



# REVELATIONS

A “No Security” Horror Scenario



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A Hebanon Games Product



## Revelations

### INTRODUCTION

*Revelations* is an apocalyptic horror scenario set in the small town of Toil, Illinois during the 1930's. Four to six players take on the role of the town's police force as they struggle with what appears to be the biblical end of days. Thematically, the scenario highlights the overwhelming hopelessness and despair brought on by a loss of faith.

This adventure starts with an overall description of the setting and plot for the GM's use. Information that the players can reveal through roleplaying can be found in the gameplay section.

#### 1938: Toil, Illinois:

Soybeans helped the little settlement of Toil thrive during the Great Depression while the rest of the nation dwindled around it. A number of industrial applications were discovered for soy oil in the previous decade, most notably for use in soaps.

It was rare for any farmer in the area to have unsold crop. The more forgiving northern climate meant plentiful harvests, and while no one was rich, hardly anyone suffered hardship or went without work for very long.

Throughout America's hardest years, Toil slowly grew from a collection of wooden huts into a bustling township. The farmers needed a central location where everyone could ship their harvest to the city, repair tractors, shop, and socialize. Industry came next, and even a few Chicagoans fled the smoky city for the peace of the plains. Isolated on all sides from the misery wandering the rest of the nation by its flat, endless fields of beans, the town became an idyllic slice of Americana in a few short years. It was a good place for picnics, for hard days of work and quiet nights with the family. A good place to build a life.

But though the town escaped the economic turmoil gripping the nation, it harbored a terrible secret at its heart. Driven by shame and abuse, Toil's fallen first son delved ever deeper into mysteries altogether too

## GM INFORMATION

A Gifted Child

Even as Toil was spared the deprivations of the rest of the nation, the pessimism of the times had an effect on the populace. During the first few years of the Depression, the townsfolk and local farmers found solace in a renewed faith. Reverend Yearta's Abundant Harvest Fellowship Church came to dominate the community's worship in these early years. The Reverend's positive message – that the continual faith and work ethic of the townspeople had spared them the economic blight – drew in many a parishioner. But the preaching of the father paled in comparison to that of the son.

Andrew Yearta, the minister's young son, would have been a prodigy in any occupation, and tending the flock was no different. The boy first gave testament at the age of seven, and by the time he was eleven he was giving full-blown Sunday sermons. In truth, the theological density of his analysis would have been difficult for an experienced biblical scholar to follow, not to mention a congregation of simple bean farmers. In spite of dense content, crowds from every surrounding county flocked to experience the disconnect between the boy's small stature and the sophistication of his preaching. People felt the only explanation for his skill was divine selection, and the elder Yearta was content to let them believe. The father's collection plates were as filled with offerings as his heart was with pride.

Forbidden Fruit

By the time Andrew was 16, he was co-pastor of Abundant Harvest. Though not nearly as adept at glad-handing parishioners as his father, the teenager's generosity and faith were unquestionable. People tolerated his awkward and shy demeanor as a side-effect of being touched by God, and the sense of family tradition attendants felt seeing the Yearta clan maintain the church with such unity overcame any reservations about the boy's shiftiness.

All of that changed when Andrew volunteered to help watch over the ailing Buella Sewell.

troubling and complex for his neighbors. After years of isolation, the tortured young genius discovered something not meant for man. A force, simultaneously holy and profane, that, once seen, evolved the ability to return a gaze – an abyss that would stare back. Unknown to the simple folk of Toil, a secret god was summoned: called down from their skies, raised from the fertile earth, and invoked from within their very souls.

And the thing's very presence did smite the town and all within it.

DISCLAIMER

This scenario pulls *heavily* from the Bible to inspire its horrors. Acts of violence and terror depicted in the Old and New Testament – both divine and hellish in origin – make up the vast majority of gameplay. Furthermore, this RPG module is firmly rooted in Lovecraftian horror, which by its very nature blasphemes against every traditional faith simultaneously. It could be argued that the collapse of mankind's entire belief system is the central theme of Lovecraft's fiction, and this scenario chooses to emphasize that aspect rather than any specific tentacle-sprouting monstrosity.

The author wishes to point out that *Revelations* is by no means meant as an attack on Christianity, Judaism, or any other faith. First and foremost, the goal is to provide a scary and novel scenario for horror RPG fans. If *Revelations* has any broader point to make beyond "have fun," it is only that Biblical literalism steals much of the poetry and meaning from an enlightening text. No other criticism is intended.

