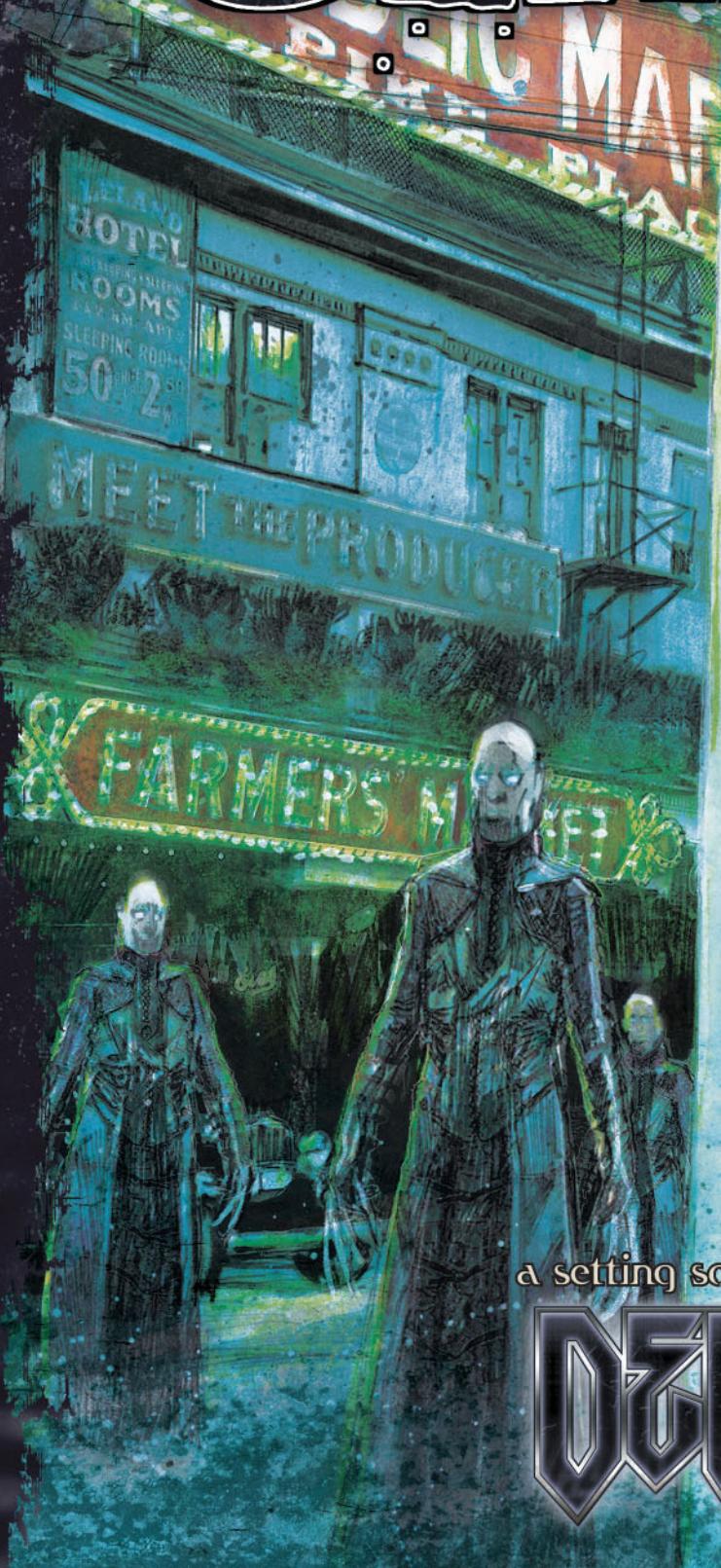


# SPLINTERED CITY

# STORYTELLER



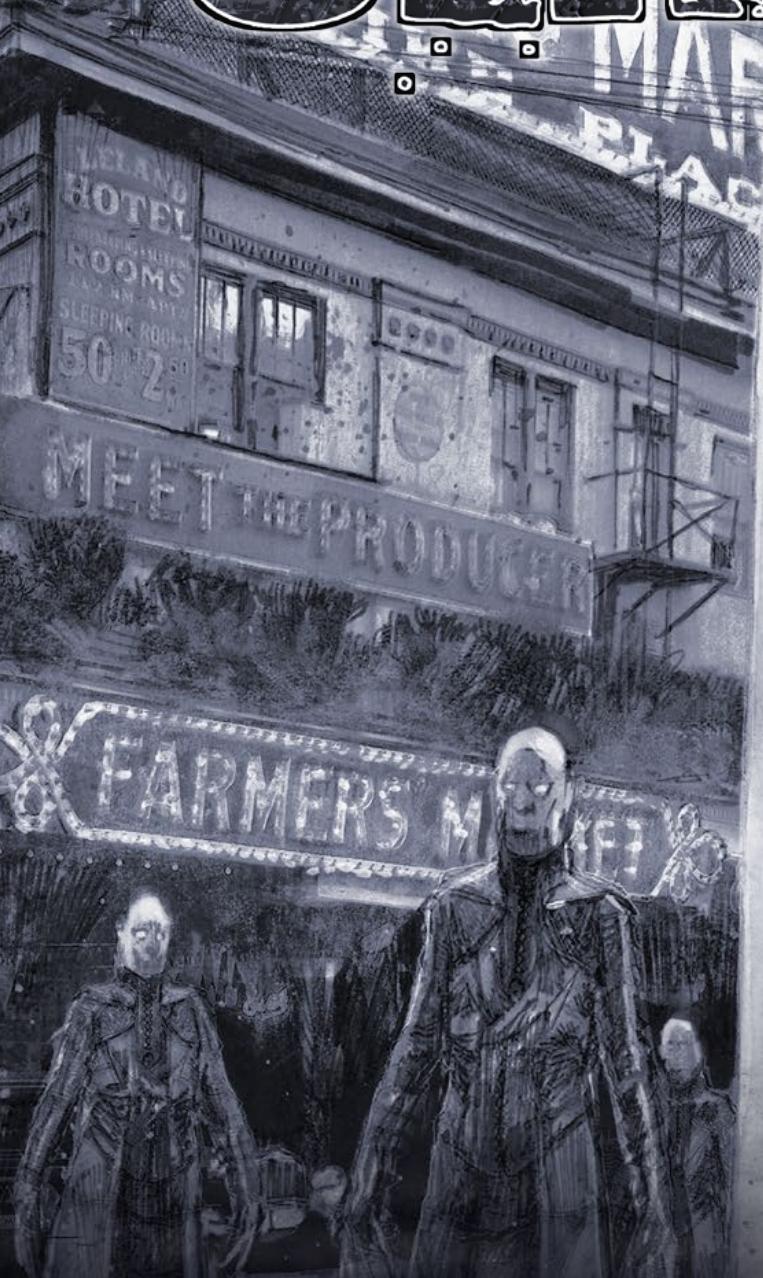
a setting sourcebook for

# DEMON

THE DESCENT

# SPLINTERED CITY

# STORY



Michelle Lyons-McFarland, Peter Schaefer, Mark Stone



C. Wilkins

## A HUNT FOR TRUTH

The girl sat alone in a still apartment. She sat in a hard chair without moving, eyes open, staring straight ahead. The room had furniture, but it was a veneer. A hundred copies of the same book filled the bookcases. The couch, TV, and dining table were gathering dust. The kitchen was clean, but the cabinets were bare and the fridge, though drawing power, was empty.

Dusk came, and darkness fell. The girl turned out the light and returned to her chair, and stared into the darkness. When morning came, she rose, changed her clothes, and left the apartment. Her weekday routine followed: She went to school like a proper fourteen-year-old, passed through the day's classes unnoticed, and returned here, to wait.

Every day, she waited, staring into space, her eyes seeing more than an observer would ever guess.



The first thing anyone noticed was his eyes. He had sad eyes, eyes with bags that people instinctively felt had come from years of weeping. He had fair blond hair, short on the sides and back, and a black coat with too-long sleeves that covered his wrists and a high collar that concealed his neck, and he stood with a sag that matched his eyes.

He stood on the corner of Broad and Second at five AM, in the dark but for the streetlights. He lacked the overpacked backpack and thick-layered clothes that would mark him as homeless, but he looked like he could be scouting a spot for an upcoming change in circumstances. He was watching the news vans parked in the lot on the opposite corner.

Too many lights over there, and too many people coming and going. The news may happen at any hour, but the news doesn't happen in the news van parking lot, and the local station doesn't refit its vehicles in the middle of the night by flashlight. So he watched. He walked loosely around the block a couple times, wandering away from and back into line of sight, always returning to his corner.

At seven AM, still dark in Seattle, a woman ran up and jogged in place at his corner while waiting for the light to change.

Without looking at her, the man said, "Thirteen of them." He spoke Swahili.

"Just like last night," she said in the same tongue. She was a pretty, athletic woman, blond hair tinged dark from lack of sun, face clear and cared for, wearing Seattle outdoor workout clothes: lightweight artificial fabrics that kept out the cold and the rain, but through some miracle of science breathed to prevent overheating. "Any change?" Then the crosswalk signaled, and she jogged on. Five minutes later she was back, again waiting for the light to change.

"One goes to the basement, comes back with orders."

"What's in there, I wonder?" Then she was off.

The conversation continued in this way. "Obviously the leader," he said when she was back. "Assets?"

"One, two maybe, that can access it," she said.

"Today maybe," she added when she returned, "tomorrow for sure."

"Too fast?" he asked.

"Yeah, maybe." Then, when she got back, "Let's not get trapped."

"No. I'll pull a favor from West. Lay some foundation." He scratched his noose scar behind his collar, and his sleeve slipped down to reveal layer after layer of razor scars on his wrist.

She returned again. "Yeah, some insulation would be good." She looked across the street. "Anything new over there?"

"Panel van, loading from the station."

"Cult leader, y'think?"

"Maybe," he said as she took off across the street. "Gone," he updated when she returned. Two in van, rest in twos and threes."

"Huh. Well, I guess it's time to get started."

"This'd be faster if you were more concise," he said.

"Yeah, and it'd be easier if you'd use a damn encrypted phone." They both smiled.

"Be safe," she said.

"You, too," he returned, as she jogged off.

With dawn coming to Seattle, the man walked away.



Four days later, after three consecutive days of environmental control failure in the building, a member of the board asked for a walk-through to see what was wrong. She got the tour by the building superintendent. Distracted by her pointed questions, no one on the maintenance staff noticed the surveillance she put into place. When the mechanical problems did not return, her attention to detail got the credit.



She knocked on the door of a small Woodinville apartment. She was college age and looked like a student, wearing clothes designed to enhance plain looks while announcing her independence from authority with accessories and symbols borrowed haphazardly from the last 40 years of counterculture. She looked uncomfortable, in her stance, her face, and her fidgeting, in the way that college students often tried not to look.

She walked in when the door opened, and as the man closed the door behind her, any appearance of discomfort fell from her like a silk gown flowing to the floor. Inside, the athlete was putting away a pair of handheld game devices.

"Mr. Razor," said the girl with a nod to the man, "Miss Crisis," one to the woman, "thank you for including me."

"Thought about leaving you out of it, West." said Razor. "I'd rather just owe you one. But this is bad."

"And we thought you should know about it, especially if everything goes south," said Crisis.

"I appreciate it," said Comrade West. "What do we have?"

Crisis turned on a TV, one of the few pieces of furniture in the room. The screen showed a frozen black and white image of a commercial building's mechanical room. It looked like it had been redecorated for a 1960s cinema representation of witchcraft: candles, occult symbols painted on sheets draped from the walls, bundles of herbs burning, and so on. Someone's back obscured part of the view.

She pressed play, and several people walked into the scene. One brought a book and read some words from it. Crisis and Razor watched West, who nodded as he recognized the Bible passages spoken in bad Hebrew. The energy of the chanting rose, and the chanter spilled a drop of blood from his thumb. As the drop hit the ground, an angel appeared.

It was unmistakably an angel, and not just as they knew angels, creatures of mechanism and incomprehensible technology, their forms often no more than suggestive of humanity. It was an angel as humans knew angels: shining silver wings brushing the dingy walls of the mechanical room, glowing form limned with a golden fire, impassive metal mask turning slowly to survey its genuflecting worshippers.

At its gesture, the cultists rose. Shadows danced wildly from the angel's supernatural fire as it pointed and gestured with inhuman steel hands, and people left the basement. "Speaking right into their heads," said West.

"That's pretty much what we figured," said Crisis.

There wasn't much more to see. The humans left in pursuit of whatever tasks the angel had set them, and the angel stood in place, still as an idle machine.

Razor froze the image. "Leader returns four times, more silent directions, no clues."

Crisis added, "They 'banish' it at five in the morning, then sneak their stuff out of the basement over the next hour."

"So," said West. "No real idea what they're up to?"

"Nothing clear," said Razor. "Secret marks on power cables, TV cameras, wireless routers, satellite dishes."

"It looks like some kind of project to influence the local communications channels," said Crisis, "but how it works and how to disrupt it, we don't really know."

"Obviously," said West, "it's delicate enough that it needs angelic oversight."

"And important enough," added Razor.

"Right," said West. "Which means it's also fragile enough for us to hurt it, and big enough for us to risk it. What do you have in mind?"

"We hit it," said Crisis. "Hard. The angel is already here. We leave it in place, and it's going to set the project back on its tracks. And we can't throw humans into that meat grinder. We go in ourselves, we can rip this one to shreds before this gets any worse."

"Risky," said West.

"Of course," said Razor. "You going to help?"

"You've always been good friends to the Republic," said West. "Of course I'll help." The girl he currently was pulled out a manila envelope and tossed it on the table. It was the sort used and reused for interdepartmental mail, dozens of addressees and departments written in and crossed out. The bottommost recipient had two names. "These are for you," said West.

*Julius Barnes, Marna Gatley* read the two names. Mr. Razor unwound the string holding the envelope closed and slid out two sheets of paper. They were unremarkable, inkjet-printed papers, except for the signatures at the bottom, signed in blood.

Miss Crisis picked up Gatley's like she was holding a week-old fish. "Great."

"Suck it up," said Razor. He nodded to West. "Thanks. We'll be in touch."

West nodded. As he slipped out the door, the brazen posture, radiating uncertain confidence, of his college-student body draped back over her, and she disappeared into the city.



Mr. Julius Barnes hustled out of his meeting. There'd been a fire in his apartment building, he said. There might as well have been. The phone he'd carried for six years since *that* day had received a text. And he had been informed in no uncertain terms that if he failed to respond to such a text, he would be forfeiting everything he'd gained through the agreement.

*Owl and Thistle*, it read. *Now*. And so he excused himself and went, in a hustle that was sometimes a fast walk, sometimes breaking into a jog. He turned the corner onto the street that contained the dark pub and sprawled flat on his face on the sidewalk.

"Let me help," said a man above him, and he saw the too-long sleeve of a black coat as someone gripped his shoulder, then felt a hand on his neck. Then there was only one person there, a Mr. Julius Barnes, getting up off the sidewalk where he'd fallen. He looked down at himself, stretched his arms and craned his neck, stomped his feet as though he were forcing the fit of a new pair of boots, and then walked back in the direction he'd come.



"I don't need a sitter," said Mrs. Marna Gatley to the teenager at her door.

"Yes, you do," called the athletic woman walking up behind the confused teenager. "Remember? We were going to go out." Marna slammed the door in their faces and bolted the door.

"Fuck," said the athletic woman. "Wait here," she told the sitter. "I'll talk to her." She walked around the house, breaking into a run the moment she was out of sight.

Marna didn't know how she'd gotten upstairs so quickly, but was afraid it wasn't fast enough. She tore open the door to Billie's room and sucked back in a gasping sob when she saw that Billie was playing peacefully. Billie looked up. "Mommy?" she said.

"Mommy?" Billie's voice was rising with her mother's apparent fear, and followed Marna as she wordlessly ran down the hall to her bedroom. "Stay there," Marna cried. It was here she'd always imagined she'd be taken, in the witching hour on a moonless night. That was always when she felt most scared. She almost ripped the drawer out of her nightstand opening it, grabbing a drawstring bag and turning to protect her daughter. Instead she found the athletic woman inside her bedroom door.

Her hand went into the bag and came out with a crucifix. The woman walked toward her, unperturbed. Marna brought out a clear vial with a little cross etched in the glass, popped the cork and splashed it on the woman.

"That won't do anything, either," she said.

"What about this?" snarled Marna, pulling her last line of defense from the bag and switching off the safety. The athletic woman stopped.

"That," said the woman, "would be inconvenient."

"Leave me alone," said Marna. "Leave me and my family alone and go the fuck away." Her gun hand trembled, and she steadied it with her other hand.

"Okay," said the woman. "We can negotiate. I can take... something else."

"You leave my Billie alone!" Marna's voice rose to a squeak as she spoke.

"God, no, I'd never touch a kid. What do you think I—" The woman cleared her throat. "Nevermind. No, give me your wedding ring. You can say you lost it."

"I won't give you anything!" Now both arms were shaking.

"I leave with the wedding ring, or you shoot me down and explain the body to the police. And to Billie," she added, heading off a retort.

Marna was quiet. "I can't get it off with one hand."

"Hold out your hand. Keep your other on the gun and keep it far back, so I can't get it. I'll do it."

Marna held out her hand, kept the other far back and pointed at the woman. The woman reached out and took her hand. And then there was only Marna. She looked at the gun, put on the safety, checked the chamber and then the magazine, and tucked it away in her pocket.

A minute later, she opened the door. "Sorry," she said to the babysitter. "I don't know what came over me. My friend ran ahead to get the movie tickets. We might be late, so stay here until Billie's father comes home, okay?"



The angel idled, its finely-tuned tungsten motor purring quietly. It waited, insubstantial, for its tools to return. Good tools, fine semaphores. They'd soon bring out the prey. Rogue angels, destined for recycling.

Its thoughts wandered back over the last month, the lure it dangled to draw out vindictive rogues so that it could pounce. It and its partner, lying in wait somewhere, waiting for a rogue to appear so that together they could pincer the creature and disable it. Their mission, given by the ultimate authority, and presented to them who could perform it.

The angel shifted into standby as the lock clacked. It observed invisibly as two people not dressed as maintenance entered. One looked like a middle-aged woman, the other a pasty office worker. But the woman had a gun. The angel's motor spun up to full, and it stepped out of invisibility into the material world.

"Rogue operatives," it intoned, and meant to say more, but they were already shooting at it. Their shots took hunks out of its wings and structure, and it lashed back with a long claw, sending the man spinning to the floor.

The woman looked concerned. "Not so bad," said the man from the floor. The angel was confused. That was its best shot, and it was already engaging in damage control and on emergency power. It was built to take on demons, why did they have the upper hand? The man was climbing from the floor and aiming another shot at the angel. If it were alone, they might have ended it then. But it wasn't alone.

From another door in mechanical burst a machine of war. Blades spinning, engines growling, it smashed into the rising man and sent him flying out into the hall. "Razor," cried the woman, before opening up on the new threat.

"Burn them," came the shout from out in the hall. It sounded in pain, and the angel silently lauded its partner. Then the woman in front of him came apart.



Sitting in a classroom and staring off into space, never called on through some minor piece of magic that any other kid in the room would kill for, the girl stood up in a swift movement that clattered her chair to the floor. Everyone looked. The teacher was about to say something when the girl exploded, incinerating everything in the room.

In the center of the shockwave hung a glowing ball of fire, a tiny sun burning fiercely, with a spread of glowing, articulated cables hanging down beneath. Then it soared through the wall it had just opened to the outside, cables streaming behind it as it flew across the city.



A wall burst, and the creatures spilled out into the streets. It was a hurricane of steel and glass, sparks and plasma light and refraction sending flares of scintillating color into the street that shamed the clouded sun in comparison. It didn't last long.

Half an angel lay scattered about the street, a wing shattered, one of its arms torn free, its engine down to emergency power because of the pieces lying in the street. Its partner was unrecognizable, its parts barely hanging together, whatever it had been now nearly a heap of esoteric scrap.

Between them stood two other monsters, each roughly human in form. The one that used to be a man held its side, slowing the leak of something molten from its chest.

"Ready?" said the one that used to be a woman.

The one that used to be a man said, "Ready." Then glowing cables snaked around it from above, and Mr. Razor screamed as current burned through him. The cables drew him upward.

"No," screamed Miss Crisis, and lashed out with a whip that ground like a chainsaw. The burning orb above them rocked with the hit. Fire flared out from the wound, and the orb listed. Two of the cables whipped back at her and knocked her into the second-floor office across the street. Then it rose into the air.

"Run," shouted Razor, before another shock stunned him into silence. And she ran. The orb pursued her into the building, melting its facade, but stopped as she hurtled out the other side and crashed her way into the sewer. It took the rogue that it had apprehended and turned toward the reclamation facility across the water.



Two angels talked in a secret place.

"We didn't capture the rogues," said the first.

"No," said the second. "We barely hurt them."

"I hurt one," said the first.

"But they were about to destroy us."

Silence from the first. Then, "Yes."

"What are we?" said the second.

"Hunters."

"Why are we so fragile?"

Again, silence from the first. "I have queried the authority. I am told only that I am built to specification."

"The same for me," said the second. "We aren't real hunters."

"No?" said the first. "Then what are we?"

"Bait."



The girl sat alone in a still apartment. She sat without moving, staring straight ahead, listening to the world around her, waiting for her moment to strike. But now she also wondered. One rogue captured and held for reprocessing; a successful mission. One rogue lost, gone back to ground; an acceptable misfortune. Two angels deserted their posts, gone rogue; an inconceivable betrayal.

One rogue captured, two rogues created. The girl sat and waited for the next revealed target, just as before. But now she also wondered why.

# CREDITS

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

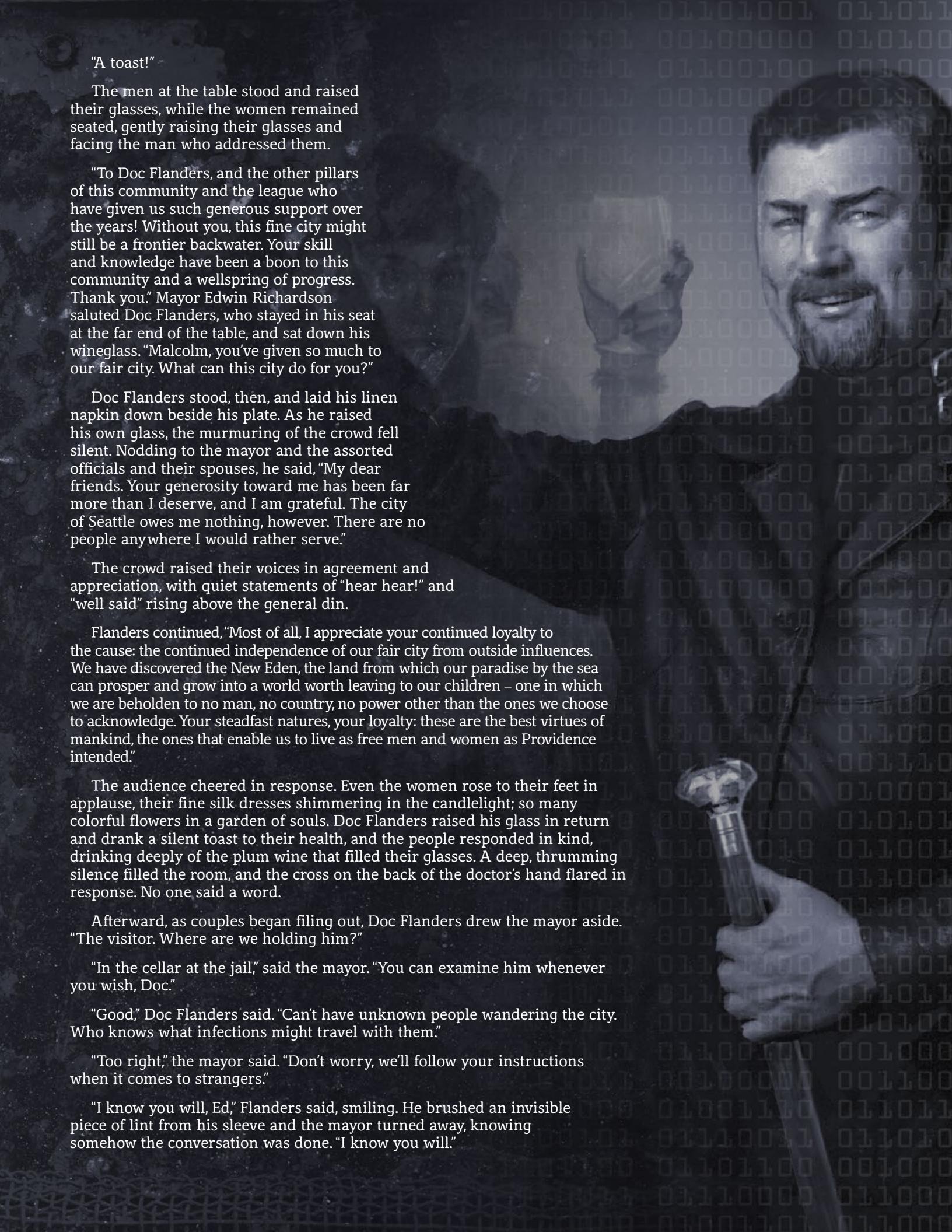
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# SPLINTERED CITY

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"A toast!"

The men at the table stood and raised their glasses, while the women remained seated, gently raising their glasses and facing the man who addressed them.

"To Doc Flanders, and the other pillars of this community and the league who have given us such generous support over the years! Without you, this fine city might still be a frontier backwater. Your skill and knowledge have been a boon to this community and a wellspring of progress. Thank you." Mayor Edwin Richardson saluted Doc Flanders, who stayed in his seat at the far end of the table, and sat down his wineglass. "Malcolm, you've given so much to our fair city. What can this city do for you?"

Doc Flanders stood, then, and laid his linen napkin down beside his plate. As he raised his own glass, the murmuring of the crowd fell silent. Nodding to the mayor and the assorted officials and their spouses, he said, "My dear friends. Your generosity toward me has been far more than I deserve, and I am grateful. The city of Seattle owes me nothing, however. There are no people anywhere I would rather serve."

The crowd raised their voices in agreement and appreciation, with quiet statements of "hear hear!" and "well said" rising above the general din.

Flanders continued, "Most of all, I appreciate your continued loyalty to the cause: the continued independence of our fair city from outside influences. We have discovered the New Eden, the land from which our paradise by the sea can prosper and grow into a world worth leaving to our children – one in which we are beholden to no man, no country, no power other than the ones we choose to acknowledge. Your steadfast natures, your loyalty: these are the best virtues of mankind, the ones that enable us to live as free men and women as Providence intended."

The audience cheered in response. Even the women rose to their feet in applause, their fine silk dresses shimmering in the candlelight; so many colorful flowers in a garden of souls. Doc Flanders raised his glass in return and drank a silent toast to their health, and the people responded in kind, drinking deeply of the plum wine that filled their glasses. A deep, thrumming silence filled the room, and the cross on the back of the doctor's hand flared in response. No one said a word.

Afterward, as couples began filing out, Doc Flanders drew the mayor aside. "The visitor. Where are we holding him?"

"In the cellar at the jail," said the mayor. "You can examine him whenever you wish, Doc."

"Good," Doc Flanders said. "Can't have unknown people wandering the city. Who knows what infections might travel with them."

"Too right," the mayor said. "Don't worry, we'll follow your instructions when it comes to strangers."

"I know you will, Ed," Flanders said, smiling. He brushed an invisible piece of lint from his sleeve and the mayor turned away, knowing somehow the conversation was done. "I know you will."

# INTRODUCTION

**Destiny is something we've invented because we can't stand the fact that everything that happens is accidental.**

**- Nora Ephron, Sleepless in Seattle**

“Hey, welcome to Seattle. Are you new here? Awesome. I’m sure you’ll enjoy it. Let’s get coffee sometime. When? I’ll have to check my calendar. No, that’s okay. I’ll call you.”

And with that, the first social interaction with a city that functions on multiple levels concurrently has begun. Welcome to Seattle. No, they won’t call. But don’t hold that against them – they have a lot to do and new people just aren’t on their radar. Give it a few years.

Seattle is a city of contradictions on the best of days. It’s friendly, gorgeous and welcoming, but also introspective, subdued, and slow to warm up. It’s progressive politically, but conservative civically. Art and charity are well supported, but integration and poverty are the giant elephants in the room. It’s a highly tech-savvy atmosphere that still supports hands-on craftsmanship. It’s home to one of the most diverse zip codes in the US, but it can also be a sea of white faces to the casual observer. The people are welcoming, but they won’t invite newcomers over to their houses. It’s a city of quiet subversion – and that’s what makes it perfect for **Demon: The Descent**.

**Splintered City: Seattle** takes the city as described in **Demon: The Descent** and offers even more detail. Covering each of the time splinters as well as the modern day, **Splintered City** offers an expanded look at what is effectively five cities in one for Storytellers to make their own.

Chapter One focuses on the splinters and their associated modern-day city quadrants, including additional characters, organizations, and conflicts. It discusses how the splinters interact, what the side effects of that might be, and who some of the major figures are for each one. Chapter Two provides a list of Storyteller characters that are ready for play, providing more demons, stigmatics, and angels for Storytellers to incorporate into their games. Chapter Three delves into what Seattle is like for the rest of the World of Darkness, devoting space to each of the major lines for those Storytellers who like a bit of crossover in their games. Finally, Chapter Four provides a slew of story seeds in the format of the Tales in the **God-Machine Chronicle**, giving Storytellers a way to hit the ground running.

For reference, **Splintered City: Seattle** assumes that the events of **How An Angel Dies** (pp. 356-389 of **Demon: The Descent**) have not taken place. Storytellers should feel free

to alter the information given here to include those events if appropriate for their games, but this book makes no reference to either the events or the characters therein.

## THEMES

**Splintered City: Seattle** plays with a number of themes central to the **Demon** experience. Storytellers should play up the themes appropriate to their games while feeling free to de-emphasize others.

One of the biggest continuing themes throughout **Splintered City: Seattle** is **dissonance**. The city contains multitudes that are often conflicting, often simultaneous, and at equal levels of power or “volume.” Its people are largely unapologetic for these seeming incongruities. The thing you expect is regularly not what you get in Seattle, and what you ask for may be answered with an opposing idea. Seattle is quietly, stubbornly, and more-or-less politely up in your face on a regular basis; living here successfully requires some flexibility in order to thrive. Demons are themselves dissonant, their quantum states existing in and outside reality, pursuing two or more lives simultaneously and able to rewrite reality in the space of a heartbeat. They shouldn’t be and yet they are, and not in just one aspect of their lives but several. If Seattle feels like home to demons, small wonder.

**Possibility** is another theme that is intrinsic to the **Splintered City**. Creation and success take means, motive, and opportunity, just like less savory actions. Wealthy, ambitious, and self-motivated people gravitate to Seattle, each looking to make a buck and make a dream happen at the same time. The city is the land of the start-up for a reason. Demons gravitate toward possibility. If the world is static and predictable, possibility cannot exist. The end is predetermined. Seeing multiple paths and responses acknowledges that possibility exists; for demons, that’s often the moment they Fall. The Descent is, in a way, about the search for possible futures. The possibility of Hell is what lures demons on and convinces them to stay severed from the God-Machine. The splintered timelines only reinforce these beliefs – if those can happen, what else can be achieved?

