

# Don't Fear the Ripper

A WitchCraft/Armageddon scenario by Jason Vey

## Introduction

This scenario involves a string of ritualistic murders that lead the characters to a young Wicce who has been possessed by an ancient and vengeful spirit through a tainted Athamé (dagger used to direct mystic energies). She purchased the blade at a second-hand auction, unaware that the spirit within is beholden to the Mad God Leviathan, who seeks to widen the tear in reality that will allow the god to begin its conquest of our reality. Characters with psychic visions will be very useful in this scenario, as will characters with street contacts. Sample characters are provided at the end of the scenario, which is specifically written for these characters; however, with minor alterations it should work with any group of Mundanes, Gifted, and/or Lesser Gifted characters. Throughout, the main villain will make heavy use of the Gateway and Greater Illusion Invocations to achieve a number of unsettling effects, and even upset the laws of nature. The Chronicler should be well aware of these abilities and use them to whatever ends suit the story best.

As with most adventures, this scenario will present supplemental information and clues which will be set off for the Chronicler, for easy reference.

### Cut Scenes

*Cut scenes will appear in boxes like this and are intended to be read aloud to the Cast, to set flavor and tone of a given scene.*

### Director's Information

Text in boxes like this presents specific background and supplemental information for the Director's eyes only, to help fill in the missing pieces of the puzzle. Such boxes will give insights into events taking place behind the scenes, ways to troubleshoot scenes that the Cast approaches differently than written, rules information such as maps or special, situational rules, etc. Any game-related info that isn't specifically tied into story events will most likely be in these sidebars.

## Back Story

**Note:** This section, while too large for a sidebar, is intended for the Director's eyes only, and provides back story for the coming adventure, as well as a quick synopsis

of the Cast. All stats for Cast Members, Supporting Cast, and Adversaries can be found at the end of the adventure.

Dana Green, a 23-year-old inheritress and practicing Wicce, has been obsessed with fantasy since she was a child. And by fantasy, we're talking swords and sorcery, schools of witchcraft and wizardry, fireballs and lightning bolts, wizened old men with long gray beards, and priestesses filled with wisdom and magic. She got involved with the Wicce at the age of 14, when she entered a local New Age bookstore and was recognized as one of the Gifted by the owner.

Dana quickly became wrapped up in the trappings of the Wiccan faith, but was disenchanted with the lack of real power it afforded the majority of its members. Sure, she understood the benefits of meditation, of the feeling that one could direct energies to control her life, but she wanted something less...subtle. Where were the fireballs and lightning bolts? She began to pray to the Goddess daily for more power and became frustrated when it never came.

Unaware that the forces she was meddling with were growing darker, and more sinister, she began to seek knowledge through ancient tomes of black magic, still praying every day (now to any gods who would listen) for the power she sought, which she still believed would be used to right wrongs and avenge injustices. She became even more frustrated when at the age of 21, she inherited her grandmother's 40 million dollar estate, but the money and material power she held as a result didn't help her to gain any more magical power, though over the past 3 years she has amassed quite an occult library.

Then, one night, she had a dream in which a soothing and fatherly voice told her that it had heard her wishes and prayers, and would grant her the power she was so hungry for. She saw an auction, and at the auction a beautifully carved dagger was up for sale. Within that instrument, the vision told her, resided the power to give her all that she desired and more.

The next day, she purchased the dagger. As soon as her hands touched the instrument, she could feel the power coursing through it. Unfortunately, all she's been rewarded with thus far is recurring nightmares and psychic visions about murders taking place, in which the dagger is involved. She wakes up at night in cold sweats, and feels compelled to check on the weapon. The first night, she awoke with the dagger in hand, and grease on her arms. After that, she locked the dagger up in a case, but still awoke night after night to find it nearby, covered in blood. Finally, she had a special display case commissioned, which she placed the dagger inside and from which it could not be removed. Since then, she no

longer wakes to find the dagger nearby, but the nightmares continue.

## Dana's nightmares

Dana's recurring nightmares involve a series of ritualistic murders, the victims of which are prostitutes, strippers, and sex workers throughout the city. Unfortunately, she's been waking up to news reports of actual killings that mirror her dreams. What she is not aware is that the spirit within the dagger possesses her each night and sends her for more souls to feed Leviathan. Realization is beginning to dawn, however, and she is researching ways to free herself from the dagger's influence. Still, she is growing more powerful, and this tempts her. Her sanity is dwindling with each passing night, and at this rate it's only a matter of time before she manifests the Mark of Leviathan.

She feels fatigued, as she has been losing sleep as well as time. Further, her staff all provide alibis for her, as the dagger has the ability to cast a spell of hypnosis over her house, convincing all within that Dana spent the night quietly inside. They believe that she is under a great deal of stress due to the scrutiny of the police, and would like to find a way to help her, as she treats them very well.

The truth of the matter is that the dagger is infused with a demonic entity from a dark and hellish dimension. This demon escaped almost a century ago, and has been on a quest ever since to manifest physically, which in the past has always been thwarted. Recently, however, the demon was contacted by the Mad God Leviathan, who made a deal with it: Leviathan will guide the demon to its awakening, provided that when it arises it uses its power to tear a hole in reality which will bring forth the Mad God into our world.

The demon's name is the Ripper Demon, and its first appearance was to possess the man who became known as Jack the Ripper. The demon feeds upon souls that perish through violence and absorbs their released Essence as *Sadicas*. Three times in the past 150 years has the demon tried to ascend, and three times it has failed. Now its time has come once again. It will raise a new body for itself through the ritual sacrifice of a Chosen One, a woman with a specific birthmark that is reborn every 33 years. In the past, the demon always had to hunt to seek out the Chosen One, but this time Leviathan has guided the monster to possess the very body of the woman it needs to kill! When the Ripper has gained enough strength, it only needs to complete its awakening through the ritual suicide of Dana, and the End Times will begin. This is the Cast's plight, to stop the rising of Leviathan and the Ripper, and to save a soul in the process.

## The Cast

**Alexis Randolph:** Solitaire psychic with chronic nightmares. She has been experiencing the murders nightly, as they happen, and as a result hasn't been sleeping well.

**Jamie Connor:** Wicce owner of the *Hive Arcana*, a New Age store with attached café and rock club. She's Alexis's best friend.

**John Burke:** An ex Marine Force Recon soldier who has seen more than his share of bloodshed. He thinks of himself as an "avenging angel" who prowls the streets at night guarding those who no one else cares about. He spends time at the Arcana because he's fond of the girls and wants to look out for them. Frustrated he hasn't been able to help any of the murder victims.

**Megan Porter:** A 12-year-old street urchin who looks upon the regular crew at the Arcana as a surrogate family. In turn, they look after her, give her food, and a place to crash every so often when she needs it. Unbeknownst to them, Megan is a Pariah possessed of the Disciplines of the Flesh. Megan has contacts on the street and was very close friends with one of the recent victims.

**Father Joseph Forsythe:** A street preacher who was once a Catholic priest, but who saw too many dark creatures lurking in the shadows. A bit touched in the head, but Inspired and fond of the girls. Distrustful of Burke, who he views as dangerous and unstable.

**Daniel Morgan III:** A Rosicrucian private investigator who helps to look after Megan, and uses her for information on a regular basis. He is fond of her and would go to great lengths if she asked her to—almost a "daddy's little girl" situation.

### Cut Scene 1

*The girl hurtled through the city streets she'd walked so many nights before. He was following her, slowly, his steps echoing with an ominous ring through the alleys and avenues. She could almost feel his smug confidence, that he would catch her and that it was only a matter of time. But she wouldn't—no, couldn't—let that happen. She had to live, had to get away to tell someone, her sisters on the streets, that there was a new danger now.*

*She'd seen werewolves, vampires, children that turned into monsters...things that would make most people crazy. Most people, however, didn't live on the streets and didn't eke out a meager living selling their malnourished bodies to anyone who had an extra fifty bucks. She was probably already crazy, truth be told, her and all of her street sisters. Crazy or not, though, she'd seen them all, even had a few as clients, and survived. But this wasn't anything like a vampyre feeding off of club hopping Goth kids.*

*This was death incarnate.*

*She turned down an alley, clutching her chest. Each breath came as a battle, now, but she forced herself to keep moving. It was only fear, now, that kept her going.*

*The footsteps turned the corner behind her.*

*The alley was almost pitch black, covered with a coating of black grease that gleamed in the slivers of moonlight that pierced through. She bobbed and weaved under fences, around dumpsters, through narrow gaps into other alleys. She knew this city, even without being able to see clearly. That was why it came as such a shock when she ran face first into a brick wall and fell, dazed, to the ground.*

*He was on her before she could get up. The knife appeared from the folds of his archaic coat, a flash in the full moon. It rose above the killer's head as he straddled her and squatted down close.*

*"But wait," she whispered, "You're not even a...!"*

*The knife came down and across, neatly severing her windpipe and vocal cords. It took seconds for her to lose consciousness, minutes for her to die. The killer basked in the released Essence as it flowed out of the dead body, immersed in the ecstasy of absorbing the power held therein and wished to be like the Master. A sense of bliss and calm washed over the ripper, and a soft, fatherly voice rang out through the alley. "You've done well, Jack. Now return home, and sleep."*

*Jack stood and walked from the alley. He knew that tomorrow would bring the sleep of death once again, but the night would come soon enough, and he would serve his master again.*

*Miles away, in the wealthier sections of the city, a red-headed beauty sits bolt upright in bed, soaked with sweat, tears streaming down her face. "Not again," she sobs. "Please, Goddess, not again."*

*On the other side of town, Alexis Randolph also sits bolt upright in her bed, knowing that until the murders stop, she will continue to be plagued with these horrible dreams. She wonders for the thousandth time if psychic powers are a blessing...or a curse.*

## **Scene One**

### **Return of the Ripper**

The city is awash with rumors of the recent serial killings. In the past two weeks, six women have been systematically murdered in a form and pattern that matches that of the infamous serial killer Jack the Ripper. All of the women worked in the sex industry as prostitutes, strippers, amateur porn actresses, webcam girls and similar professions. The media, it seems, can talk of nothing else, and television, newspapers, and radio are doing an excellent job of their usual tactic of desensitizing through overexposure. The police are adamant that they are "following several leads," and that people shouldn't panic. Serial killers stick to a pattern, and those not in a high risk group shouldn't fear for their lives. Those who are in the risk group for this killer are advised to remain indoors until

the situation is resolved. The general feeling among the populace is that the police are only making token efforts because the killings are so high profile. After all, who cares about the derelicts of society?

As the scenario begins, our heroes have gathered at their favorite spot, a quirky café, club, and new age shop called the *Hive Arcana*, which is owned by Jamie Connor. As they sit around, drinking their coffee, smoking their cigarettes, and browsing the bookshelves, one of the Cast, Alexis Randolph, is probably preoccupied with her recent string of nightmares, in which she sees the murders as they happen. She hasn't been sleeping well, and it's starting to show. While she hasn't yet said anything to her friends, the time is coming soon. With a simple Perception + Notice Task, Jamie (manning the counter) will notice (probably with some concern) that Alexis has been looking very fatigued lately.

Daniel and Megan sit in a corner, quietly talking. Daniel has bought coffee and pastries for Megan, and sips a cup of chai tea for himself. John is also present, probably having his morning coffee and donuts and chatting up Jamie, and Father Joe is either out front preaching or in the café relaxing.

