veins, and it did not need a genius to realize that there is no nightly elder named Rafastio. Which meant they were trapped among lowlifes and outcasts in the invisible war.

'Look at this!' alerted Anderson.

The trio came to a cautious halt, nigh crouched in their attempts to investigate into the pinpointed direction.

'That blade sure is expensive!' confirmed Terrence.

'And it is touched by... It is special. Alike the Athame in legendary witchcraft, or alike a silver bullet has a special effect on werewolves in the movies.' analyzed Marina.

'Shall we risk it?' asked Anderson, his index finger pointing towards the blades' edge.

'You mean tasting it?' asked Terrence.

'Yes, that is what he means, in case you know the familial incantation.'

'Of course I do!' stammered Anderson and Terrence in nigh unison. Male pride, warm wax in skilled women's hands.

'Who goes first?' wondered Terrence.

'I'd say the careful one. Marina.' admitted Anderson.

'Hui, a streak of wisdom in a proletarian street-tough?'

'A streak of realism in an aged, crippled, and surviving former street-tough I would say.' answered Anderson.

Terrence J. Mather watched with obvious curiosity. Though all which was to see was Marina moving the index finger of her left hand parallel to the blade's edge, and then licking the same index finger. Anderson and Terrence were in the midst of exchanging puzzled glances, when a shadow came down unto T.J. Mather!

Slowed due their utter disbelief both males were unable to react much faster, when Marina, who had instances ago licked her finger, jumped Terrence in a frenzy and ferociously, savagely bit

his neck. A Sound of surprise and pain came from Terrence, and a gasp from Anderson Cappado.

Anderson had kept his wits about it though, as his next action was a roundhouse-kicked aiming at Marina's head from the front-side. Clad in his Kevlar-reinforced working gear, including the modernized working boots, he hit alike an oversize brass-knuckled-fist.

A disgusting sound was heard, when his foot impacted with Marina's face. But instead of seeing her propelled backwards she and the unlucky Terrence she held clawed tight were only shaken through. Before Anderson could even ground his leg again Marina was in motion. Preternaturally quick her right hand grabbed the pant on Anderson's kicking leg and wrested him around with a swing of unbelievable brutality. Whatever glared through her eyes that moment, it was not Marina.

Cappado was ripped off the ground, making a short yet involuntary flight to collide with a car parking in the side lane of the road. When he came to his senses again the supposed freak-out was over. He deduced that from the fact that Terrence and Marina, both bloodied and battered, were chit-chatting about his fat belly and the extra rounding of his back bumpers!

'We must wait for Marina. I had to smack her head pretty hard to knock her off.'

Marina added a cheery giggle to the statement, and grinned joyfully, as if unaware of her fresh blood still covering most of her face.

Anderson knew that internal damage was hard to heal for each of them, and after that display of ferocity he had no doubt that Terrence was forced to hit her fiercely. The wound at his neck was nigh closed by now, so Anderson concluded that he had been unconscious for more than one minute at minimum.

Meanwhile Marina declared her love to the darkening sky. Seemingly not yet recovered.

'That was not the blood of a recently created vampire!' agreed Cappado and Mather.

And with that they both tested a less greedily-measured portion of the remaining fluid on the blade. The first surge felt like a drug kicking in aka symptoms beginning to manifest. Still contrary to Marina neither Terrence nor Anderson felt a frenzy effect. Both were in a lucid calm known to the mentally less retarded males of their age.

'With this blade still here we gotta get away soon!' announced Marina.

'Nice you are yourself again. We flee?'

'Yes' spoke Terrence. 'We cannot be certain what happened, but we can be certain that kinda power league has means to secure a scene before the sundown.

'Or that whatever could take-out such a power may come back to snatch the trophy' contemplated Anderson.

'Car or low-profile?' inquired Marina.

'Dunno.' admitted Anderson.

'No car, draws more risk-raising attention, not just due stealing one.'

'Lets go!' decided Marina.

The trio knew they were in over there head, and withdrew with the best blend of vigilance and low-profile they got mustered. Later that evening they would rely on their minds, and on their memories about the tasted blood, to pool-up their insights and decide their course. But first their mortality had to withstand the seriously impairing clench of fear, as a part of them realized the threat was overtly powerful, and freaked-out at the mere notion of being unable to do anything to evade or neutralize it. Halfway back homewards they were intercepted by a carload of guys in suits:

'The deal we make is; You hand us the blade now, and we supply you a hideout for this night only!'

Apocrypha of Bedlam & Bloodshed

'Gimme that, and here you go!' summarized Marina while testing her humorous stares on Terrence.

'I would speak a toast to our unknown host, but sadly we ran out of both, service providers & champagne.' humored T.J. Mather.

Shuddering visibly Anderson added: 'Yeuch! That is so French cliché.' proud of throwing in some cheap movie notion disguised as cultural open-mindedness.

'When they renamed French fries into freedom fries the world went darker for poor Anderson Cappado!' mocked Marina.

With no need of withholding information, as all they found out was easily available to any decent investigation, even by mortal standards, they started their first little brainstorming on their latest discovery.

'So we found suspiciously zero from a larger late-night-skirmish until the totally secret magick of our familial side made us discover the one piece of evidence, Marina's lolly'. Summarized Anderson.

'Oh, so cute, you remember Kojak!' interfered Marina.

Countering the puzzled look on Terrence' face Anderson stated: 'Telly Savalas, TV series star, as the lolly-licking skinhead detective!'

<http://www.trilulilu.ro/video-cultura/telly-savalas-some-broken-hearts-never-mend-subtit>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZFo7HXR8Wo>

'Thanks. So it means we were late on the news and someone had already cleaned up, of course. Plus we know it was someone not precisely trained in any form of sorcery?' came from Terrence.

'Yeah, probably that. Or could mean someone had much to clean up or was focused on not being seen cleaning up. Plus: Could be a team or crew, no need to expect a solitary, when the stakes are high.'

'Stakes high, fangs bared...' mused Marina.

'Yes, an appreciated reminder.' spoke Terrence.

'Maybe it was just this one clash among power-players and all calms down now. Still we don't even know, if any side won out, or, if it was just a duel among some more progressed people.' fumbled Anderson.

'We have a little, helpful game among artists. Kinda muse-boosting. I always found it comparably easy, though others complained about their minds having problems assessing the pattern and participating in the flow.' stated Terrence, with a streak of predatory innocence on his face, and a barely camouflaged smile.

'Seeing her is not banging her, T.J.!' interfered Anderson.

'Excuse me?' reacted Terrence.

'Victoria, from Latin, means kinda victory. Smiling alone won't make it a realized success.' explained Anderson.

'Indeed, but the ease by which the smile came tells me I am ready for the ritual I mentioned.' boasted Terrence.

'Men!' scoffed Marina.

Invisible Forces and camouflaged threats

Eager to return to their own hideout the trio was at a disadvantage due to the unwelcome stay in some not yet identified bosses safe-house having wasted twelve additional hours of time. When they finally set eyesight on their own apartment again it felt like a real homecoming.

'Give me your handbag!' insisted a blonde woman in cheap office clothing.

'What? No!' infuriated Marina.

The female stranger looked perplexed for one moment, and then repeated the commanding prose: 'Gimme your handbag!'

'WTF?' wondered Anderson.

'How rude!' judged Terrence.

'I said no! Leave me alone.' retaliated Marina.

'Kneel! Yes, the master has arrived, kneel!' shouted a male stranger clad only with sneakers and a jeans.

Anderson, Terrence, Marina, and the blonde woman blinked, with disbelief forming on their faces, and began to kneel before the self-entitled master.

'That is better! You are my little bitches now. Yes. And the guys in the block thought I am one for the loony bin. Ridiculous!' celebrated the triumphant stranger.

'There he is! Get him.' came a shout from a bunch of hooligan-like musclemen.

The 'master', flabbergasted right out of his triumphant posture, began to run like a rabbit from the hounds. The musclemen in direct pursuit of him. Abandoning his newly gained lackeys without a thought wasted unto their well-being.

Five minutes later the trio had reinforced the door and the window of their apartment with something suspiciously resembling police riot shields. Luckily none were reported stolen, so that impression must be a matter of artwork.

'Mainstream ignorance is a weapon!' babbled Anderson.

'Ill-termed statement.' scolded Terrence.

'Bah.' evaluated Marina.

'Seriously, whatever contaminated the water-supply acts alike to the mystical blood we are using to fuel our sorcery. But the more dangerous part is that salary slaves and office tyrants were pumped up with it. It means average people, along with their freaky but intimidated mindsets, can temporarily meddle due the powers given them. Or unleash their TV sedated wishful thinking on whomever encounters them.

'I'm feeling funny.' were Anderson's words while slowly collapsing.

'He gets the mindless grin, it's a disease affecting his central nervous system!' worried Marina.

'Don't be silly, we have no scientific evidence about... Supposedly overdose of elder kindred vi-tae, in the heights of a fight for survival, dripped into the water supply of an ill-maintained, less lucrative to politicians city part... Oh, oh.'

'If it was a vampire, and if it was only one!' shuddered Marina who still peered at Anderson lying on the ground.

'Willy Pascal!' stammered the shady and sweaty form of Anderson from the floor.

Marina's eyes bulged, a clear sign of code-red kinda alarm on her face now.

'Below the Naruto porn!' coughed-up Anderson.

'That ninja fox dude banging all those retarded chicks worshiping him?' escaped from Terrence' mouth.

But meanwhile Marina had attached the neon-blue plastic wrapping to the tablet PC, and began typing commands or clicking icons, in her own mixture of touchscreen meets USB cable keyboard.

One moment later the video started, and a couple of serious gay-pride-enthusiasts, easily noticed with their own society-impairs-our-egomania-issues, began warning about a handful of conspiracy theories and how easy it is to infiltrate the urban water supply. [Content filter]

The two well-trained adults performing in this video were so poor that they could only afford minimal underwear. Having no money for education or better technology their only choice was their second job, animal handling park ranger. Yes. That is why now and then one or the other wanted to talk about his rooster. They were both former farmboys who really loved the natural waking calls given by their roosters. And, as a sign of gratitude, they licked and massaged their roosters, whenever they had earned enough money to visit the farm... (The author was raised in Catholic fashion, and is an occasional homophobic & gay critic! Henceforth only high sales numbers

encourage him to write a minor sex scene from Evil Sodomite Empire into any of his purely fictional works.) [/Content filter]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu-Mj9GcANU> (Video with Spanish subs) Lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxCGXF-mPww>

Billions of people were forced into schedules. To keep their jobs, to pay the bills, not to end in jail or psychiatric care once again, because the tougher ones at bum shelter robbed 'em and kicked 'em out... No matter, if by enemy or accident. The city part was brought to the edge of crisis with a trick so cheap that every junkie, fraud, or desperado could muster it!

And it worked, the unholy Quaternary of pub-wisdom, sports, amateur porn, and dumbest cliché aka zombie apocalypse took over the neighborhood before any resistance could identify the threat and go into formation to counter it.

The trio wanted to find out what was really going on. The revenants knew the Kairouan Brotherhood was involved, and that at least their lower foot-soldiers would have their own mind's impaired by their own political and religious indoctrination. It was painstakingly clear that a violent change came alike an enormous wave or thunderstorm, threatening and harming all their lives. No gunshot stops a disease. No cheap magick ritual reverses a major twist of fate. Outside of Hollywood a hollow-headed pledge to duty only got oneself killed, or worse!

Something had been mixed into the traditional mixture of disgust, disrespect, and barely veiled hostility of Kemal, Murrak, and Farruk, when the trio entered the local Shisha bar. Something they knew was shining from their own eyes, too. Bitterness and the wrath only helplessly watching the enemy win tends to spawn forth.

'Welcome!' announced the proprietor.

'Tea?' inquired the waiter.

'Gladly, sir, mine with honey, please.' replied Anderson to the waiter.

'We call it Kismet, you know?' stated Kemal, Murrak, and Farruk in unison.

'Yes, alike Latin *alea, iacta, est!* God has thrown the dice, we must live with the result.'

The End (basic version)

Dreams from within Ceoris

Gone medieval, Vampire Dark Ages, but without Valerie a waste of words...

Dreams from within Ceoris

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

In the year 2017 people frantically insisted that 'tank' and 'damage dealer' is proper roleplaying sermon. I still remember actually reading the books about SAS, the Storytelling Adventure System and I never forgot that I was a passionate but mediocre roleplayer and storyteller myself. Times changed, friends died while false friends became enemies or stalkers, money took new ways, and sometimes I felt nearly ready to return to university and graduate. Health and monetary problems prevented it so far.

When I started to write the prequel of a short story collection about my Tzimisce revenant, namely Andrei Mikhail Bratovich, I finished the first part in one night of insomnia and zeal. Next morning restarting my thinkpad no longer worked, and so far not even recovery of the hard-disk could be afforded. I know it does not sound heroic, but each time I lose stories that way feels nearly alike the death of a relative... Let's get started!

Dreams from within Ceoris 1.1 My first Vampire Dark Ages Fiction, from the perspective of chosen RPG character

Dear Magus Sachet,

wandering the dark halls of our spiritual high-fortress has become a dangerous ordeal to me. I

guess all those whispers and rumors about some ongoing secret diabolism, and the members of our House who commit it, may have begun to spook me a bit.

My breath is heavy, and I am sweating more each time, when I attempt, to make it to our now-nightly meetings without being noticed. I do not blame you, as your higher rank includes so much more duty. Yet sometimes I wished we could exchange our letters in daylight, as we had done it during the last decade.

The new arrangement bears its benefits, too. One night I really believed that I saw Etrius himself walking around with his staff of adjutants and secretaries. It was most inspiring to be reminded of how much higher in rank most of us may still rise. Oh, if I would just be better-versed with *creo fatum, rego fatum and perdo fortuna...*

Night and Silence, Shadows' Friends. A decade before I established my heavily criticized progress on bloodmagic I had ranked on the path of eternal night, or Shadows, as the simpletons put it in their impatience. It did help, as on successful invocation the darkness guided me more than it blinded me. *Creo ater, rego ater & perdo ater*, in my lacking Latin.

Sadly though, it becomes more and more clear to me that the shadows themselves whisper warnings, or threats, to me. Nightly predators lurking? Could it really be that a fierce, stealthy killer managed to get access to Ceoris, I wonder?

Anyway, my weakened stamina worries me and will force me to invest much more energy and time back into recuperation and healing. I even remembered the good old alchemy and housewife herbal remedies... Yet no longer I want to keep you waiting for your recent key-topic.

Your observations and conclusions have quite impressed me. I was surprised by the astonishment of the discovery. You seem to see a unique approach to bloodmagic, which I actually have never discovered myself. I fear though that is the toll age and sickness have on my competence. Your approach seems to be more modern than any theory of sorcery, which I had ever read, or inscribed myself.

I am faithful to our arrangement though and I will put emphasis on the topics of bloodmagic for longevity-sorcery, as soon, as I can focus on practical sorcery instead of theory and research about it. My access to certain tomes is limited in usage-time and others I am forbidden to read at all. Further I am the Imbecile. My sad lack of skill for linguistics, the limits of my education, take their proverbial toll repeatedly.

My only meditation about the suggestion which you had made, and I expect you have made it for a practical reason, gave me a vague intuitive feeling about the need to experiment with a cross-combination of bloodmagic with healing and transformation.

Stupid like my 1st mistake, I foolishly thought, just for one instance, that you meant that there exists a certain bloodmagic-alchemy drink, which would actually invoke such a transformation in a maximum of three nightly dosages. Oh such is my folly. Of course you, as a ranking member of impressive accomplishments, know well that sorcery takes time.

Especially so, when used to produce lasting effects. Yet I have the feeling that I can soon join you up on your theory and that we may actually discover some spectacular results. All that schedule puts between my practical support and our first analysis is one appointment with another member from the conclave of darkness.

Much like you they came up with an offer of alchemist sorts. They foretold vaguely about a ritual and potion, which could stabilize my health and again my 'in just three nights' misconception. Nocturnal Coincidences like that seem to be the bliss of the moment.

As this letter ends, I am focused on Shadow Sorcery and eager to pass the test which allows me to meet this new acquaintance. Some whisper he is a famous guest who has visited Ceoris for many years already. FINUM.

Addendum (?) Add-On 1 – A hastily scribbled Note

Dear Magus Sachet,

my apologies for vanishing in the heat of ambition for some days. I sincerely hope that no compromising situation arose because of my nigh too-late retrieval of your latest answer? I already contributed my part in plausible disinformation concerning the servants and spies who I must expect, too.

I participated in the mentioned ritual, and was actually out of service for three nights. Now, two more days after, I am very well. On the 4th day I still felt exhausted, as if my body had to work hard and strenuously to heal. I guess I have been much sicker than I expected. The ritual leader helped me through that, and we did spend some hours in darkness to discuss the consequences of the healing drought.

As respect demands I will serve as his assistant for a while, to pay back the enormous favor he has done for me. My biofeedback just stays in turmoil. I had a fierce and bloody dream about ... please understand, the fever.. About a vampire and eternal or abyssal darkness. After serious contemplation I am convinced that it was actually a splendid and lucid symbolism! The darkness symbolized our ritual and the *creo ater* and *rego ater* we focused upon, while the Vampire surely symbolized the enervating effect of my sickness and its really dangerous impact upon my health. Much worse than I had believed it to be. No miracle that horrid, feverish dreams haunted some of my nights.

I was nearly dead and my sorcery has suffered immensely! Yet I am alive and breathing, thanks to my impressive and admirable benefactor. The Shadows whisper softer now, yet each time they do I feel, as if my new mentor could answer all questions and return my power with just one more ritual... Shadows and Bloodmagic, I never before suspected synthesis.

I will, for now, focus on replacing lost abilities by advancing via the new approach I was taught. Soon I may support you again. Farewell!

Add-On 2 – Letter to an appreciated old Acquaintance

Most respected Thaumaturge Sachet,

with this letter I wanted to thank you for efforts, which back in the past, I could not appreciate due lack of both, knowledge and initiation. You knew me as Bartholomew van Weyden, a minor adept of a sub-house to the old Houses oh so Hermetic and before Rebirth in Blood was discovered.

By now I understand well that your Embrace into House Tremere and my Embrace into the Clan of Shadow spoiled some of your original plans. I apologize for having failed to support you by my selfish quest for survival. Though I guess you knew early that my Sire would have not left me that option anyway.

As more than a decade did pass and politics have become a problem I have to watch out for, please know this: Hypothetically I would be willing to reestablish the old occult research alike we did it in mortal years. Once more, how foolish I babbled about you in my ignorance, please lets simply chuckle about it with no proverbial bad blood left between us?

I would understand, if your Clans reign puts you in a predicament of sorts, yet if you still follow some of your old roads to discovery, we may, to a degree limited by our duties and allegiances, return to the joyful study of Bloodmagic and Shadow-Powers. Finally. I leave the choice to you, as truly, my duties forced me into a new role. One which the mortal sorcerer I once was could have never expected.

I once saw a fester mocking the topic. Sadly he was an impertinent ghoul going to far with it and was torn to shreds in the combat-focused *creo ater* and *rego ater*, which our hardliners are so notorious for. I became a kind of Prodigy. After horrible failures and hardly survived punishments I am now finally a self-sufficient and nearly independent adult once more! As far, as one of our blood

may be so.

Basically, to remain modest and focused, the Bloodmagic I handled as a mortal resulted in an unexpected Anomaly, when I became a ghoul, and once more, when I was Embraced. Nothing spectacular, just that I quickly developed back in Shadow-Sorcery and that I was reborn with a gift which is harshly ever coming that early to those of our blood. I heard your scholars summarize it as the blood-power called Auspex.

I am willing to discuss my way through the last years, yet, of course and in mutual consideration, I expect it wise for both of us not to share any information about our creators or our bloodlines at all.

I had been trained and sent to assassinate traitors, as part of my education and study. It was never as pleasant, as in bardic tales. Duty always comes first now, otherwise I have regained my open-minded personality in memory of the good old times.

I am a notch more cultivated in practice now, too. Not good enough for the highborn, yet I can handle myself among artisans and merchants or simple courtiers. That includes keeping their daggers out of my back.

I am uncertain about the credibility of rumors. Though I hope that your own progress has satisfied you. I was rebuked quite harshly by some of the Tremere I interviewed to find you after such a long time. In truth, I barely escaped Final Death due one of your most intolerant hardliners in Prague and once more similar in Vienna. Well, it gave me reasons to become tougher and faster. Isn't it despicable how the non-spirituals compensate their deficiencies by constant violence? I still get angry, when I have to draw a blade. Bloodshed oft is a doubly wasteful ordeal to us, isn't it?

As far as I can suggest topics which we may use to revive our old acquaintance, I consider the use of mental domination, the blood-powers of perception, and the old approaches we already did as mortals to be a decent and modest, as a neutral and uncompromising start? I would love to read your evaluation.

