

Beneath a Harvest Moon

A. 20. PLAYER. FREEFORM

This is an industrial gothic melodrama, set somewhere in the American South. It concerns the struggle between two groups of supernatural creatures, once known as the forces of hell and faerie for the favour of the Ancients. These Ancients are buried in key earth places and the factions struggle for influence over each. No one knows much about the ancients, they seem to be some kind of sleeping gods, immensely powerful.

The site under contention in this freeform is a cornfield near a small town called Mayfield. Until a hundred years ago it was controlled by The Lost (the Fay) through their earth religion. Then a massacre destroyed the worshippers and shifted the balance toward The Profane (hell).

In this freeform, there are 4 zones which represent different worlds. Some characters can travel between them, others know secret paths that they may use or teach to others. Because it is a special night of the year (Halloween) the barriers are weakened and will come down during the session, allowing free access. It is best if this freeform can be run in four rooms, one to represent each zone.

It is suggested that the freeform needs 2 moderators - 1 for the Domain and 1 for the other worlds. The entities from beyond are invisible in the real world, so the mortal characters who are caught up in the events can't see them to begin with. This will need guidance from the moderators - perhaps black badges for the entities and white ones for the real world folk.

This is a character driven freeform and is fairly light on structured plots. Much of the outcome will depend on the alliances forged in the course of the game.

There are no direct references to the faerie or demonic origins of the factions. They have evolved past these medieval constructions and can no longer be reduced to stereotypes. The closest that you can generalise about them is that the Lost represent dreams and the Profane the flesh. They are locked in conflict but do not yet realise how similar they are.

Written by Scott Beattie
Original premise by Louise Pieper and Scott Beattie.

SOURCES: Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Clive Barker, Ray Bradbury, Nick Cave, David Lynch and just a touch of A Midsummer Night's Dream

The 4 Zones

These Zones should be represented by four separate rooms. It is best if there is a central room to use as the Interim, which joins the other three. Each door should have the symbol for the joining Zone, so players know which ones they can cross.

Most of the Profane and the Lost are invisible to the Mayfield kids and Holy Joe. This can be represented by different coloured name badges (white for characters visible in the domain (the kids and curs) black for the invisibles (Lost and Profane). Once they enter the Interim, even the Domain based characters will be able to see those from beyond, or at least their mantles.

Worst comes to worse, you could make badges which say "INVISIBLE" but this might be a little tacky.

THE DOMAIN Q

CHARACTERS:	Todd	The Wanderer
	Peggy	Bad Lily
	Dwight	Iron Mannequin
	Maybeline	The Traveller
	Henry Crane	Ergot
	Scarecrow	
	Holy Joe	
	Linda Lee	

The world of mortals, one of the borderline places which can cross over to the Interim at certain times.

Features:

- A crossroads
- A labyrinthine Junkyard
- A derelict whiteboard church hidden in the junkyard.
- A field of black corn behind the church which seems to run for miles.
- A path through the black corn leads to a clearing with the remains of crosses, bones litter the earth.

- Hidden in the cornfield is a moonshine still which creates a brew which gives terrifying visions. Eli Tyler (Tod(1) and Peggy(2)'s Grandfather) built the arcane distillation device in the black cornfield. Rather than making moonshine, this device creates a thick evil brew which enables the imbiber to walk easily between the realms, and see through Mantles. The device has a cost, it is a meat machine which requires a sacrifice of flesh. A small amount (eg. a finger) will give benefits for an hour. Willy Eli built several snares on the still where he could trick his children into, say, holding a pipe in place while the machine took their tender pieces.

The access to the INTERIM is an obscure path through the Junkyard. The seeker must open an old battered Westinghouse refrigerator and open the secret catch at the base. This then leads to a network of dark tunnels which smell like the big cat house at the zoo. Fine bone powder crunches underfoot. It looks like an ancient powerstation, where parts of the junkyard have spilled in. At the right point in the labyrinth there is a half submerged toilet facility, its seagrass matting rotten underfoot. It one stinking cubicle an air shaft climbs steeply upward, strange winds echo through this ducting carrying with them the scent of ages. A rough climb will emerge back where you started - next to the church. But everything is different...

THE INTERIM Y

CHARACTERS: Henry Crane
Scarecrow
Linda Lee
Red Butcher
Buffoon
The Wanderer
Bad Lily

Iron Mannequin
Princess Jack
The Traveller
The Gameplayers
Ergot

The shadow world outside of our own, leads to other places. It is the crossroads for other 3 zones. It is a spooky place, close to domain in appearance, but has carnival and industrial elements creeping in from the Carnivean and Metal Priory.

FEATURES:

- The Church resembles the Domain structure, but it is full of tormented dead, stray too close and they will drag you into their pain. There heat and smoke inside, the dead try to pound on the windows for escape.
- Old mad gods on crosses in cornfield. In the domain they are bones but here they are like scarecrows made of corn husks. Raggedy madmen with grasping arms and eyes like inky pools.

To gain access to the CARNIVEAN, one must walk three times widdershins around the mad gods in the black corn, avoiding their fearful and frantic grasping. When one emerges from the cornfield they find themselves in the dark arcades of the Lost, filled with treasures, promises and nightmares.

To gain access to the METAL PRIORY, one must pass the howling dead and perform a bloodrite on the altar of the Interim church, a sacrifice of either sex or pain. The content of the ritual does not matter but many of the Profane or the Lost like to specify something which entertains them. The air fills with industrial shrieking, the walls turn stone and metal as the sky outside ignites and a dead moon rises through this conflagration.

THE CARNIVEAN t

CHARACTERS: Angel
Princess Jack
The Traveller
The Gameplayers
Ergot

Linda Lee
Bad Lily
Red Butcher
Buffoon

A dark carnival, sideshows and posters of freaks, the world of Sorrow and reveres of the past.

- The church is a shadowy arcade filled with secrets. Strange machines, games and automats line the halls, beckoning the curious.
- Angel's chamber is deep within the arcade, a gauzy room filled with dreamy noises and promises. Curtains conceal and mirrors distort.
- The cornfield is filled with creatures made from corn or leaf or earth. They are sick and crying, choking on the foulness which runs through the field like irrigation. These channels are sourced at a large burnt bough, a withered corpse hangs from a noose.

THE METAL PRIORY C

CHARACTERS: Jest
Red Butcher
Buffoon
The Wanderer
Bad Lily
Iron Mannequin

Linda Lee
Princess Jack
The Gameplayers
Ergot

Industrial monastic structure, the world of Jest. All colours are leached out except for reds.

- The church is a grand Guignol tunnel of love, the entrance a red gasping mouth. Jest's plush throne is atop the altar.
- The cornfield is constantly burning with black fire

T imes:

The freeform begins at nightfall. At first the zone boundaries are set, unless the character sheet allows multiple zones or the player learns of one of the secret paths.

At moonrise, the boundaries between the domain and the interim come down. If you have access to effects, a strobe and loud noise (slowed down whal esong, industrial noise) can signal this change.

At midnight all boundaries may be crossed. Again effects may be used.

The moderators decide when each of these events occur in real time.

P reparation

There are four groups:

THE PEOPLE OF SORROW (THE LOST, The Fay)
THE ODDFELLOWS OF JEST (THE PROFANE, The demoni c)
THE MAYFIELD KIDS (mortals)
THE BONEYARD CURS (Other dri fters)

The players need the following:

- A character sheet
- An introduction sheet, relevant to each group
- The Lost, The Profane & the Boneyard Curs (except for Holy Joe) get the "From Beyond" character and zone guide.
- White number tags (1-8) Black number tags (9-20)

When Joe or the Kids first enter the Interim, they get the "Dark Mirror" supplementary description sheet which fills in the description of the other characters.

When any character drinks the moonshine or is granted grace by Linda Lee, they get the "True Shapes" sheet which details the supernatural creatures real forms under the disguise of their mantles. LINDA LEE starts with this sheet.

FREEFORM. BLURB

B eneath a Harvest Moon

Crane's Boneyard was no place for a church. A citadel of rusting metal, discarded bones of buildings, skins of cars, teeth of obsolete machines. But still, there it was - the whiteboard church, stark in the starlight. Behind it the black corn rustled and whispered.

Inside the forsaken wait. Redemption is at hand, tonight a bloody moon will rise on the sleeping evils of the past.

In another place, they are moving. The veils are coming down. The People of Sorrow and the Oddfellows of Jest. Tonight they stir the Ancient

A FREEFORM for 20 players
Adults only

Moderator's Guide to the Plots

Every character has two plots and one personal goal.

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.
(all Lost and Profane)

The Mayfield Kids are the avatars of the Ancient. Over the years, it has kidnapped them in their sleep and attuned them to its power. They all had different abduction dreams which is their interpretation of the events. The choices they make regarding their 'Coming of age' plot will shape who has the favour of the Ancient.

Coming of Age

Youth soon withers or else turns sour. The becoming of an adult is a terrible time of change - obligations of responsibility and smouldering sexuality battle each other in the will and in dreams. The young must find their own path in life lest they be overwhelmed or consumed by these forces.
(Mayfield kids)

Each of the kids has to make a choice about their future. This may involve a decision to stay in Mayfield vs a desire to flee to the big city of St Cloud. The actual choice is not so important as the REASON for the choice. If motivated by dreams, curiosity, aspirations for a better life or rekindling the glories of the past, this is a vote for the LOST.

If motivated by lust, dreams of the flesh, power or dominance, this is a vote for the PROFANE. It is possible, where the reasons are mixed to have a tie which is a null vote.

The Conspiracy of Mirth

Jest's time as archon of the Oddfellows is at an end. He has grown careless and lax in his position of power. He should be toppled and replaced by the Red Butcher, a dynamic leader who would take the Profane on to greater glories.

(Red, Lily, Mannequin)

Jest is sympathetic to the cause of the Intercessiary. A crippled girl (captured by one of Lily's agents) converted Jest. He let her escape, although the others do not yet know this. This plot may be achieved in conjunction with an alliance with the Lost.

