

Perdition Alley

Apocrypha

"I'll put pennies on your eyes." -Stephen

We're dead. We know that. Well, we suspect as much. We don't know how it happened. Maybe it was part of The Rapture, or maybe this is Purgatory. All that seems important is surviving and escaping.

We've dubbed the sprawling town Perdition Alley. It looks like the suburbs of Las Vegas as seen through the lenses of Sergio Leone with all the sin of the strip. It's in the middle of a vast red sand desert where temperature exceeds 100 during the day and drops to freezing at night.

Don't even think about trying to escape the city. When people try the desert sometimes we here howls or screams, but most times we just find their bones at the edge of town the next day. Those who try the highway just end up back here. All the roads lead back here.

I said we think we're dead; some of us can remember a different life. Details like names, faces, and occupations stand out. Everything else is blurred, indistinct. You might remember your name, your wife's name (but not her face), that you were the mayor... but, you can't remember the names of your kids (just their faces), the name of the town, or even so much as a street name. I know a street preacher who says you remember what you have to.

Once you're here it doesn't take long to realize you can do things you never could before. Great things, terrible things. If we are in Purgatory, then our sins are real here; they give us power. It's like that movie? You know the one; it had the guy from the movie about time travel in a phone booth? Guns, lots of guns... And killer robots... Computers? Well, I remember a lot of black. And green. It's like that. Sometimes somebody will use that power more like a wizard of old, but lately it's always "bullet time." Whatever that means...

A few people want to escape. If it is Purgatory, then we ought to try to better ourselves. Most just keep trying to make a living. The grocery stores and restaurants are all automated; occasionally the local paper prints a classified ad looking for a janitor or hostess. No one knows who places the ad, or who restocks the paper's supplies for that matter.

The rest is just maintenance and repair. No one knows where the tools and supplies come from; we just know they're there when we need them.

So there are the Penitents, the Lifers, and then there are the Sinners and Saints. The Sinners are easy to find. They're the ones who have given up and embraced the power of their sin. Most times they burn themselves out, literally. But some of them linger on. Dangerous people those with a lot of power and nothing to lose.

The Saints are harder to spot. They keep a low profile, and watch out for the Penitents. Somehow they've managed to purge themselves of the sin that brought them here and draw strength from their virtues.

Well, that's the basics, kids. You want to leave, you become a Penitent and try to become a Saint, you want to stay or just get by, you become a Lifer like everybody else. I don't recommend the other alternatives.

Lost Souls

"It's better to burn out, then to fade away!" –The Kurgan

Every PC must devote at least 1 die of 4 to Vice.

Every PC must devote the balance of those 4 to Virtue.

The remaining 6 dice may be assigned to Clichés as normal.

Hooks & Tales work as normal.

Commandments

"Phones gonna ring, it's gonna be him, he's gonna make it alright..." –Gabriel

Vice is the magic Cliché of Perdition Alley.

Roll all sixes on a Vice roll, your Vice increases by 1, your Virtue decreases by 1.

Roll all ones on a Vice roll, your Vice *decreases* by 1, your Virtue *increases* by 1.

Succeed at a Vice roll, increase your Vice by 1.

Thusly, if you roll all sixes *and* succeed your Virtue drops 1, and your Vice rises 2!

If your Vice ever drops to zero, congratulations! You've escaped Perdition Alley...

Or,

If you have a Virtue of 6 at the time, you may choose to stay in Perdition Alley to guide other Lost Souls. Your Virtue is halved, becomes a Double-Pump Cliché, and henceforth functions as a Magic Cliché just as Vice did.

Virtue is the "lifeforce" or "soul" Cliché of Perdition Alley.

If it drops to zero, the PC becomes an NPC; or vanishes in a puff of brimstone...

If it rises to 6, you may reduce it to reduce your Vice. This may never reduce either below 1.

If you've become a Guide, and your Virtue falls to zero for *any reason* you can no longer maintain your grip on Perdition Alley and you Ascend. Don't worry, *you're* going to a better place.

Ascension

"It's over; you have no power over me!" –Daniel

The standard rules for advancement do not apply to Virtue or Vice. They do apply to the other Clichés.

GMs may award PCs by increasing their Virtue and decreasing their Vice. This is the only way in which Vice may be reduced to zero. It is the only way Virtue may rise at all.

Leviathan & Legion

What follows is Perdition Alley's bestiary and some notes towards running stories there. It is recommended that the player read no further...

The Rogues' Gallery (Legion)

Some of the antagonists that follow have no Virtue listed. This is for one of two reasons. They may have never been human, are even perhaps natives. Or they have lingered on after succumbing to their Vice and sin. No one is sure why this happens, or who it will happen to. Most of the time once one's Virtue is exhausted they're gone.

One example of a Saint is also provided.

The Black Widow

The Black Widow is an exceptional sinner that approaches The Triggerman or Showman in power.

Vice (4), Refined Cannibal (3), Transsexual Serial Killer (3), Charismatic Mentor of a gang of blood thirsty street urchins (3), Upstanding Citizen (1), Virtue (1)

GMs Option: The GM may rule that The Widow is one of those exceptional few who linger after completely exhausting their Virtue. Personally, I don't think a higher Vice is out of line either.

Cold Ethyl

Cold Ethyl runs one of the most successful brothels in town. Her zombie bouncers are notorious amongst the sorts of people who frequently get thrown out of such establishments. Nearly as notorious as her business' ability to cater to *any* taste.