Politics and formalities may cost us some time, yet it should be possible to once more reach a state of mutual benefit. I would understand though, when you want to leave all your mortal ties behind you. So far I never did embrace anybody, still I know from observation and handling my own retainers that there are good reasons for such as well.

I know that you cannot believe me, yet I promise, I did not share any of my inquiries about you with my Sire or any other member of my bloodline. It is my right to attempt this though, as back in Ceoris we had legitimization to join your House, as free and welcome guests.

As far, as I know, I did not violate any of your wards. It will be seriously helpful to you anyway, to remember focus on perdo ater, as I once called it. Detecting of our traditional way of Shadow-Sorcery may be a notch more difficult. While I am inferior skilled with Auspex, I would remind you to use that gift of the blood in addition to your successor to sorcery, which I know now entitled as thaumaturgy.

One last rhetorical question: After the Embrace, did you face certain strenuous failures, when energizing by blood instead of will, too?

I know that it can be easily dismissed as thinking too mortal. Still I found that precisely that allows unique applications which are not known to reactionary or lethargic members of our Conclave of Shadows at all.

I have not been banned from Ceoris yet or such, it is just that I feel wrong in just returning there. I plan to regain a new official invitation, as I am no longer a mortal sorcerer and I would be displeased, if one would accuse me of such a blatant and crude attempt of infiltration or opportunism.

You have my best wishes and I hope that no change we had to get through would force us, to

face each other as enemies. May that night never come. Farewell!

Another Note send into the Unknown

Weird Dreams within these Walls! Disturbingly lucid and recurrent. Especially for my new state of being. I craft copies of this, in case of my demise. The 1st night I couldn't believe it, yet the mere bad vibrations and their effect on my improved perception forced me to invoke a ward straight in my own dreams!

By the fact that it made a difference I was reassured that the old and long ignored rumors about diabolism are actually worth investigation by the vigilant. Didn't I once underestimate the clarity of my dreams about Vampires just as well? Well, I did.

Now it seems though that the precaution of those reborn in blood was actually just one of two flavors, whereby the other flavor seems more and more to be literally diabolic or abyssal! If I would be more superstitious I would consider it the vile presence of the Devil itself!

From that and my warding signs I conclude that either some demonic sorcery is involved, or that somebody is really foolish yet skilled or desperate enough, to summon an actual Denizen of Hell. My competences are much too limited, to decide, whether such is symbolical or if a fiend from the infernal realms is present for real.

As I know nearly nothing about demonology and have no access to reliable research material at all, all I can do about it is to report to better-versed scholars. Congratulations, accursed Ceoris. One night back within your walls and I once more feel like the most foolish apprentice who had ever entered.

With the first shock passing, maybe the leadership has decided, to welcome guests from that clan which spawned forth so many rumors? Wasn't there some talk about infernal vampires in Byzantium? How foolish I would discredit myself, if all that really happened is that the reborn in blood welcomed one of those within their stronghold. Yet then I read about the via diabolis and practitioners of that alone leave no obvious unholy resonance, as far as I know. Could there be devilish magic? Does such exist outside of peasantry panic at all?

Relief & what dangerous delusion it may be.

Honored compatriot,

I am relieved much, now that I have brought the secret meeting confirming the permissions behind me. It may seem weird, yet from all I know only the scholars of Ceoris embody the spirit and competence to handle my sorcery's 'inheritance'.

I wanted all my works from my years as a mortal Sorcerer archived for those of us who may be called successors. I found it was a proper way of ending that chapter of my life and showing gratefulness to those who had once helped me. If my mediocre approaches are ever needed, there will soon be copies of my books available in the libraries.

With that done and all questions answered, I have to prepare taking my leave though. To me the warning signs are obvious. The Tremere hardliners are seclusive and embody a certain siege-mentality. One which served them well against the Tzimisce repeatedly indeed!

They made it clear that time as a guest is limited, and under conditions. Truthfully though, I am withdrawing. Retreating from a battle I cannot win. I suspect that I somehow ran afoul of the diabolists. Could it be that the spymaster found my note about the disturbing emanations and the dreams those had spawned forth?

I will never know. I can still contact you legitimately via the gate of Lions on the Island. I would prefer though, to venture to Milano or Venice. It has been much easier to me, whenever there was distance between my Sire and me. No blame in that, just that he surely is more politician than occult delver. Yes, I fear my bloodline could cause trouble. Especially now that I did discover a secret which they demand me to share with them. Unusual, how I stumble into Blood-Alchemy from time

to time. It has never been my field of study.

While it was smart to remain a political nobody within those walls of Ceoris, my focus on research and field-testing made me other enemies nonetheless. I am not sure, if it is actually about Oneiromancy or Diabolism. Yet I suspect the latter, as my senses and invocations have verified more leads than red herrings into that direction.

I warn you further not to trust my Sire overtly much! It is no secret to anybody I met that my bloodline has been guest at more than one Tzimisce stronghold and I agree that we, too, were trained to find it suspicious, when some defect or disrespect a flawless ally spontaneously.

I have mentioned that to those who showed me respect and hospitality among House Tremere. Though remember, I am just a guest, I surely did not ever meet your higher ranks at all. Hence I cannot estimate, if my warnings fruition, or get neglected.

I leave you a note-book. It includes my conclusions about regaining sorcery or similar after becoming a ghoul. I have added certain notes from the later years and my suspicions about the transformation, which we call Embrace, and how it has to be handled to keep a connection to formerly learned basics. Embrace, for it makes me one of my brothers keepers... a weird statement of camaraderie and responsibility, wouldn't you think?

If I survive the travels, I fear that a century of political duty awaits me. Sometimes it is a burden or toll I find unsuitable. Yet until now I only know of one mystic from my own bloodline who has any interest in furthering the understanding of our blood-powered Shadow-Sorcery.

Opportunity in crisis. Originally I considered the last principle you wrote me about a failure on my part. Later I had to correct that. No, I cannot shoot bolts of darkness at enemies. I am not aware, if that is because of my own limited skill, or because of physical limitations. Bolts fired lose substance rapidly, as energy-loss destabilizes their matter and my control of the energy. I did improvise a solution though. minor progress, I can temporarily solidify the spearheads of my tentacles to become dagger-like.

To me personally it is enervating, as I have to invest extra effort and concentration. Yet I felled four so called witch-hunters with it where earlier I would have just managed to wrestle them and flee. Foolishly, as the concept of strangulation is well known to me. Still I am not yet really skilled in such and my temper took toll.

Sadly this means one more temporal dead-end to our combined research and contemplation. For now. I have to tell you about my suspicion about that topic. It seems your blood-power is more versatile in certain approaches. Or I am far deficient in knowledge? In theory the principles work out well, yet in practice less than half of them seem practicable at all.

To a degree this must be due lack of experience, maybe for both of us. Oh and I did as you asked on the mundane definition. The term Jihad, as far as I know, is unknown as such among the reborn in blood. The term stems from Arabia and the Muslim religion known as Islam? Islam means total submission to god in some translations and Jihad or Djyhah seems to mean: Work for god, when in peacetime, and holy war otherwise?

Some could call me a heretic to the catholic faith. I am not sure, yet I remember our priests preaching against bearded devils from the desert and their mortal pawns. I was not surprised that they crusaded in attempts to free the Holy Land from them, and I would not be surprised, when those bearded devils would soon roast on pyres either.

Maybe in retrospective that atmosphere of uncertainty is the aftermath of the 1st Crusade gone awry. I don't know, if they are friend, food or foe... While I never visited Arabia or Egypt, I know warnings about the latter. Both spawn forth dedicated scholars and mystics, yet my Sire warned me about venturing farther south. I guess he was holding back the real important lore, as usual, yet our bloodline does not warn, if there is no real threat obscured and lurking. Fare thee well and expect

words to the Island Lion, if I survive the ordeal put before me.

Shades of Shadowy Sermon

'The eldritch excerpt from Bartholomew van Weyden was seemingly continued by a certain Andiamo Guicciardini several decades after the original heretic had withered away. The name is clearly artificial and the writing, it seems to stem from somebody with very limited skill and education once again. It is clear though that the writing suggests that a cult of nocturnal heretics worships the 'angelis ater' aka angel of darkness. This dark angel then, obvious to all theologians, another fallen angel: One more disguise of the Devil itself! Luckily though it seems to be a local heresy in Southern England. While the author wastes no words about his person, or reliable sources, there are several passages which tell-tale against the typical pagan witchcraft conspiracy. The author considers them archaic and atavistic, prone to self-destruction by provoking the holy Inquisition. We consider A.G. to be a fallen monk, or halfwit noble child, who, tormented by Hell and the shock of having sexual intercourse with the Devil, felt forced to unleash such unholy sermon about darkness being a sentient and sapient entity to those with certain talents. It is wise, not to let such writings be read by the Unprepared, as their innocent souls may really be tainted by beholding the Unholy.'

Dear thaumaturge Sachet,

in a mixture of sadness and joy may I report to you that the author of the note above was neutralized before his, quite appreciated though naive summary, could bring the attention of religious fanatics upon us!

I would love to use it as backside information summary for works from my mortal years nonetheless! Of course such will never happen, as discretion is very important and my loyalty to my brothers and sisters is unshakable.

It was my chance to play admiral though. Valiantly marshaling my own ghouls to dare the journey from northern Italy to England. We succeeded and had quite some fun learning lessons in interception and infiltration! Plus the ghouls escaped unscathed from it. This time.

Sadly though, I remembered clearly that the only ones possessing works from my mortal years are actually those of your bloodline.

Further I have neither ambitions on the Island, nor would I compromise diplomacy by venturing there uninvited myself! While I do not blame any reborn in blood, I am certain that some mortal magi managed to craft copies of my works and smuggle them out of Ceoris.

My Sire will soon find out and he will not be amused like myself. He will not be satisfied with my countermeasure either. He will enforce to find the original traitor and neutralize the threat completely.

I will answer him that I would leave that to him, as, obviously, my competences are still not fitting and my diplomatic state is hampering efforts to enter Ceoris freely. More disturbing was that a mere Mortal managed to connect my old name to the false one I adopted! For such it needs divination sorcery or divine blessing, maybe infernal blessing alternately!

This affair henceforth wasted everything I did build-up in northern Italy with one foul strike! All it gained me was a new ghoul. A ghoul unaware that my Sire will question him in very torturous ways soon, and extensively. No, I am not amused.

To balance this note though: I have found out, very successfully, that the Synthesis of will with vitae was just the beginning. Indeed I advise you, to instantly start attempts, which combine the blood-powers into achieving one specific effect! My *creo ater* or *rego ater* with aura-sight and as well with psychometry? Both spawned forth formidable results in just some weeks of intuitive experimentation!

As a Mystic of my blood, I do have some allies and I do have value to my bloodline. Yet I cannot afford, to leave security breaches, which go back to Rome, ever! Many of our blood were for-

mer Catholics and only our own faction has mystics and ex-sorcerers who learned life as heretic before their transformation and rebirth in blood. I noted before “May that night never come.”

Yet, if I have to protect my bloodline, then it is my duty, the duty which always comes first, to murder any involved Tremere reborn in blood without hesitation. Final Death, nothing spiritual.

I therefor ask your support in finding a flawless political solution immediately! Smart would it be, not to get our names involved into that one at all. I never doubted your intellect nor your prudence. Please ensure that the precious opportunities we kept going for more than fifty years by now are not wasted due some short-sighted traitor from within the walls of Ceoris.

If my Sire drags me back to Ceoris, I am prepared. Both, for duty and any punishment I may suffer, if I am found faulty or guilty, which I am most probably not.

My anger stems from the fact that I have better things to do. Even as the most imbecile scholar in decades. Well, I am a mystic, not really a scholar. My talent lies with the empiric and the practicable.

Born Shadow-Sorcerer and Blood-Magi. I know the looks of those who would dryly remark that my Sire could have tattooed “Inquisition-fodder” upon my forehead just as well. He didn't. And the one flaw my Sire never displayed was choosing badly, when it came to servants, assets, and disciples! Fare Thee well!

Sexual escapades “inter pares”

Dearest Thaumaturge,

yes, yes. Trouble resolved, traitor felled. Diabolists were involved and told most insane lies in the chosen few cases, wherein they lived long enough to dare it. Shadows and fire haunting them to Death. Occult persecution complex, as excuse for their own vile villainy! Bah.

I was on vacation upon a small island. 'inter pares' was properly translated as 'among equals', I hope. I have no books with me, my apologies.

Well, my new mistress could do more than stealing my books and teaching me primitive joy though. Actually, I consider her quite an expert on diabolism among the reborn in Blood.

For now, I only wanted you to know that the intimacy of feeling our blood course through both of us was merely an introduction of sorts. Vulgar yet efficient it made us discover that we both are very fond of practical experiments with sorcery.

She insists that all I need to make invocations of invisibility work, is to articulate them through my vitae instead of through verbal incantations, which I would have used as a mortal. Can you believe it? I do since she showed me that she can even invoke one which made her look like my twin!

Channeling I called it, when the mind sets energy into motion to affect physical reality. The concept is the best spontaneous hint I can offer. We worked much in those three weeks. Yet with duty calling, I have to return homewards. Even, if it is just so I can plan to visit her for another fortnight soon.

Among the gifts we shared, I found two of possible interest to you, too. First, I was told that Diabolists, not unlike bloodlines, have factions and schisms, too. A streak of hope that my bad dreams within the walls of Ceoris were only due a small local disturbance.

2nd, I will never be the same again. As sign of her sincerity and courage she showed me one of her own blood-powers, thereby as well telling me honestly that she is reborn in blood of a diabolical bloodline I considered named children of Baal.

She summoned the Flames of Hell! No, I am not mistaken and not exaggerating! She conjured forth a direct gateway into Hell. When she made one of those flames hit me I knew that she was not overestimating her abilities either. The kind of burn could not be compared to any candle or torch,

priestly blessed or not. The horrid thought that my by now reliable toughness of a reborn in blood could be easily overwhelmed or undone! And that her sympathy and affection for me were real, as I am neither ash nor bedeviled.

If she would have held me in her arms while opening the fire-gate, I would have been burned to death even before Hell could snatch me. And that is what will always distinguish us from the Believers. They believe in a Messiah, a Paradise, a Devil, and a Hell. We instead know and learn to know more of it means realistic practicing, not mere worshiping.

I have never before been so afraid. Shunning a flame and fearing the sun have been put into a new relativity. And she looked so happy in those flames. Deceivingly happy may be. Oh, Lorena, my brimstone-bride...

It seems another principle is unmasked. Like with our Bloodline, there are the materialists and the spiritualists, even among the Diabolical. Just that those of a specific elder actually have a literal pact with the Devil. A horrid notion.

Lorena told me her tale. From a harsh childhood as daughter of a Merchant-Prince from the city of Capua, tormented by her envious sisters, for she was beautiful, chaste and smart, yet not the firstborn, to her time as a nun in the monastery. The fateful night, when the Devil decided, to test her faith, knowing she was still too young for her to hold herself against the Fiend.

The Devil raped her, evidencing what he told her that all her faith and devotion would not make God help her at all! Undoubtedly that was more than mere bluff. And she fell worse, violated, and disillusioned as just another devilish whore she was transformed into a worthy harlot in its image. I did not want to ask her the details on the Embrace for now.

Yet Lorena claimed her abuser was enjoying the enormous amount of innocence he could rob her of and treated her as a pawn for his lusts and ambitions for a while. When he finally lusted for fresher whores she managed to flee and started her live as a wandering mystic. Again, I did not ask for details.

For twenty years she had been a hermit on the islands before we met. Or so it seems. Obviously her education and spirituality recovered, even though she told me that curses and not prayers are all, which the Christian Deity deserves. Knowing about witch-hunters, I could harshly ever disagree with that statement. I feel a mental and emotional fatigue while I am juggled across the waves. I have much to contemplate thoroughly.

I wonder, if we could trap one of those diabolical dream-poisoners in Ceoris and do some divination upon that fiendish fellow? What secrets could be revealed by finesse instead of crude violence? Indeed, I do not consider all diabolism ended within those walls. Just the faction of my fans, who, paradoxically, turned it against me. Sometimes I feel very old...

Noted Contemplation: via diabolis versus via video nefas

I failed in writing a brimstone-bride poetry worthy enough for beloved Lorena! Again... yet in my wisdom I invested a fortnight for love and a remaining week for undisturbed research. Yes, I should invest a century into proper Latin indeed. It is just that it hurts even to consider it... I am the Imbecile among the ex-sorcerers after all.

Theory: Blood is just the foundation. With the centuries many reborn in blood forget their time as humans. Therefor, among older reborn in blood, there is an ambition, to craft a codex of conduct, which allows to behave properly without constantly endangering hideout and fellow reborn in blood. As with everything else, it never takes long, before diabolical variants are spawned forth. Two of those I had rudimentary insight into. The 1st seemingly a recipe for criminal success, as the so called Road of the Devil is very materialist and impatient.

Now consider my surprise, when the 2nd diabolical variant, derived from oldest pagan, witch-

craft or druidism, is operating based on a mystic-principal which all in-the-know recognize instantly!

I am willing, to invest work into finding out how much of the diabolism we can exterminate and replace by proper mystical or thaumaturge guidance indeed! I have not forgotten, how the Shadows whispered to my mortal self. I was just too unknowing to handle it any better back then.

I will not press focus to 'video ater' either, as I do that habitually on my own anyway. Yet what, if we combine some spiritual minds of the Reborn, to craft a codex of conduct, which helps to improve generic sorcery efficacy simply by avoiding the core mistakes we all tend to make occasionally? A worthy extension then could be, how combining blood-powers may work out easier.

Who knows, we may even help our Bloodlines to gain a practical tool along with it.

Farewell, my most respected Thaumaturge.

Freedom by Betrayal or Freed from my Betrayer

My valued Occult-Observer,

indeed you know what I wrote before. Did it surprise you? My Sire has a despicable streak in his ways. It is wrong that any of us pretends to be human, for we are absolutely not! Well, not any longer. My allies in Ceoris were always closer to me than the one who enslaved me by blood. At least I like to think that.

Despicable, how they mock and mimic our sorcerer cabals in their idiotic worship of elitism. What is "amici noctis" but a foolish separation from flexible mystics of darkness? And why does friends of the night sound more like drunken sodomites to me?

Because I learned Lasombra wisdom! We despise weakness and cull it from our ranks. My Sire postures the noble, while his ilk, the martial arm, should be busy freeing Iberia. He himself is a craven, traitorous opportunist. My marriage did not enslave me, as you may soon find prove of yourself. It did set me free! Love shattered the bonds of weaker blood.

I can once more focus on mysticism and sorcery, focus on what I care about and am skilled with, instead of spying and assassinating for the whim of a traitor disguised as clan-politics! I honored my hosts in Ceoris for a century already.

Now there is much to learn once again. Yet blood-slavery is true. The price for tainted longevity comes as a loss of sorcery, which no blood-power could fully compensate for! Indeed, I envied your choice, as thaumaturgy is so much more flexible and versatile.

And hubris everywhere! Even a child would realize that the abyss of darkness has nothing to do with the bottomless pit. But among Lasombra, there is an idiocy, a clenching to catholic patterns of worship and behavior, even as they are proven weakness!

Our special diet is a dangerous problem. It makes us addicts to the mortals we so easily despise after being reborn in blood. And new whispers of madness arose. I harshly understood all, yet it seems that imbalance of blood-powers, much like overuse of them, leads to temporal mental turmoil among all reborn in blood. Like an inbuilt safeguard against over-ambitious opportunism?

I am afraid occasionally. There are those of the Blood whom I rightfully fear. Brutes and monsters, older and more powerful, than can be good. Yet is it more than delusional, to still consider US children of God? Isn't it clear that we fail to resist temptation whenever we get thirsty? Aren't we nocturnal and crawling through the nights alike thieves? I think we should be careful and vigilant, as discipline and caution are survival mechanisms of our new way of existence indeed. I never mentioned it before, yet I found comfort in your cooperation!

The thought that, if my path fails, there will still remain those in Ceoris having my books, and you, knowing many principles and discoveries which I could share... I would lie to you, if I would write that all my years had been peaceful and well-protected. Actually I learned the blood-powers of physical nature because I had to face the threats from early on.

Toughen yourself well, as both, the claws of a Fiend and the spell of an elder will hit you before you can conjure-up a defense! I am still not satisfied with my invisibility-research and testing. I will not forget, to send you notice about it though. Actually that blood-power is very fascinating. Its options so subtle and as if created for combined effects.

I have never known that many Tremere, yet you belong to the scholars and open-minded occultists who made me stay true to the approaches I started as a mortal. I fear though that not even the idea behind Ceoris is immune to politics. Or the Inquisition.

Farewell!

Via video obscurantism

Dearest Sachet,

I have started to work on a pathway of scholarship and mysticism ready for theory and practice even among reborn in blood! I await your feedback on it, if that is not too insolent to hope for.

