

POLYBIUS

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Scenario by
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An unofficial scenario for
KULT
♦ Divinity Lost ♦

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Polybius

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This scenario revolves around the urban legend about Polybius, an arcade machine which according to urban legend surfaced in shady corners of video arcades in the early 80s and later disappear without a trace or apparent reason. A number of stories have been told about what they actually were. Were they government mind control experiments? Perhaps an attempt at implanting subliminal messages into young teenagers? Or were they something much, much more sinister? This is the story about a group of high school students and their attempts at finding the truth behind the conspiracy.

Backstory

What makes humans tick? Like, actually work? This was something that the nepharite working under the Death Angel Thaumiel had always been looking for an answer to. What if one could harness the powers of humans, control it somehow? Too bad she did not have the time to oversee a project of such magnitude. However, she realized, she could set things into motion at the very least. She appeared at a video arcade in the suburbs of Portland, Oregon.

“Sorry, we’re closed”, said the proprietor of the establishment.

“Gregg... I have a very important mission for you... but, I need to change a few things before we can get started.”

Before Gregg could ask what the nepharite meant, reality twisted around the unsuspecting man and without effort he was torn straight out of the Illusion. Exactly what follows the purgatide wearing Gregg’s name can’t quite fully recall. He vaguely remembers being played alive by what looked like constantly weeping porcelain dolls. He had vague memories of the feeling and sound of how his skull was being opened by rusty tools. Fleeting impressions of how the nepharite slowly, deliberately, sunk what felt like red hot nails into the exposed grey matter of his brain. Through this, Gregg as he once knew himself was no more. After what must have been decades, maybe even millennia, of torture he was released back to the very same day and place he had been plucked up.

He might look like Gregg and maybe even act like Gregg, but what he used to be is since long dead and in his place is a powerful purgatide in disguise.

With a gesture, the nepharite pulled what looked like an intricately ornate trepanation tool out of thin air. As she spoke the tool started conforming to the Illusion, “Gregg, I have but a few simple tasks for you. I need samples. This apparatus will collect them for me. All you need to do is watch and take note. Lure susceptible subjects and make them disappear when they’re no longer useful. Do this for me, and I shall consider letting you live and not just snuff you out once I am done with you.”

The creature once known as Gregg grinned a too-wide grin from ear to ear and nodded yes to his mistress’ requests. It did not take long for the Illusion to accept the tool in the form of a black arcade cabinet with big cyan letters spelling “Polybius”, emitting a catchy short tune to entice people to come and play.

Gregg delighted in the work he was doing, seeing all the different teens and children go over to the dark corner where the

machine was and watch as it literary ate their little minds. For some it was fast, for others it took weeks or even months. The prolonged descents into despair were the most fun to watch.

He had to upkeep appearances and he kept Andréa Farland, his only employee, completely out of the loop. At first, he had thoughts about making her a purgatide like him to his run all his errands, but he needed someone still fully human to do interaction with people. His social skills were never too precise, but the decades of torture had made them go from being ham-fisted to outright bizarre and destructive. Instead he requested other purgatides from the nepharite to run samples and act as repairmen for his mistress’ arcade machine.

For when people needed to disappear he summoned a razide. This razide took on human form and would drive around in a white van. Whenever summoned, Gregg sent him to fetch a youth who had served their purpose and who was to be executed. He did not care how it was done as long as the body would turn up with signs of a natural death. An easy enough thing to accomplish.

The Player Characters

The player characters for this scenario are ready-made. The GM information can be found under *Backgrounds and Subplots*, while the actual character sheets with player information can be found in the *Character Sheets* section. It is suggested that you read though the character descriptions in both chapters before you read the adventure to have a better grasp about what makes them tick and how they are tied in.

Their archetypes are based on the ones from the *Kult: Divinity Lost* corebook but with some of their Dark Secrets modified just slightly to fit the scenario. This scenario is made for between 2 to 4 players so whichever character is left over can either be used as an NPC or as stand-ins in case a player character dies.

Keep in mind that the scenario may refer to characters that were not selected. Unless the character is being used as an NPC, ignore these things. For instance; the rules for the tournament refer to all the characters, however if only two characters are in play, only those two are actually in the tournament.

Some blanks have deliberately been left open for the players to fill in as they please. Name of parents, ethnicity, sexuality and so on.

The descriptions underneath can be read to the players to help them decide which characters they want to play.

Amy J. Drake, 18 years old, grade 12, The Bitch

Amy is known as the stuck-up bitch in school who sleeps with any guy she can get her hands on. She's one of the most popular girls as well as the leader of her clique which is the strongest and most influential clique in school.

Cathy J. Kaiser, 14 years old, grade 10, The Bookworm

Cathy is a shy and introverted girl who is always seen with a book in her hand. Most of the time it is fantasy and sci-fi but sometimes other books as well. Ever since moving to the 10th grade there might even be a romantic book in the mix.

Charles S. Lawson, 17 years old, grade 11, The Bereaved

Charles used to be a funny and outgoing kid until he lost his little brother. It's clear that he had a really hard time accepting his brother's passing and seems to hold on tightly to his memory. Now he spends most of his time at the kwoon, practicing kung fu.

Evelyn C. Jordan, 16 years old, grade 11, The Troubled

Something is weird about Evelyn lately. She used to be this outgoing and well-spoken kid who had good grades and did well. However, a few months ago she started staying mostly to herself and seems to be constantly spaced out. Maybe she has started doing drugs?

Kyle C. Marshall, 15 years old, grade 10, The Sickly

Poor Kyle has always been a sickly kid ever since anyone could remember. Some school years he's been missing for weeks or months, and has had a number of operations. No one seems to know the source of his sickness, which makes curing him even harder.

John K. Dent, 18 years old, grade 12, The Nerd

John is the designated bully victim for sure. But he is easy to hate due to his nerdiness and how viciously mean he seems to be to everyone. Lately, he has been completely lost in his school project which is building some sort of weird machine.

Theme of the Scenario

The scenario has the following primary themes:

Coming of age: Everyone is starting on a path that can lead to their personal destruction if they do not fight back. The "grownups" will not believe them and will reject anything that doesn't seem to fit with their idea of reality. In this, the students will need to care for themselves and are forced to grow up faster than maybe they should.

Friendship: Despite the character's diverse backgrounds, they have to work together to be able to fight back against the enemy facing them.

Tips for the Gamemaster

Set and setting: This game is set in October of 1981 in a rural town in Oregon. As an 80s period drama a bit of backstory can be good, especially for younger players and gamemasters. Suggested movies and TV series to get up to speed with the idea of the 80s are *Stranger Things (2016)*, *Dark (2017)*, *The Void (2016)*, *The Changeling (1980)* and *The Gate (1987)*. Also, one can spice things up with music from the era or with modern synthwave-music. See *Links to Media* in the *Appendix* for some ready-to-go playlists. There is also a link to a documentary about the actual urban legend of Polybius to be found there.

Location, location, location: While the scenario is written to take place outside the suburbs of Portland, Oregon, USA it isn't essential to know all the locations, especially since the general idea is for this scenario is to be centered all in the same place, a highly fictional suburb called Oak Grove. Don't get too bogged down in details about locations of everything since a lot of development has occurred in the 40 years since this scenario took place. There is a map included in the *Appendix* that can be used to give a sense of where everything relevant is.

Drop the bombs: There are many suggested bombs for each chapter that the GM can deploy or use as inspiration for making her own. These are always good to use in case the story gets stuck and the GM needs an out to get things going again. Though it might be a bit too much to use all of them for each and every chapter. They are great if you have a bit of a shy and quiet player to give them something to deal with in case the other players take too much room on the center stage.

Puzzle, action and roleplay: The scenario can be modified however the GM wishes. There are some puzzles added (for instance, the Polybius square) that you can either let the players play around with and try and figure out themselves or just have their characters solve it through roleplaying. The same goes for action and roleplay. Depending on how you balance these things, this scenario can take anything from one evening to a couple sessions.

Choosing characters: There are more characters available than will actually be used in a single session. This is to give the players more options in what characters they can play. The GM should have read through all the characters - both the character sheets as well as the *Backgrounds and Subplots* - and then tell the players which are available. Keep the character sheets hidden for the players until they have decided since the sheets have the Dark Secrets baked into their description. The Dark Secrets are secret even from the players, though it is easy enough to figure out for some of them. For the gamemaster there is a quick rundown of all characters under *Backgrounds and Subplots* together with their Dark Secrets, personal subplots and suggested GM moves.

Side stories: Don't be afraid to invent your own side stories and tangents if you feel the scenario is heading that way. But always make sure to lead the players back towards the main thread.

Resource materials: At the very end of the *Appendix* you can find different resources that are available for printing. At the very least you should print out the character sheets for the players so they can read about their characters, but the other items can also be used for great effect to build and tell a story when printed out and given to the players at appropriate times. Some can even be recreated by hand for even better immersion, such as the Post-it note or the paper scrap with the master password.

Grownups never listen: The nepharite's influence has made it so that grownups simply will not listen. Everyone apart from the player characters should be considered sleepers unless otherwise is stated. It should be hinted at early on that they have to fend for themselves since everyone else will just rationalize what is happening.

Play to find out what happens: The story here is really just the framework. Whenever anything written doesn't make sense or the characters have done something not anticipated, just have fun with it and see where it takes you.

Scenario Timeline

Stage 1

- ◇ **Introductions:** A normal day in the character's lives is outlined. A tournament at Gregg's Arcade Emporium the next Friday is announced. This is a chance for the players to get to know each other and their characters.
- ◇ **The Tournament:** A very small tournament is played out between the characters and a couple of NPCs. Once a character has won, there is a strange occurrence happening with the Repairmen coming into the arcade. Everyone has their own reason to want to investigate further.
- ◇ **Sinneslöschen:** The characters go to the headquarters where the Repairmen work. They learn more about the arcade and find a password promising access to a secret menu in the game. They can also learn about the supernatural nature of the arcade machine as well as other information about Sinneslöschen and the Repairmen.

Stage 2

- ◇ **Find the Key:** They have what they believe to be the password and the means to access the service menu to the game. They will learn that the number they got from Sinneslöschen is a cipher and the key to reading it is a Polybius square. They access the menu and learn that they are all about to die, and where Gregg is hiding out. They need his password to turn off bad settings tied to them.
- ◇ **The Chase!:** The Man in the White Van chases the players in prolonged chase sequence.

Stage 3

- ◇ **A Moment of Rest:** The characters can rest and, if needed, heal up a bit before going forward. The deadline is a month from when they broke into the arcade cabinet. Here they can complete any personal subplots.
- ◇ **The Boss Battle:** The characters break into Gregg's hideout, find the master password for the arcade machine and are confronted by Gregg, the Repairmen and The Man in the White Van in a great final battle.
- ◇ **End Credits:** Epilogue to the scenario.

Gregg's ARCADE EMPORIUM

Stage 1

In the first act, the characters are established as well as the mystery introduced. Here the players are encouraged to get to know one another and learn to work together. None of them knows the others before the game starts, apart from Kyle who knows Cathy. Amy and John know about each other but don't actually know one another.

They are introduced to the game, as well meeting some of the NPCs and antagonists. Maybe they will even confront some of them, depending on how the scenario plays out.

Introductions

The game starts in September 23, 1981. To let the players familiarize themselves with their characters the GM can let them roam around school a bit. Maybe Amy and John have a run-in with one another and Amy's boyfriend gloats in shoving John around. Maybe someone has slid a note saying "He deserved it" into Charles' locker. Perhaps Cathy is asked out on a date by a student and Kyle sees it and seethes in jealousy. One can also involve other parts of the faculty and a high school setting; such as the school nurse, after school club activity and so on. Take note of what the characters do and what they say and maybe let it come back to haunt them at a later date.

The way forward

Make sure to establish that on Friday later that week there is a tournament at Gregg's Arcade Emporium, this time for their favorite game, Polybius. All of the characters have already signed up for this and have paid the buy-in. Players may try to weasel out of this but the draw of the game is very big and if they make up other plans, have them appear at the tournament without really knowing how they got there.

This chapter is kept very short on purpose but the GM should feel free to extend it as much as she likes.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **General:** A character is seen smoking by the headmaster and is confronted.
- ◇ **General:** A meek character accidentally walks into someone from the main clique and a small fight occurs, only to be interrupted by the teachers. The bullies leave with the threat of "Just you wait until after school".
- ◇ **General:** A character is dragged into one of the school toilets and flushed by unknown assailants.
- ◇ **General:** A character comes out after school to find their car/bike has been damaged.

- ◇ **Cathy, Charles or Evelyn:** As the character rounds a corner of a corridor it is completely empty. It's too dark despite being late in the afternoon at autumn and a vague sound of an arcade machine is heard in the distance. Once they start freaking out they feel a hand on their shoulder and a classmate asks them what is wrong, they had a thousand-mile stare and things are back to normal.

The Tournament

At 7pm Friday night in Gregg's Arcade Emporium Andréa wishes all visitors welcome. Apart from the player characters there is only handful of other people, maybe two or three. The turnout wasn't great. The player characters who ended up at the arcade against their will feel compelled to stay and have to roll *Keep it Together -2* to make it out of there. If they do, let them leave and maybe invent a little side scenario for them or make use of their personal subplots.

Andréa speaks to everyone once they're gathered and frowns, "I had hoped there would be more. But anyway, here we are. Welcome to the first... and probably last... Polybius tournament. You all already did your buy-ins, so you each get two tokens per round and the highest score each round is tabbed up for a total of three rounds. Are you guys ready?"

As Andréa kicks off the tournament each player rolls their *Act Under Pressure* which the GM secretly modifies by the table below for each character:

- ◇ **Amy:** +1
- ◇ **Cathy:** +0
- ◇ **Charles:** +1
- ◇ **Evelyn:** +4
- ◇ **John:** +0
- ◇ **Kyle:** +1

Whoever rolls the highest, of course, wins. This whole scenario is another chance for the players to get to know one another. Let the characters describe their play style and how they interact with the game and let them interact with each other. Due to the nature of the room layout, only a couple of spectators can fit around the machine at a time. Andréa is overseeing the whole thing, so she is always hovering around the machine during play.

The winner receives a free play pass (in reality a gift card worth 50 arcade tokens). And during the victory ceremony, the Repairmen enter the arcade. There are three of them, all look very somber and walk a bit weirdly, as if having sat uncomfortably for too long, and are in a good need of a stretch. Andréa tries to say this is a bad time but they barge on, talking to her in jerky interrupted voices as they tear the machine open and go at the cathode ray tubes.

GM Note: What has happened is that the machine's vials became full due to the extensive use of the machine that night by so many different people. The Repairmen functions more or less on routine which is why they came there despite the strange hour.

If asked about the Repairmen, Andréa will mention that they only come there for Polybius and that they work for the company Sinneslöschen who also created the game. She will agree that it is weird and that no other arcade manufacturer's staff do the same. If asked how to contact them, she'll say that she got their contact info in the manual for the cabinet. And no, she will not give it to them.

Once the Repairmen have collected the tubes, they close the machine, lock it, and walk out. If Charles is there, he sees the Repairmen enter a white van and gets a glimpse of the driver - The Man in the White Van - before he drives away.

During all this commotion, the two-three people who entered the tournament together with the player characters have left.

The characters, seeing their motivations, should have ample reasons to want to investigate this further, especially if they now notice and suspect each other of having the same motifs or motives that line up.

- ◇ **Amy:** Wants to find a new place to fit in and wants to know more about Polybius.
- ◇ **Cathy:** Is very curious, obsessed even by the Repairmen.
- ◇ **Charles:** Really wants to get at The Man in the White Van.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** Has to break her habits, and needs help doing so.
- ◇ **John:** Wants to get a cathode ray tube and has seen the Repairmen come and go with them.
- ◇ **Kyle:** Has a feeling something is weird about the game which might be tied to his illness.

Floor Plans for Gregg's Arcade Emporium

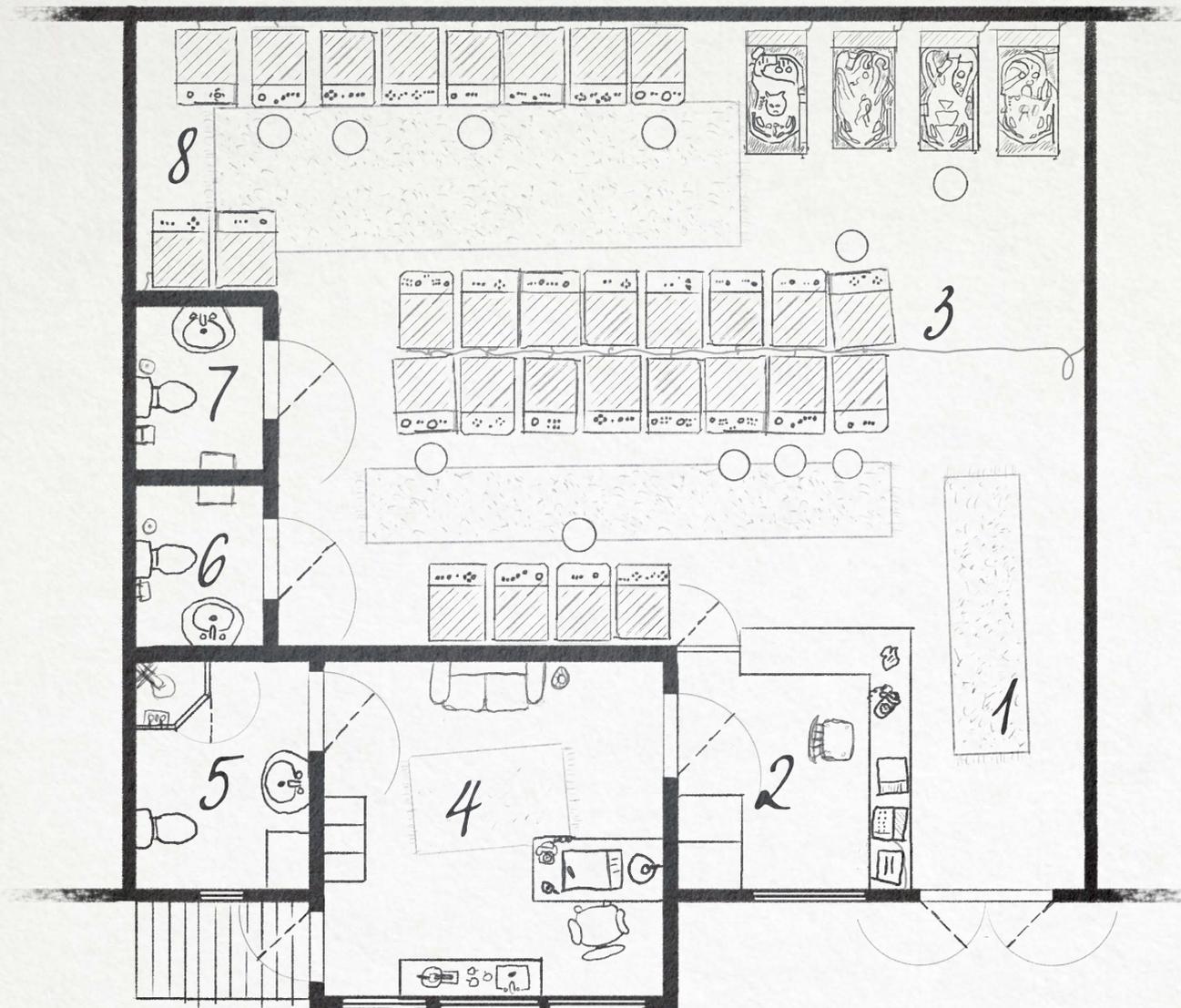
There is a floor plan without numbers on it that can be printed out from the *Appendix*.

- [1] **The lobby:** From the sidewalk outside, one can easily walk up the few steps into the video arcade. Above the entrance is a sign saying "Welcome to Gregg's Arcade Emporium" in large neon letters. They flicker slightly and a letter here and there fails to light up at all. The video arcade is open between 11 AM and 11 PM. There is a parking lot outside as well as a stand for bikes. Once inside, one is welcomed by the smell of sweet soft drinks and sweaty teenagers. The noise is almost overwhelming as each and every machine periodically play a little melody to entice the youth in here to spend their coins in that specific machine.
- [2] **The counter:** The counter is crammed with magazines (such as Computer World Gaming, Soft Talk, Electronic Games). There is a little paper cut-out that has seen better days, which proclaims the rules of the establishment for

the guests (No running, no loitering, no screaming, no smoking). There is a simple cash register along with a rotary phone, a phone book and a calendar.

Behind the counter, one can find Andréa Farland from 2 PM and up until closing. Gregg mans the counter from 11 AM up until 2 PM and generally goes home around 8 PM, leaving Andréa to close up. In the drawers behind the counter are the various keys to the arcade machines along with stacks of instruction manuals. Except for the key to Polybius. Another drawer has about a thousand tokens for the arcade machines; a kids' treasure trove.