Dark Dealings

Some of the Lost seek a union with the Oddfellows of Jest. The Lost are dying and need to attach their future to a dynamic and proactive force. There are plenty of mortals who have become interested in the forces beyond in recent times. It seems foolish to conflict over scant resources when unity brings power.
(Jack, The Traveller, Ergot)

Both factions are stagnating and need a renewal, a stimulation which might come from a mixing of power. The Wanderer knows of a book which talks of the forces once being one and being reunited, although he will be reluctant to deal with the Traveller (his 'other half').

Seize the Lightbringer

The Intercessiary is a thorn in the side of all those from beyond the Interim. As a result, many seek to expose the machinations of the Intercessiary. It wants to bring about an end to the power of the Ancients. It may send a spy to this event, perhaps influencing someone within one of the factions.
(Gameplayer, Angel, Buffoon)

Discover more about the Intercessi onary. There are various rumours floating around, but most valuable information can be gained by exposing Linda Lee. One way to do this is to earn her trust and then betray her.

The Interim l overs

For most of their lives, the mortals live in blissful ignorance of the Interim and the worlds beyond. It is usually impossible for them to cross the veil unless they walk the secret paths or the veils weaken at special times (like tonight). Some beings create devices such as magic mirrors or puzzle boxes to make the transition easier. It would be a matter of great prestige to invent (or discover) new methods to ensnare mortals.

(Gamepl ayer, Jest, The Wanderer)

Find new ways of introducing mortals to the interim worlds (ie the still/meat machine). Puzzle boxes, buildings, mirrors have been used in the past.

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

(Mayfi el d kids and Joe)

This plot simply requires delving into the history of the place, particularly Henry Crane and the Scarecrow.

Curse of the Black Corn

The evil that has been wrought here has soured the earth and turned the corn black. There must be a way to lift this curse and restore fertility to the land.

(Linda Lee, Scarecrow, Crane)

The curse is held in place by Crane's guilt. If he can pass over to death or gain the grace of the Intercessi onary, the curse will be lifted. Fertility will not be restored, however, until a new earth god is chosen.

Ni ght Paral ysi s

There is something in the cornfi el d, an ancient malevolence. It lures folk here, abducting them in their dreams for its own terrible purposes. Discovering what it does and what it means to achieve is the first step in stopping the monstrosity.

(Linda Lee, Scarecrow)

The Ancient has been constructing avatars. There are various rumours surrounding the ancients. This plot requires the discovery of the role of the Mayfi el d Kids in the resolution of the conflict and their abduction by the ancient.

Lord, why have you forsaken me?

They say that God is dead. He sure as hell hasn't been to Mayfi el d recently. Faith was once a nourishing thing, a blanket which kept out the cold. Now it seems to be nothing but a crutch for a cripple. Still, redemption for past sins cannot be impossible, can it?

(Crane, Joe)

These characters are damned by their own guilt. They need to forgive themselves, possibly by earning the Grace of the Intercessi onary by which they need to perform a selfless deed.

DESCRIPTIONS- FROM BEYOND:

ZONES:

If the symbol appears on your sheet, you can move there freely. Otherwise, you need to discover the secret paths, or wait until barriers come down.

QTHE DOMAIN: The world of mortals, the 'real world'. Most beings from beyond are invisible to mortals in the domain. Your character can, of course, see other supernatural entities. An industrial junkyard which conceals an old whiteboard church. Behind the church is a field of black corn.

YTHE INTERIM: The shadow world which runs parallel to the Domain. In some places and at some times, the boundaries may be crossed. It appears as a dark mirror of the Domain. The souls of the dead wail inside the church, trapped by some great evil.

tTHE CARNIVOREAN: The world of the Lost, a dreamy place of secrets and yearning.

CTHE METAL PRIORY: The home of the Profane, a dark and sinister land full of the pains and pleasures of the flesh.

TIMES:

Tonight is Halloween, the time of the year when the barriers are at their weakest. When the moon rises, the boundary between the Domain and the Interim comes down amidst much shrieking and rejoicing, allowing free access to all. At midnight, the Metal Priory and the Carnivorean become as one with the Interim and the Domain.

CHARACTERS:

MORTALS

- 1: 15 years old boy, looks older. Handsome.
- 2: 12 years old girl. Beautiful in an unearthly way. Delicate like glass.
- 3: 15 years old boy. Goggle eyed.
- 4: 13 years old girl. Makes her self up to look older, but just looks cheap
- 5: A hobo, dishevelled and deranged
- 6: A hobo. Instantly forgettable face.
- 7: A 30 year old man dressed like a priest. He's sallow and pale. Lank dark hair hangs over sunken eyes.
- 8: Jolly plump mongoloid girl

THE PROFANE

- 9: Little contortionist. Bald and balletic
- 10: An elegant sculpture of flesh, mostly perfect, but the seams still show in places
- 11: A crouching dwarf, neatly attired. Has no hands, but metal claws
- 12: A brooding stranger
- 13: Sultry, pale beauty dressed in stained tulle. Her skin is smooth, fleshy yet strong like a jungle plant
- 14: A tight lipped, weathered woman. Used to hard work. Her face is covered with an uneven grid of deep scars and seams. Her voice is impossibly deep, like rolling thunder heard underwater

THE LOST

- 15: A decadent southern belle
- 16: A circus freak with a deformed, twisted face
- 17: A dandy cardsharp
- 18 & 19: Twins. Colourfully dressed masked chess players, somewhere between fops and harlequins.
- 20: A haunted, pale junky fortune teller

SUPPLEMENTARY. DESCRIPTIONS: DARK. MIRROR

The world is truly a strange place. You have crossed the veil into the Interim, a shadowland similar to the real world but alive with strange spirits and beings, previously invisible.

ZONES:

Y The Interim. A mirror or shadow of the real world. But darker shadows extend from the world beyond, warping and twisting the shapes of the Church and Junkyard. The church is full of spectres, the moaning spirits of the damned.

tC Worlds beyond. Inaccessible for now.

NEW. CHARACTERS:

- 9: Lithe contortionist. Bald and balletic
- 10: An elegant sculpture of flesh, mostly perfect, but the seams still show in places. He looks for all the world like Billy 'Biff' Taylor.
- 11: A crouching dwarf, neatly attired. Has no hands, but metal claws
- 12: A brooding stranger
- 13: Sultry, pale beauty dressed in stained tulle. Her skin is smooth, fleshy yet strong like a jungle plant. She bears a strong resemblance to a Mayfield homecoming queen who went missing many many years ago. There are occasional tales of a ghostly hitchhiker which looks like her.
- 14: A tight lipped, weathered woman. Used to hard work. Her face is covered with an uneven grid of deep scars and seams. Her voice is impossibly deep, like rolling thunder heard underwater
- 15: A decadent southern belle. This woman looks like Francine Pritchard - a notorious folk villainess who killed two husbands then threw herself to her death in the Clay River.
- 16: A deformed circus freak with a twisted face
- 17: A dandy cardsharp
- 18 & 19: Twins. Colourfully dressed masked chess players, somewhere between fops and harlequins.
- 20: A haunted, pale junky fortune teller

TRUE. SHAPES:

Creatures of the other worlds keep their true forms well hidden. You are able to see through their guises and discern the true shape beneath.

- 1 - 4: No difference
- 5: A charred skeleton
- 6: A man constructed of rotting fruit, like an Archimboldo painting
- 7: No difference except for a faint glow like a cigarette ember
- 8: She appears similar to her normal shape, yet beatific and shaped from radiant light.
- 9: An embroidered abomination of lace and barbed wire. Perfumed filth
- 10: Beautiful boy of blades. He is filled with clattering, clamouring machinery like a razor typewriter, an unidentifiable lump of meat rolls around inside the machinery being eternally grinded and mutilated by gears and levers.
- 11: A hollow puppet with shrieking voice like tormented bridge girders.
- 12: Darkness
- 13: An obscene plant, dripping juices of corruption
- 14: Rusty iron mannequin, a salamander crawls through her innerspaces giving heat and flashes of flame through the joints and eye sockets
- 15: White, fleshy worm thing which fluoresces in the moonlight, a will o the wisp which leads men to their deaths in the swamp.
- 16: A woman with a head that shifts through bestial shapes, never one particular animal. Always howling and hungering.
- 17: A mass of worms
- 18: Tightly twisted veins vigorously pumping blood and other dark fluids of life.
- 19: Stolen breath, captured by chains of different minerals.
- 20: A gnarled fungus mandrake woman, knotted and twisting. The small fibres unravel and sway lightly.

Introduction:

The Mayfield Kids

Halloween is supposed to be a time of fun for the young, dressing up in costumes and pretending to be scary monsters, running with the night. In Mayfield, Halloween is an event to be dreaded, especially by children some of which may never see the dawn.

Many of the men of the town spend the night in their Lodge downtown, leaving their children to their restless, terrible dreams.

Every few years a kid disappears on Halloween. The adults try to play this down - Mayfield is a country town, lots of kids run away to the big city, St Cloud. But the kids aren't dumb, they've started to figure things out...

Rather than lie sleepless in their beds, a group of four kids have decided sit vigil together. They have fled to Crane's Boneyard, a junkyard at crossroads outside of town. With stolen booze they wait out the storm. The crossroads is the meeting place of the Old Mill road and the main road to St Cloud, the nearest big city.

No one goes to the Boneyard, it has a sinister reputation even among the adults. The kids were not expecting to find the abandoned church squatting behind the towers of scrap metal, or the field of black corn behind it.

Approaching the grim whiteboard edifice, they discovered that it was not empty at all. There were people inside, shabby, quiet, waiting around a small fire as if awaiting the great rapture which will bring about the end of the world.

There are other things here. Things unseen moving about. Things just outside of vision. It's just imagination, it's just imagination...

CHARACTERS:

1 TODD TYLER: 15 Years old but he looks older. Since his father (the one handed Preacher) died, the weight of family responsibility has rested on Todd's shoulders.

2 PEGGY TYLER: Todd's 12 year old sister. She has a fragile beauty but is very dreamy and distant.

3 DWIGHT ASHBURN: Todd's best friend. He is also 15, sneaky and the school freak. He likes to experiment on animals. His father runs the drug store, his mother is a notorious town 'personality', given to strange moods and rowdy behaviour.

4 MAYBELINE FOSTER: Peggy's best friend. She is well developed for 13 and already knows some tricks. Her parents are separated. Shep Foster is the town sheriff and Ma Foster runs the Trailer Park and Tearoom. The separated after Maybeline's brother Billy (or 'Biff') went missing a few years back.