Allow some time for basic role playing, to get the Cast into their characters, before moving things along a bit. At some point, a waiflike girl that would probably be attractive if she were better kept wanders into the store. Her clothes are woefully out of date (80's style) and a bit threadbare, and she wears a little too much cheap makeup. She scans the store with somewhat wild eyes. Allow the Cast to react to this a bit before Megan, whose back is turned to the newcomer, sees and recognizes the girl, a prostitute by the name of Nancy. As soon as the two make eye contact, the newcomer begins to sob and collapses to the floor. She has come bearing sad news: a mutual friend of hers and Megan's, a prostitute named Elly, was the most recent victim of the Ripper just the night before. Just as she regains her composure, she grabs Megan by the shirt and insists, "You've got to do something, Megan. You've got to stop this."

Megan's most likely response will be one of feigned ignorance, to which Nancy will insist, "I've seen you, Megan. I know what you can do, and I bet they can do things, too. The cops aren't helping. The cops don't care. Please, this isn't a normal human being. There's something more to it. We all know it. We all feel it."

Upon calming her down, the Cast can question Nancy. Unfortunately, she doesn't know much in the way of specifics, and will quickly change her story about any special powers Megan has. Those in the Cast who are Gifted will certainly know already that Megan is one of them, but won't know what exactly Megan can do. If the group pools their resources, they can get a decent amount of information from various contacts and research. With successful skill use, the following information is available for the Cast to find.

- Jack the Ripper was never caught. The murders attributed to him simply ceased one night, and no one was ever able to conclusively prove who the Ripper was, or that he had indeed been captured or killed.

- The current victims don't exactly match the classic profile of the Ripper. While he did slit his victims throats, originally the Ripper was known to remove the parts that constituted a woman's nether region, and these victims don't match that profile. A visit to the crime scene or a successful Willpower + Influence roll or Intelligence + Crime roll under the right circumstances (contacts, stealthy investigation, etc.) reveals that the current victims are also marked by the eyes and heart of the victims, with surgical precision. This information is not available to the public, and should require some good role playing coupled with skill rolls to glean. Just don't be *too* stingy with it, as it could lead to further research.

- If the previous bit of information has been revealed, an Intelligence + Myth and Legend or Occult Knowledge roll reveals that many primitive cultures believe the eyes and heart to be the window and receptacle for the soul, respectively.

- In contrast to the surgical precision of the organ removal, the throats of the victims have been viciously slashed with what appears to be a *kris* dagger—a type often used in magical rituals which is marked by a wavy blade. Because of the shape of the blade, the cut leaves a different pattern than a straight-edged knife. This has led the police to believe that there are occult implications. Tracking sales of Kris blades locally over the past month (using Contacts or Intelligence + Computer Hacking) generates perhaps a dozen or more possible sales—more than a few of which are from internet sites. However, hidden among the sales records is a mention of a *kris* blade sold at local auction about a week before the first victims appeared. The auction was sponsored by a pawn shop dealer very near the group of alleys where the first murders took place. Failing their use of contacts or computer skills, an Intelligence + Notice roll at -2 allows them to recall a news report about the auction and the sale of the dagger.

- The timing of the murders seems to place them during the three nights of the full moon, and occasionally there is more than one victim a night. There's no telling how many more women will die this week if the killer isn't found and stopped.

- Once the Cast locates the potential dagger, a successful Intelligence + Notice roll at -5 (or the one required above with an additional -3 penalty applied) also reveals that the blade in question was found at the site of one of the last Jack the Ripper murders. Further research (an Intelligence + Research Task, or an Intelligence + Occult Knowledge Task) reveals that the blade vanished from Scotland Yard's evidence room soon thereafter and has periodically resurfaced in private collections ever since. The last known owner of the blade was a Necromancer in the 1970's who

sought to achieve something called "Awakening," and used the dagger as his means of sacrificing a "Chosen One." He was stopped by a group of Wicce and Rosicrucian mystics and killed. On Friday, the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of his failed Awakening will occur.

### Waldo, the Pawn Shop Owner

Talking to the owner of the pawn shop where the blade was sold can yield a great deal of information. While not the most pleasant man in the world, Waldo doesn't like the idea that an item sold from his store may be implicated in a killing spree. It's bad for business, and he's more than willing to help out. As such, the Cast gains a +2 on any social Tasks to get information out of Waldo. He has a photographic inventory of all the items sold at the auction, and can provide a picture of the dagger, as well as information on the buyer.

"The chick who bought it? Yeah, I remember her. Pretty girl, red hair, green eyes, but one o' them new age freaks, all into candles and incense, and prob'ly drugs, too. No offense, mind ya. But you know the ones I mean, too much money to know what to do with, so they start playin' pretend with the boogie boogie. Personally, I don't like all that ghosts and goblins crap. If I'd'a known that knife was some sort of magic symbol I never woulda bought it. Why, just the other day I turned away a guy tryin' ta sell a old Ouija [he pronounces it "weejee"] board. But ain't none o' my business, I figure. A customer's a customer, weird or not, and if that thing was full of ghosts or somethin', best I got rid of it, right?"

He's unconcerned overall about the murders, and washes his hands of the whole thing, being firmly convinced that he is not at all responsible for what someone does with anything he sells them. After the money changes hands, it's none of his concern. He's just running a business and nothing can convince him otherwise. Persistent efforts may find the characters tossed out on the street. On the other hand, with a proper Willpower + Questioning, Willpower + Fast Talk, or Willpower + Seduction roll, he can be persuaded to turn over the name and address of the woman, one Dana Green.

The dagger itself (from the photo Waldo provides) is a silver blade stretching from a bronze handle, ornately carved into the shape of what appears to be a native of some sort (further research reveals that this "native" is actually an Aztec Indian shaman.) There is very little that is remarkable about it; it appears to be a standard ceremonial dagger, probably designed as an athamé.

Following their talk with Waldo, the characters have enough information to begin their search for the killer, and should be fairly convinced that these killings are not the work of a mortal psychopath. There's something darker, more sinister, and probably magical going on here.

## Cut Scene 2

*She steps outside, into a beautiful Romanesque garden. She is sad and frustrated. No one in the world understands her; there's no reason left to go on. Everything has fallen apart. There's nothing left, no raison d'être. She may as well just end it here.*

*She sits upon the stairs and gazes out over the garden. The perfume of lilac soothes her senses, serving only to convince her that peace lies on the horizon. She turns her gaze to the sky, looking at the cold, clear night stars twinkling above. The moon is bright and full, a witch's moon. There's power there, untapped power...and peace.*

*She's afraid of the future.*

*A sudden breeze penetrates the bedroom behind her. The curtains blow, the candles flicker and die, leaving only the silver glow of the moonlight as illumination. And suddenly, he is there, face obscured as always beneath a wide-brimmed top hat and high-collared cape. He leans nonchalant upon his silver headed walking stick and she gets the impression that he is smiling at her. In that moment, all of her fear and resignation leave her. She leaps to her feet and runs to him. He catches her up in his arms and holds her close, leaning to whisper in her ear.*

*"Not yet, my dear," he says. "Your purpose is not yet served."*

*"But why, my love? Of all the women in the world, why have you chosen me?"*

*"Destiny, love. You are destined to be mine, forever."*

*"And I want nothing else."*

*"Then have no fear, my bride. Have no fear."*

*"I cannot fear you. I never could."*

*She clutches him tightly. Slowly, his left arm, obscured until now beneath his cape, raises high into the air, a Kris bladed dagger held tightly in his grasp. As she holds him, unaware, the dagger plunges down once, twice, a third time. Blood sprays the scene, which is obscured through a crimson haze. Her lifeless body slumps to the floor, the dagger embedded in her heart. He throws his arms to the air and cries, "AT LAST! I LIVE AGAIN!"*

*She awakens, screaming, in a cold sweat. Her bedroom window is open, the cold night breeze blowing her curtains about her. The man who has been as a father to her rushes in, soothing her, tucking the blankets about her and laying her back to bed. "It's all a dream, lass. All a dream."*

*Finally, sleep takes her again. He stands, closes the window, casts one last worried look at her, and leaves her to a fitful slumber.*

*Across town, Alexis's eyes pop open and she stares into the pitch black night.*

## Scene Two

### The Ripper Strikes Back

The Cast's prime suspect should now be Dana Green. At the very least, they are going to want to talk to her. This won't be an easy task to accomplish surreptitiously, since the police have been scrutinizing every minute of her life since the murders began—the Cast aren't the only ones following up on this particular lead.

Locating Dana is easy enough; they have her address and her house is located on Millionaire's Lane. While not technically a mansion, it's lavish nonetheless, two storeys high, with five bedrooms, three bathrooms, a library, study, living room, dining room, large kitchen, office den, and game room, and a courtyard and garden in back.

Perception + Notice Tasks reveal that the house is being staked out by two officers in an unmarked Chevy sedan across the street. Like it or not, our heroes have just implicated themselves in the investigation. What role, if any, this plays in the scenario is up to the Director. At very least, however, it makes the Cast realize that they're in and not going back now.

Upon ringing the bell, the Cast is greeted by Dana's butler, a middle-aged Irishman named Peter who is very protective of Dana. He is distressed about the undue amounts of attention inflicted upon his mistress and at first is not willing to let the Cast see her. Some fast talking may be necessary to get past him, or at least keep him at the door for a few minutes, until they catch their first glimpse of Dana. She walks into the foyer, looking disheveled and exhausted, but still quite beautiful, and asks, "What is it, Peter? More Police? I've already told them everything I know." Her voice is strained, but musical. Alexis, with a successful Intelligence + Notice Task, may be shocked to learn that this is the woman she dreamed about last night—or more accurately, whose dream she apparently *shared*.

Regardless, how Peter answers Dana depends upon the Cast's presentation of themselves. If they have managed to convince him that they are police, he will answer in the affirmative, and probably demand that they come back if and when they're prepared to present legal warrants. If, on the other hand, they are not posing as police, he will dismiss them as curiosity seekers, private investigators, or some other such epithet. At this point, the characters have a chance to (quickly) interact with Dana, but they need to convince her quickly that they're here to help and not to harm or harass her. She's not in the mood for games.

Their best bet is to make mention of their special abilities, or even to channel Essence for some purpose. Dana is Gifted, and as such will sense the same quality in others. Once she realizes that her visitors are Gifted, she will not hesitate to invite them into her home, believing that perhaps others like her can help her with her

problems. The moment she detects the Gift Quality, she will step up to the door, stare intently at the Cast for a moment, then instruct Peter to let them in.

Any conversation the Cast has with Dana will be convincing. As far as the woman is concerned, and as far as she knows and honestly believes, she has done nothing wrong. She hasn't left the house, and her staff can corroborate this. She has been having horrible nightmares, but she doesn't always remember the details of them. Many are about the murders that are happening around the city, but others are darker and more deeply buried. Even prompting by Alexis won't bring the details forth; they're too deeply buried in her subconscious. All she remembers is blood, a man in archaic evening clothes, and mixed feelings of peace and of horror. She readily admits to purchasing the dagger, and to her status as a solitary practitioner (she doesn't even know about the Covenants). She has an extensive occult library, and will happily give the Cast a tour of it. The dagger itself is hermetically sealed inside a glass display case inside the library. It doesn't look like there's any way the knife could come out of the case without shattering the glass, which Dana claims is bulletproof (characters with appropriate skills can confirm that it is). She informs the Cast that the knife has been locked inside the case for the past month.