- [3] **The video arcade:** Filled with a cacophony of sounds from games, pumping pop music, and excited kids and teenagers. All the popular games of the 80s can be found here. To name a few; Lunar Lander, Asteroids Deluxe, Warrior, Donkey Kong, Pac Man and Crazy Climber. There are also four pinball machines; Jungle Lord, The Amazing Spider-Man, The Empire Strikes Back and Mata Hari. On the wall to the right there are scoreboards from competitions that Andréa has arranged. All other walls and spaces contain posters of old games and new games to come. Strewn out here and there are stools that can be moved from game to game. The machines are fed with either quarters or arcade tokens.
- [4] **The office:** Here is where Gregg spends most of his day, dealing with all the paperwork and making sure the files are in order. There is another exit here leading down a staircase. At the wall by the window is a simple kitchen counter with a quite disgusting looking coffee machine and a couple of dirty cups. Gregg has his all-important desk here along with a desk lamp, a dirty cup of cold coffee and a rotary phone. Covering most of the center of the surface is a desk mat with a calendar. At the opposite wall there are filing cabinets where all paperwork is filed. Inside the bottom cabinet there is an extra office key taped to the inside since Andréa has happened to forget the office keys at home and had to call Gregg for him to come lock for the night. At the wall opposite from the sink there is a worn old suede sofa. During off-hours the door between the lobby and the office remains locked.
- [5] **Employee bathroom:** This is a larger bathroom with a cleaning supply closet in the corner where all the necessities for keeping the arcade clean are hidden away. There is a shower too that only Andréa use. When she uses it, she always pulls the curtains in the office, lock the office door and stash her clothes in the sofa before taking her shower which is important to know if the characters try to steal her keys.
- [6] **Girls' Bathroom:** A small bathroom that is quite clean. It has everything one would imagine a bathroom would have, and a first aid kit on the wall opposite the sink.
- [7] **Boys' bathroom:** A small bathroom that opposite to the girls' bathroom is quite dirty. The first aid kit in this bathroom is mostly emptied apart from a few adhesive bandages.
- [8] **Polybius:** In the darker corner of the room stands the black and nondescript arcade cabinet of Polybius. The machine next to it seems to be perpetually broken.



Leads in Gregg's Arcade Emporium

There are many different leads and a lot of different information to be found at this location. The players can find their way in either after opening hours by breaking in, or by befriending or using their relationship with Andréa.

Leads the characters can find include:

The drawers in the counter contain a lot of interesting things. In the stack of manuals, one can find the manual for Polybius which contains very basic troubleshooting information along with DIP switch settings (reset memory, easy/normal/hard, one/two/three credits per quarter, access to password menu on/off). The access to password menu will come in handy once they solve a future puzzle. There is also the service number (555)312-4321 as well as the address 43 Birchwood Drive, Portland Oregon for Sinneslöschen's US headquarters.

Inside the drawers one can find keys to all arcade machines apart from Polybius. Since the keys are generic, there are only five different keys, all with a key tag in a different color and a number written on it with a ball bearing pen. Since there is no way to tell if any of these keys will fit Polybius, the players will have to try them or ask Andréa.

The drawers of Gregg's office desk are also locked but easy enough to break into due to the quite flimsy quality of the desk. Only Gregg has the keys to this desk. Inside one will find a bottle of whiskey, half empty. Big caliber bullets (.357 Magnum) for a gun, but not the gun itself. A broken cathode ray tube, that is leaking and forming a foul-smelling puddle in one of the drawers of the desk (John, who has knowledge about CRTs, would realize that these are supposed to have a vacuum, not be filled with liquid).

The way forward

The characters should realize that they need to get hold of the information on how to reach Sinneslöschen. They're not listed in the yellow pages and no matter where they look they cannot find any information on it. The only ones who have that information are the Repairmen, Andréa and Gregg.

Andréa: The easiest way is to ask Andréa. She will not provide them with the location or their number, but she mentions that the manual has the information. Depending on the characters and what they do with Andréa she can be more generous with information. Female characters can try to charm her, but she is only forthcoming on what she thinks is actual flirting that might lead somewhere. Friends of hers can beg for a favor which

she will cash in heavy on later on. Andréa also has the keys to this place and if the characters are careful, they can hide in the arcade or sneak in through an open door while Andréa is showering after work to steal the keys from her.

The Repairmen: The characters can spy on the Repairmen and follow them. Next time they come around is in the evening of the next day and if the characters ask them outright they will look at them strangely and not give them any information. If they stoop down to threats or physically harm them they will fight back. Physical harm or harsh words will get nowhere since these people know pain in all forms and know that what the characters do cannot even begin to compare to what they have already been through. If the PCs follow the Repairmen they can reach the headquarters and find out its actual location.

Gregg: This is more or less a dead end. If they start asking Gregg, he will look at them strangely and tell them they best not ask any questions and be gone. If they persist or show any sign of that they know something weird is up with Polybius, he will call The Man in the White Van to collect them.

Breaking in: Breaking in, either by stealing the keys from Andréa or Gregg or smashing a window, is a possibility. There is also an extra key in the filing cabinet in the office that is really hard to find. The GM should let the characters get away with this crime quite easily unless they're being horribly stupid about it and botch all rolls.

Whatever path the characters choose, make sure there are some kind of consequences. If they steal something or leave traces while breaking in, have Andréa look really horrified or sad from having been yelled at and lectured by Gregg. If they follow the Repairmen and are spotted, they will attract the attention of The Man in the White Van. Feel free to be creative and inventive.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **Amy:** Spots the reflection of her father in one of the arcade cabinets. When she looks closer she sees a big skull on the display in full 8-bit glory before it returns to the insert-coin screen of Pac Man.
- ◇ **Cathy:** One of The Repairman catches her looking at them and curiously comes closer to her as if walking close to a dog or puppy that they are not sure will bite or not.
- ◇ **Charles:** Suddenly worried about his son, Charles' father says he can't go to the tournament and that he must stay home.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** All top-10 scores, which were held by "EVE" are gone. There are just two normal scores for AND, the rest are the placeholder scores. If asked about it Andréa says the Repairmen had to replace something inside the machine and the scores reset. Evelyn can no longer remember her highest score. How do she feel about that?
- ◇ **John:** One of the Repairmen accidentally drops a cathode ray tube which John sees but the repair man doesn't seem to notice. No one would miss it, would they? If he goes for it while they're still in the building they confront him and ask for it back. If he goes for it afterwards it is gone, though he could swear it was there and no one else got close to it.
- ◇ **Kyle:** Feels suddenly worse, a lot worse and must try to center himself. It is as if the arcade is fading away and is replaced by a very run down and mold-smelling version of itself for a moment.

Sinneslöschen

43 Birchwood Drive, Portland Oregon. One way or another, the characters will find themselves here though their investigations. If the characters decide they do not want to go, do a few normal days in school or something of the kind and let the players find themselves increasingly confused and inside the arcade, playing Polybius with no recollection of how they



got there. Give one of the characters a hint that when they rub their temples they feel dimples in the very bone that never were there before. Pressing firmly against the dimples makes them taste weird colors and see what feels like scentient sounds, making them almost faint. If they try calling the number from the manual, one of the Repairmen will answer and ask if repairing is needed. If the characters calling says yes, they will head to Gregg's Arcade Emporium right away and leave the office empty for at least an hour. *GM note: If you want to have fun with it, let the characters know how long it takes to drive to the office from the arcade (about 20-30 minutes in each direction) and then use an hourglass or a timer to countdown the time in real time.*

The Repairmen don't lock the door when they leave and the door remains open at all hours. The Repairmen sleep in the beds upstairs on level 4 between 2am and 6am. Their sleep is very shallow and unrestful and if the players are move on the 4th floor they have to roll **Act Under Pressure** not to wake them.

If they come there during normal open hours, there is always one Repairman posted in the reception. He is extremely unhelpful and will under no circumstance let any teenagers in.

Floor Plans for Sinneslöschen's Headquarters

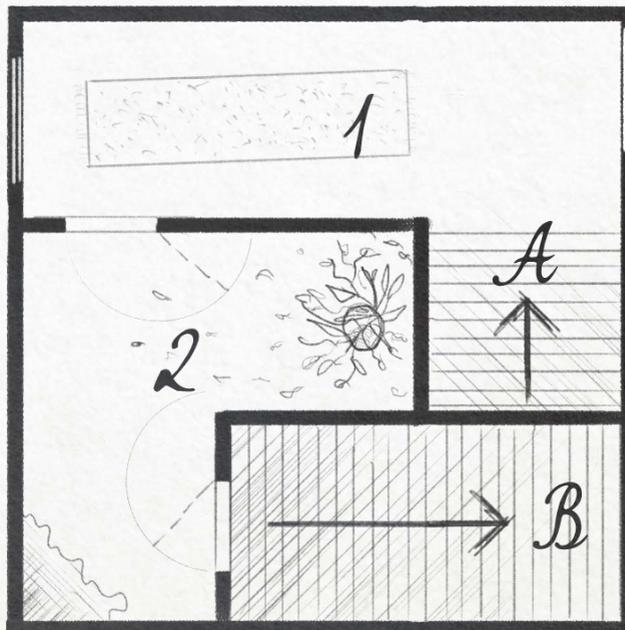
Ground level

- The reception:** The building itself is two floors tall which is important to mention to the characters, since inside there are four floors. Between the sidewalk and the building there are mostly dead shrubs. Before one enters the reception area, there is a small set of stairs leading up to the building and you can either go to the left where there is a small sign saying "Sinneslöschen" or to the right where there is a sign saying "Lawson & Sons" which is a small-scale design bureau which is run by Stephen Lawson and his sons Andrew and Mitch. If the players talk to these guys about Sinneslöschen, the Lawson's will admit to finding the people of Sinneslöschen to be very eerie and freaky and for that reason they have avoided them. The reception to Sinneslöschen feels very out of place and more like whatever was there before is still there now with minimal effort to make it seem like the office to a game manufacturer or even repair firm. There is a sofa by the windows and an easy chair next to it. On a low coffee table there are random magazines strewn about, most date from between 1970 to 1975 with maybe one or two arcade game magazines on top. There is a desk with a calendar and a rotary dial phone on top. There is an in/out box that is filled with invoices to be sent or dealt with. On the desk in this office is a state of the art computer which contrasts with everything else in here being dated and old. The computer is a Commodore VIC-20 with a RAM expansion cassette, a cassette drive and a dot matrix printer connected to it. The printer sits next to two filing cabinets that is filled with paperwork for buying equipment and doing repairs.
- The hallway:** This is a long hallway that looks like it has not had a proper cleaning for over a year. The floor is linoleum with a huge carpet on top of it which covers almost the whole floor. The carpet is dirty and a bit sticky. By the door from the reception is a window with the blinds drawn so that no light comes in from the outside. The only light is the sterile incandescent light tubes in the ceiling. The

handle to the door leading to the bathroom is covered in oil and looks very dirty. At the very end of the hall there is a stairway leading up to the second floor.

- Bathroom:** The bathroom is small and cramped with a very dirty sink full of rust and water stains. The toilet brush shows signs of years and years of usage and the toilet paper is almost out. There is a very foul stench in here as if there is something rotting. Opening the closed toilet seat reveals that the source of the smell is a dead rat floating in the bowl.
- Repair room:** This is a strange combination of a repair room and lunch room. It is clearly improvised to be a repair room and a normal office table is used as a bench to store tools on. There is also a note on the workbench with information on how to set the DIP switches on the arcade to enter the password menu as well as a long string of numbers for a Polybius square. The kitchen table is empty apart from a dead potted plant and a grimy old coffee cup. There is an open Polybius arcade machine in here with its innards spilled out on the floor. It will not start and doesn't work, awaiting a new logic board.
- Walk-in closet:** This room is filled with a pile of old, worn clothes right in front of the door. Just heaped up against the wall. Hanging on hangers are the jumpsuits that the Repairmen use. Unused for months are cleaning supplies against one of the walls with soap, bleach and such things.

2nd level



Second level

- Upstairs hallway:** This hallway has a staircase leading down to the bottom floor and two windows on each end of it. Like the floor beneath it, the carpet here is very dirty and a bit sticky. If you look out the windows you can see a back lot though the window closest to the stairs and the street outside through the window closest to the door. If one stop to think about it, it is very obvious that something is messed up with the distances here and the hallway is much shorter than it should really be.

GM note: be careful when describing this and just hint at it for the time being. For instance, mention that the hallway here is shorter than downstairs and when they look out the window they see the front entrance.

- [2] **Passageway:** The linoleum here is yielding and spongy, the reason being some sort of fluid leakage. The whole room smells of mold. In a deep alcove there is a long dead flower, its brown, crisp leaves spread out over the floor. Cockroaches can be seen scuttling about and trying to hide as one enters the room. The wallpaper has started to peel off the walls, showing flaking mudded red paint underneath. There is a door leading to a staircase upwards here to the third floor. Just before one can enter the third floor there is another door, opening inwards.

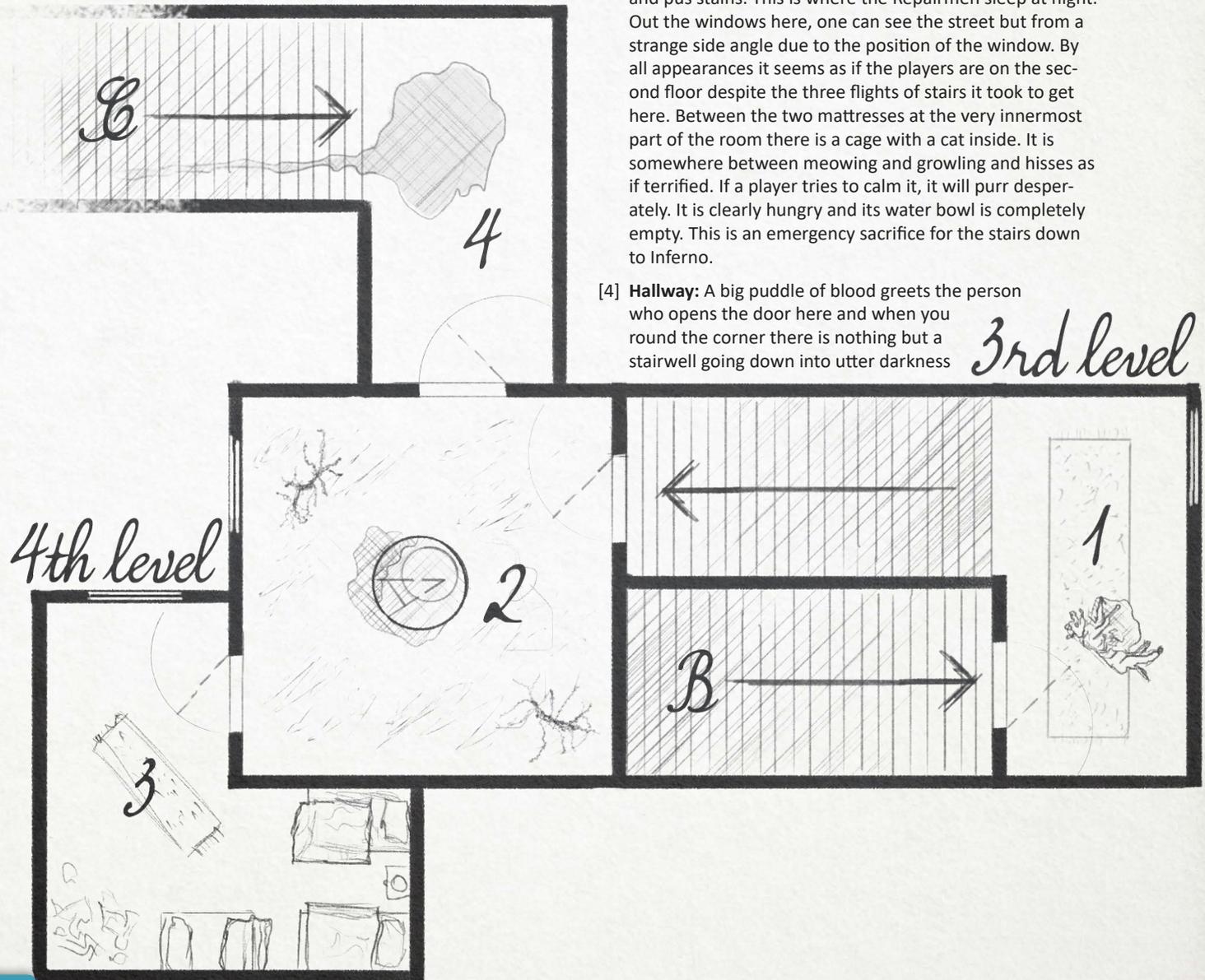
Third and fourth level

- [1] **Halfway landing:** From the stairs leading up here from the second floor, one walks straight out onto a landing with another one of those dirty carpets. When the door is opened, it bumps into something soft and quite heavy

which shows to be the long dead corpse of an animal the size of a dog. It is hard to tell due to it being quite rotten. Despite this being a halfway landing, the walk here is as far as the previous flight of stairs, making this a very small third floor even though there are only two floors from the outside. The window is shut and barred and can't be opened. Through the gaps in the bars one can see the same back lot as before.

- [2] **Sacrificial room:** This is a chamber made entirely out of concrete. Walls, ceiling, floor. It looks very little like any other room in the building. In the center of the room is a waist high pillar that features a weird engraving of Thaumiel's symbol. This is what the Repairmen use to pass through to Inferno and back. Without a sacrifice, the stairway down (room 4) will just continue forever.
- [3] **Bedroom:** This bedroom reeks of sour sweat and sickness. There are three worn mattresses here with thin filthy blankets and heavily stained bedlinen. The carpet on the floor is wet and makes squishing noises when walked upon. In a corner one can find clothing with sweat, blood and pus stains. This is where the Repairmen sleep at night. Out the windows here, one can see the street but from a strange side angle due to the position of the window. By all appearances it seems as if the players are on the second floor despite the three flights of stairs it took to get here. Between the two mattresses at the very innermost part of the room there is a cage with a cat inside. It is somewhere between meowing and growling and hisses as if terrified. If a player tries to calm it, it will purr desperately. It is clearly hungry and its water bowl is completely empty. This is an emergency sacrifice for the stairs down to Inferno.

- [4] **Hallway:** A big puddle of blood greets the person who opens the door here and when you round the corner there is nothing but a stairwell going down into utter darkness



with only a few flickering fluorescent lights. If the players start down these stairs they are heading towards Inferno. One must however ritually sacrifice an animal on the altar in the sacrificial room to enter it. If not, the stairs just keep going forever without end, and to get back, you need to go as far back up as you went down. This passageway is what the Repairmen use to go back and forth between Inferno to drop off samples taken by Polybius.

Leads in Sinneslöschen's headquarters

Leads on the first level:

In the reception, still in the printer, is a printout of current status about the test subjects. The printout reads:

```

o ## Cipher: QUICK ????? DEATH ????? PROXY
o Only a few subjects remain that are still of inter-
o rest:
o -----
o Subject #05: 332155
o Subject #08: 1433343555
o Subject #10: 14353352453223
o Subject #11: 324132455542
o Subject #16: 44533542
o Subject #14: 15554532
o -----
o Next subject to have run its course is #11 who is
o up for termination. Need 5 more samples. Next the-
o reafter is #14 who is showing clear signs of dete-
o rioration.
o
o Let Gregg know I am pleased with his work. This cy-
o cle is nearing an end and I want to see all subj-
o ects above terminated within a month. Then we exp-
o and the project into central Portland.
  
```

The subject numbers refer to the player characters encoded with a Polybius square. From top to bottom the encoded names read *Amy, Cathy, Charles, Evelyn, John, Kyle*. The characters need the decipher key to be able to read the names and realize it is their own names in there.

In the repair room the players find the following note which is another printout from the printer in the store, giving information about the DIP switches as well as a handwritten code. This code is encoded with the Polybius square.

```

o ----- Polybius DIP switch settings -----
o
o DIP SW      1   2   3   4   5   6
o Mem Reset   ON
o Easy        ON OFF
o Normal      ON ON
o Hard        OFF ON
o Freeplay                    OFF OFF
o 1 coin 1 credit                ON OFF
o 1 coin 2 credit                ON ON
o 1 coin 3 credit                OFF ON
o Password menu                    ON
o
o Password: 4532341334311332
  
```

The password is encoded with a Polybius square, same as above and the characters need the decipher key to be able to read it. The code is "LETITDIE".

Leads on the third level

The **halfway landing** has a dead animal that has been used as sacrifice. Whatever it was it is long dead and so rotted and partly eaten away at it is almost impossible to tell what animal it used to be.

The way forward

There are many clues to be found in the headquarters for the players. The most important ones needed are easy enough to get. The key one is the printout in the repair room which contains a code. Another important clue is the other printout, that can be found in the reception. Those two printouts together should be enough to give them a clue that they are dealing with a code and that they need a decryption key of some sort.

The rest of the house also gives hints towards the supernatural nature of everything.

Clever players may already have figured out the nature of the cipher, otherwise the player characters will have to look into the nature of the cipher somehow to figure out what kind it is and how to solve it. A good way might be to involve contacts that might be fitting in case the players can't figure it out themselves.

The players might also just think that the numbers written down are the actual password for the arcade which they will probably come to realize is wrong once they see the Post-it note with the cipher key inside the arcade cabinet.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **Amy:** The animal corpse found on the halfway landing on the third level looks a lot like her dog Rover, only very decomposed with its innards spilled out on the floor. She can just about see his collar and if she dares to go check it, it actually says Rover on it, even if her dog is still by her side.
- ◇ **Cathy:** Without warning, as Cathy sees the open and gutted Polybius machine, she is thrown back into a nightmare of the Repairmen as she saw them behind the Illusion for that moment. She realizes that they are not insectoid, but terribly, horribly tortured people.
- ◇ **Charles:** At some point, Charles discovers something of his brother's. A shoe, a shirt, his wallet or home keys, and realizes that the Repairmen are somehow in on everything, making his Oath of Revenge encompass even them, giving him a reason to attack them next time he sees them.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** When inside the sacrificial room, for a moment, just one moment, Evelyn sees everything clearly again. She has a very lucid feeling, as if waking up from a long sleep for the very first time.
- ◇ **John:** The realization that the building is taller on the inside rather than on the outside hits John like a ton of bricks. It should NOT be possible. This is making so very little sense! He is put out of commission for five minutes, just walking back and forth spitting forth facts about space and time while trying, and failing, to rationalize it.
- ◇ **Kyle:** Granny Fanny is urging Kyle on, even if the group doesn't want to, to go find the dead animal on the halfway landing and collect some of its moldy fur.