THE PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

5: A hobo, dishevelled and deranged.

6: A hobo. Instantly forgettable face.

7: A 30 year old man dressed like a priest. He's sallow and pale. Lank dark hair hangs over sunken eyes.

8: Jolly plump mongoloid girl

GAME NOTE: ANY CHARACTER WITH A BLACK NAME TAG IS INVISIBLE, PROBABLY IMAGINARY.

ZONES:

Q Crane's boneyard. The derelict whiteboard church, the junkyard and the black cornfield beyond.

1 Todd Tyler

ZONES: Q

APPEARANCE: 15 year old boy, white trash. Handsome, looks much older than he actually is.

Todd knows all about pain and cruelty. Seen enough for a lifetime or two. Since he was a small child, he was beaten by his father, the one handed preacher. Todd has six younger siblings, including pretty Peggy and all of them have had broke bones or lost a tooth or two to the man's fist or his metal-clad stump.

A week ago the Preacher died. The police fished his body and the body of some whore out of a car wreck. They could only tell who they were from their dental charts and the Preacher's unusual affliction. Now Todd is expected to be the man of the family, but he yearns for freedom. He wants to get drunk at the 7-11 with his friends and throw beer bottles into the Clay River.

Todd checked out the wreck of the car. It weren't no car accident. The burnt shell was found at an abandoned roadside diner. Someone torched the car and the Sheriff is either covering up something or is a damn fool.

A few months ago, Todd had a romance with Francine Ashburn, the strange wife of the town pharmacist (and his best friend Dwight's mother). She comes from the big town of St Cloud and is very exotic and worldly. Then she told Todd that she was pregnant. He wanted her to leave her husband and they could both move to St Cloud. She just laughed and said she was run outa St Cloud and the only reason she was goin back there was to get an abortion.

Todd was devastated at the death of his child. He had pinned his hopes for the future on Francine, she made him feel like a man. Now he has sunk as low as can be. Todd has caught a whore's disease from her but won't

get it treated cos Doc Havi sh would soon let the whole town know about the great shame.

One reason why Todd has come to the Boneyard tonight is to continue the search for his grandfather's still. It is a mythical contraption but was said to brew the best shine in the four counties. If Todd could find it, he would have a way of getting together some money and maybe then getting out of Mayfield altogether.

When he was younger Todd was abducted by doctors who performed strange experiments on him. He doesn't know if this was memory or nightmare but he has had recurrent dreams about it this last few days.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Proud, Rough, Bleak, Crushed, Grim, Mendacity, Disgust

GOALS:

Coming of Age

Youth soon withers or else turns sour. The becoming of an adult is a terrible time of change - obligations of responsibility and smouldering sexuality battle each other in the will and in dreams. The young must find their own path in life lest they be overwhelmed or consumed by these forces. In order to provide for his family, Todd needs to find a way of making money. Maybe the 'shine still is still out there. He has to choose between his devotion to his family, his roots and his yearning for the big city and its pleasures.

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

Personal Goal

Preacher Tyler was an ornery sonofabitch but he was blood. And blood calls out for blood. That car accident was no accident and his death calls out for justice.

2P eggy Tyler

ZONES: Q

APPEARANCE: 12 year old girl, white trash, beautiful in an unearthly way. Delicate like glass.

Peggy knows what it is to be hurt so bad that you crawl into your shell and never come out again. For years she has been beaten and abused by her father, the one handed preacher. Worst was when he got his Lodge buddies, like Sheriff Foster round to join in.

The Lodge hall is in the old Mason building in Mayfield. The brothers are all good Christian folk on Sundays, but on weeknights they worship some metal woman. She sure ain't the Holy Virgin.

Peggy has a fragile beauty, quite unlike the coarse hill-stock of the rest of her family. Pa Tyler claimed that Peggy was not of his blood and that her Ma was a loose slut (or else consorting with devils). Therefore what he did to Peggy is no harm in God's eye.

He's dead now. He was in some carwreck with an unknown woman. Peggy feels relieved but guilt gnaws at her gut that this was somehow her fault.

Peggy dreams of being a model, running off to a big city like St Cloud.

When younger she was abducted by witches who made her drink potions. She can't recall if this was real or just a nightmare but she has been dreaming about it the last few nights. In one dream she was brought to the crossroads to confront an ancient and stinking old hag. Speaking through her ruin of a mouth, the witch said "You belong to us now, to those who were beyond years when the earth was new. You are no longer one, but four and also one. You have been changed and you cannot go back to the way things once were. The wiggedy men own you no more."

Peggy does not want to be old and ugly - being one of that group is a terrible prospect and an awful nightmare.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Fragile, Damaged, Wistful, Broken Glass, Dreaming, Distant

GOALS:

Coming of Age

Youth soon withers or else turns sour. The becoming of an adult is a terrible time of change - obligations of responsibility and smouldering sexuality battle each other in the will and in dreams. The young must find their own path in life lest they be overwhelmed or consumed by these forces. Peggy wants to be important, to have people take notice of her. She's sick of being the delicate invalid that everyone creeps around for fear of breaking her (except, of course, Pa Tyler). She has to choose between starting a family of her own in Mayfield, or seeking fortune (and possibly ruin) in the big city.

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

Personal Goal

Peggy wants to escape from Mayfield, festering with its dirty little secrets. She wants a fresh start, for everything to be clean again. She wants to go to the big city, to St Cloud. Maybe even further. But with Pa dead, her family pulls her back. Ma is a drunkard and cannot care for the little ones.

3 Dwight Ashburn

ZONES: Q

APPEARANCE: 15 year old boy. White Trash and goggle eyed

Every family has one. Dwight is the peculiar son of the Mayfield pharmacist. His mother blames his father, says it's the family madness. She is none too stable herself, given to bold behaviour and her big city ways. She was a stranger to Mayfield, turned up one day with nothing but a pink valise. Pa took her in and then rued the day forever more.

Dwight's grandmother has another explanation, she told him that his bloodline was special. She told him of the old religion, said that he would have to go into the earth one day. He likes to think she was talking about being dead and buried but suspects she means something else.

To be frank, Dwight is weird. He likes experimenting on animals and collecting things in jars. Dead things. When he was younger, he was abducted by aliens who experimented on him. Dwight kinda figures that 'as above, so below'. He heard that somewhere. Anyways, he has been dreaming about those aliens, last few nights.

He was taken up to a space ship by the little bug eyed fellas who brought him to see the allmother, a bloated and pustulant creature which groaned and squirted out black, shiny eggs. She spoke through a large and sticky mouth, drooling corrupt fluids. "You are the judge, all of you. Your choice hangs the balance of flesh and dream. Shake off the earth digging ways of your old, we have remade you on a cellular level, not one bit of skin or bone is the same as before. You are new and your will must be a laser." Weird, huh.

At present, Dwight's mother and father are tense. Mother had to have an abortion which went wrong and ended up butchered inside and barren. Dwight found this out by spying, a favourite hobby. Mother was supposedly visiting family in St Cloud but was having the whore's operation. She now claims it's dead as the dead moon inside. She always was given to histrionics.

Dwight is quite keen on Peggy, well he's also got a real boner for Maybeline. Hell, Dwight likes all girls and their secrets. He likes to prowls around at night, peer through their windows and watch them undress or go to the bathroom. He's a bit scared of doing this to Maybeline as her father almost caught him once. Her father is the sheriff, a big and brutal man who Dwight once saw beat the bejesus out of a crippled girl who was talking about some 'Intercessory' fella to the school kids (sounded like Jesus). The sheriff dragged her away to the town jail, never to be seen again.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Sneaky, Careful, Sly, Giggling, Odd, Frog-Eyed, Collector, Sharp, Curious

GOALS:

Coming of Age

Youth soon withers or else turns sour. The becoming of an adult is a terrible time of change - obligations of responsibility and smouldering sexuality battle each other in the will and in dreams. The young must find their own path in life lest they be overwhelmed or consumed by these forces. Dwight's rampaging hormones give him one immediate drive, to taste the nectar of sexuality.

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

Personal Goal

Dwight fancies himself a scientist, an experimenter and a pioneer. He wants to take part in a great experiment, "to boldly go" as they say on the tv show.

4 Maybeline Foster

ZONES: Q

APPEARANCE: 13 year old girl, white trash. Makes herself up to look older, but usually just looks cheap.

Since the very beginning, Maybeline wanted it all. Unfortunately she got nothing and when she stopped being a cute little kid, she got even less.

Maybeline's Mother runs the Blue Bayou trailer park and tearoom, her father is the sheriff. They split when her brother Billy (or "Biff") went missing six years ago, at Halloween. Maybeline can still remember part of the conversation she overheard:

Ma: I don't believe this, you're the Sheriff. Tell them NO.

Pa: I don't have no say, hon. It's what THEY want. We can't just pick up some transient kid like usual...

Ma: You and your goddamn boys club. If you'd let him go to St Cloud with John Gallows when he wanted to, he wouldn't be faced with...

Pa: It's already done, nothin I can do.

Billy had not come home that day and Maybeline never saw him again. Ma had moved out to the trailer park, where she later became the manager. Once, when drunk, Ma said "May - it was you they shoulda took".

Maybeline is best friends with Peggy Tyler, the daughter of the one handed Preacher who battered and abused her. She never said nothing but Maybeline knew. She secretly followed the reverend Tyler to his Lodge meeting one night and saw what he did to her and allowed his Lodge brothers to do to her, including Maybeline's own father.

A little voice has been speaking to Maybeline, calling itself the 'Bad Lily'. It urges her to do bad things. She is a sadist and a cunning killer under the guidance of her little friend. She killed old man Tyler for what he did to Peggy. Maybeline was filled with rage but is also ashamedly jealous of Shep Foster's attentions.

A week ago she followed Preacher Tyler to an abandoned roadside diner he saw the preacher meet a whore. Maybeline doused their car in gasoline while they were engaged in carnal pleasures and they were consumed in an inferno. That has not been the only murder.