If (when) the Cast inquires as to why it has been sealed within the case, her answer is honest and forthright. "I told the police it was to protect the value of the knife, and that's part of it. Unfortunately, it's not the whole truth, which I doubt they'd believe anyway. You're Gifted, though. You know there are things out there that conventional science just can't explain." She takes a deep breath before continuing, "There's just something about this knife. It's something magical, dark, and just wrong. I didn't feel it at first. At first I only felt the raw power in it. Then I started having the nightmares, and this knife was there, in all of them. The first three nights, I woke up in a cold sweat, and the knife was there beside me on the bed. I tried to destroy it, but it just wouldn't break, no matter what I did. Finally, I had this display case commissioned and the knife sealed inside. It didn't stop the nightmares, but at least the damn thing stays put, now."

Her reasons for keeping the knife are equally logical. "The thing is evil. What can I do, sell it to someone who might use it for evil purposes? I'm not going to stand here and deny that the knife is connected to the killings; in fact, I'm sure it is. But you have to believe me. I didn't kill anyone, I swear it." She's almost in tears by this point. Any skills, spells, or powers the Cast use to sense her motivation reveal that she is entirely sincere, and terrified, though one or two details might be eluding her.

Dana is aware that the police are watching her house, and for that reason alone doesn't think it's a good idea for the Cast to stick around long (why make themselves accomplices in whatever the police decide to charge her with?), but she is willing to allow one or two of them to stay

at the mansion in order to research using her collection, or even to keep an eye on the dagger to see if they can figure out what's going on. It should be noted that Dana's collection may provide information and resources that Jamie's library does not.

## Staying with Dana

Characters who do stay in the house that evening will miss the assault by the zombies and werewolves described in the next section, but may have a chance to catch a clue into what's going on. However, doing so requires overcoming the Dagger's Affect the Psyche and Greater Illusion Invocation effects. Cast members staying at Dana's must succeed at a simple Willpower Task against the dagger's Invocation Task (d10 + Willpower of 5 + Affect the Psyche or Greater Illusion 4). Cast Members who fail the roll remain convinced that Dana spent the entire night peacefully asleep in her bedroom, and the dagger remained safely tucked away in its case. They may even have memories of checking up on Dana a few times throughout the night, just to make certain everything remained kosher. For story purposes, all of Dana's staff, and the police staking out her house fail this roll automatically.

However, Cast Members that succeed in overcoming at least one of the two effects experience a strange, dreamlike sequence of events. They will find that they are trapped as spectators in the events, and are unable to act to alter what happens, like prisoners dragged along against their will. Their experience begins around midnight, when a figure in archaic evening clothes enters the library and magically removes the dagger from the case, seemingly reaching through a tear in reality to pull the knife forth (this is an advanced effect of the Gateway Invocation). The figure tucks the dagger away, hefts his silver-headed cane, and heads out into the night, whistling an old English folk tune. The Cast Member is compelled to follow.

The streets are dark and silent. There aren't any prostitutes out, even in the areas of the city normally crawling with them. The figure skulks about the shadows for a time, then curses in a very masculine voice. He then turns and heads for a local strip club, where he proceeds to seduce and leave with a stripper (with a little help from Affect the Psyche). He guides the stripper into a dark alley, where he proceeds to brutally murder the young woman. Any attempts to stop the killing result in the Cast Member unable to move or interfere, except to cry out. After the murder, a fatherly voice fills the area: "You have done well, Jack. Now go home, and sleep it off. Tomorrow is Dana's final night."

The killer removes his hat and runs his fingers through his hair, then turns to the Cast Member and screams in a high-pitched, female voice, then winks and walks away. The Cast Member awakens with fuzzy memories of what happened. He or she is still in the alley,

standing over a dead body. The character's first clear moment is that of a gun in his or her face and a cop growling, "Don't move, asshole." The character is arrested and taken downtown for questioning. However, the evidence linking him/her to the crime is nonexistent, and they can only hold the Cast Member overnight before having to release him/her.

### The Truth

The figure in the black evening clothes was indeed Dana Green, possessed by the spirit within the dagger. She sits up around midnight, goes to her wardrobe and opens a secret panel in back with houses the Ripper's clothes. She dresses, and then performs an Invocation to summon the beasts in the next section to deal decisively with the meddling Cast.

Then she walks to the display case and steals the dagger, then proceeds upon the course described above. At first any Cast Member who sees her won't be able to remember the face of the Ripper, though they will be aware that they saw the killer's face last night. This comes at a dramatic moment, preferably shortly after the rest of the Cast picks up the arrested character, they'll remember that it was Dana, speaking with a hollow, echoing male voice, and her green eyes glowing with a black light.

After killing the stripper, Dana returns home, puts the dagger back in its case, undresses, cleans up, and goes back to bed, where she wakes up ten minutes later, soaked in sweat, from another "nightmare."

### Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch...

With the information and clues they've already put together, the Cast can hit Jamie's library (or Dana's) and discover the following information with Perception + Research rolls. Some of what follows may also be provided by Daniel's Rosicrucian contacts, if he so thinks to call them for help. This is often best handled with the Cast Member making a phone call, and the contacts informing him that they will be in touch when they have the information. Now would be a dramatically appropriate time for that call back. If he has not thought to check with the Rosicrucians, An Intelligence + Occult Knowledge check could spark a vague familiarity in Daniel's mind about the Ripper, which motivates him to get in touch with his brethren.

- The Ripper is an ancient demon who feeds on the souls of murdered women. For centuries it has traveled various worlds, bringing death and mayhem to everywhere it visits. It exists using a dark form of Essence known as Sadicas, which is Essence that is colored by the pain and suffering of those tortured or caused to suffer intensely (hence its modus operandi). Alternately, another look into Jack the Ripper's history using Dana's library leads to this link about the Ripper demon.

- An Awakening rite is a ritual in which a demon possesses a human being, then gathers unto itself enough souls to manifest physically as an almost godlike creature. This Awakening is completed by the ritual sacrifice of a Chosen One, who bears a specific birthmark on her hip, resembling a circle with two prongs arcing off of it at the top and bottom. When the Chosen One dies, the human host's body twists and warps into the manifestation of the demon, and the human host is no more. Successful Awakenings are rare, and generally not healthy for the surrounding populace.

- The Ripper demon has the ability to summon undead when its foothold on a dimension is so strong that it is nearly ready to complete its Awakening.

- The Gateway Invocation is contained in both Jamie and Dana's libraries.

Characters who return home for the evening eventually find themselves in an unpleasant situation. The Ripper doesn't like the Cast meddling in its plans and has decided to deal decisively with them. Through Dana, it summons a small horde of Arisen and Werewolves to deal with the Cast decisively. The attack isn't subtle; they simply crash through the windows and doors of anywhere the Cast might be congregating (likely, the Hive Arcana for more research) and attack. Generally speaking, there will be one Arisen for each Cast Member, more for John. Chroniclers should feel free to add more attackers if the first batch are dropping too easily, or adjust stats downward if they're too tough.

There are three werewolves involved in the assault; they're going to be the real challenge, since few among the cast will have silver bullets, though it's not out of the question for Jamie to have silver knives for sale. The werewolves are under psychic control and are acting against their will, so they suffer a -2 penalty to all actions in the combat. Their movement is clumsy and sluggish as well. Any who suffer more than half their Life Points in damage will snap out of the trance, revert to human form, and look around, confused. Then they'll simply turn and run.

The Arisen, on the other hand, are a different story entirely. They fight to the end, and before the last one falls, it croaks out in a raspy, dry voice, "None of this matters! Another soul has been claimed, and the Ripper grows closer to Awakening! When he finally manifests in this world, you will all burn! The Chosen One is claimed and she has been called, and her death on the anniversary will mean his salvation! You will all burn!"

If this doesn't begin to put things together for the Cast, a recollection the next day of Dana's face in that alley, glowing green eyes and male voice and all, certainly will.

## Troubleshooting

It is possible that all or none of the Cast stay with Dana in the evening. There are several ways to handle this issue. If the entire Cast remains with Dana, the fight with the Henchmen can take place in the alley immediately after the murder and before the police show up. Alternately, this encounter can be skipped over, and the events of the next section expedited to cover Dana's capture. If none of the Cast remain with Dana, or if all fall under the hypnotic spell of the dagger, the murder can be handled via another cut scene (a nightmare experienced by Alexis is most likely). The characters can get details from Dana or Alexis via the nightmares, or from investigation similar to that in Scene 1.

The Cast may decide to rush to Dana's house in the middle of the night following the Arisen / Werewolf attack. If this is so, then every Cast Member arriving on Dana's property must make the Resisted Task against the Invocation effect of the dagger as well; those that succeed will have a dreamlike experience of the Ripper, similar to the one described above, but this time involving the murder of the two police staking out the house. They will wake up at home in their own beds the next morning. Those that fail simply wake up at home with no recollection of anything after heading to Dana's house.

The real trick here is the dissemination of information to the Cast. What information do you give them and when? There's no easy answer to that, save to be careful not to give too much or too little at any given point. They have to keep on the trail of the murders, gaining enough info to give them new leads, but not enough to answer all their questions until the end. The addition of Dana's library to the mix is a great excuse to give information that wasn't gleaned earlier, as are Daniel's Rosicrucian contacts. A little fast thinking on your part may be required, however, to keep things from getting too far out of hand.

## Cut Scene 3

*The final sacrifice lays upon the table. She squirms, kicks, screams, begs, and threatens, all to no avail. The killer stands over her, looks to the black candles to his right and left. He picks up a knife, traces it across the victim's chest, leaving a thin line of blood in its wake. He can smell the fear upon her, his last victim.*

*Midnight strikes; it is time.*

*The killer shrugs off his cloak to stand naked before the victim. He...is a she.*

*It matters not. Gender means nothing to the Ripper. Soon it shall rise; the body it inhabits is meaningless. It*

*will be transformed into a higher being.*

*The knife slashes across the girl's throat, cutting her scream off in a sharp gurgling sound. The blade flashes three times and the eyes and heart come out. The creature that was once human devours them in wonton bloodlust.*

*The blade flashes a fourth time as the killer plunges it down into her own chest. She screams in agony and in ecstasy as she doubles over. Her skin turns a sickly green and scales erupt from beneath it. Spikes plunge through her back as her tailbone extends into a sharp, thrashing appendage. She grows to ten feet in height.*

*The process takes an eternity of seconds during which she cannot act.*

*Finally, the Ripper rises, throws its bladelike fingers high into the air and cries out in victory. The world will be torn asunder.*

\*\*\*

*Alexis awakens with a scream of utter horror. Across town, Dana Green also sits bolt upright in bed, screaming herself hoarse. Again, Peter rushes into the room. "Lassie! Are ye all right?"*

*"I remember!" Dana cries. "I remember everything, and I know!"*

*"Know what, lassie?"*

*"It's begun, Peter. His time is at hand, and Goddess help me, I'm the vessel!"*

## Scene Three

### Rise of the Ripper

By the next morning, only one or two pieces are left in the puzzle, and the Cast has a slew of problems to deal with. At least one of their number may need bailed out of jail, or at very least a ride home. The police, fortunately, have only circumstantial evidence with which to hold the Cast Member(s), and several eyewitnesses at the club can describe the man who left with the stripper, a man who doesn't match the Cast Member's description, but who does correspond with a description the CM(s) can give the police regarding the murderer. Combined with the lack of hard evidence, fingerprints, and DNA samples from the Cast Member(s) on the body, there's little choice but to set them free. Any weapons the CM(s) possessed legally (with proper permits) are returned; others are confiscated and the appropriate fines levied. In any case, Daniel has enough clout and money to arrange for the release of any incarcerated Cast Members.

It gets worse. The Cast receives an early phone call from a frantic Dana. She's rambling and almost incoherent, going on about the hour approaching, the Awakening being near, the souls all gathered, and her



inability to fight it alone. She begs them to come to her house, insisting that she's put together some new information, but that the phone isn't secure, and she can't talk like this...then hangs up on them.