Stage 2

By here the players know something is wrong and that they are somehow caught up in something big. Due to the nature of it, they know no grownups will actually believe them and since what they've found is supernatural in nature there is no way to involve the police. Attempts at involving the police will only result in a report that is soon forgotten.

Find the Key

By now, the characters have a way to access the machine's circuit board compartment to be able to access the password menu. They can either try to break into it or find the keys. Once they've opened the machine they might want to try just setting the switch to the password menu. However, the password only accepts eight characters so the number they got will not fit in there. Inside there they also find a Post-it note with some information written down.

This is called a Polybius square. The way to decipher something is to take the code and group the numbers in groups of two. For instance, 332155 would be split to 33 21 55. Looking at the third row and the third column gives the letter A. Looking at the second row and the first column gives M.

Looking at the fifth row and the fifth column gives Y. So, 331255 spells AMY. The same is true if one is to write something using the same cipher. For instance, to spell out DIE, one first looks at D, which is on the third row and the first column; 31. I is on the first row, third column; 13. E is on the third row, second column, 32. So DIE is 311332.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	Q	U	I	C	K
2	M	F	S	D	W
3	D	E	A	T	H
4	V	N	G	J	L
5	P	R	O	X	Y

If the players can't figure it out right away they need to get out of the video arcade to do their research. This can be done in any number of ways depending on the characters:

- ◇ **Amy:** With seduction or manipulation of the right people she can get someone smart enough to help her learn what is needed. A teacher at school for instance.
- ◇ **Cathy:** Can get help through her contact David Carlsen who knows a thing or two about antiques and ciphers.
- ◇ **Charles:** Has no real contacts or relevant advantages to help him and will have to improvise.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** Can try to reconnect with her boyfriend whom she knows is into puzzles.
- ◇ **John:** Can make use of his Scientist advantage to figure out how to use it on the spot.
- ◇ **Kyle:** This is a perfect reason to try and contact Cathy, who he knows to be book smart but who will instead introduce him to David Carlsen. Granny Fanny knows exactly what this puzzle is and sends mental images that she can solve it, but only if Kyle does a couple of things for her.

Once the password is figured out they can turn the machine off by unplugging it, flip the DIP switch for the password, turn it back on, and enter the code "LETITDIE". Once they do that, the characters are greeted with a menu with four options:

- ◇ **Registered users:** This option opens up a sub-menu, showing the names of all the player characters (as well as the unused characters). No one else is in the list. If one selects a user, yet another sub menu pops up with the following information: Addiction, Hypersomnia, Insomnia, Liar, Megalomania, Mythomania, Narcolepsy, Night terrors, Sexual neurosis, Sleep paralysis, Terminal illness and Victim Mentality. Each and every one of these is either set to "Enabled" or "Disabled". Which character has what is quite obvious, based on disadvantages and personality. Each user also has an expiration date set for next month, which is when they are supposed to be terminated, labeled simply as "Termination date". The player characters can find out the settings they personally have and learn that they can be enabled and disabled. If they try to do either of these, yet another menu will pop up saying, "USER: Gregg. Password required." This field is 16 characters long. The players will need to find it at a later date.
- ◇ **Temple location:** This opens a menu showing the current temple location to "Oak Grove High School: Basement" with options to set it to something else. Just like above, trying to change it requires Gregg's password. This is the location where Gregg lives and spends his time.
- ◇ **Register new users: YES/NO:** Is currently set to NO, since the experiment is about to be stopped.
- ◇ **Exit and start boot ROM:** Exits the menu and starts the game as usual.

After having had a chance to examine the menu, reading about themselves, and realizing they have an expiration date, the characters can choose what they want to do next. Try to destroy the machine (it will still be functioning later on, no matter how thoroughly they destroy it), steal the cathode ray tubes (will be replaced by the Repairmen), steal the entire machine (which The Man in the White Van will make sure they do not get away with in the next chapter.).

The way forward

Breaking in: To break into the compartment with the circuit board they need to pick the lock or use a crowbar, which is an **Act Under Pressure -2** roll due to the supernatural nature of it. There is also always a danger of being found out (Gregg or Andréa noticing what they are doing, or a random police patrol noticing them if it is during the night).

Gregg's key: Gregg has a key of his own. This information can be drawn out of him though casual conversation if asking about opening and closing the arcade cabinet. But the players have to be very careful not to arouse his anger or suspicion. Andréa also has this information if asked about it. Gregg keeps the key in his coat pocket which he hangs in the office whenever he is working. Getting it is very risky since whenever he mans the desk the back door is closed and whenever Andréa and he is working he tends to sit in his office.

The Repairmen's key: One of the Repairmen, Larry, actually has a key, and this has been established at the very start of the adventure. Since the key is part of Larry, even though within the Illusion it looks like he is wearing the key in a chain attached to his pants, they need to cut off the finger it is attached to. If they try to steal it or attack the Repairmen the Illusion will momentarily shatter and they can see the key for what it really is, a horribly malformed finger on Larry's hand. They can try to cut it and run (**Act Under Pressure -2** to aim any weapon they might have to cut the finger) or defeat Larry altogether.

Whichever path they choose or invent, they will come across a Post-it note inside the maintenance door of the Polybius Machine with the key to the cipher written on it. Either the players can solve it on the spot if they want to. Or, if they can't, they can research to learn what kind of a cipher it is and how to decode it.

They will learn that they are about to die, within a month, and that the location where Gregg lives is in the basement of the school.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **General:** When breaking in, Andréa comes by the arcade to pick something up and she notices the characters and calls out to ask them what they are doing. If they act threatening, she runs away as fast as she can to call the police, but if the players play their cards right she can be convinced what they do is necessary..
- ◇ **General:** If the characters break in to the arcade during the night, all games suddenly and without warning turn on at the same time.
- ◇ **Amy:** Hoover is sitting by the machine as they approach it, looking at it with his neck hair standing on end, as if keeping watch on something that scares him. Amy has never seen him scared before.
- ◇ **Cathy:** Cathy sees the arcade machine for what it really is for a brief instance. Triggering memories from her nightmares, making her realize that nothing about it is like what it seems.
- ◇ **Charles:** Charles sees an old entry for his brother Daniel in the arcade machine, reading "Subject terminated". How does he react?
- ◇ **Evelyn:** Without warning, the need to play the game is overwhelming and she must either **Keep it Together** or play at least one game right now.
- ◇ **John:** If taking a Cathode Ray Tube out of the machine, The CRT breaks in John's hand and a clear fluid leaks out of it. He, and only he, now sees the CRT for what it really is: a vial containing a clear substance, streaked with a drop or two of what looks suspiciously like blood.
- ◇ **Kyle:** Seeing his own information in the user menu, Kyle realizes his terminal illness can be turned on and off. This is probably something the player will pick up on before the bomb is dropped though.

The Chase!

As soon as the characters leave the arcade, the lights from the White Van are upon them, the engine revving angrily, almost sounding like a raving beast that has lost all restraint and rationality. If the characters hesitate, The Van advances a bit and then comes to a break, hits the gas once more for a bit and

comes to a stop again. Inside they see a widely grinning man, The Man in the White Van. Then suddenly he peels off towards them, tires screeching like a triumphant war cry!

The way this scene plays out very much depends on the characters and what they do. Underneath are some suggestions for how to handle different situations and putting an almost unfair amount of pressure on the players. See the *Appendix* for information about moves for the White Van.

No matter the time of day, the players will barely see anyone else around to help them. They will have to fend for themselves.

Fleeing along the streets

Fleeing down the streets is one of the more dangerous things to do since the player characters can be caught up with easily. The Van is very fast, much faster than it should be and will be upon the characters very quickly. Though having speed, control is a bit lacking so the characters will have a chance to get away.

- ◇ **Trees/Street lights/Traffic lights:** The character can try to take cover from The Van. If the characters succeed with an **Act Under Pressure** they can outsmart The Van and will cause **1 Harm** to it.
- ◇ **Other vehicles and cars:** The players might attempt to take cover behind a vehicle. The Van seems to almost ignore other cars and if it runs into them they are set spinning.
- ◇ **Try to get behind a fire hydrant:** The hydrant is sent flying and a gush of water shoots up from where it once stood. Momentarily unbalancing The Van.
- ◇ **Bridges/overpass:** A bridge or overpass can prove an effective way to get away. This will momentarily put the characters in a safe position but The Van catches up very quickly.

Fleeing through alleyways

There are alleyways near the arcade which the characters can go through to try and avoid The Van. This might be the better choice, even if they can't flee through these alleys forever. They will have to exit somewhere eventually.

- ◇ **A tight corner:** If the characters go through a tight corner in an alleyway The Van will have a very hard time to maneuver, making The Van smash into sides of buildings. If enough corners are smashed into add **1 Harm** to The Van.
- ◇ **Garbage containers:** Moving one of these in the path of The Van will need an **Act Under Pressure** to be able to pull off without The Van catching up. This will both add **1 Harm** to the vehicle as well as win a lot of ground before it can grind through the obstacle.
- ◇ **Climb fire escape:** All characters will not be able to climb the same fire escape to get out of the way. They need to roll **Act Under Pressure** to be able to jump up and catch one of these. If they do, one might be able to climb the fire escape ladder before The Van is upon them.

Fleeing across back yards/parks

Near the arcade there is a park with little paths and walkways. There is also a pond, a fountain and a statue along with benches. During the day there are some people here, but they will run away from The Van in terror and might serve as cannon fodder. There are also houses with backyards with tall and low fences they can be jumped and climbed to try and get away.

- ◇ **Someone they know:** The characters see someone they know, maybe a friend, a relative, a teacher. If they go to them for help they will try to do so but will also get killed unless the characters can save them.
- ◇ **The fountain/statue:** The Fountain and statue both have a marble base and can't be crashed through to reach players. If they manage to fool The Man in the White Van to crash into the fountain or statue (*Influence Other*) it will inflict **1 Harm** on it. After this The Man might either get out of the vehicle to get at them, or just circle around the fountain or statue like a prowling shark.
- ◇ **Jumping fences:** There are a number of fences here and there that the players can jump to get through backyards of different houses. A roll for *Act Under Pressure* might be called for climbing the higher ones, and if the players play their cards right, they might outmaneuver The Van by hiding in the right place.
- ◇ **Patches of trees:** The Van cannot go through large trees in the nearby parks or groves and will have to go around them, winning the players some time.

Fleeing by car/bike

Driving or going by bike can be interesting since it'll be a supernatural van against a normal car or a group of people on bikes. If going by car down straight roads, The Man in the White Van will toy with the players and make sure to bang up their ride as much as he can before he tries to kill them.

- ◇ **Alleys, narrow roads:** A roll for *Act Under Pressure* is definitely needed to try and outmaneuver The Van. With successful rolls, the players will gain ground and The Van will receive **Harm**.
- ◇ **Biking:** The bikes work much the same way as the car and can be used in similar fashion. The time gains aren't as much but they are easier to maneuver and penalties for *Act Under Pressure* rolls should keep that in mind.

Trying to hide/split

The key to survival is hiding and running, even though it is difficult. Here are some tips or ideas how to handle specific situations.

- ◇ **Hiding out in the pond:** The pond in the park is quite deep, requiring the players to swim to get far enough into it. The Van will screech to a halt in front of it and The Man in the White Van will get out to shout at them from the shore. If it's during daytime and people are around they will confront him, buying the players some time to escape before The Man subdues the interlopers. If during night, he will shout to them that they can't stay there forever, which is true since the water is really cold and they are rapidly losing energy. Getting out is dangerous, however if the characters are in the pond at night they can try to outsmart their pursuer by *Influence Other* (diving to hide from the headlights for instance) and win some time.

- ◇ **Hide inside a store or building:** This can let the characters feel safe for a while but regardless of the store or the size of building The Van will smash into it. Busting the entire front of the store open and try to drive inside. This causes **1 Harm** to The Van. This might cause The Van to get stuck temporarily, making The Man in the White Van briefly pursue them by foot before going back inside his van.
- ◇ **Hiding:** They can run, but they can't hide forever. If they manage to hide (a successful *Act Under Pressure*) The Man in the White Van will lose them temporarily. However, they will always hear the engine nearby, forcing the players to keep hiding and go through back alleys. This can be used to great effect to put pressure on the characters. The Van will find the characters every now and then and go after them again.
- ◇ **Splitting up:** If the players split up, The Van will always go for the larger group of people. If they all split in equal parts, The Van goes for whomever it thinks look the weakest.

The way forward

This scene is added here only for action and quite tough action at that. It breaks up the flow a bit after what has been a lot of detective work. The GM should feel free to use this scene however she wishes. Either it can be an actual action sequence or it can be used more as a thriller scene with hiding and trying to get away. The scene ends whenever the GM feels like it, but here are some suggestions for when to end it:

- ◇ **The Van totals:** The Van sustains too much **Harm** and is totaled. They can choose to fight The Man in the White Van but he is very, very powerful. If they do, he will go into his true form. If they run away, he can't go any further than 20 meters due to the cable going from The Van to him or disconnect and chase them for another 10 minutes before he runs out of power and the players get away.
- ◇ **The police:** The police enter the chase, giving the players a chance to get away. At first The Man in the White Van will ignore the police, but when they become too many he is forced to hide. If the players stay and talk to the police, statements are taken and they are driven back home to their homes. Everyone will be upset, but it feels less than it should be, as if everyone had their senses dulled. No one will fully believe them and it is seen more as a "drunk reckless driver who got away" than a scary man chasing a bunch of kids. This is due to the nepharite's pervading influence in the suburbs.
- ◇ **They hide for long enough and The Van drives away:** They are safe for the moment, and they can run away to their homes to feel at least somewhat safer for a while.
- ◇ **They are actually caught:** The Man in the White Van manages to catch one or more of the players and throws them into his van after having stunned them by running into them. They can try to get away or be taken into Inferno and The Man Van's private slice of purgatory.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **Amy:** As the chase is ongoing, Amy's dog Roover appears without warning to put himself between her and The White Van. The gesture is beautiful but it will serve nothing more than to slaughter the dog. She can save him but at the risk of her own life.

- ◇ **Cathy:** Is keeping pace really good due to her soccer practice, so good that the others are falling behind. She knows she can escape and go hide somewhere and leave the others to their fate. By doing this she can save herself, but knows that the other's won't be so lucky.
- ◇ **Charles:** Charles sees his little brother sitting inside the car on the passenger seat. He is naked and has his hands handcuffed behind the headrest of the seat. He is bruised and looks harrowed and scared. He is screaming but the sound is drowned out by the car engine. If Charles plays his cards right it might be possible to save him at this point, but it will be very hard.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** In the middle of the chase, adrenaline surges though Evelyn, waking her up and making her feel alive, truly alive for the first time in months... or at least since her visit at Sinneslöschen in case her bomb was used there too. The adrenaline rush makes her laugh a howling laughter and she feels like she could take on the whole world. In her temporary lucid madness, she has fallen behind, The Van closing in fast.
- ◇ **John:** If John collected the cathode ray tubes in the earlier chapter, he now drops all of them either by dropping the bag he carries them in, or by ripping open a coat or jacket pocket. Most of them survive intact, but he has to stop and turn around to be able to save them from the oncoming Van, at the risk of his own life.
- ◇ **Kyle:** Can't keep up, his breathing goes more and more shallow and an ice-cold fear grips him and threatens to throw himself into a panic attack. He must have constant aid by his friends not to be caught up by The Van.

Stage 3

A moment of rest

This is the last chance for the characters to do whatever things they want to do before the end game. Here they get a chance to prepare themselves and also the GM gets to play out the last parts of any subplots for the characters. The Man in the White Van will back off for a little bit but for added pressure may be seen cruising the streets near where they live, looking for them but not doing anything unless the characters do something first. The players should feel free to wrap up any unfinished business before taking on Gregg in the school.

At this time Gregg will stop coming to work, telling Andréa that he has caught the flu. The characters can also do some leg-work to make a plan for how to enter the basement.

- ◇ **Basement location:** The basement is located under the school gymnasium.
- ◇ **Basement key:** The groundskeeper has a big set of keys dangling from his belt. There is also an extra set of keys in his workshop. All of the keys are marked for their use so the correct one is easy to find.
- ◇ **Gregg's whereabouts:** The players will not be able to find Gregg at this point. He claims to be sick and can't be found at his home. In reality he is in his temple in the school basement.
- ◇ **The Man in the White Van's whereabouts:** He keeps circling around and if followed, he doesn't seem to ever stop. If he sees the players following him, he will give them either a bit of a chase or drive away. But nothing like the previous chase scene.

The way forward

As soon as the characters feel ready and have prepared, they can take on Gregg in the school.

Suggested bombs

- ◇ **Amy:** A friend of Amy calls her and says that she's seen her with the other players and that she is going to out Amy for the rest of the clique.
- ◇ **Cathy:** Cathy has a nightmare about being trapped in a trepanation machine as the Repairmen look at her, whispering among each other. Allowing Cathy to see the whole truth about the machine as she feels her temples being crushed and warm blood spill down her cheeks. Once she wakes up, she can feel how there are actual dimples in the bone where her skull was drilled into, same as everyone else.
- ◇ **Charles:** The Man in the White Van has it out for Charles. He is constantly observing him. The Van always being close but out of reach nonetheless.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** Timmy, Evelyn's boyfriend, calls her and says that he wants to break up. There is nothing left in this relationship for him.
- ◇ **John:** When using the machine, something comes through the hole it punches into the Illusion. Something horrifying, and extradimensional. Nothing too dangerous or lethal, but still something that John can't explain. For instance a c

or a nachtkäfer that he could easily kill with a swift stomp or two of his foot. Or maybe an Angel's wing feather that won't stop dripping blood from its torn root.

- ◇ **Kyle:** Without warning, Kyle collapses and has to be rushed to the hospital. Once he comes to, his doctor and two very concerned parents are looking down at him. They say that he only has a month left. Though, he knows he can save himself by going into the Polybius menu with the right code.

The Boss battle

Once the characters head to school they first have to go into the basement. It might be as easy as using a crowbar, or they might want to use more finesse. The entrance to the basement is under lock and key and is reached from a side door inside the gymnasium. Once they go into it, they first see a lot of different storages as well as an old boiler. As they keep, walking they head further and further away from the school and deeper into a maze underneath Metropolis. Concrete walls are replaced with what looks more like a sewer and iron pipes entwine with each other in impossible braids. Nothing alive is to be found here apart from maybe a Tekron busying itself with repairing a burst pipe that is leaking some sluggish red liquid. It takes no notice of the players though.

Once they go even deeper, they encounter a room. The room is Gregg's chamber and it is filled with Polybius Arcade Machines, hundreds of them. Some are finished, some are just trepanation devices. Some are somewhere in between. There is a workbench, a soiled old mattress, some moldy and half eaten food.

On the workbench they will find the master code for the arcade written down on a slip of paper, "22334545134243225253214352331432", or once deciphered, "fallingfromgrace". With this they can head back to the arcade and through the password menu log in, first with the old code and then with this one. They can turn their different ailments on or off and within a day the change will take effect. Nothing else of interest can be found here, but it is quite clear that the plan is to expand the Polybius experiment, putting even more innocent people in lethal danger.

The only way to go now is back, however even as they come back to the boiler room and the storage rooms they are still behind the Illusion. They see vague shapes of lost souls moving around and the only way back out is up the stairs they came from.

Once more they come into the gymnasium; which looks almost like it does within the Illusion, only more worn down and in dire need of maintenance. The roof has caved in, showing a dusky red sky above. In the middle of the room is Gregg, along with the Repairmen. If any repairman has been killed before this point, a replacement has been found.

Gregg says that this is the end of the line. Feel free to supply a nice one-liner in 80s horror fashion. Be inventive, and putting a video game flair to it is a good idea. "Game over, children", "Looks like you have run out of credits", "Welcome to the final level", or perhaps, "Time to go from Easy to Very Hard".

- ◇ **A weak group:** If the group is weak, make sure to let the challenge be a bit easier than normal. Let the characters make use of the environment (plinths, benches, ropes) to stagger their opponents or get away momentarily.
- ◇ **A strong group:** A group that is strong or has powerful NPCs aiding the characters can fight the battle full on. Make sure to give the characters a fighting chance.

Halfway through the battle, The Man in the White Van crashes through a wall into the gymnasium, totaling The Van in the process. He steps out and is ready to fight.

- ◇ **A weak group:** If it looks like Gregg and the Repairmen are winning, The Man in the White Van first attacks Gregg, seeing opportunity to go against the man who should by all rights be working for him. Once the purgatives are dead, the razide turns to the players.
- ◇ **A strong group:** The razide assesses the situation and goes to aid Gregg. However, he doesn't really give its all unless Gregg and the Repairmen are all dead.

If one of the players is Charles, he can see how The Van is open and he will get a chance to go into the back, which leads into the purgatory the razide had, where he can save his brother.

Once all enemies are dead, the Illusion will start to fade in again, leaving only a van crashed into the school gym's wall, and The Man in the White Van dead on the floor in his human guise.