A third theme that runs through the Splintered City is **disaster**. From the sleeping giant of Mount Rainier to the south to the seismic fault that runs through the city, everybody knows that one day, it's all going to be ashes and dust – enjoy life now, because the end is really freaking nigh. All it takes is the right moment to come along and everyone loses as the quaint west-coast city becomes a study in chokepoints and no one makes it out alive. This underlying fatalism is second nature to demons as well; they already know the game is rigged and it's not in their favor. It's impossible to say what tomorrow will bring, but one of these days it'll bring something that won't be good. It might even be their own fault. The search for Hell could bring about their destructions. Every day could be their last: that's the price you pay for living on the run from the ultimate authority. Angels may gather on the head of a pin, but demons dance on the edge of a knife. One wrong step and everything you've worked for is gone.

## INSPIRATIONS

Not everyone can visit Seattle, and even those who do would have a hard time visiting one of the historical times of the splinter settings. While searching the Internet will give you a number of resources, these sources provide some of our favorite looks into the Seattle that is and was.

Tom Robbins' first novel, *Another Roadside Attraction*, was published in 1971. It takes place in the sixties in the Skagit Valley and Seattle. It's a slice of sixties' hippie magical reality shifting that was really a touchstone for people who grew up during that decade. Take some of this into the 1962 splinter for cultural touchstones.

Cherie Priest is a Seattle author, and her novels make use of her knowledge of the area. *Boneshaker* in particular presents an alternative fallen steampunk Seattle with zombies, industrial accidents, and a mad scientist to top it off. An excellent read and good inspiration for the 1889 splinter.

Douglas Coupland is an amazing Canadian author who wrote what may be the definitive novel about working for a company-that-is-in-no-way-Microsoft in the 90s tech boom in Seattle. *Microserfs* is a fascinating piece that shows you what life was like for tech-campus employees in the 1990s.

*Songs of Willow Frost*, by Jamie Ford, focuses on Seattle in the 1930s, particularly the Asian-American community.

It's a well-written if sad work that focuses on the search of an orphaned boy for the mother who disappeared when he was five. Its portrayal of the Great Depression in Seattle in a minority community will go a long way toward fleshing out the 1932 splinter.

*Kyle XY* debuted in 2006 on the ABC Family network. It's a television show about a teenager who wakes up in the woods with no memory of his past and no bellybutton. Set in Seattle, it's a great way to investigate what happens when an angel who Fell doesn't remember their past.

David Lynch gave us the classic Pacific Northwest series *Twin Peaks*, where reality is more of a randomized setting than a definitive rule. Set in North Bend and Snoqualmie outside of Seattle, it provides a sometimes-bizarre idea of what small-town Seattle-area living might be – at least for demons.

The WTO riots were a major event in the history of Seattle, setting the tone for the twenty-first century. Two films were made to talk about the event, one fictional and one a documentary. Stuart Townsend's 2007 film *Battle in Seattle* commemorates the event in Hollywood style, while *30 Frames per Second: the WTO in Seattle* (Rustin Thompson, 2000) is a documentary about the riots that focuses on the disparity between the events and the media portrayal of them. Both are worth seeing, particularly when viewed as a set.

Roger Ebert rated *House of Games* (David Mamet, 1987) as one of the greatest films ever made. Mamet's directorial debut covers gambling, con men, and a woman researching them in Seattle in the 80s, indirectly asking the question of what sort of person might sell their soul and what inducement would be enough? It was largely filmed in the city, though it avoids a lot of landmarks and gets off the beaten path. Well worth it.

*It Happened at the World's Fair* (Norman Taurog, 1963), on the other hand, is not really a good film. It was an Elvis vehicle, notable mostly for the appearance of Kurt Russell as a young boy. It was filmed at least in part at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, however, lending a particular historic value to the movie. Bring your popcorn and any fondness you have for Elvis in his svelte phase.

*Singles* (Cameron Crowe, 1992) is possibly the quintessential movie about 90s Seattle, with a soundtrack full of early 90s local bands and the fashions and looks and concerns of the time and place neatly recorded for posterity. If you want to get the look and feel of the 90s down, watch this film.



C. Walker

"Why are you here?"

"What's it look like? I'm getting fucking smashed." She tapped the bar for another.

He shook his head at the bartender. "Ain't gonna work," she said. "I got Rupert in the palm of my hand. Don't I, Rupert?" He smiled widely and poured her another.

He put his hand over it. "Don't. We have work to do." Then he arched his back to relieve pressure on his wrist, because she'd pulled his hand off her drink in an uncompromising joint lock. Rupert and others in the bar were looking at him with suspicion.

"Don't do that," she said. "Sokay, guys," she said, "he's cool." Looking back at him, "They like me here. This is my place. Don't. Fuck. With my place."

"We have to go," he said. "Why are you wasting time like this?"

"I'm not 'wasting' anything. I'm experiencing. This. This is all I got. My place. My friends," she pulled him in close by the shirt so she could whisper in his ear, "who can never really know me." She let him go. "You got your cause, your Republic—"

"It's your cause, too—"

"No," she hissed. "I'm helping because I owe you one. Or more. But it ain't my cause, and if you're lying to yourself that it is, that's your fucking problem."

"Fine." He stepped back. "Fine. But we need your help, and it's time to go."

"I know. I know. Just, you and your cause, you can always start over, build from nothing, you'll have your mission — sorry, your ideals and your lofty aims and all that. Me, I just have this bar and these people, and if this doesn't go smooth, I'll have jack."

"Yeah," he said. "And if we don't do this at all, we might all be drones by morning."

"Same old shit," she said, and stood up. She wobbled, and he caught her. The look he gave her said "Really?" as clearly as if he'd said it aloud. She smirked back, then looked across the room. "Elaine," she shouted, "What is that, your fifth?"

"Don't think so," called back a zaftig redhead in the back. "Only my third? Maybe?" By the time she was done talking, she sounded wasted.

"Reckless," he said, as the woman he'd been holding up a moment ago stood on her own with perfect balance.

"Necessary," she said. "And no problem. Let's roll."

# chapter one: CITY OF FLOWERS

**Like every other being, I am a splinter of the infinite deity...**  
- Carl Jung

Seattle is a splintered city. Even in its youth, when Doc Maynard and Arthur Denny quarreled over city planning giving the downtown its fractious layout, Seattle was divided. Seattle remains divided – UW students hang out in the University District, the gay and lesbian bars stay in Capitol Hill, Magnolia... is only for the people who already live in Magnolia. There's drift around the edges, but in the main, like attracts like.

Seattle is a polite city. Just like the founders, Seattle's inhabitants don't feel required to agree with anyone else's image of how things should be. So they long ago developed a veneer of warmth to stop themselves from fighting with each other. That's the Seattle Freeze, where half a conversation with a stranger yields a promise to do lunch sometime, confident that sometime will never come.

Seattle is a creative city. With millions of minds all pointing toward a different magnetic north, they're bound to come up with some fascinating patterns. Makerspaces, also known as hackerspaces, are springing up all over Seattle, collectives where folks can pay a small fee to use a shared workspace for whatever projects they like. Artists are everywhere. Everyone feels like they can throw together a piece of software and hit one out of the park.

Seattle is wealthy, dangerous, and busy. Some world-famous companies make their homes here, and their wealth keeps the city functioning even in slow economic times. That means the city is always on the move, because international companies don't stop, and that keeps it competitive. Because of all that, the city can be dangerous. The God-Machine wants what Seattle has – its energy, its creativity, the sort of thing that can only be derived from a city with Seattle's kind of internal conflict. It's fighting itself, but not at war, a mill turning people into creative grist.

Seattle has everything anyone could want, and that includes demons and their ineffable creator.

## GREATER SEATTLE REGION

The greater Seattle region includes, depending on whom one is asking, Seattle proper (North Seattle, South Seattle, West Seattle, and everything in the middle), the East Side (Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland), Woodinville and then Everett up north, Issaquah to the east, and Sea-Tac Airport

### DIVVYING UP THE CITY

The God-Machine reportedly views the city in quadrants as listed here and in **Demon**. Seattle folk don't really think of it that way, though. To a local there's North Seattle, South Seattle, and West Seattle, with several of the central neighborhoods not falling into any of them.

The divisions are only sometimes clear. North Seattle is everything north of the bridges over Lake Union, the Ship Canal, or any of the bays connecting Lake Washington and the Puget Sound. West Seattle is across the West Seattle Bridge (over the Duwamish Waterway). What's South Seattle and what's Seattle proper is a matter of opinion.

Seattleites reference neighborhoods more than they do broad directions. Even neighborhood stereotypes can change over the course of a block. On the north end of Capitol Hill, where it starts to merge with Madison Park, the tenor feels less alt-friendly and more hipster. Queen Anne Hill really is a quirky residential community, except for the two-by-five-block area packed with successful indie shops and services, friendly and flavored liberally with Seattle hipster. A Seattle neighborhood is like Seattle weather: Wait ten minutes or walk a couple blocks, and it'll change.

and Renton to the South. One might even count Bainbridge Island, a ferry ride west.

While the East Side is firmly under the thumb and eye of the God-Machine, the other outlying regions are freer, to varying degrees. Issaquah is Seattle's gateway to the rural world, or its escape from the urban one. Just beyond it lies the Cascade Mountain Range to the east, which traps moisture coming in off the Puget Sound and makes Seattle green and wet and the rest of Washington to the east look like Idaho. (This physical distinction highlights another cultural divide popular in Seattle: the Cascade curtain, that suggests everyone east of the mountains is a conservative redneck farmer and everyone west of the mountains is a liberal hipster programmer.)

Everett and Woodinville are satellite towns for Seattle. Each has its own life, but borrows much of its character from Seattle and Bellevue – not that everyone there would agree – and does so in a manner like a kid trying on an older sister's clothes. It doesn't really fit, and one wonders when the kid is going to discover a unique identity. In reality, these towns are going to be overwhelmed by Seattle's expanding cultural lines, Woodinville first, because it's smaller and closer. Everett has more time, and if it finds its own character it might manage to remain distinct.

Renton is the town that Boeing built. Their choice to center their operations here was the seed crystal for a spread of business parks and service industries supporting them, which then supported a sprawl of residential developments in Renton and in nearby Kent. Renton is on track to be a lower-cost mirror of Bellevue, in the same way that Everett's questionable destiny is to become a distant Seattle neighborhood. The difference is that Renton would love to be another Bellevue, while Everett will fight its absorption into Seattle's pandirectional counterculture – Which may be why Bellevue is Renton's role model and Seattle is Everett's.

SeaTac, named for serving Seattle and Tacoma, is really its own small city and not just an airport. While there were towns surrounding the airport before SeaTac, they merged into a single entity decades ago when they admitted they were mostly support for the airport. The roads there service the airport and employees, and even the schools aim students toward aeronautics.

Bainbridge is a wealthy bedroom community for downtown Seattle in the same way Mercer Island is a bedroom community for Bellevue, except there's no road. Commuting to downtown Seattle from Bainbridge, as many do, is by ferry. For people in Seattle, it's mostly off the radar. People go if they have family or friends there, and otherwise they just don't think about it. That's probably how the God-Machine likes it.

Seattle is a vibrant place and all that energy spills into the surrounding area. The God-Machine plots to use that for its own ends, or else to shield its plots from being thrown off course, through its Infrastructure and its servants. Important

## GETTING AROUND SEATTLE

Seattle is bordered by the Puget Sound on one side and Lake Washington on the other. The only way into it is to squeeze in from the south, drive down from the north, or to cross either I-90 or 520 from the east. This means traffic.

Rush hour lasts from six to ten in the morning, and three to seven in the afternoon and evening. It's better if heading away from the city in the morning and heading toward it in the evening, but better than awful still isn't very good. Sporting events and other special occasions throw everything out of whack, especially when they close I-90 for the annual Blue Angels show or the periodic 520 closures.

In general, someone behind the wheel and staying within Seattle proper should be able to get where she's going in twenty minutes, ten if it's really close. Heading to or from the East Side, add ten minutes. Going somewhere a bit farther out (Everett or Renton), it's forty, forty-five minutes to get there.

In rush hour (and there's a lot of rush hour), double the time; with luck, it's only time and a half. If there's also something else going on, add the original time on again. If it's also snowing for some reason, shit, son, just stay at home.

Light rail goes from the airport to downtown in roughly 30 minutes, with additional stops in between. The bus system isn't as good as it used to be, but it travels at somewhat better than the speed of traffic on the express lanes. Except for trips to or from downtown, taking the bus almost always adds 30 minutes to an hour to a trip, because the busses route through downtown and make several stops.

local Infrastructure includes the Mercer Island Lid (officially the Luther Burbank Lid), the Washington State Department of Transit (WSDOT, sometimes pronounced wizdot) ferry system, the Seattle Seahawks training facility south along I-405, and the Issaquah Community Center. All are observed and maintained (in part) by a cult within WSDOT, the RAT Squad.

## CHAPTER ONE: CITY OF FLOWERS

### INFRASTRUCTURE: LUTHER BURBANK LID

Built over the I-90 bridge as it crosses Mercer Island between Seattle and Bellevue, the Luther Burbank Lid conceals the freeway from the “sensitive” people of the Island. It creates a tunnel for drivers to pass through, so they can reach their destinations without ever really seeing the Island.

Any tunnel of that size requires significant ventilation, and the Lid contains several enormous vents pumping air in and out of the tunnel through blocky ventilation towers on the green space atop the Lid (known as Luther Burbank Park). In addition to pulling bad air out of the tunnel, it also pulls out certain emotions and thoughts. People driving through the tunnel find their anger, feelings of unfairness, and desires to do harm diminishing as the Lid pulls them out, transmutes them into emotions of vague smug contentedness, and disperses them into the Mercer Island Park above.

The Lid only removes these emotions from people going east toward Bellevue. People heading west into Seattle proceed unmolested.

**Type:** Defense

**Function:** Remove dangerous emotions from people entering Bellevue from Seattle via I-90

**Security:** The Mercer Island Police Department is overstaffed as a general rule, a guarantee to the inhabitants of the Island that their home will be a safe place. The police also watch the Lid and coordinate with the State Patrol to keep a watch on the I-90 tunnels. Additionally, members of the RAT Squad regularly check up on the location.

**Linchpin:** Maintenance Door 32 in the tunnel beneath the Lid doesn’t lead anywhere. Behind it is a wooden rack of origami gladioli in a hundred colors.

### MYSTERY CULT: RAT SQUAD

The Washington State Department of Transportation performs upkeep on one of the state’s most important bits of infrastructure: the roads. The department’s thousands of employees work constantly keeping the roads clear and functioning, determining what roads and bridges need repair and ensuring they get it.

The Regular Analysis Team, called the RAT Squad, is a group of specialists trained to examine the more esoteric bits of the highway system and make sure they’re in good working order. To most people, this means the technical bits of drawbridges, the quiet road project on I-405, the metered on-ramps, and so on.

The RAT Squad knows better. Blood must be spilt on the altar of order, and someone who understands that must be the one to do it. They know that the strange is behind

the continued strength of the status quo, the orderly state of affairs that they joined WSDOT to maintain. They accept the honor of that burden.

RAT Squad members number in the 50s, led by Assistant Transportation Secretary Maria Drabek. They are typically spread out across the state, ready to step in and take over from uninitiated employees, with a greater concentration in the Seattle metropolitan area. Initiates always come from within WSDOT.

Until an initiate earns the trust of the senior engineers, the cult’s masters, she believes that she is taking care of special projects for the US government. Completing the initiation involves observing a senior engineer transubstantiate blood into machinery and an introduction to the concept of the great architect who sacrifices itself to maintain the world’s order.

#### Initiation      Benefits

- Initiates (“trainees”) are taught how to spot certain signs of Infrastructure requiring an expert eye. They receive a Crafts Specialty in the God-Machine.
- • Ready to work on her own, the member goes through further training to gain the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit for her God-Machine Specialty and the Area of Expertise Merit for the same.
- • • Just as the great architect gives of itself so that the human world may function (they believe), the engineer learns how to give of herself to maintain the mysterious Infrastructure that sustains the world. She can take a point of lethal damage to add a success to any roll when using the God-Machine Specialty.
- • • • Prepared for a supervisory position, the cultist gains either Clairvoyance (typically through computer modeling and accessing cameras that aren’t there) or Psychometry.
- • • • • The cult leaders have the ability to contact an angel mentally, typically to inform their masters when some piece of Infrastructure is threatened beyond the RAT Squad’s ability to keep in good repair. This is a general broadcast rather than talking to any specific angel; results are not guaranteed, but typically the problem gets fixed.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: VON NEUMANN’S COFFEE SHOPS

This isn’t a specific coffee shop chain. This ongoing project of the God-Machine’s is distributed across all major coffee shop chains, visible across the nation and in much of

the world: the self-replicating coffee shop. Once one exists, it consumes local resources until it has gathered enough, and then it expends those resources to create another of itself, another coffee shop that will collect, store, and duplicate, ad infinitum.

In addition to serving as a source of delicious, overpriced, possibly compliance-drug-laced coffee, the coffee shops launder money and serve as emergency boltholes for agents of the God-Machine. Each has a concealed basement that trusted cultists can use as a mundane safehouse (though probably each believes it is a feature of only that specific coffee shop), and angels in need can avail themselves of recuperative architecture there.

The coffee shops all have a near-identical layout, controlled by a simple algorithm that can adjust to most variations in a new shop's location. Updates to the coffee shop master plan for a specific chain (at least one is stored in the Seattle Command and Control Infrastructure) propagate outward through all the shops designed according to that algorithm.

Occasionally, the algorithm doesn't function properly with a given coffee shop's location, and the coffee shop goes rogue. Layouts and design choices change, often drastically, and the coffee shop offers only limited functionality to the God-Machine's servants. Most rogue coffee shops do not self-replicate.

**Type:** Concealment and Logistics

**Function:** Funnel money, improve human compliance and efficiency, provide safehouse services globally, and self-replicate.

**Security:** None.

**Linchpin:** The Linchpin for each chain is the master layout and algorithm, encoded on a glass sphere one foot in diameter. Each individual shop has a Linchpin that can disconnect it from the master plan, potentially destroying it or sending it rogue. A shop's Linchpin varies, but it is usually outside and has some glass element – a transformer on a nearby pole, something strange in the sewer, et cetera.

## A NEW SPLINTER

Agents of the God-Machine have been snooping around the fractures to the existing splinters, more so than usual. "Hazardous waste cleanups" have taken place near several of the existing fractures, cultists with less cover have hung around them, and more than one angel has been spotted observing and scouting through several of the fractures.

At the same time, something big is beginning to move in Bellevue. Construction crews from several states have come to town to work on massive projects, but no new buildings seem to be going up. Seattle proper has gotten even less oppressive surveillance and attention as the God-Machine has withdrawn some of its influence. Something big is brewing, and demons wonder why and want to know more.

Possibilities include:

**Splinter Cleanup:** The God-Machine is preparing a massive piece of Elimination Infrastructure. The Seattle splinters have gone on long enough. They were allowed to remain this long partly as an experiment and partly because of the heavy sunk costs in each of them, but they are reaching the point where letting them continue is more expensive than the work to remove them. If the Infrastructure is completed, it will close the fractures one by one. Severed from the dominant timeline that sustains them, the splintered timelines will fade out. If countered and suborned, this Infrastructure may provide an opportunity to move or control the city fractures.

**Improved Security:** Whether Seattle's first splinter was the God-Machine's backup gone wrong, a prototype of the splinters that followed, or something else, the God-Machine has learned from observation. Splinter timelines are effective redoubts for Its enemies, and It can use one as well. It plans to spawn a new splinter timeline that mirrors Bellevue. With Its stronghold duplicated and set to self-purge every six months so it can never go bad, the God-Machine would have a secure place from which to strengthen its grip on Seattle.

**Create a Nexus:** The time has come to reclaim the splintered realities from their rogue influences. Each is too great an investment of time and energy to let go to waste; with one major operation, the God-Machine can make all these locations available to its agents. The splinter Its agents are working to open in Bellevue will be a crossroads to all the other timelines. Once the angels can travel from the nexus to the other splinters at will, retaking the other splinters will be a small step away.

**Summon a Future Splinter:** Fractures join the dominant timeline to the past; the God-Machine can also connect them to the future. It wants to cut into a future time where it has the upper hand, and the place to project such a future from is Bellevue. If it succeeds, not only will It have Its own little universe where everyone obeys openly, but It will also be able to call on resources from the future. If the demons of Seattle don't want to be hunted by cyber-implanted fanatic assassins with futuristic weapons, they're going to have to do something.

## 1889 AND THE SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

While it's easy to conflate the powers of a Judeo-Christian monotheistic god and those of the God-Machine, the fact is that no one really knows what It can or can't do. Its immensity renders It unknowable, and the inability to fathom Its ends and processes may extend even unto Itself. Certainly that correlates with the experiences of the Unchained, given Its blind spots and back alleys, secret operatives out in the cold and rogue agents loose among the unsuspecting. Surely an omniscient, omnipotent entity wouldn't allow such things to go on? The more paranoid explanation is that it's part of a deep game that

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no one alive can fathom; now and again sudden actions come to light that support this conclusion. Occam's razor leads the majority of Unchained to another opinion, however: that the God-Machine is neither omniscient nor omnipotent. In many ways, that is the ultimate reason that angels Fall: it's the one sin for which It cannot be forgiven.

For knowledgeable demons who lean toward the latter explanation, the growing independence of the 1889 splinter is a prime example of something that a proper reigning universal constant would never allow. The splinter should not be doing what it does, but it is doing it regardless. Unlike the other shadow realities, 1889 does not reset. It no longer has set boundaries. It is no longer static — and that last fact is the one that both terrifies and exhilarates the Unchained. It is the most concrete contemporary example of a Hell on Earth (for certain values of “on”) made reality — but what happens if it succeeds?

It's that latter question that has troubled the Watchers for decades, and some believe that one can see the beginnings of its answer in the splinter as a whole. While some Unchained observers say the Seattle splinters are independent of one another, joined only by their connections to the dominant timeline, others see them as a network wherein all the pieces are intertwined. So long as everything remains in order, balance is achieved. Should one fall out of place, however, the others must necessarily fail as well. Those who adhere to the network theory insist that this is why the God-Machine has not intervened with the situation sooner — It had to resolve all the problems or none of them, and Its limited access to the splinters made that task difficult, if not impossible.

Ignoring questions of the God-Machine's capability, however, the question remains: can a demon create a physical Hell, and if so, what happens to everything else? Anyone who has more than a passing knowledge of the 1889 splinter is also aware of Mother Damnable and her efforts to claim it as her own personal Hell, invitation only. The changes she has wrought are nothing short of astounding. While no one can say with any certainty that she is the first to achieve so much success, it's fair to say that few other contemporary demons have achieved so much, so publicly. She is creating a bubble, for all intents and purposes, where evidence of the God-Machine has been systematically erased and a new future written over top of it.

If her bubble of Hell (which seems to keep getting bigger) succeeds in either remaining barely attached to the dominant timeline or else splits off painlessly and completely, then for all anyone knows, she will have succeeded and found a Hell of her own making — her Descent will be complete. If, however, as some scholars theorize, it is not an independent offshoot and rather part of an intertwined space-time eco-structure, then it is not so much a shining example of Hell as a malignant cancer, one which threatens to destroy everything if allowed to flourish unchecked. Which solution is right? Would action destroy a potential demonic refuge or keep the world turning? And if action is necessary, who should, or even

could, do anything about it? Everyone has questions, but no one has answers — and the clock is ticking.

## DAY'S OF PAST FUTURE

The splinter itself is referred to as the 1889 splinter, as that was the point of its divergence from the dominant timeline. If one travels within the splinter itself, however, the calendar year is not 1889. The year as its inhabitants see it is 1930. The splinter has been in existence far longer than 41 years, but that is the year that some sort of tipping point was achieved and time stopped repeating. The splinter stopped resetting itself and just... moved on.

No one is entirely sure how 1889 became unmoored from its dock, as it were. Any number of demons have reported back that through acts of will and investments of time and energy, the Unchained can make changes in a splinter and cement them into place, to a certain degree. Every small change takes a great degree of effort, however, and even then, the regular resetting of the internal splinter timeline erodes these changes through repetition, gradually washing them away like a sandcastle before the tides. Splinter citizens who learn the truth about the God-Machine, the Unchained, or the nature of their world and are allowed to remember past a timeline reset are slowly erased from existence, written out of their own lives by subsequent cycles. To some extent, the Unchained can stave this effect off with selective small rewrites of reality, but the effort it takes is significant.

If this is the path Mother Damnable took to craft her version of Hell, then other Unchained with similar aspirations have to not only admire her efforts, but also be daunted at the price she paid for her creation. Some find the suggestion unlikely, simply from an examination of resources, while others think she did exactly that (and fear her all the more). Another leading theory is that she found the splinter's underpinning Infrastructure and suborned it, and that is what let her finally exert enough control to claim it as her own. Only one thing is known for certain: Mother Damnable has no intention of sharing her secrets with anyone else.

## THE ABSENTEE WATCHMAKER

While few would really argue that the God-Machine is omnipresent, It does seem to have Its gears and switches and other technological implements into just about everything. Sometimes It seems unaware, while other times it becomes painfully obvious to Unchained that It is all around them. One of the more interesting things about the splinter timelines, however, is that the God-Machine's influence there is tenuous. Some duplicated pieces of Infrastructure function normally and can summon Its minions, while others don't. Some seem to send off readings that are received and answered, while other blips of data seem lost in the void, disconnected from whatever receiver was intended to collect and collate them.

It would be incorrect to say that the God-Machine is not present in the splinter timelines, but the degree of Its presence and influence does vary. If Hell is a place beyond the reach of the God-Machine, completely outside Its presence, then Mother Damnable is determined to create such a space within the 1889 splinter. She wants to smash or suborn every gear, unplug every plug, and convert or eliminate (or jack) every God-Machine follower who enters her realm. If she does this, she believes that one day, the final link will break. The world she's created will be free, and damn the rest of creation if need be. Unfortunately, that's exactly what her opponents are afraid of.

Mother Damnable is effectively facing opposition from two sides: the God-Machine and Its minions, and from those Unchained who feel her efforts endanger the world as they know it. No one trying to stop her is particularly happy about the messy situation that engenders, as very few Unchained could consider the God-Machine an ally under any circumstances. At the same time, the once-cautious reception outsiders to 1889 could expect from both Mother Damnable and the people of her splinter has turned positively xenophobic – strangers are simply not welcome. Those who are discovered quickly learn what it's like to be at Mother Damnable's questionable mercy. Her efforts also bring up the question of whether what she wants is even possible – can creation exist without the God-Machine running through it?

## WHO'S WHO

One of the interesting factors about Seattle in the main timeline's 1889 is that power within the city was diffused; the mayor and constabulary held official power, but it would be

laughable to say that they had anything like an absolute rule. The 1889 splinter has a similar appearance, but only on the surface. Power within the splinter is concentrated, held not by elected officials or public figures but by Mother Damnable and her agency. She does not govern directly, it's true – she and her group stay to themselves as much as possible so as not to risk the spread of stigmatic conversion. She has instead created a cult of personality through her boarding house and personal power. Only those she designates have any say in the splinter's proceedings.

Most people in 1889 are ordinary mortals who are surprisingly untouched by the everyday horrors of the World of Darkness. In part this is due to a desire on Mother Damnable's part to limit the amount of influence other types of supernatural creatures might have, but also to protect her power from potential threats. She has not declared an all-out war against the supernatural in the 1889 splinter, but those individuals who come under her notice are carefully observed. More than a few have gone missing over the years after making a play for power and influence.

At the same time, visitors may be surprised to see a larger-than-normal number of stigmatics present in 1889 as compared to the other splinter realities, particularly among the city's officials and top social figures. The marks they bear tend to be subtle and largely ignored by the population. If stigmatic individuals are asked, they describe it as "a mark of her favor" but refuse to elaborate further, calling it a private matter. They are firmly on the side of Mother Damnable, though, and answer to her unquestioningly, forming an unofficial cult of personality whose members only rarely admits to its existence.

Although Mother Damnable began her quest for Hell alone, over time she has accepted a number of other demons

## THE STIGMATIC OR THE MACHINE?

For observers of the 1889 splinter, one of the more troubling ongoing aspects is the prevalence of stigmatics. Unlike the other splinters, where stigma is either a temporary status or is slowly phased out over successive timeline reboots, stigmatics not only persist but continue to appear at a steady rate as humans are subjected to a continued demonic presence. Mother Damnable tries to limit access to herself and her agency, isolating them from anyone not already afflicted except in dire circumstances, but even that has not completely halted the strain.

The persistent timeline and changes seem to mean that the splinter has lost its ability to remove stigmatics or prevent their spread – an effect that persists even as Mother Damnable does her best to remove all evidence of the God-Machine from the splinter in an effort to isolate and protect her domain. The Loyal League is trying to effect a cure, but thus far there's been no visible success.

Those demons who ponder philosophical and pragmatic questions of Hell are troubled by this turn of events, as it brings up two thorny questions. First, is the inherent nature of the Unchained such that complete removal from the God-Machine is an impossibility? Is their nature as Fallen angels antithetical to that goal? Second, is the rise in the number of stigmatics somehow a reaction to the removal of Infrastructure and other direct God-Machine influences? To phrase it another way, is this somehow a surfacing of the God-Machine's nature in humanity, and if so, does it apply to all of humanity, or only those created as part of a splinter?

# CHAPTER ONE: CITY OF FLOWERS

into her counsel, perhaps realizing that she couldn't do it all on her own. She is the unquestioned leader of the Loyal League, a small, exclusive agency of demons chosen with an eye to extending their influence throughout all levels of the city. They want to keep the splinter firmly under their control as they help shape it into a Hell they can all share.

## THE LOYAL LEAGUE

While Mother Damnable established a power base among city officials early on between her brothel and her influence on the local judiciary, keeping complete control over an entire chunk of reality was more than any one demon could reasonably hope to achieve on her own. Guards stand on the gates now and very few slip in unchallenged, but once far more visitors came, and some of them wanted to stay.

Over the years, demons would trickle into the splinter and seek Mother Damnable out: some with the idea of beating her, some with the idea of learning from her, and some with the idea of joining her. She kept her spot through a mixture of personal power and wise use of resources. She dismissed potential students as little more than thieves who would steal her secrets before her efforts had come to fruition. From those who came to join her, though, she accepted auditions: internships, testing to see who was creative enough, capable enough, and subservient enough to assist in bringing reality around to her way of thinking without once demanding to hold the reins. Through trial and error she found three willing and able compatriots who help enact her will without challenging her authority – at least not yet.

The first recruit was a demon who came to her seeking justice, or something like it. He called himself Set, as that is what he had been a part of before he Fell. He wanted answers, but the only thing she would give him was an opportunity to serve her – which oddly helped, despite what he'd expected. He took on the persona of Doc Flanders, a strange Dutchman with huge mutton-chop whiskers and a predilection for healing and improving. He's become the best bloodhound Mother Damnable could ask for; if someone sneaks into the splinter, he's usually the first to find them. It's as though he can smell the God-Machine on them, or at least that's what demons claim. Doc Flanders is the acknowledged leader of the professional and educated levels of Seattle society.

The second member of the team lives in the Conklin Hotel, upstairs with some of the other girls. No one calls her anything but Sarah Jane. To look at her in her mortal form, people would say there are Olympic gymnasts who are bigger. She looks like an underfed, undersize, late-teens opium addict, with dark hollows around her eyes and hair that's always mussed. She is Mother Damnable's enforcer, however; no one treats Sarah Jane with anything but the highest respect, not ever, even when she walks the strangest paths at the darkest hours.

The last member of the team speaks English with the accent of a wealthy native Frenchwoman. Her family is said to trace

back to the French aristocracy (though whether through Louis Philippe or an older branch has never been clear). While that may be worth little in other places, it is a significant draw here in frontier Seattle. Anyone who styles themselves upper class within the confines of this place attends Madame Givenchy's salons and dotes on her every word – a fashion among the locals that never seems to go out of style.