Heading over to Dana's house reveals a scene straight out of a horror film. Her entire block is still and unnaturally quiet, the result of a Greater Illusion effect to dampen the sound in the surrounding area. Communication is possible, but any loud noises are dampened to the level of quiet conversation. Even yelling does not break the sound barrier; while a screaming Cast Member will hear himself scream, others will still only hear his voice at a moderate volume. There is a lingering amount of power in the area, a sickening combination of Essence, Sadicas, and Taint that requires all Gifted Cast Members to pass a Fear Test at -4 or suffer a -2 penalty to all actions while in the area.

### Director's Information

The Ripper has now gained control of Dana and cast the Illusion spell over the block. While on first appearance this spells trouble, it was done so that the violence that took place here wouldn't draw undue attention. It means that open gunplay is not out of the question in this situation; the noise will not attract the police.

The car with the two police officers has been removed, again courtesy of the Ripper's Gateway Invocation, leaving no evidence of the murders behind.

The unmarked Chevy and its two police stakeout officers are gone; what happened to them is anyone's guess. The door to Dana's house hangs from one hinge, swinging back and forth with a quiet but ominous creak. The house inside is trashed; tables overturned, carpets torn and bunched up, holes in the walls. The windows are shattered. The whole place looks like a war zone.

There are traces of blood throughout the house. In the kitchen, the Cast finds the cook, brutally murdered and parts of her body devoured (Fear Checks at a -2 may be in order). One of the maids is likewise found murdered in the living room, and another in the Lounge. In the Library, the glass case that held the dagger is undamaged, but empty. There are no visible means by which the knife could've been extracted (though spell research may have already revealed the existence of the Gateway Invocation). Peter and Dana are nowhere downstairs, and calling out doesn't yield any useful results (remember that sound dampening effect). However, hidden among the stack of opened books on the table in the Library is a small notebook with handwritten notes. Unless the Cast actively searches the table or the room (Perception + Notice at -2), these notes won't be immediately noticeable, though Peter will reveal their existence later on. The following information is here:

- The Ripper needs only one more soul before the Chosen One can be sacrificed. Dana has now realized that she possesses the birthmark, and that she is the Chosen One.

- The ritual sacrifice of the Chosen One must be performed at midnight, at a major place of power. Dana suspects that the most likely place is a spot in a local public park that was constructed on the ruins of a dark temple in the 1800's, where a cult dedicated to the Mad God Leviathan was said to gather in worship. It is a center of mystical convergence and the focal point for many supernatural activities. In the passage is a sketch of the Mad God's mark, which matches the birthmark of the Ripper's Chosen One!

- Dana fears that if the ritual is completed, it will tear a small hole in reality that will allow Leviathan to begin the first stages of manifesting itself on the Earth. It could begin the Reckoning.

- Dana has come to realize that the Ripper is inside her, attempting through the dagger to possess her. She feels that an exorcism is the only way to save her soul and defeat the Ripper. A successful exorcism would allow the dagger to be destroyed and end the entire problem. However, it also means that the Ripper's job is easier, for all it has to do is force her to commit suicide at midnight. If Dana can be exorcised, the demon will be banished for a millennium. If she dies before the exorcism is complete, the killings will only be put off for another 33 years.

- Only a character who gets *five success levels* on a Perception + Notice Task will notice that Dana has misinterpreted the above information. Circled in one of the books is a passage which notes that once the final victim dies, the Ripper may kill the Chosen One at any time *after midnight* in order to arise.

- If Dana dies, and the Ripper arises, its weakness is the dagger that served as its vessel for so long. While it is vulnerable somewhat to normal attacks, the dagger is the most potent weapon available for battling the monster.

- The last entry in the notes reads, "I can't fight much longer. The dagger calls me. I have to get away from these notes before the Ripper wakes up within me and realizes I've left these clues behind. Have to hide the notes and warn Peter."

Searching upstairs, the Cast can discover a half-alive and savagely beaten Peter partially beneath the bed in the master bedroom. With a Difficult (-3) Perception + Notice roll, his quiet moans can be heard when the Cast enters the room. Dana's wardrobe is smashed, and a simple Perception Test reveals the secret compartment in the back, just large enough for a single suit of clothing. The compartment is now empty.

Throughout the house, hiding in various rooms, are Arisen left behind by the Ripper to take care of the interlopers (the Cast). All are lying in wait to ambush the

Cast at the right moment. There should be three to four Arisen per Cast Member, but again, tailor the number and ease of battle to the individual Cast. This should be a tough battle, but is designed to keep the Cast here and engaged, rather than having them turning to run.

Peter, for his part, has information to share. Anyone who leans down to check on him will find that the old Irishman is still conscious. He grabs for whoever is closest and coughs, "Something not of this world came upon her...no is inside of her! It took her, dressed in its own clothes, and left. I tried to stop it, to save her, but she...it...called those demonic things upon us!"

"She knew it was coming. She told me it was coming. Before it took her, she told me that tonight's the night, and that she's the vessel. She said you could help her. Please. She's like a daughter t'me. She said midnight. That's hours away. Said she left notes in the Library."

He then gurgles, coughs, and falls unconscious. Cast Members with medical skill can make an Intelligence + First Aid or Medicine check to note that his injuries are not life threatening and that if made comfortable he will survive, though he'll need to be watched over for a few hours to ensure that he stays stable. The Cast is free to call an ambulance, but will most certainly be mired with police questions for hours at least, and possibly charged and implicated in the crimes if they do so. A simple Intelligence Test should make the Cast aware of the problems inherent with calling the police or an ambulance at this time. In fact, their best bet is to make the house look as presentable as possible so as not to draw undue attention to the mess. This will take several hours as well, but will most likely be the Cast's best bet to actually make it in time to stop the ritual. In the end, they've got a full day's work ahead of them preparing to stop the ritual and cleaning up the mess so as not to have police hot on their trail when they do. In the end, Father Joe will be the one to perform the exorcism, but the rest of the Cast must find a way to restrain Dana while it goes on, and fight off the undead retainers she will no doubt have nearby.

## Scene Four

### The Demon Rising

**Note:** *There is no Cut Scene for Scene 4*

This is your straightforward climactic battle scene, where the heroes must rush to stop the evil from rising and beginning the events of *Armageddon* four years too early. By now, the Cast should have all the pieces to the puzzle. They can go to the ritual site at any time, plan, and prepare. As midnight approaches, however, there will be no sign of Dana, her final victim, or the Ripper. This suspense should be carried on as much as possible.

At 11:50, and hopefully just as the cast is about to leave, an inky black portal appears right at the center of the park, and Dana steps forth with a group of 6 Arisen

retainers, 2 werewolves, and a Sheol. Dana's hair has turned jet black, her eyes glow an unearthly green color, and dark veins snake their way up her face. On her forehead, a faint mark is beginning to appear, a circle with two prongs coming off of it...the Mark of Leviathan. She tosses the bound, unconscious, naked body of a blonde woman at her feet. This, then, would be the last victim.

The very instant the Cast makes their presence known (a must if they expect to exorcise the demon), the monsters attack, and Dana plunges her knife into the chest of the final victim. Barring an absolutely ingenious plan, there's no way the Cast is going to save the girl. Dana has to be their primary concern. They have to get through the press of monsters, restrain the possessed witch, and perform the Exorcism. On the up side, their meddling has forced the demon to call upon a great many powerful magicks, and its Sadicas pool is dwindled. It cannot afford to call upon its own Metaphysics, lest the ritual fail. Optionally, if the Cast has too easy of a time with the existing monsters, the Ripper can call forth from the Gate a Lesser Shaitan, a horrific tentacled monster from Leviathan's Tainted universe, to do battle with the Cast. It can also continue to call forth more Arisen as needed.

Unless they scored the requisite five success levels in scene 3, the information the Cast has is mistaken in one important area: Dana does not have to die exactly at Midnight. Rather, the final victim had to be killed any time *before* midnight, and the Chosen One sacrificed at or *any time after* midnight. Once that girl dies, the Ripper's primary goal is to kill Dana, so the Cast will have their hands full. So long as the demon is still in human form, however, it is vulnerable to all the types of attacks a human is and suffers full damage type modifiers for any attacks against it. Alas, if the Cast kills Dana, it gets worse.

If Dana manages to kill herself, or the Cast kills her, the Ripper Demon arises. Its transformation is exactly as described in the dream sequence from Scene 3. This transformation takes two rounds, during which the Demon is helpless to attack (though it can still defend clumsily, -2 to defensive actions). The Cast can all do their worst in those two rounds. Their best bet is to attack it with the dagger, which does *five times* normal damage against the demon, and bypasses its natural armor. Otherwise, the demon does not suffer multipliers for damage type, and is immune to attacking specific parts of the body (a head shot does the same thing as a body shot to it). Even with its pool of Sadicas depleted, if the demon rises, it's likely that some of the Cast won't survive the encounter.

### Denouement

At the end of the battle, bodies are littered about the scene, and Dana is either saved, or the corpse of the Ripper lays at their feet. Suddenly, a whirlwind whips about the place, swallowing up all the bodies. A disgusting sucking sound erupts from the whirlwind, and

lightning arcs about it. At last, a soft voice floats forth. What it says depends upon the outcome of the battle.

### If Dana survives:

“You think you’ve won? We haven’t even begun, my pets. You may have won the day, and saved one woman’s soul, but she has delivered so many unto me. Mark my words, my friends, one day we shall yet meet again, and these meager victories cannot hope to keep me from my final destiny.”

What’s more, the Cast has gained a valuable ally. Dana’s library is impressive, and she now considers all the Cast friends and compatriots, and wishes to join them in their battle against the darkness.

### If Dana dies:

The Cast is tormented by the sounds of her agonized screams from within the whirlwind. Finally, that terrible,

familiar voice speaks to them again. “Oh, she tastes so sweet! My destiny is at hand, and you’ve given it to me! You’re fools if you think you can stop me! In the end, I shall devour the world!”

The next day, news reports reach the Cast that some time during the night, everyone in Munich, Germany died, except for one man, Johann Goering, who has proclaimed himself the Apostle of the True God, Leviathan. In a few short months, he will have conquered all of Germany, most of Europe, and will be on his way to a global Empire. The End Times have begun.

On a more mundane front, Peter blames the Cast for Dana’s death and looks upon them all with thinly disguised animosity. As the sole named heir to her fortune, Peter now has the resources to become a serious thorn in their side.

## Supporting Cast and Adversaries

### Dana Green, Solitaire

Str 2 Int 4

Dex 2 Per 3

Con 3 Will 2

Life Points 30

Endurance Points 25

Essence Pool 31

**Qualities/Drawbacks:** Essence Channeling 2, Gift, Increased Essence 3, Occult Library (+2 to all research Tasks), Resources 4, Recurring Nightmares, Secret, Adversary (Police)

**Skills:** Hand Weapon (Knife) 2, Humanities (Ancient History) 2, Myth and Legend (Wiccan) 4, Occult Knowledge 2, Research/Investigation 4

**Metaphysics:** Blessing 2, Communion 2, Spirit Mastery 1

### Dana Green, Possessed by the Ripper

Str 7 Int 4

Dex 6 Per 3

Con 5 Will 5

Life Points 73

Endurance Points 56

Sadicas Pool: 80

**Qualities/Drawbacks:** Essence Channeling 10, Gift, Increased Essence 10, Resources 4, Sadicas, Secret, Adversary (Cast and Police), Delusions of Grandeur, Obsession (Awakening)

**Skills:** Hand Weapon (Knife) 5, Humanities (History) 5, Medicine 3, Occult Knowledge 5, Research/Investigation 4

**Metaphysics:** Create Zombie 5, Gateway 6, Lesser Curse 3, Lesser Illusion 5, Greater Illusion 5

### Arisen (Zombies)

Str 3 Int 1

Dex 3 Per 2

Con 2 Will 2

Life Points: 60

Endurance Points: n/a

**Essence:** 0 (Arisen feel Tainted to the Gifted)

**Skills:** Brawling 1, Dodge 1, Guns 1, Hand Weapon (club) 1, Hand Weapon (knife) 1

**Powers:** Increased LP’s, but die when reduced to zero rather than -10.

**Notes:** Some Arisen attack with clubs (D4xStr bash), others with knives (D4xStr Slash), still others with guns (D6x4 bullet). However, they are not master strategists, and are generally of the “attack until you die” mentality.