1. Handle your nocturnal needs in a mindset of modesty and caution, for safety and survival are needed to progress. 2. Never endanger your Sire or fellows on the pathway by your words, deeds, and neglects. 3. Practice the arts of Fortitude and Obfuscation, as they help you in both, survival and discretion beyond your own limits. 4. Practice the arts of Auspex and Awareness, as other means to discover the camouflaged, obscured, and unseen. 5. Share key-principles and discoveries with those who walk the pathway as your equals & higher ones. Solidarity strengthens more than what a traitor could easily undo. 6. Invest efforts to re-investigate the known for new options due your progresses through the years. 7. Meditate in death-trance, and wrestle your inner demons, to fortify your personality against the risks of madness and despair. 8. ...

Ah, so much to think into so limited a number of words. It makes me feel like a charlatan! Harshly do I manage to embody the seven rules and now I shall dare to define an 8th? I would never want to make others depend on my limited competence alone. Please share your insights concerning corrections & improvements with me. One final warning: Our cult has a serious dislike to “divide and conquer”. Stay distant at best. Tactically honest, well-armed, and diplomatic otherwise.

Fare Thee well.

The final farewell

Deer Traumaturk Sachet,

yoo will not know me, as I am unimportant. I know though that my precious Magister would have wanted yoo informed. Don't dare to send the Church after me, or I'll kill yoo and betray all House Tremor secrets!

I wrote this on the 5th of Julliard in the year 1408. I wrote this, so yoo know that my master, once known as Bartholomew van Weyden & Andiamo Gucciawhatever, has met Final Death yesterday, due a craven ambush by the almighty Lord itself!

The coward didn't even show up, made the sun do his dirty work for him. As my beloved master wished, I send yoo his last gift for yoo. It is a grim moire? Well, a book it is.

He entitled yoor copy “Brimstone Bride & Brotherly Ritual Guide”. He must have liked yoo very much. But my copy is perfumed, while yoo's is not! I must now destroy the hideout and kill myself, as without the beloved master there is nothing left to live for.

Loretta, the dutiful lady-ghoul

Experimental – Character Secrets & 'Destiny'

Bartholomew van Weyden aka Andiamo Guicciardini. Nature: Explorer, Demeanor: Sensualist. After his Embrace into the Lasombra clan his secret ambition was compensating the loss of sorcery which he wielded as a mortal. A mystic, blood magician, and worshiper of darkness he secretly ven-

tures forth to learn and indulge his pathway's fruition. Far away from Ceoris in its final nights he barely notices the rumors. For life and unlife he remains smart enough to stay forever outside of kindred politics. He becomes re-embraced as a Baali celestial apostate in 1294. In 1318 his Ex-Sire invites him to a precious nocturnal affairs ritual in Monaco. The invitation an ambush the underestimated mystic fights back against his former Sire and wins by fortuitously surviving the sun longer than his abusive slaver. The Imbecile, badly scorched, returns southward to the isles and remains in torpor until 1356. He finishes a final communication with his oldest compatriot-mind, creates a new nocturnal occult lodge, and a revenant line of sanguine alchemists, then settles down with Lorena for "as long as it may last". Believing that God calls him forth, to be counted, he measures his darkness versus the sunlight on his final morning, and is burned to ashes in the wind on the 4th of July in 1408...

Lorena. Nature: Defender, Demeanor: Traditionalist. Not even the existence of this reported Baali temptress & high priestess (celestial factions nest mother) could be proven. While some consider her an ephemera in the heretical Lasombra's mind, she did actually teach and inspire him a lot, just as he taught her. Their love among the fallen real for a while. With the wars, and the purge against her bloodline, she simply used her obfuscation and devilish deception to remain dead and forgotten, or so the whispers went in the Mediterranean... With few Reborn in Blood existing in the areas around Sardinia, no Auspex-Veteran searched for a secret stronghold there anyway. Or survived to tell about it.

Thaumaturge Sachet. Nature: Rogue, Demeanor: Pedagogue. Typical for a member of House and Clan, he was never caught and when he came up with a clan-oriented version of the thaumaturge path of darkness & damnation, his rising in rank and his competences made nobody wonder, if he achieved it all on his own. Unsurprisingly he rose to regency for a while and traveled through Europe wherever duty lead him. The last known arriving letter addressed to him was reported to stem from the 5th of July in 1408. 7th of July 1408 he is reported absent from his chantry in Tirol. Vienna loses blood-trace of him on July the 16th, when he becomes another apostate. In the year 1418 an occult tome titled "From the Ashes of the Imbecile", translated into Latin, English, German, and Italian; Was published anonymously. Everything else about this ex-thaumaturge remains unknown, unconfessed, and unpublished...

Alchemy, or proverbial Homebrew

My truth had two core problems with the official definitions which spoiled quite a lot. Further the Alliance Camarilla versus Horde Sabbat was actually dumb and immature from my perspective as well. I do not care about the monetary, as it didn't go to my bank accounts! To the very best I know the most virtuous real world humans I had to spend my life with would have a maximum Humanity rating of 6. The definition was so flawed and hypocrite that it disgusted me from the start. Having played a Sabbat Lasombra with a path of enlightenment, Humanity was actually not enriching for Vampires. A rule I would enforce is that nobody learns the specific "Clan-Discipline" of any Clan which he or she is not belonging to. A Toreador with more dots in Thaumaturgy than any Tremere of equal generation (now called blood potency) is no character concept but a spoiling cheater. A nice balance for reminding that being made of a certain blood means being controlled by that blood to a certain degree would have served well, too. Especially, as most clans are still direct pawns of the Vampire who created the clan. Or the oft unknown Diablerist who took over! Vampires are clinically dead bodies, cold and stiff. Sex as something which is no fun at all should be reserved to those who enjoy their real world marriage in my opinion. The Assamite Clanbook was one of the best ways to ever show a vampire Bloodline. It showed the stealthy assassin "we all" knew, the stereotype which made them notorious, yet as well the truth. That their clans' brutes are guided by the political Viziers and the Sorcerers. The Drawback was that in a time of real world Islamic Ter-

rorism and Extremism this Clan seemed the easiest way to waste your reputation and meet certain agencies of the State. Especially Minds Eye Theater & LARP. Hellfire, a weapon of mass-destruction? The Baali Clan was badly presented. Its Discipline the key to defeating medieval Christianity and all they did with it was “Act like pale Satanic Orcs with Fangs”? Setites were cool, as a unique Clan of vampires busy reviving their Founder while corrupting anybody else. Here was the Sex&Drugs crap which teenagers so easily fall prey to. With Typhon Seth, as Sub-Mekhet, all that remains is a crude Cult of Destruction. Set was a deity of Egypt and to undead bloodsuckers his reign was highly preferable to the Pantheon which felled him.

Why did we pay for this?

Encouragement: I am among the chosen few who survived a winter sleeping on the asphalt of our city AND made it back the legal way aka rent a new room due social-networking supporters, plus accepting minimum wage physical labor to get back into the workforce. Trauma-Bane: I was the ONLY bum who held up his empty coffee cup and NEVER got a coin. Plus: It is because I am a skinhead, they insisted I look like the type of guy lurking in ambush with a baseball bat. Well, I did not, I went the legal way AND purchased a baseball bat by now. To oppose rapists and forced prostitution. My own first offer was 15€. One other fellow bum of my own group was only offered 10€, but another started with 20€. Respect: Because reading the licenses, working the formats and adding the logos and graphics properly is additional work. And the same is true on inviting higher skilled artists who's fiction I really read, and who can qualify for good contributions to the storytellers vault. Honesty among adults: Mugging and robbery do become necessities among survivors, when you are bureaucracy forced to stay urban, but run out of money while criminals, disease, weather, and accidents can nail you 24/7. Simple logic, if I run out of money, then I must get it the less pleasant ways. And this is a truism for all who went through the first 48 hours of being outcast. Because capitalism is a bitch which runs like that, morons? Alone the legitimization to write their most negative review ever should mouth-water the troll hordes. ;->

SHADOWPUNK & CYBERRUN...

LICENSE ISSUES & OFFICIALS BITCHING...

Family affairs...

The vengeful vampire

Family Affairs, revision 1.12

“When forced into battle Fox always fights to kill, not stun or capture.” From Shadowrun – Shadows of Magic.

“Thou shall not suffer a witch to be born!”. That pseudo-prophetic-warning weighed upon my mood alike arcane significance, while I woke-up. Some brain-dregs like that formed the sermon of another, hopelessly outdated, yet supposedly-holy book. My problem about it was that the woman whom I had married was a witch, and my daughter thereby could be suspected to be a witch, too. Even by the shrivels of scientific education which I care to remember, fellows. All she had wanted was to get to that teenage-band 'Celtic Soul' concert. Well, we had not forbidden that, just failed to tell her about it in time. So she did what every good daughter does. Rebelliously she made use of the personality traits inherited, and learned from her parents. The lil b!tch sedated us and sneaked off.

“Next time you tranquilize your elders you might wake up in the cauldron along with spices, Dear.”

I wished I could tell her, as for now she was still missing. When we had finally gathered enough cash and credit both, me and my wife, had decided to proverbially leave running the shadows, and the big city life, behind. Technology was mobile so we did not miss much and did spend our time in an arcology much like those retired rangers often tend to do. Controlled environment, security, and some comfort. Independence, as we could produce our own food and water. Except for me nearly all others knew how to brew alcohol, too. Not Synthanol, but real, handmade-brew alcohol... When it all started, back in 2053, I had been a Street-Shaman. Or better said I may have once been supposed to become one. Fox was my calling, but a criminal underclass was my environment. There is no great prudence which a high caliber bullet into my head could not neutralize instantly. We had our problems from the start. Because I guess Fox knew it, yet decided to leave my choice to me. Even the well-meaning can hurt one brutally, such was not new to me.

I had done that. After ten years of running with Fox, and as a fox, I told my totem that we better depart. It was mutual. I did not lose all my magic. I was not killed by some breach of my spirit either. Without Fox I simply was a proverbial shadow of a man. There was no day in my life I could be fully awake for more than four hours. That was the price to pay. Lifelong imprisonment on the borderline to dreamy slumber. Like a sedated lunatic. I hated Fox even more, yet knew it was not his misdeed. Fox was just one more totem, and the fat and bloated man whom I had become did not look prudent or tricky at all. We had done, as parents typically do, when their child goes missing. We had instantly indebted ourselves, and hired a private investigator who had scored some suc-

cesses in Seattle, precisely the city where 'Celtic Soul' were predestined to jump upon the stage.

But there is this truism about solutions among grey-zone-dwellers: "An easy solution is no solution at all!"

The Bitch named Consequence is not fucked by anyone without dire repercussions to follow. My wife tended to smack me with one of her elbows whenever I was caught babbling vulgarism aloud..

The Sleuth had returned to us with one of those facial expressions one only wants to see in Sim-Stim entertainment. The fact that he visited an arcology at all proved him professional enough to me. He delivered a message from my daughter's pseudo-kidnapper.

Kinda: "Come, jump into my trap, so I can avenge myself, or your offspring... signed K."

Insanity has only one limit and that is certain death. I should have killed K straight the first time he had proven himself a false friend. I did not, brainwashed by the laws of old, long-gone democracy calling it murder. So he had risen in power, and was eager to put the blame upon me once again. "He'll have you raped, and tortured to death!" my wife commented with the shimmer of divination magic in her eyes. "Or worse: He forces me to listen to his self-pity-fuck sermon again! I will not abandon our child to his fangs!" I tried to fake a smile, and to pretend immortality. K had become the boss of a special gang. Süpür-K <-> Homosexual Turkish Criminals. Funded by some corporate media friends of him, them hoping that K, who happened to be a vampire since 2055, would gift them immortality! K had played the patience-card. Bluffing about how his rise in power would mean the blood by which they will soon be created would be much stronger. Well, the virus in that blood to give some detail. Corpse-lovers and Coffin-sleepers are wrong in the head for sure.

So I ventured into the big city one more time. I needed neither magic nor scouts to find a K who wanted to be found. Shortly after midnight, shortly after because my fat old me was out of breath, I had entered the gang-hosting mansion of the vampire. Former friends make fierce enemies. A mutual wisdom. The stench of feces alone could have killed me, and I always had the suspicion that certain homosexuals perceived it as perfume of a kind. Disease worship, pretty common.

K was well prepared. Neither my weapons, nor my suicide-capsule escaped the vigilance of his guards. I wasn't surprised. So I went into the vampire mansion. Once more a black sheep coming home. Ready to face my self-declared judge. It was much, as I had anticipated. K wanted something, which I could not offer. I saw it in his eyes, when he made his melodramatic moves, sneaking around my bound daughter like a ghoul around a passer-by who had just died of heart-failure. K believed the brain-crap he was babbling, he did not just play the victim. With all his nocturnal powers he was still trapped. He had to blame me, for he failed to accept the responsibility for, and consequence of, his own misdeeds. I couldn't end our friendship, for he had always been faster than me. Didn't he know that much at least?

"Now you miss that capsule I presume?" K asked in his triumphant mood. His fangs nearly shining in the semi-darkness.

"A bit. Still I just wanted you to be distracted until the spell works..." came my reply.

The last memory I ever had was the shock of realization dawning in my child's eyes. My daughter was transported home, as I unleashed the energy of a forbidden spell. An old, Norse witchcraft born due merciless demand. The one even attempting such a spell is torn to shreds within the proverbial moment of his deed. It is a spell made only for females. It saved my daughter, and robbed my oldest adversary of his vengeance. I died gratefully. I had understood the prophecy. I just had not expected my daughter to be already pregnant.

End of Story 1

Drunken-humored: Totemic riddle red riding hood

I nearly collapsed from vodka, but I wrote it!

Totemic Riddle Red Riding Hood

© André M. Pietroschek, my rights reserved

Revision 1.02

Native American, later Shadowrun, proverb: "Wolf wins all fights, except the last, and in that one he dies!"

Foreword: Dear readers, this brainstorming, omniscient tale was written in a drunken stupor & will become an excerpt. It is more than one more Shadowrun story, or may-hap I was dehydrated on day of deciding. It started at WDC, when I read the wonderful and new to me interpretation of "Red Riding Hood – A Fairy Tale of Terror" http://www.writing.com/main/view_item/item_id/1439040-Red-Riding-Hood-A-Fairy-Tale-of-Terror which we Germans, translated-back, just knew as Redcap, or "Rotkäppchen". Disgusted by certain setbacks at WDC I had ignored the idea. Guess, what ran on TV that week? No bluff, the interesting performance of Amanda Seyfried. Oh and late night song in the radio, when I went to the toilet? Yep. The Spirits had called me, Veteran Shamanic Worrier, or some-such.

The Place & Setting: Fairy Tale Forest-Village with a Church. It may have a harbor, yet all incoming ships unleash only stranded strangers, and all outgoing ships have next stop Bermuda Triangle. The Heli-Pad is under construction for decades already, funds are limited. Gun-Lore is pretty simplified too: There is the Ares Deerstalker Musket, the Remington Blunderbuss (Shotgun), Ruger Corsair Handgun, and Colt Pirate-Hunter Handgun. Both latter are no-ammunition-clip two barrel pistols. The pocket realm is high magic therefor Cybernetic-Implants cease to exist. The Matrix is comparably simple, too. There is the Mayor's data fortress and the Virtual Church Vault. Computers make us of archaic screens (monitors). Just so that you have a minor guidance along the trip.

Music: If music is mentioned, then for the option of reading those song-lyrics or listening to legal copies of the song. Some readers could be positively surprised how it can boost atmosphere.

And so it happened that on that fateful day:

Seventeen year old Sonja had accepted the only available Shadowrun of the day. The Johnson's, Mom&Dad, had insisted that she would sign-up for the solitary mission without hesitation. Get the pick-nick basket, and deliver it safely to Grandma in her forest witch-house, which all must call her beloved hut.

Now our Sonja was not the village mare's twin. No, besides having the body of a voluptuous porn-star, the skills of a Shadowrunner, and the school grades of a half-genius she had as well common sense. She equipped her Armored Red Hood and the Combat-Shock-Gloves for the totally unexpected chance of encountering villains, or danger.

Sonja was not a Sissy. Her classmates had hacked into the Mayor's secret database, and besides having spread some money, they had seen the Legend of the Heroes. Henceforth Sonja knew that her Shadowrun had a pretty good start. She had ventured through the village occasionally greeting the working people, or acquaintances.

Then she had made the slight upward curve along the path to the forest. Of course she had not failed to give her smiling regards to Sarah, wife of lumberjack Carlton. And neither had she hesitated to do a small chat with Jacob, who was the Chief-Hunter and Chief-Ranger of the area.

Quite good on her schedule she had reached the secret forest path to Grandma's beloved hut. It was then that a big black wolf appeared alongside the way! Knowing no limits, and with the proverbial wings of success driving her on, Sonja had juggled a sausage out of the pick-nick basket, and tempted the wolf with it. While the canine beast fed she spoke gentle words to it, and stroke its fur. Oops... that were her good intentions. Sadly though she had been sloppy with the Shock-Gloves during last maintenance session, as she had spied on Abigail from across the road meeting her

lover. Teenage priorities after all.

Shock-Gloves were meant to give off an amount of electricity on impact to render potential assailants unconscious. In this unfortunate, and unwanted, case her malfunctioning right glove had given-off the complete dosage for all ten supposed shocks, and the electrified wolf smelled a little bit scorched before its stiffened shape went soft; collapsing. Apologizing to the wolf Sonja had marched on in blissful ignorance, giving no first aid to the agonized beast, as she was quite eager to finish her duty, and deliver the basket to Granny. This irresponsible, and selfish, decision would come back to haunt her though!

“Grandma, I came to bring you a gift on this wonderful day!” called Sonja. ;-) The door of the beloved witch-house opened, and Grandma Donna Garibaldi, the former Queen of Palermo and Little Italy; stepped out to greet her dutiful offspring.

“Sonja, Dear, what a pleasant surprise! Straight after I threatened to cut your parents off from the money they have decided to send you here, and even with an appeasement gift!”

Sonja never understood those familial remarks of Granny, yet she loved her grandma, and happily handed her the basket.

“Oh grandma, wouldn't it be safer when you live with us in the village? Your isolated homestead is easy prey for burglars, and predatory beasts.”

“Pah, its another Home of the Brave, Silly.” Granny replied while quick-drawing her two Ruger handguns.

“We can't just leave the place unguarded. The illegal brewing of alcohol alone earns us a fortune, and as long, as they must fear my wrath, the smugglers won't cheat us too much.”

“Oh Granny.” replied the astonished, and traditionally quite confused; Sonja.

Donna Garibaldi went back into her beloved homestead, and returned soon thereafter with a platter full of coffee (Espresso) and cake (Tiramisu).

Like old people tend to do on occasion she talked on about worries, and plans in her head.

“See that field over there? Marihuana does only grow in small numbers, accursed weed. And there! After the cocaine plant rotted away we only have a handful of ephedrine plants left, barely enough to keep the pub running.”

“Oh Grandma you are such a wise and god-fearing woman!” proclaimed Sonja, who did not know a more proper word to say.

Donna Garibaldi chuckled. “The holy book? Yes, that was a damn smart coup, though I had help, and boasting is against the Omerta!”

“Oh Granny, as soon, as I have graduated at college, we just do it! We get a ship-passage to Italy and visit your sister Omerta?” As usual the Donna was sure that only if the Devil would possess moon-calf Sonja there could still be any hope left for her.

Sonja had accomplished her Shadowrun, and wanted to return home now. She did bid farewell to her granny, as the sun was sinking, and venturing through the darkness was indeed most unwise!

Blessed woman she was she arrived at home unscathed. Eagerly grabbing her handful of Nuyen for the accomplished Shadowrun, and then returning to her room to do Karma-Point-Spreading Yoga.

Yet the world had not stood still while Sonja, the sadist animal-abuser, had gone unpunished. Eric Dumbson had been one of countless stranded strangers. A former criminal and prison-escapee he had fled into the woods. Just that he was on a special trip. In prison he had read an article about vision quests. Now, years later, he had need for such. He knew to become a Shaman one needed certain Totemic experiences. He knew as well that the own personality was a minor reflection of what kind of totem would be more or less sympathetic to a want-to-be shaman as well. He had restrained from food since yesterday and had washed himself in the cold river waters. Ritually pre-

pared he was on his vision quest when the Spirits gave him a sign.

A blonde teenage harlot in a blasphemously red cloak had lured a wolf with a sausage, and then, faking sympathy, she had electrocuted the poor feeding wolf! Just like the prison wardens had done it to end his psychotic rushes. Just like the prisoners had done it to him, whenever they needed a bitch.

Eric felt spiritual zeal arise within him. He knew what to do now! The Wolf-Cult had been born. Gathering the like-minded, and initiating them into the totemic avengers, Eric Dumbson worked over-shift to fulfill his calling!