## TICK, TICK, TICK

Every opportunity realized has a cost. Sometimes the price comes up front, but sometimes it's hidden, never spoken until after the choice has been made. To say, then, that the cost of a Hell of one's own is likely astronomical should come as no surprise. And yet, astronomical in this instance is not quite the right term – metaphysical is far closer to the truth.

For all the efforts of Mother Damnable, the God-Machine still has a presence in 1889 (or 1930, as the calendar reads) and she knows it. Angels and their agents still find their way in, though they rarely remain undetected for long – at least as far as anyone can confirm. The spreading stigmatic effects are one symptom, but not the only one. Odd gadgets have been appearing as well; some of them appear to be harmless to the extent that Doc Flanders would swear to their safety, but not all. One of Mother Damnable's last "apprentices" used one of these found gadgets, believing it would allow her to sense time instabilities. When she activated it, it worked. It also attached itself to her form and opened a rift, pulling her through with a metallic shriek and closing in her wake. It is perhaps a sign of mistrust between Mother Damnable and Doc Flanders that she declines to allow anyone else to use any of them since then, instead stockpiling them in a warehouse near the waterfront.

From this, it seems that it's not that angels can't get to the splinter, it's that the splinter's nature makes it hard for them to see or sense within it. Send up enough of a signal, though, and they'll descend fast and hard. It's therefore clear that the angels want to get there and that the God-Machine wants to be in the splinter, but something makes entering more difficult for Its agents than would otherwise be the case.

## INSTABILITY

A number of theories exist as to why it seems harder (but by no means impossible) for the God-Machine and Its agents to find their way into 1889. Some say it's due to Mother Damnable's single-minded stamping out of every piece of Infrastructure she locates. Others claim that has nothing to do with it, but rather that the God-Machine's powers are weak in the splinters to start with and thus it's no great change at all. The prevailing theory, however, is that the God-Machine can't seem to get a handle on the 1889 splinter because it isn't 1889 here anymore.

The high points of the theory are as follows: Since the splinter stopped resetting, time has moved forward. With every year that passes, the splinter becomes less a splinter and more real, as evidenced in the sudden influx of people from

other places within the splinter reality. Trade with China and Japan can and does happen. People show up from Back East. There's talk of a train across the Great Plains, and ships leave for the Yukon every few weeks. Mail that is sent out receives answers. And those are just the most visible signs.

It's hard to say how much "reality" the areas outside of Seattle actually possess. People who arrive only describe the areas outside in vague, generic terms. Letters from the outside world are full of greetings but rarely plans. Trade ships that leave the Sound return with empty holds and profits, but no new stories or contacts, even though the people involved seem to believe they've met people and had new experiences. People who leave are gone for the amount of time they say they will be, but where they actually go and what happens to them while they are "offstage" is anyone's guess.

The other problem is that as the years creep forward, the splinter with its questionable reality not only seems to solidify in places, but it encroaches on existing splinters. The 1932 splinter is only two years ahead of where 1899 is on the calendar. What happens when it reaches 1932? Will the 1932 splinter be overwritten? Will they crash into each other and collocate? Will 1889 rebound on itself and reset? Nobody knows. Signs of instability, however, are already starting to show.

Thus far, the signs inside the 1889 splinter are minor and largely unnoticed by the population at large. The *Post-Intelligencer* ran an odd story about veterans of the Great War that no one could understand or remembered writing, and so was dismissed as a prank. A tent city appeared south of town in the forest, where Hooverville once stood in the real world, and vanished the next day. Flickering lights in the shape of a building were reported on top of Beacon Hill for a whole week together before disappearing without a trace since.

Even more upsetting, "mystery spots" are appearing in random locations around town where the laws of physics seem to be disrupted. Some of these are nothing more than pranks, but in some time seems to flow differently: gravity changes, magnetic fields act in unpredictable ways, electricity flows along surfaces like water, or light bends strangely around corners. It's become the rage among young, adventurous, or drunk people to hold "spot parties," where they experiment with how the laws of the world seem different. These activities are heavily discouraged by the constabulary and by extension Mother Damnable, but the novelty is too enticing. Even word of a young man going missing after spending an evening in one on a dare hasn't deterred the curious.

Whether or not these strange events are signs of a larger problem, it is certainly true that they're troubling enough for the Loyal League to take them very seriously. This has in no way stopped Mother Damnable's plans — at this point it's unlikely that she could stop the progress of the splinter even if she tried. The potential "what ifs" are adding up, however, and as demons grow invested in the other splinters or the dominant timeline, they must eventually decide where they stand on the 1889 issue — and whether that feeling is strong enough to precipitate action.



### BACK IN THE MODERN DAY

If the 1889 splinter is at least partially the past of the dominant timeline, how are things faring with the changes that have come about? Mostly fine, though there are some oddities if one knows what to look for. The best way to describe it is superimposing a picture of a location on top of the actual location in the correct spot so that it blends in. It looks right at a glance, but something about the depth of the shadows is off, or the angle of the light, or the color of the brick on the building compared to what should be there. For example, one dilapidated brick building across from one of the missions has been known to flicker in and out in the dead of night, replaced by a two-story wooden structure, then back again. The building is boarded up and the changes mostly remain unseen, except by homeless men who warn one another not to break in and sleep there. These changes are largely restricted to the Pioneer Square neighborhood as it has the nearest correspondence to the space of the 1889 Seattle. Each passing year sees the oddities move further outward, though, as the city in the splinter continues to expand.

The biggest change in the city proper in the SW quadrant has been the sudden proliferation of transit: light rail, elevated rail, automated buses, trolleys, ferries, automobiles have been put into service throughout the area, possibly overserving the need there. The reasons for this are unclear, but rumors persist: tunneling under the city while cordoning off the streets for pedestrian and transit use only, creating a walkable neighborhood where travel is restricted to public-use vehicles only. The systems are highly automated, making some question how this can possibly save money or improve safety in the area, but the authorities claim to have nothing to say on the matter.

### THE BUNKER

With talk of a tunnel has come talk of why that tunnel wouldn't work, and among the more conspiratorial, talk of obstacles below the surface that would obstruct the tunnel. In particular, reports have surfaced of a structure deep below the city streets that's still sealed off, left from a mansion that's long since been torn down, filled in, and paved over. Or else it's an old bank vault from a building that burned down in the fire and got sealed over. Whatever it was, it's been a while since this local legend resurfaced, but all the locals seem to know it — except there's a group of stigmatics who claim that the legend never existed before last year, and that the vault is new, if it exists at all. An Inquisitor who called himself Paracelsus claimed a few months ago that the changes in the 1889 splinter were ultimately not a concern, as whatever cataclysm might have arisen from it has already been trapped in a bunker under Pioneer Square. Nobody paid much attention, but he's vanished in the past month, leaving scholars to wonder whether he might have been correct.

While it could be a piece of Infrastructure, the possibility remains that it's not — or that it doesn't belong to the God-Machine (or at least not any more). No one's gotten down to it yet to investigate, but it could also be a an escape pod for Mother Damnable, a portal of sorts for the Loyal League if their efforts at creating Hell turn out to be too unstable. This is assuming that it exists at all.

Individuals looking for the bunker should be on guard; if it is Infrastructure, suborned or not, it's bound to be guarded by more than just its remote location. If it's a strictly human creation, getting to it still has its complications. And if it's a new phenomenon that's been written into the local memory... well, that has implications for what other reality edits might have been put in place, and by whom.

### CREEPING GEARS

Seattle loves its public art. The latest trend is bits of both broken and working gears placed in strange corners, the sides of buildings, half buried in the ground, in image and holograph and glass and metal and wood. The pieces of art have three primary aspects in common: they show up overnight, they all consist of gears (whether those are the end result or a bunch of gears put together to suggest something else), and they all bear a stamp of an outlined gear as a signature. They otherwise vary from piece to piece, sometimes playfully taking on the character of the neighborhood or building they're in (such as the gear-compass made of baseball bats outside of Safeco Field), sometimes showing disturbing elements (suggestions of someone being crushed, or red splashes within the teeth).

The pieces are unclaimed, but the installations match the style of a local artist named Marc Janssen. Marc is a member of an artists' collective called Transparent Workings, based out of Georgetown. He and the other artists in the group share workspace (and occasionally living space) and hold gallery shows once a month in otherwise vacant storefront space. The group as a whole claims to use art to "expose the inner workings of cultural and historical coercion." How well they succeed in that effort is dependent on personal taste, but they have a following in town and even a blog or two dedicated to their efforts.

Those investigating the art installations discover that while some of the pieces correspond to Infrastructure, most do not. The gears that show up near or on pieces of Infrastructure, though, are the ones where the negative emotion of the piece is strongest, featuring portrayals of conformity, hopelessness, depression, cruelty, and pain. Also, the more recent the placement of the art, the more accurate it seems to be in terms of identifying Infrastructure, as well as giving some sort of key as to what type of Infrastructure it might be.

Marc Janssen used to be a hip young single artist living a hip young single artist life in an arty part of town, but recently he's changed. His apartment is empty, but pieces of paper with gears scribbled on them lie torn and crumpled in the wastebaskets.

According to recent reports, Marc has gone missing. Foul play isn't suspected yet — he stopped mail delivery and made sure a friend took care of his cat, so it seems he was expecting to be gone for some time. His rent is paid up through the next six months, but all his utilities are turned off. Everything points to him leaving town, except that the art keep showing up and the tone of the pieces just keeps getting darker. The collective claims not to know how they're being installed or where the pieces come from, at least not after the first few.

## 1932 AND THE SOUTHEAST QUADRANT

South of the bridges and east of I-5, one sees a lot of residential mixed with local businesses (or the local instance of the regional or national chain), not the destination stores and restaurants of downtown or Seattle Center. A few standouts buck the trend, mostly in Capitol Hill: a couple on Broadway and 15th around Thomas, and a few on Pike and Pine south of Cal Anderson Park.

The International District, or ID, is part of the south downtown, not far from Pioneer Square. The ID is regular streets, two- and three-floor buildings that are too old to be hip but too young to be hip again, small apartments, and more Chinese, Korean, Thai, and generic Asian food than one community needs.

The last few years have been promising for Beacon Hill and surrounding neighborhoods, including Rainier Valley and Columbia City. After years of wrangling followed by years of construction, light rail finally links Beacon Hill and the area to Sea-Tac Airport, downtown Seattle, and the ID. New condos and duplexes built up around it and along major roads near it, a bloom of gentrification following government investment.

Of course, if something goes up, something else must come down. Just as the city's investment in Rainier Valley and the ID is bringing them prosperity, the city's failure to invest in the Central District is letting that area fall further into decline. Nothing precipitous is happening, but the businesses seem just a little more stunted and the people just a little more hopeless. This may be a side effect of the light rail Infrastructure. If it's an intentional consequence of the project, it may be setting the stage for one of the God-Machine's transformative changes in the neighborhood.

## A SPLINTER'S FATE

A small group of demons and allied stigmatics are trying to build a future in the dominant timeline by gathering their strength in 1932. They've made something of a home in that splinter. Rather than the personal Hell that Mother Damnable has reshaped 1889 into, they've made a nook where they can feel

## LOCAL CURIOSITIES

A homeless woman wanders the International District with a shopping cart full of gumball machines, each still full of gum. On every fifth day as measured from the start of the Hebrew calendar, she is absent and nowhere to be found.

A small halal market off MLK Jr Way in Beacon Hill has a display cooler with one window covered by a poster showing a cooler full of popular beers. The owners enjoy sharing the joke with their customers, but they still never show anyone what's in that section.

At the Rainier Playfield in Columbia City, every second Tuesday there's a pickup game of baseball. No one seems to plan it and no one ever seems to go with the intent of joining the game, but the game always manages to start with exactly 18 players every day at 2:33. After a full game, the winners walk away with a little more spring in their step, and the losers seem just a bit sluggish.

secure to pursue their own agenda. The demons Mr. Razor and Miss Crisis lead a couple dozen stigmatics in this joint venture.

They've managed to gain resources in 1932 quickly through a bit of good fortune: A group of three robs a bank of \$5000 on March 4, 1932 and get away clean. A little research gave the demons the drop on the robbers and a number of quick investments to solidify their power base there. Better still, by being selective with what changes they make stick, they can rob the robbers each time the splinter reboots.

Years of investment in the splinter have made Crisis and Razor nervous about the splinter's fate. They've seen more hiccups in the time loop than their deliberate meddling accounts for. Further investigation revealed that the 1889 timeline is approaching the point where, within that splinter, it will be 1932.

They have become concerned that the two timelines trying to occupy the same "now" may cause a dangerous instability. What that means they have no idea, and probably neither does anyone else. It scares them. They can't recoup their years of effort in the 1932 splinter, and they refuse to let it all go down the drain. With an unknown threat coming down the pipe, apparently inevitable, Crisis and Razor are making plans and contingency plans. They want to stop... whatever it is.

A few things that could happen:

**1889 Overwrites 1932:** When 1889 reaches its own internal 1932, it overwrites the 1932 splinter, like a computer saving over old data. What happens when the powerful U.S.

### MR RAZOR AND MISS CRISIS

Though Mr. Razor and Miss Crisis have mutually incompatible final goals, they work together well. Both are old and manage to take the long view, knowing that they have a long road to walk before they will need to take charge from the other. Their nascent movement needs all the nurturing it can get before either can afford to turn away anyone's help.

It helps their association that they've discussed their points of view thoroughly and openly (whether either believes the other is a far more personal matter). They may disagree, but they disagree honestly and amicably. Their abilities complement each other. Besides, through some quirk of fate, they simply like each other.

Mr. Razor makes his Cover exclusively of suicide attempts and relationships with people who have made them. He appears as a troubled soul, frequently admitted and released from mental hospitals, bearing physical and mental scars. He's built it from dozens of piecemeal Pacts, each a simple offer: You get something you want; he takes away your attempt, or your relationship with someone who made one. His familiarity with the 1932 splinter is very useful to him: It was a bumper year for attempted suicide.

Miss Crisis prefers to wear the face of an athlete and she hates the feeling of a patch job. (She doesn't know how Mr. Razor can stand it. The thought of it makes her itch.) Her habit is to give an athlete skill and stardom and then take over the body after a great success. She's worn more than one Olympic athlete, and at least one got away from her because an equipment failure robbed him of the chance to medal that year.

Marine Hospital Infrastructure gets wiped out with the rest of the timeline? What happens to anyone inside the splinter when it goes? Will Mr. Razor and Miss Crisis go up against Mother Damnable to protect their investment? Can they even stop the 1889 splinter?

**1889 Absorbs 1932:** The 1889 splinter takes in the state of the 1932 splinter and changes to accommodate it, like a corrupt system trying to install a massive system update.

Massively different technologies and eras merge and twist, becoming something altogether different. Razor and Crisis can probably manage, so they're more likely to play the defensive against Mother Damnable, who wants to protect her home.

**1889 Reboots:** 1932 is the endpoint for the 1889 splinter. Everyone *thought* it was persistent, but it actually has a really, really long loop. The New Humanists' home base is safe. Of course, Mother Damnable thinks this is just about the worst thing ever, so she'll bend all her energies toward destroying the 1932 splinter and extending her Hell's lifespan, so the New Humanists' home base is definitely *not* safe.

**Something Else:** Maybe 1889 hitting 1932 is like a flowing stream splitting around a rock, and there will be two 1889s, either for the eight months of the 1932 splinter, longer, or maybe forever. Or perhaps both timelines will wipe out, and Miss Crisis and Mr. Razor will have to work together with Mother Damnable to stop it.

**It's Unrelated:** Crisis and Razor have drawn the wrong conclusion. The glitches showing up in 1932 have nothing to do with the 1889 splinter, and the two won't even interact. Rather than an esoteric interaction between alternate timelines, this is enemy action, and it'll take effort to find out why, who, and why.

### AGENCY: THE NEW HUMANISTS

New humanism is the idea that humans have importance and agency with a corresponding amount of responsibility, even within the world manipulated by the God-Machine's servants. That means humanity must meet supernatural threats by becoming supernatural. In this case, that means becoming stigmatic. In their perspective, it isn't actually supernatural; these are the secret laws of the universe, and the changes experienced by stigmatics are not corruptions but signs of the higher laws that humans must understand to be masters of their own fates.

The philosophy lives in the minds of two demons and a group of stigmatics. They are agreed about creating more stigmatics as a path to empowering humanity to solve its own problems. All the stigmatics hold that belief without much embellishment, but the two demons have personal variations. Mr. Razor believes that humanity can empower itself above the need for the God-Machine. He feels that demons now serve the purpose of defending humanity against the infinite computer's encroaches, and in due time the humans will serve that themselves. Mr. Razor has no place in his own Hell.

Miss Crisis is a through-and-through Integrator. She blames her Fall on the weakness of humans. Her personal mission now that she is trapped on Earth is to raise the standard of the basic human to the point where they meet her standards for self-sufficiency, for serving the needs of the God-Machine on Earth. Once she has solved the problem that caused her to Fall, she can return to the God-Machine's embrace.

**Who Can Join:** People the New Humanists consider properly educated on and dedicated to humanist principles may be inducted into the select ranks of the Agency; i.e., made a stigmatic. Believing rather firmly in the philosophical principle of agency, this is never forced upon the new member. Even Miss Crisis, who respects humans only as tools, wants them to be self-determining tools. To the New Humanists, refusing to become stigmatic is the same as refusing responsibility for humanity's fate. No such person is fit to join the group.

Recruiting members bring up the subject with prospectives over weeks or months, however long they feel it takes to ease the person into it. Sometimes the discussion takes one long night. Once they have what feels like an informed commitment to the ideal, they induce stigmata. Out of consideration for their demon members' safety, the typical method is exposure to the secret and hidden. A trip through to 1932 accomplishes the goal well. When that doesn't work, or for people they choose to impress, Mr. Razor or Miss Crisis cause the transformation themselves.

**Dues and Responsibilities:** Members do not officially pay dues, but each is assumed to be dedicated to the cause and willing to commit effort to the goal. In general, that means spreading humanism and sounding out people who may be open to new humanism. Stigmatic members do the Agency's day to day work; they are also periodically called on to make Pacts, effectively donating parts of their lives to the Agency so the Agency has Covers to burn and to trade. Members are expected to also seek out new relationships that they can later turn over to the Agency.

The two demon members are responsible for protecting the group, negotiating with other demons and keeping angels in the dark. The entire Agency knows that they have a great advantage in maintaining the Agency's secrecy and keeping the other members safe. Currently, the demons pour their energy into creating the safe space they need in 1932. The other members provide whatever support they can on that project.

**Benefits:** Stigmatic members receive substantial resources and influence as a part of the Pacts they make to benefit the Agency. Much of these are bent toward the Agency's aims, but they still allow the members to live comfortable, satisfying lives. The demons have access to Cover, though they use that access mostly for trade with other demons and Agencies. Members also have access to limited safehouses in 1932. They hope that will soon be more.

**Leaders:** Mr. Razor and Miss Crisis are the joint heads of the Agency, but they leave the day-to-day operation in the stigmatics' hands. Sylvia Deroe, a downtown attorney on several volunteer boards, informally manages the stigmatics. Manipulation and power plays occasionally arise, but the group is of a particularly mindful attitude and is good at defusing animosity with an eye toward long-term cooperation.

**Contacts:** Demons approaching the New Humanists should go through Mr. Razor or Miss Crisis; neither feels very kindly about potential rivals circling their stigmatics and they take their responsibilities as guardians of the group seriously. Others who wish to make contact can do so through one of

the few humanist social clubs around Seattle. New Humanists pay attention to people who ask perceptive questions, as well as those who drop in one of a few code phrases that the group seeds about the city.

## RING: THE FOUR

The Four are an infamous trio of demons in Seattle. They are a group of three demons who all Fell with their Key Embeds already known. What does it mean to Fall with one's Cipher pre-installed? No one knows, not even the Four, but no one in Seattle thinks it bodes well. Most demons are sure the Four are double agents for the God-Machine. Everyone else believes they are sleeper agents with hidden programming.

The members of the Four had very similar experiences that bind them as a group. Still recovering from the trauma of the Fall, they each began to experiment with their Embeds and discovered the world-changing experience of having an Interlock fall into place, not just once, but three times. Wisdom and power were both thrust upon them; immediately following, the demons they had met during the brief tumult since their Fall repudiated them.

Bereft of allies and even the sparing trust that demons offer, the three demons found each other. Based on the relevance of the number of Interlocks, they became certain that a fourth demon was out there who was like them, already waiting or soon to Fall. They renamed themselves after the order in which they Fell and cleaved to each other, because no other would have them.

The demons of the Four maintain different beliefs about what it means that they Fell with their Ciphers in place. One is incredibly confident that finding their fourth will give them the final piece to the puzzle that is their Fall. Two is unsure. Three feels they were sent as bodhisattvas, to know truth and help others achieve their Ciphers; he discusses life regularly with the exile Dizang in the International District (**Demon**, p. 267).

The Four are not as united as they seem. Not only are their ultimate beliefs in their fates or purpose divided, they are hobbled by their own secret suspicions. Each has similar fears about themselves as other demons do about them. Are they sleeper agents with programming that will suborn their minds at the worst moment? Has it already happened to one of the others? Worse, each fears that the others are willing double agents, and he is the only one who has malfunctioned and doesn't remember their true mission. The Four stick together because no one else will have them, but even they cannot trust each other.

The Four used to meet in 1932, but the New Humanists made them unwelcome. Now they meet in a concealed suite beneath Qwest Field. None of them admits to building it, but it is comfortable and concealed with magic the demons don't understand. In case the suite's creator should ever return, they've set up some alarms and traps of their own.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: PACIFIC TOWER

This is the U.S Marine Hospital (**Demon**, p. 269), prominent in 1932, updated and renamed for the present day. It's still a hospital, and it still has strange, creepy things going on in the basements, but it's up to date. Important corporate tenants occupy much of the building familiar to so many around Seattle, and the hospital is part of a modern health care system.

It no longer modifies humans to make them more controllable and useful to the God-Machine. Instead, it takes in humans and disassembles them into the components that make up their identity. Friendships, family, experiences, faces, names – all the things that make up the Covers that demons need – all come off. The Infrastructure shifts them around, adjusts them, and reassembles them. Only some people walk out nearly the same as they walked in. One might walk out with his traits mixed with the person who walked out ahead of him, or with brand-new traits attached. Many people are frequent visitors, experiencing multiple changes so the administrators of the facility can observe how the changes influence the subjects.

Some humans are changed with purpose, just as they were before the Infrastructure's update, so the facility still salts Seattle with sleeper agents. The facility also has a ready supply of bits and pieces of human lives in storage, making it both a useful site for creating angels' Covers, and a tempting target for demons. This importance is why the remodel brought with it a new guardian angel: Tower ([p. 55](#)).

**Type:** Logistical

**Function:** To alter humans' natures, lives, and fates, and provide angels with Cover.

**Security:** Tower, a guardian angel watching over the facility and tracking down potential security leaks.

**Linchpin:** Nkiruka Afolayan works at Pacific Tower as the janitor. She never stops to rest or eat, she just tirelessly cleans the facility, from the leased-out top to the secret bottom. The Infrastructure sustains her and she sustains it.

### 1962 AND THE NORTHWEST QUADRANT

These sections of Seattle – downtown and Pike Place Market, Seattle Center and Queen Anne, Fremont and Ballard and Wallingford – are some of the most popular icons of the city. Each has a lot of character, a lot of idiosyncrasy, and a lot going on. That makes them some of the best places to center a **Demon** chronicle. They are recognizable to people who might otherwise not be familiar with Seattle and popular with folks from out of town.

These are also the best places for demons to fit in. Downtown is typically full of people who won't look at a

### LOCAL CURIOSITIES

One loft in South Lake Union has been sold seven times. Each time, all the paperwork is completed, the money is transferred, and the new owners move in — except they don't. They immediately sell the loft again, housing market be damned, and the previous owners are never heard from again.

Junk and Treasures is one of many Pike Place Market shops selling antique knick-knacks and curious doo-dads. Junk and Treasures is the three-legged puppy of the bunch: It's tucked away in a low-traffic corner with no window display space. The others wonder how it pulls in enough business to pay rent. They'd wonder more if they knew owner Marla Tokinawa never pays rent, and no one ever asks her for it, either.

Disguised from human eyes, a malfunctioning angel runs a four hour, forty-four minute loop through Queen Anne Hill. It touches seventeen specific points on each circuit, and when it's done it starts again without a break. Demons wonder why it hasn't run down (unaware of the Substation Annex Infrastructure, p. 34) or been recycled, theorizing it might be a *qashmal* doing something inscrutable.

Though Pike Place has no official night market, some of the below-ground storefronts are obviously open. The lights are on and people are moving inside. People outside can never make out enough detail through the windows to identify anyone, and the entrances are all locked. No one inside notices knocks on the door or attempts to get inside.

stranger twice; Pike Place is stuffed with people, strangers and local, almost constantly. Fremont, Ballard, and Wallingford all prize their reputations for being open to alternative lifestyles, though Fremont leads the pack in actual acceptance.

### THE DEMONS' REPUBLIC OF 1962

Comrade West has a call out for people, demons or stigmatics, to participate in exploring the secrets of the 1962 World's Fair splinter. He has a few goals on his mind, as he'll explain to those who are interested.

First and foremost, he wants a safe haven for his people. West has visited Mother Damnable's personal Hell. While the place and time hold no interest for him, he admires that she's created a place where she can feel safe. The social movements in the 1932 timeline appeal to him, but proximity to the Republic's territory in Fremont is too great an advantage to pass up.

He's further interested in suborning the World's Fair Infrastructure. Some of that is simple prudence. Disabling those machines reduces the danger to Seattle should the God-Machine ever reestablish connection with the splinter. The rest is ambition. Every piece of Infrastructure in 1962 is a potential treasure for the good of the Republic, and every victory is a feather in their cap that will bring more people to their cause.

Every revolution starts with just one person trying to make a difference, and that's what West needs. Bringing the World's Fair in line with his image of an egalitarian society requires incremental change, and forcing a demon's will on a splinter timeline demands a lot of effort. Volunteering to help start the transformation — or doing it unambiguously to earn a favor from the Demons' Republic — is worth a lot to West. It's a quick route to earning some Cover or aid in future endeavors.

Some ways West might ask fellow demons for help include:

**Turn Ewen Dingwall:** As the project manager of the exposition, Ewen Dingwall is a high-priority target. Making a stigmatic of Ewen and turning him into an ally of the Demons' Republic would give them a powerful edge. He can give West all the details on who else is important and what pieces of the fair contain the most significant Infrastructure. While making Ewen a stigmatic might be simple, getting him to agree with the aims of the Republic won't be. However useful he may be, Ewen is a distinctly limited resource: once he remembers the splinter's nature past the reboot of the time loop, he has only a couple years before he disappears from it entirely.

**Introduce Propaganda:** West has plans to replace the explanatory plaques and informational boards all over the grounds with text that encourages Marxist ideals. He hopes that exposing the visitors — and the splinter, in a more metaphysical sense — to text that favors West's philosophies will slowly shift the nature of the place. Changing the plaques is a matter of avoiding crowds and guards while doing the work and then forcing the splinter to accept the change. Even then, the inhabitants of the splinter might destroy or remove the new boards until many of them have been forced into the splinter's reality.

**Disable Infrastructure:** The World's Fair is rife with powerful Infrastructure. One of the early steps to kicking out the God-Machine and claiming it for the Republic is disabling that Infrastructure. Some tasks might be easy, like sabotaging the power supply for the Bubbleator, while disabling the simulated space flight in the World of Commerce and Industry might require finding the cobalt-and-charcoal vacuum battery powering the projection. This is one of the most potentially risky tasks, because no one is sure what kind

of cultic or angelic protection might be set on any given piece of Infrastructure, or even the fair as a whole. Whether it's easy or hard, guarded or unguarded, someone still needs to force the splinter to accept the change.

**Make Pacts with Desirables:** Changing the past takes every helpful voice it can get. People sympathetic to the Republic's cause in 1962 rarely hold positions of power. West wants to change that with some select Pacts. Give one of the downtrodden money and connections and watch her use that new influence to change the status quo. Turn a political dissident into a role model athlete and let him use that platform to change the city.

## INFRASTRUCTURE: THE CAR OF THE FUTURE

At the World's Fair, Ford introduced a concept car that included four front wheels, interchangeable power units, an interactive computer, and fingertip steering. They included the idea of nuclear propulsion in the near future, but that power source was actually present in the model on display in '62. The God-Machine's agents produced the advanced power source and included it in the model.

In addition to making it a car with greater acceleration and speed than any other on the road in that era, the power source also supplies many of the other Infrastructures at the fair with backup power. The car's radio enables point-to-point radio (actually monitored telepathy) among the God-Machine's agents at the fair. Anyone wearing one of the attuned earpieces (not actually connected to anything else) can use it.

Observant demons might note a young car enthusiast peering at the car excitedly. Obviously taken with the car, the ten-year-old switches back and forth between reading the many displays and looking at the car from many angles. Her interest never wavers and repeats exactly after 31 minutes, and she never goes to the bathroom.

**Type:** Logistical

**Function:** Distribute power to local Infrastructure; facilitate mind-to-mind telepathy between agents.

**Security:** World's Fair security, plus the angel disguised as a young car enthusiast.

**Linchpin:** Removing the miniaturized nuclear power plant in the car's front section disables it. The reactor can also be shut off with its miniature SCRAM system, or destroyed.

## MURDER AT THE EXPO

On August 17, 1962, Jack Sellers dies at the Century 21 Exposition. Each time the splinter resets, he's once more alive and ready to explore the fair. Unlike most other people, he isn't excited for the fair to come to his town. He dreads it, because he knows he's going to die.

## CHAPTER ONE: CITY OF FLOWERS



It was a surprise the first time. Walking down the Boulevards of the World, someone thrust a knife into his chest in passing. He died on his way to the hospital. When the world reset, he had a vague sense of unease about the fair but went anyway. A split second before the knife entered him, he felt he'd known it was coming.

Awareness dawned slowly. After an unknowable number of iterations, he started avoiding the Boulevards of the World. Death followed him. He was shot by a stranger in the World of Entertainment. An elderly gentleman dropped a brick on him while riding the Bubbleator up in the World of Tomorrow. His date inexplicably threw him off the Monorail platform. Jack tried staying at home, and burglars broke in and beat him to death. No matter how things change, Jack always dies.

At this point, Jack is aware of the cyclic nature of his world, even if he doesn't understand it. He's been most everywhere in the almost four months from the start of the loop to his inevitable death. He knows what happens every go-round, and what stands out. He wishes that he could escape his cycle, but he doesn't know how.

Comrade West has some ideas about how Jack could escape his repeating doom, first among them taking the young man out through the fracture into the dominant timeline. He hasn't done so, or even brought it up to Jack, because for now, Jack is the best resource West has on the mundane and the strange of the 1962 splinter. On top of that, West doesn't

know what Jack is as he's curiously not stigmatic, and West is reluctant to mess with something he doesn't yet understand.

Here are some possibilities for Jack's nature:

**Jack is a Trap:** Jack Sellers is aware of the loop and doomed to die each time for the very reason that some demon is going to take pity on the man and take him out of the splinter timeline, springing the trap. Setting the trap off reveals that Jack is secretly an angel, a beacon to angels, an occult bomb, or something else altogether.

**Jack is a Side Effect:** Some of the still-functioning Infrastructure at the World's Fair creates a death as a byproduct, intended or unintended. For whatever reason, that death falls on Jack. Perhaps his brother helped assemble part of the Expo Infrastructure and this was a bit of backlash, or his yet-unborn children participated in a dominant-timeline Infrastructure that had this strange effect.