Since an early age, Maybeline has had ecstatic visions of angels. Last week they took her away and operated on her soul. She was returned to her bed the same evening. Perhaps Bad Lily is really an Angel. Anyway, for the last few nights she has dreamed of the angels on a regular basis.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Carefree, Tawdry, Lethal, Husky, Wilful, Angry, Covetous, Possessive

GOALS:

Coming of Age

Youth soon withers or else turns sour. The becoming of an adult is a terrible time of change - obligations of responsibility and smouldering sexuality battle each other in the will and in dreams. The young must find their own path in life lest they be overwhelmed or consumed by these forces. For Maybeline it is the power over life and death which occupies her attentions. People can be squashed like bugs. Who's next?

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

Personal Goal

Bring down the Lodge amidst hellfire and damnation.

Introduction:

The Boneyard Church

Hot wind lifts moisture off the Clay river, creating an atmosphere, a disposition which is clammy, unpleasant, a harbinger of a storm which will not come.

By the old crossroads out of Mayfield is a junkyard that folks call "The Boneyard"; none come there. It is a graveyard of dead metal. Crippled cars are left to be eaten slowly by rust and decay, no man to put them out of their hurt. The things we toss aside lie broken and hateful of our disregard.

This place has a hunger, it is all sullen eyes and wicked intent. The towers of decay are treacherous, seeking to entrap and yield a feast for the symbiotic vermin which live within.

The church should look wrong here but it doesn't. It can't be seen from the road, it cowers amidst the refuse and filth like those who dwell in it. It is a haven for those who have an affinity for this junk. The unwanted, the lost, the broken.

It is dark in the church, a comfortable musty dark where secrets are nurtured. Beyond the church is a field of black corn that flows like a sea of corruption as far as the eye goes.

The road is a river, flowing from the heartland to the coastal city of St Cloud. The crossroads are like the submerged reef which snags the unwary and collects every bit of trash that floats on by.

Four raggedy souls have made this place their home for the time being. Two old hobos, a filthy young man dressed like a preacher and a retarded girl. Each keeps the darkness close to them, like a blanket.

There are other things here. The Mayfield folks have good reason for avoiding this godforsaken place. Spirits, demons, whatever you care to call them. Invisible entities come to listen to the lullaby sung by the whispering corn.

This night has brought with it new flotsam. Four kids from Mayfield have shown up (1-4), perhaps on the run from something or to something. The night has many mysteries, but common hospitality is not an unreasonable proposition.

CHARACTERS:

- 5 HENRY CRANE - mad hobo been here for ages
- 6 SCARECROW - mad hobo also long term
- 7 HOLY JOE - young man on the lam, has preacher's collar but is no saint. He and Linda Lee have been holed up in the church for a few days.
- 8 LINDA LEE - mongoloid who follows Joe devotedly

THE KIDS

- 1: 15 years old boy, looks older. Handsome.
- 2: 12 years old girl. Beautiful in an unearthly way. Delicate like glass.
- 3: 15 years old boy. Goggle eyed.
- 4: 13 years old girl. Makes her self up to look older, but just looks tawdry

GAME NOTE: ANY CHARACTER WITH A BLACK NAME TAG IS INVISIBLE, PROBABLY IMAGINARY.

ZONES:

Q Crane's boneyard. The derelict whiteboard church, the junkyard and the black cornfield beyond.

5 Henry Crane

ZONES: QY

MANTLE: A hobo, dishevelled and deranged

APPEARANCE: A charred skeleton

GAMENOTE: *Your Mantle is the Illusion which hides your true form.*

In November of 1871 a cold wind blew through the town of Mayfield, taking with it the last tatters of autumn and bearing the Preacher Crane. An unpersonable and gaunt man, Crane was the replacement for the old holy man who had died in the Autumn of, it was said, too much liquor and high living.

Crane was not popular with the townsfolk, with his strict views of sin and complacency. Over the next year he discovered the source of their hostilities - they were nothing but a bunch of Godless heathens merely playing at piety. Worst, some of his flock were pagans who worshipped the craven images of dark fertility gods. They practiced human sacrifice and other perverted practices. The preacher had stumbled across a circle of crucified skeletons, out in the cornfield behind the church. Crane knew only he could bring God's word back to this forsaken place.

The culmination of their foul rituals took place on All Hallows' Eve, a Sunday that year. They came to church that morn, keen with anticipation of the bloodletting to come. Little did they know that Crane had dosed the communion wine with enough rat poison to bring down a goodly sized city.

When folk from a nearby town found him a week later, he was delivering a sermon to the dead. He was bound, taken into the field and hanged. They then burnt the bodies and the church. Some claimed to hear screaming as the inferno consumed the church.

The church was avoided by all as a contaminated place. Gradually Mayfield was repopulated, the locals built a

dump to hide the charred earth, today they call it 'Crane's Boneyard'. Over the years the church has returned, rebuilding itself from the junkyard and with it has come the damned Henry Crane and a mad ghost calling himself the Scarecrow (6). The scarecrow is all the company Crane has had for many years - they constantly bicker. The corn has grown back black.

Crane exists both in the real world (the DOMAIN) and the spirit world (the INTERIM). There are worlds beyond that are perceptible but not able to be reached. Because of this, he can see the creatures which move around, invisible to the others. He has seen many strange creatures in the Interim, including one which looks like Francine Pritchard (15) a notorious folk villainess who killed two husbands then threw herself to her death in the Clay River.

Crane has heard whispers about a creature called the Ancient. It abducts sleepers and performs experiments on them, altering their internal mechanics by putting parts of itself into them. Lots of townsfolk have had it done, thinking that they were just having a bad dream.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Raggedy, Anguished, Hateful, Betrayed, Torn, Rotting, Perdition

GOALS:

Curse of the Black Corn

The evil that has been wrought here has soured the earth and turned the corn black. There must be a way to lift this curse and restore fertility to the land.

Lord, why have you forsaken me?

They say that God is dead. He sure as hell hasn't been to Mayfield recently. Faith was once a nourishing thing, a blanket which kept out the cold. Now it seems to be nothing but a crutch for a cripple. Still, redemption for past sins cannot be impossible, can it?

Personal Goal

Crane wants to find peace and pass over into death. He hates being trapped here, with the wails of the damned ringing in his ears.

6 Scarecrow

ZONES: QY

MANTLE: A hobo. The Scarecrow cannot remember who the man was or what he did. His Mantle is a blurred indistinct memory.

APPEARANCE: Man constructed of rotting fruit, like an Archimboldo painting.

GAMENOTE: Your Mantle is the Illusion which hides your true form

They told him that the man was dead. He had consumed the water of death, bled, then hung for twenty days upon the spoke of the earth. He had gone beyond. He would no longer hold his wife or tend his fields or admonish his children. That was the task of the man. The task of the God was to protect the corn, the wellspring of the town of Mayfield.

The people of Mayfield pretended to worship the false god, the weeping Christ of the church. On Sundays they played at worship but at all other times they belonged to the old ways.

Every nine years a new God takes his place on the gibbet in the corn and the old God goes into the Earth, to be with the Lost - the oldest of the spirits of the earth, the old gods. The Lost protect the corn and the people so a sacrifice must be made. One life for many. The man knew this and felt joy.

He was brought into the arms of an angel, a figure clothed in light (15). She was the goddess of the earth, yet she wore the form, Francine Pritchard, that debutante who had gone missing years before. She had joined with the Goddess and reassured the man that death was only the beginning.

It has been over a hundred years since the corn god awoke amidst flames to discover that a priest of the

false god had killed all of the followers of the old ways - burnt down the church and the field. With no old religion there would be no new God. The old God wrung his hands with anguish at the dying earth.

The church, rebuilt itself over the years, with scraps from the junkyard (locals call the Boneyard) built on site. A field of black corn has replaced the old fertile field, growing back as slowly and surely as the creeping of madness whose soft footfalls the God hears all too clearly. He now calls himself the Scarecrow as this is how he feels.

The Scarecrow and a mad ghost named Henry Crane have lived in this junkyard for many years. They bicker constantly yet depend on each other. They exist both in the real world (the DOMAIN) and the spirit world (the INTERIM). There are worlds beyond that are perceptible but not able to be reached. Because of this he can see the creatures which move about invisible to others in the Domain.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Shabby, Decayed, Gangling, Unhinged, Corrupted, Weak

GOALS:

Curse of the Black Corn

The evil that has been wrought here has soured the earth and turned the corn black. There must be a way to lift this curse and restore fertility to the land.

Night Paralysis

There is something in the cornfield, an ancient malevolence. It lures folk here, abducting them in their dreams for its own terrible purposes. Discovering what it does and what it means to achieve is the first step in stopping the monstrosity.

Personal Goal

To find peace, see the traditions restored and find a replacement Corn God.

7 Holy Joe

ZONES: Q

APPEARANCE: 24 years old, sallow and pale. Lank dark hair and sunken eyes.

John Gallows was the golden boy of his home town. In football and acting he excelled. When he was 16, the men from the TV company saw him in the school play and offered to take him to the big city, St Cloud, and make him the star of a show.

John's first regret was leaving behind his oldest friend, Billy (Biff) Foster. He wanted to take Biff with him, but Biff had to stay because of family responsibilities. Biff's father was the Sheriff and it was thought that he would become a deputy when he turned 18.

John became very successful but had some regrets. Soon Biff stopped replying to his letters and he lost touch altogether. Success led to the lifestyle of the successful. One day on a cocaine high, John bottomed out. He felt as though he had contracted a wasting disease of the soul.

He couldn't work, he consumed more drugs and made enemies at the same rate as he lost friends. His appearance began to change as this spiritual rot consumed him. No longer the handsome football star, he withered as his outward appearance transformed to match his inner decay.

Four years later he was not welcome in St Cloud. A junky, he dresses like a preacher and goes by the name of Holy Joe. He was given to robbery to get quick cash to buy drugs. Tonight he is on the run after accidentally killing a security guard.

He tried to kill himself but Linda Lee (8) a sweet mongoloid girl saved him from the wreckage of the

stolen car that he drove off the covered bridge. She seems devoted to Joe and he can't bring himself to tell her to go away.

A week ago, at an abandoned roadside diner he saw a preacher and a whore murdered. Their car was doused in gasoline while they were engaged in carnal pleasures and they were consumed in an inferno. Joe saw a young girl toss aside a gasoline can and run giggling off. He did not get a good look at her through the smoke.