At first his mob of wolf-crazed ganged-up on the old woman in the witch-house. Overwhelming her easily, plundering, and feasting in the first rush of victory.

Second; he had disguised as the old woman, giving a cryptic warning to Sonja when she returned for another delivery.

Third; his cult received firearms from the smugglers, who were made an offer they could not deny.

Finally the totemic-crazed assaulted the village, burned down the church, and caused plenty of bloodshed until both sides were pretty decimated, and sick of it. Eric Dumbson and the Priest among the Fallen. Some of the survivors swore that during the aftermath of the slaughter a woman clad in red was seen boarding a ship!

THE END of the base version. An extended revision is possible.

Shadow friends (ebook version)

Leaving the painful life behind...

For those who do not know ShadowPunk or CyberRun, and i am not angered about license and trademark threats at all, it may help first to read:

<http://www.shadowrun.com/what-is-shadowrun/>

Shadow-Friends (Ebook version)

© Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

“Dark Mother, Kali-Ma, guide us!”

The chant was habitual by now. Alphard Johnson intoned it with joy and conviction. The back-room was unlit. Sound-dampening padding attached to the walls, the floor, and the ceiling. A minor Refugio, a shabby sanctuary crafted for the magically awake among his flock. Alphard bathed in the darkness, drawing energy from it like a hungry vampire drains lifeblood from its victims. His sacrifice was not understood by his clientele, and Alphard had long accepted that it was a burden which only a handful of brethren and disciples even knew about. It was the price he paid for the Dark Mother's supportive guidance, and he paid it willingly. Though sometimes he missed home, grew proverbially homesick.

Technically official Meta-Magic-Theory made him one more Shaman. A dangerous simplification. Alphard was a cultist, a special form of magic user and the Dark Mother was not his Totem but his Patron or Deity. There were truisms about similar principles in the comparison of relationships for Shaman to Totem and Cultist to Deity. Yet defining it via those too often resulted in mutually unwanted misunderstandings. When Alphard had learned that beyond all the accusations and paranoid ramblings only the Dark Mother fought against Demons & Injustice, then Alphard had paid her respect. For from his perspective she deserved it, a heroic and solitary Sacred-Police Task Force against exceptionally dangerous criminals and abusers.

He had come to her after his third Shadowrun ever had culminated in utter catastrophe. His team had been send against a coven of witches and warlocks serving the Adversary. The Adversary was the true patron or deity behind creatures like Satan, Shaitan, or Wendigo plus countless other

guises, and heaps of disinformation. Since his original magic had been burned out of him Alphard believed in stuff like hellfire. His team had survived, crippled and scarred, because they were allowed to survive as a frightening example for other Shadowrunners. Seattle remembered it for several years. In the aftermath of it he had found help and healing where it was most unexpected. Still the hags' prophecy haunted him. Barely recovered, freshly accepted as a child of the Dark Mother he had encountered a messenger of the adversary.

The vicious, old hag had just come to verify that much was true: "Painstakingly will be your existence, and you will be murdered by the only family you have left!"

That was 24 years ago. It was true that his scars, received from the dark ephemera encountered on that proverbially fateful run, had never fully healed. Recurrently he had days in anguish or outright agony. His will opposing the onslaught even though his will was mortal while the hellfire was not. Twenty years ago he had to leave the sacred temple. It was his start as a Mr. Johnson and Cult-Agent. Tasks he had learned to coordinate and execute quite well. Modern computers had allowed him to fund and support the cult, send Shadowrunners against enemies of the Dark Mother frequently, and prosper along with it. It had been a blessed time.

With 46 years of age he was a veteran mage of sorts. He had seen and experienced much in his life. He even got happily married for a complete decade. Just that all their children were born dead, and that his wife had committed suicide, when it became too much for her. The Dark Mother was there giving solace and healing what she could. Once again. But Alphard was a man of his time and he had not ignored any chance to evade or defeat the prophecy. He had failed time and time again. Even the Dark Mother had reassured him that the prophecy was verified and would inevitably come true. Alphard slipped into his Dined Luster armored coat. He wore the holy symbol of his new Family, stuck the Remington Hotelsweeper into its holster and ensured that ammunition was sufficient. Slower than in his younger years he walked through those streets of Seattle. The smell of the city, the pulsing of its energy, like lifeblood to a human body. The atmosphere he had learned to love. All those impressions which had accompanied his triumphs and routine throughout the years. It was a wonderful walk. When the alley before him deepened in darkness it was a spirit of fulfillment, and relief, which made him venture into it.

He had been reborn in darkness and everything good in his entire adult life had been supplied by that darkness. Now he had to be strong and regal, as it was the least he could do to show proper respect. The Shadow before him was so solid that any cultist gifted with dark-sight would have stared at it in awe and admiration. Its female form radiated power, divinity, and solace. Alphard looked into the eyes made of blackness like an infant who feels all nightmares banished when Mommy comes to give him a good-night kiss.

"This is your wish?" The Shades' voice was angelic to Alphard.

"Yes. I thank you for all of it!" Alphard barely saw the motion coming... The Cultist barely felt the strike... Before his head had fallen from his severed neck Alphard was already reunited with the one essence he had ever found comfort in. It was a good, darkling Death to choose.

"Dark Mother, I'm coming home!" his last faint echo of a chant on the Astral Plane...

End of original story 5.

YE OLDE D&D FANTASY

VERY OLD, FLAWED BEGINNINGS...

Vudash Hexenwahn - The guild...

Half-orc subtlety & halfling temper..?

Vudash Hexenwahn – The guild of Zion, from 2007

© Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

My „Appetizer“ for the NWN module „*Thief Prelude*“ created by TSP under use of Biowares ® & © *Neverwinter Nights*.

Dear readers, in this text we will venture into the nightly side of the imagination. The story is about a small thieves guild. Set in a realm, where there is sorcery, where undead dwell and druids can do magic with nature and animals. Evil is neither less competent nor less omnipresent though.

Vudash was a half-orc in his 21st summer. As many others of his species, the stigma of his birth was not always pleasant. He was declared a monstrous and criminal psychopath the moment he got tucked from mommas womb. Orcs, dear readers, are really sadistic and brutal man-slayers, which celebrate their cruelty. Vudash had to add something to this heritage though. He had a balanced confidence, a clear mind and a certain talent for ...the other side of the law. Due half-orcs like Vudash the city guard would stay in business without any worry about lack of missions.

Vudash had cultivated his passion for fun, sex, drugs and minor not so legal activities in recent years. He was on a journey to reap the fruits of his investments by now. The thieves' guild of Zion had accepted him as a member. Breaking out of the squalor of a grudgingly tolerated tribal culture and opposing the constant menace of racism, whenever he had not to evade the minions of the law.

Vudash looked forward in anticipation for the guild. He learned early that in his profession every spoken word came on one unspoken as one between the lines.

Vudash didn't start his journey naked though. He had his reinforced fur armour and a well-balanced dagger with him. His agility and training with the blade would convince more than one footpad or highwayman to strategically retreating. At the thought of cutting the face of some human scumbag he couldn't fully hide a rather orcish grin. Vudash was aware that the real threat was not due criminals mostly. He had earned his name in the tribe for a reason. Vudash was no sorcerer, but he had a real instinctive talent for using their magical staffs. Few of the spell crafters could do it better. He could activate this eldritch magic from scrolls and so he started his career as a witch hunter.

Vudash thought this sounded much better than the evenly true statement that he broke into houses and lodges of wizards to steal their stuff. In bad nights he had been caught doing this and cutting a warlocks throat is better than tasting the steel of the guards oneself? Vudash had the muscles and temper of a half-orc, yet he couldn't duel with a real warrior. He was talented, but not yet really experienced.

It did cost him some weeks of wandering to reach the outskirts of Zion short before nightfall. Hexenwahn held his eyes open for an inn. He was tired and then the thoughts of Gerstensaft (beer) and prostitutes were better signposts to the realm of dreamy slumber.

His first night in Zion was full of good sleep on a small bedroll for Vudash Hexenwahn. Seems half-orcs never got the real comfortable beds in their proper size.

Vudash awoke before the roosters cry. His ears had caught the sound of wooden bowls. There would soon be breakfast and he had some silver coins left. Pie made of grain and vegetables. Vudash found it tasty enough and grunted happily. Burping and farting were taboo when in presence of others. Humans and elves were only reassured in their hostile prejudices due such misbehaviour. Same was true on scratching this itch between the legs in front of others. Women rarely appreciated it. And if Vudash was about to jump into the bath, his intention was not to stay there in solitude.

Vudash knew where his appointment had to be made and was still intimidated enough not to steal within the city before he contacted the guild. He was already on the way, so what? Diving into a smaller street he started to look for the cellar entry. Today the virtue of patience was with him.

He had more than the luck to be unnoticed. The stairs down to the cellar door were trapped with some simple devices. For rogues it was obvious, that what could be deadly surprise to others, was a nice gift to the competent. Seemingly there was a bliss of generosity in the streets of Zion. From a half-orcs perspective. He would have to work a week as rat catcher or carrying rubble. Vudash picked the lock and carefully entered. (Here the module "Thief Prelude" begins) Vudash was just through the door when he made his first contact with Sippy. Sippy was a halfling with a certain charm. Vudash stated his business and was welcomed friendly enough. Sippy showed him around and gave him a quick lesson on the codex of conduct.

The halfling seemed much too friendly for his dark leather, but Vudash knew that more than traps could deceive the eye. He never had any personal contact with halflings before and as far as he knew pureblood Orcs took pleasure in torturing and eating them. Sippy didn't seem to be a coward to him. For someone who was just big enough to bite Vudash's belly that seemed worth noting back then.

Vudash and Sippy spend a while testing each other in practise. They compared their talents and tricked each other where they could. Vudash was talented, for many young rogues such nonsense had ended with mutilation or death.

Disarming an acid trap while doing pranks? Few could say this truthfully about themselves.

If rogues by their very profession would not have such a dire allergy to publicity the bards could add some sharp-witted lines about the argument if it is a half-orc dagger or a halfling short sword at Sippy's belt.

Sippy introduced Vudash to "peg leg" later on. The dwarven guild member worked grudgingly as a merchant for weapons and armour here since an accident did cripple his leg.

For Vudash this remained information, he lacked gold. But Sippy saved his day. Pointing at three chests in the main room he said:

„These are for training. If you manage to get them open the loot is yours. If you get hurt doing it, we will just watch you suffer though. You are welcome, but incompetence we cannot afford to continue. Think about it, none here care if you do it or not. If you are hot for the gold, go and take the risk.”

Vudash had heard the words through an icy mood that befell him. The first chest, he sensed it for sure, had an especially weird trap. That was the energy that witches, crones and hags had in their aura! That was unworldly evil. The lock itself would not be much of a problem.

To Vudash it seemed as if his deepest fears rose up to sabotage his struggle with the witch-trap. This trap was dangerous. The slightest mistake and he would feel all strength sucked from his mus-

cles and his life force drained away. Normally, so Hexenwahn thought, that was what happened when a witch gave one the eye. This evil eye was just more than a look of mortal eyes. A powerful witch would look through enchanted glass and give you the eye from far away! Vudash focused on neutralizing the trap's mechanism again.

The dark night of the soul he had heard once. Vudash didn't know what was meant with that. His own imagination made up a pretty scary spectre from it. He had offed the mechanism and finally heard the relieving click when the lock snaps open. He withdrew his tools carefully and took a deep breath. Hexenwahn took the time and effort to deal with all three chests.

When the work was done he began to appraise his loot. He got a studded leather armour, a masterwork dagger and a magic ring. He couldn't grasp his luck. The risk had been high, but this would help him to increase his chance of surviving future adventures! He was still on his first day in the guild and had earned around a thousand gold pieces. His greed and his realism forged an unholy marriage of impulse.

Hexenwahn decided to keep his fur armour for now and sold the studded leather to peg leg. His old blade was sold, too. The ring now was on his left ring finger. But the guild had even more to offer. There was the mistress of masks, selling disguises well made. The half-elf Tally was an archer and sold quality ballistic weapon. [Readers, we are talking 0815 and at best +1 weapons here].

An alchemist had been hired by the guild, too. He sold potions, some even magical. Then he had his first chat with "the great Herald". This gnome was some kind of mage and sold tools of his trade. For Vudash that meant buying some magic scrolls which he knew how to use. Time passed by and the young half-orc scouted his new opportunities. Meanwhile he could gut-stab some training puppets and learn firing a crossbow.

He would spend his nights in the guild for now. He had by now realized, too, that this was a rather small outpost. Coming from the poorest suburbs of his town, he enjoyed this little luxury anyway.

The next morning he awoke when Sopy managed to leave a bleeding cut upon his skin. The halfling and his "long-dagger". Hexenwahn knew this lesson; he had a pretty deep sleep. Compared to his talents with traps and locks his awareness was mediocre at best. Drunk or drugged he would be easier to assassinate than those training puppets.

The new day brought along some new faces, too. The guild master Tobin was present now and Nora appeared. She was a specialist merchant dealing mission based equipment on Tobin's behalf.

Sopy summarized it in his own words: "Tobin is not really one of us. The real bosses have hired him to take charge of the guild for now. Nora there is another class. You should treat her real friendly unless you get your jobs done with malfunctioning or none equipment. She only deals with you if Tobin tells her to do so."

Vudash understood. He paid Tobin a visit as fast as he got an appointment. It was not half as impressive, as the half-orc had expected. Tobin was exactly what people accused half-orcs of being. Sadly, Tobin was human, so one could guess that he reached this degeneration, disgust and vice due his own efforts.

Hexenwahn had to swallow that brainless cheek kissing counted more than professional work. Between the lines and unspoken he had already figured out his solution to the problem of unsuited leadership.

But work has to come first. His first assignment would be to retrieve some evidence from a local merchant. All necessary means were acceptable. The self-righteous dude seemingly boasted in public how he would turn the thieves guild in to the guards. Vudash noted that to know anything about the guild the merchant must have some kind of connection to it. It being unspoken he knew not to ask right now. Watch, contemplate and learn.

Hexenwahn managed to unearth one real treasure while preparing for the task at stake. Nora swapped his fur armour with the so-called “suit of Zion”. This was light leather armour crafted especially for those of the rogues’ profession. It was darkened, oiled and bolstered with light metal bracers to allow blocking a knife. Vudash looked and felt better.

Being not really born for spell-craft he was fascinated to learn that Raibek, mage of some order, had the power of teleportation! He wouldn’t have to sneak endlessly through damp and dark alleys; his first mission would start weird but comfortable. Vudash didn’t really understand this, yet this may make for a good escape if the situation turns sour. The guild had taken care that the owner of the Flying Scimitar had a certain degree of pity and understanding for the guilds not any closer specified needs. Raibek had done his fierce rituals in one of the back-rooms and could teleport a group or smuggled wares now to or from this spot.

Vudash had wished for Sopyy as his companion, but was too sly to ask. Sopyy had his tasks within the guild and would have offered his aid by now. So it had to go without halfling short sword or long-dagger. The guild had someone else for this role though.

That was the day that Vudash Hexenwahn and Saman Menneseoph formed their pact of mutual support.

Menneseoph was a cultist skinhead, whom the citizens would despise even more than the average half-orc scum. Saman didn’t even try to hide his greed for forbidden fruits, sex, drugs and violence.

The skinhead had realized that an alliance with the guild could be helpful when nobles and clerics would more than happily eradicate the entire cultist-plaque.

Menneseoph claimed that he was once a monk and had in later years overcome his fixation for physical prowess. He had cultivated his potential as a sorcerer instead. Vudash noticed that Saman was pretty untamed where Raibek seemed disciplined. Vudash couldn’t know if the skinhead would be worth his pay, yet doing his first mission in an unknown city maybe some ward against violence won’t be wrong. Hexenwahn paid 200 gold to the cultist. He expected the skinhead’s blade and sorcery on his side for now.

The two listened to Raibek’s instructions and for an instance their world blurred. They found themselves in a room with the obvious sounds of a pub all around. So it really works.

The flying scimitar had not too many customers as they found. Nodding a gratitude to the owner they made their way upwards. He had told them where to find their target.

A guardian right at the upper end of the stairs intercepted them. Vudash decided for a little white lie. Claiming to be some business partners from another city made sense. They were so lightly armed, that they had no problem with a superficial inspection anyway.

While Vudash looked at least normal in his suit of Zion, Menneseoph wore fine robes, rarely the clothing of thugs. They could have been some lower merchants looking for the target by their looks.

The force of intuition became revealed as they, following the guards descriptions, came to the turn of the corridor. Further guards were posted before one door. Two stood at the sides of the door, while two further guards stood on the corridor. Those at the door were clad in heavy splint-mail with long-swords at their side. The other pair of guards was clad in light armour with maces. Obviously two trainees for the risky business of guard profession. Menneseoph repeated their story with wild gestures, drawing attention away from Vudash. They had an ace up their sleeves yet. Vudash had his hands on a scroll of invisibility and Saman, claiming to be thirsty, took a little bottle from his pack. The guards just turned away from them as they dealt their magic while opening the door to the target. Invisible they entered the chamber of the target.

Hexenwahn believed the bards would loose another taunting song here. The tale of a merchant

hearing invisible voices demanding his evidence ever untold. Same on the expression on his face. Vudash finally relieved him from this via a scroll of sleep. He took what they had come for.

As the two rogues became visible again they turned to the door and faking a goodbye to the (sleeping) merchant they left the room.

They were nearly at the end of the corridor when Saman had a simple but decisive question: „How much would peg leg pay as for those splint-mails and swords?“

Hexenwahn couldn't help it; human life became cheap to him when the price was right. They could have sneaked out here now on “fox paws” but why then his hands had grasp on the scroll “deadly cloud“?

The guards never stood a chance. Wasn't it Vudash himself who constantly warned about what danger magic is to mundane folks? He knew from experience.

To see how easily a simple scroll brought death to four persons made him fell creepy. Menneseoph had finished the remaining guard by slashing his belly with a skilled move.

They secured their loot and used the portal back to the guild...

With the years going by Vudash Hexenwahn became a ranking guild member. He developed as a barbarian (D&D initiates know: level 2) and a rogue (D&D initiates know: level 4) as far as his potential could go. [Feats save soul more often than equal class balance experience]

The conflict with Tobin would, step by step, grow to outright escalation. Even more since Vudash had to endure an ambush by the city guards during one of his missions. He survived by the mercy of the guards. Usually it was rogues doing the ambushes.

Vudash was aware that there was a traitor within the guild. Such “accidents” as that of the crippled dwarf as those of other thieves became now explainable.

For Hexenwahn the time to leave Zion had come. Vudash paid a last visit to the grave of Saman Menneseoph. The guards killed the warlock during their third mission.

Vudash paid a last visit to the local brothel, trying to forget. [Dear idiots, in fantasy dying of aids, syphilis or such is less deadly than for real] He wasn't unprepared. Sopyy was alerted and kept an eye open for the traitor, too. Hexenwahn ventured forth by night. He had turned society's racism against them. As a half-orc he could much easier get in contact with the underworld. His contact was a dread elven woman.

Vudash met the blue-eyed Sicklemoon in the sewers. From here it would be easy to reach the Blackrose elf caverns of the underworld. The were rats were bribed for a save passage with around three thousand gold pieces. Just to avoid nasty encounters.

Those beasts had allied themselves with a cult of plaque bearers to gain influence within the city of Zion. But the Blackrose female stood in those sewers, as if there just was no danger ever. From her perspective this could even be true, Vudash had seen her fight before.

To Hexenwahn even the smile of a vampire would have been more calming than that of Sicklemoon. The elven woman was just too much of an assassin to radiate a feeling of solidarity. Her sharpened teeth didn't help to make her less dreadful at all.

Still, for now, she was his companion. A mercenary of her guild and the best guide he could afford. The avenging angel manifested in flesh lead Hexenwahn to and through the caverns. Real caverns, which had never seen the light of the sun. The half-orc wandered along with his guide.

It was a new start in many ways. For Vudash the chapter that made him find his way through life was closing. It had cost him two years to struggle with a certain decision. He had nearly joined a mage tower. Though his temper blocked his way there and he had no intention to deny his orcish blood. Damn them; he took them out even less experienced whenever wanted. Knowing by now that trust was seen as a disease in his profession he was prepared. He was warded against venom and mind bending sorcery. The best artefacts he could buy or steal were part of his gear by now. His

spell-breaking belt was disguised with simple fur and his ring seemed like rubbish.

Instead of hiding his barbarian roots he had learned to exploit them against racists. He looked like a stupid and ugly orc. More than twenty thugs and rogues died because they fell prey to his optical appearance.

Vudash still wore the suit of Zion but had worked his way to a magical cutlass. The comparatively small blade looked petty when wielded by his strong arms. Yet it could express his wrath with an impact few could survive. Hexenwahn grinned his orcish grin. That grin which many knew as the last view of their vile existences. A fluorescing light lit the caverns here. Sometimes it seemed greenish where fungus had befallen the caverns.