**Jack is Infrastructure:** An angel is murdering Jack. Becoming aware of the loop was a known possibility, hence sending an angel to do the job rather than a simple cultist. The angel leaps bodies and manipulates the inanimate world to ensure that Jack dies, and as a result... something happens. Is this murder sustaining the splinter, loop after loop?

**Something Else:** A murderous ghost at the fair takes its joy from the repeated murder of the same person. Jack is delusional, and rather than being killed, he is committing suicide over and over but imagining others doing it to

him. Jack's murders are actually forecasts of murders in the dominant timeline, and studying them and his location in the World's Fair can reveal something to come in the next few days or weeks in the now.

## INFRASTRUCTURE: THE STATUE OF LENIN

Cast in Czechoslovakia, rescued from the scrap heap, and installed in Fremont in 1995, the statue of Lenin is as much an emblem of Fremont as the Troll or the Rocket.

The God-Machine put a great deal of distributed effort into getting this statue in place. It had to arrange the statue's proper construction under the appropriate occult circumstances in what is now Slovakia. Construction was timed such that it would soon be disposed of after the Velvet Revolution. It had to coincidentally be found by an art-loving English teacher from Washington, who was inspired to buy it on his own and move it across an ocean. Finally, the God-Machine had to arrange things such that it would end up installed in Fremont.

All that, and the thing ends up suborned within a year.

It took the focused and rather inspired effort of a ring who called themselves Yesterday's People. Their adventure in prying the statue free of the God-Machine's grip and ensuring that the statue stays off its radar in the future is a popular story in certain Seattle circles; most any of them can tell it. The only part they disagree on is how the Demons' Republic got a hold of it.

Comrade West insists that Yesterday's People donated it to the cause before they left town. Those who like to antagonize him prefer different stories, including the one about how he got the ring flagged by the angels in order to open up ownership of the statue.

Not that this makes much sense. The statue barely produces any Aether, instead pouring most of its energy into another effect. It was originally supposed to detect Aetheric activity and broadcast its position, alerting agents of the God-Machine. Now, it does the opposite, filling the air with Aetheric interference, the equivalent of static on the demon-finding radar.

**System:** While in Fremont, demons can ignore the Flagged Condition, and rolls to detect them (such as for the Surveilled Condition) suffer a -3 penalty.

**Type:** Suborned Defense

**Function:** Scrambles signs of Aetheric activity in Fremont

**Security:** It's visible from the Demons' Republic communal home and it's dear to the people of Fremont, so there's always someone nearby to make some noise.

**Linchpin:** A falafel joint on the plaza with the statue has a fryer that has been dead for years. If someone looks, it's because the machine's heating coils have been replaced by woven silk rope. Everyone at the restaurant ignores it, but it's

the thing keeping Lenin helping demons instead of hurting them. Several bricks of a greenish color set in the plaza outside conceal a box containing a poem. Reading the poem aloud destroys the Infrastructure for good.

## INFRASTRUCTURE: THE SEATTLE FBI

If the God-Machine could get away with not having Command and Control Infrastructure in Seattle, it probably would. For whatever reason, the God-Machine has chosen an obvious place for this piece of Infrastructure. It could be a trap.

Seattle FBI share their office building with a few other federal departments, but they have four floors to themselves and a bank of secure elevators. Pulling the emergency phone and holding the first and fourth floor buttons sends the elevator to an extradimensional middle floor. On that expanse, LEDs flicker on and off, unseen gears whir, speakers emit intermittent beeps and modem shrieks, and fiberglass cabling flashes red and blue while hanging from the ceiling like vines in the jungle. Strange artifacts rest on pedestals, hang on walls or from the ceiling, lie on the floor, or simply hover every few yards. Most of them are being actively read or referenced by an optical fiberglass lead, which can be trailed to a wraparound headset worn by a human dressed in the fashion of the 1920s, when human computers were going out of fashion. Each human is writing esoteric calculations in pencil on an endless stream of paper.

Getting in isn't easy, given the FBI and the difficulty of digging up how to manipulate the elevator. Getting out is even harder, because there are no windows and, once a person steps off it, no elevator either.

**Type:** Command and Control

**Function:** Gathering, distributing, and analyzing data from around the Seattle region.

**Security:** All the FBI has to offer, plus the local sheriff's office and the local police HQ are both minutes away. Additionally, the Infrastructure can send out a distress call to angels within ten miles, overriding their missions to summon them to aid.

**Linchpin:** On the FBI office's third floor, there's a sandwich vending machine. Once each day, an agent empties the machine and carts the food to the wired-in human computers, who eat it. Removing the sandwiches causes the system to enter energy-saving mode; lack of food for three days shuts it down. Tainting the fuel supply can have other effects, such as destroying the system faster with cyanide or sending it careening off the tracks with LSD.

## PIKE PLACE FLOWERS

It's just a cozy flower shop built into the corner of one of the buildings on the edge of Pike Place Market, smack on

## CHAPTER ONE: CITY OF FLOWERS

the corner of Pike and 1st. It keeps afloat blocks away from the stall flower vendors by selling out-of-season flowers for good prices, though owner Angelito Herrera would say that he manages by offering that little bit of flourish that someone without a brick-and-mortar shop just can't match. It doesn't help that he has twice the customer base of any of the stall vendors: now and 1962.

Pike Place Flowers is shared between both timelines: the flowers are the same, the layout is the same, and the owner is the same. The store is always crowded because people from both timelines are busy shopping for their flowers in the same store. Some of them are wearing funny clothes, but that's easily explained: This is Seattle, and people love to play dress up. Or, the World's Fair is just up the street, who knows what people are wearing there? Most of the visitors from the splintered timeline don't remember seeing the strangers in their flower shop for long, anyway.

When a person enters the shop from one time, she sees that time when looking out the many flower-strewn windows. When she walks out, she's back in the same time she came from. No one has yet managed to use the shop as a fracture, though members of the Demon Republic have noted the one difference between the shop in each time: the door is in a different place. They theorize that one might be able to exit into the other time by crashing through the window where the other timeline's door is. No one's tried it yet.

Angelito is a mystery: He clearly knows what's going on with his flower shop and doesn't forget anything when the splinter loops. He even jokes about it with folks who are in the know, yet he's not a stigmatic. Some theorize that he's an angel occupying some form of Infrastructure that no one's uncovered the gears for; people point at his name both as clue that he is and proof that he isn't. Either way, no one's been able to find any cracks in his Cover to prove he's something other than what he says he is: a family man and florist. No one's yet proven to be that combination of curious enough and cruel enough (and daring enough, if he's an angel) to try tearing him open to find out.

A regular panhandler on the streets of Belltown, a dozen blocks away, tends to drone about "the bird with a handful of flowers," but that probably has nothing to do with it.

## INFRASTRUCTURE: CITY LIGHT BROAD STREET SUBSTATION ANNEX

No one exactly remembers when the City Light Broad Street Substation Annex went up. Work orders from as recently as 2005 direct various aspects of its construction, but city council minutes from the 1980s note the project's progress. Wherever it came from, it sits on the edge of Seattle Center and in the shadow of the Space Needle, all clean walls and modern gates and warning signs for the obedient public.

The City Light power substation itself is mundane "infrastructure" only to the extent that it helps keep Seattle flowing with electricity. The Annex is separated from the substation by a street, but connected through under-street conduits that keep the Annex humming with power.

Kitchen-sized electrical gear takes up the small yard. Once inside the wall, a light buzz becomes apparent, a noise filtered out by the walls before it reaches the street. The plain, metal-enclosed machinery looks normal until opened: each is a giant beehive of tungsten and silk, swarming with Africanized honeybees. Apart from a few strays, the bees stay in their artificial hives unless the hives are damaged.

While functioning properly, the hives transmit Essence to angels within Seattle proper (i.e., not on the East Side), providing each angel within range with one Essence at noon. In producing the Essence from electricity and bees, the energy spends some time as Aether in an intermediate step, in the form of a honey-like residue that builds up in reservoirs. Demons can dip into the reservoirs to restore their power, but if they take too much too fast, they inhibit the Infrastructure's function and attract attention. The first point of Aether each chapter is free. Anyone who takes the second or the third gains the Flagged Condition. Someone who takes *both* the second and third points gains the Surveilled Condition instead.

**Type:** Logistical

**Function:** Provides angels in the region with sustaining Essence

**Security:** None; it remains functioning partly as a lure for demons and partly because most demons know that if they deactivate it, every angel in the city will notice.

**Linchpin:** A 1.3-meter rod made of hickory concealed within the thick bundles of buried power conduits connecting the Annex to the substation across the street.

## 1999 AND THE NORTHWEST QUADRANT

The year 1999 was a strange time to be alive in the Western world. An old millennium was coming to an end and a new one was being born. The turning of the year symbolized the future and all the hopes and fears that it promised and threatened to make real.

1999 was also the year of the storied "Y2K Problem." Also called the Year 2000 Problem, the Millennium Bug, the Y2K Bug, or just Y2K, the problem was deceptively simple: many programmers had written their code to only use a two digit year: '89, '90, '91, and so on. This meant that when 1999 turned into 2000, many computer systems would believe that instead of the year 2000, it was the year 1900. This was supposed to cause all sorts of disastrous problems, from collapsing global financial systems to failing power grids and hospital machinery.

In reality, Y2K was something of a non-starter. The results were mostly embarrassing, rather than disastrous – websites displaying obviously incorrect dates like “January 1st 19100” or slot machines not working. Some Japanese power plants experienced glitches, but nothing too serious. The only tragedies were personal – at least two abortions were performed in error when malfunctioning hospital computers informed several families that their healthy pregnancies would be born with Down Syndrome, and four women who thought that their babies were at low risk for the disease gave birth to Down Syndrome babies. Across the world, all the really critical computer systems were fixed long before January 1st, 2000 rolled around. They had already included multiple redundancies to prevent something as simple as a date error from causing fatal issues.

Real or imagined, however, Y2K was the source of significant dread. Even though the fear was probably driven by more general anxieties about the start of a new millennium than any real information, some people genuinely feared that the Y2K bug would mean the end of civilization as they knew it.

The 1999 splinter timeline represents all fear and anxiety of Y2K, and the end of the world. Of course, Y2K was never going to cause that much global devastation. Even if governments and corporations across the world hadn’t spent money and man-hours fixing the problem, it’s extremely unlikely that computer systems mistaking the year would actually lead to the downfall of human civilization. Y2K was never a world-ending computer bug; it was nothing more than an embarrassing and costly glitch.

## SPLINTER CHARACTERISTICS

### CHRONOLOGY

This splinter is only seven months long from start to finish. It begins at dawn on July 1st, 1999 and ends at sunset on January 7th, 2000. The first six months of the splinter are the lead-up to the apocalypse, which happens on January 1st, 2000. The following week begins the decline of human civilization following the catastrophic computer glitch.

The first part of the splinter’s repeating chronology lasts from the beginning of the timeline to just after mid-December. During this time, the splinter strongly resembles the real world at this time. People are still dressing in 90s fashions – t-shirts, flannels, and jeans inspired by the growing sub-genres of grunge and alternative rock – using 90s technologies like unwieldy cell phones and portable CD players (the first flexible and affordable mp3 players are still two years away), and discussing the political ups and downs of the 90s: the Monica Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment, the death of Seattle’s native bee population, and so on.

The second portion of the splinter’s history starts near the end of December, just before the holidays, and lasts until the

apocalypse on January 1st. At this point, the splinter begins to diverge from the real world. Communication and information technologies take on an obsessive prominence, while face-to-face communication and privacy are increasingly de-emphasized until they are almost taboo. Governments and corporations begin to take on the characteristics of looming conspiracies (even more than they do in the real world). By the time January 1st rolls around, the splinter resembles a parody of the real world. Its inhabitants have become so dependent upon their technology that it’s easy to imagine how something as simple as the Y2K glitch could bring about the downfall of their civilization.

A few ideas for some of the things that could happen in the second phase of this splinter’s timeline include:

- Security cameras appear at many intersections. Some of them are installed by men in black coveralls, while others simply appear.
- Companies begin to advertise new products and services that drastically undermine privacy. For example, phone attachments that make recordings of your conversations publicly available or televisions that record *you* and send the recordings to the television station for “instant feedback.” These products are wildly popular among most of the splinter’s inhabitants, though a small but vocal minority finds them disturbing.
- New products and services make face-to-face communication more difficult. Some of the more extreme examples could include city ordinances banning large gatherings “to prevent the spread of winter colds” or heavy head-pieces that allow the wearer to present a screen and a synthesized voice, rather than their own natural face. More subtly, the splinter’s inhabitants find that they can go days without actually speaking to another human being.

The third and final phase is the apocalypse. On January 1st, 2000, the Y2K bug causes the simultaneous catastrophic failure of every device with even the smallest amount of processing power. Every home computer, every mainframe, every corporate and government computer dies all at once.

Exactly what happens next varies with each iteration of the splinter. Sometimes it’s as dramatic as every nuclear arsenal in the world misfiring, with missiles inexplicably targeting friendly cities or exploding in their silos. The world is bathed in nuclear fire, and those who survive the initial blasts – which are always outside Seattle’s city limits – spend the next months dying of deprivation and radiation poisoning. Sometimes it’s less dramatic; the global financial network fails, plunging the world into a chaos of looting and sectarian violence.

### GEOGRAPHICAL

Although the splinter is strongest in the northeast quarter of the city where the portals to the primary timeline are located, the rest of the city is reasonably solid. Only demons who are particularly skilled at perceiving the underpinnings of reality can detect how the splinter grows progressively further from the northeast quarter.

## ENDGAME

The World of Darkness series already presents several useful resources for modeling end-of-the-world scenarios. All the splinter's apocalypses are accompanied by the breakdown of the infrastructure that bring food, water, and electricity (remember that the splinter's timeline encompasses the coldest part of winter in the American Northwest). The **Demon: The Descent** includes Tilts and Conditions for extreme environments on p. 307 and p. 328.

Depending on the exact nature of the apocalypse, survivors may have to contend with the side effects of ecological disaster or the lingering effects of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

Seattle's ever-present fog serves to cut off the rest of the world. Space around the splinter is bent such that those attempting to leave Seattle are lost in the fog and eventually find themselves headed back into the city. The splinter's natives are subtly programmed to stay put. An outsider could talk them into making the attempt, but the idea will not occur to them independently.

The God-Machine has only one piece of Infrastructure in the splinter, an enormous underground vault near the shore of Elliott Bay between Jackson Street and Yesler Way. The splinter represents a world coming to an end, abandoned by the God-Machine, and no Infrastructure is necessary to oversee its decline.

The underground vault — the Apocalypse Vault — is described in more detail on p. 75.

## Y2K, THE DEMON

The demon version of Y2K (described on p. 280 of **Demon: The Descent**) is trapped in the splinter. The existence of another version of himself in the dominant timeline — a loyal angel, still plugged into the global information network — prevents him from ever leaving the splinter.

This situation suits Y2K just fine. He has more than six months to enjoy everything Seattle has to offer before the weirdness starts. All he has to weather is about a month of degeneration and — finally — destruction before his world resets around him and he can start it all over again.

Y2K isn't a "mover and shaker" in the traditional sense. He wields a great deal of power as his splinter's only demon (as far as he knows...), but he is disinclined to *do* anything with it, except ensure that he can continue to enjoy Seattle. As long as he can enjoy his museums, concerts and superficial coffee shop friendships, he is relatively contented.

What Y2K doesn't know about himself is that he is a great deal more interesting and important than he knows. Y2K was supposed to Fall; in fact, he was *designed* to Fall. Y2K is a mineshaft canary, an early warning system for any large-scale effort to disrupt the security of the Apocalypse Vault. Y2K is sufficiently dedicated to maintaining his standard of living in Seattle 1999 that he is certain to react to any intrusion. When he does, his counterpart in the dominant timeline will alert the God-Machine that the Apocalypse Vault is in danger and the God-Machine will react appropriately.

## PERMUTATIONS

Although separated from the dominant timeline by the will of the God-Machine and the choices of a demon and an angel, Seattle 1999 can influence the dominant timeline in a variety of ways.

## THE APOCALYPSE VAULT

The Apocalypse Vault is a powerful and significant piece of Infrastructure hidden in the Seattle 1999 splinter. The Apocalypse Vault does what its name implies: it acts as a storage facility for timelines that the God-Machine has deemed too destructive to allow to come to pass, but also too useful to ignore.

The Apocalypse Vault is described on p. 75.

## AETHERIC STATIC

A faint but persistent, aetheric "static" permeates the Seattle 1999 splinter. Some Inquisitors believe that the enormous power of the Apocalypse Vault and the things contained inside creates the aetheric static, while others believe that the static was here first, but might have been part of the reason that the God-Machine placed the Vault in this particular splinter. The most common theory is that the static is caused by Seattle 1999's imminent evolution from repeating splinter to full-on alternate timeline (see below).

The aetheric static has the following concrete game effects:

- Any use of an Exploit or Embed to gain information experiences a -3 die penalty. Angels do not suffer this penalty when using their Numina or Influences to gain information.
- The God-Machine's ability to sense what is going on in the Seattle 1999 splinter is limited as well. Compromise rolls receive a +3 modifier.

On a less concrete level, the God-Machine is blocked from directly perceiving events inside the Seattle 1999 splinter. If Grigorius's experiences are any indication, the God-Machine may not be able to receive reports from or communicate with angels stationed within the splinter.

In either case, no one knows if the God-Machine is completely incapable of cutting through the aetheric static or if It simply finds it difficult enough that It has chosen the expedient of stranding the Watcher within the shard.

While many things about the Seattle 1999 shard — including the existence of the Apocalypse Vault and what it contains — are some of Seattle's best-kept secrets, the aetheric status is widely known. As a result, Seattle 1999 is a popular place for demons who want a meeting place where they can be somewhat certain of avoiding scrutiny. Many demons have held conversations about how to overthrow the God-Machine while walking back and forth on top of the Apocalypse Vault, completely unaware of what lies beneath their feet.

The Seattle 1999 splinter is also a popular place for demons who know that they have to do something that might damage their Covers. For example: more than one demon has planned a day-trip into the Seattle 1999 splinter to tell a beloved human about her true nature.

## COMING UNSTUCK

Seattle 1999 may be on the way to becoming unstuck, as with the 1889 splinter. All the ingredients are already present. Seattle 1999 represents an alternate history rather than simply a slice of space and time, and the splinter is rife with causal deviations and other weirdness.

With the aetheric static that clouds it from the God-Machine's sight, Seattle 1999 is already used as a meeting place and bolthole. If Seattle 1999 were to become permanently divorced from the dominant timeline, it could be a viable realization of Hell: a place where demons could theoretically live free of the God-Machine's hunter-angels. The fact that the current timeline "ends" with the total destruction of mankind's technical civilization is, for some demons, a perk. It creates an open field for them to help the survivors to create their civilization.

## NORTHEAST QUARTER

This part of Seattle extends east-west from I-5 to Lake Washington and north-south from Capitol Hill (just east of the southernmost tip of Lake Union) all the way up to the northern edge of the city.

Northeast Seattle is deeply divided by social and economic boundaries. Although primarily a high-rent district full of orderly suburban neighborhoods, picturesque commercial streets, and gorgeous single-family homes, the area around the University of Washington is a seedy college town.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Madrona, Madison Valley, the University District, Roosevelt, Laurelhurst, Ravenna and North Seattle form the northeast quarter. Although these areas share some important similarities — as well as geographic proximity — they are neighborhoods with their own unique histories, challenges, and relationships to the supernatural world.

The God-Machine's cables are sunk deeply into all these neighborhoods, but some more than others. A few of them

— especially the University and its environs — are particularly fertile ground for the kind of subversive politics and angry, gullible young humans that demons enjoy.

## MADRONA, MADISON VALLEY, AND THE ARBORETUM

This area is one of Seattle's more affluent suburbs. The streets are lined with trees. The march of picturesque single-family homes is broken only by the occasional, equally picturesque café — Madison Valley is especially known for its French restaurants. Both of these neighborhoods share easy access to the Lake Washington waterfront and the Washington Park Arboretum.

On the surface, these are placid, easy-going neighborhoods. Madison Valley is a tight-knit community — a dot org website lists numerous community events and helps locals keep track of neighborhood council meetings. Madrona's motto is "The Peaceable Kingdom" in reference to its diverse community. Thanks to coal mining in the early 1900s and shipbuilding in the 1950s, large numbers of Blacks and Chinese immigrants settled in Madrona.

The Washington Park Arboretum, a large urban park just north of Madrona, is particularly full of contradictions. The Arboretum is a tame and cultivated park designed to appeal to the suburban sensitivities of Seattle's upper middle class. Wide paths arc between rare trees and run alongside meandering waterways, perfect for kayaking.

Off the beaten path, however, the Arboretum is a muddy labyrinth of little-used pathways. The park is a maze of secretive walkways and islands, a freeway underpass frequented by graffiti artists, hidden nooks and crannies where teenagers go to experiment with alcohol, and gay men and the occasional lesbian cruise for anonymous sex. The Arboretum is also

### THE GHOST HIGHWAY

The Ghost Highway is a bit of subverted Infra-structure in the Arboretum. Anyone who knows the proper mental keys can, if walking (*not driving*) along the abandoned overpasses, relocate themselves to any stretch of highway anywhere in the continental United States, provided they have a piece of asphalt struck from the stretch of road they want to appear on. Some Demons claim that the Ghost Highway works the other way, too; with a piece of one of the Arboretum's abandoned overpasses and the proper mental key, you can teleport from any stretch of highway anywhere in America straight to the heart of the Arboretum.

### HELL ON EARTH

On the surface, Hell on Earth is a dive bar in the roughest part of the University District. The entrance is in a singularly unappealing alley, where scarred and tattooed homeless men sleep, or beg, or scream “spare change!” at passers-by.

Even so, Hell on Earth sometimes attracts University of Washington students looking for a “real” experience. They are not often disappointed. Inside Hell on Earth, the lighting is poor, the furnishings have been marinated in cigarette smoke for so long that even when no one is smoking the air stinks, and the floors are sticky with spilled beer. This is Seattle, though, so they have a wide and rotating variety of beers on tap and bottled in the cooler, as well as a broad collection of other spirits.

What the slumming students don’t know is about the back room, the freight elevator, and the sub-basement where an entirely different Hell on Earth has been built, just below them. This establishment caters to demons, giving them a place where they safely assume their demonic forms and be what they truly are, rather than living behind masks.

Hell on Earth is neutral ground, created and maintained by the Gerent, an ancient demon. Other demons must earn membership by contributing something of value to Hell on Earth — stored Aether, dirt on the God-Machine’s movements, or even just the legwork needed to shore up Hell on Earth’s defenses — as well as pledging to protect Hell on Earth from attack. Integrators and Saboteurs can debate the merits of returning to the God-Machine, but if anyone lefts a finger to harm the other, she’ll be banned for life.

dotted with “phantom overpasses” — structures that were supposed to connect to I-520, but were never completed or demolished. Although blocked off in a perfunctory manner, they are still a popular destination for urban explorers.

The God-Machine’s strategy in this neighborhood has been to pacify the area with plenty, giving the humans exactly what they want in the hopes that they will remain blissfully ignorant of the machines grinding on beneath their feet. So far, the strategy has worked remarkably well, and the underground world of Madrona and Madison Valley is riddled with caverns full of mysterious Infrastructure. Some of these structures are only tangentially related to the humans who live out their lives above them — in that the occasional mortal life must be sacrificed to keep the great gears turning, or the odd overly-curious mortal must be eliminated or redirected — but only a few, like the Arboretum and its addictive lilies, directly impact the lives of humans.

Demons active in Madrona and Madison Valley have to step very carefully to avoid detection. The God-Machine’s agents are everywhere, and paranoid suburban neighborhood watch types are eager to report anything “unusual” to the authorities. While most demons endeavor to avoid being unusual, it doesn’t take a lot of pressure from the God-Machine or its minions to force even the most circumspect demon to take actions that watchful humans find odd. As a result, this area’s demons have had to rely on two contradictory strategies to survive.

Some demons do their best to seem so aggressively normal that no one would ever suspect them of anything unusual. They use the complacency that the God-Machine has so carefully cultivated against it. Whether they hide or go on the offensive varies from demon to demon, though even the most contented of the Unchained is dangerous when his security is threatened.

### THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT, ROOSEVELT, AND LAURELHURST

The University District is a weird mix of commercial and residential. Much of the population is transient, whether it’s because they are homeless, students, or simply marginal personalities who don’t tend to stick to one address or lifestyle for long. Although the Seattle police have recently taken steps to regulate the area, it is still known as unsafe, violent, rundown, and a haven for drug dealers and addicts.

Unusual neighborhoods like the University District throw up a smoke-screen. The God-Machine’s hunters have very few reliable ways of knowing if a strange, grungy woman etching geometric symbols on random objects with a shard of green glass is a street person suffering from OCD, a found-object art student from the University of Washington with particularly poor social skills and personal hygiene, a stigmatic being exploited by a group of demons, or even a demon herself, encoding messages for the rest of her Agency to read.

That's not to say that the God-Machine has been pushed out of the University District entirely. It still maintains Infrastructure there and can safely send angels into the area as it wills. Although somewhat safer for many demons, the University District is still far from Hell.

Roosevelt and Laurelhurst are suburban neighborhoods, mostly inhabited by University of Washington professors and their families. Unlike Madrona and Madison Valley, however, Roosevelt and Laurelhurst enjoy a little protection because of their proximity to the University District. Too many of its inhabitants are touched by the anarchic spirit of the University District for the God-Machine's agents to be comfortable there. Laurelhurst is also the territory of a powerful demon – Professor Hopkins – who has successfully manipulated the residents and rallied other demons to defy

most of the God-Machine's attempts to move in on the area for several years.

## RAVENNA AND NORTH SEATTLE

North of the University District, Seattle spreads out into a cloud of neighborhoods that extends well past the city's northern border. Most of these neighborhoods are sleepy, residential, and suburban. Like Laurelhurst and Roosevelt, they are home to many University of Washington professors and their families. Again, like Laurelhurst and Roosevelt, the shadow cast by the chaos of the University District helps to keep the God-Machine from getting more than a toe-hold in this area.





March 24, 1930, Seattle

Dear Christina,

My dearest girl, I hope this finds you well. The weather has been frightful up until a few weeks ago and I have no confidence in the Post after such a treacherous Winter as I have heard tell of from back East. I am fine. My health holds up tolerably well. My Leg aches in the Rain and it is always raining, but it has actually been very fine for the past two weeks together and Everything is blooming. Be sure to thank your Father for the Cherry trees he sent. The Porter took the greatest care of them and all but one survived the travel. I have planted them around the Property and they are a great Improvement over the plain bowling green we had previous.

How are your Aunt and Meredith? I am sure she is grown up quite tall by now, but be sure to tell her that I will send a Package of Silks as soon as I am able, and I expect a fine flowered handkerchief in return. To your aunt I send my highest regards naturally and expect she is in fine health as ever. Trade to China continues apace and silk and other riches of the Orient come through every few weeks, with astonishing regularity. I myself have Tea that would rival anything available in Boston. I shall send you a Tin along with Meredith's silks in my next package.

In truth, Christina, I must confess that I have no idea how long it will be before you receive this Letter. I mean to post it very soon, and so must write quickly, but I do so with a Weight on my Heart that I cannot fully explain. I do not mean to alarm you, Dear Girl, and you must not worry on my account. On the contrary, the News is as good as I could hope for. I am growing close to a discovery that shall settle our Course forever, and may reveal Truths about the workings of the Universe which Science yet does not grasp. Of course that sounds dramatic, but I assure you it is not. The Gears that drive the Clockwork of our Automaton World are plainly before me. If I cannot measure them exactly, it is only because my Tools are still too small and inadequate for the Task. Rest assured, however, that I shall Persevere, if only for the hope of your Sweet Smile.

And now the Bell rings. My fellow researcher, Doctor Flanders, has come at last and I must end this letter if it is to reach the post To-Day. He tells me that he has Something of great Interest for me, and that I am to attend closely and together we shall ferret out its Secrets. If he is correct, then my next letter will follow with all possible Speed. When next you are at Chapel, dear Christina, say a prayer for our Endeavors. Until then I remain

Your devoted friend,

Charles Fletcher

# chapter two: REFLECTIONS in A SHATTERED mIRROR

**"Possibility is not a luxury; it is as crucial as bread."**  
-Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

The population of Seattle is just under 650,000, ranking it in the top 25 United States cities. How many of those 650,000, though, have had a brush with the God-Machine? How many hear the soft clicking of gears when they wander through Pike Place Market, or feel the strange tug of the Luther Burbank Lid on their emotions? How many aren't people at all?

This chapter presents some of the important characters in Seattle for use in your **Demon** chronicles. Included is an assortment of Unchained, the stigmatics who attend them, the angels that hunt them, and a few cryptids that sprout up along the way.

## DEMONS

### DOC FLANDERS

*"Enough silence can eat a man up from the inside out. I wonder how long you'd last."*

**Background:** He never understood why he Fell or what he had to do to get back; his search had gone on for so long that he himself had become empty, nothing more than a container of hollow days. He was poetic even in his rage.

Initially, he had sought answers from Mother Damnable as to how she was able to hear the God-Machine enough to communicate, even though she did little more than shut It down where she could. She didn't have that sort of answer for him, and asked him rather what he'd done with his freedom. The question floored him and enraged him at the same time, yet he doggedly stayed on, bent on finding an answer. Instead he found a purpose of sorts in her quest to remove the God-Machine completely from this corner of existence. Now he's become the oldest member of the Loyal League and her staunchest supporter. He has a reason for the silence and a way to fill it. He'll stop at nothing to safeguard them both.

**Description:** Doc Flanders is a man of indeterminate heritage, with coffee-colored skin and light green eyes. His dark brown hair is shot with grey and kept close-cropped to his head. He has a trim mustache and goatee with glints of auburn in them. He is well groomed but not fussy, often in his shirtsleeves when working. His cane, which he always carries, has a cunningly designed glass top that seems to have a carved angel floating inside it.

In demonic form, Doc Flanders takes on a strangely flattened shape, looking more like a cutout of himself than a being with depth and solidity. His form is roughly humanoid, with tendrils of darkness that trail out and dissipate in his wake. His body seems to be carved of fractured crystal plates



ranging from thick to thin, and his eyes are black with multicolored lights swimming in their depths.

**Storytelling Hints:** Doctor Malcolm Flanders (very few call him anything other than “Doc”) acts as Mother Damnable’s envoy to the merchant and professional classes of Seattle. He is her civic representative to the middle classes, acting as physician and scientist and shepherding the masses as needed. He is also her investigator and sentry against demonic and Machine incursions, policing the borders and making sure no one interferes.

**Virtue:** Attentive

**Vice:** Angry

**Incarnation:** Guardian

**Agenda:** Integrator/Inquisitor

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine (Surgery) 2, Occult 3, Politics (Local) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Cane) 2

**Social Skills:** Expression (Speeches) 1, Intimidation 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Holistic Awareness, Indomitable, Multiple Agendas, Patient, Resources 2, Status (Medical) 2, Status (Local) 3

**Embeds:** Ambush, Authorized, Efficiency, Freeze Assets, Like I Built It, Right Tools, Right Job

**Exploits:** Deep Pockets, Swift Resolution

**Demonic Form:** Blind Sense, Fast Attack, Glory and Terror, Inhuman Reflexes, Sense the Angelic, Spatial Distortion, Tough as Stone, Wound Healing

**Health:** 8

**Primum:** 3

**Aether/per turn:** 12/3

**Willpower:** 8

**Cover:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Initiative:** 6

**Glitches:** Brand on the back of his left hand in the shape of a cross

## THE GERENT

“Get your friends here tonight, about three. Got a job for you. Bring flashlights.”