They have returned to Mayfield, his home town. It is almost as though he was drawn here. They only made it as far as the junkyard outside town, when they sought shelter for the night. It has been a place of sanctuary for the last few days.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Hollow, Tired, Yearning, Guilty, Angry, Wintry, Scarred, Defeated

GOALS:

White Church, Dark Secret

Who would build a church in a junkyard? Perhaps Crane's Boneyard was built to hide the church? This is a mystery to tempt the curious into places where they ought not go. Perhaps that is its purpose after all.

Lord, why have you forsaken me?

They say that God is dead. He sure as hell hasn't been to Mayfield recently. Faith was once a nourishing thing, a blanket which kept out the cold. Now it seems to be nothing but a crutch for a cripple. Still, redemption for past sins cannot be impossible, can it?

Personal Goal

To find a purpose in life, something to stop the terrible waste. Time is waste, life trickles away and nothing is built to last.

8 Linda Lee

ZONES: QYtC

MANTLE: Jolly plump mongoloid girl
APPEARANCE: Same as MANTLE but built of light

GAMENOTE: Your Mantle is the Illusion which hides your true form

Linda Lee is an angel - a child of a human impregnated by the Intercessory (the God who is to come). She was chosen to be the protector of John Gallows, who today calls himself "Holy Joe" (7). A good man, he is one of the mortals who bear a fraction of the spirit of the Intercessory. It is so powerful that it wastes his soul and body. He is corrupted by this wasting and given to robbery and self pity. This is normal and he must sink as low as he can if he seeks the true path of enlightenment. She is his guide on this path.

The Intercessory seeks to keep the factions of the invisible world fighting each other and unprepared for his coming. These are THE LOST, creatures of dream, echoes of another place and THE PROFANE, beings manifesting the corruption of the flesh. They seek control over earth sites where the fragments of the Ancients are buried.

The Intercessory is the grace of spring rain, the sum total of what mankind will be, projected from the future to the present. It seeks the end of the tyranny of the Ancients and the outsiders who squabble for their bones. It is the Redeemer and the Lightbringer, that brings hope where there is none, cleans away corruption and rot. Regrowth and renewal.

The Intercessory can even gain influence among the Profane and the Lost. It sends signals to Linda Lee, humming along the power lines. Jest of the Profane (10) has been converted to the cause and Ergot of the Lost (20) seems receptive to its ideals.

The Intercessory is hard on its hosts, its holy fire consumes their bodies and souls like a spiritual wasting disease. It is the role of creatures such as Linda Lee to protect and give aid to these martyrs, like Holy Joe. Linda Lee pulled his body from the wreckage of a car. He had tried to kill himself by driving off a bridge. She has to give him succour while he fulfils his destiny.

Linda Lee may grant grace to anyone who does a truly selfless act, a small dose of enlightenment which brings peace and helps to heal the soul. It also allows one to see through the lies and perceive the true forms, the soul behind the Mantle. Linda Lee can do this at any time.

Linda Lee can move among the realms of earth and spirit as she wills. Unlike most creatures from beyond, she is anchored to the Domain and is visible there. She can see the beings which are invisible to others in the Domain.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Serene, Watchful, Protective, Rival, Optimistic, Playful

GOALS:

Night Paralysis

There is something in the cornfield, an ancient malevolence. It lures folk here, abducting them in their dreams for its own terrible purposes. Discovering what it does and what it means to achieve is the first step in stopping the monstrosity.

Curse of the Black Corn

The evil that has been wrought here has soured the earth and turned the corn black. There must be a way to lift this curse and restore fertility to the land.

Personal Goal

To sow discord among the Profane and the Lost. If they fight each other, they will never unite and become a real threat to the Intercessory.

Introduction:

The Oddfellows of Jest

The sect of Oddfellows are a part of The Profane, elder beings of lust, sensation and corruption - the pains and the pleasures of the flesh. Known as The Apostates, The New Flesh, The Colibri, The Fallen, The Unwritten Creed, Malus Corporeous. They represent worldly evils, cruelty and the exercise of will on the world.

They seek influence over sites where the ancients are buried. Ancients are fragments of the fallen one, the loser in the war of gods.

The METAL PRIORY under the Dead Moon is this faction's world. The tunnel of love as designed by Piranesi. It is a world of hierarchy and order, supervised by the Panopticon (the living prison) which administers the Word from the great book of unwritten law, the Enchiridion. This volume contains all the great lists and nomenclature of all the things in the world of Flesh and beyond.

The Profane seek out mortals to use as mantles. They control the world through direct influence (compelling or suggesting evil deeds) or through patronage of secret societies and cults like the Great Opusculum. They may reward followers by making them Sorcerers who, contaminated by new flesh may change the laws of reality around them.

A MANTLE is the clothing of flesh which a Profane adopts in order to interact with the world of mortals, they usually come from dead people. The Profane gain a *more* human appearance but also often gain traits of the dead and some distant memories. A mantle host rebelling against it's Profane parasite is almost unheard of.

The Profane's primary rivals are THE LOST, creatures of dream and sorrow, lost in nostalgia from a world known as the Carnivean. Their time has gone yet they seek to retain control of the Ancients' sites.

There is another force at play, a mysterious entity known as THE INTERCESSIONARY which seems to protect mortals from the manipulations of outsiders.

The site under contention is a black cornfield in a southern rural American town. It was under the sway of the People of Sorrow (a group of the Lost) a hundred years before. They established a corn god, a mortal who protected the fields and the folk. They pretended to be pious christian folk and kept their secret well, but not well enough.

The balance swayed to the Oddfellows of Jest when the worshippers were killed by a mad priest who poisoned the communion wine. He was lynched the men who found him preaching a sermon to the corpses. It was they who burnt down the church and the cornfield, building a junkyard on the ruin. Over the years the church has rebuilt itself from the junk and the cornfield has grown back black.

In the contemporary town of Mayfield, the IRON MANNEQUIN patronises the LODGE - a cult which many townsmen belong to. It is under her instruction that they sacrifice a youth every Halloween which her Profane brethren may take as a Mantle or make their slave beyond death.

There are 4 Zones in this freeform. The DOMAIN is the world of the mortals. Unless they possess a mortal shell, creatures from beyond are spirits, invisible to most mortals. The INTERIM is the shadow world between the Domain and the worlds beyond, the Carnivean of the Lost and the Metal Priory of the Profane. Here they may interact fully with mortals.

THE ODDFELLOWS:

- 9 JEST: The Black Abbot of Mirth. Archon and Leader
- 10 THE RED BUTCHER: Jest's beautiful adopted son
- 11 BUFFOON: A hollow puppet and slave to Jest's will
- 12 THE WANDERER: A killer, gunfighter of the crossroads
- 13 BAD LILY: Flower of Corruption
- 14 IRON MANNEQUIN: Lady of Rust, Patron of the Lodge

9 Jest

ZONES: C

MANTLE: Like the contortionist. Bald and balletic. The dancer sought perfection above all - above fame, above love, above humanity. He struck a deal with those beyond but found perfection a shallow and fragile gift.

APPEARANCE: An embroidered abomination of lace and barbed wire. Perfumed filth.

Jest is Black Abbot of Mirth, the Archon of the Profane. He was appointed to this position by Buffoon (11) the Slave of the Archon who was regent at the time. Jest is an artist of cruelty and an epicurian of debasement.

Once he sought power and lustfully embraced The Red Butcher as his beautiful adoptive son, to provide for succession in the event of misfortune (which DOES seem to plague the Archons of the Profane). But he has found power to be a bitter and acrimonious mistress.

Many years ago, the town of Mayfield was a domain that honoured the Lost. Jest drew a godly preacher to the town, disclosed their pagan ways and inspired the man's murderous rampage. He used his faithful servant, the Wanderer (12) to implant the suggestion in the priest's mind. Preacher Henry Crane is now a ghost (5), bound to the corrupt earth by the villainy of his deeds.

Jest is concerned to monitor how much power he actually wields. Most of the important suggestions and enigmas come from Buffoon. They are wise and canny designs but it seems as if the slave has most of the real power in the order.

Jest has become disenchanted with the Profane. He has been tempted by the Intercessory, a creature of enlightenment which seeks to free humanity from the tyranny of outsiders and the Ancients. It is the redeemer who is to come and the Lightbringer. It is time the Lost and the Profane minded their own affairs and let the mortals guide their own destiny.

Recently a crippled girl came to Mayfield, preaching the Intercessory's credo. She was captured by an agent of Bad Lily (13) who delivered her unto Jest for his pleasure. The girl won the abbot over to her cause and he secretly let her go, back into the Domain.

He knows that the Lost have some breeding program involving the mortals. Little do they know it, but the Intercessory is using them to breed itself in the future. It is merely a reflection of itself.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Decadent, Austere, Filthy, Blasphemous, Stately, Regal, Perverse, Pandemonium, Operatic, Jewelled, Festering, Luxurious

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Interimlovers

For most of their lives, the mortals live in blissful ignorance of the Interim and the worlds beyond. It is usually impossible for them to cross the veil unless they walk the secret paths or the veils weaken at special times (like tonight). Some beings create devices such as magic mirrors or puzzle boxes to make the transition easier. It would be a matter of great prestige to invent (or discover) new methods to ensnare mortals.

Personal Goal

Jest wants to look after his own kind, but not at the expense of humanity's growth. He has true fondness for the Red Butcher (inconstant as he is) and seeks to help him in advancement. The other Profane are like children to Jest - to be kept out of trouble and protected. Particularly with the coming of the Intercessory.

10 The Red Butcher

ZONES: CYt

MANTLE: An elegant sculpture of flesh, mostly perfect, but the seams still show in places. His current Mantle is Billy Foster, a handsome football hero. His heart was broken by the loss of love. When the Mayfield cult called the Lodge killed him, it was a welcome release. His bitterness at being abandoned fuels his ambition.

APPEARANCE: Beautiful boy of blades. He is filled with clattering, clamoring machinery like a razor typewriter, an unidentifiable lump of meat rolls around inside the machinery being eternally grinded and mutilated by gears and levers.

The Red Butcher's name is synonymous with murder, bloodshed, regicide. He is the Knave of Razors, Patron Saint of Mutilation.