Sicklemoon looked forcefully stern while she walked along. Hexenwahn stared at her armour. The Blackrose woman was not stupid; many of her kind wore armour that was just too light.

Sicklemoon had reinforced her leather armour with bracers for arms and legs. The magical metal of the Blackrose elves protected her guts, too. In this armour she was agile and silent. Vudash really was only interested to receive her visit at night when it was a sexual move. Sicklemoon was his advised acquaintance from the assassins of Zion.

Once she was hired she was through and through professional. Someone could have written a handbook for mercenaries by her experience alone. Among her people she must still have been a young blood. While Blackrose elves usually were wanted for atrocities all over the world she was only hunted for several slaughters in the known kingdoms.

Three days through the caverns to make a way that seven days with a coach would have been above. Vudash enjoyed saving some time. He had made out their escort only after the first night. A bunch of Blackrose elves supervised both of them all the time. Those were sneaky fellows for sure. With more experience Vudash had become a more vigilant rogue.

He was still too young for the professionals, but already distinguished himself from the beginners too much to look back. His experiences had made him become a stronger and more efficient person than he had ever expected. He planned to keep these facts to the grave. Hexenwahn did never rely on "Fortuna", personally he suspected her to be part of the witch's coven.

To be continued...?

Deviants & Red, horned dragons

A mockery % fairy tale i failed to formulate well...

Deviants & Red, Horned Dragons

Humorous minimalism & flashy fiction © Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

It was the age of fairy tales in the wonderful kingdom of Deviancy RT. Long centuries of joyful productivity and happiness were only rarely disrupted by the craven deeds of the wicked. Yet now once again it had come to this. Two evil advisers had convinced the beloved king to accept a 'political-marriage' between the virgin and the knightly horned dragon. The nobles of Deviancy RT, just like the vassals and commoners, found nothing wrong in a sign of tolerance and trust. Though they were, alas, wrong.

Evil had arranged for a virgin who would be all but harmless. Necessarily, as the enormous costs and efforts to keep any evil teen a virgin for years were nearly indescribable. And knowing of the compulsive do-goodhearted attitude of Deviancy RT, Evil could connive at its scheme.

So it came to be that the heroic, horned dragon of Deviancy RT, a unique specimen of his kind, was lured into a sinister trap spun by his fiancee the evil virgin. Long had the fiendish Frigid schemed to thwart the plans of the evil that had dared to force her into a nunnery.

And when she had found the old grimoire she had discovered a way! She would sacrifice the most powerful good soul in all the land to bargain with a demon prince. She planned to sacrifice the honored red, horned dragon.

Deviancy RT had long prospered in peace-time. And still, in this fierce crisis, the people of the realm did not falter. On the contrary, the best heroes and heroines of the Land arose to rescue the good, loyalist dragon from the bewitching virgin.

And so an epic journey began and a mighty quest awaited the heroic souls of Deviancy RT. Many challenges had to be overcome, runs were explored, traps disarmed, plenty of grisly monsters had to be neutralized...

... Until finally, the four greatest heroes and heroines of the nation found the evil virgin and interrupted her satanic ritual. Freed from the wicked magic, the horned dragon himself delivered the false fiancée into the prison she deserved, the dragon's stomach!

The Land having been pacified, he decided to marry a horned she-dragon and waited long hours until the first eggs began to crack and the future of dragon-kind was secured for Deviancy RT. And they lived happily ever after, until this author is merely another fantasist and a liar! ;-)

THE END

2 Ravenloft quick-writes

Spontaneous atmosphere conjuration attempts

Pietroschek's Ravenloft fan-fiction

Justice from out of the Mists

© André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

Ravenloft fan-fiction short-story inspired by: <http://mists-of-ravenloft.deviantart.com>

This very small text was inspired by reading and art-watching through the “Mists of Ravenloft” gallery:

“May those who have the need to separate the world into a contrast of good and evil decide themselves, which side to choose.” Varian Fidelio, Mist-Born Avenger.

The roadside Inn was shrouded in darkness. Mist formed an artful underlay to it. At least for those not easily spooked! Dread was in the atmosphere and the few travelers all seemed cautious, as if the slightest outburst could summon vilest Evil.

Bernelle had already earned her living when she encountered Varian. She was a nomad by passion, another soul wandering the realm. Her secret lay in her heritage. She was Half-Vistani and had learned long ago that some customers can be eased by more than storytelling, song and tune.

Varian felt sad. He would have to repose the charming female bard even though he sensed no ill-intent in her approach. All she wanted was a look into his future. Sadly though, Varian had no future, as only Death and Damnation remained. Bernelle just shrugged and turned her attention to the next patron of the inn.

Varian paid his due and left. Back into the night, back into the nocturnal embrace of darkness and mists. There was just one task left for him to do. And it was the time to do it now. Fidelio followed the road which once had seemed like the path into life and fulfillment to him.

Short before midnight he had returned to the village of his rebirth! It did no longer hurt him to call it such. It felt no longer sickeningly and wrong. He knew the old stone surrounded by trees. He knew that his target would be there. Her wards could neither warn her of his approach nor keep him at bay. It was the moment which had to come. Varian struck her from behind. A deed as craven and free of honor, as she had earned it. Yet she had earned so much more and Varian wanted her to

get her due.

His right index finger punched into her left eye, merely a precaution to disable her abilities of unleashing certain unspoken curses and spells. When his left fist punched into her side she had to gasp, just like Varian had to bite her tongue-tip off! There was no hate involved in his deeds, that proverbial fire had long burned out.

Smacking his right elbow brutally into her stomach he ensured, that she would remain on the ground while he called the others. And they appeared.

Spectral forms of three fellow villagers who had once been his companions. United again, even, if just for one precious moment! For one moment pain, cold, and torment were forgotten and the four were simply friends meeting each other.

Yet their task was a grim affair. Marielle whom they had once called their Mistress lay on the ground, choking and bleeding. Yet her pain was nothing compared to the torment she had wrought upon the four. In unison the four companions decided what there was to do about her. And in horrid silence did they cannibalize her life away. Starting from the arms and legs towards her torso. The Mist began to creep through the wards of her hag-born witchery as her life faded away.

Dropping a letter for the four families and a bag of gold coins Varian finished his quest and dropped dead, just in the moment in which his old companions started to dissolve out of reality forever.

And on the next day there was much debate in the village. About a grisly murder at the shrine and the letter accusing the harmless herbalist to be a hag-blooded she-fiend who had committed human sacrifices and worse. Four families could finally mourn their deceased and slept better from then on. The truth though, depended much on whom was asked. Was justice finally done, or was it another villainous lie? Each bard has the own interpretation...

For now this is THE END...

Ravenloft fan-fiction: Dutiful Pedagogue

My 2nd mini-story © Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

“That is why you will remain an assistant for several years onward, Aleph. Nobody discriminated against you, do you understand it clearer now? For now you simply lack the mindset needed to apply academic formula to practical work.”

“Thank you for the clarification, Boss. I will remember it well.” pretended Aleph.

The nocturnal landscape of rural Barovia, along a well-traveled road there once stood the Coach and Crown Inn. That inn is the place where both, Aleph and the Pedagogue, learn some lessons of life and the mists.

“The cellar is for the brewing. A smart use of the structure, especially since the steam-pipes and ventilation have been improved.”

“Oh, yes indeed” replied Aleph.

“And here, the kitchen, for the staff to prepare food. Watch the wooden panel's extended reach to the bar. It is a well designed work of craftsmanship.”

“Pavel, the Innkeeper, must have really loved his job.” noted Aleph.

“Oh, he still does. It is only logical that routine can drain us of motivation once in a while.” lectured the Pedagogue.

“Now Aleph, do not get lazy. Look into the commoners' room, it is directly besides the main room on ground level! Using the steam-pipes of the brewery to heat the room for the poorest in winter is another sign of academic lore bringing relieve to the hard working populace.”

“Indeed, you must have been very proud concerning your achievements.” guessed Aleph.

“And deserving to be so.” judged the Pedagogue.

“Then these must be the stairs to the more luxurious rooms? The four rooms you had told me about? I really lacked imagination, it is so much more transparent now.” concluded Aleph.

“A proper deduction, my humble assistant. Indeed those four rooms are well known to me. I already worked within each of them for years. Years in which I helped dozens of people into a better life.” prided the Pedagogue.

The Academic was so eager to spin-forth the memories of his work for the people that he nearly dragged Aleph through the first two rooms on the Inn's upper level. Aleph listened and learned.

When the Pedagogue entered the third room, a frown signed itself upon his face! He was not amused, for sloppiness is not to be tolerated in underlings, be it wenches or housewives! Anger swelled up in the man and soon an accursed nausea impacted the actually quite bright mood of the Pedagogue.

Aleph looked past the Pedagogue and saw that the window had been left open. At the damp time of the year, it had made a misty fog cover the ground of the otherwise stainless room. Though it pained him beyond words to express, he entered the room.

“I should have known! Why, Aleph?” the Pedagogue turned to face the assistant “Why did you poison me?”

Aleph held the gaze of his accuser without any effort. “I did not poison you at all, Sir. Maybe this room has just...”

“Do not lie to me! I recognize foul play, when it is against me! And I recognize the subtle streaks of murder in your personality, Aleph. What have you done?”

Aleph still stayed calm. “I did not poison you. Maybe the mists have a bad smell. Murder? Yes, there was a murder in this room indeed. What have I done? I listened to you, just as I told you that I am eager to learn your truth.”

His head was proverbially spinning, as the Pedagogue was busy discovering the truth while staying wary of his, obviously psychotic, former assistant.” Flashes of Insight and Flashes of Nightmare did battle in his mind.

“My daughter was nineteen, when I decided that she should have a better life than the crude existence as a hunter, which was all I could secure for myself. It damned me to a life in poverty, yet I managed to send her on her way to the new van Richten university. I had trained her for the journey and truthfully, I was proud of her choosing the wayfarer tradition to her goal.” tears rolled down Aleph's face while he spoke.

“I never knew you had a daughter. And already nineteen?” the Pedagogue stumbled, nauseated and sickened, while nightmarish twists of perception threatened to drive him mad.

“I once hoped you would remember her. She was one who met you here and you taught her precious lore for her life as a student.” Aleph lied.

“I vaguely remember encountering a female student here.” the Pedagogue felt confusion mixing into the alienating malfunctions of his mind. Headaches and dizziness threatened to overwhelm him.

“Yes, you did. And that, while I slept just one room away.” accredited Aleph.

The Pedagogue felt struck, as if by lightning. Aleph spoke words which made sense in an abysmally dreadful way. The petty underling must have assumed that immoral activity would have spoiled the work of the Pedagogue, yet it has never been like that. The Pedagogue was a cultivated man, no cruel ruffian who would force himself upon a woman!

Aleph shivered while the mist began to fill more of the room. “I learned long ago that you really perceived it all differently. Some theories implied that was your self before you snapped...”

“Snapped!” more lightning flushing the surreal, foreboding scene. The Pedagogue remembered the cheerful crowd on ground level. Images of guests came to his mind, a long list. Yet he was a professional, he had never lost his focus for his work! Never!

“Time runs out, Sir. Please remind me, whom did we locals call the Pedagogue?”

The Pedagogue felt forced to reply. As if it was the only way to bring back the order of logic into this chaos of nightmare and accusations.

“The locals in this area, in a grim sense of humor about the undeniable, entitled a delusional serial-killer to be the Pedagogue. The most popular theory is that he murdered gruesomely while his madness convinced him to socialize and interact professionally with the local populace.

One autumn night the Pedagogue was stopped from further misdeeds, when the father of his latest victim shot him in the back and began to beat the brain out of the murderers skull in a desperate, mournful frenzy.”

The Mists had risen to hip-level already and Aleph knew it wouldn't be much longer. So he spoke his farewell. “So you can remember. And by murder we both had damned ourselves. You to haunt this inn until the Mists arise to drag you away once more, and I to face you knowing that it would be wrong to forgive each other, even if it means we both will never find salvation.”

The words could not hold back the madness of the Pedagogue and his ethereal form was already drawn back into the Mists, to serve on with the dark destiny so ill-earned in blood...

THE END

BONUS CONTENT

WHIMSICAL ADDITIONS & DESPERATE PAGE COUNT RAISING...

Lone stars, warpstone sixguns, and red orc tomahawks...

Reuniting Oldhammer with Legends of the Old West due POETRY, LOL!

Lone Stars, Warpstone Sixguns & Red Orc Tomahawks

WIP, Revision 1.06 © Andrè M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved A handful of prosaic-doublets about my Warhammer-Western Intermezzo

Norse – Thorson's last stand

That Night in Odin's Belch, down in good ole Texas Our kind Sheriff Thorson prepared to make a stand

He would soon die fightin' with a weapon in his hand Blue eyes'sight grimly set on the arrivin' outlaw band

His deputies aside him, them three against the odds Unafraid of Death they don't even dodge the shots

The outlaws look upon them, false pride upon true grit More than one damn outlaw panty fillin' with warm shit

Rifles & sixguns started blazing, Death came as hot lead Em three who stood for duty killed a dozen with godspeed

When everything went silent and 'em Valkyries arrived The settlers proudly ensured that nobody had survived

Skaven (Ratmen)

Loadin' Warpstone bullets Sheriff Vermyn awaits the gang Hornless, dwarven drunkards with Steamguns for da bang!

Workers'n'settlers hide in panic, as the west entry tunnel fills Dread bearded beasts indeed came down here from their hills.

Four did invade the Saloon, like addicts to their craved fix Our Sheriff Vermyn intends to send 'em down a River Styx

Em horny drunkard punker laid hands on harlots' silken fur Em had it cummin', so clear what was now awaiting to occur

Saloon Doors kicked open, Warpstone bullets deliver death Of four bearded fuck-ups not one could face Vermyns' wrath

So Victory Squeaks arise, the Sheriff felled the horrid beasts No miracle that on such a night the whole town gladly feasts!

Totemic Orcs

So Chief Sagebrush had send Gardush to Spirit's End The Shaman, Gardush, was to become a Spirit-Friend

White Hand Tribe of Red Orcs was threatened to Death By an army of riders bringing settlers to the weird West

Gardush wore sacred gear, rattle and tomahawk in hands Come on out ye coward spirits, or we'll never be friends!

And strong Manitoba had heard him, as soon was clear to see So dark elder specter promised to set all who die fighting free

Hence Gardush learned the warpath knows only gruesome ends But those who fight with courage will for eternity meet friends

Gardush returned to the tribe sharing the spirit's decisive news Don't ask where to flee, but what weapons you should choose

The tribe came down on Fort Knightly in that same night Only Death an option even wives and kids braved to fight

Dark Elves

Herder Mordhuil was a hard and pious kinda seafaring man Sworn to deliver homewards as many slave-herds as he can

His bunch had been hard workin' they gathered all they could 120 slaves planned to be, but nature selected how many would

The sacred Confederacy was fighting the overwhelming odds And still the rebel songs sounded even louder than their shots!

From the swamps of Louisiana Mordhuil had once appeared A knife-eared man of duty who was respected and well-feared

The Crimson Corsair was a symbol of the fierce Rebel Pride Slaves gasped in awe, as the armored steamship came into sight

That bedeviled Union would make all good come to a final End Millions free, but meaningless, work-drones damned, if foe or friend

But God in his dark wisdom has allowed them to prove worth Die to earn yer paradise, or submit to be living shame on Earth!

Amazons

Conquistador false oaths not forgotten, thru Mexico they ride Clear sight on their future, if the vile Union gains more might

Gorgeous'n'deadly riders their battalion joins the losing war Da right cause is 'em only option, as on 'em honor they swore

Slann masters in their wisdom had tempered with their blood Twin sisters they create to help thwarting the blue Union flood

On ships of wood and iron they skirmish up to their last breath For all of 'em da one man who touches 'em unpunished is Death

Opposing Union Demons and steam cannons cooking 'em alive By each blade and bow, oh with what conviction they did strive

With ever-thinning ranks the tide of war does take its bloody toll Still to the moment of their death with high spirit did they stroll

Sisterhood and Rebel Pride know they will never see their victory day Still shining their example of godsworn sacrifice chargin' into da fray!

Wood Elves

Freedom from all oppression, a law governing each equal for 'em all High ideal or false promise them wood elves heeded the human call!

Priests, medics, and rangers taking up the uniforms of Union Blue So sad for the deluded Confederacy they now must bloodily undo

Old Grey clashes with Modern Blue, both fighting for their highest goal Each major battle brave soldiers met like swine and bull in a butcher's bowl

Their unit stands among trees in silence, as at their generals command On dark elves & Amazons they've arrows to lose from each snipers hand

Earth Mother drinks much blood these days, but tears fill all their eyes For no forest-born child ever rejoices, when any true believer bravely dies

Slavery their sin and crime in one, a second trail of tears, law enforcement done Elf fights Elf, Brother kills Brother, as Sister kills Sister by blade, bow, or gun

Sacred Isha we've many wounds to heal, as too many fallen left to mourn, Oh celestial Lords, Kurnous & Loec, in what a cruel world we were born

Chaos Beastmen

Them hunters stopped appearing, as Grey and Blue did go to War It turned out a major banquet, as each day we raided even more

Khulgar swore Khorne had blessed us, as bloody battle never stopped We had faith, when upon the Grey or Blue, from ambush we hopped!

Bashing, tearing, clawing for the delicious mystery meat the foe provides All frenzy and joy, as surely great Khorne to glutton's paradise us guides

From our caves or captured forts we went on each new frenzied killing spree Villages, towns, entire counties left unguarded, Grey & Blue nowhere to see

Our whelps each smiling at us, skull-totem-poles they build in pious pride Never again we will doubt that there is blessing in Khornes' good might

Our best females all with bellies swelling, as our hordes can afford to grow No matter how Khorne split 'em into Grey and Blue to him we gladly bow

Dwarfs

That new mine yields gold'n'iron, but the price is paid in lives Each tunnel-warden knows that not much longer one survives

Graybeard patrols on duty, lantern and sawed-off shotgun in hand Vile god Tzeentch ensured the blood-toll for da riches to defend!

With every chaos mutant onslaught new gore decorates each wall Foul Nurgle, wickedly helpful, ensures we don't enjoy 'em to fall

Graybeard now shows a youngster how blows can make monsters cease and as by now is needed how to avoid catching each god-send disease

Hardest work and fiercest fighting have ever been the dwarven way Best workers, smiths'n'soldiers, but "drunks" is all most fellows say

Graybeard has just reloaded, and with lantern one sees, but can't shield So smack the mutant with the barrel, then shoot head to win the field

The young one is still shaky, but stalwart by his side to turn the tide Graybeard honors the valor, as on and on they parry, shoot, and fight

Pinkertons' Way

Work-shunning and white collar the underpaid fellow in tweed One in a legion who get away, for with the town major 'em feed

So the snobs go sleuth on yer smart villains ever greedy for da green Apache and Comanche say no greater wanna-be-penguins they've seen

Still with their educated standards 'em tend to solve a lot o' subtle crimes And, as funny, as 'em look, they are da darn best detectives o' their times!

So if ye ain't hollow-headed, and want yer own family earn any decent pay Go apply, get yer darn costume, and solve each crime the Pinkerton Way

Outwitting da embezzlers, 'em forgers and counterfeiters, for da green'n'law Their is a righteous streak to that future need big Chief Pinkerton foresaw

Em rigid and 'em royal, each faith-day, see da Pinkerton's kneel to Verena So have yer opinion, son, but know 'em penguins made da law much keener

Em darn Undead – Yer living dead folks

Forced out of black slumber by forbidden words from tomes or priests Again trapped in torment we vengefully slaughter and feed like beasts

Them Hungry Dead 'em called us, but we come in many different breeds Sometimes it's adaptation, sometimes it's a reflection of our sinful deeds

Our gluttons live in crypts, and they love to hunt their prey in ravenous packs Bloodlust, hunger, diseased claws, and paralyzing saliva empower ghoulish attacks

Bones rattling at night, on most graveyards the fierce skeleton infantry awakes Once freed from flesh and tissue one has a grim look unto causes and great sakes

Stench, shock, and the ever-hungry brutal bite that is in what zombies delight True Nitemare of townfolk, when from the Fallen they arise as unholy blight

Oh Yuppie beyond 'em ranks of rabble there are 'em who even went to school Frigging Necromancer and the Vampire undo almost any kind of mortal Fool

Da realm of the dead awaits ye all, and we returned to say'n'show it ever true But at times a grimoire-born return, or vengeance, is a darn jolly thing to do!

Four rode against Nurgle

Four-Hoofed angels darn-well chargin' through da black of night Upon their backs two doctors who know 'gainst Nurgle 'em ride!

Foul chaos god was tempted, or maybe lured by darn catholic wrath As he invoked disease t'cum an'plague every Sodomites cursed path

But no urge'n'no darn religion made 'em two dare such gambit at night Em were husband'n' wife, both knowing modern science on their side!