If you or members of your gaming group find any of these topics uncomfortable, please do not play *Revelations*. Hebanon Games has many frightening and fun games available for free at [hebanongames.com](http://hebanongames.com). Please download one of our other products and enjoy.

For those interested, all quoted verse is from the King James Bible, Cambridge Edition.

Diagnosed with stomach cancer, Andrew was tasked with helping Mary Sewell, her shut-in daughter, watch over the woman's final days. Reverend Yearata the elder had to speak at a convention in Chicago that week, and it was thought that the substitution would better prepare Andrew for taking more responsibility for the congregation.

Buella Sewell had done too good a job in life protecting her daughter's reputation. Convinced that Mary was born "a filthy whore" (her pet name for the girl since she caught her playing doctor with a neighbor boy), Buella had kept her daughter a prisoner in her home for nearly all of the girl's 26 years. The mother's religious fervor sprawled into madness, and in addition to driving her husband away, it created a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Andrew Yearata, handsome and slim, was the first man that had been allowed in the Sewell home in nearly a decade. Both victims of social isolation, repressed youth, and domineering parents, Andrew and Mary could have had a lovely courtship had their needs not been so starved. Alone in the house for days, a nose neighbor finally stumbled in on the pair as they were... engaged, as much wrapped up in each other as the inevitability of their sin.

The neighbor had been bringing over a pie in attempt to alleviate the morbidity of the young pair's deathwatch. When she checked on Buella as the young couple frantically tried to cloth themselves, she found the elder Sewell dead, seeming to have chosen to expire at the moment that would maximize her daughter's shame.

The scandal burned through the town like wildfire. Reverend Yearata came home to find his congregation torn asunder by gossip. Mary was all but formally shunned from the community, denying the young woman the freedom she'd hoped could be found in her mother's death. In the years that followed, the repressed girl hardened into a fierce cynic, holed up alone in her house. She wore the whispered jeer of "whore" with pride now, making it a point to cuss out every back-talker encountered and flirt indiscriminately without any purpose save sparking the town's ire.

Andrew fared even worse. The boy punished himself more harshly than his father ever could, though it didn't stop the old man from trying. The boy thought himself damned forever to hell, and Reverend Yearata would not even let the boy make confession to the townspeople whose faith he had defiled. On a lark, some months earlier Andrew had written an essay to an obscure German divinity college, inquiring about a specific biblical interpretation in the Book of Numbers. The school had been so impressed they offered the young genius a full scholarship, and he was sent away across the ocean, more in exile than triumph.

### Recalling the Deserter God

The college Andrew Yearata attended would have been infamous for the monk-like devotion demanded of its students if it weren't so isolated in the Black Forest. Built in the former von Meinhoff estate, little was known about the school save its penchant for producing odd, if not totally heretical, theological texts.

While there, Andrew Yearata made the devotion of even the most dogmatic staff seem like debauchery. He barely ate. He never left his rooms save for study or organized prayer. He made no friends and spoke to no one save the librarians, and even then to only ask for obscure texts. His whole life seemed psychotically, feverishly devoted to redemption, and the scholarly work for his degree seemed performed as an afterthought, albeit flawlessly. His only problem, aside from being disconcerting to the staff and students, was a brief obsession with self-flagellation that saw him in the infirmary many times.

Honestly grateful to be rid of him, the school sent Andrew back home in '37. Now a young man, the returned son didn't even speak to his parents upon re-entering his home. He merely walked upstairs with his trunks of books, went into his old room, and shut the door. The Reverend, who had been geared up for a confrontation, found himself baffled. Andrew had practically snuck back into town. Unwilling to rekindle the gossip by throwing the young man out, Andrew's father let him stay.

Alone in his room and finally free from distraction,



Andrew pored over what he'd begun studying at the college, what he now regarded as the last hope for mankind's salvation. In his madness and despair, the boy had convinced himself that God had abandoned his people; he called it "Deserter Theology." The sins against God's nature so offended the Lord that, in despair, He ceased even punishing the wicked. There was no more salvation to be had, just as the divine wrath that once rained so quickly from the skies had dried up after biblical times. The parental love that sent down the flood was expended, and now God merely washed his hands of mankind, allowing them to save or damn themselves. Andrew had damned himself through his lust, and he could never find forgiveness for his sin in a world devoid of divinity, a void he felt he'd personally created through his ingratitude. God did not hate Andrew; he ignored him, ceased to exist for him, leaving him alone with his self-loathing.