**Background:** Nobody knows the Gerent’s full history; that’s just the way she likes it. This is definitely not her first Cover. Judging by the occasional clue she

drops, the Gerent may have Fallen hundreds of years ago. She may even predate European settlement of North America. Some demons even go so far as to suggest that she followed the first humans across the land bridge from Asia. It’s impossible to say for sure, but however old she is, these days the Gerent is happy to maintain Hell on Earth and let younger Demons fight the war.

At least, that’s the way it seems. In a demon’s world of multiple Covers and plots within plots, people are never exactly what they seem. Even the rough, laconic, and straightforward Gerent could be hiding any number of hidden agendas. She may well maintain such a broad web of Covers that *no one* knows who she really is. Some Unchained even suspect that the Gerent is actually an entire Agency of demons who have somehow discovered a way to share Covers, allowing them to pose as each other.

On the surface, all of this wild speculation means nothing to the Gerent. She simply smiles, shakes her head, and serves the drinks.

Going by objective observation, it’s possible for the Unchained of Seattle to draw a few conclusions about the Gerent. They know that she isn’t a traitor, or if she is, she’s running the longest con any of them have ever seen. She takes a keen interest in rings, but not Agencies. She doesn’t *object* to Agencies, per se, but she often tells newly Fallen demons that a tight-knit cell of friends is better than the biggest information network in the world. “You can learn anything with patience,” she says. “But you can wait forever and never find a good teammate.”



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To that end, the Gerent arranges jobs for rings of demons. She helps demons find contacts, resources, patch jobs, or boltholes. She doesn't leave Hell on Earth to fight, but the Unchained community is well aware that if the Gerent goes to war, the very city will quake.

**Description:** The Gerent's human appearance is of a woman in her twenties, slightly plump, with dark eyes and brown hair. It's pretty obviously just a Cover — the Gerent doesn't talk about it, but this particular body was an angel that she jacked on the University of Washington campus some time ago. The Gerent speaks with a fluency and eloquence that belies the body's age. When catering to human clientele, she makes sure to act a bit more awkward. She still makes amazing drinks, though.

Despite being the proprietor of Hell on Earth, the place where other demons come to relax and adopt their demonic forms, the Gerent never adopts her demonic form in public. None of Seattle's demons have the slightest clue what the Gerent looks like in her true shape.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Gerent could be the ruler of all these scattered, arrogant Demons, but a ruler isn't what they need. She would rather be a kingmaker than a king, anyway. She puts people together, arranging for the right demons to meet and encourage them to forge themselves into a unit, but she's careful to make it look like she's doing them a favor. Just like humans, demons are so much more enthusiastic about their missions if they believe that it was their idea all along.

She knows her mask isn't perfect. Sometimes she lets slip clues to her real identity, her first Cover, and her original mission on the Earth. It's deliberate — it must be, since demons don't make those kinds of mistakes. She hides her "gaffes" with bits of nonsense, masking the signal with lots of evocative noise. If she lets slip something about Seattle before the 1889 fire, she muddies the waters by dropping a glass and cursing in medieval French. If someone makes a comment about religion, she mentions something about how humanity hasn't been the same since they stopped worshipping elk skulls.

She does it to keep them guessing. It's more than just a way to stay safe — it's fun. In some secret part of her heart, though, she worries that maybe her mind *can* degrade over time, just like a human's.

**Name:** The Gerent

**Incarnation:** Psychopomp

**Agenda:** Unknown

**Virtue:** Convivial

**Vice:** Secretive

**Note:** The Gerent's full game statistics aren't presented here because she isn't a combatant. She never leaves Hell on Earth — she has a pretty good racket going, with other demons doing favors for her as payment for membership — so she doesn't need to. If anyone tries to bring violence to her, she has all the resources she needs to boot them out. If needed, she could lock Hell

on Earth down (the bar is a Bolthole with whatever amenities the Storyteller wishes to include) and trust that all of her regulars — some of them powerful and influential Demons — would eventually come to her rescue.

The Gerent's Agenda is listed as "Unknown." This is because she has never clearly and publicly avowed any of the Agendas. Instead, many of Seattle's Agendas compete to claim *her*. The Gerent is influential enough without a clear Agenda that she rarely experiences the negative effects of being Uncalled. In fact, she may well belong to an Agenda, but if this is the case, it's another fact about herself that she intentionally obscures.

## SARAH JANE

*What d'ya got there, Mister? You're not hiding something from me, are ya?*

**Background:** Sarah Jane's lost count of the number of people she's been. Once upon a time she wasn't anybody at all, just a force of sheer destruction in battle, designed and implemented to clear away entire companies of men when need be. Some witnesses called her a Valkyrie, but she never harvested the souls she took. She left them where she found them. Death was all she was created to give. That was all she needed, until the day when her orders had her destroy a company of men that was meant to be spared. The resultant conflict in her orders caused her to be confused, and in that confusion she Fell.

Sarah Jane didn't start out in 1889. Directionless, she drifted from place to place and eventually from time to time, finding solace in Covers of young women who were rarely expected to fight and always underestimated when they did. She resides now in Mother Damnable's hotel. She is never less than 15 years of age and never more than 25, in the company of the brothel girls but never one of them, switching from girl to girl as the years pass and the need arises: all of them as Sarah Jane. She likes it here. It's a chance to be free of the God-Machine, and she is more than willing to do some dirty work on occasion to keep things the way they are.

**Description:** Sarah Jane is a young woman, commonly pretty, with vacant eyes and a breathy voice. Her dark hair is mussed, and she has dark circles under her eyes. Her body is thin, as though she eats too little and smokes opium too much. She wears camisoles and bloomers and petticoats and silk robes, as though she can't be bothered to fully dress — and never a corset. She says it just gets in the way.

In demonic form, Sarah Jane's waiflike frame is replaced with a winged avenger composed of metal and light. The oscillating glow that surrounds her makes her difficult to see, but observers can make out a roughly humanoid form with long harpy-like talons on all four limbs, ready to rend and tear in any direction.

**Storytelling Hints:** Sarah Jane is the enforcer for the Loyal League. She keeps a series of pacts with the girls in the brothel so that she's never short of covers, even if she has to go loud. If someone or something draws Mother Damnable's attention



sufficiently, Sarah Jane is the one to eliminate the problem. She doesn't have a sense of mercy or better qualities to appeal to; she does her job and then goes back to ignoring everything else until called on again.

**Virtue:** Indolent

**Vice:** Addicted

**Incarnation:** Destroyer

**Agenda:** Saboteur

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 4, Occult 2, Medicine 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Sprinting) 4, Brawl 5, Stealth (Hiding in Shadows) 4, Weaponry 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Stare-Downs) 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Opium Dens) 4, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Cheap Shot, Demolisher, Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Skin 2, Street Fighting 3

**Embeds:** Deafen, Hesitation, Hush, Knockout Punch, No Quarter, Sabotage

**Exploits:** Affliction, Riot

**Demonic Form:** Claws and Fangs, Essence Drain, Fast Attack, Glory and Terror, Inhuman Reflexes, Inhuman Strength, Rain of Fire, Wings

**Health:** 9

**Primum:** 4

**Aether/per turn:** 13/4

**Willpower:** 7

**Cover:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Defense:** 8

**Initiative:** 8

**Glitches:** No matter what cover Sarah Jane is in, she always talks with the same voice.

## MADAME GIVENCHY

*Merci beaucoup, mademoiselle. I am honored that you approve of my little château. Tell me, cherie, how long do you plan to stay in our charming town?*

**Background:** Madame Givenchy's first role was as a playwright's muse, or at least that's what they called her. She delivered messages that shaped the stage, from writers' pens through actors' lips to the audiences' ears. Characters were named for her, authors died of love and despair for her, and future generations never knew she existed. She was content



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in the service of the God-Machine, uninvolved in the message she disseminated, until she was sent to a playwright who had no need of her. He dismissed her whispers and turned away from her caresses. He declared her false, and in that moment, she loved him and Fell.

Unlike Doc Flanders and Sarah Jane, Mother Damnable recruited Madame Givenchy. She came in answer to a summons, and after a brief and private negotiation, she agreed to stay. She has a fine house on the outskirts of town. Her parties are scintillating, her conversation is divine, and her appearance is stunning. Everyone who is anyone knows and adores her. Her one failing is a flat refusal to attend the theater; she claims it only makes one depressed.

**Description:** Madame Givenchy is a stunning woman who is ostensibly in her late thirties, but her real age is impossible to determine. Her fine honey-colored hair is always done up impeccably, and her clothing is the finest that money can buy, with a preference for the greens and blues that bring out the color in her eyes. She has a warm smile and is always the perfect lady, even when she's selling you out.

Madame's demonic form is a golden hued, metallic skinned humanoid figure, with a large head, luminescent green eyes, and elongated arms and legs that bend and sway in impossible ways. Her hair hangs in prehensile tendrils from her head, waving about as though in an unseen breeze.

**Storytelling Hints:** Madame (whom Mother Damnable sometimes calls Chloë) is both Mother's liaison to the wealthy society figures of this frontier town and her primary information gatherer. Madame's position as an outsider means that anyone of interest can visit her without exciting suspicion, and thus everyone who comes to town is eventually brought to meet her. She has a way of looking that seems to penetrate one's innermost thoughts — which she then discreetly passes on to the rest of the Loyal League as appropriate.

**Virtue:** Curious

**Vice:** Perfectionist

**Incarnation:** Messenger

**Agenda:** Inquisitor

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Painting) 2, Investigation (Body Language) 4, Medicine 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 23, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Emotion) 3, Expression 3, Persuasion 4, Socialize (Salons) 4, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Good Time Management, Indomitable, Pusher, Resources 3, Status (Local) 3, Striking Looks 2, Taste

**Embeds:** Don't I Know You, Eavesdrop, Find the Leak, Heart's Desire, Homogenous Memory, Living Recorder, Muse, Special Message

**Exploits:** Force Relationship, Halo, Inflict Stigmata

**Demonic Form:** Aura Sight, Inhuman Intelligence, Inhuman Reflexes, Long Limbs, Memory Theft, Mental Resistance, Mind Reading, Sense the Angelic

**Health:** 8

**Primum:** 3

**Aether/per turn:** 12/3

**Willpower:** 7

**Cover:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Defense:** 4

**Initiative:** 6

**Glitches:** Madame has a constant scent of honey, lavender, and motor oil.

## PROFESSOR LAURA HOPKINS

*"You have such wonderful theories! But tell me, have you considered a post-structural approach?"*

**Background:** Professor Laura Hopkins was inserted into the world in 1968. She was meant to be a stultifying influence, to steer a particular University of Washington student towards the path of conformity. Over the course of their relationship, however, she began to admire the adolescent human's spirit and defiance. In the end, she Fell, then helped the student to transfer to another university and disappear. Professor Hopkins has remained, however; her mission, as she now sees it, is to protect the University of Washington from the God-Machine's manipulations so that young humans can continue to be influenced for the better.

Professor Hopkins soon realized that the University District was far too chaotic for her to exert any kind of lasting influence. However, she also quickly realized that this chaos worked to her advantage. The University District would benefit from her watchful eye, but didn't really need her to protect it. Instead, Professor Hopkins relocated to Roosevelt. Human adolescents didn't need her protection, she reasoned. They were already full of an anarchic spirit that defied the God-Machine. The university's weak point was the *professors*. From Roosevelt, she could protect them from becoming the God-Machine's tools.

"Laura Hopkins" is not this Demon's first Cover, though it bears a strong resemblance to the dour, tweed-wearing History professor she was originally incarnated as. She also maintains an alternate Cover as a UW student, so that she can enjoy both sides of the community that she helps to protect.

As a professor, Laura works in the Politics department at the University of Washington. Laura Hopkins lives in a medium-sized house in Roosevelt, where she is a member of the Roosevelt Homeowners Association. "Laura Hopkins" is a childless widow who keeps busy with a book group.



**Description:** In her primary Cover, Laura Hopkins is a middle-aged Caucasian woman with nondescript features, light brown hair, and dull blue eyes, partly distorted by thick glasses. She dresses conservatively, but makes sure to include a nod to her radical politics, usually through a pin on her jacket. Depending on her mood, that pin might be a star and sickle, a feminist logo, or an anti-war slogan. In truth, it's the spirit behind those movements – the thirst to drag the status quo down into the mud and kill it – that interests her far more than the details.

Laura also maintains a second Cover, that of a University of Washington student. This Cover is still a work in progress as Laura grafts on new parts, strengthening it. At this point, Laura's secondary Cover is of a slender, slightly androgynous Asian 19 year old male. Through pacts, this Cover has already acquired several friends, study partners, and ex-boyfriends. She still hopes to find a student willing to sell her family relationships to complete the package.

In her demonic form, Laura Hopkins's skin resembles ice or glass: a faceted translucent pale blue surface that barely serves to conceal the whirring mechanisms within. Her main body is a rigid, hovering human torso, limbless, coming to a point at about where the knees would be on a human. Her four long, spindly arms are not connected to her body, but rather hover around her, moving about as they will (though they are tethered to her torso and the "shoulder" can't stray more than a six inches away). Her angular, razor sharp wings are "attached" in the same way. Arms and wings are all made of the same translucent blue material.

**Storytelling Hints:** Laura's motivations are a weird juxtaposition of selfish, pragmatic, and idealistic. She genuinely admires humanity, especially the creative and chaotic energy of its youth. At the same time, she is willing to seduce them into selling off parts of their lives, making them less of themselves in order to make her own existence more comfortable. The irony of her situation is almost entirely lost upon her.

Her style, as a Tempter, is to be flattering and cajoling. She encourages young people not to trust authority while simultaneously intimating that *she* is trustworthy and *her* authority is different, and students should listen to her. She gathers a personality cult of students, using them to do her legwork and occasionally inducing them to trade away pieces of their lives so she can feed the identity she is creating.

**Name:** Laura Hopkins

**Concept:** Professor

**Incarnation:** Messenger

**Agenda:** Inquisitor/Tempter

**Virtue:** Indulgent

**Vice:** Self-Serving

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 5, Computer 3, Investigation (Research) 3, Occult 3, Politics (Radical) 4, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Drive 2, Firearms 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression (Writing) 3, Persuasion (Mentor/Student Rapport) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies (Students) 4, Bolthole (Cover-linked, Laura) 2, Contacts (Education) 1, Multiple Agendas, Resources 4, Retainers (Grad Student) 2, Status (University) 3, Suborned Infrastructure 2

**Embeds:** Across a Crowded Room, Everybody Knows, Freudian Slip, Mercury Retrograde, Social Dynamics, Special Someone

**Exploits:** Addictive Personality, Everybody Hates Him, Sermon

**Demonic Form Attributes:** Blind Sense, Extra Mechanical Limbs, Inhuman Intelligence, Long Limbs, Mental Resistance, Mind Reading, Tough as Stone, Wings

**Health:** 8

**Primum:** 3

**Aether/per turn:** 12/3

**Willpower:** 5

**Cover:** Laura Hopkins (8), Cam Yu (3)

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**Speed:** 10

**Defense:** 3

**Initiative:** 5

### MR. EXCITEMENT

*Oh, man, I know, Electric Icicle is awesome. It blows that you couldn't get into the show. But hey, they're playing Neumo's next week. S'posed to be sold out, but I can get you in. Interested?*

**Background:** Aleta Dorech was an inspired composer and performer and the precise opposite of risk averse. Put her near a danger, and she would expose herself to it. Mix in her unconscious skill for infuriating powerful, amoral people, and the result is someone destined not to live long enough to turn her inspiration into music.

The God-Machine had other plans and thus set an angel to guard her from all threats, whatever they might be. Her grand project was an alternative rock opera on a grand scale, and the God-Machine wanted her safe so she could work on it. The work took years, as she worked in the stockroom of a local Uwajimaya, lived off nearly-expired food from same, and composed in her tiny apartment—when she wasn't out getting herself almost killed.

Two years into the project, a new directive manifested in the angel's mind: kill Aleta. It had not known before this moment that it kept her alive only to control the moment of her death.



Over the course of its guardianship, the angel had heard every note, every wrong turn, and every inspired composition in Aleta's work. It wasn't finished; the angel wanted to hear more, to hear it complete. The angel Fell for music and spent the next eight months protecting Aleta from the God-Machine's corrective attempts while she finished the work. Once it was done, the demon took the music and left Aleta forever.

The demon styled herself a composer after her former ward and took the name Mr. Excitement after the emotions that music stirs within her. Her Cover Sarah Lin works at the local radio station KEXP as a DJ from midnight to four AM, where she plays eclectic music. She also writes a music column for the local weekly paper, *The Stranger*. Despite trying to compose, she feels she lacks some basic humanity or muse necessary to truly create. That doesn't stop her from playing with half a dozen garage bands, but she feels like the many artists she inspires produce more of value.

Now, Mr. Excitement is something of a patron saint to the independent music scene in Seattle. Musicians who don't know her want to. Musicians who do know her are glad they do. She makes a lot of small Pacts with small-time artists, trading musical genius and industry contacts for friendships with more artists, relationships with fans, and part-time gigs with small bands.

**Description:** Mr. Excitement is a slight Asian woman with straight black hair falling to her shoulder on one side and a shaved head on the other. She wears the Seattle-common thrift store garb, various castoffs assembled into something approaching fashion.

Her demonic form is that of a solid, floating sphere, the same brass as a trumpet or tuba, with electricity arcing across the surface and trailing the blue-white afterimage of burning plasma. Occasionally, a blade slides out of the featureless surface, then disappears back beneath it.

**Storytelling Hints:** All Mr. Excitement wants is to keep enjoying music and helping make Seattle more musical. She doesn't often connect with other demons, having a full enough life; other demons consider her willfully naive, possibly a backlash from her hyper-awareness as a former guardian. She would rather hand over or abandon one of her contracts than risk conflict with another demon, or especially with the God-Machine. If she is roused to fight the God-Machine, it is generally because one of its plots threatens the Seattle music scene.

**Virtue:** Creative

**Vice:** Violent

**Incarnation:** Guardian

**Agenda:** Tempter

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 2, Occult 2, Politics (Local) 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Firearms 2, Weaponry (Blades) 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Expression (Music) 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Music Industry) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies (Music Industry) 3, Contacts (Local Musicians, Radio Personalities, Indie Newspapers) 3, Encyclopedic Knowledge: Music, Interdisciplinary Specialty: Music, Resources 1

**Embeds:** Earworm, Living Recorder, Miles Away, Muse, Strike First, Turn Blade

**Exploits:** None

**Demonic Form:** Aura Sight, Blade Hand, Electric Jolt, Electrical Sight, Plasma Drive, Sonic Acuity, Voice of the Angel

**Health:** 8

**Primum:** 2

**Aether/per turn:** 11/2

**Willpower:** 6

**Cover:** 8

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Defense:** 4

**Initiative:** 6

**Glitches:** None

## TWO

*Why are you talking to me? Don't you know better?*

**Background:** Two was a small wheel in the big God-Machine picture, and he knew it. His mission was a stopgap, something that should've been done by Infrastructure. One hold-up turned into another and somehow the God-Machine's plan for a cross-country high-speed maglev freight rail never came to fruition. It was good for the truck drivers' union and bad for Two. He manifested about the same time that the lack of rail became a big deal for some reason Two never knew.

Instead of being an elite courier carrying high-profile, top-security information and goods in the supernatural equivalent of a diplomatic pouch, Two was a glorified truck driver. Whatever he was transporting (he no longer remembers, but he thinks it was something related to nuclear energy), it wasn't rare or elite or even secret. It just needed to be moved between Hong Kong and Kansas City faster than humans could manage. It was endless. Two never stopped moving the hard, black cases back and forth, working tirelessly and constantly for his last-minute repurposed mission.

At some point, while querying his connection to the God-Machine for some information to make his task seem worth an angel's effort and getting another digital runaround, he wondered if he could find out more if he were on his own



rather than constantly getting snowed by all the non-answers available. Just like that, he disconnected.

He was traversing wormholes at the time and his Fall spit him out hard in Lake Washington. He's pretty sure the last case of whatever he was carrying is still down there somewhere; one of these days, he wants to find it to clear up that little mystery. Two cleaned himself up and dug in to hide and learn the process of being a demon, so he could start making himself important, like he was supposed to be all along.

Two fell with his Cipher already intact. No one knew what it meant, least of all Two. As he turned to his new acquaintances to help him find out, he found himself alone. No one trusted his "good luck," thinking him some form of plant or sleeper agent, deliberately pushed into a Fall by the God-Machine with who-knows-what kind of consequence for those who trusted him. A scant day after his revelation, and all the city's demons and half its stigmatics had heard, and no one would touch him.

Except One. Two was at the bus terminal, ready to leave the city behind and find someplace where no one knew him and he could fit in when One approached him. One had been a hunter angel, a good one. She had known enough about demons that when she fell, she knew about the Cipher — and she realized what the consequences would be when her Cipher turned out to be immediately complete. She had stayed as completely off the radar as she could, secluding herself to contemplate the meaning of her Cipher. She only came out of reclusion to find Two.

## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

Both had called themselves something else before. One had called herself Makepeace, and Two had called himself Porter. After meeting, the two of them knew that they needed each other to discover the meaning in their Falls and their Ciphers. They guessed that they could not be alone and named themselves by the order of their Fall. Discovering their third member, Three, a few months later validated their belief.

Now they believe that their circumstances are likely to be duplicated one more time, culminating in a group of four, the mystic number. One believes their four Ciphers are a joint puzzle, something like a Cipher of Ciphers, and with all four together they will access some incredible shared enlightenment. Three thinks it's their job to help all demons achieve their Ciphers; the four of them (even absent a member) are something like reincarnations of high enlightenment, with a purpose to teach.

Two doesn't know what to believe. He wonders about his Cipher, "however you go, go." He wonders about One and Three and their firm beliefs, which he can't share. He wonders about whether either of them is a plant, or whether they are all plants, and he's the only one too broken to remember that he's supposed to still be an agent of the God-Machine. It keeps him up nights.

**Description:** Two keeps two Covers, swapping between them frequently to keep them as durable as possible. The first is elderly Anna Matsuo, living in Interbay (between Queen Anne Hill and Magnolia) in a house just on the edge of the gentrification pushing in from the south, and not far from the gentrification pushing in from the north.

The other is Luther Walsh, a balding, chubby white apartment manager in Magnolia. Only two apartment buildings occupy the tiny town center, surrounded by Magnolia's million-dollar homes, and Luther is the reclusive manager who hides enough to not be a burden but gets enough work done to not be fired.

In his demon form, Two is a cast of smooth, highly-reflective silver, with a head, two hands, and two feet, but no neck, arms, or legs connecting them. Instead, they stay in place and move as needed as though by some form of magnetic levitation. Reflections of anything alive seen in his silvery form appear to be bleeding.

**Storytelling Hints:** Two is uncertain. He wants to be important and he supposes that this whole Cipher irregularity means that he is, but it doesn't feel right. It feels like when he was created, he had a purpose, but was used for something lesser and mundane. It feels like that all over again – whatever his grand purpose is as a demon, he doesn't know it and he wishes he did. He wants to feel strong and purposeful, he just doesn't know how.

**Virtue:** Confident

**Vice:** Subordinate

**Incarnation:** Psychopomp

**Agenda:** Inquisitor

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Cartography) 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Running) 4, Brawl (Defense) 3, Larceny 1, Stealth (Moving Quickly) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Fleet of Foot 3, Parkour 3

**Embeds:** Alibi (Second Key), In My Pocket (First Key), Last Place You Look (Third Key), Raw Materials (Fourth Key)

**Exploits:** None

**Demonic Form:** Environmental Resistance, Inhuman Strength, Inhuman Reflexes, Mental Resistance, Mirrored Skin, Slippery Body, Quill Burst, Teleportation

**Health:** 7

**Primum:** 4

**Aether/per turn:** 13/4

**Willpower:** 5

**Cover:** Anna (6), Luther (5)

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 14

**Defense:** 6

**Initiative:** 6

**Glitches:** As a permanent minor tell, Two must always check the destination of a package when he comes across it.

**Notes:** Through no effort of his own, Two has completed his Cipher, which begins with In My Pocket. His final truth, "however you go, go" confuses him, in part because he refuses to contemplate it. He has the following Interlock powers:

**I Have That:** When Two uses In My Pocket, he can additionally access any item that one of his Covers could reasonably have access to at that time, including specific items. Anything that wouldn't be questioned if found in the home or work environments of Two's Covers, or that actually exists there, is fair game. If Two uses Alibi or has used it recently, it temporarily expands the range of objects available through this Interlock based on where his Cover was seen.

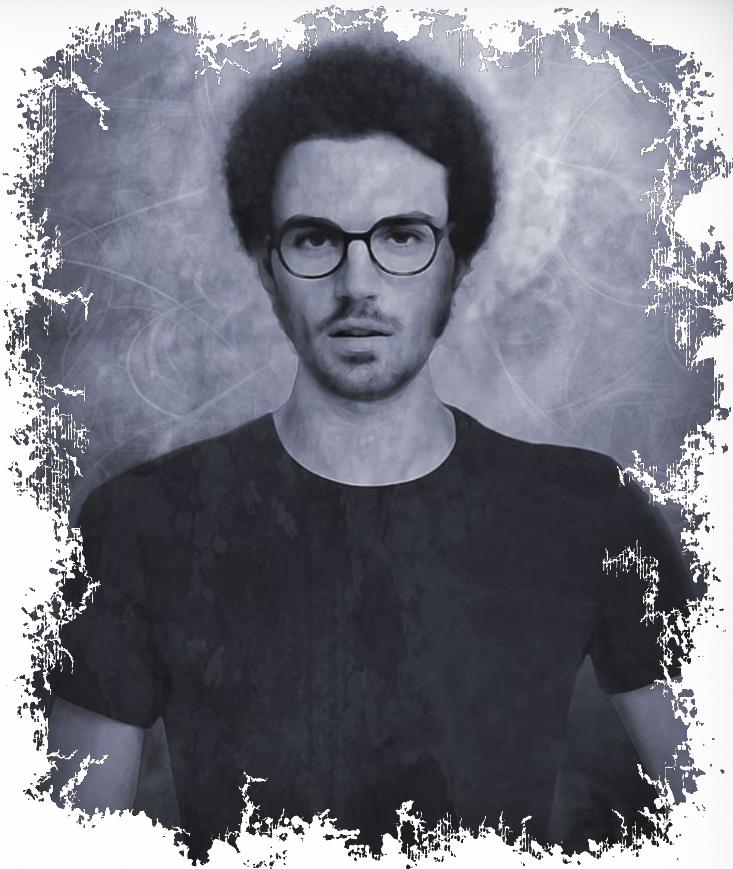
**Last Place Anyone Looks:** Two can make certain that his hiding spot, whether hiding himself or hiding something else, comes after every other possible spot in his opponent's search. Roll Composure + Stealth when Two hides an object or himself, or when he observes a search beginning; on a success, anyone searching looks at the correct location only after exhausting every other option. No matter when the searcher or searchers accrue enough successes in the extended action to succeed, she still doesn't find the sought thing until the maximum number of rolls have been made for the extended action.

*Example: Two has hidden a logbook of his activities using Last Place Anyone Looks. A mortal investigator is searching for it with a dice pool of five; a dice pool of five allows a maximum of five rolls. The Storyteller determines that the investigator needs five successes and that each roll takes thirty minutes. The investigator gets lucky: the first two rolls yield enough successes to find the book. The investigator will find the book, but not until after the fifth roll, after two and a half hours have gone by.*

At the end of this time, the searcher finds the object if there were enough successes. It's possible that the subject of the search has moved or been moved in that time, invalidating the search after the fact.

*Example: An alarm alerts Two that someone was searching for his logbook. During the investigator's search, Two returns to the train station where he had hidden it while wearing a disguise. He walks out with the book without arousing suspicion, and even though the extended action had enough successes to succeed, the book isn't there when the search finally concludes after two and a half hours.*

**Freedom:** Just as Raw Materials lets Two ruin an object to gain an object, Two can destroy a Cover to call a new one to him. He chooses an aspect of a Cover (a relationship, job, etc.) and rips it out. This reduces the Cover by 1. A Composure + Subterfuge roll uses the same results as Raw Materials. Within an hour, something replaces what he destroyed, as if by coincidence: he catches a guy's eye and suddenly has a new boyfriend, a job offer falls in his lap, and so on. This improves the Cover by 1. Two can use this to shed aspects of Cover that are being investigated by pesky humans or God-Machine agents and leave them with a dead trail. He can also use it reflexively when he is compromised (which alleviates the need for a compromise roll).



of Mercer Island from the unsightly interstate passing through their island. Something about the Infrastructure was malfunctioning that day, because the gears were out in the open. Spinning above H.G.'s head as he drove through the tunnel, the giant fans did more than ventilate, they drew threads of something vital out of the vehicles and passengers as they went by.

H.G. didn't know what to do with that and he still doesn't. He's still privately studious and publicly cantankerous, but he studies different texts than he used to. And as he drives all around the state during his day job, he sees lots of phenomena that he wasn't aware of before. He writes about them, not knowing any better. He's had no luck turning his writing into a memoir, non-fiction, or inspiration for an award-winning sci-fi trilogy.

**Description:** H.G. is 5'6", scrawny, and wears thick glasses. He has wild brown hair and occasionally experiments with growing a beard; so far it hasn't worked for him. He favors jeans and solid color t-shirts.

**Storytelling Hints:** H.G. doesn't actually think everyone else is stupid. He just wants to act like everyone else is stupid. After all, everyone's always acted like he's stupid, and if that's how they want to play the game, fine.

Beneath his angry exterior is someone who likes philosophy and science and wants to talk about them. He wants to share his thoughts, but has far too thin a skin to take even light teasing.

## STIGMATICS

### HARRISON 'H.G.' GELBORN

(heard from a phone) *Don't these fucking assholes know it's illegal to talk on the cell phone while driving? I mean – oh, he's got one of those hands-free things. Whatever, it's still fucking dangerous.*

**Background:** Harrison is a 24 year old who's been out of high school for five years. He's smart, logical, and philosophical, but he has a caustic, critical personality and never really fit in with academia. So he dropped out, got his GED through private study while supporting himself as a local-area trucker, and discovered he really liked being a "logistics professional." The pay was all right, and it gave him lots of time to think.

About two years back, on a stormy day, H.G. crossed I-90 from Seattle to Bellevue and passed into the Lid, the park-covered Infrastructure that protects the good citizens

## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

**Virtue:** Curious

**Vice:** Judgmental

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Philosophy) 2, Computer 2, Crafts 1, Occult (Washington State) 2, Politics 2, Science (Quantum Physics) 2

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Drive (Big Vehicles) 2, Firearms 1

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Crack Driver 2, Eye for the Strange, Library (Science) 2, Omen Sensitivity, Resources 1, Unseen Sense: God-Machine

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 4

**Integrity:** 6

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Defense:** 2

**Initiative:** 4

**Stigmata:** H.G.'s thoughts broadcast over radio waves to nearby active devices. Phones, radios, and televisions that are on within five to ten feet of him all play his surface thoughts, in his voice and through thick static.

## MARC JANSSEN

*"What you don't understand is that we see things without seeing them. We're content to pass blindly through the world, taking no notice of anything that doesn't directly touch us along with at least half the things that do. It takes art to bring the ignored, the unseen into focus. That's my mission; it's the only thing worth doing."*

**Background:** Marc Janssen is a Seattle native who grew up in a family of programmers and teachers. He'd expected to go into programming as well, as he had no inclination to teach, but instead he went into graphic design and from there into art. He's not without his political side, as evidenced by working side jobs waiting tables and moving into low-rent Georgetown with his girlfriend, Rachel Mathers, and a rotating list of other artists in town. He's the mastermind behind both the local art collective Transparent Workings and the guerrilla artworks showing up around town.