Vice (4), Undead Prostitute (3), Legitimate Businesswoman (3), Necromancer [2]

GM Note: Ethyl found a way to beat the system by "dieing" again. Her unique abilities with the dead intrigues The Showman and frightens The Asylum. It is only a matter of time before there is a confrontation.

Danny Boy

"It doesn't have to be this way. You can change; I can help you."

Danny is a Saint. He long ago overcame the sins of his past but he lingers on in the hope that he can help others. He has had a number of run ins with The Showman, and as gifted as he is he always runs...

Virtue [4], Good-hearted Teenager (4), Street Tough (3), Friend of the Penitents (3)

The Director of The Asylum

No one but The Triggerman has ever gotten an appointment to see The Director. There are those few patients who the staff deem ready to be reintegrated back into Perdition Alley society who never quite fit in... Their ravings about tentacles and chitin put people on edge.

Monstrous Soul Eating Doppelganger (?), Kindly Psychiatrist (?), Tentacles! (?), Giant Cockroach or Brain-like Grub (?)

GM Note: Is The Director a man shaped demon like The Triggerman? Is alien in appearance and motivations? Is it responsible for *all* this? I leave this to the GM. The Clichés above are only suggestions and the GM should adjust the numbers according to their vision.

Employees of The Asylum

"Got your thumbprint always with me, got your barcode memorized."

There is some nominal resemblance to a state run mental health institute, but a second look reveals how tenuous this resemblance is.

Interns: Cruel and Brutish Intern (3)

Nurses: Inhumanly Efficient and Callous RN (3)

Doctors: Cold and Apathetic Mental Health Professional (4)

GM Note: No Virtue, no Vice. I leave it up to the GM what sort of things go on within the secretive walls of The Asylum that lead to such improbabilities.

The Monster Dogs

(A long mournful howl of the desert, joined by one, then another, and another...)

No one has ever faced them and lived, no one. Most suspect that they've been here as long as The Showman. They don't enter the city, so the only evidence we have of their existence is the gnawed bones of their victims at the edge of town. Just stay in the Alley, ok?

Alpha: Vice (4), Lycanthrope (3), Black Hound (3), Citizen of the Alley (1)

Typical pack member: Vice (3), Lycanthrope (2), Black Hound (2)

GM Secret: They do come in to the city; they *live* there. They may be natives of this strange realm.

Typical Penitent

"Oh Lord, we beseech the..."

These lost souls genuinely are seeking salvation and are trying desperately to get by in an honest and upright fashion in a world they perceive as right next door to Hell.

Vice (1), “Appropriately penitent Cliché” (1 to 3), Virtue (3)

Perdition Alley Police Department

Every town has its law, even this one. They are corrupt and only marginally better than the Sinners they protect the populace from, but they beat chaos. As with any police force, there are exceptions to the rule and more extreme examples of the rule, so this is a “typical” officer.

Vice (2), Corrupt Beat Cop (1 to 3), Virtue (2)

The Showman

“What’s the matter little boy, you afraid?”

The Showman is the closest thing we have to a mayor around here. Though, *that* title is more of an honorarium. Penitents use tales of his predations to scare newcomers like you. The Showman is no boogiemaster though, he is all too real. I think he has always been here and I suspect he always will be, like an angel in heaven or a devil in hell.

Vice (6), Twisted Carnie (4), Fiendish Ringmaster (4), ___?___ (4)

Typical Sinner

“You’re one of our own.”

Gangers, flesh peddlers, and worse...

Vice (3), “Appropriately sinful Cliché” (1 to 3), Virtue (1)

Sister Sara

“Whatever happened to me?”

There is a street preacher on every corner. Or else some days it feels like it. Sometimes they are Penitents truly trying to help their fellow lost souls, on rare occasion you’ll find a Saint preaching one gospel or another, but most of these folks are like Sister Sara.

Vice (3), Debauched Nun (4), Streetwise Info Merchant (3), Prostitute (2), Street Preacher (1), Virtue (1)

The Triggerman

“Ain’t got a name, ain’t got a face, no fingerprints, or DNA.”

The Triggerman is a literally faceless demon who walks as a man. If The Asylum decides it wants you they will send it after you. It will catch you. If you’re lucky, it’ll kill you.

Vice (5), Man in Black (4), Gunslinger (4), Unerring and Inhuman Tracker of Souls (4)

The Asylum (Leviathan)

“Can’t sleep clowns will eat me, Can’t sleep clowns will eat me, Can’t sleep clowns will eat me...”

The Asylum is an enigma. They aren’t trying to escape, nor are they reveling in their sin. The asylum seems to be dedicated to keeping people here. Several places are rumored to be their base of operation, but no one knows for sure. In fact, the only definitely known employee is The Triggerman.

People captured by The Asylum come back changed. They no longer display any of the power associated with Vice or Virtue, yet they remain. They do display a fierce devotion to the cause of the Lifers though, and it is through them that any details of The Asylum are known at all.

The Asylum, where ever it is, is antiseptically clean and uniformly white or pastel. It is full of people in latex gloves, surgical masks, white coats, and soothing voices. Their seems to be a hierarchal structure with “Interns” at the bottom, “Nurses” in the middle, and “Doctors” and “The Director” at the top. Any one else is a “patient.”

On occasion one hears rumors about Interns accompanying The Triggerman on Recovery/Rescue Missions. Whether or not there is any truth to these rumors remains to be seen.