He is the Scion of Jest, the Archon of the Profane. Red Butcher hates his master, but plays up to his decadent fondlings. If anything were to happen to Jest, Red would become Archon.

Red Butcher is a slave to his vital juices, both homicidal and carnal. Has been engaged in lustful pursuits with Bad Lily (13) and secretly with Ergot of the Lost (20). It is sacrilege to be involved with the Lost, particularly so intimately.

Red knows the secret way to the world of the Profane from the Interim. To gain access to the METAL PRIORY, one must pass the howling dead and perform a bloodrite on the altar of the Interim church, a sacrifice of either sex or pain. The content of the ritual does not matter but many of the Profane or the Lost like to specify something which entertains them. The air fills with industrial shrieking, the walls turn stone and metal as the sky outside ignites and a dead moon rises through this venomous conflagration.

Red Butcher has become increasingly concerned about the role and purposes of the enigmatic Ancients. In the Library of the Panopticon, he has searched the books of law and hierarchies, looking for a clue. In a reference to the Book of Permutations, he has discovered that the ancients often modify mortals for some purpose. It is clear that it is not the same thing as adopting a Mantle, but it does have some similarities. The mortal is not possessed but is changed in some way on the most fundamental of levels. Just why this is done is still a mystery.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Mercurial, Blithe, Vicious, Charming, Corpus Delicti, Mendacity, Ordained, Angry Wound, Carnal, Hedonistic

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Conspiracy of Mirth

Jest's time as archon of the Oddfellows is at an end. He has grown careless and lax in his position of power. He should be toppled and replaced by the Red Butcher, a dynamic leader who would take the Profane on to greater glories.

Personal Goal

To find a new Mantle, the bitterness of the present one is clouding Red Butcher's judgement.

11 Buffoon

ZONES: CYt

MANTLE: A crouching dwarf, neatly attired. Has no hands, but metal claws. The malice man has been a mantle for thousands of years.

APPEARANCE: A hollow puppet with shrieking voice like tormented bridge girders.

The Buffoon is the slave of the Archon of the Profane and is therefore Jest's servant. The puppet, however, guides the hand and it is Buffoon who holds the real power. He lets the Archon think that he has power while making useful suggestions and intimations.

The Profane are a perfidious and faithless bunch, prone to regicide. Buffoon has no deserve to be the obvious corpus regis of the order when so many are keen to be his tools.

Little does anyone know but the Buffoon was once human taken as a servant by some antediluvian Archon. He has become Profane by gradually stealing the power of his masters. He has taken as his own the realm of self-deception, delusion, the untruths that lead to evil.

Buffoon knows the secret way from the Interim to the world of the Profane. To gain access to the METAL PRIORY, one must pass the howling dead and perform a bloodrite on the altar of the Interim church, a sacrifice of either sex or pain. The content of the ritual does not matter but many of the Profane or the Lost like to specify something which entertains them. The air fills with industrial shrieking, the walls turn stone and metal as the sky outside ignites and a dead moon rises through this conflagration.

The Buffoon is content with Jest as an Archon, he is lazy, decadent and does not keep a firm control of his slave. Having embraced the goals of the Profane, Buffoon is their greatest champion against all threats - be they the Lost, the mortals or the Intercessory.

The Buffoon has dared the gravest heresy. He has entered the very seat of power of the Profane, Panopticon the living prison. There he sought out the great book of law, the first book from which all the copies are made. This volume has a dark reputation and is said to contain aspects which drive the reader to insanity. The book was blank. Sheet upon sheet of crisp white parchment. The Buffoon saw the great joke in this and laughed himself sick. The Profane are shallow and the little man tires of them. He seeks release from his charges and the chance to seek greater truths and mysteries.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Foul, Shrieking, Sinister, Rustling, Macabre, Gallows Humour, Vulgar, Scuffling, Naughty, Void

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

Seize the Lightbringer

The Intercessory is a thorn in the side of all those from beyond the Interim. As a result, many seek to expose the machinations of the Intercessory. It wants to bring about an end to the power of the Ancients. It may send a spy to this event, perhaps influencing someone within one of the factions.

Personal Goal

Relinquish command and find a worthy replacement. Jest is just not up to the task by himself.

12 The Wanderer

ZONES: CYQ

MANTLE: Brooding stranger

APPEARANCE: Darkness

On Halloween night each year the gunfighters meet at the crossroad in the Domain. The duel ends in mutual bloodshed, the way it has always done. It has been this way from the very beginning, since brother first slew brother. The Mantles come and go but the spirits of carnage remain - one Profane and one Lost. The Wanderer is the Lord of murder. Has worn many human forms to compel their killing hand and fought the Traveller (17) throughout all the ages of the earth.

The Wanderer is the trusted servant of Jest (9). The Domain of Mayfield was once swayed by the Lost who administered their bland benediction through the old pagan religion. A hundred years ago, Jest drew a holy man to the town but it was the Wanderer who put murder in his mind, an outrage at the pagan practices. The preacher, Crane, poisoned his flock and was lynched for his sins. He is now a ghost (5), bound to the church until he releases his guilt.

While this plan was administered by Jest, it was suggested by Buffoon (11). The Wanderer has come to notice just how many of Jest's stratagems originate in his depraved slave. It seems that the puppet holds the real power.

Searching for ways to defeat his rival, the Wanderer secretly searched the great library of the Panopticon. He found an ancient (and forbidden) codex which suggested that the Profane and the Lost are split aspects of the same force, once unified. It suggested a great Heresy, that they could become united once more. The Wanderer stole this volume and realised that a mutually beneficial arrangement could be struck, but for the existence of the hated Traveller,

The Wanderer knows the secret ways from the Domain to the Interim. It begins with an obscure path through the skeletal towers of Junkyard. The seeker must open and old battered Westinghouse refrigerator and unlatch the secret catch at the base. This then leads to a network of dark tunnels which smell like the big cat house at the zoo. Fine bone powder crunches underfoot. It looks like an ancient powerstation, where parts of the junkyard have spilled in. At the right point in the labyrinth there is a half submerged toilet facility, its seagrass matting rotten underfoot. It one stinking cubicle an air shaft climbs steeply upward. Strange winds echo through this ducting carrying with them the scent of ages. A rough climb will emerge back wear you started - next to the church. But everything is different...

CHARACTER HOOKS: Righteous, Demanding, Silent, Vengeful, Violent, Brooding, Tempest, Lamentation, Retribution, Apocalypse

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Interimlovers

For most of their lives, the mortals live in blissful ignorance of the Interim and the worlds beyond. It is usually impossible for them to cross the veil unless they walk the secret paths or the veils weaken at special times (like tonight). Some beings create devices such as magic mirrors or puzzle boxes to make the transition easier. It would be a matter of great prestige to invent (or discover) new methods to ensnare mortals.

Personal Goal

The Wanderer is consumed with hatred for the Traveller. Each Halloween they meet at the crossroads and fight out their dual to their deaths. If he could only win one time, he may destroy the Traveller forever.

13 Bad Lily

ZONES: CYQt

MANTLE: Sultry, pale beauty dressed in stained tulle. A past homecoming queen of Mayfield, contaminated in the bud. Her skin is smooth, fleshy yet strong like a jungle plant.

APPEARANCE: An obscene plant, dripping juices of corruption

Bad Lily has taken for herself many titles. Flower of corruption. Saint of Debased Sexuality. Lady of the Black Jelly.

She enjoys games of deceit and jealousy, inspiring mortals to acts of great cruelty and wickedness. Of late, she was the trigger for murderous activities of a Mayfield schoolgirl, Maybeline Foster (4). Bad Lily whispered obscene suggestions in her ear. A week ago, Maybeline killed Preacher Tyler while he was engaged in carnal pleasures with a whore. She doused the car in gasoline and they were consumed in an inferno. That was not the only murder Lily's daughter has committed. Bad Lily is invisible while in the domain, but may speak freely with Maybeline.

On some stormy nights Lily is able to appear in the Domain and she manifests as a ghostly hitchhiker, luring men onto dangerous roads.

Tyler, the one handed preacher, was an agent of Iron Mannequin (14) who would not be impressed if she found out why he was killed. Lily has also converted Sheriff Foster from Mannequin's cause, by appearing to him in longing strains as his drowned dead sister. When a crippled girl (an agent of the Intercessory) came preaching in Mayfield, Lily got him to arrange an arrest. She delivered the unfortunate girl to Jest for his darks pleasure. He now owes her a boon.

Bad Lily has shared her carnal pleasures with the Red Butcher (11), the Scion of Jest. She has also been involved in a forbidden tryst with Princess Jack (16) of the Lost. She wants to exploit this secret to get information damaging to the Lost. This notwithstanding, such dealings are heresy to the Profane, punishable by discombobulation.

Because of her dealings with the Lost, Bad Lily knows some of the secret paths through the Interim. To gain access to the CARNIVEAN, one must walk three times widdershins around the mad gods in the black corn, avoiding their fearful and frantic grasping. When one emerges from the cornfield they find themselves in the dark arcades of the Lost, filled with treasures, promises and nightmares.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Sultry, Overripe, Clinging, Heady, Intense, Thrilling, Disgusting, Lacerate, Viscera, Another reason to cut off an ear, Rotten, Decadent, Erotic, Velvety

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Conspiracy of Mirth

Jest's time as archon of the Oddfellows is at an end. He has grown careless and lax in his position of power. He should be toppled and replaced by the Red Butcher, a dynamic leader who would take the Profane on to greater glories.

Personal Goal

Bad Lily is consumed with jealousy of Iron Mannequin. While maintaining a civil demeanour, she cannot understand why that cold bitch gets to run the Lodge. Bad Lily wants to usurp her or create a rival cult, dedicated to indulgence.

14 Iron Mannequin

ZONES: CYQ

MANTLE: A tight lipped, weathered woman. Used to hard work. Her face is covered with an uneven grid of deep scars and seams. Her voice is impossibly deep, like rolling thunder heard underwater.

APPEARANCE: Rusty Iron Mannequin, a salamander crawls through her innerspaces giving heat and flashes of flame through the joints and eye sockets

Of all the Profane, the Iron Mannequin has the most dealings with mortals. She has been a Goddess, a Black Madonna, the Lady of Rust, the Saint of Alienation. She speaks reason to madmen who seek to build a shell to keep out the world.