### Ferals (Werewolves) (Beast Form)

Str 6 Int 2

Dex 7 Per 4

Con 5 Will 3

Life Points: 105

Endurance Points: 47

Essence Pool: 28

**Qualities/Drawbacks:** Feral, Wolf Shape, Fast Reaction Time, Situational Awareness, Cruel 1, Code of Honor 1

**Skills:** Brawling 2, Notice 4

**Special Abilities:** AV 1, Claws and Bite D4x6 (12) slashing, Feral’s Curse (if victims are reduced to -10 Life Points, they must pass a Simple Willpower Test, or be turned), Regenerate 5 LP’s/Turn, Smell Essence, See spirits, Silver weapons increase damage modifier by 1, but are -3 from base damage.

**Sheol****Str 5 Int 3****Dex 4 Per 5****Con 6 Will 3****Life Points: 162****Endurance Points: n/a****Taint Points: 56****Armor Value: 10****Qualities/Drawbacks:** Acute Senses (sight), Cruel 3, Fast Reaction Time, Situational Awareness**Skills:** Brawling 4, Disguise 3, Driving (auto) 2, Guns (handgun) 4, Guns (shotgun) 4, Hand Weapon (club) 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 4, Surveillance 4**Special Powers:** Create Shadows (sphere of darkness 1 yard/Taint point spent; everyone but the sheol is -3 to all combat tasks in the dark), Regenerate 2 LP's/Taint Point spent, only dies when LP's and Taint pool reach -30, Taint Manipulation (can spend as much Taint as it wants to, at any given time)**Damage:** Handgun D6x4(12) bullet, Shotgun D6x5(15) and +2 to hit bullet, Club D6x5(15) bash**Shaitan****Str 6 Int 1****Dex 4 Per 2****Con 5 Will 4****Life Points: 130****Endurance Points: n/a****Taint: 60****Armor Value: 5****Skills:** All attacks treated as Skill level 3**Special Powers:** Hideous appearance (tentacled horror) requires a Fear Test at -2, Damage Resistant (no damage type modifiers), Taint attack (D4 damage per Taint point; range 10/50/150/600/1000 and ignores armor, those struck suffer -2 to all actions the next round), Raise Dead (create up to 40 Arisen per round, at a cost of 2 Taint per Arisen, provided enough bodies are available).**Damage:** Clawed tentacles D6x6(18) slash, Teeth D4x5(10) slash, or by Taint attack.**Ripper Demon****Str 10 Int 5****Dex 10 Per 5****Con 10 Will 6****Life Points 150****Endurance Points 83****Sadicas Pool: 96/10 (see notes)****Qualities/Drawbacks:** Essence Channeling 10, Gift, Increased Essence 10, Increased Life Points, Sadicas, Cruelty (Severe), Zealot**Skills:** Martial Arts 5, Humanities (History) 5, Medicine 3, Occult Knowledge 5, Research/Investigation 4**Metaphysics:** Create Zombie 5, Gateway 6, Lesser Curse 3, Lesser Illusion 5, Greater Illusion 5**Powers/attacks:** Natural Armor AV D10(5)+5, Claws D6(3) x Strength, Horns D4(2) x Strength**Notes:** The Ripper needs to reserve 10 Sadicas to facilitate its rise, so it must reserve at least that many points. Creating Zombies costs 6 Sadicas per zombie created.

## **Alexis Randolph**

Gifted Psychic (College Student)  
Association: Solitaire

### **Attributes:**

Strength: 3                      Intelligence: 3  
Dexterity: 3                    Perception: 3  
Constitution: 4                Willpower: 4

Life Points: 50                Endurance Points: 38  
Essence Pool: 20             Speed: 14

### **Qualities:**

Attractiveness (1) (+1 to social tasks)  
Fast Reaction Time (2)  
The Gift (5)  
Hard to Kill (4) (+4 to Survival Tests)  
Nerves of Steel (3) (+4 vs. Fear Tests)

### **Drawbacks:**

Emotional Problems (Depression) (2)  
Emotional Problems (Fear of Rejection) (1)  
Cruel (1) (never directed at friends)  
Honorable (2)  
Minority (African American) (1)  
Recurring Nightmares (1)  
Recklessness (2)

### **Skills:**

Beautician 4  
Computers 3  
Dodge 2  
Driving (Cars) 2  
Brawling 3  
Humanities (History) 4  
Notice 3  
Research/Investigation 4  
Singing 3  
Streetwise 3

### **Portrait:**



**Gear:** 2000 Dodge Stratus, laptop computer, cell phone

### **Background:**

Alexis is arguably the most complicated member of the Hive Arcana's social circle. She was given up for adoption at birth and has no idea who her birth parents are. She spent most of her early years in group and foster homes, and the constant bouncing from one place to the next had its effect on her emotionally. She was in trouble a lot throughout her early teenage years, until finally in a moment of clarity she decided to put her life together. At the age of 16, she became emancipated and attended beauty school, earning a certificate in hair styling and makeup. She currently works as a beautician to put herself through college, pursuing a degree in history. Her psychic powers came to light only a few years ago, and she hasn't quite gotten a handle on dealing with them, yet...particularly her involuntary visions, which leave her with recurring nightmares and chronic insomnia, a condition that of late has deepened her depression.

Learning that there were others out there who had special Gifts was a weight lifted off of Alexis's shoulders, but discovering that being Gifted meant being called to sometimes do battle with forces beyond human

understanding, and that it meant playing a role in some upcoming apocalypse, didn't help her fragile emotional state at all. It's only through her friendship with Jamie that Alexis has been able to cope with all of the changes that her powers have wrought in her life. She's fond of Megan, though she doesn't let it show, openly criticizing the girl for her lifestyle on the streets and adopting a "tough love" stance towards convincing Megan to clean up her act. That the girl is only twelve is immaterial in Alexis's eyes; it's never too early to start getting yourself together.

She has also developed strong feelings for the brutish John Burke, feelings that she hasn't yet come to terms with because as she puts it, "Please, he is so not my type," and she finds Father Joe a strong confidante, the only other Christian in her New Age circle. As for Daniel, she wishes that he and Jamie would just get on with the romance so she could stop hearing about it...in her head.

**Quote:** "Oh, would y'all just get over it already and move on? I'm sick of hearing you think about it."

### **Powers**

Alexis is gifted with the Sight, psychic powers that allow her to see visions of future and present events, peer briefly into the minds of others, and create fires with her mind. Each psychic power has two scores, a Strength score and an Art score. The Art score is her skill with using the power, and is always rolled in combination with an attribute (usually Willpower) just like a normal skill Task, to activate the ability. The power's Strength score measures how powerful Alexis's individual abilities are, the scope of what she can accomplish. Her powers are described in detail below.

#### **Mindfire: Strength 3, Art 2**

Mindfire is classic pyrokinesis. Alexis can start fires with only her mind, and even summon fire out of thin air. She has not fully developed her control of this power yet, as its potential for real harm terrifies her. With a Willpower + Mindfire Art Task, Alexis can create flames from the size of a match or lighter, all the way up to fires that will ignite wood, clothing or any flammable substance. Such large flames cause D4x3 damage.

#### **Mindsight: Strength 1, Art 2**

Mindsight is the ability to read other peoples' minds and thoughts. With a Willpower + Mindsight Art Task, Alexis can sense emotions and thoughts of others that she touches. The exact results of her Task determine the depth of information she gathers. Sometimes she gets involuntary flashes of information that she cannot control.

#### **Mindview: Strength 3, Art 1**

Mindview is a type of clairvoyance. Through this ability, Alexis gains flashes of events that are about to happen, that will happen sometime in the future, or even that are happening at this very moment. These flashes are often the result of her chronic nightmares, in which she tends to see horrible things happen to people, and awoken to find that she cannot do anything about the events taking place in her dreams. She's been working on learning to control these visions, but as yet she's been largely unsuccessful (hence her low Art). With a Perception + Mindview Art Task, Alexis can sometimes get a flash of impending danger (like a "sixth sense") that allows her to avoid potential hazards.

## **Jamie Connor**

Gifted Entrepreneur  
Association: Wicce

### **Attributes:**

Strength: 2                      Intelligence: 2  
Dexterity: 3                    Perception: 2  
Constitution: 2                Willpower: 4

Life Points: 41                Endurance Points: 29  
Essence Pool: 40             Speed: 10

### **Qualities:**

Attractiveness (2)  
Charisma (1)  
Essence Channeling (4)  
Gift (5)  
Hard To Kill (5) (+5 to Survival Tests)  
Increased Essence Pool (5)  
Resources (Middle Class) (2)

### **Drawbacks:**

Covetous (Lecherous) (2)  
Delusions (Phobia: Dark) (1)  
Emotional Problems (Fear of Commitment) (1)  
Impaired Senses (Wears Glasses) (1)  
Honorable (2)  
Obligation (Major; Business) (2)  
Secret (Former prostitute) (1)

### **Skills:**

Brawling 1  
Computers 1  
Dodge 2  
Driving (Car) 1  
First Aid 1  
Guns (Handgun) 1  
Haggling 3  
Hand Weapon (Knife) 2  
Magic Theory 1  
Notice 2  
Occult Knowledge 1  
Research/Investigation 3  
Seduction 3  
Streetwise 2  
Unconventional Medicine (Herbalism) 1

### **Portrait:**



**Gear:** Computer, Occult Library, .38 caliber revolver (D6x3), 2001 VW Beetle

### **Background:**

Jamie Connor's mother died while she was an infant, killed by her drunken father. Jamie was raised by her grandfather, the role model on whom her father based his own behavior, and Jamie suffered unspeakable abuses at his hands. Days locked in a dank basement filled with rats and fleas resulted in a fear of the dark that Jamie still hasn't mastered to this day. By the age of 14, through a whirlwind of events that even she doesn't remember clearly, she was on the streets, a prostitute under the care of a pimp who was barely a better caretaker than her grandfather was.

She was extremely successful at turning tricks through a combination of her natural wiles and a subconscious use of her Gifted powers, and before long had managed to secure a regular and fairly high-class clientele, men and women who could afford to be careful in their indiscretions and through divine providence she survived without disease or pregnancy.

One evening, an elderly and wealthy man named Niles Miller secured Jamie's services, only to inform her once they were alone that he had no intentions of taking advantage of her. He went on to explain (and then demonstrate, to Jamie's initial horror) that she was special, with power beyond that of normal people. He taught her to control and use her innate magic, and to learn to respect and value herself. Niles became the real father figure that Jamie never had, and for a time the girl was happy.