Few hours time of incubation was left by yer well-learned higher math If not getting syringed a chaos mutant would claw itself outta each ath

Shallya'n'Hyppokrates looked upon 'em faithful with kind'n'holy eyes Four heroes rode to ensure that by their gambit no darn townfolk dies

Dodge City far behind 'em, hearts-pounding due exert, as da seconds count Sweat pours, breath's drawn hard, a ride toughest for da horses 'em mount

The bell-tower alerts folks, as two Doctors risked it all to make a stand The few survivors tellin' tales about 'em saintly, and the healing hand!

Mostly Work-Notes Song Lyrics for the Context:

Outlaw by Man'O'War Cowboy Dreams by Jimmy Nails Ghost Riders in the Sky performed by Johnny Cash El Dorado Movie Theme – John Wayne got a good one here! Last Rebel by the Tattooed Bagpipers at youtube

Films I once liked:

1. The Last Outlaw - Goldie with Mickey Rourke
2. Tombstone - Val Kilmer performing darkly-splendid!
3. Nevada Pass - Goldie with Charles Bronson
4. The Shootist, as John Wayne gave it a very mature weariness&death-wish.
5. Young Guns, as once I shared the naive idealism of the youthful spirit.
6. Westworld. Yul Brynner really influenced my life, and made me shriek.
7. Once upon a time in the West. Henry Fonda and Charles Bronson gave greatness to it.

Boardgame <http://www.flyingfrog.net/shadowsofbrimstone/>

Arrest Warrant – About yer' darn author

<https://pietroschekblog.wordpress.com>

All needed was already written with Warhammer, Deadlands, off-springs, and the fan-fictions. What it needs is the one who holds back the own ego, and really gets the movies, affordable miniatures, and video games done! And I am not even afraid of 'Torment – Sixguns of Numenera', or whatever overpriced dorkness comes gunning..? ;-)

In bed with professor Hammersmith

Adventure RPG version of Banish with Laughcraft

“In bed with Professor Hammersmith”

Trumpet version, totally not fame-phishing due a super-cool POTUS, originally for easier use with White Wolf's Adventure RPG (light version of WoD system, rulewise). Based on my 'Banish with Laughcraft, Version 2007' Author : André M. Pietroschek © all rights reserved

At first, some hints to readers who never read H.P. Lovecrafts „Shadows over Innsmouth“, August Derleths „The Star Gate“, and are unaware of Cthulhu style Role-playing Games. Lovecraft "used" his sickness to inspire the myth of evil, chthonic deities, who interacted with planet earth since it came into existence. I wrote it Laughcraft to mock it, and to indulge my own folly. Small groups, or single individuals, stumbled across the myth, went insane, suffered a horrible death, or came to the shocking realization that they were part of the myth, and set apart from all humanity. Main idea is that the myth cannot be understood, nor countered, by neither science, religion, or occultism. A sucker-punch mostly works though. Every insight concerning the truth is another step into madness. White Wolf's "Adventure RPG" emphasizes that joy of life and courage prevail against all villains & evils though. This is FICTION. Hint : You may treat tentacled beings, cosmic horrors, and the abomination of Azelthoth, as either pulp-readers-fantasy-come-true, induced hallucinations due drugs (kind of cavern-gas), symbols for a psychological struggle, perhaps caused by a wicked mesmerism. Or simplified: Z-wave mutants.

“For those valiant fools who face such wicked curse, a handful of humans against the scum of planet Earth.”

The Arkham Instigator, short summary Today, 01.06.1925, the investigations of the police ended. The last months were filled with a nearly incomparable effort to illuminate the disappearance of the well known persons struggling versus preternatural incursions. The small town by the name Dunstable became the stage for an unsolved mystery-crime. The central figures: Adriano Trumpet, Sebastian Crowley, and J.T. Heidelberg remain missing. Just a few hours after the local police was alarmed the government had ordered that Dunstable was to be secured by forces of the US army. The scarce evidence comes down to a torn, bloodstained coat, blood, and two bullet holes of handgun calibre. Police declared that the assumption of a cult crime could be valid. With the end of the investigations the flags were lowered to half-mast. Arkhams greatest newspaper willingly covers all expenses of the investigation, and encourages further search for evidence, and our folk heroes.

For years the occultist, and small time actor, Sebastian Crowley, the business lawyer J.T. Heidelberg, as last-but-not-least the ex-monk, and pulp writer, Adriano Trumpet got drawn into situations, which would shatter the mind of the average citizen. The activities of obscured cults, and alien entities, left tracks to a horrifying truth which is confronted by inspired people. Sanity threatening discoveries of forbidden lore hint at the possibility that earth is suffering the dark plots of maniac, chthonic deities who undermined humanity for aeons. The myth was detected in multiple places, and again and again the survivors faced the problem of knowing the truth, while being surrounded by oblivious neighbours, telluric energy, insane entities, and their bloodthirsty minions.

Anxiety, and enervating pressure of ignoring the unacceptable facts, take their toll. Yet some

myth-sleuths gained special insights which proved beneficial. One of those valiant groups operated in the light of publicity, and scored admirable successes in series. They became a symbol of inspiration and hope for entire humanity. Of course the tentacled conspirators flayed them alive before this story started. Survivor of this bunch was Adriano Trumpet. After the death of his fiancé he was trying to compensate trauma by indulging masculine fallacies. The Old Ones had other plans in mind though. In 1918 he was dismissed from the Corpo di Armato, and realized new gain of initiative. Confronted by overwhelming forces he decided to deal crucial damage, as long, as he could. His journey on the fruitless road of retribution. He was seen gazing at a burning tarot card. The desperate assault of a single brave soldier. Illusions of heroism and glory were not for him any more. A long termed, and painful, struggle against forces one couldn't defeat was his more realistic answer. Yet he was aware how many times outgunned individuals stood forthright against cults, criminals, and crazed scientists. Where they succeeded they were called heroes, where they faltered they were labelled fools.

The necessity of introspection was not to be ignored. In battle with horrors from beyond there was no reason to grant them further advantages due ones own mental instability. Of course such insights came the hard way in a man's younger years. The three protagonists had their first meeting in 1922, Calcutta, India, as they were drawn into a revival of the thug activities, and the masterminding influence behind it. Through a lack of subterfuge in the thuggish actions, they found out about occult meaning of their vile crimes. Supposed accidents and sicknesses could be proven ritual murders of this heretic, abstract local cult of sycophants. Deluded that the goddess Chalice asked to re-establish the cosmic balance with Shiva, there was assassinated, whoever stood in the way of the vicious sycophants, or their deranged plans.

Crowley valiantly stepped up, to face the blood-magick, Trumpet welcomed the escape from boredom, and Heidelbach wouldn't allow a bunch of crazy, knife-wielding blackouts to spoil his investments in this region. When they discovered first signs that a surprising outbreak of disease was the dirty work of these religious madmen, even the British advisers could no longer hesitate.

Need of circumstance, and Heidelbach's political influence, allowed them to join forces with the responsible military of the Commonwealth. Weeks passed in the draining heat, and short of the breaking point they eavesdropped information about a ritual gathering, and even managed to identify some thuggees. They followed those cultists and discovered their hideout. Caverns in derelict parts of the country, and minor camps along the roads. Duty on side of the British soldiers, and grim resolve of the three, made them charge into the caverns. During the first phase of infiltration they managed to rescue Dr. Derek Nail from the fangs of a dark courtesan who had schemed to ritually feed upon him in service to Dhurga. Nails natural gift of seduction had blinded him, sexist-hubris' ignorant shadow-side, for the price of seeing women only as sex-toys. For the three myth-sniffers it didn't matter, the cult had to be stopped, and if syphilitic Nail was foolish enough, he would continue to reap forbidden fruits until the consequences tore him apart. Gentlemen treat consequence as a lady, not as a whore.

After their first case was solved they were celebrated by the British embassy and the society of early human culture. They had, by chance, not only fought the cultists, but by their raw courage alone pasted a minor banishment versus the dreaded influence from beyond. Now such villains had to expect repercussions, if they dared to stomp on law and humanity. Dr. Nail was brought forth to the best asylum of the western world, to purify his shredded self from the torment of his recent experiences. While the media entitled them heroes it was Colonel Fleming who earned this.

It was his tenacity, and disciplined leadership, which made them prevail, even when body and soul were at stake. The memories were clear enough to still shake all of them. In those dark and

dreaded caverns they suffered the sight of a lower servitor, which's stench and insane chanting, full of soulpain and sorrow, haunted their minds for a long, long time. In midst of those stone carved cavern walls full of ceremonial symbols a strangling feeling hit their guts. They would never know if some incense or the alien atmosphere shocked them more. As they entered they had still believed to fight down some thugs, arrest the cults guru, and go home.

A notch away from the truth of battle they were. As they charged on they encountered the abomination which the cult worshipped. For an instance insanity seemingly kicked God from the throne, and seemed all-consuming. A second later they had to fight for their very souls. The handful of soldiers prepared for battle while Crowley studied the painted walls. Trumpet, who was pretty shaken by this intense situation, realized this was no problem solved by simple fire-power. Heidelbach, influenced by this thing, was drowning in a wave of horrid self-pity and soul-sucking-trash. Unable to fire his reliable handgun again, he stared like a drunken peasant who realized he had just kissed his cow. Crowley focused on countering the strange rituals formula, and achieved some form of banishing power. The German-Sicilian bastardo guarded the occupied occultist, but couldn't shake completely free from the grasp of shock. As the magical effort overstretched Crowleys mental balance, and the first soldiers got seriously wounded, Trumpet finally focused his self.

Mistaken to be the effect of Crowleys ritual incantation, the banishment of the horrid creature came completely surprising to all of the shocked eyes. The creature faded from flesh to ethereal, much like an overcome nightmare. In this moment of triumph it was Adriano's realism which shocked his companions. He explained that the creature was neither destroyed, nor arrested, capable of returning after a short phase of recovery. While their psyches were marked by this night, they nonetheless fell into a cheerful victory mood, everyone busy to rationalize these haunting moments. The look in the eyes of Colonel Fleming was all which spoke of this chapter ever after. After they had withdrawn from the caves, short after the first full night of sleep, the next setback awaited. Embittered they had to swallow that further investigation was impossible, cause the British army decided to detonate caves in this area to secure the local villages, and avoid further spread of this wicked disease. They had saved hundreds of people ,and did give their very best, yet they felt like beaten dogs, when they left India.

Heidelbach rapidly ventured back to the United States. An old acquaintance, by then a high ranking diplomat, had asked him to interfere with a heavyweight political crisis. Gunter von Gotha had manipulated the economy, to revive his dream of the German Kaiser Reich. Heidelbach coordinated, and led, several executives to deal with this mundane danger. This time there were no signs of mysterious influence to be found. Aiding the USA shortly after the great war proved valuable nonetheless. The public was pleased, and the media celebrated Heidelbach as a defender of western culture. The Arkham Instigator entitled Heidelbach „a Star shining brightest“. Crowley compared this with his astrological data, and made some divination concerning the destiny of Joshua. Trumpet was less euphoric, and remained silent.

After they had left India some month of recovery, and calmer bachelor life, took place. In February 1923 the three met again, as they dared to intercept some uncommon occurrences in Japan. Work on a planned road brought forth a discovery of some strange relic, which had seemingly summoned a group of spooky, pale cultists out of proverbial nowhere. The chanting, and dancing, of these people irritated the workers, and when the heart of a work group leader was found on some savage altar, it was no longer prejudice that spoiled the climate here.

The real horror started, when a small mountainside monastery was discovered to be the headquarter of some weird Asian sect. Far from the shores there was just one village close by, and so the monastery was still filed as deserted in the official Japanese reports. An illusion, which was falling apart, as Sgt. Koromiko arrived with a squad of soldiers. Patient information gathering, and his per-

sonal cunning, made Koromiko realize a sense of weirdness about this mission. Maybe support from Iteki was seen as more appropriate than risking more Japanese soldiers. Officially the honour, that Iteki like Heidelbach were allowed to join up on this investigation at all, is nearly inexpressible to western barbarians. Adriano was somewhat uncertain about the usefulness of Japanese infantry equipment for in-house-fighting. This insight should prove real. Koromikos decision made them clash with the lunacy of a culture, which was nearly as strange to them, as the vile web of the Old Ones. While the first monk cells still somehow resembled something human, every step towards the centre made the foreboding sense of danger more intense. Dirty, degenerate, and hideously desecrated was this scene. The acumen of Crowley would be the only chance of escape for the trio, yet this was totally unknown to them at this point.

Anyway, without the glorious sacrifice of the Japanese soldiers, they would have been condemned to a painful, slow death. Confronted with an abomination of myth horror, and battle ready thugs of this entity, it should come to a tunnel-fight which equalled the German-French trenches from 1914-1916 in all bitter aspects which fighting wreaks upon human existence. The scene turned into utmost torment for flesh, Ki, and Do which was hardly to top. A gory skirmish through the narrow corridors of the monastery was about to begin. As the first wave ended in those tunnels, the adventurers split to support some soldiers. Sebastian concentrated, forming an astral blade, resembling the dagger he wielded. Thereby he gained the chance to hurt the essence of ethereal beings as well. Joined by two soldiers he entered a corridor, advancing in flickering light, and surrounded by nerve ripping sounds. Close to the end of the passage he recognized an arcane symbol, and while the soldiers thought of an dead end, Sebastian chanted versus the walls.

Due his talent with magick he was able to energize the symbol, and opened a secret door. The soldiers were struck by surprise due to his innate abilities. Crowley expected the natural, an attack of a dark adept. The bloody dance of blades would demand toll from them. Toll which Crowley was more than willing to pay. The soldiers could fire once before it became close quarters. Meanwhile Heidelbach led another two soldiers and marched on. The dirty gibberish at the walls left him totally unimpressed. Instinct was, what made him survive such situations. The slot eyed cultists felt so superior in their ambush, that the massive counterstrike of Joshua caught them unprepared. As he had expected those degenerates never before encountered resistance. His ACP brought death to some of them, and another one was smashed down by a powerful punch, even before the soldiers could fully react. Boxing, bleeding, shivering, and blocking they survived this altercation. For a while the illusion of a glorious victory would offer itself. Trumpet stood close to Koromiko, watching. Giri and Courage couldn't make the confusion go away. This was no typical mission for soldiers. The men sensed that they wouldn't survive such a place much longer. Adriano sneaked into a corridor. Fear tried to strangle his confidence, and it demanded an act of willpower. Two times his intuition made him throw grenades into sections he felt to be dreadful. The following death cries made his doubts vanish. In his guts cramps started, this was not only fear.

This place was not part of their *via fatum*, whatever lurked here, his awareness failed to reveal anything about the deeper levels. Surprised by his own skill he perceived himself blocking the knife of a cultist, and countering by a move he adapted from the few month of Weng Chen Kung Fu he once decided to practice. Calm, but dedicated, did he cut his gratitude into the flesh of this cultist. While Trumpet expressed his allergy to vice, the tables began to turn. The minions launched an organized assault, and the pure strength of numbers drove the soldiers backwards. When defeat became obvious the remaining soldiers grouped, giving evidence that mere mortals are no less heroic, to allow Crowley the chance to grasp through a breach of reality, and save his companions. Weeks

later Crowley honoured the sacrifice of the Japanese squad by a play in the Noh theatre. Adriano chose silence as a suiting honour, and never mentioned anything about this, except that Wakino, who translated for them in the village, escaped her shame via traditional suicide. The survivors took care that the few captured scripts, and warding symbols, were handed to proper instances. When the evacuation of the village was coordinated they found some weeks of time to flow with their mushien. They met a Miko, and even found an ancient Kitsune scroll, which they copied and handed to a museum. While Adriano had nothing more to offer he found some emotional link to the female side of Japan. Here he learned that not all women taste like rotting fish. Crowley studied the scripts, and practised some Tantojutsu. Again their interference had cost them much, and they did spend months for recovery. Adriano chose to visit his place of birth, Giardini-Naxos, and enjoyed the Italian monastery close to Monte Casino.

Time went by, and the memories were no longer so harrowing to them. When Trumpet met tourists he couldn't ignore the self-righteous ignorance which transformed so many humans into a twisted bunch of swine. Crowley told them at the departure he would visit Egypt, and indeed, Adriano received two letters. The first covered Crowley's first week in Memphis, and described his attempts to teach basics of the real myth to his adepts. Unknown to Trumpet his brother-in-arms Crowley was busy countering the spreading of a cult of Apophis. From the moment that he stepped out of the plane Sebastian was sure that something was lurking for him here. The atmosphere, and bustling streets, could no longer delude a skilled occultist from sensing the tell-tale signs. Sebastian asked subtle questions, observed, and bribed his way to get more detailed information right away. When he finally investigated in the poorer districts, he learned to translate the lore.

It was Anuth'otep who had decrypted the necromantic Lore from the books of the dead into a distorted way. Unsurprisingly, even in Egypt people got angry, when some deranged fanatics dug out their ancestors, had sexual intercourse with them, and finally swallowed the remnants of their brains. By the sheer stupidity of the brain eaters, one could discard the idea of gaining the wisdom of the dead through such depravity. Fallacy which became dangerous by the latent criminal potential of this psychopathic brotherhood. Being on his home turf Crowley made the police do their job, and launched guerilla war on the Apophis cult. Falcon and Sphinx would become fundamentals of his later works.

To Trumpet's utter surprise the second letter arrived from the Hürtgenwald, France bordering Germany. Crowley sent some greetings, and wrote he played sheep dumb tourist. Mentioning his plans to visit the US of A by the way. Sebastian's physical vessel, tool of the higher self he constantly dabbled about, needed further recovery. At that moment Adriano sensed a vague menace between those lines. Rovinato C. needed his aid, although he seemed to be yet unaware of this himself. Adriano busted his low finances to dash towards the border of Austria, and purchased a train passage to Germany. Stress, and forbidden knowledge, could even hamstring Sebastian. Part of the existential limits of a human being. The natural area of the Hürtgenwald was turning into a place of dread, for in the last month several wanderers, and younger women, have been victims of a psychopathic murderer.

Police was working over shift, yet an area of this size was near impossible to cover by the dutiful cops. Trumpet cursed himself that they ventured so ignorant concerning retaliation from the minions, or even set-ups from petty criminals. Carlisle D. Wardstone, an anthropologist, had released the madness, as he stumbled upon scripts of the forbidden cults. Fascinated by old tales, which France & Germany had plenty to offer, he couldn't resist. Encouraged by his academical backers he was too stubborn to notice how much their urge to harm him was source of their advice. Even the

major warning didn't even make him think: Do never conjure such, which you cannot banish, nor destroy, nor summon ever, what can conjure such forces, which you cannot ward yourself against. As a man of scientific education Dr. Wardstone didn't want to admit, how much his darker impulses had clouded his brain. His triumph of academical superiority came in form of a ghoulish nightmare, which fed on the hapless academics.

The moment the last notch of common sense reached Wardstones jelly brain he started fleeing for his life, leaving his fellows, and all ritual trappings behind. The murders, and Wardstones following suicide, left the police more than a bit puzzled. The doctor had pushed his head into a coal oven after slitting his wrists. Newspaper conjured a demonic meaning into all of this, and the sect of psychoanalysts wanted to establish themselves by offering their questionable help. This time, Crowley, and the cultists of the Old Ones arrived, both eager to get close to Wardstones daughter, and capture the remaining notes of the deceased. This was even subtle from both parties, because no one would benefit from the police finding a certain pattern in this. What he lacked in subterfuge and stealth Crowley made up with divination. Gaining the information, yet caught in a cauldron of hostile adversaries all on his own.

Both Sebastian and Trumpet came to the conclusion that the summoning will manifest most damaging here through a human with repressed violent temper. Adriano did a desperate search for Sebastian, hoping to find him in time. Looking back, he was exhausted by the intensity of memories. He visualized the final flashbacks. The Hürtgenwald after sunset, Trumpet marched along the ways, sneaked through the vegetation, and stumbled under the light of the crescent moon. Fresh forest air, atmosphere, fatigue, and even doubts faded into oblivion the moment he heard a cry of agony from Crowley. The visualization became most lucid the moment Trumpet swung the axe to end the unwanted duel between Crowley and the psychotic criminal. Weeks of hide and seek only to compensate Crowleys weakness in self preservation. Again Adriano's life didn't benefit from any of his efforts. A shine of hope struck the frowning bastard. Perhaps he would never again have to bury body parts at least. The departure was of a blasphemous mundaneness this time. They did send some letters to Heidelberg, and went their own ways again. In November 1924, Joshua had withdrawn to his Landhaus for recovery from business, news of two well known people asking for him reached his ears. This time the newlines of the Arkham Instigator clashed brutally with those of the Miskatonic Mirror. The attention of mankind was turning towards Dunstable. The third major joint venture of the three myth sniffers was about to begin. They prepared again to resist the greedy talons of telluric horrors. Trumpet perceived bad rumours from a coastal cluster named Dunstable. Proclaiming to work on a new novel he ventured to Washington.