Iron Mannequin runs a secret society, the Mayfield Lodge, in the nearby town. A death cult, it is ostensibly a chamber of commerce. Membership includes sheriff Foster and a key member was the one handed preacher Tyler. He has performed initiation rites on his daughter, Peggy (2) who now belongs to the Profane.

The preacher is dead, killed by forces unknown. He was a key linchpin in the Iron Lady's control of Mayfield. His death has caused a destabilisation in the Lodge and in the social fabric of the town. The Mannequin needs to restore order and control (her virtues and her obsessions) and then she will seek revenge.

Iron Mannequin knows the secret ways from the Domain to the Interim. It begins with an obscure path through the skeletal towers of Junkyard. The seeker must open and old battered Westinghouse refrigerator and unlatch the secret catch at the base. This then leads to a network of dark tunnels which smell like the big cat house at the zoo. Fine bone powder crunches underfoot. It looks like an ancient powerstation, where parts of the junkyard have spilled in. At the right point in the

labyrinth there is a half submerged toilet facility, its seagrass matting rotten underfoot. In one stinking cubicle an air shaft climbs steeply upward. Strange winds echo through this ducting carrying with them the scent of ages. A rough climb will emerge back where you started - next to the church. But everything is different...

The Ancient has been abducting the children of Mayfield as they sleep and doing something to them. They sleepwalk out into the fields and returned, changed. What part this has to play in the plans of the inscrutable Ancient cannot be guessed at.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Hard, Cautious, Callous, Forceful, Corrupt, Doubting, Relentless, Lament, Dead, Distant Thunder

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Conspiracy of Mirth

Jest's time as archon of the Oddfellows is at an end. He has grown careless and lax in his position of power. He should be toppled and replaced by the Red Butcher, a dynamic leader who would take the Profane on to greater glories.

Personal Goal

The Lodge is a difficult responsibility. Iron Mannequin wants to recruit a slave to help her. This will involve the permission of Jest and the death of a mortal.

Introduction:

The People of Sorrow

This raggedy band are a few of the remaining beings calling themselves the Lost, creatures of dreams from another place. They create inspiration and change: great artists, visionaries, genocidal Lunatics. They represent entropy in the world of nature. Once were creatures of spring and growth or summer and plenty. Now late autumn slips into winter.

Through the ages they have sought influence over sites where ancients are buried, ancients are the first of the Lost, the stranded dreamers from another place who dream the world.

The Carnivean is their world a fondly remembered Penny Arcade with darkened shadows, a toyshop of secrets. It exists in a dreamscape, a junkyard of the collective unconscious buried deep in the soul of humanity. It is full of discarded dreams, nightmares, the erotic and the sadly beautiful.

The Lost seek out mortals to use as mantles. A MANTLE is a clothing of soul which a Profane adopts in order to interact with the world of mortals, they usually come from dead people. The souls are fused but the Lost are the controllers. However, they often gain traits of the dead and some distant memories. A mantle host rebelling against its Lost master is almost unheard of.

Sometimes the Lost select souls of the dead to serve them in the Interim or their own world, such as the earth kings of old. Living mortals may be given the powers of dreaming and visions. They can be given the gift of sorcery - power over the hearts and minds of their fellows. This has been used, particularly by the Gameplayers (18 & 19) to turn the tide of history.

The Lost's primary rivals are THE PROFANE, painbringers and creatures of lust and corruption that seek to

exploit the flesh over the dreaming. There is another force, the mysterious INTERCESSIONARY which seems to be striving to protect humanity from the Lost and the Profane.

The site under contention is black cornfield in a Southern American town. It was under the sway of the People of Sorrow, a hundred years before. They established a corn god, mortal who protected the fields and the folk. Balanced swayed to the Oddfellows of Jest when the worshippers were killed by a mad priest, poisoning communion wine. He was lynched those who found him delivering a sermon to the dead, they burnt down the church and the cornfield, building a junkyard on the ruin. Over the years the church has rebuilt itself from the junk and the cornfield has grown back black.

There are 4 Zones in this freeform. The DOMAIN is the world of the mortals. Unless they possess a living host, creatures from beyond are spirits, invisible to most mortals in the Domain. The INTERIM is the shadow world between the Domain and the worlds beyond, the Carnivean of the Lost and the Metal Priory of the Profane. In the Interim they may interact freely with mortals.

While in the Domain, the Lost are invisible to most mortals.

15 ANGEL: Queen of Sorrow.

16 PRINCESS JACK: The bestial Princess.

17 THE TRAVELLER: Cardsharp and dandy gunman

18 & 19 THE GAMEPLAYERS: Identical twin chessplayers

20 ERGOT: Flower spirit of visions

15 Angel

ZONES: t

MANTLE: A decadent Southern Belle. Francine Pritchard was also a notorious nineteenth century folk villainess, reputed to have killed two husbands before she threw herself to her death in the Clay River.

APPEARANCE: White, fleshy worm thing which fluoresces in the moonlight, a will o the wisp which leads men to their deaths in the swamp.

Deep within the Carnivean, the Lady of the Lost broods over the passing of time, the loss of innocence and the crumbling remains of her empire. She is the Queen of Sorrow, the Lady of Lost Laughs and the Spirit of Forsaken Joy. She is Languid, disinterested - without hope, all she surveys becomes decay.

Once the Lost held sway over the Domains of Mayfield through the earth religion, which flourished in the dark spaces where Christianity dared not go. Men of the town gave their lives to become earth Gods, the protectors of the corn. Every nine years, as the old God withered in winter, the new God arose in spring.

Then the cursed preacher came to town, about a century ago. He sought out the old ways like a man consumed with fever. Discovering the duplicity of his Flock (who only feigned faith in the pale Christ) he killed them all with poison, just like the poison in his soul. Others found him leading the dead in a parody of mass and strung him from a nearby tree. The evil he wrought made the corn grow black.

The old earth God (6) has waited long for a new God to come. He is corrupted and rotten, yearning for the quiet of the earth, yet never allowed to rest. His fate is linked to the fate of the black corn and the fertility of Mayfield. The town is dying by inches.

Angel spends her days in reverie, longing for the glories of the past and lamenting the ugliness of the present day. Once the whole earth was alive with spirits, the Lost flourished and mortals were captivated by their glammers. Today they are dwindling, a bland parody of what they once were.

The mortals are the key to the future, yet the Profane and the Intercessiary have their hooks deep into the squalid folk of Mayfield. Angel sees that winter has come and their may not be a chance for the rebirth of spring. The last days are upon us all.

Angel believes that the Ancients have accepted the inevitability of the Intercessiary's ascendant to dominance. They are planning an apocalyptic war which will mean that their enemy has nothing left to inherit but barren earth. It begins with a war between the Lost and the Profane which would spread like a grassfire through their mortal servants and cults.

Angel has had troubling dreams of the disaster to come, portents of desolation and the bright desert of bone, blinding snow and terrible cold. Thus it begins, thus it ends. It's better to dwell in the past than to take action against the tide. If death comes, let it be swift.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Regret, Shimmering, Mothlike, Regal, Dreamy, Distant, Forsaken

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

Seize the Lightbringer

The Intercessiary is a thorn in the side of all those from beyond the Interim. As a result, many seek to expose the machinations of the Intercessiary. It wants to bring about an end to the power of the Ancients. It may send a spy to this event, perhaps influencing someone within one of the factions.

Personal Goal

To restore the old earth religion that once idolised Angel as a goddess. To turn back the clock to an era where magic and beauty were appreciated, not scorned.

16 Princess Jack

ZONES: tYC

MANTLE: A deformed circus freak

APPEARANCE: A woman with a head that shifts through bestial shapes, never one particular animal. Always howling and hungering.

Once the earth was vibrant with the spirits of the forest, sea and sky. Before humanity slithered whimpering from the slime, the noble and savage beasts hungered but satisfied their needs. The humans brought to the world insatiable appetites and unquenchable thirsts.

It was this pestilence which drew the Profane to the world, gave them form and purpose. Meanwhile, the beasts are biding their time, waiting for the Apocalypse of Eden which will clear the taint of humanity from the world.

Today Jack is the Princess of Sorrow. Her realm is shapes and the wildness of beasts. Jack may adopt the likeness of any animal but uses a human mantle most often, although it torments her.

In order to better know the weakness of human hunger, Jack has sought out the yearning and debasement of Lust. Jack has been involved in a scandalous tryst with Bad Lily of the Profane (13). If the others found out, both would be outcast from their people, if not destroyed. Jack, though sinking to unspeakable depths, was pleased with the diversion and enjoyed the taking risks. She IS canny enough to realise that the Bad Lily is just taking advantage of her and has no real interest.

Jack is fascinated by the mythology of the Ancients. Their periods of activity seem to correspond to great disasters and calamities for the humans. Perhaps they are the harbingers of the Apocalypse of Eden.

Everyone has a different theory as to what the Ancients are and what they seek to achieve. One disturbing myth tells that the Ancients are waiting for all of the sites to belong to either the Lost or the Profane and this will bring about the end of the world. Yet another theory would say that they are waiting to see which of the two factions is the strongest and then they will crush it.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Change, Inconsistency, Forward Looking, Cunning, Masks beneath masks, Secrets, Raw Sexuality, Vigorous, Scent, Heat, Coming into Season, Musk, Bellowing

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

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Dark Dealings

Some of the Lost seek a union with the Oddfellows of Jest. The Lost are dying and need to attach their future to a dynamic and proactive force, however unpleasant they be. There are plenty of mortals who have become interested in the forces beyond in recent times. It seems foolish to conflict over scant resources when unity brings power.

Personal Goal

Jack seeks influence over the Domain, a realm which she cannot walk. She wants to found a line of mortals with Lost blood which would be her eyes and ears in the Domain. She needs to conceive these monstrous children with a mortal and may change her sex to be the mother or the father.

17 The Traveller

ZONES: t YQ

MANTLE: Charming dandy cardsharp

APPEARANCE: Mass of worms

On Halloween night each year the gunfighters meet at the crossroad in the Domain. The duel ends in mutual bloodshed, the way it has always done. It has been this way from the very beginning, since brother first slew brother. The Mantles come and go but the spirits of carnage remain - one Profane and one Lost. The Traveller is the embodiment of death. Has worn many human forms to compel their killing hand and fought the Wanderer (12) throughout all the ages of the earth.