Niles died in a mystical confrontation with a Fiend summoned by a rival mage, and in her rage, Jamie destroyed the fiend and the sorcerer who had summoned it. She swore to herself then that she would never let another human being into her heart, but has ever since been driven to help those who need it.

To her surprise, Niles left Jamie a substantial inheritance, which she used to open the Hive Arcana, an esoteric combination of a café, an all-ages rock club, and a new age bookstore and apothecary. The business has been successful, and Jamie has finally left her past behind and made some real friends (though she's loathe to admit it.) A young girl named Megan, who Jamie caught trying to steal pastries, has now become a regular at the Hive, and Jamie looks after her, the girl reminding Jamie of herself when she was young. Megan has introduced Jamie to Daniel Morgan III, a refined magician who Jamie keeps telling herself she does not have feelings for. Another regular, Alexis Randolph, has become the first woman Jamie has been able to relate to on a personal level, and the brutish John Burke and street preacher Father Joe have also begun to hang about the establishment, the two men each sharing different qualities that vaguely remind Jamie of her lost Niles. At last her life is coming together, and her one great fear is that her newfound social circle will one day discover her shameful past and turn away from her. For her own good (and in her mind, theirs) she keeps them all at arm's length as a result. Jamie is a pragmatist, and does whatever needs to be done, no matter how painful it might be.

**Quote:** "A girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do."

### **Metaphysics:**

Jamie uses magical powers called *Invocations*, broad-based areas of control that allow her to achieve various supernatural effects. Invocations use Willpower + Invocation Skill to activate, and for irresponsible or gross uses may at the Chronicler's discretion require a Dismissal Task (this will be dealt with if and when it arises in game; just remember, subtle is always better than overt). Each Invocation is noted with the ability's skill level next to it, and various possible effects (and their descriptions) that can be accomplished with that Invocation in smaller text beneath.

### **Affect the Psyche 3**

This Invocation uses the emotional nature of Essence to change the feelings of a person. It can be used to impress, charm or scare the target. The Chronicler decides whether or not the emotional state of the person being affected changes their behavior in the way the Magician intended: a scared would-be attacker might flee, surrender, or attack like a cornered animal, for example.

*Aura of Confidence:* This effect creates an impression of power and control around the Magician, making others unwilling to oppose her. The caster gains a +2 bonus on most social interaction Tasks, with an additional bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Focus Task. Only people who have a reason to dislike or hate the Magician may resist with a Simple Willpower Test; otherwise the bonus is automatically applied. This effect costs 2 Essence and lasts 5 minutes per Success Level; at the end of that time, the Invocation must be repeated.

*Influence Emotional State:* This effect costs 1 Essence if the person was leaning towards the intended emotion, 2 Essence to inspire a different emotion, and 5 Essence for an utterly opposite emotion (e.g., anger if the person was happy, fear if the person was calm). This ability is resisted by a Difficult Willpower Test. Normally the emotional change is short-lived, lasting 1 Turn per Success Level in the Focus Task. Used in combination with normal psychological manipulation and seduction, the Invocation may actually change the person's outlook over time. This depends on the (mundane) skills of the Magician, the target's personality, and other factors, at the Chronicler's discretion.

### **Blessing 3**

Essence can be used to alter probability, increasing the chances that one specific, beneficial outcome takes place. Blessings alter probability in favor of the subject of the Invocation, making the person luckier and more successful. The Essence spent on all Blessings is not regained until the Blessing benefits end.

*Blessing of Protection:* This effect protects the subject from metaphysical harm. Each Essence Point spent gives the subject a +1 bonus to resist one supernatural attack of one specific kind (Magic, the Sight, Miracles, and so on), activated whenever a



hostile attack is taken against the recipient. The protection is one-time-only; after helping defend against one attack, the blessing ends. A Blessing of Protection can also be oriented against all forms of supernatural attack (including Magic, the Sight, Celestial Powers, and so on) at the cost of 2 Essence per +1 bonus.

*Good Luck:* gives the recipient Luck. A +1 bonus is gained for every 3 Essence Points spent that may be used on any Task or Test. The bonuses may all be applied to one Task/Test, or may be split as desired among many such attempts. Once the Luck bonuses are spent, the effects of the Blessing stop.

*Success Blessing:* This effect guarantees success in some small matter involving mundane affairs, such as a business deal, school examination or sporting event, provided the recipient had a chance to succeed anyway. This effect costs 5 Essence.

### **Lesser Healing 3**

This Invocation can heal wounds or cure minor ailments. It requires the Magician to lay hands on the wounded. During the Invocation, the Magician feels the pain and ailment of the victim. Severe wounds and painful ailments require the Magician to pass a Simple Willpower Test to endure this discomfort. If the Test is passed, the Magician can continue unimpeded. Otherwise, the Focus Task is at -5. If the first attempt does not completely cure the wound, any further attempts are at a -2 penalty on both the Focus and any Dismissal Tasks necessary (this only occurs when the Focus Task fails). A failed Dismissal Task means the Magician is affected by the wound or disease she attempted to cure.

*Heal Wounds:* restores 1 Life Point per Essence Point spent. The victim loses 1 Endurance Point for each Life Point restored due to blood loss and the energy cost of the accelerated healing. The effect closes cuts and puncture wounds, mends broken bones and even reattaches any fresh body part (provided the Invocation heals the entire damage inflicted). It does not restore missing limbs or organs, especially long-gone ones. In other words, a severed finger can be grafted on if the finger is fresh and available; a ruined eye cannot be fixed. By a separate variation of this effect, Lost Endurance Points can also be restored, at the same Essence cost as Life Points. The subject does not lose Endurance during this effect; they feel refreshed by the influx of Essence.

### **Lesser Illusion 3**

Essence can be used to fool the senses, creating a simulacrum that may appear, sound and even smell like the real thing. Such illusions are not solid, however, nor do they cast a shadow (although the illusion of a shadow can be created to get around that). Sometimes, illusions do not look quite right, allowing people to realize their true nature. Most illusions work as a Resisted Task, pitting the caster's Focus result against the Perception and Intelligence of those who see the illusion. Illusions are not selective—the effect can be perceived by everyone. Illusions with an extended duration must remain in the Magician's line of sight or other senses, or they disappear.

*Auditory Illusion:* This effect creates the illusion of sound. The loudest sound possible is strong enough to be uncomfortable, but not enough to actually damage or stun people. The cost in Essence is for each sound made: 1 Essence for a soft noise (equivalent to a whisper), 2 for the equivalent of normal speech, 3 for a shout or scream, 5 for a loud (but not deafening) sound. An extended sound illusion costs triple (e.g., 6 Essence for the sounds of a conversation); this lasts 5 minutes.

*Visual Illusion:* This illusion can look like anything the character can picture, but is soundless. This costs 1 Essence per cubic foot (.03 cubic meters) of the illusion. The illusion lasts for 5 minutes.

*Full Illusion:* This effect creates a realistic illusion that fools all senses except touch. This costs 5 Essence Points per cubic foot (.3 cubic meters) of the illusion, and lasts 1 minute.

### **Soulfire 3**

*Soulfire Blast:* This Invocation allows the caster to fire bolts of pure Essence. To the mundane, the bolts are invisible; the Gifted see them as swirling streams of blue-white energy. Soulfire inflicts D6(3) x Essence Points spent of damage. Corporeal supernatural entities (like Seraphim and manifested spirits) take Life Point and Essence Point damage at the same time (if 10 points of damage are inflicted, the target loses 10 Life Points and 10 Essence Points). Immaterial spirits (like ghosts) lose Vital Essence. Soulfire is less effective against human beings; they lose 1 Essence Point for every 3 points of damage inflicted by the attack. Soulfire can strike any target within line of sight. Mundanes cannot Dodge the attack, because the Soulfire is invisible; Gifted and supernatural beings can see Soulfire, and may Dodge normally.

## *John Burke*

Mundane Vigilante (Ex-Marine)  
Association: Solitaire

### **Attributes:**

Strength: 5                      Intelligence: 3  
Dexterity: 5                    Perception: 4  
Constitution: 5                Willpower: 3

Life Points: 65                Endurance Points: 44  
Essence Pool: 25             Speed: 20

### **Qualities:**

Acute Senses (2) (Eyes, +3 Per. rolls w/sight)  
Fast Reaction Time (2)  
Hard to Kill (5) (+5 to Survival Tests)  
Natural Toughness (2) (AV 4 vs. bash attacks)  
Nerves of Steel (3) (+4 vs. Fear Tests)  
Resistance (Pain) (3) (+3 vs. effects of pain)  
Situational Awareness (2) (+2 Per. to detect danger)

### **Skills:**

Bureaucracy 1  
Climbing 2  
Computers 1  
Demolitions 1  
Disguise 1  
Dodge 3  
Driving (Cars) 1  
Driving (Motorcycles) 2  
Escapism 2  
First Aid 1  
Guns (Handgun) 3  
Guns (Rifles) 2  
Guns (Assault Rifles) 2  
Hand Weapon (Knives) 2  
Intimidation 2  
Martial Arts 2 (add +2 to all melee combat damage)  
Notice 2  
Stealth 3  
Streetwise 3  
Surveillance 2  
Survival (Desert) 2  
Tracking 2

### **Drawbacks:**

Adversary (Criminals) (2)  
Addiction (smoking) (1)  
Clown (1)  
Honorable (1)  
Recklessness (2)  
Secret (Vigilante) (3)

### **Portrait:**



**Gear:** .50 caliber Desert Eagle D10x4, Two .9mm Glock pistols D6x4, survival knife D4x5, 12 gauge sawed-off shotgun D6x5/+2 to hit (birdshot; ranges halved for sawed-off), cell phone, Honda Shadow motorcycle, ultra-cool leather jacket and Ray Ban sunglasses, pack of Marlboro Reds, concealed carry permits for all handguns.

### **Background:**

John is a man who believes in the basics. What you see is what you get. He's gruff, but jovial with a wry sense of humor that most people easily appreciate. He's also big, hulking, a martial artist, and knows how to use several different kinds of weapons. The kind of guy you want in your corner.

Except that he isn't, always.

John was a member of the Marines Force Recon in the Gulf War in the early 90's. He knows first hand the horrors of war, even one as reportedly easy as the media made the Allied victory in Kuwait out to be. He's had men die in his arms. He's seen the results of despotic regimes mustard-gassing civilians, first-hand. He's also had friends develop Gulf War Syndrome in the years following.

When he came back from the war, John was a man haunted by his experiences, but full of pride and patriotism. Unfortunately, he started to witness the war going on in the back alleys of the very country he loved so much. He saw the drug lords, the petty thieves, the thugs preying upon people in the night who couldn't help themselves, and he saw that the police weren't doing a good enough job taking care of business.

John is a soldier, and he does what has to be done.

Since those days, John has come to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are things hiding in the shadows that defy rational explanation, and he uses his skills as best he can to combat any threats to the innocent, both mundane and supernatural. Thus far, his identity hasn't been revealed, though the police are aware that a vigilante has been prowling the streets.

John came to the Hive Arcana for a cup of coffee one morning, and was immediately taken with Alexis. When he discovered she was a regular, he also became a regular and since then has become a member of the crew. He has an idea that the girls at the Hive are knowledgeable about the darker things he has to face in the night, and hopes that he can benefit from their knowledge in the future. He's also very fond of the group overall, though he thinks that Father Joe is unstable, and he doesn't like the air of superiority that Daniel constantly displays. In any case, he's pretty much dubbed himself the secret protector of Jamie, Megan, and (especially) Alexis (who he hasn't yet gotten up the guts to court).