Adriano was busy gathering information, comparing notes, and checking archives for weeks. His natural gentleness made him get access in a smooth way, although his shock to realize that he still was able to socialize with normal people shook his emotions. The librarians whispered about his dedication while studying the dusty tomes in the stuffy atmosphere of the old buildings. Comparison of the notes made him admit that again forces from beyond were fiendish-puppeteers storming into human society. In the end, his introspection would make the situation clearer to him. As he lay on the bed of his cheap hotel room, he perceived mental images, and began to understand some of their meaning. The haunted spot Dunstable nearly cried out the challenge to those willing to dare. Trumpet would conclude that an old signal tower, once build upon the place of atavistic pagan hermits, was the source of the strange coincidences. Adriano expected another set of cavern tunnels. Emotionally shaken by his mindwork, he took a night walk through the foggy streets, delving into dreams while sniffing the autumn wind. He admired the architectural wonders for several hours, praising the skill of craftsmen and visionaries. The architectural, at least plenty of them,

wonders were clad in the typical dresses of females, not build concrete. Hit by surprise he was later informed that Sebastian Crowley was in town. Escaping the embrace of his favourite dance girl, he started his way to the Miskatonic Residence motel.

As many times before they sat in a darkened room, exchanging news, and contemplating the dangerous, alienating myth. Trumpet watched the smoke rise from his Gimel cigarette, and playfully flattened his softpack. Overwhelmed by memories and melancholia. Crowley remained silent in such moments, and this was one reason for Adriano's respect. Trumpet was busy wondering, if his feelings were an obstacle, or the longing for things he failed to establish. Crowley studied his notes and charts, muttering arcane syllables. Adriano recovered his mental clarity, when Crowley became agitated. Sebastian suspected that it wouldn't be a tunnel, but rather some alien kind of portal which they sensed. Freudian assumptions mentioned the symbol of portal as linked to the female abdomen, relating to some childhood traumatic experience of Crowley being unable to attain sex with his mother. The myth just meant a gate to another realm of existence though. Adriano worried why he could sense resonance of truth in statements, while most others were seemingly oblivious to such insight. Anyway, to him the myth was a replacement of his average life. Unlike Thurston and Crowley he was not drawn, but born into this myth. His lifestyle was similarly neme-sis and sanctum to him. Without his few talents he would be just another cocaine crazed puritan, or a petty criminal.

Such realizations sucked him into an emotional abyss, but today Crowley would prevent him from drowning there. A litany of encrypted chanting was intoned by Crowley, and Trumpet was again amused how easily he could suffer this, to him totally meaningless, gibberish. While the occultist checked his equipment Adriano planned to ask for support from Heidelbach. Ambient atmosphere of the nightly drive towards the corporate building set a new expression (to the mind of the reader and the graphic I want created for my PC game). The choice of employees was one sign that Heidelbach's clear, sharp cutting mind was needed for this venture. Although Adriano couldn't deny that money, and a comfortable limousine, would perhaps be among his considerations, too. The clean rooms granted a relaxing mood, and while Crowley foretold the constellation of stars wouldn't hint at Adriano getting laid with the voluptuous secretary, the double-blood was in deep, passionate trance, his gaze transfixed unto her... aura.

Back in his mind he remembered Crowleys symbolism. The sword of determination, the staff of desire, the coin of valour, and a cup full of insight. Trumpet wouldn't like to miss his Gimel cigarettes in all of this. Metaphorick. Nearly like stars, which were synonymous to humans in this occult dabbling. Entire libraries full of such crap should ensure that adepts were kept from the few useful insights of these studies for eternity. On the other hand though the idiocy to paint pentagrams, and chant evocations in ancient languages, at secret spots of ritual meaning, had always been a misinterpretation which begged to be punished. For some short moments the serious threat of the surreal situation could be ignored, and resembled a vacation. Even, when they had any prove at all, they were forced to choose wisely whom to trust with this forbidden lore.

Crowley recruited from his adepts, Joshua and Adriano had seen them fail, fall into despair, and suffer before, though. Adriano acted on intuition, yet solitude was the better choice manifold. Trumpet had seen remnants of the women he loved locked away in the Arkham Asylum, or admirable female warriors buried in another dusty grave. Heidelbach never mentioned anything since his wife was killed. Contemplation was smoothly wiped away by the entry of Jeffrey Ronald, personal assistant of Joshua. The scarce evidences were discussed in absence of Ronald due to precautions taken before. Joshua radiated coolness, but couldn't hide his enthusiasm for long. A death-wish, or the political less correct realization that the own survival instincts were no longer valid.

Preparations were made, and two days later the impressive limousine was driven gallantly by Heidelberg.

Dunstable, where Gods light denies to shine, the place where unspeakable abominations crawl through shadows pursuing incomprehensible goals. The arrival at the outskirts of Dunstable was done. In light of street lanterns they walked towards the meeting point that they had arranged per messenger. Police later found the messengers half-eaten corpse a bit too late for our protagonists story. Dunstable was a run down, nearly rotten village. The air smelled of salt, sea-weed, smoke, and fish. When they perceived the first dwellers their mood turned to vigilant. The inhabitants displayed certain stigmata of the insane myth, and it's toll upon the human body and soul. Fat, anxious, and nervous with a dumb, or piercing, gaze in their eyes they weren't people one wanted to meet at all. Crowley noticed that the erratic thoughts were not concealed by their facial masque. Even the professional welcome by the villages leader couldn't banish the foreboding sense of dread from their minds. The only tavern was used as the meeting hall and Heidelberg started the negotiation. In this small, atmospheric setting the three stood surrounded by villagers, like heroes of old folk tales. Years later these moments were still held in memory by the believers among people.

While Adriano played Heidelberg's advisor, Joshua had noticed years ago that Trumpet's insights were not based on pure acumen, nor psychoanalysis, but strange insights into the application of the myth. His essays, and quotes, were crudely prosaic, sometimes even shockingly strange, yet he could score successes, which none whom Heidelberg had ever met, or read about, could hope to outmatch. Joshua learned over the years to sense which of these ramblings were to be taken serious, and which delved into metaphorical blasphemies. Seemingly, Adriano strived to a path which would banish the Old Ones, and supply compensation for the bitter years they had to survive. Sebastian was prone to fall into a nervous glossolalia from time to time, and Joshua would bet that Trumpet kept a low profile concerning occult studies in respect to Crowley. The recent years repeatedly evidenced what power the ethereal beings wielded against humanity, and thereby versus Heidelberg's investments, so that their skills were useful exotic addition to the repertoire. His employees never grasped, why Joshua invested in a pulp writer like Adriano.

Even the best among his workers couldn't deal with the smallest insights he handed to them. If Joshua needed a competitor crushed, he made sure that he received Adriano's less fictional writings. Heidelberg's attention circled back to the villagers' dabbling. He enjoyed the taste of his coffee, and analysed their smarter ideas with an honest smile upon his lips. When the discussion transformed into articulation of paranoid superstition Joshua brushed it off, and arranged last minute preparations. Meanwhile Trumpet managed to get Crowley out of the waitresses' bed. They made their way across the only worn off road towards the goal of this investigation. The place itself was as mundane, as it could be. Nothing mystical, no bad vibrations. Short of the door to the signal tower Crowley drew out a blade with carved symbols, which remained enigmatic to Joshua and Trumpet, even after their initiation. Joshua took his Automatic Clip Pistol out of it's luxurious package, and Adriano made himself look foolish, as he clumsily tried to handle his brass knuckle, flashlight, and revolver while opening the door. The door opened, and in the pale, yellow light of their flashlights they entered the conic formed room. While stairs led upwards, their senses foretold it would be here to search for another way. They started checking some chests, and looking around carefully. Thurston found a crowbar among some chests and caught a medic kit a while later. Crowley borrowed the crowbar, and Adriano found a trapdoor in the floor. They took their positions and opened the door, prepared for whatever they could prepare for. The intense smell of fresh wood hit their noses. This was not what they had expected, no sense of dread, no rotten smells. Giving hand signs they coordinated their moves, and Adriano sneaked downwards. He was aware that pleasant

sensations could cloud ones perception, too. He entered a room of surprising width and looked around.

Short before he perceived the first creature his senses warned him of danger. It would be a fight, soon. In the light of his Taschenlampe stood a creature which he perceived like a ghoulish nightmare turned real. The pale, grey skin looked unfamiliar, and metallic teeth reminded him of sharks he'd seen in Japan. The creature moved gently, exuding a sense of menace. Adriano's body felt numb, and he was aware that martial arts would be no good to him here. With a clumsy punch he launched the brass knuckle on his left towards the head of this creature.

He had needed the few seconds to deal with adrenalin, and fear, and therefore couldn't yell any warning to his companions. He felt Crowley arriving, and thought him outflanked by another of these ghoulish freaks. Crowley reacted like a samurai of legend, cutting a chunk out of the flesh of his aggressor before he was pushed into defence. The magus spend daily hours in physical training, and contemplation, here it had just saved his life. Joshua was on the stairs, alerted by the sounds. He suppressed a scream of pain, as a third ghoul bit his back bumpers (yes, his ass). Before pain made him stumble he shot. Two bullets precisely through the sneaky ghouls eyes. Trumpet was pushed into infighting, and dealt blows, just as he took them.

For an instance he thought time stands still, so he could hear the sound of his blood splashing against the walls. The unreal moment should fade back into a painful reality. Adriano launched a brutal combination of punches until he fainted in a fog of exhaustion, and pain. Crowley and Joshua covered their backs, and made the creatures pay blood. Trumpet awoke the moment the metallic drums could be identified as gun shots again. He felt the shakes, pain, and fear in a weird mix of perceptions. A look at the source of an unknown smell made him realize that his pocket watch, and parts of his belly, were bitten away. Bandaging himself while watching the bruised Sebastian shove his blade through the brain of the last ghoul, and the grim Heidelbach busy tending his wounds.

A moment of silence made Crowley bark out his theory that these creatures were manifestations of their darker aspects. Facing the threat of hearing further dabbling about magick, Joshua enjoyed his cigar, and Trumpet braced himself, faking unconsciousness. The morbid humour of perceiving the melodramatic occultist in this bloodstained room shook their egos. When pain became tolerable they stood up, used what the medical kit had to offer, and thought about this situation. Mental images of unspeakable horrors, eternal torment, and torture of the flesh began haunting them. Of course no angel came to save their souls. A desperation of incomparable quality invaded their minds, and the onslaught of mind flaying impressions was as greedy, as Ute and Carroll, the village whores.

The atmosphere began humming with unknown energies, and a shift of energy shook their bodies. While a simple flashlight was high tech in this time, the three were quite calm the moment that shock and despair made way to reveal a shining door. Crowley proclaimed this to be a dimensional gate, and they stepped through. For an instance that seemed eternal, they struggled to gather their courage. Then advancing to the final challenge, which was now part of the heroic mood they used to subdue their common sense. For the last time their minds, like a nutshell on the stormy sea, attempted to cross the ocean of madness and nausea. Within moments the steps were done. A single house close to the edge of a European forest was Adriano's first mundane perception after his eyes got used to the moonlight. He couldn't tell any difference to his general condition, although he was quite focused and aware. The sound of Crowley drawing his blade and Heidelbach checking his gun reassured him that silent supervision was not their intent concerning this building.

Adriano started a howl, a weird mockery of sound, somewhere between a human imitating a werewolf and a recently castrated poodle. He decided to charge through a window. Crowley approached the side door, while Heidelbach dared to take the front. Moving with fluid motion, once more remembering what he practised for years, he crouched, and shielded his eyes while crashing through the glass. Landing on his feet and gaining a first glimpse of the room he found himself in for now. Trouble. The first robed figure charged him, and received a brutalizing thrust kick into his, or her, guts. Adriano's leg and hip coordination gave power to this kick, so the attacker plummeted backwards, gasping, or vomiting, he was not sure, already focusing upon the second possible threat. This cultist brought the large wooden table between himself and Trumpet, trying to reduce the risk of receiving such a gut kick. Many people intuitively sensed Adriano's flaws, high kicks were really not in his trickster box. Sadly overconfidence has nasty consequences.

Trumpet moved swiftly towards the table, laying his weight into the move, and imitating a sweep he saw from a Brazilian Capoeirista. The balls of his feet hit the table while his hands secured the balance, as best, as he could. The table hammered against the knees of the second cultist with a bone-cracking sound. Adriano tried to get up from his hurting back bumpers, and prepared to grab a bowl with fruits, which lay before him. The first cultist still choked. Robe number two fell to the ground with a painful new experience gained. A second later the cultist was freed from all worries concerning his legs, as the bowl was slammed into his face. Stylish knock-out with only minor flaws. Trumpet bit into an apple, and gazed the choking cultist into the realization that unconsciousness can be a blessing in certain situations.

Heidelbach reached the front door in time to avoid a lethal surprise. Shortly after Adriano stopped being noisy someone in there decided to check, if his, or her, shotgun is loaded. The click of a closing two barrel rifle is one of the sounds he could even identify while asleep. He stepped sideways an instant before the rounds, and shrapnel-splinters, brought death towards the spot he had stood at a split second ago. Wasting no time he returned this friendliness with a head shot. Picking up a newspaper from the entrance area he made sure that no blood, nor brain parts, would waste his expensive shoes.

Crowley opened the side door, only to glimpse at a scene he never expected. A robed male person sitting at a small table, eating bread and bacon. The two stared at each other, one of those moments. Crowley drew his dagger, while the robed stranger grabbed the kitchen knife, and pushed the chair backwards, standing up in the same moment that Crowley was in fighting stance. Small blades impacted with each other while both of them proved worthy knife-fighters. Sebastian knew that a quick end was the healthier way, and launched a double-slash then stab combination to breach the defence of his adversary with lethal efficiency. The first slash was blocked, the second brought him a wound at his forearm, and the stab spoiled his clothing, penetrating his foes defences, as blood splashed out of the opened throat of his opponent. That was no shame, few could react to a Japanese knife combination which they never perceived before. Enough of the mourning he thought.

Bandaging his arm, and staring greedily at the food, he felt his mortal self. Some bites of bread, bacon, and cheese were totally free from bloodstains, and tasty for sure. A warm brandy washed his throat clear, and made him grin while investigating further. Next to the kitchen was a small storage room for cleaning stuff, which Crowley scanned before following the corridor. Heidelbach watched his steps, and reached the door leading down to the basement. Adriano had bound the robed opposition, and appeared from another door, nearly in time to watch

Heidelbach's amusing acrobatics on newspaper in the brain-splattered entrance. Heidelbach felt sure that this time he should check out the cellar, while Adriano and Crowley would secure upstairs. He smoothly opened the door, sneaking down the stairs. A minute later, as he came around the cor-

ner, he saw two robed freaks beating a tied up stranger in their happily unmanly way of interrogation. The good news was they had no weapons. His instincts bypassed reason. The first received two shots through the knees, and further two shots through each of his shoulder joints. This would make him a bit more cooperative in watching the boxing match, which Heidelbach intended to fight out with robed goon number two.

The second cultist was a bit nervous, seemingly he was not as good in receiving the pain, which he so valiantly gave to defenceless strangers. Joshua's fists cracked multiple times, and his wrists did start to hurt seriously. Heidelbach harshly regained his control, and started to cripple the beaten cultist with a series of aimed kicks, breaking bones and making the guts dance. Vice zero, righteous fury one. After the stranger was searched Heidelbach freed him, still staring at the badge identifying him as Heinrich Krimmer, police detective. The cop was too fucked up to talk right now, but Joshua would carry him upwards, waking him with a tasty brandy, and a first aid kit. The gentleman's way, interpreted by Joshua Thurston. Meanwhile Adriano collected notes from a desk in the upper room. He knew that it could be gainful, yet thought it wiser to avoid being associated with the impulsive entry they had performed here. Crowley was shaking in ecstasy, he had uncovered what he was longing for. He checked a small room, opening a concealed door, to find himself inside a ritual chamber. The occult touchdown!

He analysed the atmosphere, and studied the symbols for quite some time. This was the language he spoke best, arcane symbols, ritual devices, and secret ingredients. Gaining deep insights into the motivation and aims of whoever used this room he finally took the tome, most important artefact, going back to meet his companions. One could always find a place of sanctuary, but it is hard to replace copies of handmade forbidden tomes. He felt proud, the first suiting task for such a gifted occultist. Sebastian's second blast of glory came when he, and only he, could activate the powerful gate that could bring them back to Dunstable. Yes, he dares calling the pressing of a hidden button a major hermetic ritual. The cellar of the signal tower vibrated with strange energies. It really worked, the one sentence neither Heidelbach, nor Trumpet, could ever believe themselves saying about Crowley. Keeping to their agreement the heroes sneaked out of the tower, and abandoned Heidelbach's car. A sour nut indeed, yet a petty price for a real vacation. The power of separation already surging through their self, they marched away.

Heidelbach faking a generous smile, knowing that just one phone call away a number of women expected him to invite them into his sanctum. Crowley dabbling nearly endlessly, how subtly he could be inspired into making their recent experiences a theatre play, and Adriano on the edge, the pure thought of spending some undisturbed nights with Jasmine! Shattering his mind, and leaving him with nothing, but sweaty hands, a problem to speak clearly, and a pondering heart. Dear reader, this is the closing of my first chapter for now. The players scribble down their experience points, the computer game should fade in such a way with some relaxing background music.

The real villains were not all discovered, nor neutralized, henceforth spend their time studying the inspiration for villains handbook, for if I ever can bribe Hollywood you may have to suffer "Return of the myth sniffers", too.

Anyway: Adventure is not Lovecraft, so enjoy to think for yourself.

The charade of occult aphasia found it's silent end The Miskatonic Mirror: 01.06.1925; H. Krimmer, official speaker of the police admits that Dunstable had become the place of the final chapter in a story of the by now notorious, exalted occult-detectives. The questionable investigations of preternatural affairs, which started with wild accusations about the wife of the late Dr. Hammersmith, agitated by Sebastian Crowley, Adriano Trumpet, and J.T. Heidelbach ended in a mystery, which is suspected a staged act of these publicity addicted neurotics. Vigilant readers will have already noticed what weird topics our journalists had to work through in

this context. We further advise all rational people to avoid, or use with utmost precaution, the writings of Adriano Trumpet. These crude novels have been declared upsetting, and mind threatening, by concerned experts of the Church, and well known Doctors of Psychoanalysis. The Mirror will collect all evidence to prove that the only cultists of alien, chthonic deities were the three unstable persons, who are by now missing. Populace of Dunstable is unharmed, and police could not even find the slightest evidence of secret cults, or abominations from beyond.

Out of the ruins... my idea of starter-stats for the protagonists, 1922

- Adriano Trumpet, Virtue: Fanatic & Vice: Psychopath is based on a modified Beat Cop Extra, which you find on page 245 of your Adventure RPG paperback. I modified this: Attributes: Dex+1, Manip+2, Charisma+1 Abilities: replace Brawl by martial arts, Rapport+1, add Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Style 1, Medicine 1, Resistance 1, Endurance 1, Subterfuge 2, Etiquette 1 Legerdemain 2, Stealth 1, Linguistics 1 & Academics 1; myth lore (to suit this story) 3; Willpower +1 Backgrounds: Sanctum (monastery) 1, Enigma (it's as if he just popped into existence in 1918), Backing 2 (cults with myth lore >1), Gadget (write pad & Brass Knuckles) 2, Resources 2; Equipment: Clothing, super-science write pad& pencil, snub nose revolver, lt.& 24 bullets, his brass knuckles, Gimel softpack & lighter, a watch Intuitive Facet O Reflective Facet OO Destructive Facet OO Knacks for this story: Brain Skimming, Superhuman Reflexes, Brainstorm & Threat Awareness
- Sebastian "Crowley" Antonym, Virtue: Paragon & Vice: Rogue Is based upon the Cultist Extra, page 246 modifications: Attributes: Dex+1, Wits+1, Per+1 Abilities: add Quick Draw (short blade) 3, Melee 2, Occultism 3, Perform 2, Academics 2, Linguistics 1, Endurance 1, Command 1, Etiquette 1, Awareness 1 Willpower +1 Backgrounds: Gadget (ritual dagger) 1, Sanctum 1, Reputation 2 (the one dude who never even met Binah, cabbalists should be happy now), Resources 3, Contacts 2, Backing 2 (theater& adepts), Followers 2 (his cult in egypt already exists and has Cipher 2 from Trumpet), Nemesis 3 (Sigmund Freud), Nemesis 2 ("demons" or dark magicians manifested as theater critics) Equipment: his gadget, clothing, actors tools of the trade, lots of occultist paraphernalia Intuitive Facet OO Reflective Facet O Destructive Facet OO Knacks: Magick-crap, but to my readers: Sex Symbol, Superhuman Reflexes, Touch of the Muses & Touch of Life (Jesus Crowley)
- Joshua Thurston Heidelbach, Virtue: Survivor & Vice: Fool Is based upon the Detective Extra, page 245 modifications: Abilities: Brawl+1, add Awareness 1, Etiquette 2, Might 1, Endurance 1, Resistance 1, Linguistics 2, Academics 2, Repair 1 Backgrounds: Gadget (ACP, Heavy) 1, Backing 5, Kingpin, Cipher 2 (+1 by Adriano), Resources 4, Reputation 3, Followers (employees) 3, Sanctum 2, Nemesis 3 (JT does not know yet) Equipment: gadget, suit, cigars& lighter, trenchcoat with an ounce of opium in pocket, fedora, expensive whiskey, car, liquor, keys, lots of money, handkerchief, expensive absinthe, ounce of pure cocaine, camera and replacement suit in his car, checked spare wheel, first aid kit and mechanics toolkit, address book filled with names of women Facets: Instinctive OO Reflective O Destructive OO Knacks: Perfect Translation, Sex Symbol, Superhuman Reflexes, Piledriver & Threat Awareness Names in the German and English version vary due auto-correction!