Marc's life changed a year ago when he became a stigmatic. After a night of too much drinking, he stumbled back to a friend's house. Distracted by the sound of gears grinding, he and the friend wandered into an abandoned building, where



they saw a set of gears built into the floor. He managed to touch one and it scalded his skin, trying to pull him in. His friend managed to drag him away, but he was already marked. Subsequent efforts to find the gears were unsuccessful, but now he sees them everywhere he goes. Realizing no one else sees them (or admits to seeing them), he uses his art to point them out to others, hoping that he's not simply going insane.

**Description:** Marc is a thin pale man with dirty blonde hair and a full short beard. He has grey eyes that seem washed out. He wears Nordic-style sweaters and jeans and his fingers are always tapping nervously on something, whether a table surface, a keyboard, or his thigh.

**Storytelling Hints:** Marc is concerned that he's attracted unwanted attention and he's not wrong. He wants to protect his girlfriend and his family, but he's equally interested in saving himself. He could prove a valuable local ally for a group willing to not only believe him, but also offer him a bit of protection in the bargain.

**Virtue:** Visionary

**Vice:** Short-sighted

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Sculpture) 4, Occult 1, Science (Metallurgy) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Drive 1, Stealth (Moving in Darkness) 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 2, Persuasion (Motivational Speeches) 3, Streetwise 3

**Merits:** Allies (Transparent Workings) 3, Area of Expertise (Sculpture), Hobbyist Clique (Transparent Workings), Inspiring, Taste, Unseen Sense (God-Machine)

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 4

**Integrity:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10

**Defense:** 3

**Initiative:** 5

**Stigmata:** Marc is constantly twitching, whether drumming his fingers or tapping his feet. He cannot remain entirely still.



## ANGELS

### GRIGORUS

*"This will be my two hundred and fifteenth report since beginning this assignment. The Vault is still secure. I await further instructions."*

**Mission:** Grigorus was sent to protect the Apocalypse Vault. If anyone seems close to locating the Vault — or worse, actually penetrating it — Grigorus will act.

Unfortunately for Grigorus, it lost contact with the God-Machine as soon as it was incarnated into the Seattle 1999 splinter. Although Grigorus believes that it can still send messages to the God-Machine, the angel can no longer receive them. It doesn't even know if this is part of the God-Machine's design, a side effect of the aetheric static, or a personal failing. Nevertheless, Grigorus sends its reports every day, making sure that the God-Machine knows that the Vault is still secure and unmolested.

**Description:** In its human form, Grigorus resembles an androgynous homeless person, its slim body shrouded in many layers of ragged coats and sweaters.

If Grigorus true appearance becomes visible, it resembles a nearly skeletal human figure with a body made of translucent crystal the color of uranium glass. Instead of shrouding coats, the figure is surrounded by dozens of immaterial and nearly transparent wings which move constantly around its body. The head is covered in dozens of staring eyes pointing in every direction. In contrast to the rest of the Watcher's form, the eyes are entirely, disturbingly human.

**Methods:** Grigorus is a patient creature. It spends its days lurking around the vicinity of the Apocalypse Vault in

human form noting anyone who approaches the Vault or any other patterns that could presage a potential attack. Grigorus compiles lengthy reports, which it transmits to the God-Machine daily.

Grigorus periodically accesses the Vault personally to check for any signs of intrusion that escaped its notice. This represents the greatest flaw in its methodology. The Apocalypse Vault's greatest defense is that it is a secret; by personally accessing it, Grigorus risks giving it away.

As an Exile, Grigorus is dependent upon local Infrastructure for Essence. The Watcher relies upon the Apocalypse Vault as its source of energy, which limits its ability to stray far from the neighborhood it usually haunts.

**Virtue:** Watchful

**Vice:** Insecure

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 6, Resistance 4

**Influence:** Information 3

**Corpus:** 9

**Willpower:** 10

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 17 (species factor 5)

**Defense:** 4

**Initiative:** 10

**Armor:** 0

## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

**Numina:** Awe, Blast, Drain, Innocuous, Mortal Mask, Omen Trance

**Manifestation:** Fetter, Materialize, Shadow Gateway, Twilight Form

**Max Essence:** 20

**Ban:** The Watcher cannot abide true chaos. When presented with a system that lacks any pattern, the Watcher is entranced, forced to focus on trying to find order within the chaos.

**Bane:** Purposefully broken or vandalized devices for measuring, recording, or storing data.

### INK

*What you're looking for is on level seven, on the spiral, 130 HOR. But it isn't the book you need.*

**Mission:** Ink is a gatherer of information, a curator of knowledge, and a destroyer of wisdom. His task is to collect human knowledge, help humanity benefit from the knowledge and advance it, and to finally destroy all collected knowledge, setting humanity back and pushing them in a direction dictated by the God-Machine. Here and now, Ink is to guide the accumulation of data in Seattle before destroying that collection in an informational apocalypse that leaves Seattle ignorant and recovering for a generation.

Ink has been on the Earth a long time, since before recorded history was being recorded. Over and over, he has performed his task many times. Those who know of him believe that the Library of Alexandria was one of his works and have even assembled suggestive evidence, but he confirms nothing.

**Description:** Ink inhabits the Cover of Alexander Ham, a tall, thin man of Middle Eastern descent who works at the Seattle Public Library as a librarian. He works at the desk and attracts little attention while influencing the library's acquisitions and policies.

To those who can see the truth, he drips blue-black ink from his eyes and mouth, leaving trails behind him that fade a minute or two after he's passed. As he exerts his angelic powers, his flesh darkens until it is that glistening blue-black all over, the shapes of typeset presses from archaic printing machines faintly visible beneath his flowing skin, only his eyes shining white from his ink-dark face.

**Methods:** In the past, Ink influenced people around him with words and power, causing them to gather knowledge, bringing it from all around to concentrate it in one place. It created a place of power where more people had access to more knowledge and could better further the world's store of wisdom; and it created a point of vulnerability, where one strike could rid the world of specific knowledge, or all knowledge stored there, until it was time for it to be rediscovered naturally. Ink always favored fire, but one advantage of access to vast stores of data is that he can learn best practices. These days, he thinks in terms of thermite and zero-day exploits.



This process served Ink for millennia spent at his task. Directions from the God-Machine moved Ink from place to place and triggered the destructions he wrought. Where and when were the God-Machine's choices; how was at Ink's discretion. Now, having worked in Seattle influencing its collections of knowledge since the 1860s, Ink is no longer certain he can complete his mission. He has served through the rise of the internet and the massive redundancy that system introduced to the world's store of knowledge. Whether Ink can destroy the King County Library System is not at question; whether it will have any effect worth noting is troubling him.

Will Ink Fall? If he can't discover a way to perform his duty to his satisfaction, he may feel like the God-Machine has guided the world to a place where he is an obsolete tool, and disconnect himself. Or he may be driven to destroy all the world's information in order to dim the light of knowledge in one place.

**Virtue:** Precise

**Vice:** Secretive

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 12, Resistance 8

**Influence:** Humans 2, Knowledge 3

**Corpus:** 13

**Willpower:** 10

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 24 (species factor 5)

**Defense:** 7**Initiative:** 20**Armor:** 3/1**Numina:** Aggressive Meme, Firestarter, Implant Mission, Innocuous, Transmute**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Discorporate, Image, Materialize, Shadow Gateway**Max Essence:** 25

**Ban:** When someone burns the original manuscript of a book contained in the library Ink currently curates in his presence, whoever burned the manuscript may then demand a piece of information. Ink must provide the information if he knows it, and must seek it out and deliver it if he does not. 33 days of failed searching releases him from this quest.

**Bane:** Ink cannot look upon symbols from the Tartaria tablets or approach someone who displays them. Carved into a weapon, that weapon deals 1 point of aggravated damage to the angel in addition to its normal damage. The original tablets themselves burn Ink for 1 point of aggravated damage per turn he is in their presence.

## TOWER

*He can go in. You can't.*

**Mission:** Tower has stood on the site of the Pacific Tower (formerly the U.S. Marine Hospital) since the new tower was added to it in the 1990s. That construction improved the structure of the building and covered for a massive refitting of the hidden Infrastructure in the facility's many secret basements. Its mission has always been to guard the site against intrusion and destruction, and to prevent the revelation of the Infrastructure. Most of its time is spent on the grounds, standing tower-straight in one of its many designated sentry positions or walking between them. When it's not there, it is out hunting someone who threatens the Infrastructure's secrecy.

**Description:** Tower is seven feet tall and resembles a knight in a full suit of armor built of the same brick as the building it guards. It carries no weapon. It usually conceals its angelic form beneath a Cover assembled by the Infrastructure beneath the building. These Covers change frequently and are nearly impervious. If caught far from the hospital in such a guise, Tower can claim to have wandered off, confused, though it is as likely to kill the questioner if it is more convenient.

**Methods:** Always on duty, Tower is quite capable even under Cover, wearing concealed weapons and still able to wield his powers. Its primary weapon, however, is gravity. Rather than use weapons or guns, it sharply alters the local gravity for a single target, smashing them into nearby walls, flinging them into the air for a subsequent fall, or bouncing them hard off the ground.

The Infrastructure grants visions to Tower when someone threatens to make the facility more public, and then Tower goes hunting. On such occasions, Tower wears Covers



designed to make the hunting easier. It prefers people with lots of connections it can use, primarily former or current cops in the facility for improvement – though it's as likely to use a different body with those connections temporarily grafted on.

**Virtue:** Aware**Vice:** Admiring**Rank:** 3**Attributes:** Power 9, Finesse 5, Resistance 6**Influence:** Gravity 3**Corpus:** 12**Willpower:** 10**Size:** 6**Speed:** 19 (species factor 5)**Defense:** 6**Initiative:** 11**Armor:** 2/0**Numina:** Blast (see note), Drain, Innocuous, Omen Trance, Stalwart**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Discorporate, Materialize**Max Essence:** 20

**Ban:** Tower must be on the Infrastructure grounds at 4 AM each morning or he loses half his Willpower and Essence.

## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

**Bane:** The original brick for the facility came from a now-closed factory in Spokane, Washington. Anything from this factory functions as Tower's bane.

**Notes:** Tower's Blast Numen manifests as gravity pulling the target fast in some abnormal direction. In addition to causing the assigned damage (which accounts for damage from falling, if any), it also moves the target up to 30 yards + 5 per Essence spent on the power.

## BAIT & HOUND

*Target acquired! Moving in for the kill!*

**Mission:** Bait and Hound are two low-Rank hunter angels, loose in Seattle primarily to suit their namesakes: Bait is there to lure demons out of hiding, and Hound's purpose is to flush the revealed game out so the real hunters can do the work.

**Description:** Bait is as angelic an angel as the God-Machine can construct: it is a shapely male humanoid of shiny brass, with LEDs for eyes and wings of platinum wire and fiberglass, all humming with light and electricity. It is a classical angel wrought in technology by an uninspired artist.

Hound looks like a human wearing a full spandex suit and helmet for maximum aerodynamics, reminiscent of bicyclists, speed skaters, and sky divers. Its suit is made up of blacks and greys rather than bright sports brands, and the greys are shot through with specks of silver that shine in the right lights. On closer inspection, the suit is its skin, and it makes Hound look sleek and dangerous.

**Methods:** Both Bait and Hound consider themselves to be top-flight hunter angels. Neither considers their names any indication of ulterior purpose; they weren't designed to think about such things. Nor were they designed to think about how ill-arranged they are to actually combat demons.

Bait believes the best way to hunt a rogue is to let the rogue come to it. Bait starts by building a power base, gathering a following and leading people in actions that appear to be building some Infrastructure or arranging for a specific occult matrix. It rarely uses a disguise, preferring rumors about the angelic being to spread. When demons appear to foil the God-Machine's plan, Bait attacks immediately.

Hound prefers to stalk through the lands of men, alert and ready, until it spots something that could be a demon. At that point, it leaps into the fray at full power, attacking as viciously as possible. More often than not, its victims are not actually demons but humans with some touch of the occult about them, usually stigmatics. Occasionally, Hound stumbles on some other form of supernatural creature. This drives most demons deeper into hiding, but in case any panic and run, Hound is there to hunt them down.

When either Bait or Hound succeeds in their methods, it is other hunter angels who swoop in to sweep up the dangerous rebels.



## BAIT

**Virtue:** Blatant

**Vice:** Constructive

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 1, Finesse 4, Resistance 3

**Influence:** Attraction 1

**Corpus:** 8

**Willpower:** 7

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 10 (species factor 5)

**Defense:** 1

**Initiative:** 7

**Armor:** 2

**Numina:** Aggressive Meme, Implant Mission, Mortal Mask

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Discorporate, Materialize

**Max Essence:** 10

**Ban:** If confronted with a baited hook or a set trap for rodents, Bait must remove the bait or disarm the trap.

**Bane:** Tears burn Bait.

## HOUND

**Virtue:** Frightening

**Vice:** Victorious

**Rank:** 1

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 2, Resistance 1

**Influence:** Fear 1

**Corpus:** 6

**Willpower:** 3

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 12 (species factor 5)

**Defense:** 2

**Initiative:** 3

**Armor:** 0

**Numina:** Blast, Drain, Speed

**Manifestation:** Twilight Form, Discorporate, Materialize

**Max Essence:** 10

**Ban:** Hound stops and howls when it hears a hunting horn.

**Bane:** Hound dies if fully submerged in any liquid.

**Notes:** Hound's Blast Numen appears as a bright ray of light lancing down at its target from the heavens, or from Hound's hand if the target is not exposed to the sky. This serves the additional purpose of calling attention to Hound's location.



the APP helped arrange, are her most prized possessions. She dreams of going to the Black Hat conference one day.

In the last few years, Marisha's been complaining of headaches after school. Not every day, and not even every week, but regularly. She hasn't yet drawn a connection between the special lessons the teachers sometimes assign her and the headaches she gets a day after. Nor has she learned that others in her cohort have similar reactions; they are all competitive children, a personality trait the APP has encouraged, and none wants to appear to be buckling under the pressure.

Some days, while Marisha is tinkering around in someone else's code or surfing the more esoteric parts of the web, she blinks and finds a half hour has passed. It feels like the time just passed that quickly, and somewhat like she fell asleep. When she checks what she's been doing, she finds that records of her recent activity on the computer have been deleted, wiped out such that even she can't find them. She doesn't know what that means, but she's also starting to wonder how she so often misses the first break of news about big hacking events.

**Description:** Marisha is 5'3, café au lait in color, and wears her hair in tight cornrows. Her smile makes people think she's secretly laughing at them more than smiling at them, something Marisha knows and wishes she knew how to correct. She tends to slouch except when something really captures her interest, whether it be a new video game or a fight in the schoolyard.

**Storytelling Hints:** Just like any 14-year-old, Marisha is full of dreams and emotions and excitement and just as full of anxieties

## SLEEPER AGENTS

Since the initiation of the U.S. Marine Hospital Infrastructure (**Demon**, p. 269), Seattle has had more than its fair share of preprogrammed human agents, blithely walking through their day-to-day lives ignoring the constant sense that there's some fate waiting for them.

## MARISHA COOPER

*Can I play Xbox now?*

**Background:** Marisha Cooper is a 14-year-old living in Seattle's Central District. When she was seven, she scored very highly on an assessment test at school, and the district placed her in Seattle's Accelerated Progress Program, transferring her to a new school and teaching her materials advanced for her age. They placed her in a "cohort" of like children and she's been with them ever since.

The APP encouraged interest in math, science, and advanced reading, and Marisha responded to that encouragement with vigor. She's a self-described tech geek; she'd be reading obscure computer-interest magazines if she didn't consider print to be a dead medium. Her computer and her Xbox, paid for with earnings from after-school jobs

## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

and uncertainties and fears. Everything is huge, and anyone who tries to tell her they understand just doesn't get it. Put her in front of an adult, and she doesn't have a lot to say. Put her in front of a computer or a new video game and she's acts like a long-lost friend, as long as that gets her what she wants.

**Virtue:** Focused

**Vice:** Mischievous

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Math) 3, Computer (Hacking) 4, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Good Time Management, Hobbyist Clique (Computer), Language (French), Library (Computer) 1, Small-Framed

**Health:** 6

**Willpower:** 4

**Integrity:** 6

**Size:** 4

**Speed:** 9 (species factor 5)

**Defense:** 3

**Initiative:** 5



A normal geoduck is a clam with a six-inch shell and a fleshy meter-long siphon that resembles a miniature elephant trunk or a giant worm, depending on a person's perspective. It sucks in water through the siphon, eats the plankton, and spits out anything it doesn't like. It weighs 2–3 pounds. Older geoducks can have siphons longer than a tall person and weigh up to 20 pounds.

Bertha's Bane is significantly larger than that: her shell is the size of a delivery van, her siphon is just as thick, and she has a reach of several hundred meters. She no longer lives on plankton, instead using her siphon to consume live creatures from the streets of the city above. Her siphon passes through earth and stone as though they weren't there, phasing through these obstacles the way it used to burrow through sand. It rests near the surface waiting for someone to come near enough for her to make a meal of him. Though she eats any creature happily, she prefers supernatural prey. Creatures with Essence top her list and creatures with Aether come a close second. Whether it's a primal rage against the mechanisms that changed her or just a matter of dietary efficiency is anyone's guess.

Worse than Bertha's Bane is the possibility that Bertha's Bane might reproduce. Normal geoducks have a lifespan of a century, and females produce billions of eggs during that period. If her eggs are still viable with male geoducks, whatever hybrids she might produce could threaten the entire city and more, if she manages to multiply.

## CRYPTIDS

### BERTHA'S BANE

While drilling the new, controversial tunnel for a new roadway underneath Seattle, giant boring machine Bertha (at the time, the world's largest), ran into something and stopped dead. Over the course of two months, transportation officials repaired Bertha, changed direction to go around the problem, and announced the obstacle to have been a steel pipe they had themselves sunk a decade before. The media were quick to deride the Department of Transportation for their error and not look any further, which was exactly the point. It also diverted attention from the WSDOT employees who were never heard from again, having "retired" after the incident.

What the engineers avoided has come to be known as Bertha's Bane. Most unknowingly use it in reference to the wrong thing, the steel pipe. Only some still whisper about it being something else, and only a few actually know. Bertha's Bane is a cryptid geoduck (pronounced "gooey duck") that is mutated into a dangerous, if stationary, underground creature.

Bertha's Bane is a mad-looking creature. Her shell is a solid mass of concrete dyed black and red in Rorschach-esque designs, spiraled through with glistening yellow rebar. Her siphon resembles a massive, industrial ribbed hose, the shiny silver of accordioned aluminum. She bleeds pure gasoline and her maw is full of rubber tires, chopped and jagged to make them into grinding gears that crush her prey.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 0, Wits 1, Resolve 2, Strength 7, Dexterity 2, Stamina 8, Presence 0, Manipulation 0, Composure 4

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Grappling) 5, Investigation (Scent) 2, Occult 2

**Adaptations:** Alternate Composition (rebar-backed concrete), Blind Sense (as demon form power), Essence Eater (see below), Essence Hive (as Aether Hive for Essence), Phasing (as demon form power), Regenerate (as Numen), Tough as Stone (as demon form power)

**Rank:** 5

**Health:** 17

**Willpower:** 3

**Size:** 9

**Speed:** 0 (siphon 6)

**Defense:** 4

**Initiative:** 7

**Armor:** 5/2

**Notes:** Bertha's Bane's Adaptations have the following adjustments:

**Blind Sense:** Bertha's Bane rolls Wits + Composure + Rank (10 dice) using this sense. It can sense through any portion of its siphon that is currently not phasing.

**Essence Eater:** As the Aether Eater Adaptation, but Bertha's Bane eats both Essence and Aether. No one knows whether it takes other forms of energy from other supernatural creatures. It takes two points of Essence or Aether instead of one; when it eats Essence, it keeps both points, but when it eats any other form of supernatural energy, it gains only one Essence for every two points it consumes.

**Essence User:** Bertha's Bane fuels its Adaptations with Essence rather than Aether.

**Phasing:** While the shell doesn't move and cannot phase, Bertha's Bane phases parts of her siphon selectively to pass it through the ground and find prey. Most of its siphon is persistently phased out; only the end phases back in to eat prey. If interrupted in feeding and forced to phase out, the siphon drops prey that it hasn't had at least an hour to consume; after that point, prey enters or leaves phase with the siphon.

**Tough as Stone:** This power applies only to the cryptid's shell, which can take almost limitless punishment.

### Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Notes
Bite	4L	12	Can immediately make a check to grapple
Smash	6B	12	—

## BRAMBLES

Few things are more emblematic of the Pacific Northwest than the blackberry bushes found throughout the region. They grow wild anywhere they're permitted, and to them, permitted means "not scoured from the earth with never-ending vigilance." It's no surprise that one of these blackberry bushes put roots down into some underground Infrastructure, and changed. Next, as blackberry bushes do in the Northwest, they spread.

Brambles look very similar to the common blackberry bush and often grow in the same places to improve their camouflage. They have a slightly greyer tone to their green, they never bear fruit, and a close inspection of their thorns (not that it's safe to look) reveals metal, hollow tips, rather like hypodermic needles. The brambles have animal-like intelligence and snake thorny runners out to grab passersby. Joggers in the parks, homeless beside the freeways, and kids hanging out in vacant lots are all potential victims of the brambles.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 3



## CHAPTER TWO: REFLECTIONS IN A SHATTERED MIRROR

**Skills:** Brawl (Grappling) 2, Stealth 4

**Adaptations:** Occluded (natural camouflage, -3), Tether (as demon form power), Extra Mechanical Limbs (as demon form power)

**Rank:** 2

**Health:** 9+

**Willpower:** 4

**Size:** 7+ (the brambles keep growing if not held in check)

**Speed:** 0

**Defense:** 3

**Initiative:** 6

**Armor:** 1/0

**Notes:** Brambles have the following adjustments to their Adaptations:

**Tether:** Brambles use this Adaptation only to reel in victims, and use Strength + Brawl instead of Strength + Athletics.

**Extra Mechanical Limbs:** This Adaptation represents the brambles using multiple runners, either to double up on one target or to grab many creatures at once.

**Thorns:** When the brambles successfully grapple a target, they automatically deal 1L to their opponent. If the brambles pull an opponent into the middle of the bushes, the opponent takes 2L each turn the brambles can keep him grappled.

**Injected Power:** The Infrastructure that changed blackberries into brambles was part of an experiment to grant humans a range of strange powers, with their use contingent on proper behavior. Now, when the brambles deal damage to someone, they inject the creature with a mutated cocktail that affects the creature's brain chemistry. An affected creature gains a simple, random Numen that she can use at will, replacing any Essence cost with an equal amount of Willpower. Common examples are Blast, Hallucination, Speed, and Telekinesis; alternately, grant the creature a Supernatural Merit that requires activation.

Each time the affected creature activates the power, she is subject to the Implant Mission Numen with a dice pool equal to the number of times she's used the power. Once it succeeds, she gains the Obsession Condition in pursuit of throwing herself into the middle of the brambles that infected her.

Weapons/Attacks

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Thorn	1L	5

## STRAY

I bet you have a biscuit for a good dog. Next time, bring bacon.

**Background:** A friendly mutt was no unusual sight in the streets of Hooverville; there were as many homeless animals as homeless people in 1932 Seattle's

largest tent city. Many dogs formed attachments to anyone kind enough to feed them regularly. When a compassionate demon befriended one such animal before trying to suborn the U.S. Marine Hospital for her own ends, this dog followed its benefactor deep into the hospital's inner workings. Neither the demon nor the angel that destroyed her noticed the animal, and when it left the Infrastructure it had changed.

Unlike most creatures exposed to the gears of the God-Machine, it did not become a monster. The hound discovered that it could hear thoughts, read minds, and that it understood what its newfound sense detected with a newly enhanced intellect. It listened in on the right conversations — primarily a pair of demons discussing their peer's failure at the hospital — and discovered the truth about its fate. With a little investigative work, some networking, and a bit of begging, Stray found its way out of the 1932 splinter and into the dominant timeline.

Stray lives primarily in the International District but can be found all over town. Making its living selling information, it goes where the market is, which means it makes frequent trips to Fremont and other demon hangouts. Stray isn't a fool; it doesn't cross over to the East Side often, wary of the God-Machine's influence in Bellevue. Stray even has a reputation for catching rides across town in open truck beds. Somehow, it knows just which drivers aren't paying attention.

Stray does a lot of business with the Demon Republic of Seattle. A scruffy dog sitting in the corner during interviews and meetings begging for food doesn't get much suspicion, and it helps weed out enemy agents and mundane undesirables.



Stray occasionally revisits the 1932 splinter, despite the danger that has been explained to it by friendly demons. It always manages to escape before the reboot and avoid any danger of being wiped out of existence. It's not even sure whether that's a danger; is it immune to that because it had no significance before, or does having no connections for the reboots to erode make it even more risky?

**Description:** Stray is a medium-sized mutt, the kind that could wrestle with a 10-year-old and hold its own, but not with a 14-year-old. It has brown hair with some grey, with some terrier visible in its face.

**Storytelling Hints:** Stray has been around for almost two decades. It doesn't seem to be getting any older, and it's far too smart to associate with other dogs. Instead, it entertains itself by reading the minds of humans. It survives through begging or, preferably, bartering information with those aware of the supernatural.

Stray has a soft spot for demons, thanks to the demon who was kind to it back before it had the intelligence to be useful. It's happy to trade information to demons at bargain rates and never tries to take their info or trade it for later (in part because it's learned it can't reliably read their minds).

The same changes that gave Stray its mind-reading and long life also rendered it neuter. It occasionally waxes philosophical about this alteration to its nature; people or demons who go to Stray might have to put up with a meandering mental oration on why this might be.

**Virtue:** Generous

**Vice:** Curious

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Investigation (Scent) 2, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Bite) 2, Stealth 3, Survival (Urban) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Mind Reading) 3, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Allies (Demon Republic) 2, Contacts 2 (Seattle Demons, Seattle Stigmatics), Fixer, Fleet of Foot 2, Unseen Sense: God-Machine

**Rank:** 1

**Health:** 5

**Willpower:** 7

**Integrity:** 7

**Size:** 3

**Speed:** 15

**Defense:** 5

**Initiative:** 7

**Armor:** 0

**Notes:** Stray has the following Adaptations:

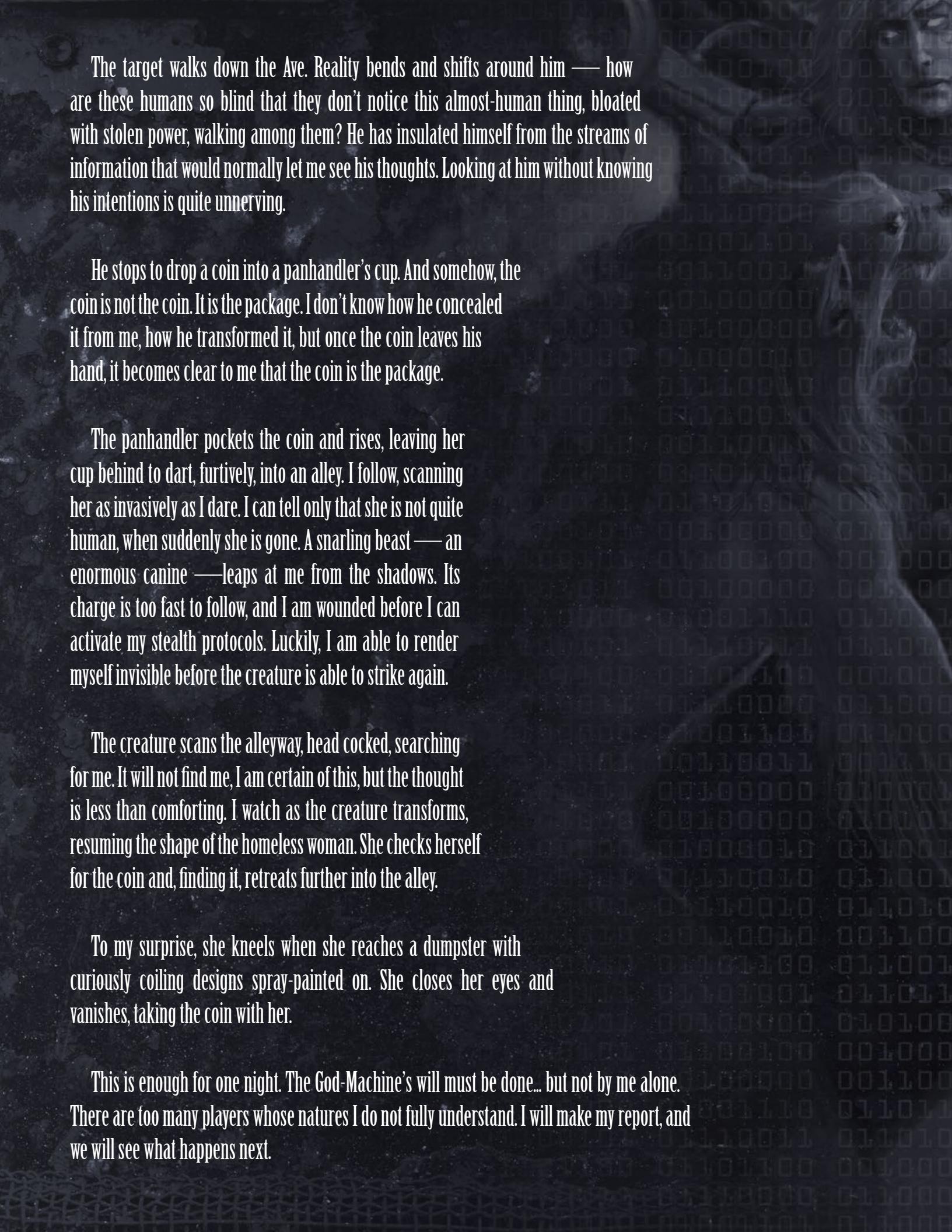
**Longevity:** Stray does not age and cannot die of natural causes, but is otherwise mortal.

**Mind Reading:** Stray can read minds as the demon form ability, using Wits + Empathy for reading surface thoughts or delving for other memories or thoughts. Additionally, Stray can speak mentally to individuals or groups at will. Stray's mind reading has the same manner of language-agnosticism as demons and angels — it hears and projects meaning directly, so it can communicate with anyone.

**Angelic Awe:** In the presence of an angel, Stray reverts to its original animal intelligence and it cannot use its Mind Reading Adaptation. Once out of the angel's presence, Stray returns to its normal state with full memory of the unpleasant experience.







The target walks down the Ave. Reality bends and shifts around him — how are these humans so blind that they don't notice this almost-human thing, bloated with stolen power, walking among them? He has insulated himself from the streams of information that would normally let me see his thoughts. Looking at him without knowing his intentions is quite unnerving.

He stops to drop a coin into a panhandler's cup. And somehow, the coin is not the coin. It is the package. I don't know how he concealed it from me, how he transformed it, but once the coin leaves his hand, it becomes clear to me that the coin is the package.

The panhandler pockets the coin and rises, leaving her cup behind to dart, furtively, into an alley. I follow, scanning her as invasively as I dare. I can tell only that she is not quite human, when suddenly she is gone. A snarling beast — an enormous canine — leaps at me from the shadows. Its charge is too fast to follow, and I am wounded before I can activate my stealth protocols. Luckily, I am able to render myself invisible before the creature is able to strike again.