End Credits

As the dust settles, the characters will have a chance to get back to the arcade. Once there, they can enter the code and adjust their personal settings to their liking. Once they have done this, they will be free from the curse of Polybius but will remember everything that happened, and anyone who has fallen along the way. The grownups still do not fully understand or believe them but the characters now know something that is wrong with the world. Their experiences have made them aware that the world they live in is but an illusion. But what does all that mean? It leaves them with more questions than answers.

They can choose to move past this and settle down. Maybe live a normal life, have friends, a partner, kids. Live out their lives in the suburbs. Create a secure job for themselves and not ask any questions about the nature of reality.

Or they can choose to see what comes next, and dwell further into this. Who ordered these arcade machines to be made? Why did all this happen, and why to them? Perhaps the time for living the lie has ended. Perhaps it is time to find out more about The Truth and learn why everything they just experienced has happened.

- ◇ **Amy:** Did she learn anything from all this? Did she defeat her father? Will she continue life with her new friends or will she slide back into her old ways and try to forget what happened?
- ◇ **Cathy:** Did this whole scenario make her braver? Will she keep seeking refuge in her books to dream away about fantasy lands that don't exist? Or will she dig deeper to learn about the truths of the real world?
- ◇ **Charles:** Daniel is back and alive! Their parents are happy beyond words but will never understand. But the brothers know what is really going on. How will they handle it? Will they go through the motions of life, or try to learn more about what is real?
- ◇ **Evelyn:** The thick fog in Evelyn's mind has lifted and she has never before seen so clearly. She finds herself in complete control of her powers. Will she keep using them? Or will she try to get back with Timmy and her mom and live out a normal life?
- ◇ **John:** The machine doesn't lead to a Nobel Prize, but to another world. Will he trash his machine, afraid of what it does? Will he improve the design and use it to travel out of the Illusion and learn more about actual reality?
- ◇ **Kyle:** His health returned back to what it should be, the doctors and his parents claiming it to be a miracle, a blessing from god. But Kyle knows this is not the full story. Will he try to figure out why he was made sick? Or is it better not to look the gift horse in the mouth?

Even though the scenario is concluded at this point, the GM should feel free to use this as a starting point to continue further and let the characters learn even more about the truth.

Backgrounds

and Subplots

Detailed in this part is each and every character and their Dark Secrets and how to put their personal subplot into play. The subplots are most importantly here to help develop character depth and give each and every character a chance to be in the spotlight.

- ◇ **Amy:** She has to deal with her father, Frank, who has escaped purgatory. The creatures hunting for him have nothing to do with the other goings-on with Polybius, and the hunters will reward Amy for sending Frank back.
- ◇ **Cathy:** David from Handy Dandies needs help to retrieve a strongbox from his old basement. He cannot go there due to a restraining order from a marriage gone bad and he promises a reward of a rare book she will probably find interesting.
- ◇ **Charles:** Having been kidnapped and tortured for so long in purgatory, Charles' brother Daniel is no longer the sweet little brother he remembers. If Charles can rescue him, which will be really hard, his brother has learned a trick or two.
- ◇ **Evelyn:** When Evelyn uses her wayfinder ability, a gynachid becomes fascinated by her. Evelyn will notice and see it whenever she uses her power. If she befriends it, the creature will stand at her aid whenever the Illusion is weak and can be breached by it.
- ◇ **John:** To finally see the machine complete is John's highest wish. After having gotten his hands on some cathode ray tubes, he can finally complete his life work and go for the Nobel Prize.
- ◇ **Kyle:** The ghost haunting Kyle, Granny Fanny, is making him collect strange and sometimes dangerous things and then have him gather his friends to perform a ritual. This ritual will get Granny back to the world of the living for which she will reward Kyle. Or, so is Granny's plan.

Player Characters

Amy J. Drake

Dark Secret: Victim of crime

From age 10 to 15 she was in increasingly gruesome fashion being molested and raped by her father, Frank Drake. It all started as inappropriate touching and escalated from there. This made her very insecure and broken. After this ordeal, she can't form any meaningful relationships. She covers this up with a facade of power. Frank died in a car accident three years ago. After his death, he was taken into his very own personal purgatory that he mostly built for himself. See *Antagonists* for more information.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Liar: Amy's web of lies consists of many layers. As her lies begin to fall, a suggestion is to work one's way from the shallow lies (why she skipped school that day) to the lies which she dreads anyone finding out about (why she would start crying without reason when she was young). Suggested moves:

- ◇ Teacher calls home and asks Amy's mother where Amy was that day.

- ◇ A boyfriend confronts her about double timing.
- ◇ A friend in her clique learns Amy has been sleeping with her boyfriend.
- ◇ Amy's psychiatrist has let slip her hypothesis about why Amy cried a lot to a friend, and it has found its way into the teacher's lounge. It is only a matter of time before more people learn about it and start whispering behind her back.

Sexual neurosis: If the character has sex and this disadvantage comes into play and you select "The boundary between dimensions are weakened" you can choose to let her father, Frank, appear either right there and then, or throughout the rest of the adventure suggest fleeting sights of him here and there.

Relations

Alex Smith - Boyfriend.

Roover - Family dog.

Subplot

Amy's subplot is to confront her father. There are many ways of doing this and it is a bit up to the GM and the rules set down for the horror contract how she wants to implement Frank in all this. It can be a way to just let Amy confront him, apologies go around and forgiveness is given. Or maybe Frank spies on his daughter until she is alone and he rapes her again, unable to stop his urges. Perhaps Amy outright tries to murder her father.

If Amy kills Frank or keeps him in the same place long enough (two or three hours), the hunters will catch up to Frank and Amy is rewarded by them. As they catch up with him the Illusion shatters and only Frank, Amy and her friends if they're around are left in an otherwise dark void with only a stone floor stretching out into the darkness. The hunters are three purgatides and a nepharite. The purgatides catch him on meat hooks and drag him away into a void, while the nepharite, a slender good-looking man in a blood-soaked turn of the century dress, very formally thanks Amy for killing or delaying Frank enough for them to catch up. He rewards her with a chain osteotome, basically a dagger-sized hand operated chainsaw made in the 1830s for cutting through bones. See *Items* for more information.

Cathy J. Kaiser

Dark Secret: Occult Experience

Cathy and her friend Carolyn went to Gregg's Arcade Emporium to stand in line for Polybius behind Evelyn, when suddenly a sense of dread came over them both and they hid as the Repairmen came into the arcade. They watched as one of them plucked out a key and opened the machine, seeing tons of strange mechanical and electrical parts inside. Suddenly the Illusion shatters and they're in a dark and scary place, the Repairmen are clearly tortured, wounded and tormented beings who are collecting strange, liquid-filled vials from the machine and replacing them with empty ones. The arcade machine now looks more like a device with metallic straps in which Evelyn is stuck. A trepanation drill is slowly drilling into her skull, draining her head of some clear liquid that goes into a small tank that fills the Repairmen's vials. She and Carolyn run for their lives. Now, she only remembers seeing the Repairmen as weird

insectoid creatures. But in her dreams, she often sees what actually happened. Carolyn has blocked off even being there, but she can be triggered to remember.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Obsession: Cathy is obsessed with finding out more about the arcade machine, even to the extent where she'd risk her life. Here are some suggested GM moves to use as inspiration:

- ◇ Cathy blurts out her ideas about the Repairmen in casual conversation with someone not involved or to Carolyn who might have memories flooding back.
- ◇ The Repairmen have taken notice of how she is obsessed with them and whenever they see her, they curiously move over to her.
- ◇ Gregg takes notice of Cathy spying on the Repairmen and lets The Man in the White Van know.

Nightmares: Her nightmares revolve around seeing the Repairmen. Depending on how far into the story the characters are, this is a great way to dispense clues and information.

Relations

David Carlsen - Clerk at Handy Dandies.

Carolyn Chambers - Best friend forever.

Subplot

Whenever Cathy decides to first visit her friend David Carlsen she is greeted as usual, asked how her day has been and then introduced to his latest stack of books she might find interesting. Somewhere between introductions and her leaving he asks her in confidence if she can help him with something. He says there is a house at the other side of the river that he used to live in once. It is old and run down. He asks her to go there and retrieve something of his. He cannot be seen in the area due to a restraining order. If asked more closely, he says that there was a marriage gone bad. If she does this for him, he will give her discounts for the rest of her life, along with something very special. What she is asked to retrieve is a metal strongbox that is in the basement, there should be only one.

She receives his key and is told to use the side door in the back which leads straight down into the basement. This door however is hopelessly stuck and made out of metal so she can't get through there. Instead she will have to go through the front door. The Illusion here is quite weak and Reality bleeds into it here and there. Giving glimpses and sometimes even leading into a labyrinth of a house. The GM should feel free to use any good scare tactics she wants to enhance the eerie feeling. Once in the basement Cathy finds the strongbox which is a metal box with a swastika on it. Something Daniel's grandfather brought from the war. Suddenly someone is trying to open the door leading into the basement, but seems to be failing. If Cathy stays and listens, she hears the same sounds she made when outside and trying to get inside. If nearing the door, a click is heard and it glides slightly open. Either Cathy can backtrack or go out through the opened door. Once outside, it will be late night, no matter what time it was when Cathy went inside.

Once she returns the box to David the next day, he is delighted and opens it up with a key he has on a chain around his neck. He makes sure no one can look inside as he does (if someone somehow manages to sneak a peek inside it got a lot of second world war memorabilia, a picture of a beautiful woman which was David's grandfather's German mistress and some gold

coins and the like). He takes a book from the box and hesitates before handing it to Cathy. He says that it is a one of a kind book, written by Heinrich Himmler for the Ahnenerbe project (Nazi Germany's Occult Research Branch). See *Items*.

Charles S. Lawson

Dark Secret: Strange disappearance

His little brother Daniel was a subject to the Polybius experiment and his usefulness had run its course. The Man in the White Van came and took him and put him inside a private little slice of an old forgotten purgatory and processed another corpse to look like Daniel. If the dead would person be exhumed now, the corpse would look nothing like the brother Charles once had. No one else but Charles knows this, and he has tried to make people believe him but to no avail.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Stalker: The Man in the White Van has taken notice of Charles and is spying on him. The stalker is trying his very best to not go after Charles since he has no orders to actually kill this youngster. But being a razide it is very hard for him to act against his nature. Suggested moves for the GM:

- ◇ The Man in the White Van is seen spying on him from across the room/plaza/park.
- ◇ Charles happens across The Man in the White Van as he is kidnapping another child in broad daylight and no one seems to notice or care.
- ◇ The neighbor's cat is found dead and horrifically mutilated on Charles' bed with a note attached saying "You're next!"
- ◇ All bets are off, for a few hours before The Man in the White Van can get a hold of himself he goes for a wild chase to kill Charles, letting his true self be seen but only to Aware characters.

Oath of Revenge: At the start Charles will believe only The Man in the White Van is responsible. But as the plot evolves he will learn that Gregg and even the Repairmen are responsible so the oath will be expanded to include them too.

Relations

Andréa Farland - Acquaintance, employee at Gregg's Arcade Emporium.

Zhang Ce - Sifu.

Subplot

Charles will have two chances to save his brother. The first one is in Stage 2, The Chase, when Daniel can be seen on the passenger side next to The Man in the White Van. The razide has brought Daniel with him as another method of torture, to show Daniel how he kills his older brother. Clever roleplaying can save Daniel already here. See *Contacts and Notable NPCs* for more information on Daniel and how he can be used.

If failing during The Chase, another chance will present itself just as the razide is killed in the finale. Momentarily the Illusion will give way and open into Inferno where Daniel can be seen strapped into an infernal torture device looking a whole lot like a medieval rack. If he acts fast enough, Charles can jump through the rift in reality, free Daniel, and get back out.

Evelyn C. Jordan

Dark Secret: Victim of Medical Experiments

This character is the furthest gone of all characters when it comes to being drained of whatever juices are needed for the nepharite's experiments. This has also pushed her towards actual Awakening, even though she will probably die long before that if she doesn't do something about her situation. Her subconscious is constantly fighting to let Evelyn get back in control but it is a losing battle against Polybius.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Broken: No matter how hard she tries, Evelyn can't get back on her own two legs and become mentally stable. She shows a mere facade to her friends and family but it will not work for much longer. And when it finally breaks down, The Man in the White Van will come for her.

Drug addict: All she can think about is the next time she will get to play the game. Get to the next level. Beat the damn thing. By now she believes she must be the best player in the whole of the united states. But she also knows somewhere deep down that she needs to stop.

Relations

Timothy "Timmy" Kelley - Boyfriend.

Andréa Farland - Friend, employee at Gregg's Arcade Emporium.

Subplot

Whenever Evelyn uses her Wayfinder ability, she will see a gynachid in the shadows. She will sense it isn't hostile, but rather that it is curious. First time they meet, they will see each other head on and the creature will scuttle away. Second time, the creature will curiously approach Evelyn, offering a small, strangely smoky crystal figurine as a token of friendship. The crystal is a gem no jeweler in town has ever seen, but some would pay to own.

If Evelyn Wayfinds or even goes out to look for the creature again after receiving the gift, the gynachid will be very affectionate, secure in the belief that Evelyn likes it as much as it likes her. It already got plans to let Evelyn be the host of its next egg and, after all, Evelyn is very interesting.

In the case that Evelyn chases it away, is scared of it, or even attacks it, the gynachid will back off and leave her alone, losing interest. Otherwise, the gynachid will do whatever it can to protect Evelyn (but not her friends). Depending on how dark the game is, how the horror contract is written, and what limits are set, the gynachid may implant an already fertilized egg in Evelyn and the reason for protecting Evelyn is to make sure the offspring is alright.

John K. Dent

Dark Secret: Forbidden knowledge

John has been building a machine as his thesis project, unknowingly making a gadget that can punch a small hole through the Illusion to show what is hiding behind it. So far, the holes are very small, fist sized, and very temporary and only work every now and again. He believes he has found a way to bend spacetime though.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Bad Reputation: John is hated by most of the students who have come into contact with him due to his toxic personality.

Whether his personality came from being bullied or vice versa is a bit of a chicken and egg discussion. He is the favorite object for everyone at the school to hassle and abuse, and most of the teachers just lets it happen. However, this has started to feel like it is spilling out into the world outside of school too. Suggested GM moves:

- ◇ Get pushed over by a classmate.
- ◇ Get beat up by Alex Smith and his goons.
- ◇ Get falsely accused of spying in the girl's dressing room (though there are real cameras there that John set up but no one knows about that).

Fanatic: The ideology that Jon adheres to is science; rational, empirical logical science. Whenever he is put in a situation where things seem to be supernatural, his instinct is to study it and try to unravel the mystery to show that it is just something mundane. He takes rationalization to a completely new level. But at some point, when the whole Illusion shatters around him, he will be forced to deal with Reality, even if he might try to rationalize it later on.

Relations

Elenora Nelson - Only friendly classmate.

The Machine - John's school project.

Subplot

There are many times during the story when John can grab a CRT/Vial and bring it back with him to school to finish repairing his machine. He will need to spend a few hours tinkering to adjust it and afterwards it will work better than it ever did before, punching holes through the Illusion with ease and the holes stay open longer than they ever did. John will see the Machine City on the other side if using it in school and must slowly come to grips with what he thinks reality is. See *Items*.

Kyle C. Marshall

Dark Secret: Curse

Despite what everyone remembers, it wasn't until recently that Kyle became terminally ill. Gregg was tasked with taking samples from a terminally ill human, which would however have hard to find. Instead, he made a brew from something vile in Inferno that he gave to Kyle to make him sick. The sickness is unbound in time and has travelled back through time to the point where Kyle and everyone around him believes he has been sick since birth. The resulting samples have greatly pleased the nepharite.

Disadvantages & suggested moves

Condemned: Since this campaign is short, five dots have already been crossed from Kyle's **Time** tracker. Suggested GM options may include:

- ◇ Tortured by dreams or visions: Sees himself being trapped in the game and the trepanation drill going into his skull. Vivid dreams and memories of never having been ill in the first place.
- ◇ Haunted by the entity that sealed your fate: Gregg tries to soothe the character with a free play of Polybius.
- ◇ Someone in your vicinity is negatively affected: Someone the player character cares about notices he has taken a turn for the worse, overshadowing the need to do something about it by trying to soothe him.

- ◇ Something provides you with false hope of escaping: A doctor comes up with a new cure that works temporarily. If the cure is linked to Gregg somehow, he may lift the curse temporarily to later slam it back down in full force.
- ◇ Kyle relapses into a very bad state and is out of commission for a day or two. Feel free to describe whatever vile symptoms feel the most fitting.

Haunted: Kyle is haunted by an entity he calls Granny Fanny. This is an entity that has been appearing around him since he tried an occult ritual to stop his illness. In reality the entity was summoned when he first became cursed, even though the ritual felt like a last-ditch effort for Kyle. This entity is actually named Dolores Hannigan and used to live in the same parts as the player character. See more information about her under *Contacts and Notable NPCs*.

Relations

Granny Fanny - Ghost haunting Kyle.

Cathy Keiser - Kyle's crush. He can't help but to think about her often, usually accompanied with a sigh. He would like nothing more than to ask her out, but he doesn't dare to. Cathy can be used as a great encouragement to lure Kyle out of his shell.

Subplot

To solve Kyle's subplot, he has to follow Granny Fanny's whims and help perform a ritual that will bring her back to life. Or so Granny Fanny hopes at least. Before that, however, Kyle needs to collect a few more ingredients for the ritual:

- ◇ Fur from a dog sacrificed to a death angel (can be found at Sinneslöschen's Headquarters).
- ◇ A possession belonging to a secret love (Any item belonging to Cathy Kaiser).
- ◇ The fetus of a malformed child (One of these can be found in a jar of formaldehyde in a backroom to the school biology lab).

- ◇ A possession belonging to Dolores Hannigan herself (Can be found in an old house currently inhabited by an old man. The item itself is in an old box up in his attic. The old man didn't even know he had an attic).

Space the requests out over the scenario but make sure Granny Fanny nags whenever it is time to get a new item. Once they are all collected, she will show him images of him getting well again in case he helps her. The ritual requires at least two people and one of them has to be a woman. If none of the players will help or none of the other players is a woman, Granny will suggest Cathy.

The ritual is simple enough. Draw a like-sided triangle on a flat surface then take the fetus out of its jar and place it inside the triangle. Place at the points of the triangle. Stand over the triangle and hold hands with the woman across from it and close one's eyes.

Remember that Granny Fanny can only convey this with impulse images and no words. At this point Granny, will attempt to enter the woman who was chosen for the ritual by first entering the fetus, which will start moving and making little choked sounds. The next part is supposed to be that the fetus is going to do a reverse birth. However, before ever actually coming this far, everything will backfire for Dolores. She will disintegrate and be sucked into the key stuck into her head. She does so leaving the images of the dead, malformed fetus crawling into the woman participating in the ritual burnt into Kyle's brain.

If Cathy was the one and she was an NPC at this time, she will refuse to see him again for a long time. However, in the remains of the ritual paraphernalia, which are now a slushy mess of animal fur and fleshy fetus bits, is the key which was stuck in Granny Fanny's head. Using it will show that it can open any pin tumbler lock (house doors, arcade cabinets, car doors, car ignitions). See *Items*.

Appendix

Items

Chain Osteotome

This item is a gift from a nepharite to Amy if she completes her personal subplot. It is a dagger-sized, hand operated chain-saw made in the 1830s for cutting through bones and helping prepare bone grafts. The item itself is very well made and ornately designed with a skull carved into its handle. This item can be utilized to inflict terrible agony on someone. Using it on someone as a torture instrument gives a **+2** bonus to **Influence Other** to extract information or **+1** to **Influence Other** when being used as a threat due to its ominous nature. It can also be used as a weapon:

Distance: arm

Attacks:

- ◇ Cut, slice, and stab [3]
- ◇ Edge at the throat [0] [you are in control of the target until they break free]
- ◇ Dismember [2] [small appendages can be cut off the target]

Granny Fanny's Key

Granny fanny has a very ordinary looking key stuck in the side of her head. Once her subplot has been dealt with, only the forever blood-stained key remains. What has happened is that she has become the key due to the magical properties the key had. The full story of how this came to be is something that will remain untold. The key itself can be used to open any kind of pin tumbler lock. In other words, it is usable for house doors, car doors, car ignitions, arcade cabinets, and so on. It cannot be used with older doors that have a lever type lock though.

Heinrich Himmler's Book

This book is written by Heinrich Himmler in his very specific pointy and sharp script handwriting. It seems to have to do with Ahnenerbe, which was a project to find the true origins of the Aryan race and uncover its occult powers. It talks a lot about different spells and magical rites. None of them work apart from one, which have been marked with a bookmark having the text "This one actually works!". The ritual is one of protection against evil and if performed it gives **-1** or **-2 Harm** from supernatural creatures for an hour or two. How much it helps and how long is up to the GM to balance. If it is a weak group with no fighters it can be better to reduce harm by a lot rather than just a little and vice versa. The ritual requires blood from a virgin (Cathy may be able provide, this depending on what has happened during the scenario up to this point) mixed with the ashes of a sparrow (a specimen can be found in school) while chanting a verse in Old High German. The mixture is then used to paint a small Odal-rune (⚔) onto the forehead of everyone participating in the ritual, completing the rite of protection.

Cathy will need to spend a few hours translating the ritual before it can be used, and she needs access to a library. Either the one in school or the town library.