My KULT: Conjurers & Conjunctions (compatible with most editions)

Mockingly: KULT - Virginity Lost!

KULT_Conjurers & Conjunctions, revision 1.14

Kult *conjurer aka magic-user characters* fan-fiction © André M. Pietroschek, all rights reserved

"The Dark Art represents the marriage of your innate strength of will and your personal under-

standing of precisely what you can achieve with it. Quoted from 'Kult – The Dark Art', so far, as I know, written by: Clark Wallace. <http://issuu.com/andrem.pietroschek/docs/>

- KULT-Notes: I write this in Pietroschek Prose, not US-English, nor British English. Pietroschek Prose is something like unintentional, imbecilic-moronic violation of the two English versions to which it is often & mistakenly compared to. ;-) As soon, as I can, I will improve my language skill. Gladly reducing my mistakes to increase readability. Yet there is one truism you love to ignore: ALL works get their proof-reading done, when they become books, not before that.

Lessons of Life within the Illusion

The Illusion was the tool to make our imprisonment an easier task for our jailers. Looking Beyond is far, life-threateningly far, from being able to live Beyond! The Illusion is partially collapsing, as some of the maintaining wardens were murdered or went turncoat, and some did their own hostile takeovers. And many did go insane! Awakening is handling the accumulation of misconceptions, habits, and proverbially higher powers, which keep us imprisoned. Sometimes, in my theory at least for those with magical intuition, the Awakening is not extending our perception to see the truth, and learn handling it, as it is much more a “Shaking-Off of our Delirium”. All Conjurers who start within the Illusion are actually trapped. Further only hubris would make any of us ignore that our personalities are both, cut-off from our divinity by heritage, and sabotaged by our Abusers, to keep us imprisoned in the Illusion under their own conditions, and agendas.

The first phase of both, awakening and learning hedge magic, is henceforth finding out, if and how our directly accessible advantages, and disadvantages, enchain us to the dogma and dictum of our abusers. I have lived a decade with the suspicion that up to the moment of true awakening, which is alike the completed mastery of the full hedge magics, we remain different from regular humans, as much, as we remain vulnerable, and truth be noted inferior, to our abusers and jailers. The Jail of Night is actually a prison complex, which belongs to the purpose the Illusion was created for in the first place. Sometimes I hissed that both, the Demiurge & Astaroth, may have just been too lazy, or too impatient, to guide us to the ability to live under their dominion. Actually, when divinity is in each of us, aren't they violently suppressing us merely to continue their own ego-trip of supremacy?

Mortality alone made them win that war against us and freedom itself. Without some form of patronage it is definitely impossible to master the complete lore magics of our abusers. The proverbial big picture is unmistakably painted against our kind. Further though it is more than naive to believe everything, which is not field-tested about the lore magics, as they were actually a gift to make it easier to keep us all imprisoned, and victimized. Excitement about our discovered, and in truth lesser, forms of power alone can cause the fatal flaw of trapping oneself in the egomania of comparing ourselves to mainstream humans, instead of investigating the Illusion, which will sabotage, and execute us, when not opposed by our own repeated efforts.

Jailers, and Agents from Beyond, are a real threat. Yet for the context of this text they will be mentioned later. It is futile to warn people who simply have no chance to even survive an encounter with those powers, and it must be noted that the unfinished degrees of magical prowess are actually like shining lights on their radar! The triumph of the moment made more than one Conjurer overlook that consequence already reacted to the manipulation of Reality, as we were brainwashed to know it! Further humanoids are notoriously ignorant of the thin line between whim, and

will. In the early years the will of our divine but suppressed real self was actually just one impulse, which few could even recognize as different, when compared to impulses invoked in us due simple media manipulation, or personality affecting idiosyncrasies of our personal lifestyle. Yeah, in example TV, Sex, Drugs & Psychic Pathways.

Given the truth of our imprisonment, and enslavement, it becomes even more dangerous and perilous, when we find ourselves in those years during which we are semi-awakened, or semi-freed, albeit barely-able to force some changes upon the Illusion, or upon our deceptive fellow prisoners, and may-hap weaker, hostile Jailers. In the beginning many of us started with nothing, but perception of one aspect of lore magic. That aspect, while opening our mind to one meaning, is heavily bent on making us abuse our powers. Aimed at keeping us deluded about the necessity to fully awaken, for only so can we fully estimate consequence, and probability. From the perspective of a non-magical human it is already impressive, when one is decently skilled in powers of two, or three, lore magics. Sadly though these early gifts grant us what we whimsically crave, yet at the price of alerting our jailers, and actually forgetting to learn what would be needed to ever really free ourselves.

Be reminded that, until master in all the five lores of hedge magic, one does not even truly gain the ability to recognize, if ones divine self was actually sided with the Demiurge, or Astaroth, as our blind-spots still grant predominant control to our jailers. And those decades of struggling versus overtly powerful adversaries are already the lucky cases in which they do not just use maximum violence to destroy the small, and mostly impotent, insights we gained during our mortal life. Quick-Fixes do not exist, as they cannot exist, while ego and self have to grow together. It was possible to imprison us in the first place because we got so easily distracted that our divinity could not save us in time to evade, or correct, consequence.

- Any passion conjurer might enjoy sex, or asceticism, as any synthesis possible due them. Still such a passion conjurer could easily die from a sexually transferred disease, or jealous mate going too far, or want-to-be mate decades before gaining any chance to attempt longevity, or healing.

- Any dream conjurer could lose himself, or herself, both in dreamworlds, which lure away from solving the problems, and keep us imprisoned in the Demiurges' reality; or simply consider nothing but manipulating fellow humans due dream-induction possible at all beyond the so called lucid dreaming.

- Any madness conjurer easily runs afoul of the envy, and prejudice, of completely insane wild-cards. Further the risk of working the magic for the price of actually creating a greater madness which reinforces the predicament we call life, or attracts even more far-gone creatures from beyond, IS an ever-lurking risk.

- Any death conjurer might be felled by mortality itself. It is easily possible to die of drug-abuse, disease, or simply by passage of time as well. Further Death Angels, and the Reaper, might propagate either death, or immortality as goals, while in truth both sabotage the work towards true awakening manifold more often!

- Any space & time conjurer might they get by using forces more powerful to turn even the learned magics against him, or her. Actually at least a handful of powers could even take all humanity away from each individuals place or time to awaken, or away from learning any means to fight our abusers.

A wise conjurer might not learn faster than a foolish death-angel pawn with magical intuition, yet a wise conjurer would learn to look through all aspects of the Illusion preventative, be it only to ensure the magic we work will actually benefit us instead of becoming a long-term backlash for the

temporal joy of the whimsical moment! Team-working before the real awakening will always take more toll than it can be worth. That is basically ensured by the fact that our jailers ensured our personal tastes, and habits, will pester others. Even, if they have a common goal, or good reason to cooperate with us. After a decade, or two, even the minor talents we may have learned reveal the amount of wrongness in the whims, ambitions, and conceptions of our own youthful start.

All the while, and pathway, we run risks of our own worldly habits becoming obstacles, and with each success the power-level of our adversaries becomes more and more overwhelming, as to us it is actually a minor difference, if their interference and opposition is aimed to imprison us again, or to destroy us along with the rest of creation.

Patronage nearly always works, by forcing us into a submission we most certainly cannot understand on day of considering such patronage beneficial. A death conjurer might spare himself, or herself, much trouble, or even gain longevity, by vassalage to Togarini in example, yet in the long run duty to any patron will mean we must ignore necessities of our awakening to pay our debts, which chain us to the imprisonment, and ultimate failure, as the perversion or undoing of our true goals is auto-inclusive!

Malkuth toyed with passions even before humanity came into existence. Still nearly fifty percent of the magically intuitive are fool enough to think their competences would suffice to outmatch such a semi-eternal power-player. Hubris once more, where true radiance is out of reach due our own flawed state away from the rumored divine self, which could actually be just another lie, or abuser, in disguise. Metropolis might be needed as reconquest, for to save even a part of humanity it may be the only shelter we can reach in case the Illusion comes crashing down upon us before we can all turn into pure light, or deepest black, and thereby join with the seemingly two masters, or get rid of them!

The complexity of living with practical magic, and the risks of personal deficiency, or piety warping it in unexpected ways have been played down by people who want us downed. Agents from Beyond. It speaks more of their own agenda, or hostility, than of any occult key, which ever could unlock anything worthy to be called power!

Toying with keys, accepting somebody else's definition of keys, or simply unlocking something we cannot handle, neutralize, or evade remain risks, and obstacles, we have to face recurrently! Even, if our divine selves journey through eternity nonetheless.

“Death is only the Beginning” was either the mocking warning of Astaroth, or the triumphant victory of hopeful success against our prison. Sometimes the path seems so impossible to walk that even the slightest newbie steps we might have taken successfully could be called a miracle in comparison. And if those miracles scored, then maybe our divinity did not abandon us at all.

Danforth among the Keys – Tarot

Pietroschek: “Democracy is the one asylum within which the inmates are supposed to run it!”

Pawns moved by another Angel of Death! That was the one thing we all had in common. One could note that certain officials, pawn of whoever they are, were envious about our unfaltering dedication and efforts. I felt it coming like a wave in my backside. Nervous System tingling I did what I never did before. I did cut the crap instead of staying with the others. Yet once I fought for the future of my own species. Once I scored for mankind. Temporal victories which already crumble in the dust of dying memories. For the Danforth work I share my spread. Needless to say I excluded what I illuminated about the other fellows.

BINAH. 5, 9 or 10 of EYES. Depends on WHO is watching me. QUEEN OF RAZORS: RESC-

HAZA KING OF TORCHES: ANACALYPSE TWO OF CRESCENTS: THE HARUSPEX ACE OF ROSES: METROPOLIS

Foundation: Awakened occult-understanding in theory & practice.

This is the simple handful of truisms realized due the study, practice, and experience required to learn the five lore-magics. This backdoor-pathway to divinity is reflected in everything that the conjurer embodies, allowing him, or her, to transcend the prison aspects still binding for ignorant humanity, and to manipulate the powers that may even permeate, or shatter, the Illusion itself.

- **Watching the Show:** Skill Rank 5 to 10 in each; Conjurer is intuitively able to exert his will on a rudimentary level of external persons, situations & things. At this level, the objective is self-knowledge, and self-awareness, to grow in competences.
- **Ego-Crazed Ape at Neurosurgery:** Skill Rank 10 to 20 in each; Conjurer begins to understand the truths behind many fundamentals of Occultism. His will is strengthened, and he begins to see that the power exists only for those who muster enough courage to reach out and wrest it away from our jailers, or the dormancy beyond the Illusion.
- **Risky Rites of the Disciple:** Skill Rank 20 to 35 in each; Now, the conjurer learns that it is his body building the stranglehold, as focus on rituals alone does not outmatch the jailers. The conjurer begins to doubt that he must still fear mistakes, as anything seems possible, and reachable. Doubts are henceforth replaced by the Seeming (hubris), until individually overcome.
- **Juggling Cause & Consequence:** Skill Rank 35 to 50 in each; Finally powerful enough to do more than watching the proverbial show, and giving gentle pushes to the enforced course of direction, or disaster, the own ideas become possibilities instead of meaningless daydreams. Beyond rituals & incantations there is embodied unity with lore-magics, zen-like, as the movement of an arm, or the pull of the string, during archery .
- **Master of the Ways, Wardens, and Fate:** Skill Rank 50 to 125 in each; Conjurer realizes that his true divine pilgrimage had harshly begun. Much of his divinity restored he learns that his quest for survival, independence, and supremacy, is never-ending. Neither is the envy, or wrath, of the Jailers within the Illusion. Soon he, or she, leaves the Illusion, and personal reality itself, willingly behind, as it is outgrown & shallow due the powers now embodied. A conjurer of this level of prowess is developing alike with angels, or death-angels. His magic is universally reflected in everything he says, feels, thinks, or does, and everyone-awakened recognizes it for what it is: A real Magus (divine paragon) at work, or the blasphemous crimes against creation & mankind, committed by a Black Magician (infernal paragon, death-angels' champion).

Veiled for being dumbest – Reality Magick

The trash published as a supposed third Kult edition gave birth to the idea that the sixth form of lore magic is reality magic. Given that ANY official adventure of real Kult authenticity proves that a madman going insane has much more influence over reality than any master of lore magic could hope for, such idiotic shit should be left for those who are too weak to bring-on a real solution.

WFRP: Strigoi dreams & Strigany wishes

Playing a gypsy-vampire among equals!

Strigoi Dreams & Strigany Wishes

© Andrè Michael Pietroschek, all rights reserved

Credo: "If it was the greatest lie of the devil that it does not exist, then the greatest lie about us was that we are defeated!"

Two agitator minded notes for 2nd edition WFRP. Revision 1.02

Alternative Perspective

Welcome to my heresy. For that is what the 5th ruinous power called our ancestors, our families and ourselves already. If you must ease your mind by a time and a place, here it is. It is the burning times and the place is the realm of the 5th Chaos God. Malal the Renegade. The Chaos God who fights the other Chaos Gods. Or in more academic words, the Emperor! And Sigmar, his daemonic servant.

Centuries of injustice, prejudice and persecution. Paid with tax money of the common folks. A propaganda machine which distorts and twists all the atrocities into heroic deeds of some Sigmar Heldenhammer and his flawless minions. Supported by academics who support mass-murder to establish their inferior cocktail of logic and submissiveness.

Folks tortured and burned without any trial. The constant excuse of fighting some great evil and how this justifies all atrocities of the Empire. One does not need to be Strigoi or Strigany. One does not need to be a hedge wizard or witch. All it needs is one witch-hunter deciding to hurt you and you are guilty.

That is the Empire we experienced through the centuries. An Empire which achieves nothing, but fanatically attempting to outmatch all others, when it comes to mass-murder and cruelty.

The world was dark and fierce, thanks and praise to the Emperor, now due its deeds it is pitch-black and criminally insane. Yet somewhere, in noble courts long infiltrated by the other four ruinous powers and pawns of the Vampire Counts, there are people who wield all the raided luxury to deceive about the blood on their hands and guilt upon their minds.

Look away burghers, merchants, and peasantry. Ever-fearfully hoping that you are not next on the pyres or in the torture chambers. Surrender your right to be protected by the law. Join the Sigmarites, as all non-members end on the pyres! Smile and bid farewell to your wife and children, they may be declared witches or slaves to darkness any time soon. Give your life in service to the Empire, so it can abuse others just as thoroughly! Or be the ones who break free from the religious dictatorship of a false god? The Emperor is the 5th Ruinous Power!

Kleingeist (Kleingeist is German for a simpleton, someone with a mindset stuck in the known social surroundings or religious circles)

There is a truth there in the enemy propaganda. If vampires would be as dumb, as academics tend to be by majority, then it would be like their fairy tale propagated: Ushoran, half-wit brother to Neferata, the queen, works to fulfill his dream and dies in the trying. Possible. Now a bloodline losing its most powerful member, the founder, has serious problems. Yet it may be like with the betrayal of Nagash, when all the vampires, except one Strigoi, were smart enough to sense that the battle won't be won in that campaign. But I lack the benefit of being overly powerful in an age within which the world wanted great tales to unfold. I am just a lowborn. I was simpleminded, individualistic, and eager for joy the way I liked it. It made me a heretical abomination, if I can trust the lore and minstrels.

No god cared for me and henceforth I cared for no god. I was hot-headed, impulsive, or flame-heartedly reckless, like agitators tend to be. I preferred words and seldom brawling to drawing steel and shedding blood. When I made it to university I surely caused some minor trouble. Weird, how those elitist minds could rarely handle it. My downfall was easy to predict, as I lacked the funds or

rich family to get the special-rich-brat treatment. Yet it came as a surprise. I was brutally invited to join the Strigoi. A night on a planned and booked vacation, out in the Border Princes.

So I learned that sometimes words are not enough. I learned hunger and self-sufficiency, too. I learned discipline or inner strength, as degenerating into savagery was even below the barbarians against whom the academics discriminate on a regular.

In the end it was quite simple. Never socialize when you are thirsty. A vampire wisdom. It took me more than a decade to learn handling the dark kiss. It took even more time to murder through to those who had any real knowledge. I am no thief. I copied texts, especially because I had to search translations for most of them. It seems our clans history had its downsides. It seems, too, that we are damn underestimated. Maybe only the halfwit did select others as dumb and insecure? Self-preservation is an instinct to vampires, no matter, what academic oh so smart claims to know it all better.

Hedge wizards, witches, and Strigany mystics are hunted, because they tend to use Dhar, black magic, aware of it or not. What about ... are hunted, because they belong to our kinfolk or prefer to ally with us. It needs no von Carstein to live alongside our food in some kind of solidarity after all. And there it began. Though tales around the fires and the few books we value tell of owing thanks to the Norse and Arabia. The Strigoi greatness lies in their number of dangerous foes who make no compromise with us. Am I the only who wonders, why anybody would need veterans and nobility to slaughter a shattered bunch of halfwit brutes? The really defeated are already felled, no need for elite assassins and soldiers.

The muscled and cannibalistic feral Strigoi is one mix of the bloodline. So it really gives some nasty want to be werewolf kind of vampires somewhere out there in hostile lands rarely visited anyway. Damn, there are wizards, knights, and witch-hunters who kill just as well. So what?

Our noble courts exist no more. Our folk courts do. Like gypsies ever did, like Norse dared and like the occasional Wanderlust made some people of the Empire venture forth. We are encircled. We are not in a luxurious position. Trouble and death lurk all the time. If you ever saw a mortal gypsy on whom that was not just as true, then you either hallucinated, saw an actor or actress or a disguised spy.

New alliances were made. Rare are our loyalists, especially among Strigany who lack the binding force of the blood. Difficult it is to find people on whom the bloody kiss is not wasted indeed. A lonely road... would there be gypsies left, if they would have shunned the lonely roads? Fewer. Accursed Sigmar, glorified murderer and epitome of prejudice!

Even up to Norsca we stretch our hideouts and occasional strongholds. It is just that we design them differently. Perhaps less obvious. Our agents often serve our cause, because it is one with their own survival. Believe it, even rogues learn honor, when it spares them the pyre!

Maybe we were punished for hubris and up-rise. Maybe we just had our share of defeats, as on closer inspection, neither the Empire nor any other force went through the centuries without their losses. Maybe nobility proved us below their standards the courtier way...

Is necromancy not depending on the user? Flourishing forests, shiny chapels, and anti-wart magic from college are simply not especially high on any vampire priority list anyway.

And who could prove that we vampires, all bloodlines, hail from Khemri? Do all gods hail from one place? Would it need gates to travel so far then? Are all orcs from one place? I doubt the academic lore, as it is the greatest yet laziest villain of all.

Knowledge and Education have long stopped to enrich life. They became tools of sadism, oppression, and tyranny. Lynch-Mob Justice by the more educated, for paying education funds is

asked too much of those selfish & greedy academic-monsters.

Signed

Giorgio Damiano, the meaningless Strigoi-Thrall

ex-student, ex-agitator, Strigoi-Thrall Main Profile of the best RPG ever (attributes aka stats excluded here)

Skills: Academic Knowledges (Necromancy, Law, Educational Science), Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (Evil Empire), Concealment +20%, Dodge Blow, Gossip +20%, Heal, Magical Sense, Perception +20%, Read/Write, Speak Languages (Reikspiel, Strigany, Tilean& Classical), Torture

Talents: Etiquette, Flee!, Frenzy, Luck, Night Vision, Public Speaking, Rover, Savvy, Seasoned Traveler, Streetfighting, Strike Mighty Blow

Blood Gifts: Yes Curses of Nagash: Yes. Equipment: Yes