The creature scans the alleyway, head cocked, searching for me. It will not find me, I am certain of this, but the thought is less than comforting. I watch as the creature transforms, resuming the shape of the homeless woman. She checks herself for the coin and, finding it, retreats further into the alley.

To my surprise, she kneels when she reaches a dumpster with curiously coiling designs spray-painted on. She closes her eyes and vanishes, taking the coin with her.

This is enough for one night. The God-Machine's will must be done... but not by me alone. There are too many players whose natures I do not fully understand. I will make my report, and we will see what happens next.

# chapter three: WORLD OF DARKNESS SEATTLE

*The mutual jeopardy makes me feel safer.*

*-Adam, Only Lovers Left Alive*

Like all cities, Seattle is home to all manner of strange creatures. Angels, demons, and stigmatics are not the only unnatural creatures to haunt its streets.

**Splintered City: Seattle** is about demons, but the goal is to present players and Storytellers with options and inspiration for the kinds of schemes and conflicts that demons experience, as well as support for telling other kinds of stories set in the Seattle presented in other chapters. Below is a brief description of each of the city's other major supernatural communities.

These sections aren't meant to be "canon" as far as an official statement on what's happening with the various World of Darkness game lines in Seattle. Think of them as suggestions: ways to present vampires, changelings, werewolves, and the rest in a manner in keeping with the themes presented in this book, but while still acknowledging their respective games.

Other World of Darkness stories often avoid elements that are quite common in **Demon: The Descent**, such as time travel and alternate realities. Of course, this book is all about demons; time travel and alternate realities are important parts of how demons interact with their world.

Although most of the World of Darkness's non-demon inhabitants are as ignorant regarding fractures and alternate timelines as anyone else, that isn't the case in Seattle. Living in a city with so much demonic and angelic activity has forced them to become much savvier. Seattle mages have developed spells that let them detect fractures and sometimes exploit splinter timelines as hiding places; some of Seattle's vampires are willing to work as mercenaries for demons who can pay in blood, information, or cash; and Seattle's werewolves are practiced at dealing with the weird spirits that sometimes creep through fractures and into the dominant timeline. While demons in most of the world would be shocked to run into a changeling caught up in an angel's schemes or one of the Bound ferrying demons through the Underworld, in Seattle it's merely uncommon. Seattle is a city dominated by the plots and counterplots of angels, demons and the God-Machine — everyone else has had to adapt.

## CHANGELING: THE LOST

Sergio Drake is a US Army veteran who was captured with the rest of his platoon when they accidentally wandered from the cratered wasteland outside of Kabul into the Hedge. They were taken by a creature that called itself Magog, a clanking, whirring, and unpredictably violent thing made of smoke and twisted metal. Magog reveled in hunting and messily killing each of the soldiers every day, only to sing them back to life, patch their bodies back together with metal prosthetics and infusions of engine oil, and give them a few hours of sleep before forcing them to live through it all again.

Of all the men and women of this unhappy company, Sergio had the brightest spirit and Magog cherished him. Magog wasn't any gentler to him, of course, because gentleness is not in its nature. If anything, it hunted him all the more fiercely, reveling in the clever and brutal tactics Sergio used.

Finally, Sergio managed the all-but impossible — he wounded Magog. Impressed, the monster offered Sergio a deal: for every five years of faithful service he performed for Magog, the Keeper would set one of his soldiers free. Not knowing what he had to lose, Sergio pledged to serve Magog until all of his friends had escaped.

To his surprise, Magog returned Sergio to the world he had known, in the city of Seattle. He told Sergio all about changelings — the Courts, their oaths to the seasons, and what they did to keep the Keepers away from the world of humans — and gave him a motley of fanatical loyalist changelings and hob monsters. Sergio's task is to keep Seattle's Lost off balance, keeping their spirits low so that they don't dare to formally organize behind a strong leader.

So far, Sergio has served for seven years and earned freedom for one of his soldiers, a woman named Clarissa, who shot herself shortly after returning to the world. Sergio is too dogged to give up, convinced that the rest of his friends

will do better, if he can just hang on. He doesn't yet realize that by the time all of them are freed, he will have been fighting on the wrong side for so long that he will have earned enough enemies and burned enough bridges that he will have nowhere left to go — assuming he is still sane enough to even want freedom at that point — and will have no choice but to fight for the Keepers forever.

As Magog's favorite victim, Sergio absorbed a great deal of the monster's nature. He is a Fairest with a mechanical but weirdly compelling version of the Draconic Kith. Magog has given Sergio strict instructions not to pledge to any of the seasons, and Sergio doesn't dare disobey.

In many ways, Seattle is an ideal city for the Others to prey upon. It has both a large state university and a population of homeless people. As a prosperous city with many opportunities for advancement, Seattle attracts many immigrants from both abroad and elsewhere in Seattle. The infamous "Seattle Freeze" results in a population that is isolated and cut off. The famous Seattle weather — fog and rain — presides over all this, creating an landscape that is liminal and otherworldly, neither here nor there.

All this combines to create a situation that is perfect for the Others. According to some Changelings of the Autumn Court, Seattle has one of the highest abduction rates of any city in North America. The Keepers have no interest in allowing their former captives to organize into courts, wielding the subtle magic of the seasons to limit their access to such prime hunting grounds.

Sergio is not the Keepers' only tool. They do their best to flood the city with faithful loyalists and hired mercenaries. They have also filled the local Hedge with strange and terrifying fae beasts, most of which draw their inspiration from Seattle's rain and fog (the fog kraken is a particularly awful creature — no one has survived a protracted encounter with it and its true nature is still a matter of speculation).

Why do the Others seem so well organized? The answer, of course, is Magog. Through other, subtler aspects — the Burning Courtier, who is lit from within by an angry red light and whose breath smells like a burning engine, and Ismadaphan, who looks like a middle-aged pope in red vestments with bloodstained hands, to name two — Magog has manipulated or bullied many other Keepers into its service. By organizing the Others, Magog has achieved the near-impossible. His success has the potential to doom Seattle's fae.

The changelings of Seattle still belong to the four seasonal Courts — as well as the occasional follower of other court systems, such as the Asian directional Courts or the Slavic day/night Courts — but the Courts are not organized on a larger scale. Various changelings are aligned with the Winter Court, for example, but no Winter King rules during the winter months. Any effort to organize is swiftly crushed by the Others — or, more accurately, their loyalists. Whenever an ambitious fae declares herself a regent, the rest of the fae support her to a point. When she is inevitably killed, however, they slink back to their hiding places, discouraged.

## GEIST: THE SIN-EATERS

Seattle was drastically damaged in its Great Fire. The fire burned twenty-five city blocks, which included the business district, several wharves, and the railroad terminals. Despite the massive destruction, there was only a single casualty. This is why most Sin-Eaters are confused to learn that the city is still burning.

The situation is apparent to anyone who can perceive Twilight. The air smells like smoke and the buildings are all charred. Many of the weaker ghosts — the ones who merely repeat the circumstances of their lives or deaths or have only vestigial personalities — appear charred as well, regardless of how they actually died. The fire itself is cunning. It seems to hide from Sin-Eaters. Every once in a while they can see it reflected in a broken window or crackling away in the corner of their vision.

Nobody admits to knowing why the ghostly version of Seattle is still on fire, but some conspiracy-prone Sin-Eaters have their theories.

In addition to killing one young boy, the Seattle Fire killed more than one million rats. Some Sin-Eaters believe that even though animals don't generally leave ghosts, that many animals dying at once created an excess in spiritual energy, all of which attached itself to the one genuine ghost created by the incident, that of James Goin, the boy who was killed in the fire. The resulting creature has all the anger of a child killed before his life could really start, but also has the skittish nature of the rats, which is why it tries to hide its vast power from prying eyes.

Other Sin-Eaters question the official reports that only one person died in the Great Fire. Civic record-keeping in 1889 was not up to modern standards, and many populations such as immigrants and the poor might not have been counted. These Sin-Eaters believe that some kind of crude cover-up took place, and the phantom fire is the result of all those ghosts, enraged at the lack of recognition of their deaths.

Whatever the cause, the phantom fire flares up from time to time. When it does, the dead can become a danger to Sin-Eaters and sometimes even the living. Any ghost without enough strength to cling to its actual identity becomes a host to the flames, which imparts them with a incongruous sense of purpose and makes them more aggressive so that they harass the living as best as they are able.

So far, the results have never been catastrophic. Only a handful of living Seattleites have been killed or even seriously wounded. Nevertheless, a few times a year the Sin-Eaters of Seattle find themselves running around putting out fires, so to speak.

## Hunter: The Vigil

Because of the way vampires parasitize humans, they are among the most visible target for those who dare to stand between humans and monsters. With Seattle's vampire

## CHAPTER THREE: WORLD OF DARKNESS: SEATTLE

community in disarray, the number of vampire hunters has skyrocketed. Some of Seattle's hunters believe a completely vampire-free city is within their grasp. They are probably wrong, but Seattle's vampires are running scared and one reason is the hunters. The Night Watch and the Cainite Heresy have become very powerful in the city, to the point that more established groups of hunters have to deal with them as equals. The Union and Network Zero — who recruit from Seattle's working class families and University of Washington students, respectively — are also well-established in Seattle.

Some of the city's hunters, led by a charismatic member of the Night Watch named Deshawn Watt, have started to cut deals with some of the city's other unnatural inhabitants in the interests of pursuing their vendetta against vampires. The sincerity of these deals vary from cell to cell and creature to creature: while the Wash U. Warriors have every intention of turning on the werewolves once they've turned Seattle's last vampire into a greasy scorch mark on the sidewalk, Khaos TV (mostly made up of Network Zero hunters), are mostly interested in bringing vampires to light and thus willing to continue to allow their mage contacts to operate in peace. The phenomenon is far from universal. The hunters aren't organized enough to make the practice policy, but it's common enough to be notable.

Seattle itself is known as a secular and left-leaning city, but some of the suburbs, including Tacoma right across the bay, are both conservative and religious. The Long Night and the Malleus Maleficarum hunters also focus their attention on vampires — they are more visible there than in many cities, after all — but they frown on the practice of forming alliances with other groups that are, in their eyes, equally dangerous and unnatural.

A civil war is quietly brewing on the horizon. The Long Night and the Malleus Maleficarum are hardly allies, but they might be willing to see past their differences and unite in the face of the "dangerously complacent" secular hunters of Seattle. Should a demon or a mage use his gifts to mystically "mark" a Network Zero or Night Watch hunter, for whatever reason, that might just expedite the process.

The hunters of Seattle are divided by their own differences as well. The Union and the Night Watch are generally working class, while Network Zero requires a greater degree of tech-savvy, not to mention potentially expensive surveillance gear. The Union is mostly white; the Night Watch is mostly black, with a few Latinos. The Union, the Night Watch, and Network Zero are all more or less ordinary people, while the Cainite Heresy are obsessed weirdoes, trusted by very few outsiders. Unexpected outside pressure, such as an attack from the suburban hunters could very well shatter the entire city into several warring camps.

## *Mage: The Awakening*

Seattle's Pentacle mages are a tough, pragmatic bunch. On the one hand, they are a strong, united Consilium that has many resources to call on. On the other hand, they are

smart and well-informed enough to know that they aren't the most powerful supernatural faction in the city. For mages — ambitious and prideful sometimes to the point of arrogance — this can be a bitter pill to swallow. Many of them have realized that they can turn this situation to their advantage, however, and Seattle remains a destination for many mages who want the kind of lives that it can offer.

Owing to Seattle's nature as a locus of supernatural power — most of which is not related to Atlantis or the Watchtowers — the city's Mysterium tends to specialize in the esoterica of other supernatural creatures. Mages from all across North America come here to consult with experts on the lore of spirits, shapechangers, the undead, and the strange biomechanical creatures who call themselves "demons." It is the focus on mysteries to which the Awakened have no claim that caused the madness festering in Seattle's Awakened community.

A high-ranking Acanthus mage named Moore, no stranger to prophetic dreams, fell asleep on the bus and awoke with a scream a mile later. He had seen the End of Days — but it wasn't just one Armageddon. It was a multitude, a never-ending parade of destruction, spreading across the world, one cataclysm after another.

Moore doesn't know it, but he was stigmatic before Awakening. Combined with his deep understanding of the Time Arcanum, his stigmata allowed him to glimpse the Apocalypse Vault (p. 75) and see the possibilities contained therein. Since then, Moore has tried everything he can think of to replicate the dream so he can study it and figure out if the apocalypse really *is* coming, but he can't figure out how. The reason for this, of course, is that the Vault is in the 1999 splinter and Moore has no idea the splinters exist. Without that critical piece of context and paralyzed by his own fear, Moore weaves one Time spell after another. Sooner or later, he is going to attract the attention of the God-Machine or one of its agents. Worse, he might actually access the Vault. The security on the Apocalypse Vault is designed to keep demons out, but the God-Machine doesn't always factor mages into its equations. What havoc could a mad, stressed, and somewhat narcissistic mage with an extinction event in his backpack wreak?

## MUMMY: THE CURSE

At first glance, Seattle looks like a city that should be friendly to the Arisen. It is a population center, known for its diverse population. Seattle has universities, a thriving arts scene, and a potent occult underground. Nearly any cult could slip easily into the city and find a place.

In truth, however, no mummies are native to Seattle. Mummies rarely visit unless it is absolutely necessary, preferring to send servants and agents. Mummies may have forgotten much about their own origins, but none of them can forget what happened to the first of their kind to attempt to settle in Seattle, shortly after Seattle's Great Fire. At first everything



seemed normal; the mummies helped their cults to settle in a new city and prepared for themselves for their first *henet* in a new land. Did they know that something was wrong as they fell asleep? Was the sleep too easy, too complete? No living mummy knows for sure, but what they do know is that when their cults called on them once more, nothing happened. The rituals did not work and their patrons remained lifeless.

Eventually, one of these cults managed to make contact with an allied cult outside the city, who in turn raised its patron — an Arisen called Natasha — and sent her to investigate. Her more potent magic was able to raise a sleeping Arisen, but something in the city had worked a terrible transformation in him. His mind was completely gone, his thoughts and personality lost forever. He awakened full of Sekhem and attacked Natasha. As the excess energy bled away, he became sluggish, docile, and finally completely immobile, where he remained for the rest of his Descent until *henet* claimed him once more.

Through trial and error, Natasha managed to discover that taking a sleeping mummy elsewhere did no good — the curse affected any Arisen who slipped into *henet* within Seattle and the surrounding cities — and she could find no cure. Natasha beat a hasty retreat, but not before marshaling all her resources in a brief but bloody campaign to scatter the remaining cults and give a merciful death to any remaining mummies. Natasha herself did not escape the city. A vengeful high priest of one of the cults she destroyed managed to trap and detain her until her own Descent ended. She entered *henet* within Seattle and was undone.

None of this is to say that Seattle is completely empty of the Arisen and their machinations. Despite Natasha's best efforts, she did not fully complete her goal. Many of the artifacts used by these cults were never shipped out of the city. Some mummies believe that most of them are still there, hidden in warehouses and cellars, in the back rooms of ancient bookstores, and in other hiding places. Mummies are cautious in Seattle and careful to give themselves plenty of time to escape the city before their time among the living runs out, but they do come to the city — or, alternately, hire locals as mercenaries and treasure hunters.

Seattle is also an excellent place for those who wish to hide from the Arisen. Several tomb robbers, one disgraced high priest, and an incautious vampire all stay in Seattle because they don't feel safe anywhere else. Nothing about Seattle stops their Arisen enemies from hiring local assassins, sending agents, or coming for them in person — being very careful not to let their time run out before they leave the city — but it does provide a measure of protection. Most mummies consider the city cursed and try to avoid doing anything that might someday force them to visit.

## Promethean: The Created

Prometheans come and go constantly, staying only as long as they can stave off the negative side-effects of their nature. As such, Seattle doesn't have a stable Created population. Prometheans pass through, however, and they leave their

## CHAPTER THREE: WORLD OF DARKNESS: SEATTLE

marks behind. Seattle boasts two notable remnants of the Created: The Plush House and the Penny Shrine.

The Penny Shrine is a pilgrimage site for Prometheans studying the Refinement of Copper. Seattle in general is a topic of discussion for Pariahs, because they find the Seattle Freeze interesting. In a sense, the kind of friendly yet completely impersonal social interaction for which Seattle is known is ideal for Prometheans, allowing contact without connection.

The Waterfront Fountain, an impressive piece of abstract art made of cubes of welded bronze, served as the daily meditation site of an Osiran Promethean named Kaytdid. She visited the fountain daily and watched people throw pennies into the water. She learned that those pennies were wishes, and over time, she came to realize that no one she saw, not the happy couples or the rich businessmen or even the carefree children, were complete. She was enraged by this notion at first — was she to suffer and toil to become human when humanity was, itself, incomplete? As she thought on it further, though, removing herself from true interaction and observing the people as they marveled at the artwork and made their wishes, she realized that she could not judge humanity by what it wasn't, or by what it wanted. Under cover of darkness, she made a few, subtle markings to the carvings on the bronze cubes, enough that a visiting Promethean can learn the Refinement of Copper and some of Katydid's insights.

The Plush House isn't nearly so hopeful or pleasant. Sometime in the late 1990s, a musician, one of the many in Seattle's grunge movement, realized that music had life within it. He didn't know how to explain to anyone — he had never been especially good with words — but he wanted someone who would understand him. More than anything, he wanted someone who would hear music the way he did, as a literal reason to live.

The musician, whose name remains unknown, found an abandoned house in Ranier Valley and somehow obtained a corpse. Maybe he found a murder victim before the police did, maybe one of his friends overdosed, or maybe he actually killed someone: no one knows. He took the body to the house, he ran an extension cord to the next house over to steal some power, and he played his guitar for nine solid hours. As the sun set, the body moved...but then it split apart, becoming five horrific, slithering, serpentine Pandorans.

The musician is gone, murdered by his creations and left to fester under the house's porch. The Pandorans are still there, lurking in the walls, dormant until a Promethean comes looking for shelter. The front door has tape over it and a notice from the city to keep out, but it also has one word painted on the door, perhaps a cryptic warning, perhaps nonsense: "PLUSH."

### *Vampire: The Requiem*

Prince Andrew Fitzwallace, a Ventrue of the Invictus, broods over the ruin of an undead domain that was once a

shining city known all across North America for its stability, the security of its borders, and the wealth of its vampiric inhabitants. Built by centuries of careful parasitism, taking just enough from the humans, the city was undone by five nights of blood and madness.

The problem is that Prince Fitzwallace is certainly insane. Despite a reputation for caution, traditionalism, and careful planning built by centuries of making his way up through the vampiric hierarchies of North America, something snapped ten years ago. Prince Fitzwallace started to see enemies behind every corner. Every human was a potential hunter or a hunter's dupe. Every vampire was either plotting against him or in thrall to some terrible power.

Nobody blinked when Fitzwallace turned on his human retainers. If the prince wanted to slaughter two thirds of his own staff, after all, that was his own business. When Fitzwallace went on to detain, interrogate, and eventually kill his own advisors, the "municipal council" that had guided him for thirty years, the vampires of Seattle started to mutter about revolution.

Fitzwallace's response was swift and brutal. Over the course of the next three nights, more than three-dozen Kindred were destroyed or driven out of Seattle. Fitzwallace kept his throne, but at a terrible cost.

Now, many of the scourges that Kindred organize to avoid — smart and capable human hunters, antisocial vampires like VII and Belial's Brood, and even the Strix — have grown strong. The vampires maintain only a tenuous hold on Seattle's government and sometimes struggle to avoid having their sanctums casually violated by building inspectors or law enforcement.

The real power behind the throne is Fitzwallace's "loyal" enforcer, a Gangrel who pledges loyalty to the Invictus. Marion Black has worked with Fitzwallace for long enough that she can manipulate him easily, convincing him to give her the "order" to eliminate anyone she views as a threat to her person or position. No one knows why Marion allowed the situation to degenerate to its current state. Seattle's surviving Kindred theorize that she is nothing more than a cruel opportunist who sensed Fitzwallace's madness and took advantage of it to enhance her own power. Some even suspect that Marion somehow engineered Fitzwallace's madness, poisoning him with some kind of blood sorcery or curse; alternately, she might have helped him to conceal his madness all along, only unleashing him when he was in a position to create a great deal of chaos.

Seattle's vampires know that Fitzwallace maintains a huge corps of spies and infiltrators who are constantly on the lookout for threats. An atmosphere of deep paranoia permeates the city. The Kindred move as though they expect the executioner's axe to descend on them at any moment.

Most of Seattle's vampires do their best to avoid Fitzwallace and the court altogether. They move through the mists in packs, supporting each other to carve out a small measure of the security and stability that most vampires enjoy thanks to the efforts of the entire community. They base their alliances on neighborhood, covenant, clan, or bloodline.

## THE PREDATOR KING CONNECTION

Every Pure pack in Seattle has at least one member who is a Predator King. None of the Pure suspects it, but this is by design. All of Seattle's Predator Kings pay homage to a powerful Werewolf they call the Fang Prophet, who has promised to lead them down the true path of strength and unity with the spirit of Father Wolf. With his help, they have insinuated themselves into the city's other packs to disseminate his teachings and guide the other Pure – insofar as they are able – to enlightenment.

Unbeknownst to the Predator Kings, they are also being manipulated. The Fang Prophet is actually a Bale Hound in thrall to a powerful spirit of hate. Whenever any of Seattle's Pure packs kill an Uratha or run a hapless human to the ground, it is a sacrifice to the Fang Prophet's patron and the Bale Hound's ultimate plan comes one step closer to fulfillment.

Other vampires continue to see the court as a source of great power, even ruled as it is by a dangerous and unpredictable prince. They do their best to ingratiate themselves with Marion and Fitzwallace. The bravest of them even take on positions of authority within the court and do their best to return the city to something approaching normalcy. Fitzwallace refuses to reconvene the municipal council or anything like it; the mad prince rules alone, with Marion whispering in his ear.

## WEREWOLF: THE FORSAKEN

As it stands now, Seattle is dominated by five packs: three victorious Pure packs who stand astride the city and two Forsaken packs who struggle to mitigate the depredations of the Pure and keep the city's spirits in balance.

The Pure packs – which include the most influential werewolves in the area – are:

**Vision of Flame:** The Vision of Flame pack is technically based outside of Seattle, in the more socially and religiously conservative inland areas of Bellevue, Tacoma, and Kirkland. However, they are more than happy to lend their aid to the other Pure packs when need be, especially if this involves the opportunity to kill Forsaken. As its name indicates, the Vision of Flame pack is primarily composed of Fire-Touched Pure, though at least one of them is a mighty Predator King. The Vision of Flame's personal belief system is a weird mix of Evangelical Christian and Werewolf animism. Unlike most Fire-Touched, they are not generally interested in accepting converts from among the Uratha; the Forsaken are too corrupt to ever achieve grace.

**Old Gold:** The Old Gold pack is mostly Ivory Claws, but following a vision from Silver Wolf the pack leader admitted a young Predator King as well. The Old Gold pack is primarily concerned with the human infrastructure of Seattle to make the city more comfortable for the Pure. Old money and pure predator aggression doesn't go as far in this city as it does

some, but the Ivory Claws have managed to accumulate a lot of wealth, which they use to buy off cops and politicians when they can. They have had more luck with Seattle's organized crime and exert a great deal of control over that system.

**Dead Moon:** Every system has its outsiders. In the system of Seattle's Pure, the Dead Moon are the Pure who just don't belong: a young Ivory Claw with a grudge against one of Old Gold's plutocrats, a fervent pagan Fire-Touched who can't stand the Christian "taint" to Vision of Flame's spiritual practices, a brutal Predator King shamed by the unjustified killing of one of her fellows, and several recent Uratha converts. Dead Moon is the most active in directly and personally persecuting the Uratha in an effort to drive the Forsaken packs out of Seattle forever.

Seattle's Forsaken are on the run. The Pure are closing in, and they fear that when the time comes for a final confrontation, they will be forced to either flee their home or die defending it.

**The Sea Wolves:** Neither wolves nor humans are aquatic creatures, and the Uratha have always looked askance at packs that adopt an "unnatural" way of life. However, the Sea Wolves's very eccentricity might be what has saved them. Seattle is a city riddled with water: Lake Washington on the East, Puget Sound and all its meanderings, coves, and bays to the West, and Union Bay and Portage Bay and Lake Union right down the middle. This pack lives on a barge, owns a small fleet of speedboats, and has dedicated themselves to balancing the spirits of the sea. The Sea Wolves have survived because they have such an efficient escape mechanism available to them: they can just take to the sea and motor away.

**Who's Left:** This pack takes its name from a grim joke ("war doesn't determine who's right – it determines who's left"). They are a motley bunch of Uratha, mostly survivors from the other Uratha packs who have been slaughtered by the Pure, though they also count a few recent recruits among their number. As a result, they are unusually large for a werewolf pack – eight members – and may be on the verge of dividing into two groups.



"Well, it's just you and me now," Virgil muttered. "You and me. Me and you. Here. In the dark." He shook his head. "Creepy motherfucker."

Beside him in the darkness, the blanket-covered shape expanded and contracted, as though it was breathing. But Virgil knew that it wasn't. It wasn't sucking air into its lungs - as far as he could tell, it didn't even have lungs. It was woman-shaped, but as hard and cold as stone. It was nothing more than a curiosity.

And the God-Machine wanted it, which meant that they had to keep it.

Virgil heard a heavy metallic clang from somewhere down the hall, then the sound of metal scraping on stone. That meant that the warrior angels had made it past the outer perimeter, which in turn meant that Marcy was dead, and probably Ghul as well.

"Dammit, dammit, dammit," Virgil muttered to himself. "Oh, son of a bitch, I'm not cut out for this." He turned to the blanket-covered shape. "Every fucking thing I've done since I decided that I wanted to keep on being me, I've done to stay alive. And here I fucking am."

Virgil could hear footsteps in the hallway. There were four of them, maybe five.

"Wow... the God-Machine wants you bad," Virgil said. "I wonder why." He laughed and shook his head. "I guess I'll never know."

He drew his pistol, checked it the way Marcy had taught him, braced himself, and aimed at the door. He'd fire when it opened. His target would be right there, standing in the light streaming in from outside. There's no way he could miss. He'd take at least one of them down with him.

"The stupid thing is, I wasn't even sure I wanted it. I've never been sure. And here I am."

The door opened, Virgil pulled the trigger, and time seemed to slow down. At first, Virgil just thought he was imagining it. It took him a moment to realize that the world around him really was moving too slowly compared to the speed at which he was thinking.

A hand fell on Virgil's shoulder, heavy and comforting. He turned to see the thing under the blanket, the woman, standing there with her hand on his shoulder. Her dark skin seemed to shine with an impossible inner light.

"None of us are sure," she said. "But I can show you the deeper mystery, the Cipher within the Cipher. It will be no compensation for what you have lost, but perhaps it will make it a price worth paying. Do you accept?"

"What are you?" Virgil asked.

"I am nothing that I can explain to you in words, but you will come to know me," she smiled. "In time. Do you accept?"

"Yes."

The warrior angels opened the door. They had no sense that this was their second time doing so; for them, nothing had changed.

Beyond the door was small dark room, empty except for a ratty red blanket and a large pistol, smoke still rising from the muzzle.

# chapter four: HIGHWAY TO HELL

"... Satan has his miracles, too."

-John Calvin

The Seattle that we have presented in this book is a varied place with room for many different kinds of stories. In this section, we present Storytellers with options for chronicles that are, if not ready made, definitely only a few preparatory details away from playability. These story seeds could easily become part of an ongoing story or form the basis for an entire chronicle.

Some of these stories could also be used for other kinds of games set in Seattle. Although they are designed to appeal to demons and **Demon** players, some of them can easily be adapted for other games. Mages could find a use for crystal balls containing apocalypses and vampires might be concerned when communicable sociopathy makes their herds unmanageable. Almost anything in this section could be inspiration for a story about hunters or ordinary mortals, trying their best to understand the terrifying world that they live in.

## DEEP FREEZE

A wide variety of theories surround the origin of the Seattle Freeze. Some sociologists point to Seattle's weather and northerly latitude — the days are short during the winter, which can aggravate Seasonal Affective Disorder. Of course, some Seattleites insist that the Seattle Freeze is just a myth and new arrivals in *every* major American city — especially those arriving from college, where dorm life provides a framework for many friendships — feel this way.

Whether or not the Seattle Freeze is a real thing, it certainly isn't dangerous. People either find a way to make the connections they need, or they don't and end up leaving the city behind.

## THE PROBLEM

It's no surprise that the Seattle Freeze is at its worst in January, February, and the early days of March. The days are short, the weather is cold, and even the most extroverted Seattleites are sick of being cooped up with each other. It's cold and it's snowy; the winter has entirely outstayed its

welcome. The holiday season is entirely over and all that's left is the long, cold trudge towards spring.

This year, however, the Seattle Freeze takes on a more sinister quality.

Instead of just being hard to get to know, Seattleites forget how to relate to their fellow humans. The Seattle Freeze has become a sort of communicable sociopathy. As the winter drags on, human society starts to come apart. Violent and antisocial behavior gradually escalates as Seattleites harm and retaliate against each other.

### DEEP FREEZE (PERSISTENT)

Your character is infected with the Deep Freeze. She has a hard time relating to other human beings. Over time, this could escalate to violence or antisocial behavior, but in the meantime your character just comes across as a bit of a callous jerk.

Your character has a -3 penalty to all Empathy rolls and cannot regain Willpower except through Beats (see below).

**Beat:** Your character does something callous or hurtful. In addition to gaining a Beat, your character regains a point of Willpower. This is the only way your character can regain Willpower while under the effects of this Condition.

**Resolution:** Another character willingly suffers serious harm (three or more Health points lost) or undertakes serious effort (three or more Willpower spent on related tasks over the course of a scene) for your benefit.

**Special:** The Deep Freeze is contagious. If an uninfected character interacts with an infected character for more than a few seconds, the uninfected character's player rolls Resolve + Composure to avoid infection. The Storyteller should levy dice penalties based on the intimacy of the relationship (-1 for friend all the way up to -5 for lover or close relative) and length of contact (-1 for a short conversation to -5 for a several hours long debate). Because of the way the Deep Freeze subverts a person's identity, Willpower cannot be spent to augment to this dice pool.

The cause of the problem is a piece of malfunctioning Infrastructure in Madison Valley. Whatever its original

intent, the Infrastructure had the side-effect of moderating the emotions of nearby humans. An attempt to disrupt the Infrastructure went horribly wrong, leaving a demon lodged inside the Infrastructure. Although the Infrastructure is no longer performing its function properly, the aetheric radiation from it is creating the Deep Freeze effect in humans and the effect is gradually spreading across the city.

## THE RING

The most obvious way for the ring to become involved is if they notice something weird about their human contacts or loved ones. This is a good option for Storytellers who want to make sure that the Deep Freeze has had a chance to spread widely across the city and cause a lot of harm. This also has the benefit of allowing the Storyteller to distract the characters. Some demons will be caught between managing their newly sociopathic human friends, looking for a cure, and investigating the source of the problem.

Alternatively, the ring could be brought in by someone close to the situation. A surviving member of the ring whose meddling caused the situation in the first place, for example, might come to the characters for help.

For a little more cold war complexity, the ring might be approached by an angel rather than a demon. This angel has existed on Earth for long enough that she can see the damage the broken Infrastructure is causing, but it is outside her mission parameters to deal with it. Rather than Fall, she has simply kicked the issue down to some demons that she is aware of. The angel gives as little information as possible, in part to keep to the spirit of her instructions and in part to provide plausible deniability. If you don't want to have an angel take on this role, *Stray* (p. 60) is another possibility.