The Traveller is a gambler. Only the bravest and most foolish play a hand against the left handed gunslinger. His cards show your dirty secrets and the possible deaths of you and your loved ones. None have ever won against the Traveller, unless he so desired it in order to increase the stakes. In the end, he always wins.

During his journeys, the Traveller has seen a number of agents of the Intercessionary. They are physically imperfect but spiritually they clean and precise like the tone of a bell. It is believed that they are the children of the Intercessionary and mortal women. Disturbingly, there seem to be more and more of them all the time.

The Traveller knows the secret ways from the Domain to the Interim. It begins with an obscure path through the skeletal towers of Junkyard. The seeker must open and old battered Westinghouse refrigerator and unlatch the secret catch at the base. This then leads to a network of dark tunnels which smell like the big cat house at the zoo. Fine bone powder crunches underfoot. It looks like an ancient powerstation, where parts of the junkyard have spilled in. At the right point in the labyrinth there is a half submerged toilet facility,

its seagrass matting rotten underfoot. It one stinking cubicle an air shaft climbs steeply upward. Strange winds echo through this ducting carrying with them the scent of ages. A rough climb will emerge back near you started - next to the church. But everything is different...

The Traveller yearns for innocence lost. He is fascinated by the lives of mortals and is entranced by their fragile beauty. They see death as is impersonable and cruel but death is as much a part of life as love.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Charming, Sly, Wicked, Hearty, Slick, Personable, Conning, Secrets

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

Dark Dealings

Some of the Lost seek a union with the Oddfellows of Jest. The Lost are dying and need to attach their future to a dynamic and proactive force. There are plenty of mortals who have become interested in the forces beyond in recent times. It seems foolish to conflict over scant resources when unity brings power.

Personal Goal

Every year on All Hallow's Eve, the Traveller and the Wanderer fight out their last gunfight. Each time they mortally wound each other and skulk away for another year. The Traveller is sick of this blind hatred and feels trapped in this bloody cycle. He wants to find a way to break it, to get off of the carousel.

18 The Gameplayer

ZONES: Y t C

GAME NOTE: Name Badge has "18 or 19"

MANTLE: A colourfully dressed chessplayer, somewhere between a fop and a harlequin. Always wears a mask. The Gameplayer twins are dressed identically.

APPEARANCE: Tightly twisted veins vigorously pumping blood and other dark fluid of life.

This Gameplayer's name is Heart. It chooses not to use this name, it considers itself to be the ONLY Gameplayer. Heart its twin Mind have always been locked in quiet, yet desperate conflict. The stakes of their game is control of the Soul. They affect a frivolous air, yet they play the most serious game of all.

The Gameplayers consider all to be part of their game - the mortals, the Lost and Profane, even the Intercessiary. They inspire madman and visionaries, leading to beautiful works of art, ideology or genocide. Sometimes these are indistinguishable.

They spend most of their time in the Interim, rarely visiting the worlds beyond. They NEVER travel to the Domain, truly gifted mortals will always be able to find them. Access to the interim is not easy but there are some who come in dreams, others use rituals or devices, some are drawn there by other creatures.

The Gameplayer is fascinated by the Ancients. Chances are, these entities are the greatest Gameplayers of all, using the Profane and the Lost as pawns in their wars against the Intercessiary. The Ancients are the past, the Intercessiary is the power to come. Perhaps they are both representations of the same force, in different eras?

The Mayfield jail, a place of great pain and consternation exists both in the Domain and the Interim. This is a good place to observe the lamentations of the wicked. Recently the Sheriff had confined a crippled girl who was immune to the evils of that place. Oddly enough, she existed both in the Domain and the Interim, she glowed like a distant comet. Very strange. She was taken by Bad Lily (13) of the Profane and not seen again.

This Gameplayer know some of the secret paths through the Interim. To gain access to the METAL PRIORY, one must pass the howling dead and perform a bloodrite on the altar of the Interim church, a sacrifice of either sex or pain. The content of the ritual does not matter but many of the Profane or the Lost like to specify something which entertains them. The air fills with industrial shrieking, the walls turn stone and metal as the sky outside ignites and a dead moon rises through this venomous conflagration.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Jolly, Distant, Secretive, Mischievous, Uncaring, Vicious, Playful

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

Seize the Lightbringer

The Intercessiary is a thorn in the side of all those from beyond the Interim. As a result, many seek to expose the machinations of the Intercessiary. It wants to bring about an end to the power of the Ancients. It may send a spy to this event, perhaps influencing someone within one of the factions.

Personal Goal

This Gameplayer hates the other Gameplayer, while maintaining an air of conniving civility. It will do anything to thwart its twin's schemes.

19T The Gameplayer

ZONES: YCt

GAME NOTE: Name Badge has "18 or 19"

MANTLE: A colourfully dressed chessplayer, somewhere between a fop and a harlequin. Always wears a mask. The Gameplayer twins are dressed identically.

APPEARANCE: Stolen breath, captured by chains of different minerals.

This Gameplayer's name is Mind. It choses not to use this name, it considers itself to be the ONLY Gameplayer. Mind its twin Heart have always been locked in quiet, yet desperate conflict. The stakes of their game is control of the Soul. They affect a frivolous air, yet they play the most serious game of all.

The Gameplayers consider all to be part of their game - the mortals, the Lost and Profane, even the Intercessiary. They inspire madman and visionaries, leading to beautiful works of art, ideology or genocide. Sometimes these are indistinguishable.

They spend most of their time in the Interim, rarely visiting the worlds beyond. They NEVER travel to the Domain, truly gifted mortals will always be able to find them. Access to the interim is not easy but there are some who come in dreams, others use rituals or devices, some are drawn there by other creatures.

The Gameplayer are fascinated by the dangerous creature called the Intercessiary. It seems that it exists in the future, but can influence the past somehow by sending strange emissions back through time, something like the radio waves from a deep pulsar.

On a recent secretive visit to the Metal Priory, the Gameplayer spied upon Jest, the Black Abbot of Mirth

(13) engaged in earnest discourse with a crippled girl who had a faint glow like a falling star. She was manacled but Jest released her (looking furtively to see if any of his brethren were around). She passed through the boundary to the Interim easily and then glided into the Domain. A strange being, make no mistake. It seems that the great Jest, also enjoys partaking in games...

This Gameplayer knows some of the secret paths through the Interim. To gain access to the CARNIVEAN, one must walk three times widdershins around the mad gods in the black corn, avoiding their fearful and frantic grasping. When one emerges from the cornfield they find themselves in the dark arcades of the Lost, filled with treasures, promises and nightmares.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Jolly, Distant, Secretive, Mischievous, Uncaring, Vicious, Playful

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

The Interimlovers

For most of their lives, the mortals live in blissful ignorance of the Interim and the worlds beyond. It is usually impossible for them to cross the veil unless they walk the secret paths or the veils weaken at special times (like tonight). Some beings create devices such as magic mirrors or puzzle boxes to make the transition easier. It would be a matter of great prestige to invent (or discover) new methods to ensnare mortals.

Personal Goal

This Gameplayer loathes the bond to his unpleasant twin and wants to break free of it, to forge an identity of his own. He would kill his brother but fears that this will bring an end to his life too.

20 Ergot

ZONES: t YQC

MANTLE: A haunted, pale junky fortune teller. Missing Persons File: St Cloud police are still looking for the daughter of industrialist KC Barnett. It was said that she fell in with a bad crowd of beatniks and drug abusers. Raids conducted on known degenerate gathering places have not yielded any success. They have begun dragging the James River.

APPEARANCE: A gnarled fungus mandrake woman, knotted and twisting. The small fibres unravel and sway lightly.

All flowers have their fairies, but the fairies are all dead. Choked on an exhaust pipe or injected too much DDT into collapsing veins. The strong insects survive the poison and eat away the inside. New growth is the first to go.

Ergot is fertility turned to fermentation. Hallucination, vision, change. The wilderness overgrows all, wildflowers in the pavement. Time destroys ego, the self is an illusion. Once all the world of plants sang with their Lost mistresses, fair and bright. Now poor Ergot is alone.

Ergot has visited the Domain many times in the past. It was she who inspired Eli Tyler (Tod(1) and Peggy(2)'s Grandfather) to build the arcane distillation device in the black cornfield. Rather than making moonshine, this device creates a thick evil brew which enables the imbiher to walk easily between the realms, and see through Mantles.

The device has a cost, it is a meat machine which requires a sacrifice of flesh. A small amount (eg a finger) will give benefits for an hour. Willy Eli built several snares on the still where he could trick his

children into, say, holding a pipe in place while the machine took their tender pieces.

She also knows that the Lost were conducting a great experiment of the Ash families (Ashly, Ashburn and Potash) of Mayfield, in order to breed a god to rival the pale Christ. An interbreeding and inbreeding program set in place under the old religion but still carried out by some adherents. These families do not marry for love, but to breed an all-father. This was a program of the Lost by which they wanted to create something capable of fighting the Intercessory. Sometime Ergot wonders why we do fight the Intercessory, perhaps mortals should be free to choose their own destiny.

Has been involved in a forbidden tryst with The Red Butcher (11) of the Profane. Ergot is defiant of the laws and customs, she sees that there is little difference between the factions aims and wonders why they play the Ancients' game at all.

CHARACTER HOOKS: Seductive, Light Headed, Vague, Fermented, Quiet, Humid, Ripe, Hot, Pliable

GOALS:

Stir the Ancient

The time has come that only the Ancient may decide who lays claim to this part of the Domain. It is dormant beneath the earth and no one knows how to rouse them. Still this must be done, whatever the consequences.

Dark Dealings

Some of the Lost seek a union with the Oddfellows of Jest. The Lost are dying and need to attach their future to a dynamic and proactive force. There are plenty of mortals who have become interested in the forces beyond in recent times. It seems foolish to conflict over scant resources when unity brings power.

Personal Goal

Ergot seeks freedom from the foolish conflicts that shape their lives. Individuals should chose their own destinies and not be bound by the machinations of others.