At heart, John is a hero. While his methods may be outside the law, and while he is a killer when the circumstances call for it, his primary goal is to protect the innocents at all costs, and he'll lay down his life to achieve that goal. Humor has become his primary defense mechanism against the Things That Should Not Be, and he sometimes cracks jokes at just the wrong moment as a result. But overall, he's likeable, if dangerous.

**Quote:** "Sometimes, the things a man sees haunt him. The only thing that man can do in that situation is haunt those things right back."

## **Megan Porter**

Gifted Disciple of the Flesh (Street Urchin)  
Association: Solitaire

### **Attributes:**

Strength: 2                      Intelligence: 2  
Dexterity: 3                    Perception: 4  
Constitution: 2                Willpower: 2

Life Points: 41                Endurance Points: 23  
Essence Pool: 40             Speed: 10

### **Qualities:**

Charisma (2) (+2 to social Tasks involving charm)  
Contacts (Street) (3)  
Essence Channeling 3 (6)  
The Gift (5)  
Increased Essence Pool (5)  
Hard to Kill (5)  
Nerves of Steel (3) (+4 vs. Fear Tests)

### **Drawbacks:**

Emotional Problems (Emotional Dependency) (1)  
Honorable (1)  
Phobia (Fire) (2)  
Resources (Destitute) (4)  
Showoff (2)

### **Skills:**

Cheating 1  
Climbing 1  
Dodge 3  
Escapism 2  
First Aid 1  
Hand Weapon (Club) 1  
Hand Weapon (Knife) 1  
Lock Picking (Mechanical) 1  
Pick Pocket 2  
Smooth Talking 3  
Stealth 3  
Streetwise 3

### **Portrait:**



**Gear:** The clothes on her back

### **Background:**

Megan doesn't talk about her past much. Most people who meet her would wonder what could have happened to a girl in 12 years that could be so terrible. Her close friends know that it had to do with fire, but that's the extent of it.

Megan's family was killed in a fire when she was six years old. She still vividly remembers watching the burning timbers collapse and bury her mother, father, and little brother. She went to live with her grandmother after that, and she also vividly remembers a few months later, when the story got around at school, and a particularly sadistic fifth-grader locked himself in a closet with her and tormented her relentlessly with a Zippo lighter. That was when her powers first appeared. Megan left that closet; the fifth grader never did, and Megan has been living alone on the streets and scared ever since. Once, a few years later, she tried to go home only to find that her grandmother had died of a heart attack.

But living on the streets hasn't exactly been bad from Megan's point of view. She stays out of the way of the heavies, listens to chatter and rumors, and makes cash through petty theft and running errands for more big league criminals. She never asks questions and always does what she's told, and people mostly leave her alone.

At least, that's how it was until she met Daniel.

Daniel insisted that she stop the errand girl routine, and he started to take care of her. Now she listens for him, keeping her ears perked up for news, gossip, rumors, anything that can help the private investigator in his work. She also has made friendly with the locals at the Hive Arcana, a café and rock club, since the owner, Jamie, caught her trying to pilfer a croissant one day. Jamie says that Megan reminds Jamie of when she herself was a kid, so they all look after her now. Megan, who hasn't known a real family since before her parents died, is happy to stick with them. She thinks that Alexis is too mean and hard on her, and that Father Joe is a little weird, but John is the coolest guy ever. She has a secret crush on Daniel, though she knows he'll never see her that way and she knows he likes Jamie, which is okay with her. She knows they're all special, because she can sense that in people, but she's still afraid of that monster inside her that killed the fifth-grader, and is afraid that if they ever see it, they won't like her anymore.

**Quote:** "Please don't make me cry. You really wouldn't like me when I get upset."

## **Powers**

Megan uses Disciplines of the Flesh. When she needs to, she can channel essence and call upon all of the pain and anguish she has suffered throughout her life to wreak horrific changes in her body. Specific powers are below.

### **Anguish 5**

Activating any of her powers requires Megan to roll an attribute + Anguish Task, and relive all of the pain that drove her to this point. As such, all of her powers manifest as burn injuries in some way, and she generally cries tears of blood when using the powers. She must then channel Essence into whichever of the following effects she wants to achieve. Megan can spend up to 7 Essence per turn, and gains it back at a rate of 3 Essence per minute.

### **Reshape**

The fundamental power of those with Disciplines of the Flesh. Megan can reshape her body into a hideous, monstrous form. The exact details vary from transformation to transformation, but Megan's shape is always that of a hideously burned and scarred figure, and her changes always involve burning, singeing, or melting in some way. This power requires a Constitution + Anguish Task. *Minor changes*, such as short clawed fingers or teeth inflicting D4 x (Strength-1) cost 1 Essence and last 1 minute per success level. More *Noticeable changes*, like long claws dealing D6 x Strength, or an utterly inhuman form (witnesses make Fear Test at -3) cost 2 Essence and last 6 Turns per success level. *Major changes* like giant claws, a horrific form that requires witnesses to pass a Fear Test at -5, lengthening limbs up to a yard long, contorting her body to fit through chimneys or drain pipes, etc. cost 5 Essence and last for 6 Turns per success level, and *Absolute changes* that make Megan's body become almost completely fluid (she appears to melt) cost 10 Essence Points and last 1 Turn per success level.

### **Flesh Chitin**

Megan can harden her skin so that it becomes a leathery armor, protecting her from damage. With a Constitution + Anguish Task, Megan gains an Armor Value of D6 per Essence Point spent. The thicker the armor, the more scarred and leathery Megan's appearance becomes, and becomes increasingly difficult to wear clothing over. Anything over Armor Value 3 rips and tears any clothing Megan is wearing.

### **Fury**

With a Willpower + Anguish Task, Megan can greatly increase her own physical attributes. This effect costs 5 Essence to create, and each Success Level on the Task provides 3 points that can be distributed among Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, as she sees fit, or a +15 bonus to distribute among secondary attributes (Life Points, Endurance Points, or Speed). She cannot affect her Essence Pool with this power, which lasts for ten minutes. Increases to Strength and Constitution provide an additional 4 Life Points per point added to the attribute, though any Life Points gained through Fury are as temporary as Attribute increases, and disappear when the power ends. This means that Megan can return to normal and simply die if she has taken enough damage in her empowered form.

### **Salvage**

This discipline allows Megan to heal injuries or disease. The process is extremely painful, however, as her body undergoes unnatural shifting of flesh and blood to heal so quickly. Activating the power requires an Intelligence + Anguish Task and a simple Willpower Test to endure the pain. If either fails, the Essence is lost and the wounds remain. She can heal others with this power as well, but must touch them and feels their pain as though it were her own. While healing, her skin appears to blister, sizzle, and pop as it cauterizes back together. The effect costs 4 Essence to activate and heals wounds at the rate of 1 Life Point per Willpower Level, multiplied by the success levels on the Anguish Task.

## **Father Joseph Forsythe**

Lesser Gifted Inspired (Street preacher)  
Association: Solitaire

### **Attributes:**

Strength: 2                      Intelligence: 3  
Dexterity: 3                    Perception: 4  
Constitution: 3                Willpower: 5

Life Points:                    Endurance Points:  
Essence Pool:                Speed:

### **Qualities:**

Charisma (1) (+1 on social tasks)  
Divine Inspiration (5)  
The Gift (5)  
Hard to Kill (2) (+2 on survival Tests)  
Increased Essence Pool (5)  
Nerves of Steel (3) (+4 vs. Fear Tests)  
Situational Awareness (2)

### **Drawbacks:**

Honorable (2)  
Obsession (Destroy Evil) (2)  
Resources (-1)  
Status (-2)  
Zealot (3)

### **Skills:**

Brawling 1  
Dodge 2  
Driving 2  
First Aid 2  
Guns (Handguns) 1  
Humanities (Theology) 3  
Language (Latin) 2  
Myth and Legend (Christianity) 4  
Notice 2  
Occult Knowledge 1  
Research/Investigation 2  
Rituals (Catholic) 6  
Rituals (Catholic Exorcism) 8

### **Portrait:**



**Gear:** .32 caliber revolver (D6x2), clerical vestments, 8 vials holy water, crucifix, anointing oils, bible

### **Background:**

“Father Joe,” as he likes to be called, was once a Catholic priest who served his parish in a relatively undistinguished manner, keeping to himself but well-liked by the congregation. The day that all changed was the day that he witnessed a Vampyre assault one of his fellow clerics. Father Joe managed to best the creature by calling upon all of his faith, and in that moment he truly *felt* the power of God enter his body.

Unfortunately, the Church didn’t see things the same way, and ordered Father Joe to keep quiet about what he’d seen. They also informed him rather curtly that he did *not* perform any miracles, and that the “creature” he’d seen was nothing more than a prowler in the dark. That was when Father Joe left the Church.

He dedicated the next seven years of his life to researching the paranormal, seeking it out, and casting it back into the fiery pits from whence it came, while spreading God’s word in the streets.

Eventually, he came to learn that there were others out there who also fought the supernatural and while they weren’t Christians, well...nobody is perfect. He’s begun spending a lot of time at the Hive Arcana, sizing up the group there as possible allies. In addition, he genuinely enjoys the philosophical discussions and debates, and

rarely if ever proselytizes the patrons. His favorites are Jamie, the owner of the café, the young psychic Alexis, who is the only other Christian to frequent the small social circle Father Joe has insinuated himself into, and Megan, the young girl who everyone (including Father Joe) is trying to get off of the streets. The two men, Daniel and John, make Father Joe uncomfortable, mostly because he sees Daniel as a cultist and John as dangerous, but he realizes they mean well. In the end, it's just nice to have other people who know that monsters really *are* hiding under the bed at night.

**Quote:** "I've seen and done things that no priest should ever have to endure."

### **Powers**

Father Joe is quite literally touched by a higher power. When he is acting in the best interests of his faith, protecting innocents from evil or furthering the teachings of Christianity, he can perform miracles, just like the Saints of old. The specific Miracles Father Joe can perform are listed below. Father Joe must spend Essence to use these miracles, and his Essence returns at a rate of 5 Essence per 5 minutes.

### **Exorcism**

Father Joe can exorcise evil spirits. Doing so requires him to stand next to the subject, and make a series of contested Willpower Tests against the evil entity. The first Test costs Father Joe 5 Essence Points, and forces the creature to reveal its identity. The next several tests represent the effort to drive out the spirit. For these Tests, Father Joe can perform a Willpower + Rituals (Catholic Exorcism) Task instead of a Simple Willpower Test (He is extremely adept at exorcism). Each Test requires the expenditure of 5 more Essence Points and represents D10 minutes of ceremony. To succeed, he must accumulate a total of 10 success levels over a series of these tests. If he stops to rest, he must start over again from scratch.

### **The Binding**

This is the power to restrain supernatural beings, freezing them in their tracks. It costs 2 Essence Per Strength and Willpower of the creature being bound, and requires a Resisted Simple Willpower Task between Father Joe and the creature. If Father Joe succeeds, the creature is frozen in place for 1 round per success level on the Task.

### **Holy Fire**

The most overt of Father Joe's available miracles, and the one he calls upon least often, this ability allows him to (quite literally) call down fire and brimstone from Heaven to smite the servants of the Adversary. The power costs 20 Essence and inflicts D8 x 5 damage. It also automatically hits.

### **The Denial**

All Inspired can use Essence defensively. Father Joe can spend Essence as a sort of "counter effect" to stop any Essence-based power from functioning. To do this, he first must pass a Difficult Perception Test to detect the flow of Essence around a person that represents the use of a Metaphysical power. Then he must spend his own Essence to try and stop the power. This is a guessing game; Father Joe must spend more Essence than his opponent to cancel out the effect.