John's Machine

The machine John is building is something that goes beyond his own knowledge. It's inspired by supernatural designs but executed in a very scientific manner. How he knew to do what he did is up to dispute and if someone Aware or Enlightened were to find this machine they would write it down to nothing more than absolute genius.

However, in its current state it will not even power on since it is missing its cathode ray tube. But once a CRT is placed into the machine, it can be used to punch a hole into Reality. If time is spent calibrating it, the results will be more reliable. John firmly believes this opens a hole in spacetime to another place, as he's seen glimpses of a city on the other side. Thus far he has passed notes and messages through, as well as his lunch, and "Peppermint" - the grade eleven classroom hamster - that disappeared mysteriously a week ago.

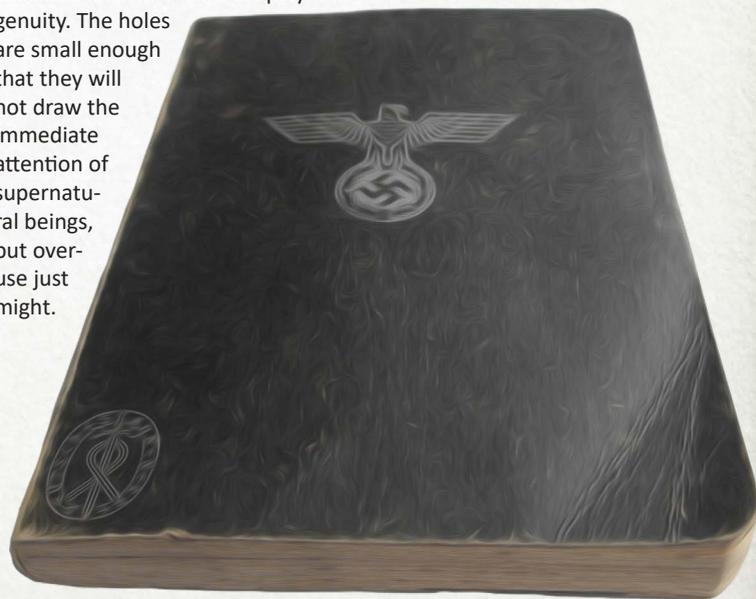
The machine punches a hole in the Illusion, about fist-sized and leading to exactly the same location it is used in. It requires either a generator or mainline power to operate. The warming up takes about 10 minutes per punch-through and the hole lasts about ten or twenty seconds before it closes.

As a **relation**, it can be used as an item-in-distress to put pressure on John. It resides in school most of the time and can be snatched through break-ins. John cares more about this machine than about his own mother and would throw himself in harm's way to make sure it doesn't get destroyed.

As a reward for completing John's sub-plot, this machine can be used to see through the Illusion into Reality. For instance, to find out the true nature of the arcade machine, or see what the Repairmen really are. It can also be used for breaking into different places if reality differs from the Illusion. Feel free to reward player ingenuity. The holes are small enough that they will not draw the immediate attention of supernatural beings, but over-use just might.



CHAIN OSTEOTOME



HIMMLER'S BOOK

The Polybius Arcade Machine

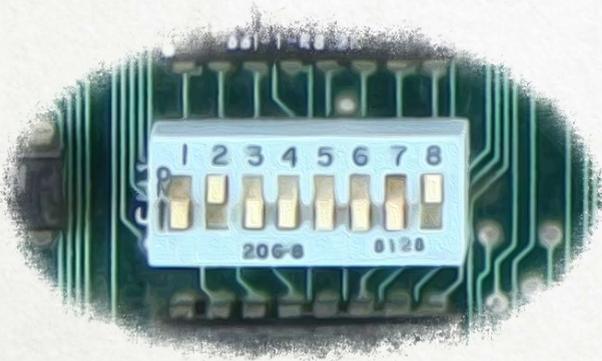
Within the Illusion this looks like your regular arcade machine, very nondescript apart from the marquee in cyan letters saying "Polybius". It's a very simple machine with only one joystick and one button. The location of the stick and the button is opposite to standard convention. It is coin operated and there is a single coin slot that one feeds the coin into and then starts the game by pressing the single button. The cabinet has a maintenance hatch on the side which can be opened. Inside of the door is a hastily sketched Polybius Square on a Post-it note. One can collect the quarters from this compartment. In here there is also an array of five cathode ray tubes mounted, small ones whose purpose is hard to ascertain.

The game itself is a strange, vector-based game where you control a spaceship that fires into the central points of enemy bases. Numbers flash by on the screen signifying both points and vulnerable locations. As a base is destroyed the game progress to the next level and becomes increasingly difficult and increasingly psychedelic.

Outside the Illusion, one sees the true nature of the machine. A wooden framework with intricate carvings held together with equally ornate metal bands makes out the rough shape of an arcade machine. Once someone is playing, metal straps pill them into the machine while a trepanation drill makes holes into the temples of the player. An x-ray would reveal quarter-sized scars on the temples of the person subjected to this game. However, they look like they are since long healed.

The trepanation is completely painless, unless for some reason the person trapped inside the machine would find themselves in it while the Illusion shatters. Then they will experience the pain and feel the metal bits holding them in place while the metal drills go deeper and deeper into their skull.

The five cathode ray tubes are shown to actually be an array of five small vials that collect the clear liquid the machine drains from its victims. These are the vials that the Repairmen collect and transport to the nepharite.



GM note: What are DIP switches, really? They are mentioned here and there in the scenario and for non-arcade enthusiasts they might be relatively unknown. Basically, they are an array of on/off switches on the arcade game board which is a big circuit board. By combining different sets of ons and offs, different options are hard set in the arcade machine. Often this has to do with coin slots, service menus and such things.



Cathode Ray Tubes

The cathode ray tube, or CRT for short, is one of the many things that make John's machine tick. It's a small glass cylinder with connections on each end. Ever since his last broke he's been looking for a new one. However, it's not been easy since the specifications are very precise for it to work. In other words, these tubes that he's been using have been of other-worldly origin. There are five of these in the arcade cabinet, and if one or all are stolen, the machine will be out of commission for a day or two before the missing tubes have been replaced. Their true nature is that these are the vials that Polybius is draining the clear liquid from the skulls of the players into. Within the Illusion, no trace of this can be found.

Antagonists

Frank Drake

Description: Frank used to be a sad, despicable piece of human garbage when he was alive. His death did not make it much easier for him. He has always had dark urges making him look towards young girls. He never acted upon them though, until one day when he was seduced by a libith wearing a body that was so much younger than even he dared to dream about. Tearing down his defenses and make him sleep with her was quick and easy. Then she urged him to do the same with his daughter, which did not take a lot of persuasion either. Quickly growing bored with her victim, the libith moved on to a new target, hoping for more of a challenge.

Frank was a very angular man with an average build and by all conventional terms both good looking and quite average. He had a perpetual stubble that stubbornly grew in after a day without shaving and would be the highlight of anyone's day.

When he died, he went to a personal little purgatory that had been prepared for him ever since the creatures of Inferno had picked up on the libith's doings. He spent three years there, reliving some of the most terrible and horrifying experiences of his life over and over again. All involving his depravity, all involving pain beyond what he thought could exist. However, he managed to escape and find his way back to Elysium and is hunted to be pulled back. It's really just a matter of time.

Frank looks like he did in life, apart from large, roughly stitched-up cuts across his body. He is dressed in a brown trench coat and is wearing a hat to cover his still bruised face.

Motivation: Frank is looking for his daughter, feeling that she is the only one who can save him from purgatory, the only one who can release him and let him go to the heaven that does not even exist. And when that fails he cannot hide his disappointment. Though when he meets her, he will not know how to act. The sexual urges have never been so strong and he lusts for his daughter's body. He might try to rape her just as easily as he might break down and cry and ask her for forgiveness. At first though, he will observe her and stalk her.

Playing tips: Act nervous, a bit happy and very sad upon talking to Amy. Be very, very regretful but with something sinister rippling just underneath the surface. Look over your shoulders as if making sure that you are not being hunted.

Home: A purgatory in Inferno

Creature type: Human, slave to a nepharite

Combat [4], **Influence** [2], **Magic** [-]

Abilities

- ◇ *Bound to Inferno:* Should Frank be killed in Elysium, he will be taken back right to his purgatory in Inferno.
- ◇ *Hatred:* This creature is possessed with a hatred towards Amy and deals +1 Harm against her.

Combat [Powerful]

- ◇ Escape out of harm's way.
- ◇ Jump someone from behind, or as a sudden surprise.
- ◇ Grab hold of and pin someone.
- ◇ Give up or beg for mercy.

Influence [Novice]

- ◇ Trick someone.
- ◇ Know where someone is located [Amy]

Attacks

Unarmed: **Bite**[1], [Distance: arm]; **Kick and punch** [1], [Distance: arm]; **Strangulation** [1], [Distance: arm, victim is pinned and must **Act Under Pressure** to get free; otherwise, they pass out from oxygen loss.]; **Armlock** [0], [Distance: arm, victim is pinned and must **Act Under Pressure** to get free].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○☠

- ◇ Frank grits his teeth and keeps going.
- ◇ Frank screams and let's go of whom or whatever he is holding.
- ◇ Some of Frank's stitches come undone, flowers of blood spread underneath his clothing.
- ◇ With a terrified scream of, "They have found me! I don't want to go back there!" Frank dies and the hunters appear to take him back.

Gregg King

Description: As a person there isn't really much to this man. He looks to be about forty years old and dresses in quite shaggy clothing. Not overweight but neither is he all that thin or fit. He is blonde and has a short crew cut due to his lack of imagination. He would be described as bland at best.

Beyond the Illusion we see a completely different man. Long strips of skin have been removed below his neck in an artistic pattern. In the center of his chest, the face of a porcelain doll is strapped, slowly weeping blood from the beating heart underneath. The whole top of his head is open, skin held into place with long nails to not slide down over his face.

If he goes into combat, he pulls a gun from the pants behind his back, even though there was no gun to be seen there before.

He lives in the basement of the school where he has a hideout and is producing more arcade machines for the next stage of the plan: getting more samples across Portland.

Motivation: He would do anything for his new mistress. Currently he is following the orders he has been given which are to act normal and rule with an iron fist over the purgatives and razide he has been given.

Playing tips: If not exposed, play him as a gruff but ultimately kind middle aged man. He doesn't do well with people but is trying. When exposed for what he is, his voice goes completely dead and he only cares about handling any threats.

Home: Elysium.

Creature type: Purgative, slave to nepharite

Combat [3], **Influence** [3], **Magic** [3]

Abilities

- ◇ *Boss:* Henchmen and servants act fearlessly and with fanaticism for as long as they're in this being's vicinity.
- ◇ *Cold hearted:* Cannot be **Influenced** or charmed.

Combat [Considerable]

- ◇ Tactical retreat to regroup with henchmen.
- ◇ Launch or Join a coordinated attack [player characters take -1 *ongoing* to battle related efforts for as long as Gregg has at least two henchmen he is coordinating telepathically].
- ◇ Take cover [+2 *Armor*].

Influence [Considerable]

- ◇ Upkeep his charade of being an arcade owner.
- ◇ Give orders to henchmen.
- ◇ Request more purgatives from Inferno.

Magic [Considerable]

- ◇ Communicate telepathically with henchmen.
- ◇ Construct other-dimensional machinery [Polybius Arcade Machines].
- ◇ Walk unseen. Can move unnoticed from his home under the school to work.

Attacks

Gregg's power is not with his knowledge of battle, but rather in coordinating his henchmen once they are gathered. The gun is good for 3 ammo. If using the *One extra shot* attack, make sure to make a show of him firing a bullet that shouldn't be there.

Unarmed: Kick and punch [1], [Distance: arm].

Smith & Wesson Model 686: Combat shooting [2], [Distance: room, -1 ammo]; One extra shot [1], [Distance: room, can fire one extra bullet even when out of ammo, can be repeated].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○💀

- ◇ Ignore the damages.
- ◇ Scream in pain as the porcelain doll on his chest starts weeping.
- ◇ Retreat and go into hiding.
- ◇ The doll face is torn off, exposing his beating heart underneath (*Act Under Pressure* -2 to hit, +2 *Harm*).
- ◇ Die.

The Man in the White Van

Description: The Man in the White Van appears to be an overweight, middle-aged man with what little hair he has left greasily sticking to the sides of his head. He has a three-day salt and pepper stubble with patches of a scabby infection. He is wearing a once-white and ill-fitting ribbed tank top with all sorts of stains along with equally dirty jeans. Around him hovers a strange odor of rusted metal, ozone and oil.

Outside of the Illusion, he is in reality a strange combination of machine parts and human flesh, tendons and muscles. Parts of him seems to be made of the very vehicle he is driving, as if he has been partly merged with it. Here and there one can see patches of skin and plastic in an unholy fusion. He has three legs, the middle one having a wheel. The wheel is powered by a piston connected to his muscle tissue making him very fast and maneuverable. One of his arms is a large two-pronged gripping claw, made for grabbing, while his other arm ends in a nightmare version of a rotating multi-tool which can switch between a claw-like hand, a set of meat hooks, a half-shattered buzz saw and a long, dull-looking drill.

He looks a bit worse for wear though; hoses and wires seem to have been cut and it is clear that this razide could use some mending. Half of its grinning bone and metal skull is caved in and through a hole one can see his pulsating brain. There is a heavy, 20-meter braid of cables, hoses and even a network of veins running from his van straight into his spine, providing him with some sort of oily fluid and ensuring that he can't go far from his van. He can disconnect for a short while, up to 10 minutes at a time, but after that he will become very slow until he can connect to his van again.

Motivation: The Man in the White Van is deeply confused about his reason for existing. He knows he is meant to torture, maul, and inflict pain, but is not allowed to do so freely. He has purposefully been retrofitted with the cable to ensure that he is under control when in Elysium. It's only in Inferno he gets to act out his torture. Every now and again he goes against his orders and kidnaps a hooker or a homeless person to drag them into the piece of purgatory he has carved out for himself. Every time he is caught, he is punished by having further parts of him replaced or crippled, causing further confusion. What angers him even more is that his mistress has chosen a lowly purgative to control him. One of these days though, he has vowed that Gregg's blood shall grease his gears as the fat man's body is ground up inside him.

Playing tips: He acts with a confused, barely controlled rage. Whenever he can, he lashes out and swears the worst swears he can, making threats about fist-fucking his target with a spiked glove or promising to cut off their eye-lids so that they will be unable not to look as he slaughters everyone they ever cared about. When using his multi-tool hand, make a show of him rotating his arm to select what he is going to use.

Home: Inferno

Creature type: Razide, servant to Gregg.

Combat [5], Influence [3], Magic [2]

Abilities

- ◇ *Monstrous form:* Those who see the razides true form must **Keep it Together**.
- ◇ *Gigantic:* When in his true form, he cannot be grappled or knocked over in close combat.
- ◇ *Natural weapons:* The creature has weapons embedded in his body, either implanted or natural.
- ◇ *Body of metal and machinery:* All **Harm** taken is reduced by -1.
- ◇ *Mind and matter:* Can control every aspect of his van when connected to it (doors, windows, engine).

Combat [Legendary]

- ◇ Grab and hold someone with his claw.
- ◇ Agonizing attack: (Must be grabbed with claw) Using the drill-bit, the razide drills into his victim. [**Keep it Together** to avoid a shock reaction].
- ◇ Maiming attack: (Must be grabbed with claw) Using the hooks on his hand, the razide tears chunks out of his victim. [+1 *Harm*].
- ◇ Bone-shattering attack: (Must be grabbed with claw) Using the buzz saw, the razide shatters bones of a limb on his victim [causes a **Serious Wound**].
- ◇ Cover a large distance in an instant (within 20 meters of The Van).



Influence [Considerable]

- ◇ Kidnap somebody.
- ◇ Steal something from someone.
- ◇ Threaten someone directly.

Magic [Novice]

- ◇ Inflict a tear in the Illusion.
- ◇ Travel to his personal purgatory.

Attacks

In his human form he is more likely to grab someone and throw them into his van and then drive away than to go into actual combat. To be able to use his full strength he must first inflict a tear in the Illusion and drive through it. He can only use his full combat ability within cable-length (20 meters) of his van. If he disconnects he only have about 10 minutes before he runs out of power and is a very easy target.

Human grab: Take hold [0] [distance: arm]; Throw towards van [1] [distance: arm, must be grabbed, throw victims into his van which door closes right away]

Gripping claw: Grab with claw [4], [distance: arm, causes no harm, victim is grabbed, **Act Under Pressure** or **Violence** to get lose]; Crushing grip [2] [distance: arm, victim must be grabbed].

Multi-tool, drill: Stab [2] [distance: Arm]; Agonizing attack [2] [distance: arm, must be grabbed].

Multi-tool, saw: Wide swing [1] [distance: arm, hits up to three targets]; Bone-shattering attack [Serious Wound] [distance: arm, must be grabbed].

Multi-tool, hooks: Slice [1] [distance: arm]; Maiming attack [3] [distance: arm, must be grabbed].

Multi-tool, hand: Punch [1] [distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○○○☠

- ◇ The attack seems to just deflect off the creature's armored parts.
- ◇ A tube comes loose, spewing a black oil-like substance all over the ground. Player characters within arm's reach roll **Act Under Pressure**, and receive -1 on their next roll involving a physical action on a success with complication, or may fall down helplessly for a few moments on a miss.
- ◇ The multi-tool's hydraulics are damaged and it is stuck on the current tool until repaired.
- ◇ The razide's tire is blown out and he can no longer move fast.
- ◇ The gripping claw's hydraulics is destroyed and he can no longer grab people with it until repaired.
- ◇ A big wriggling larva is exposed in the razide's chest (**Act Under Pressure -2** to hit, **+2 Harm**)
- ◇ The razide dies with an inhuman scream as a thick black larva crawls out of his chest and tries to escape.

The Repairmen

Description: These are three men, who all look sickly and a bit disturbing. They constantly have a slight sheen of sweat on their faces and their hair is greasy. All of them have similar,

dirty jumpsuits with a big "Sinneslöschen" logotype and their name (Larry, Clark and Monty) in a smaller stitched print underneath. They barely talk and when they do it is very disjointed.

In reality these are purgatides, long tortured by all sorts of demons and pleasure seekers in Inferno. Passed along and on so many times they are little more than worthless whores to pain and torture. They no longer remember their real names, who they used to be or if they ever actually were human at all. They all look very similar, from their torso down most of their skin has been flayed in intricate patterns, leaving openly oozing wounds. The tops of their bodies are pierced with hooks on their chests, with small jingling chains going back underneath their armpits and into a metal ring pierced directly into one of their vertebrae, tugging at their skin whenever they move. The fingers of all of their left hands have been replaced with a number of handy little tools for working with arcade and trepanation machines. Though Monty won't have much use for them.

Larry is missing his penis and, in its stead, there is a barely animated baby arm stitched, fingers wiggling slightly. His eyelids are peeled back and affixed to the bone of his eye sockets above and below his eyes with metal screws. One of Larry's fingers is actually a key to the Polybius machine.

Clark is missing the scalp of his head, the wet and festering skin held in place with heavy metal staples. Into the exposed bone of his skull, a multitude of runes have been carved. Basically, amounting to infernal bathroom stall scribbles.

Monty is missing the flesh on both his upper arms from the shoulders down to the elbows. The rest of the arms, elbows down, are mummified and immovable. The exposed bone got intricate and hauntingly beautiful carvings depicting the very deed of how Monty's flesh was removed and then fed to him.

Motivation: Obeying their master, Gregg. No matter what. To the death and beyond. Currently they're told not to harm anyone and to report anything odd directly to Gregg when no one else is around.

Playing tips: Avoid talking and when replying to questions never look the player in the eye and use a slight stutter and stop every so often in the middle of sentences before you keep going. Use slightly jerky motions when doing gestures.

Home: Inferno

Creature type: Purgatides, slaves to a nepharite

Combat [1], Influence [-], Magic [1]

Abilities

- ◇ **Fanatical:** Cannot be influenced or otherwise reasoned with.
- ◇ **High pain threshold:** Cannot be intimidated or tortured by mundane means.

Combat [Weak]

- ◇ Work together with their allies to surround an opponent [opponent takes -1 to all rolls when all of the Repairmen are in the same location, -2 if Gregg is coordinating them].

Magic [Weak]

- ◇ Travel in and out of Inferno by opening a sacrificial gate in Sinneslöschen's headquarters (requires animal sacrifices).

Attacks

The purgatides mostly attack using kicks and punches as well as their fingers with tools attached to them. Monty is the weakest of the triad and mostly knocks people over by slamming into them. If desired, he can be a bit of a comic relief depending on theme and mood when playing.

Unarmed: Bite [1], [Distance: arm]; Kick and punch [1], [Distance: arm]; Body slam [0], [Distance: arm, victim is knocked over.]; Dirty fighting [1], [Distance: arm, hits to the eye, groin, or throat – temporarily dazing the victim].

Finger-tools: Gore [1], [Distance: arm, the dirty tools cause the wounds to fester]; Slash [2], [Distance: arm]

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○☠

- ◇ Ignore the injuries.
- ◇ Start laughing and sobbing uncontrollably.
- ◇ Appear defeated.
- ◇ Die.

The White Van

Description: This is an old, rusty white van which is the vehicle The Man in the White Van uses. It is almost like a creature of its own, but it is only alive whenever its owner is connected to it through the cable. The Van looks exactly the same both within and behind the Illusion. Despite the fact it should not be possible, The Man in the White Van fits perfectly inside whenever he enters, even in his actual form. As a razide, he seems to become part of The Van while he is inside it. If left alone, the player characters cannot start The Van, even if they can enter.