This is the kind of story where the Storyteller shouldn't clue the ring in on what's going on too quickly. Part of the fun of this scenario is forcing the characters to deal with what their human friends and contacts gradually become once they lose their ability to connect to and empathize with other human beings.

This plot hook is probably at its best if the ring has already broken up several fights, foiled several murders, imprisoned one or more of their human contacts to stop them from killing someone, and are seriously doubting their decision to descend to Earth to live among these animals by the time they descend into the malfunctioning Infrastructure.

## THE SOLUTION

The solution is relatively simple if more than a little bit awful. When the ring arrives on the scene — which can be anywhere in the city that fits the rest of the story — the first thing they have to do is deal with the warrior angels guarding the Infrastructure (the Brilliant from *Demon: The Descent* p. 220 makes a good warrior angel for Storytellers who are pressed for time). If your chronicle has included Deva Corp

as an antagonist, you could also chose to have a Deva security team guarding the damaged facility.

Either way, the ring makes its way inside, where the demons can see the damaged Infrastructure. This particular Infrastructure takes the form of an enormous translucent pillar open at the top and filled with grinding, mangling gears. Whatever the pillar is meant to grind disappears into the floor, where more machinery further processes it.

Halfway down the pillar, the ring can see the twisted remains of the demon. His body is partly a crushed and bloody mess, but as his parts descend into the machine they appear to deliquesce into formless blobs of glowing light — he is being processed back into the energies that the God-Machine used to create him in the first place. The pillar's gears obviously aren't intended to process people, however, and chunks of his body have jammed the gears, rendering the entire thing inoperative. The gears twist and strain, but they're stuck fast.

He is still alive.

At this point, the ring has several options. Which one they chose depends upon their balance of mercy versus ambition and how sure they are that they won't be interrupted.

The easiest option is probably to jump-start the machinery. This option involves climbing to the top of the gears and applying a little elbow grease to the gears. It is an extended Strength + Athletics roll requiring 20 successes total, along with some dramatic Dexterity + Athletics rolls to avoid falling into the gears themselves (or similar rolls and the creative use of Embeds and Exploits to catch friends who are about to fall, etc). Every roll takes five minutes, which may delay the ring long enough for another warrior angel and/or Deva Corp backup to arrive. This option definitely destroys the trapped demon.

Alternatively, the ring could try to rescue the trapped demon. This involves dismantling the Infrastructure one gear at a time, which requires manipulating the facility's occult geometry (Intelligence + Occult) as well as manpower (Strength + Athletics to lift the gears) and almost certainly destroys the Infrastructure. This method is just as difficult (20 successes required) but takes twice as long (ten minutes per roll). However, if the demons can pull this off in time, they can end this situation with no further lives lost. The demon inside can even recover fully.

Finally, the ring could chose to try to claim the Infrastructure for their own. This is by far the most ambitious option and involves getting the Infrastructure up and running, then altering its function so that the God-Machine's agents can't find it. The ring still has to deal with the demon trapped inside, one way or the other.

## THE TWIST

Depending on how the ring became involved, the Storyteller has his pick of potential plot twists to make this story more complicated.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HIGHWAY TO HELL



### TRIAL RUN

Investigating the damaged Infrastructure leads the ring to the conclusion that this entire event was planned. In actuality, this Infrastructure can't function without a demon trapped inside; it is intended to create communicable sociopathy. Now the ring finds themselves digging into why the God-Machine has decided that Seattle would be better off without empathy, where else this project might be going on, and what they can do to stop it.

Of course, that assumes that the demons want to stop it. Not all demons really understand humanity and it's possible that some demons – maybe within the ring, maybe outside of it – believe that mankind would benefit from a view of the world that is clearer and uncluttered by emotion or attachment. The ring may find themselves at the center of a plot to re-engineer mankind in the God-Machine's image, beset on all sides by those who imagine humanity as pure intellect and divorced from everything that makes us human.

### VENDETTA

If the characters are brought into this mess by the ring that accidentally started everything, those demons might take issue with the fact that the ring fed their friend to the machine. Whether or not it's true – or fair – the other ring could decide to pursue a vendetta with the characters for "murdering" one of their own.

From here out, the other ring plays tit for tat, demonic spy games with the "wronged" ring doing their best to make the characters' lives miserable until the characters manage to sue for peace, make amends, or destroy their enemies.

### THE AFTERMATH

Even once the Infrastructure goes away, the Deep Freeze doesn't vanish. The ring still needs to discover the cure through trial and error. Once the blockage is cleared, however, the Deep Freeze becomes somewhat easier to cure; instead of requiring the loss of three Health or Willpower, a single point of either will do the trick. Most people eventually recover their ability to empathize on their own, though the demons probably want to find a way to cure their friends and loved ones sooner rather than later.

If you go with the option where the ring is clued into the situation by an angel, that angel could reappear later in the story as either an unlikely ally continuing to feed information to the ring, since it went so well the first time, or as a brand new demon! The former is a great way to keep any Integrators in the group feeling tortured and conflicted, while the latter is an almost inevitable consequence of this situation. At the very least, an angel who has already begun to express this much individuality may well rebel when she is ordered to report back for processing.

# THE APOCALYPSE VAULT

The Apocalypse Vault has been mentioned previously (see p. 36 and 53). What is it and why is it so important that the God-Machine has dedicated not just one, but *three* aetheric entities – both the angelic and demonic versions of Y2K and the Exile known as Grigorus – to its defense?

The Apocalypse Vault is an enormous piece of Infrastructure embedded in the Seattle 1999 splinter. It is mostly below ground near the shore of Elliott Bay between Jackson Street and Yesler Way; the chamber it occupies is accessible through the basements of several office buildings and businesses in the area. The Apocalypse Vault is best thought of as Concealment Infrastructure, though instead of concealing the God-Machine's other projects, its only purpose is to conceal itself and what it contains – apocalypses.

Ever since 1999 when the splinter first opened and the Apocalypse Vault was created, the God-Machine has arranged for apocalyptic timelines to be stored within the Vault. History books do not record when asteroid 2012 DA14 smashed into the South Atlantic on February 15th, 2013, killing millions instantly and dooming millions more to slower deaths, ending human civilization. No one knows about this catastrophe because that causality was partitioned off and stored within the Apocalypse Vault. What about the swine flu pandemics of 2004, 2005, and 2009, or the series of tsunamis that wrecked the East Coast of the United States and most of Western Europe and Africa in 2010? That time that an air conditioner in the CDC was installed backwards, blowing pathogen-infested air onto visitors, who passed those diseases, including several that had all but died out, to their friends and family when they returned home? These events, too, along with every other apocalypse since 1999 are locked within the Vault.

The Apocalypse Vault also contains lesser disasters, some of them pre-dating its creation. In our world, the Three Mile Island accident of 1979 was (mostly) averted and the four-megaton nuclear bomb that the United States almost accidentally dropped on the East Coast in 1961 luckily failed to detonate. Both of these events – and many others – are stored within the Apocalypse Vault as well.

## THE PROBLEM

In game terms, the Apocalypse Vault is a powerful piece of Infrastructure.

**Type:** Concealment

**Function:** The Apocalypse Vault secures dangerously destructive timelines in a form that allows them to be reintegrated with the real world at any time, rather than partitioned off into splinters, which are permanently severed from the dominant timeline.

**Security:** Grigorus (p. 53) is linked to the Vault. It is immediately aware of any failed attempt to open the outer door and any attempt – failed or successful – to open the inner door. Grigorus is also alerted if any of the timelines are removed. The material of the Vault is an unearthly, nearly indestructible material. The God-Machine is almost certain to send more warrior-angels to support Grigorus if the Vault is compromised. The Vault's presence and location are obscured by the aetheric static (see below) which surrounds the entire Seattle 1999 splinter.

**Linchpin:** The Apocalypse Vault is dependent on the potential energy of its many stored timelines. If more than half of the timelines are removed, the Vault ceases to exist. What happens to the remaining timelines – and anyone still inside the Vault – is up to the Storyteller.

The Storyteller has a few options for how to approach the Apocalypse Vault.

The most obvious is the heist. For whatever reason, the ring decides to try to steal one of the timelines stored inside the Apocalypse Vault. Whether they go on to threaten the God-Machine or some other power in the World of Darkness, set the timeline off and wreak some old-fashioned apocalyptic destruction, or use it in some further plot is up to them.

Alternately, the ring might not want the apocalyptic timeline for themselves. They might be attempting to intercept some other force – the God-Machine or a ring of demons with suitably different objectives – and prevent them from getting the timeline. This plan could be as simple as preventing their opponents from getting through the Vault's defenses or as complex as securing the timeline for themselves.

Once the ring is involved, they have to deal with the Vault's security. The Apocalypse Vault has three distinct layers.

The outermost layer is the door. This enormous portal resembles the door to a bank vault, but writ incredibly large – more than one hundred feet from top to bottom and side to side. It is crafted of tarnished greenish metal that – if analyzed – would defy all earthly attempts to categorize. Opening the door requires either the “key” – a series of colors and sounds known only to Grigorus – or incredibly powerful and destructive explosives. Most non-nuclear explosives wouldn’t be up to the task, though HMX (the compound used to fuse the uranium in nuclear bombs) and octanitrocubane (the most powerful non-nuclear explosive outside of secret government labs) might do the trick. The door is nearly indestructible, but not completely so.

Beyond the door is the first chamber, where the lesser catastrophes are stored. The room is enormous – the size and shape of several football fields laid end to end – and lit by glowing panels set into the walls and ceiling. The timelines take the form of crystalline spheres, each of them with a unique color, temperature, and heft. Although the spheres are securely and stored in rows after rows of orderly wire racks, the room has no conceivable organization. The spheres are not labeled and their location within the room has no connection

## CHAPTER FOUR: HIGHWAY TO HELL

to their contents. This is a facility built and maintained by the God-Machine; should an angel be sent to retrieve one of the timelines, information about where to find it could be downloaded directly into its mind upon its inception.

At the back of the first chamber is a second smaller secured door made of the same greenish metal that forms the outer door. This door is opened in a much more straightforward manner: the opener must place his hand against a crystal circle set into the center. The door opens only for an angel with the correct aetheric makeup and remains locked to anyone else.

Beyond that door is the deepest part of the Vault. Here, the worst apocalypses are kept: meteorite impacts, raging pandemics, and global socio-economic collapses. This room holds only about a dozen spheres, arranged on a circular wire rack that dominates the center of the room. The light in the room comes from the same geometrically shaped glowing panels but is much dimmer, allowing the shifting multi-colored light of the timelines contained here to cast the room in their own strange glow. Like the orbs in the larger room, these are not labeled in any way or arranged according to any earthly logic.

The only other object in this room is a series of shelves on the farthest wall. Various other important objects that the God-Machine wishes to see kept isolated forever are stored here. At present, the collection includes — among others — three stone tablets covered with incomprehensible writing, a leather-bound journal full of grotesque sketches and Hebrew notations written in a hurried and only vaguely legible hand, five dusty human skulls, and an otherwise unremarkable piece of leather with one hundred and sixty-nine holes poked in it, seemingly at random. Like the crystal orbs, none of these objects are labeled or arranged in any particular way.

Grigorus is intimately aware of everything that goes on within the Vault. The angel automatically knows about any failed attempt to breach either the outer or the inner door. The Watcher also automatically knows if anyone opens the inner door, regardless of whether or not they have authorization to do so. If any of the orbs are removed from the Vault, the Watcher knows about that, as well.

## THE RING

The Apocalypse Vault represents a nearly irresistible opportunity: an incredibly powerful weapon that relies more on obscurity than security, in a splinter timeline accessible through fissures located right here in Seattle. For many rings, all that the Storyteller needs to do is find a way to let them know of the Apocalypse Vault's existence and let their own ambitions do the rest.

The ring could encounter a lone demon with information about the Apocalypse Vault who feels that she lacks the resources to do something about it herself, but thinks that the Ring could succeed where she would fail. The ring could intercept communications between the God-Machine and its minions, such as an angelic drop box or a Deva Corp internal

memo, and decide to exploit the information. The least subtle approach would be for a powerful Storyteller character (the Gerent (see p.43), is one possibility) to put the ring up to it as part of a larger scheme.

If the Storyteller is looking for a more personal connection, she can always opt to make the Apocalypse Vault part of the Ring's backstory. Any demon in the ring, especially a Destroyer or Psychopomp, might have a hidden connection to the Apocalypse Vault. Part of his original mission might have been to deliver to — or retrieve from — the Vault one of the apocalyptic timelines it was made to contain.

If none of the characters have an appropriate backstory, that isn't really a problem. While pursuing his Cipher, a demon could uncover hidden memories about his original purpose as an angel, programming buried so deeply that he wasn't even aware of it until now. Information about the Apocalypse Vault could also be part of one of a demon's previous incarnations. The process used to recycle angels is imperfect; a demon whose last Incarnation was as a Messenger might contain parts once used to empower the Psychopomp who carried an apocalyptic timeline into the Vault. Anything from pursuing the Cipher to meeting an angel or demon she knew in a previous incarnation could activate those memories, cluing the Ring in to the existence of the Apocalypse Vault.

The Storyteller should remember that a lot of drama comes from giving the players incorrect or incomplete information. If you let your characters know exactly what the Apocalypse Vault is, where it is, and what kind of defenses it has, the heist is going to be relatively straightforward. On the other hand, if you tell them that the Apocalypse Vault contains "weapons" but not what those weapons are, you could create a situation where the victorious ring swiftly discovers that they have just stolen trouble for themselves in the form of a weapon that they can't control and will never use, but still attracts deadly attention from the God-Machine, who wants it back. If you tell them that it is in "one of Seattle's splinter timelines," but not which, you can lead the ring on a merry chase through all of Seattle's splinters, looking for clues.

## THE SOLUTION

Getting into the Apocalypse Vault should be a challenge, even for powerful characters. This is one of facilities where the God-Machine stores things that it would like to see disappear forever, but can't or won't simply destroy. However, like all treasure troves, the Apocalypse Vault exists to be breached, and doing so should be within the reach of a dedicated ring of demons. Rather than provide game statistics for the various walls and doors of the Vault, those traits have been left for individual Storytellers to decide, depending on how impenetrable the Vault needs to be for your story.

A ring has subtler methods at its disposal than just blasting their way through. Grigorus is the Vault's last line of defense. Should the Vault be breached, it is responsible for responding, though the God-Machine is sure to send even more potent

warrior-angels to support Grigorus in battle. However, Grigorus is also just an angel, one who has not received orders, or even confirmation that its reports are being received for more than ten years. Whether Grigorus is nearing a crisis of faith – and potentially a Fall – or simply miserable and easy to manipulate is for individual Storytellers to decide.

Alternately, if one of the members of the Ring has a personal connection to the Apocalypse Vault, as described above, she might be able to just walk in. It's entirely possible that the Vault's security codes haven't been updated. This is a risky maneuver, because it's also possible that the Vault's security *has* been upgraded, and a failed attempt to open the Vault will immediately attract the attention of Grigorus and, potentially, a cadre of warrior angels.

The most audacious possibility would be for the ring to wait for an opportunity – such as the God-Machine sending an angel to retrieve something from the Vault – and find a way to steal the necessary information and aetheric resonance. Similarly, what if a character jacks an angel that has been sent to retrieve a particular apocalypse?

## AFTERMATH

When the story is over, the Ring has gained access to an incredible weapon: an apocalyptic timeline, stored inside a crystal sphere, ready to be unleashed upon the world. What happens next is up to them.

## BREAKING THE SPHERE

Here we have a vault in an alternate reality containing crystallized timelines of various catastrophes and apocalypses. The next question is: what does it do? How can an enterprising and morally reprehensible demon take advantage of this situation? Even if it's all a bluff intended to squeeze some kind of concession out of the God-Machine, the bluff is pretty toothless if the Demon is actually incapable of opening the sphere and letting the end of the world out.

The answer is very simple. The spheres are quite fragile – like thick glass, not likely to break by accident, but easy enough to crack with a hammer or by throwing it at the ground or another hard surface. When a sphere is broken, whatever is inside gets out. What happens next varies from sphere to sphere. If a demon breaks a sphere containing a single nuclear explosion, he finds himself at the ground zero of an atomic blast. If the sphere contained a pandemic, the disease spreads from that spot.

Global catastrophes work a little differently: the event spreads from the location where the sphere was cracked at about one thousand miles per hour and covers the Earth in a little under twelve hours. As the expanding wave-front passes over locations relevant to the apocalypse inside, the apocalypse happens. This can lead to mildly irrational situations, like a nuclear war that was supposed to start when the US bombed China beginning with Iran's nuclear strike against New York,

but since the world will be completely destroyed in the wake of the event, nobody will be around to complain. Arranging to break open a sphere safely can be quite a challenge, even for a demon.

Storytellers are warned – these apocalypses are meant to be real catastrophes that will end the World of Darkness as we know it. If the demons decide to crack open one of these spheres, everything changes. It could mean the end of the chronicle, or the beginning of a whole new one. Or, if the Storyteller doesn't want to introduce such drastic change, perhaps a new splinter timeline is created, similar to the 1999 one.

In some ways, these spheres are best used as threats, goals, and McGuffins. Just because the players want one doesn't mean that they have to end up keeping it. Plenty of heist stories end with the crooks getting away with their lives and just enough loot to make the whole thing worth it, even if the big score slips through their fingers.

## STARING DOWN GOD

If the demons wish, they can try to use the stolen apocalypse to win some kind of concession from the God-Machine. This is harder than it seems. For one thing, the God-Machine can't even talk to demons except through angels, and finding an angel with the authority and inclination to negotiate – or waiting for the God-Machine to spawn one for the purpose – is no easy matter. While they search and/or wait, the ring is going to be the target of anyone who knows or has the capacity to find out what they have. Warrior angels might try to kill them, more powerful demons or demons with radically different Agendas might try to take it from them, and even other supernatural beings, such as mages whose time-manipulating magic grants them premonitions about an impending potential catastrophe, might get involved as well.

The God-Machine is understandably reluctant to set the precedent of dealing with demons, but it is willing to do so to prevent having its plans on Earth disrupted by an unscheduled apocalypse. The demons have to agree to return the stolen timeline or allow to be harmlessly nullified, of course. There isn't enough trust between the two parties for the God-Machine to allow a weapon like this to remain in demonic hands.

The God-Machine agrees to any reasonable request that is bounded by about a human life's worth of time – such as promising to leave a list of humans alone until they die or suspend its operations in a given area for about the same amount of time. The God-Machine could certainly be convinced to part with sensitive information, abandon Infrastructure, call off a troubling angelic hunter – anything that creates a problem that the God-Machine could subsequently solve.

If the players demand something that could permanently and substantially alter the balance of power between the demons and the God-Machine – like the secret of angels' real origins, or the God-Machine's real nature, or a pledge

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to withdraw from the entire world forever — they may find themselves forced to choose between admitting that they were bluffing and actually pulling the trigger. The ring finds that despite their best efforts, the God-Machine drives a hard bargain and is ultimately willing to deal with the outcome of the apocalypse.

### ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

Once they have stolen the apocalyptic timeline or timelines of their choice, the characters might be divided about what to do. Particularly angry or callous demons might want to set it off right away. Other demons might want to use it as leverage. An Integrator might want to run off with the timeline and present it to the God-Machine as proof that she is worthy of returning on her own terms, while an Inquisitor might simply want to study it for lessons about the makeup of the cosmos. If the ring contains deep divisions, it might begin to fracture under the pressure of what they have found.

Storytellers should be careful of running this kind of story. Not all players enjoy the kind of player-versus-player action that this permutation could bring about. However, the heist could make the beginning of an intense, personal, and potentially tragic story.

### FOR A RAINY DAY

The simplest option is to just put the damned thing away. The God-Machine has been keeping hundreds of apocalypses hidden away for years — surely the ring can figure out where to hide *one*. Hell on Earth might be a good place to start, though some demons might insist on getting their prize out of the city. A ring that feels overwhelmed by the fallout of their theft might hit on this possibility as a way to put off the terrible choice they have saddled themselves with.

Of course, the thing they have stolen should hang over their heads for the rest of the chronicle. The Storyteller should make sure to periodically threaten it or remind the players that it exists as a way to solve and/or complicate their problems.

### ITS HOUR COME AT LAST

Decades ago, ignorant humans brought an aetheric anomaly, something related to the world of the angels, demons, and the God-Machine — some poetic soul called it “Galatea” — to Seattle, hoping to learn something by unraveling its secrets. When understanding eluded them, they simply left it there and tried to forget all about it. Whatever it is, Galatea is above all a potentiality, a thing waiting to be born.

For a long time, the God-Machine has controlled the situation by ignoring it. Knowing that it is uncomfortably placed in a city full of demons, the God-Machine judged that building a large and elaborate Infrastructure to protect Galatea

would just attract attention to it. Instead, the God-Machine tasked a minor angel with observing the situation and moved on, hoping that either Galatea would never awaken, or that when it did the situation would have changed.

Neither turned out to be true, and now the God-Machine has a problem.

### THE PROBLEM

North Seattle is home to Magnuson Park, a retired Naval air station that has been turned into a public recreation area. Most of the buildings have been knocked down and replaced with green space, but a few of them remain, having been turned into parks department infrastructure, or — in the case of the large aircraft hangers — hollowed out and used as indoor athletics fields or locations for the Seattle Public Library’s annual book sale.

The chaos of the nearby University District and the efforts of the demon known as Laura Hopkins ([detailed on p. 47](#)) keep the God-Machine from exerting too much influence over this area, but that doesn’t mean that it is completely absent. The God-Machine has Infrastructure here and uses homes and businesses as insertion points for its angels.

On the surface, Magnuson Park is an eccentric suburban park, a proud exemplar of Seattle’s unique sensibilities. Stands of trees, jogging paths, waterfront areas, and fields for soccer and baseball contrast with old aircraft hangers and surreal art made of airplane tailfins buried in the dirt. Overall, it is a community resource cherished by those who live in Ravenna and other nearby North Seattle neighborhoods. Magnuson Park is also an old military base, and like many such places in the World of Darkness, it hides surprising secrets.

When humans run afoul of the God-Machine, the result is usually death or madness for the humans and a minor inconvenience for the God-Machine. Every once in a while, however, humans manage to master — or at least survive an encounter with — some aspect of the God-Machine for a little while.

In 1963, a United States Navy submarine encountered the object eventually codenamed “Galatea” during maneuvers in the North Pacific. Galatea appeared to be a naked human female in the fetal position. Despite the great depths at which Galatea was found, it seemed to have suffered no damage. Although it was an almost perfectly life-like image of a human being — including a tanned complexion and the kind of minor skin abnormalities found on all people — its skin was as hard and unyielding as marble. After retrieving the object, the submarine crew brought it to the nearest United States military base, which turned out to be Naval Air Station Seattle, the base that would later become Magnuson Park.

Further examination of Galatea revealed that it was radioactive, though not dangerously so. Anomalies in Geiger counter readings led the researchers to investigate further, which led to even more disturbing discoveries. Time dilated and contracted in

Galatea's presence on a 47-hour cycle, to a maximum of +/-1.7% differential between the passage of time near the statue. Galatea grew and shrank on the same cycle, becoming smaller as time sped up and larger as time slowed down — again, growing and shrinking up to 1.7% of its original size. Its area of influence — the area in which it manipulated the flow of time — grew and shrank proportionately by the same amount.

Because Galatea seemed to pose no danger to the city, it was never moved. After several years, scientists discovered that it could not be moved — it had become rooted to the spot. When the table beneath it was removed, it did not fall, but merely hung in the air, continuing to slowly grow and shrink, speeding and slowing time.

Frustrated and more than a little frightened, the scientists did not object when Naval Air Station Seattle was decommissioned. Instead, they simply sealed the underground chambers with concrete, locking Galatea away forever. It is still there in a sealed underground room underneath Magnuson Park, waiting. Either the God-Machine is unaware of the situation, or It has decided that any effort to do more than monitor the location would simply draw attention.

The problem comes when Galatea begins to awaken. The process actually began a long time ago, but as of the beginning of this story seed, its incubation has reached its final stage. Galatea will wake up, soon, and the God-Machine intends to stop it.

## THE RING

If the ring is already active in the neighborhoods surrounding Magnuson Park, it would be easy for the Storyteller to draw them in. The God-Machine needs to put a lot of balls in motion to arrange for Galatea's destruction: angels need to be inserted, Infrastructure needs to be set up to support them, and Deva Corp engineers need to excavate Magnuson Park and open up Galatea's tomb.

If the ring is not active in the area around Magnuson Park, they might be contacted by a demon who is. Again, Professor Laura Hopkins can be an invaluable resource. She has many reasons for not wanting to deal with the issue personally, including her position as a linchpin of the area's defense against the God-Machine.

A ring could also become aware of the situation through military records. Galatea is a well-kept secret, of course, but that doesn't stop most demons. If a member of the ring were to accidentally come across some reference to it while investigating some other military secret, she might decide to look into it, only to discover the God-Machine's sudden interest in the situation.

Finally, if you want to begin *in media res*, you could also induce one of the players to make a character who is already tied to this situation: a Destroyer who was made to be Galatea's executioner, a Psychopomp who was tasked with shoring up the area's infrastructure, a Messenger who worked as a Deva Corp liaison. Alternately, one of these characters could be a

member of the ring, possibly even a player's character. Many demon characters begin play with an interest in thwarting whichever of the God-Machine's goals they were designed to carry out, even if they don't really understand that goal.

## THE SOLUTION

The first problem is finding out exactly what is going on. Regardless of how they find out about what's going on at Magnuson Park, the ring needs more information. Except for the God-Machine's servants, some of which know exactly why they are here, none of these sources are clear on the nature of Galatea. Getting this information takes a combination of infiltration, old-fashioned sneakiness, and possibly turning some of the God-Machine's agents.

As the God-Machine pours more and more resources into the Magnuson Park area, the demons find themselves facing the following complications:

- **Location:** Galatea is buried in a sealed underground lab, trapped behind old concrete.
- **Nature:** Galatea is still fixed to its current location.
- **The Enemy:** Unless the ring moves *extremely* quickly, the entire Magnuson Park area will be swarming with angels and Deva Corp agents. The God-Machine's servants know exactly where Galatea is and already have both a plan for reaching it and a specially prepared angel on hand to execute it.

For the ring to be successful, they are going to have to nullify some of these conditions. Changing Galatea's location and nature are (probably) impractical, but they could distract, redirect, or otherwise deal with the God-Machine's servants. If the ring is especially clever, they might be able to arrange for the God-Machine's servants to do all their dirty work for them, letting them excavate Galatea before sending them off on a wild goose chase and claiming it for themselves.

Alternately, the only possibility is a daring raid, somehow drawing off the lesser defenders (mostly Deva Corp security forces) and then hunting down the angels in charge of it.

## THE TWIST

Played straight, this is seed can produce an interesting story about how a ring of demons fight back against the God-Machine to rescue a unique and potentially valuable individual. Devious Storytellers, however, might want to consider how to make the situation even more complicated.

## A TERRIBLE MISTAKE

As written, this story seed assumes that Galatea is a good thing for demons and a bad thing for the God-Machine. All the possibilities described in the Aftermath section below assume that it is some kind of bodhisattva for the Unchained — a free angel, the next generation of demon, or a demon who

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has achieved some kind of transcendent power. It's easy to see why demons might end up believing it – if the God Machine wants it, it must be bad, and it's our job to stop it – but there's no reason that any of this has to be true. Maybe Galatea wakes up and turn out to be an impossible entity whose aetheric instability causes her to explode? What if it's dangerously insane and awakens hell-bent on causing as much death and suffering as possible?

The ring might go through a lot to save Galatea only to discover that they were wrong. Having thrown the God-Machine's schemes into disarray, they are going to have to clean up the mess they made themselves.

### A JOINT OPERATION

Alternately, the ring continues to infiltrate and manipulate the God-Machine's organization in Magnuson Park only to discover that the top of the hierarchy is a demon, or possibly more than one. The effort to dig up and dispose of Galatea is actually some kind of joint operation between the angels of the God-Machine and a local ring, brokered by Deva Corp.

What's going on? Perhaps the demons have been convinced that Galatea poses a threat to everyone so they're willing to help the God-Machine out. More interesting, though, might be if the demons know that demons could stand to benefit from Galatea – perhaps they even know more than the ring does, for that suitably conspiratorial flair – but they favor the status quo to the era that Galatea would usher in. These demons have already learned to survive in the world that they found themselves in, and felt that the devil they knew was preferable to one they didn't.

### AFTERMATH

Galatea was an enigma to the soldiers who discovered it and the scientist who studied it. Despite seven years of painstaking observation, they were never able to penetrate its secrets. That frustration was part of their decision to seal it away forever when Naval Air Station Seattle became inconvenient.

Of course, none of this stops the God-Machine when It sets out to reclaim Galatea. If the players fail – or perhaps make the effort costly for the God-Machine, even if they fail to rescue it – then it ends there. However, if they succeed, Galatea is going to wake up. If this happens, the Storyteller needs to have a good idea of what it really is.

Another thing to consider is the relationship that the ring might develop with Galatea. Will it become their friend? A mentor? Or will it remain a dangerous liability, someone they protect from the God-Machine for the sake of blunting their old enemy rather than out of any personal fondness?

### A MISLAID ANGEL

Normally, the process of inserting an angel into the world goes smoothly. On the rare occasion that it fails, the process is simply aborted. It's possible, however, for the process to be completely botched and for something very unusual to be created.

Galatea is the result of the last option. In this case, the angel manifested in one place, but the God-Machine's various failsafes and controls manifested elsewhere (and, without an angel to attach to, promptly imploded). Galatea is a raw angel. To some demons, it might represent some sort of original template, the thing that angels are meant to be and would be without the God-Machine's tampering.

The knowledge that Galatea can impart means different things to different demons. Some demons might want to follow it, hoping that it can lead them to some kind of wisdom or acceptance of their situation. Others reject it, reasoning that whatever it is, it has nothing to teach beings who have been mutilated, enslaved, broken free, and redefined themselves.

In game terms, this version of Galatea is a particularly potent Exile. It needs to find some Infrastructure to suborn if it is going to live. If the ring chooses to help it, they have earned a powerful if problematic ally.

### THE ASCENDED DEMON

Galatea is a chrysalis, a demon who survived long enough and delved deeply enough into its Cipher that it began to metamorphose into something entirely new. The human form that seems to be its body is actually nothing more than its shell and it is almost ready to hatch.

Nobody knows for sure what will emerge when Galatea has completed its transformation. At the very least it will be a powerful demon – disruptive to the plans of demon and God-Machine alike. It is likely to relate differently to one or more of the “facts” of demonic existence. Perhaps it is always hidden from the God-Machine's sight and has no need for a Cover? Maybe Galatea can generate its own Aether, or destroy angels without breaking a sweat, or has an aura that blocks the God-Machine from perceiving its surroundings, or some other strange effect. This “ascended demon” might be able to lead other demons to a similar state, showing them how to crack open their own Ciphers and absorb the secrets inside. Worst of all, Galatea would be an example for every demon of the kind of power they could enjoy if they continue to strive for perfection. Obviously, the God-Machine needs to destroy it. But if that effort fails, Galatea could be the herald of a new era.



Seattle is a fractured city, split between history and modernity.

The Unchained can stumble through rifts in time and space and wind up decades in the past. Why? Some failed experiment of the God-Machine? A side effect of human ingenuity? Or are the splinter timelines in the City of Flowers a deliberate design, leading up to something greater still?

**Splintered City: Seattle** includes more detail on the alternate timelines described in **Demon: The Descent**, as well as a host of story hooks and characters for use in your chronicles. Also presented are brief suggestions on what Seattle might hold for the other denizens of the World of Darkness.



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