# Daniel Morgan III

Lesser Gifted Private Investigator  
Association: Rosicrucian

## Attributes:

Strength: 3                      Intelligence: 3  
Dexterity: 3                    Perception: 4  
Constitution: 3                Willpower: 4

Life Points: 49                Endurance Points: 35  
Essence Pool: 40             Speed: 12

## Qualities:

Attractiveness (1)  
Contacts (Rosicrucians) (3)  
Essence Channeling (3)  
Gift (5)  
Hard To Kill (5) (+5 to Survival Tests)  
Increased Essence Pool (4)  
Resources (2)  
Situational Awareness (2) (+2 to all Perception  
Tasks and Tests to notice danger)

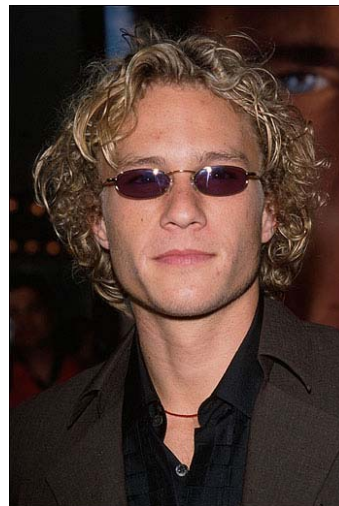
## Skills:

Brawling 2  
Computers 1  
Dodge 3  
Driving (Car) 2  
First Aid 1  
Guns (Pistols) 2  
Hand Weapon (Foil/Rapier) 3  
Language (Latin) 1  
Magic Theory 2  
Notice 2  
Occult Knowledge 2  
Questioning 3  
Research/Investigation 3  
Rituals (Rosicrucian) 1

## Drawbacks:

Bad Luck (1)  
Covetous (Ambitious) (1)  
Impaired Senses (Wears Contact Lenses) (1)  
Honorable (2)  
Humorless (1)  
Obligation (Important; Megan) (1)  
Obligation (Major; Rosicrucians) (2)  
Recurring Nightmares (1)

## Portrait:



**Gear:** Cell phone, laptop computer, 2003 Dodge Viper, .38 caliber revolver (D6x3)

## Background:

Daniel Morgan was born to a life of relative luxury and comfort, yet his parents were always careful to see to it that the boy was not spoiled. They made certain to expose Daniel to a wide cross-section of society, teaching him tolerance for the diversity among people that is not often found in the wealthy.

In school Daniel excelled in his studies, and displayed a particular aptitude for skills that required perception and insight. When he reached his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was indoctrinated into the Rosicrucians, to which both of his parents belonged.

Since that day over 15 years ago, Daniel's life has been dedicated to learning as much as he can about the true nature of the supernatural, and doing battle with the minions of the Mad Gods. He is aware that the Reckoning approaches, and knows that each must battle it in his own way. Unlike many Rosicrucians, Daniel is not adept at the controlling and banishing of spirits, so he plays to his own talents. To this end, he has opened a private



investigations agency which specializes in those cases that involve the otherwise inexplicable. This investigations agency changed his life when while working on a case he met Megan, a 12-year-old orphan living in the streets and back alleys of the city. Daniel sensed the Gift in the young girl and resolved to keep an eye on her.

At first, the girl was useful to Daniel for information and contacts. Before long, however, he developed an almost older brother or even fatherly love for her and will go out of his way to take care of her whenever he can. As yet she has not displayed any unusual supernatural abilities, and Daniel has been wrestling with the decision whether or not to begin her tutelage. It is through Megan that Daniel met Alexis, Jamie, John, and the street preacher Joseph Forsythe.

Daniel is reserved and serious, and most attempts at humor are lost on him. He takes his duty as a Rosicrucian very seriously, and is utterly dedicated to the Covenant's mission and ideals. He finds that he likes the rest of the Cast despite himself, though he distrusts Burke, who he finds a bit dangerous and unstable. Aside from Megan, he is particularly fond of Jamie, who he finds very knowledgeable and is quite attracted to, and feels a kinship with Alexis, who also experiences chronic nightmares.

**Quote:** "Let's take a look at all the facts before we dive into anything."

### **Metaphysics:**

Daniel uses magical powers called *Invocations*, broad-based areas of control that allow him to achieve various supernatural effects. Invocations use Willpower + Invocation Skill to activate, and for irresponsible or gross uses may at the Chronicler's discretion require a Dismissal Task (this will be dealt with if and when it arises in game; just remember, subtle is always better than overt). Each Invocation is noted with the ability's skill level next to it, and various possible effects (and their descriptions) that can be accomplished with that Invocation in smaller text beneath.

### **Elemental Air 2**

*Calm Wind:* Changing the speed of a natural wind is possible. This has the same cost as the Steady Wind Effect, except that the modifier reduces the wind speed in the area affected. The effect lasts a limited amount of time, but it creates an area of relative calmness around the character. For example, stopping a hurricane-level wind (100 mph) over a 10-yard wide radius for 5 minutes would cost a total of 106 Essence Points!

*Cleanse and Create Air:* With this effect, Daniel can create air, and remove any impurities and poisons in a volume of air, allowing him to survive even if locked in a small airtight room. It costs 2 Essence Points to create enough air for a person to breathe for a minute. He can also neutralize the effects of smoke, poison gas and other hazards. By spending 1 Essence Point per Turn, he can create a "bubble" of clean air around himself at a higher pressure than the surrounding area. This bubble allows him to walk through areas filled with toxic gases without suffering ill effect. Additional targets could also be protected in this way, at the cost of 2 Essence per Turn per person. Daniel can either spend the Essence beforehand or maintain the Essence expenditure continuously, if his Essence Channeling allows. So, to protect himself for 1 minute (12 Turns), he could perform the Invocation and spend 12 Essence, or cast the Invocation and then spend the 1 Essence Point every Turn, for however long he needed—which might be more (or less) than 12 Turns.

*Gust of Wind:* This effect uses 1 Essence Point for every 5 miles per hour of the wind gust. The wind only affects a small area—about two to three yards in radius—and only lasts for a couple of seconds. Very strong winds (over 50 mph) knock people over, throw objects around, and inflict D4(2) points of damage on people for every 10 mph of speed over 50 mph. So, a 60-mph wind does D4(2) points of damage; a 100-mph gust inflicts D4 x 5(10) points. The wind can be created within 20 yards. The wind gust only travels some 10 feet per 10 mph of base speed (a 100 mph wind rushes forward for about 100 feet).

*Lightning Bolt:* Daniel can ionize a section of air, and channel a powerful electrical discharge that can shock people, destroy electronics, and start fires. The lightning bolt inflicts D6(3) points of damage per Essence point spent. The Armor Value of metal armor (including that in most vehicles) is divided by 5 before applying it to these attacks. Furthermore, machines with electronic parts take double damage from these attacks. The base range of the effect is 80 yards. This can be extended at the cost of 1 Essence per extra 10 yards of range.

*Steady Wind:* This creates a continual wind rather than a gust. This costs 1 Essence Points for every 1 mph of speed, plus 1 Essence Point for every minute the wind lasts, and 1 Essence for every 10 yards of width of the wind. For example, creating a steady wind with a speed of 10 mph that lasts 15 minutes and affects an area 100 yards wide would cost 35 Essence Points (10 for the wind speed, 15 for the duration and 10 for the area). Creating a brief stirring in the air (roughly equivalent to a low-powered electric fan) costs 1 Essence Point per Turn.

*Whirlwind:* This costs 3 Essence Points for every yard of radius of the whirlwind, with a minimum of a 5-yard radius. The same cost must be paid every minute to maintain the effect. A tornado can lift objects of up to 30 pounds per yard of radius. It can be used to carry a person or passengers, but piloting it requires a Focus roll every minute if traveling in a straight line, or every Turn if attempting complex maneuvers. A whirlwind or tornado obscures vision, breaks and tosses around objects, and can inflict damage on buildings, trees and other fixed structures. Damage is equal to D6 x 2(6) times the radius in yards of the twister. People and small objects take no direct damage from tornadoes, but are lifted up and eventually hurled away, taking damage from the fall. People picked up are lifted up to one half the tornado's width, rounded up, in yards. Also, objects in the tornado are likely to hit victims nearby, inflicting half the normal damage of the tornado, as noted above.

## **Insight 1**

*Perceive True Nature:* Resisted by target's Intelligence and Willpower. Daniel can divine the mental Qualities and Drawbacks of his target, as well as her main goals and fears. On supernatural creatures, this effect reveals the being's general nature in addition to its goals and personality. Costs 6 Essence Points. An Essence Shield (see below) blocks this power. The Insight shows the presence and strength of the Shield, but nothing else. This power comes as an instant flash of knowledge, and must be cast on each person one wishes to "scan."

## **Shielding 2**

*Essence Shield:* blocks Essence-based attacks. For 3 Essence Points, the Shield has a Protection Level of 10 plus the Success Levels of the Focus Task. Each additional point of Essence spent adds 1 to that Protection Level. Any hostile Magic, Seer Power, or other supernatural or Gifted power aimed at the protected character must have a Focus result higher than the Protection Level of the Shield, or the effect does not work at all. Only powers and effects that directly affect the target are resisted by the Shield. Attacks that drain Essence (and Taint-based attacks) can damage the Shield. Any such attack reduces the Shield's Protection Level by 1 for every 3 points of Essence damage inflicted. In addition, the Essence Shield blocks any attempts to sense anything about the Magician (other than the fact that she is surrounded by a Shield).

*Physical Shield:* Physical Shields work against bullets, punches, swords, laser beams, etc., somewhat like armor. A Physical Shield has an Armor Value and a Damage Capacity. The Armor Value subtracts from the damage inflicted by an attack. The Damage Capacity acts like a cushion, deflecting some of the energy of an attack but getting weaker with every attack it dissipates. Each Essence Point used in this effect gives the character either 1 point of Armor Value or 5 points of Damage Capacity (your choice). Damaging attacks must first get through the AV, then exhaust the Damage Capacity of the Shield. Any remaining damage is applied normally. The maximum AV possible is 20. There is no limit to the Damage Capacity of the Shield. Physical Shields don't stop movement or actions taken by the person protected. He can shoot or attack without interference from the Shield. However, he could also run into a spike and impale himself, and the Shield would offer no protection. For the same reason, Shields are of no use against falling damage.

*Invisible Shield:* Any type of Shield can be made invisible at the cost of 15 Essence Points. Nobody is able to see or sense the Shield until it flares up to stop an attack. Detection Invocations and abilities sense neither the Shield nor any special powers of the character. Insistent mental probing may finally pierce the invisibility. This is a Resisted Task, pitting the character's Willpower and Shielding Invocation levels against the Gifted or supernatural entity's abilities or Invocations.

## **Soulfire 2**

*Soulfire Blast:* This Invocation allows the caster to fire bolts of pure Essence. To the mundane, the bolts are invisible; the Gifted see them as swirling streams of blue-white energy. Soulfire inflicts D6(3) x Essence Points spent of damage. Corporeal supernatural entities (like Seraphim and manifested spirits) take Life Point and Essence Point damage at the same time (if 10 points of damage are inflicted, the target loses 10 Life Points and 10 Essence Points). Immaterial spirits (like ghosts) lose Vital Essence. Soulfire is less effective against human beings; they lose 1 Essence Point for every 3 points of damage inflicted by the attack. Soulfire can strike any target within line of sight. Mundanes cannot Dodge the attack, because the Soulfire is invisible; Gifted and supernatural beings can see Soulfire, and may Dodge normally.