The back of The Van opens either from the side or from the back and the owner himself choose if it should be possible or not since he controls it with his own will.

Home: Elysium

Creature type: Living vehicle of The Man in the White Van.

Combat [4], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [-]

Abilities

- ◇ **Gigantic:** Cannot be held in place or knocked over in close combat. If the being's attacks connect in close combat, they always knock their victim over, in addition to any other results.
- ◇ **Machine:** As a machine, it cannot be reasoned with, poisoned or hurt by smoke. All **Harm** taken is reduced by -1.

Combat [Powerful]

- ◇ Break walls or floors.
- ◇ Bane of cars: [Cars are easier to push away and aside than they normally should be].
- ◇ Keep the opponent at a distance: [**Act Under Pressure** to get within reach to attack the creature].
- ◇ Bone-shattering attack [causes a **Serious Wound**].

Attacks

Ramming: Love tap [1], [Distance: room, drives into opponent]; Drive and crush [2], [Distance: field, crushes its victim by colliding at high speed]; Run over [4], [Distance: room, opponent must be prone, drives over the opponent]; Press against wall [**Serious Wound**], [Distance: room, pin opponent against a wall, flooring the gas to crush their bones].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○☠

- ◇ Scratches the already worn paint job.
- ◇ One of its lights are broken.
- ◇ The muffler falls off, making it much, much louder.
- ◇ Black smoke billows from the engine, making every move against the car or to get away from the car easier by +2.
- ◇ The Van is totaled.

Contacts and Notable NPCs

Alex Smith [Student, 18 years old]

Description: Amy's current boyfriend and one of the very few she actually feels something for. Either you or Amy's player can describe this character. His purpose is to serve as a calming counterpoint. But due to her sexual neurosis, which leads to , cheating, lies, and so on, this young man can give up on the relationship or even grow angry if things go bad enough. He is very chill when it comes to Amy but is generally a "bad boy". He hates John Dent with a passion and does what he can to get in his face.

Motivation: Always wants to prove himself and John is an easy way to do so. Loves sex and wants to fuck Amy as often as he possibly can.

Playing tips: When stressed, he turns to rage. Otherwise use a self-confident voice and a straight back. He talks a lot with his arms crossed or down his sides and isn't much for gesturing.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [3], Influence [2], Magic [-]

Combat [Considerable]

- ◇ Grip and hold.
- ◇ Punt.
- ◇ Cry for his mates.

Influence [Novice]

- ◇ Discover/disclose secrets about Amy.
- ◇ Grant a favor.

Attacks

Unarmed: Grapple and hold [1], [Distance: arm]. Shove around [1], [Distance: arm, victim becomes prone].

Boots: Tripping kick [1], [Distance: arm, victim becomes prone]; Punt [2], [Distance: arm, victim must be prone].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○☠

- ◇ Staggered.
- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Death.

Andréa Farland [Arcade employee, 20 years old]

Description: She is the closest person Evelyn has to a real friend. They knew each other for a bit before Eve got into Polybius, but the more time Eve has spent in the arcade the closer they have grown. Andréa can be used to great effect as both a friend as well as someone who Charles or Evelyn later will suspect of being in on the whole conspiracy. Once things are set into motion, Andréa can be used in a number of ways, such as to put pressure on Charles and Evelyn by giving either of them a choice of protecting her, or learning the truth about Charles' brother or Evelyn's predicament.

She once had a fling with Elenora Nelson, but it didn't last. Andréa still feels something for Elenora but knows that going back down that alley will just lead to heartbreak for the both of them. She's sort of on the prowl for a new girlfriend but not too aggressive about it.

Friendly and a good worker. She can hold her own and doesn't take shit from the kids that go to the arcade and she has earned their respect by kicking their asses in different versus games.

Motivation: Keeping her customers happy foremost but also looking for love.

Playing tips: Be confident and smile a lot. Use a lot of hand gestures and when relaxed, lean back with hands behind your head. Use a light voice. Don't be afraid to flirt with female characters so that she can gauge their reactions and say if it was either a joke or if she meant it.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [1], Influence [4], Magic [-]

Combat [Weak]

- ◇ Flee from a conflict.

Influence [Powerful]

- ◇ Open the Arcade at off-hours.
- ◇ Learn were the keys to Polybius are.
- ◇ Sway the kids at the arcade to her will.
- ◇ Flirt with female player character.

Attacks

Unarmed: Scream, kick, bite, and scratch [1], [Distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○☠

- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Carolyn Chambers [Student, 15 years old]

Description: Cathy's best friend forever. They met through soccer practice and she will always do her best to help Cathy out. She can be used in case the group need a bit more muscle or as a BFF-in-distress in case Cathy needs to do something brave. She will suffer a temporary breakdown if she learns the truth about what happened that day at the arcade, but will come back stronger. She never had many friends before Cathy so this friendship is something she holds very dear.

Motivation: Be with Cathy as much as possible. She looks up to Cathy the same way Cathy looks up to her.

Playing tips: Horse around and have fun. When with Cathy, giggle a lot and develop in-jokes between the PC and the NPC. If things turn dangerous go more somber and calculating.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [2], Influence [1], Magic [-]

Abilities

- ◇ *Captain of the team:* Give teammates +1 ongoing while doing sports activities.

Combat [Novice]

- ◇ Launch or join a coordinated attack.
- ◇ Flee from a conflict.

Influence [Weak]

- ◇ Decide on goings on with the soccer team

Attacks

Unarmed: Kick [1], [Distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○

- ◇ Lose her breath for a second.
- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Daniel [Charles' little brother, 10 years old]

Description: The very reason for Charles' crusade. He can be used as someone Charles see in reflections or a voice heard in the distance to urge the character to double up on his efforts to save his brother. The reality is that Daniel is locked up in a purgatory, tortured by The Man in the White Van.

If Daniel is rescued, he will act and behave strangely and will possess some magical abilities unlocked by his prolonged torture. Something of the boy Charles once called his brother is still there, but it is as if suddenly this younger sibling is older than his years, even older than his parents. His childishness will shine through from time to time though.

There is a number of way that Daniel can be used after his rescue. Either to give hints to the players about what is going on as well as a deus ex machina to get out of trouble for the players. Just make sure that Daniel isn't used to make the players look bad or weak in comparison. If Daniel is used to save the players, make sure he doesn't kill the antagonists, only buy the players time to get away and then let him be fatigued and unusable for a long time.

Motivation: Try to get free and escape. This can't be done without Charles' help however. He can sort of reach out into the Illusion with a word here and there, and show up in reflective surfaces for a few moments, but that is it.

Playing tips: Complain about pain, use a scared small voice. Hug yourself, rock slightly back and forth. Never use for longer than a few seconds if he breaks through to the Illusion to reach his brother.

Once freed, he is apathetic rather than scared. His voice is monotone and emotionally dead, keeping out all the horrors he has experienced by sheer force of will.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [-], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [2]

Abilities

- ◇ Reach through the Illusion with brief messages.

Magic [Novice]

- ◇ Momentarily stun attackers and push them away with a shockwave.
- ◇ Create a temporary force shield to keep attackers away for a little while.

Attacks

Unarmed: Bite, kick and scratch [0], [Distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○

- ◇ Cower and whimper in pain.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

David Carlsen [Handy Dandies Owner, 46 years old]

Description: He is a clerk at a second-hand store that deals with rare books and items. This is a great place to find information that cannot be found elsewhere. While David is still a Sleeper himself, he's teetering on the edge of becoming Aware.

Motivation: He is curious by nature and wants to learn. He feels as if he could just breach the surface there could be so much more to learn. But then again, there is the television in the back office and a sports event going on...

Playing tips: Smile, be kind and use wide gestures with both arms. He got a nervous tick where he often scratches his beard while thinking. He is easy to make laugh and doesn't mind sharing a joke.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human, near Awareness.

Combat [1], **Influence** [4], **Magic** [-]

Abilities

- ◇ *Uncanny homing senses:* Can easily find anything he got in his store, despite the mess.

Combat [weak]

- ◇ Fight for his life

Influence [Powerful]

- ◇ Can order many kinds of rare items.
- ◇ Knows many people around town and what items they have bought from him.
- ◇ Always gives a discount for [0-2] relations.
- ◇ Can give information about Polybius Squares.

Attacks

Unarmed: Fight for his life [1], [Distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○

- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Elenora Nelson [Student, 18 years old]

Description: Elenora is the only character that will put up with John's shit. She knows his personality type and can deal with it. She's a tough woman and knows when to let John rant and when to tell him to shut the fuck up. They work very well together. She once had a thing with Andréa from Gregg's Arcade Emporium but it didn't last. This character is perfect as a grounding element for John.

Motivation: Help out John but only up to a point. Once he gets abusive of their friendship, she'll cuss him out and leave him out to dry for a bit. She is quick to forgive but only after a real apology.

Playing tips: Use your arms a lot when talking, be quick to a joke and tease a lot in good humor. When push comes to shove, have a deceptive smile until she lashes back.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [2], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [-]

Abilities

- ◇ *Calming effect:* John must **Keep it Together** to not be calmed down when Elenora puts her foot down.

Combat [novice]

- ◇ Kick dirt.
- ◇ Run away from fight.

Attacks

Unarmed: **Kicks and punches** [2], [Distance: arm]; **Kick dirt** [1], [Distance: arm, kick or throw dirt into the eyes of an opponent, PCs must **Keep it Together** or get -1 on a [10-14], -2 On a [-9] to their next action.]

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Granny Fanny [Specter, ? years old]

Description: Granny Fanny is in a complicated way tied to Kyle because in the same way she sees him as a way back to life, he sees her as a way to get salvation. Even though it is annoying that she is with him all the time, it has grown to be something that makes him feel safe and secure.

She's a specter who desperately clings to life and has refused to die completely. Only Aware people can see her and she stays close, really close to Kyle, believing he can bring her back fully into the world of the living. She knows the ritual needed to do it and is asserting her influence to make Kyle collect the items needed. She never talks, only walks around to show where the player should go and sends information through mental images.

Granny Fanny's name is really Dolores Hannigan and she is a very old-looking woman. She's only partly of this world and only partly still in it. Anyone who can actually see her sees a mostly translucent shape that looks like an old woman with a key stuck in the side of her head. The wound is constantly seeping blood that seems to only momentarily exist before fading away.

Motivation: Get back to the land of the living at any cost and do not let Kyle out of sight. When she knows what is next to do she will do whatever she can to drag Kyle with her.

Playing tips: Do not say a single word. Stare reproachfully and point the character in the right direction. Only communicates using brief flashes of images.

Home: Limbo.

Creature type: Specter.

Combat [-], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [3]

Abilities

- ◇ *Dull magical senses:* She can sense magic and clearly see auras.
- ◇ *Ethereal:* Has no physical body and cannot be physically harmed.

Magic [Considerable]

- ◇ Project emotions.
- ◇ Telekinesis (up to 1 kg, 1 m/sec).
- ◇ Reverse birth ritual

Attacks

Project emotions: **Fear** [2], [Distance: room, **Keep it Together** or get momentarily stunned on [10-14] and run away screaming on [-9]]; **Anger** [2], [Distance: room, **Keep it Together** or get -1 on next non-aggressive action on [10-14] or -2 on [-9] due to numbing rage]; **Lust** [2], [Distance: room, **Keep it Together** or get momentarily aroused at [10-14] or get -1 ongoing until something is "done about it" due to being distractedly aroused at [-9]]; **Terror** [2], [Distance: room, **Keep it Together** and follow the normal rules].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

- ◇ Shivers in and out of view for a moment.
- ◇ Shatters momentarily before reassembling.
- ◇ Becomes visible to everyone, Sleeper and Aware alike, until she had a chance to heal.
- ◇ Fades away and leaves Kyle alone for a few days while healing.
- ◇ Final death.

Gynachid

Description: The creature has a grey, tough skin where all but its head looks polished. It got two small breasts and a flat stomach. It prefers to walk on all fours but will stand up often enough. It looks grotesquely attractive in the few deceptively human-like features it has until one spots the tentacle-like genitalia. It has a long scar across its face which it wears with pride. It acts a little bit like a scared dog and as all of its kind can only communicate with body language, reminiscent of a pet.

The Gynachid will dislike and avoid the other characters and will never aid them. Its only interest is Evelyn. If it has come to Evelyn's aid and other characters are left alive after a skirmish, the gynachid will escape as fast as possible to get away from the other PCs.

Motivation: It wants to befriend Evelyn and ultimately let Evelyn carry its egg. Whether this is something that happens during roleplay or not is up to the GM and the rules set. If it is scared off, shooed away, or attacked it will leave Evelyn alone (even if it might not be able to stop itself when mating with her). If accepted by Evelyn, it will protect her with its life if need be.

Playing tips: Use your body when conveying messages the creature is trying to show. Make little sounds and don't be scared to purr if the player pets the gynachid.

Home: Metropolis.

Creature type: Gynachid

Combat [4], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [1]

Abilities

- ◇ *Follow the leader:* The gynachid gets access to the Combat Move *Protect* when near Evelyn if it has been accepted by her.
- ◇ *Sharp senses:* The gynachid's senses are heightened, able to pick up the most minute sight, sound, and scent, including an intuitive sense that detects if something seems "off."
- ◇ *Vicious when bloodied:* After the being has taken 3 wounds, it devolves into a state of unthinking rage, during which all **Harm** it inflicts is at +1.

Combat [Powerful]

- ◇ Natural Escape Route.
- ◇ Move a considerable distance in a single leap.
- ◇ Launch an attack that ignores armor.
- ◇ *Protect:* Steps in harm's way to defend Evelyn [The gynachid receives any **Harm** dealt in her stead.]

Magic [Weak]

- ◇ Walk through the Illusion where it is considerably weak.

Attacks

Mostly only goes to attack when there is food to be gained, however it will defend itself and most of all defend Evelyn.

Claws: Rip and tear [2], [Distance: arm]. Shred to pieces [1], [Distance: arm, ignores armor].

Fangs: Chew [1], [Distance: arm]

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○○○☠

- ◇ Growls and bares teeth.
- ◇ Howls in rage and targets its latest attacker.
- ◇ The genitalia are severed, spilling black blood everywhere. Must roll **Act Under Pressure** near the creature not to slip.
- ◇ The Gynachid had enough and flees the scene.
- ◇ Dying, but can be saved.
- ◇ Dead.

Roover [Amy's dog, 11 years old]

Description: Amy's family dog. He's an old German shepherd whose graying fur has soaked up many of Amy's tears throughout the years. This animal is something of an Aware creature and seems to be around whenever Amy needs him. He will defend her to the death if need be.

Motivation: Keeping Amy safe is his only real motivation apart from normal doggy deeds.

Playing tips: He's an old dog that doesn't move much. Calm and secure. Doesn't mind anyone human petting him. Will growl at inhuman entities. When Amy is in danger he goes into a calculated rage.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Aware animal.

Combat [2], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [1]

Abilities

- ◇ *Sharp senses:* Perfect senses, which can detect low noises and smells [-2 to all rolls for sneaking and hiding].

Combat [Novice]

- ◇ Bite and pull target prone.
- ◇ Bark to alert.

Magic [Weak]

Roover can walk to be with Amy whenever she needs him, no matter the distance and no matter where she is. Doesn't matter if he's leashed or not. The time it takes for him to catch up with Amy is up to the GM's discretion.

- ◇ Show up when Amy needs him.

Attacks

Jaws: Bite [2], [Distance: arm]; Bite and pull prone [1], [Distance: arm, target gets grappled and pulled prone]

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○☠

- ◇ Hurt and aggressive.
- ◇ Limping away.
- ◇ Death.

Timothy Kelly [Evelyn's boyfriend, 17 years old]

Description: Timmy used to be Evelyn's whole world at one point. He knows a lot about puzzles and brain teasers as well as myths and legends, since he plays a lot of Dungeons & Dragons. He still believes in their relationship but is rapidly becoming alienated. He can be used to try and pry Evelyn out of her mania. He can find a new girlfriend or be seen with a cousin or a sister to try and spark jealousy in the numbed mind of Evelyn.

Motivation: Currently giving Evelyn some space since he realizes she is going through something. But his patience is wearing thin.

Playing tips: Be charming and friendly. Act touchy feely with Evelyn and give her space if she doesn't reciprocate. Sigh when ignored and walk away muttering. Look sad if you can't reach out properly.

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Human.

Combat [-], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [-]

Influence [Weak]

- ◇ Assemble an intervention for Evelyn together with Evelyn's mother.

Attacks

Unarmed: Fight for his life [1], [Distance: arm].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○☠

- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Zhang Ce [Kung fu sifu, 53 years old]

Description: Charles' kung fu master. He is one of the few Aware NPCs, actually close to being Enlightened. Charles comes to him for help, meditation and calming down. He will listen to Charles and believe him but will not interfere in what he sees as Charles' personal path to Awareness.

Motivation: He knows about the Illusion and wants to ease Charles into the same knowledge. However, he doesn't force the issue. He sees that through his pain and oath of revenge, Charles is heading in the right direction.

Playing tips: Observe, nod and smile wryly. Zhang has a tick where he will cross his arms and hold his chin when contemplating. Dispense of fortune-cookie knowledge with self-awareness. "To be strong one must learn what it is to be weak", "Even if it takes the wind a thousand years to erode a mountain, it does not give up".

Home: The suburbs (Elysium).

Creature type: Aware human.

Combat [4], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [-]

Abilities

- ◇ *Lightning fast:* All Distanced attacks against Zhang are modified by -2.

Combat [Powerful]

- ◇ Attack up to two targets simultaneously.
- ◇ Throw someone aside.
- ◇ Disarm an opponent.
- ◇ Agonizing attack.

Attacks

Unarmed: **Punch** [2], [Distance: arm]; **Jump kick** [3], [Distance: room]; **Multiple punches** [2], [Distance: arm, targets up to two enemies]; **Throw opponent** [2], [Distance: arm, opponent becomes prone]; **Disarm** [1], [Distance: arm]; **Hit nerve endings** [2], [Distance: arm, **Keep it Together** to avoid a shock reaction from the agonizing pain].

Harm & harm moves

Wounds: ○○○☠

- ◇ Flinch slightly.
- ◇ Subdued.
- ◇ Dying (but can be saved).
- ◇ Death.

Links to media

Youtube

POLYBIUS - The Video Game that Doesn't Exist
https://youtu.be/_7X6Yeydgyg

Spotify playlists

These are some collections of music I've gathered to fit different moods when playing. Specifically: calm, scary and action. Feel free to use these as is or make your own playlists based off them with your own set of songs blended into the mix.

