Asylum: Setting

The world we know is the world of man. We live Inside.  The worlds beyond we only half-remember as dreams, legends, and faith. They are Outside.  It wasn't always that way, so it's probably not going to stay that way forever. There are Outsiders that want to come in. They've learned this world is a haven. There are others want to get out. They'll learn this world is also a prison.

Overtime mankind has learned to cooperate with Outsiders and keep their secrets.  Of course, we can't always see eye-to-eye about the how and why. There are many different organizations that govern and compete over this secret.  Most people don't know such groups even exist, but it's getting harder to keep it that way.

The enigmatic Cirque emerged from Cold-War Europe as an umbrella for unity and security. With so many competing interests, it tries to tightly control Outside phenomenon and prevent its various factions from balkanizing.  It's sad and strange to see such a young and large organization already on the brink of crumbling. When the Soviet Union fell, its paranormal intelligence organization, the Committee, took advantage of the opportunity to become an autonomous entity. No longer bound by any laws, it ruthlessly grabs power for its own sake.  One of the oldest and best established secret organizations, the Ministry monitors and controls Outsider activity throughout Asia using a traditional system laws. Unfortunately, human civilization has been changing at an ever quicker pace.  More and more, the Ministry's ancient system seems to be creating more conflict with Outsiders and modern society than it prevents.

Across the ocean everything is run by the Bureau.  Secretly founded by the US government in the last century, it eventually extricated itself from all state oversight.  Now it involves itself with most paranormal matters in both North and South America.  Their influence in North America is absolute but maintained with a gentle touch.  Most Outsiders are tolerated so long as they don't make trouble or keep a low profile.  Their activity in South America is almost the complete opposite.  There the Bureau makes up for a lack of control through brutal enforcement of its agenda.

While most of these secretive organizations are regional, the Mission has power scattered all over the globe.  Once a secret institution of the Vatican, the Mission was trusted in investigating and combating the Outside menace. As the Vatican's power diminished and social attitudes changed, the Mission saw its support dwindle.  To adapt to the modern world and continue its crusade the Mission was forced to cooperate and assimilate similar organizations from other faiths.  The resulting group is significantly more open-minded about matters of faith, but still passionate about serving humanity and understanding what the Outsiders mean to religion.

There are recent rumors about two more conspiracies.  If it weren't for that fact that we're already beyond what's normally believable, I'd dismiss all this. The first is apparently called "the Host." Some whisper they've been approached by mysterious messengers from this secret organization. The few who are willing to talk on the subject claim that the Host seeks to guide humanity into greater harmony with the Outside. Apparently they're trying to stop another Sideways myth, Asylum. You might have actually heard about Asylum. More than a few groups have labeled them criminals or terrorists. The only thing I really have to go on are rumors among Outsiders that they're engaged in all sorts of subversive activity. There are many claims that Asylum helps smuggle outsiders into different regions.  Supposedly they have agents and sympathizers hidden everywhere so that their activities usually go undetected by other organizations.  What does Asylum want?  It's hard to say, but I suspect an organization with that much secrecy isn't completely benevolent.

The Asylum and the Host

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