Calm music
<https://goo.gl/i3UrFA>
spotify:user:matsto:playlist:6RL9zCICOWL8wKK7BIKxwH

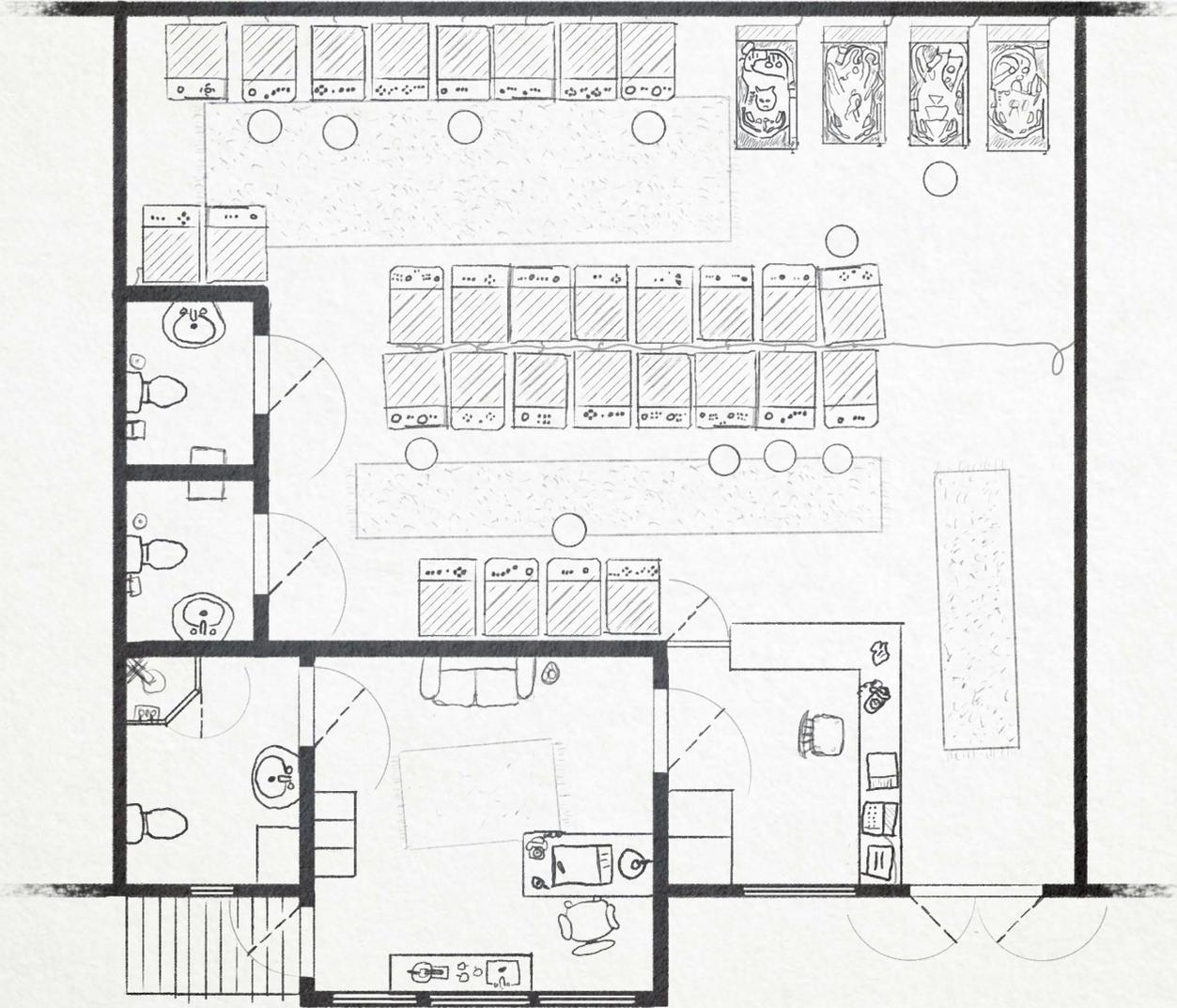
Scary music:
<https://goo.gl/9W5v8c>
spotify:user:matsto:playlist:2sRPxldcxT40wsrX05Pst

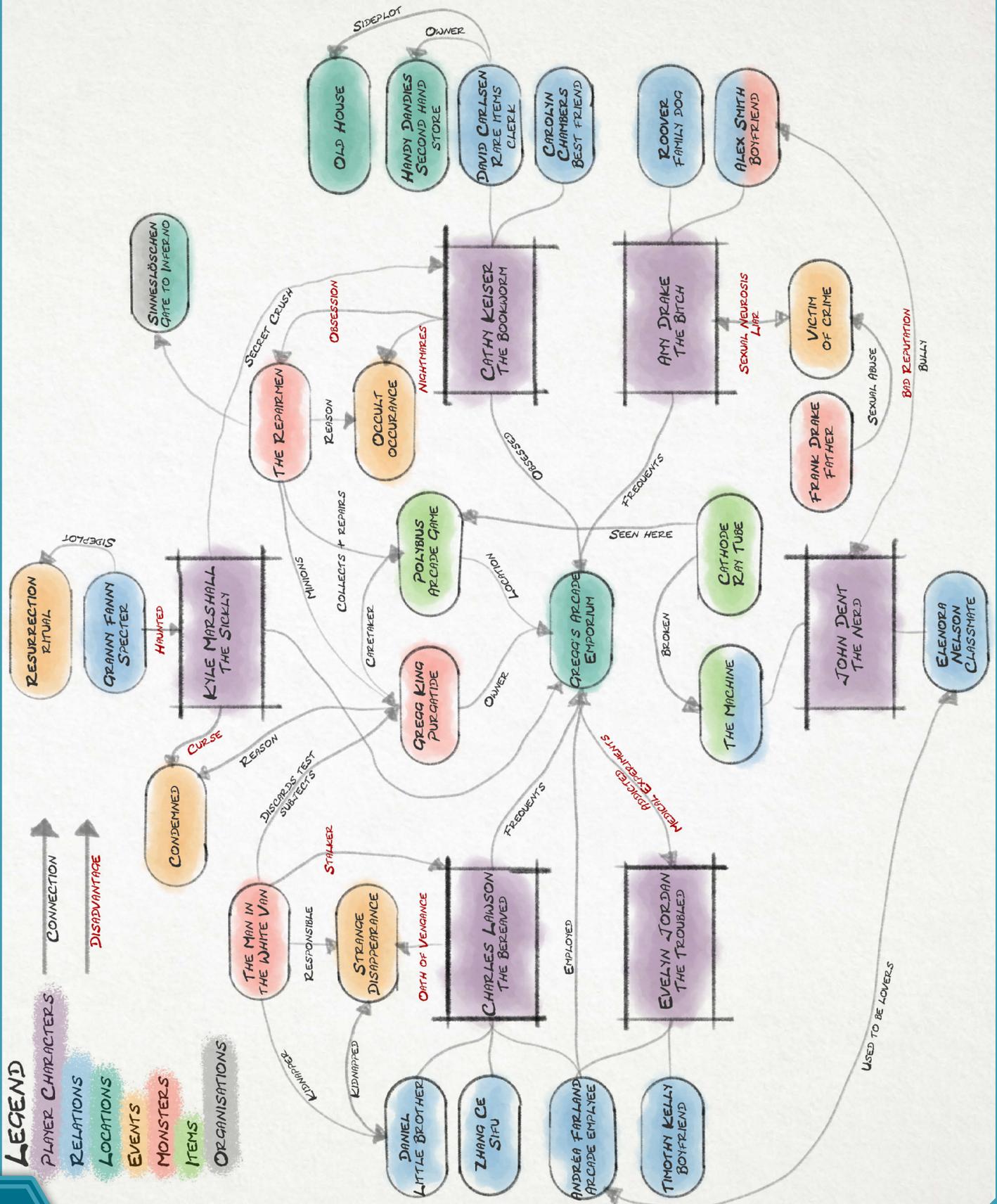
Action music:
<https://goo.gl/mqww9Z>
spotify:user:matsto:playlist:6bHxOZYIN7UeFITPIsXk07

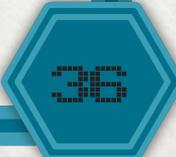
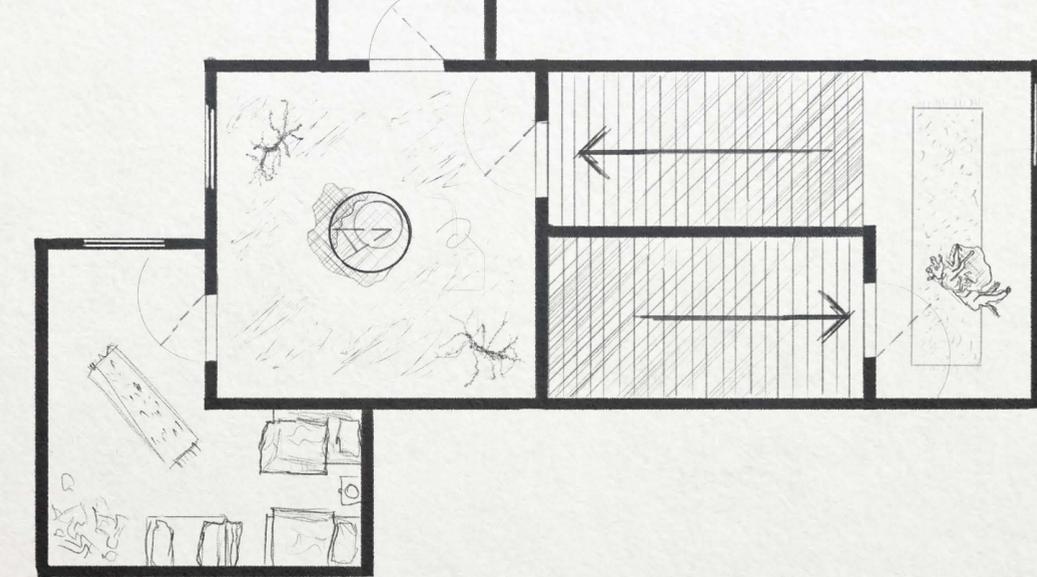
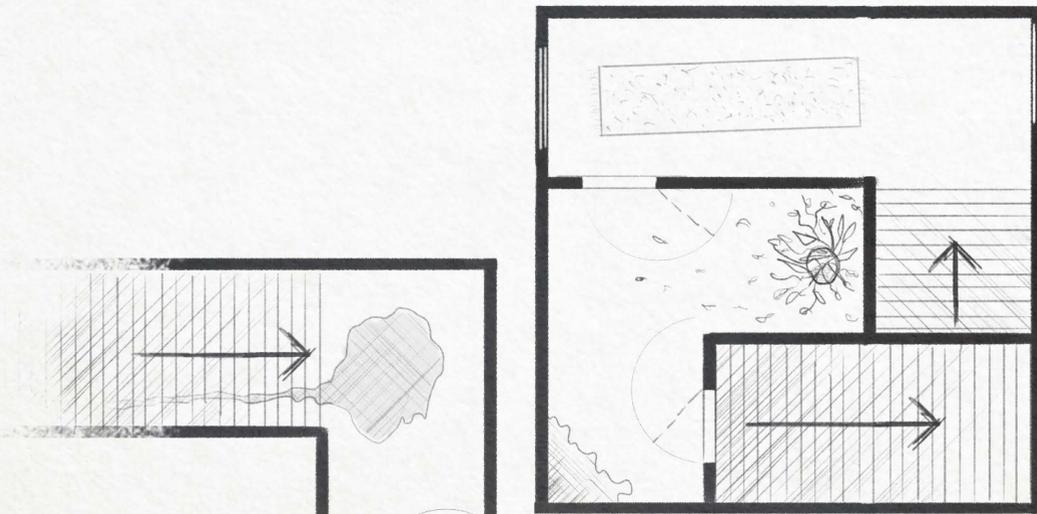
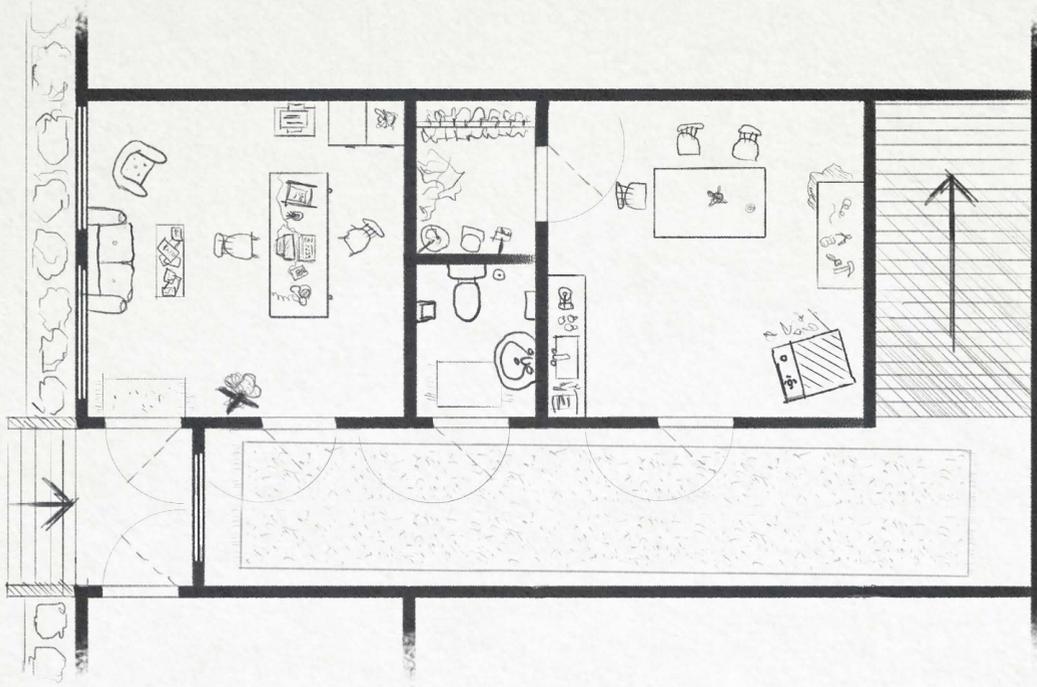


Resources

Gregg's Arcade Emporium







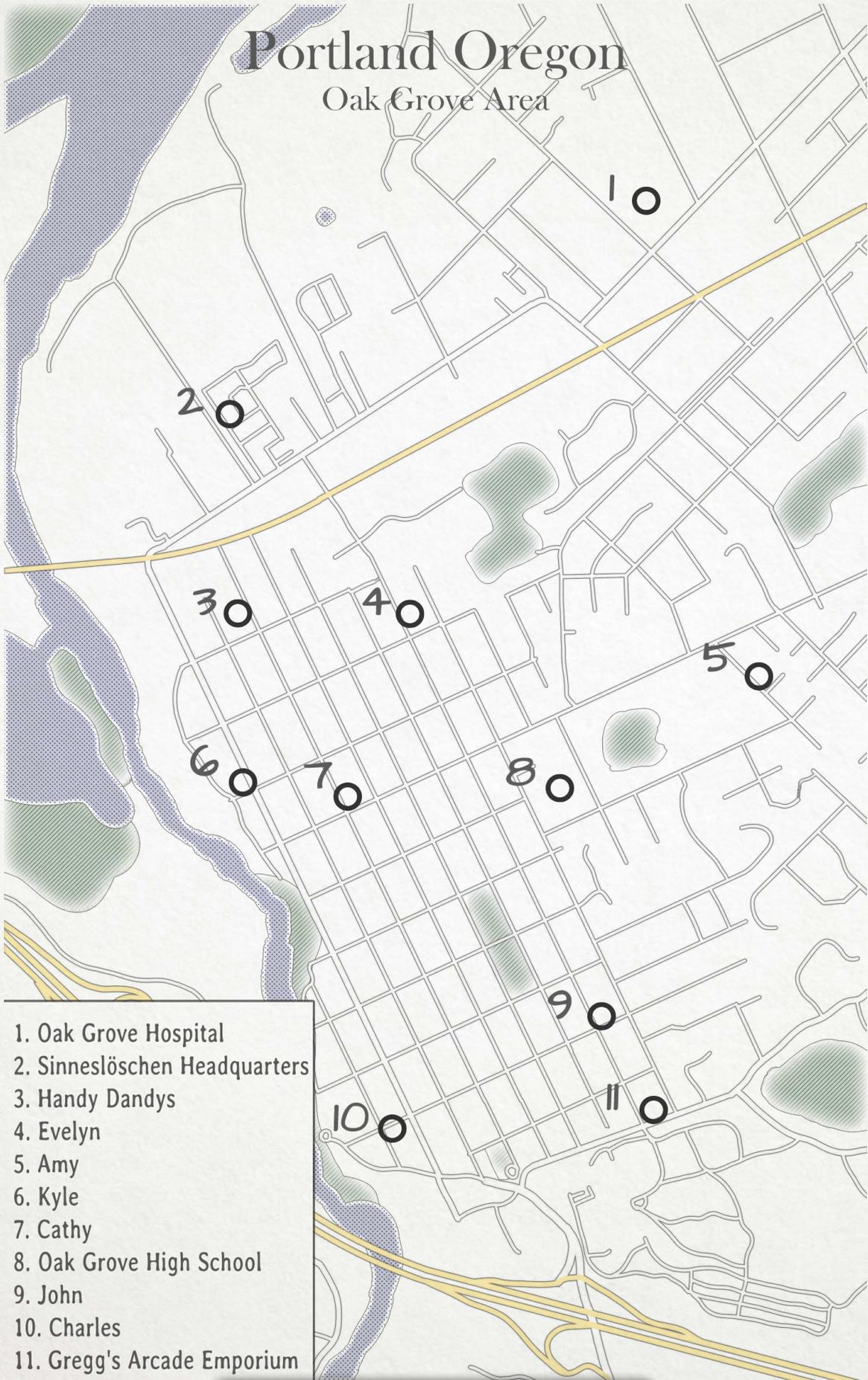
Portland Oregon

Oak Grove Area



Portland Oregon

Oak Grove Area



1. Oak Grove Hospital
2. Sinneslöschen Headquarters
3. Handy Dandys
4. Evelyn
5. Amy
6. Kyle
7. Cathy
8. Oak Grove High School
9. John
10. Charles
11. Gregg's Arcade Emporium

```
----- Polybius DIP switch settings -----
DIP SW      1  2  3  4  5  6
Mem Reset   ON
Easy                ON  OFF
Normal         ON  ON
Hard           OFF ON
Freeplay                          OFF OFF
1 coin 1 credit          ON  OFF
1 coin 2 credit          ON  ON
1 coin 3 credit          OFF ON
Password menu                          ON

Password: 4532341334311332
```

Players need the Post-it note to decipher the code. It translates to "LETITDIE".

```
## Cipher: QUICK ????? DEATH ????? PROXY
Only a few subjects remain that are still of interest:
-----
Subject #05: 332155
Subject #08: 1433343555
Subject #10: 14353352453223
Subject #11: 324132455542
Subject #16: 44533542
Subject #14: 15554532
-----
Next subject to have run its course is #11 who is up for termination. Need 5 more samples. Next thereafter is #14 who is showing clear signs of deterioration.

Let Gregg know I am pleased with his work. This cycle is nearing an end and I want to see all subjects above terminated within a month. Then we expand the project into central Portland.
```

Players need the Post-it note to decipher the code. It translates to AMY, CATHY, CHARLES, EVELYN, JOHN and KYLE respectively.

Gregg's Paper Slip



Players need the Post-it note to decipher the code on the paper slip. It translates to "FALLINGFROMGRACE".

Post-it note

	1	2	3	4	5
1	Q	U	I	C	K
2	M	F	S	B	W
3	D	E	A	T	H
4	V	N	G	J	L
5	P	R	O	X	Y

This is called a Polybius square. The way to decipher something is to take the code and group the numbers in groups of two. For instance, 332155 would be split to 33 21 55. Looking at the third row and the third column gives the letter A. Looking at the second row and the first column gives M. Looking at the fifth row and the fifth column gives Y. So, 332155 spells AMY. The same is true if one is to write something using the same cipher. For instance, to spell out DIE, one first looks at D, which is on the third row and the first column; 31. I is on the first row, third column; 13. E is on the third row, second column; 32. So DIE is 311332.

IV. PCB DIP Switch Settings

DIPSW	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mem Reset	ON					
Easy		ON	OFF			
Normal		ON	ON			
Hard		OFF	ON			
Freeplay				OFF	OFF	
1 coin 1 credit				ON	OFF	
1 coin 2 credit				ON	ON	
1 coin 3 credit				OFF	ON	
Password menu						ON

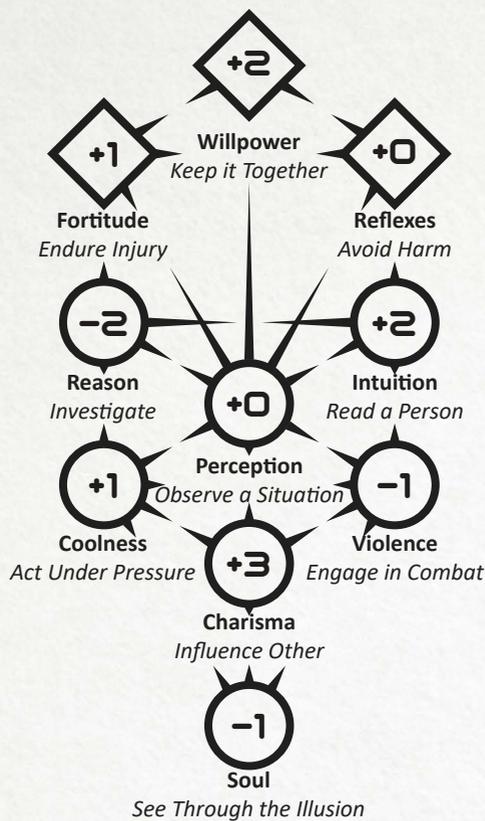
V. System Setup

Keep TEST SW or pressed or DIPSW 6 ON and power on to enter system test mode or system password mode.

If High Score data is scrambled, Power on with DIPSW 1 ON to clear memory and reset high scores. WARNING this will not erase user data. This has to be cleared manually.

Polybius©1980 Sinneslöschen
43 Birchwood Drive, Portland Oregon
(555)312-4321

The Bitch (The Deceiver)



Information

Name: **Amy J. Drake**
Age: **18**
Gender: **Female**

Best Subject: **Geography**
Star sign: **Gemini**
Grade: **12**

Advantages

Seducer
Manipulative
Impostor

Disadvantages

Liar
Sexual Neurosis

Who you are

Every night before you go to sleep, you feel his hands all over you again. He died three years ago but still it is as if he was there in your room, watching you. It happened over and over and over, and you could never tell anyone about how Frank Drake, your father, would touch you. Or about how he would force himself upon you and raped you. When he died in that car accident, you felt sad and relieved all at once. Because of course you loved him, he was your father. But finally, the nightly visits when your mother was working late would stop.

The lies you told your school nurse about the itching and the lies you told your youth psychiatrist about why you would start crying suddenly and without warning set you off to weave an intricate web of lies which you currently try hard to upkeep. The only thing that keeps the pain away is fucking, which you do a lot of. Being a "manipulative slut" and an "annoying bitch" does have its perks. Your clique at school is the most influential. And you are its leader. It is a little bit like being the leader of a herd of chicken, but beggars and choosers and all that. The boys want you and the girls fear you because you can with one night bring a boy to heaven, or with one word bring living hell down on a girl.

Your latest ex-boyfriend - Stephen, Stevie... something... was heavily into arcade machines and loved to hang around at Gregg's Arcade Emporium which you hated at first. However, since you had a couple of spare quarters and were bored out of your mind anyways, you tried Polybius and you couldn't help but to be drawn into it. You feel it's been a very therapeutic experience for you. Even though the boyfriend is already forgotten you do still go to the Arcade to play that game. You've tried to find it in other places but only Gregg's seem to have it. Also, you got a nagging feeling that your current friends may be bad for you, and a change of scenery is nice.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------	------------	--------------------------

Stability

<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy	Moderate stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfocused	-1 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaken	Serious stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Distressed	-1 <i>Keep it Together</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic	-2 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	Critical stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	-2 <i>Keep it Together</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged	-3 disadvantages
	+1 <i>See through the Illusion</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Broken	The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

Alex Smith (Boyfriend) [+1]

Your current boyfriend. He is actually interesting enough to hang around with at a more personal level. But you can't let him in too close and also you can't let him know that even though he's your current boyfriend, he's not your only current sex partner.

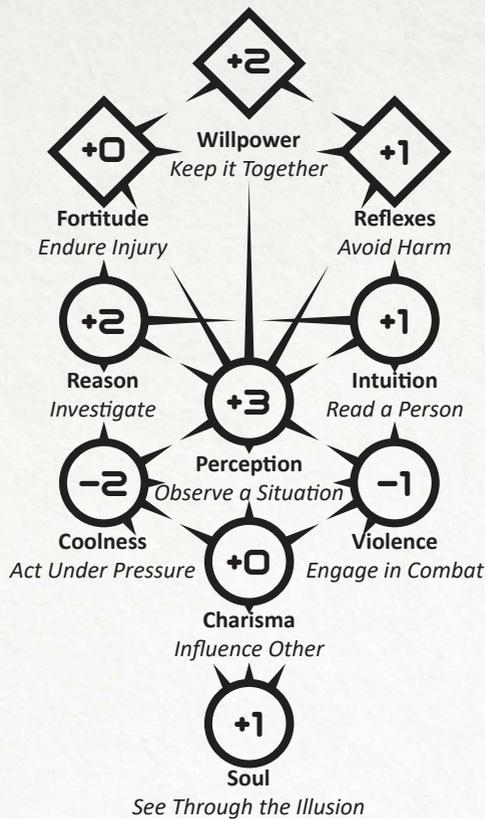
Roover (Family dog) [+2]

This is the only member of the family you've actually spilled the whole truth about your father to. This old German shepherd never got to witness the abuse against you, but he was your confidant from the moment he arrived in your family until now. He is old in age, but still very lively and trusts you like no one else, because you have never ever lied to him, nor would you ever do it.

Motivation

You feel like you've lost yourself in the last few years. Fucking your pain away has worked only as far as realizing that you are empty inside. You have come to realize you have no friends, no real ones. Only people whom you can boss around. The arcade is the first place in a long time where you can relax a bit and just concentrate on playing Polybius. Here you can even meet people with a common interest. Alex might hate the place but he doesn't own you. No one does. No one will ever again. But you got a nagging feeling there is something peculiar with the Polybius game, and you want to find out more.

The Bookworm (The Academic)



Information

Name: **Cathy J. Kaiser**
Age: **14**
Gender: **Female**

Best Subject: **Literature**
Star sign: **Pisces**
Grade: **10**

Advantages

Expert (Literature)
Elite Sport (Soccer)
Collector (Through Daniel Carlsen)

Disadvantages

Obsession (The repairmen)
Nightmares (The repairmen)

Who you are

Books. Just all things books! You just love reading and can't seem to stop. This has been a habit of yours ever since you can remember. What you read depends on mood and age. Currently you've gone a bit into romance even though fantasy and sci-fi are still your favorite genres. Apart from fiction you also read a lot of other things, such as biographies and local legends and lore.

You live in a happy home with your father who works as a lawyer and your mother who is a secretary in the same law firm. You tend to stay by yourself a lot but your parents force you to do soccer practice to get out and meet people. You are not bullied but rather you are invisible which, to be frank, is to your liking.

Just a few weeks ago you encountered something horrible which you cannot really put into words. As you were down at Gregg's Arcade Emporium with your friend Carolyn, you saw three men who looked like repairmen entering and heading to your favorite arcade machine, Polybius, to open it up. They didn't empty the quarters, but they took some strange vials out and replaced them with empty ones. All the while, they were talking to each other in chattering voices. As they looked over at you, they looked much more like cockroaches than people for a moment and it was as if they saw straight into your soul. This has haunted your nightmares ever since, and also fueled your need to know more about this. Perhaps then the nightmares will stop? Carolyn refuses to even talk about it though.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stability

<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy	Moderate stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfocused	-1 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaken	Serious stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Distressed	-1 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic	-2 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	Critical stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	-2 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged	-3 disadvantages
	+1 See through the Illusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Broken	The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

David Carlsen (Rare items clerk) [+1]

Since a year or two back you've become friends with a man who deals with many rare things in his little corner shop. Amongst other things, you specifically go to him for his vast number of books that he keeps at hand. His store is a place where you can stay for hours in, just looking at all the interesting and different items.

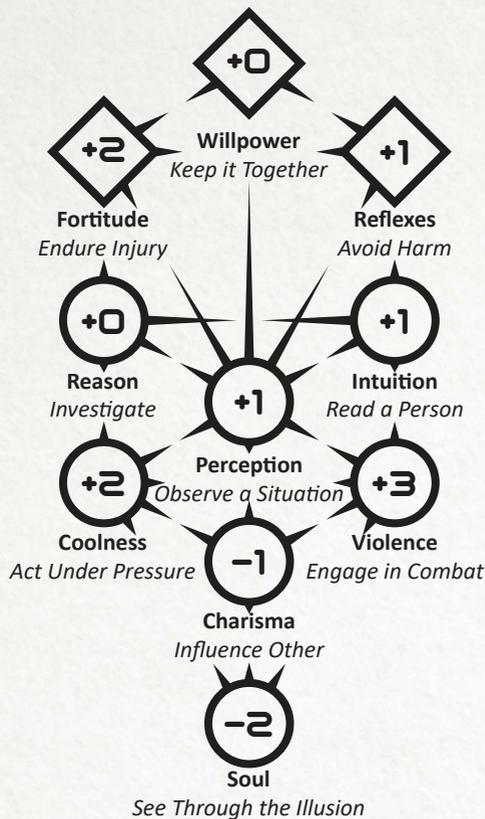
Carolyn Chambers (BFF) [+2]

You never really thought it would happen, but it actually has. You got a BFF! You are not sure how, but Carolyn, who is the sportiest type person you know, somehow likes you just as much as you like her. The two of you can talk for hours on end about everything and nothing. She is a friend whom you met through soccer practice and is the same age as you and she loves everything that has to do with sports, even though you don't care for it that much beyond soccer.

Motivation

You have an overwhelming need to find out who or what those repairmen were. But you know you cannot do it on your own. And you know that your parents, sweet as they are, will not listen rationally to what you say. You must leave your comfort zone and find someone who can help you.

The Bereaved (The Avenger)



Information

Name: **Charles S. Lawson**
Age: **17**
Gender: **Male**

Best Subject: **P.E.**
Star sign: **Aquarius**
Grade: **11**

Advantages

Eye for an Eye
Code of Honor (Help the weak)
Rage

Disadvantages

Stalker
Oath of Revenge

Who you are

Your family simply doesn't understand. It was not your little brother that they found floating in the lake last summer. It was not his corpse that was put underground. You don't know what it was, you cannot explain it, but it wasn't Daniel. You saw with your own eyes how the man in the white van kidnapped him after he was said to be found dead. And you refuse to let it go.

One year ago, your brother suddenly disappeared for two weeks. Last anyone heard from him he was heading to Gregg's Arcade Emporium but from what you heard, he never reached the place. When he turned up, he was found floating in the lake, bloated as if he had been drowned this entire time. You started your grieving then. The day after the funeral, you retraced your brother's last walk towards the emporium when you suddenly heard his voice call out for you. You couldn't believe it at first, but as you looked up you saw him, clear as day, being pulled into a white van that peeled away at an insane speed before you could catch up.

Your parents are separated and you live with your father. He's a good man but a bit slow. Of course, you still fall in line and do your school work. Mostly B:s and C:s nowadays but at least that is a passing grade. What time you have left you have spent in the kwoon, learning martial arts. You're no expert yet, but you know that if you keep going, you'll get there. The only distraction you still maintain is that game Polybius down at Gregg's Arcade Emporium. Somehow, it makes you feel like you're closer to your little brother. Most probably because it was his favorite game.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stability

<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy	Moderate stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfocused	-1 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaken	Serious stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Distressed	-1 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic	-2 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	Critical stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	-2 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged	-3 disadvantages
	+1 See through the Illusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Broken	The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

Andréa Farland (Arcade Employee) [0]

A nice girl, perhaps a few years older than you who is the only employee at Gregg's Arcade Emporium. The two of you bonded a bit over your brother since she used to talk to him occasionally and she is kind enough to give you free plays every now and then.

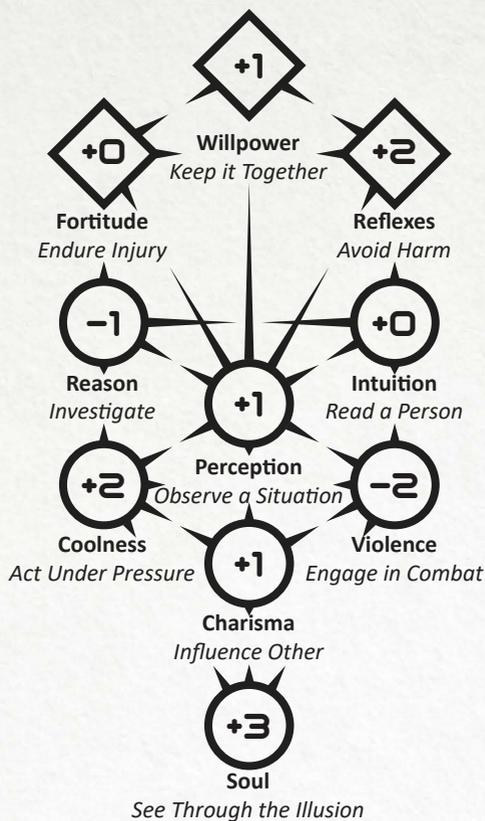
Zhang Ce (Sifu) [+1]

Zhang might be the closest to a confidant you have found in your mission to find your brother. You have a feeling he knows a lot more than what you have told him, and that if you one day were to tell him everything, he would listen. You've known him for two years, and he is thirty years your senior, but you have a very close and respectful connection.

Motivation

You are dead set on finding your little brother. Sure, the martial arts practice has gotten you some skills, but you must find some solid leads to guide you towards your brother. You are starting to realize that despite everything, you cannot do this on your own. You need to find allies with the same cause as you or at least causes that line up with yours.

The Troubled (The Broken)



Information

Name: Evelyn C. Jordan
Age: 16
Gender: Female

Best Subject: Programming
Star sign: Taurus
Grade: 11

Advantages

Wayfinder
Contagious Insanity
Sixth Sense

Disadvantages

Broken
Drug Addict (Polybius)

Who you are

Everything is... off. Not just slightly but you have felt really unhinged lately. You are still able to hide it. You smile to your mother when you come home from school, answer politely about how school was today. After all, you're the only one she has since the two of you live alone and she is between jobs at the moment. It is more like watching someone perform all the motions rather than you doing it yourself. The first month or so it was unnerving, but now it is actually soothing.

The only time you feel alive, truly alive is down at Gregg's Arcade Emporium with a fist full of quarters, standing in front of the Polybius machine. You hold the whole top 10 list of that game. Every single line says EVE. And yet you haven't been able to get to the last level. But you know it is just a matter of time. Every time you play the game, you feel like you can tune out the world a little bit more and can perform just a little bit better.

It started when you went to do research for a computer class project and then it just never stopped. You know you should be worried. Your grades have been dropping. Not bad, but enough that your mom will soon notice. You've stopped seeing your friends. You've even started tapping into your college funds. Also, you keep losing track of time. Even though you live far away, you find yourself being able to reach the Arcade in only a few minutes. Whenever someone upsets you, your deeply hidden worries seem to manifest in them. And sometimes you get glimpses of their horrific nightmares. Over and over you encounter a sense of Déjà vu.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stability

- Composed
- Uneasy *Moderate stress:*
- Unfocused -1 disadvantages
- Shaken *Serious stress:*
- Distressed -1 *Keep it Together*
- Neurotic -2 disadvantages
- Anxious *Critical stress:*
- Irrational -2 *Keep it Together*
- Unhinged -3 disadvantages
- Broken *+1 See through the Illusion*
- Broken The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

Timothy Kelley (Boyfriend) [0]

You remember feeling something for Timmy. It is still there, smoldering somewhere deep within. Like a dying ember. Somewhere underneath the thick veil of your numbed senses you still like him for his sense of humor, his kindness, his love for puzzles and brain teasers. You even remember secretly liking his stupid role-playing game habit. You wish you could fan that ember, but you can't get yourself to do it. He has stopped talking to you and he is hurt by the lack of contact, but you know he is still there for you. At least for a little while longer.

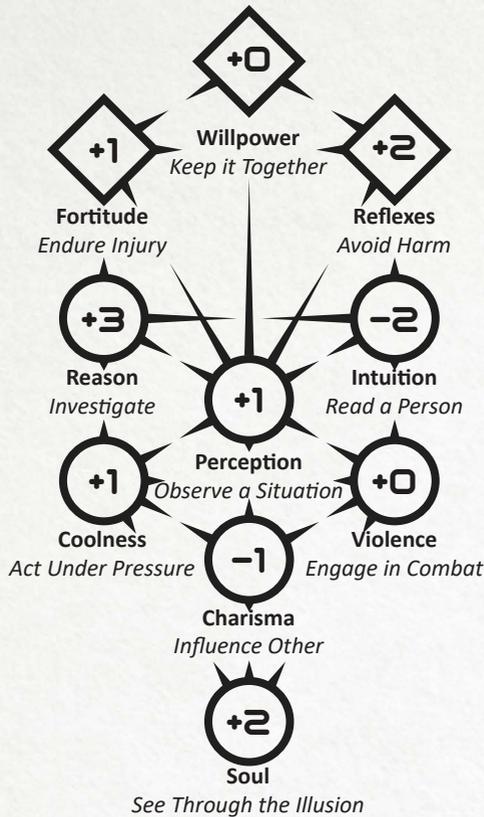
Andréa Farland (Arcade Employee) [+1]

Somewhere between an enabler and a good friend of yours. Every now and again when you run out of quarters, she helps you out. You don't even have to pay her back since she says that her employer won't even notice. You're by far their best customer anyway. You've hung out occasionally after Andréa's shift is over. Even though she's recently grown a bit distanced, almost uneasy around you.

Motivation

You find yourself in deep conflict. You have started to understand that something is deeply wrong with you. These spontaneous flashes and glimpses of the future that you sometimes get, your episodes of walking and just ending up where you need to be. You even suspect that it is somehow you who unbalances the people whom you do not like, as if you did it by your own will. At the heart of it all is the Arcade and Polybius. You need to find a way to break this, but how? How can you do it when there is no way to explain even to your mother or Timmy? Perhaps you can find help some other way?

The Nerd (The Scientist)



Information

Name: John K. Dent
Age: 18
Gender: Male

Best Subject: Science
Star sign: Aries
Grade: 12

Advantages

Inventor
Scientist
Genius

Disadvantages

Bad Reputation (Bullied)
Fanatic (Science, atheism)

Who you are

You fucking *hate* school. No, you *love* school but you *hate* the people in there. Sure, you might not be the most agreeable person there, but people always seem to have it out for you. None of the girls want you, because they all want some jock with huge muscles and a bad attitude. Well, the joke is on them, you got a hidden camera set up in the girl's locker room!

Also, females are just a distraction. You got your focus set on science and for this reason are some of the teachers' pet. Suits you nicely, even though you know that you are better than most of them. You are very smart after all. All you wish was that you'd dare to say your opinions out loud and not just mumble them. Life is so unfair and everyone's an asshole. No matter, you got your sights set on the Nobel Prize. You have found a way, an actual way, to transport things through the very fabric of spacetime and make them end up... well, you don't know quite where yet. But you have made a machine able to tear a hole big enough to fit a hand through. Well, at a one in ten success rate. So far you've managed to put all sorts of things through the hole. Like paper notes, your lunch and that classroom hamster in the next classroom over. But fucking Alex Smith "accidentally" pushed your machine off the table that smashed the cathode ray tube into a thousand pieces.

But you've seen just such a tube in Gregg's Arcade Emporium, inside one of the games as some repairmen had it open for maintenance.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stability

- Composed
- Uneasy *Moderate stress:*
- Unfocused -1 disadvantages
- Shaken *Serious stress:*
- Distressed -1 *Keep it Together*
- Neurotic -2 disadvantages
- Anxious *Critical stress:*
- Irrational -2 *Keep it Together*
- Unhinged -3 disadvantages
- Broken -1 *See through the Illusion*
- Broken The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

Elnora Nelson (Classmate) [+1]

Your science lab partner. The only one you actually tend to get along with. She can handle your outbursts and even ground you at times. Sometimes the two of you can sit down and chat about life and things in general for a while, and the foggy cloud of anger you carry around goes away for a bit. Too bad she's a lesbian.

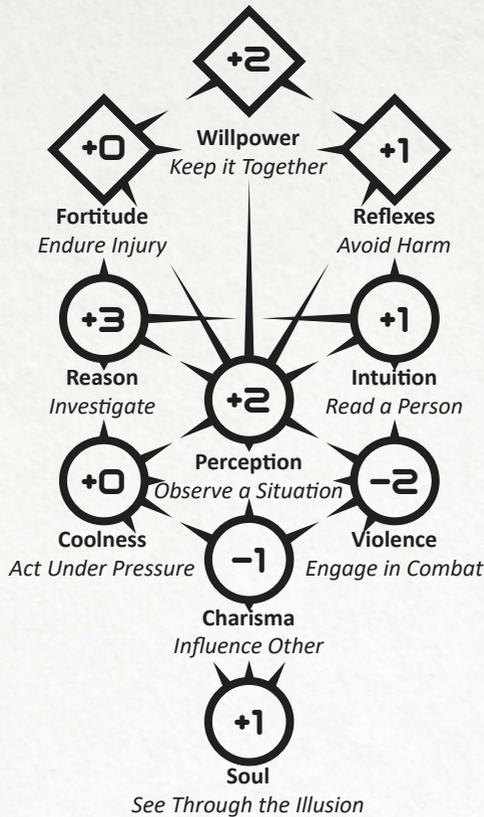
The Machine [+2]

This is your ticket out of this school and into... well, you could go anywhere! NASA, NSA, MIT. It must be kept safe at all costs. No one may touch it and you are ready to actually hurt Alex Smith if he tries to do it again. Or, well, maybe. Most probably!

Motivation

A lot of mutterings have been going around school about supernatural things, God, Jesus and other fairy tales like that. You can't help but to throw in a sharp word about how unscientific it is. You believe in the supernatural about as much as you believe in UFOs and Santa. Everything has a rational explanation. You need to get your hands on a cathode ray tube of the particular specifications you require. The only one you've seen is inside the game Polybius at Gregg's Arcade Emporium. You just need to figure out how to get it.

The Sickly (The Cursed)



Information

Name: Kyle C. Marshall
Age: 15
Gender: Male

Best Subject: History
Star sign: Sagittarius
Grade: 10

Advantages

To the last breath
Sealed Fate
Occult studies

Disadvantages

Haunted
Condemned
●●●●○○○○

Who you are

You have been sick ever since you were a little kid. Always going in and out of the hospital and no one knows what is wrong with you. You've seen doctors, healers, snake oil salesmen. Everyone offers cures, but no one actually delivers. You have been through a stable phase lately though. Your mother and father always encourage you to show hope but you have lost it long ago. You know your death is fast approaching and you know there is nothing you can do about it. This is why you have started trying to find an alternative way to cure yourself through reading up on occultism.

Even though you sleep in an oxygen tent at night, you are allowed out to do normal kid things during the day. Maybe you can't run as fast and for as long as your peers, but you do your best to keep up. Despite the dark rings under your eyes and your pale complexion you do have a few friends around you that always lend a hand when you need to.

You think, or rather, you are almost certain this stable period started when you first went to Gregg's Arcade Emporium to lose a few quarters into Gregg's machines. Polybius was the game that stuck with you, it just felt right somehow. Despite the game not being very popular, there always seem to be some of the same few people hanging around it.

Wounds

Serious wounds (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical wound (-1 ongoing)	Stabilized	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stability

<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uneasy	Moderate stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfocused	-1 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Shaken	Serious stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Distressed	-1 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Neurotic	-3 disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	Critical stress:
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational	-2 Keep it Together
<input type="checkbox"/> Unhinged	-3 disadvantages
	+3 See through the Illusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Broken	The GM makes a move

Family and Relations

Granny Fanny (Ghost?) [0]

Ever since you went deep into the whole occult thing you have tried the rituals and spells that you've come across. Most of the time to no avail, but once you summoned a being that looks a lot like a very old lady. At first you didn't realize what you did and thought someone had walked in on you in your room, she just looks so very life like. But no one else can see her. She follows you around, very slowly, making certain teenage needs awkward and hard to do sneakily. She cannot talk, but sometimes she asks things from you to put in a small storage box dug down in the park. Lint, copper wire, animal remains. You've not dared to oppose her yet. She's given no name, but you call her Granny Fanny. It just rolls well off your tongue.

Cathy Keiser (Secret crush) [+1]

Oh where it that Cathy would ever look in your direction and smile. You often see her in the library and she always carries around a new book or two. Almost only fiction. And she's so very cute. One of these days, you should work up some courage and ask her out, maybe to Gregg's Arcade?

Motivation

You are certain there is a deeper meaning behind your illness. The clock is ticking and you can feel your life slowly being drained from your very being. The Arcade gives you a certain temporary relief, or - to be honest - Polybius does. You feel something is weird about it, but you can't articulate just what. As if you fit just right in when you play the game. All too well. Something inside you is nagging at you to investigate this further, but how can you when you're alone?