So the young man set his genius intellect to finding a way to make God manifest in the world again, to bring his Truth back into the world, reanimating both His wrath and His mercy. Andrew hoped to save his soul by saving everyone on Earth, but the only messenger capable of relaying a message to the Deserter God was another God.

In a book by the last heir to the von Meinhoff family, found dusty and neglected in the library of the castle-turned-divinity college, Andrew found his answers. He would use the forbidden knowledge of the universe's new ruler to bring about the return of biblical Truth. Andrew would infuriate his God back into existence by worshipping something so abhorrent and base it escaped the notice of even the most brutal pagans.

Thus, in an attempt to save his own soul, Andrew Yeararta made Earth a living Hell.

### The Monster: Noought-Iss

Metaphor – the assertion that two unlike subjects are, at least partially, the same – is an act of pure will given voice. It simultaneously creates and negates the existence of those caught in its eye. It shapes our understanding and that understanding shapes the world, is in turn understood anew, and loops back again.

Metaphor is the only sacred incantation, the single working alchemy, and the truest form of magic. The primacy of the Subject over the Object is made concrete in its two-part ritual. The figurative links do not make existence, but they are its animating force, the circulatory system of a universe reserved for those with the burden of being able to perceive it.

Seen this way, life itself is a metaphor. Inanimate materials – oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus – are linked and linked and conflated until there is a man. That which IS NOT, suddenly IS. The many become one.

Language itself is metaphor, a gestating confusion of concept and sound. And our minds are built entirely on this fruitful misunderstanding, each complex idea stacked on a foundation of simpler precepts. Cognition is a byproduct of our linguistics, of our ability to substitute the simple for the complex and vice versa. Thus every consciousness balances atop an upside-down pyramid, the infinite complexity of every thought – reality itself – balanced on a teetering base of simpler connections, telescoping endlessly towards some unperceivable base concept. And at the tip of this semantic spear lives Noought-Iss.

"Lives" is the wrong word, for it is alive and dead all at once. It exists only in transition, and all words are the wrong words. It is the link, the connection, the vehicle between all things and that which is one thing. It is an unthinking, unfeeling, natural force in the universe and, as all things of that nature, it is perceived by mankind as a God.

Being the bearer of this perception, Noought-Iss knows itself to be a deity, as much it can know anything in its quantum collapse between consciousness and mindlessness, existence and non-existence. And it knows Gods may hear prayers.

Klaus von Meinhoff, a German linguist in the early 1800s, recognized Noought-Iss as the primary catalyst of existence. A genius of the first order, Klaus was fluent in an untold number of languages and familiar with the canons of every great civilization's recorded literature. From his family's castle, he used his vast estate and nobility to obtain texts for study

and worked at cataloguing them seemingly all the hours of the day. He reportedly never slept, and his every brush with other academics ended in unsettling social disaster. His genius was pure and total, and thus was his madness.

Klaus's only publication was *The Binding of Noought-Iss with the Objective Tongue: A Study in the Semantic Hierarchy of Base Instantiation*. As dense academically as it was sacrilegious, the book went completely ignored save for bookstores near the castle that were forced to carry the title out of respect for the family's nobility. Eventually, von Meinhoff died (presumably), and his legacy remained as a few dusty tomes forgotten in the space between bookshelves.

No one guessed that the book contained the true language, instructions for speaking metaphor in its purest form. Von Meinhoff had discovered a way to express the basest concept, bypassing the endless hierarchy of semantic connections and accessing the root of meaning. How a mortal came to discover this information was lost to history along with von Meinhoff himself. Perhaps he was the greatest linguist to ever have lived. Perhaps the God demanded a prophet...

Though this language would be a profound tool for philosophical thought, it is far more dangerous than anyone could have predicted. The language doesn't just bypass the animating metaphor; it accesses and changes it. Noought-Iss, as the title suggests, is "bound" to the will of the subject. Thus, what IS and IS NOT becomes the will of a singular mind rather than a vast, unknowable cosmic force.

Mortal minds cannot hold the entirety of existence in their thoughts, not to mention express it completely in any language. Klaus von Meinhoff himself claimed that to use such power would be apocalyptic and rewrite the very laws of reality. Andrew Yearta knew this...and used it anyway.

## What's Happening?

Andrew has used what von Meinhoff called the "Objective Tongue" to bind Noought-Iss to his will. Rather than serving as the bridge between all that IS NOT and all that IS, he has performed a sick, profane ritual that focused Noought-Iss on a single copy of the King James Bible. His insane hope is that Noought-Iss will then rewrite his "Deserter God" back into existence and save the doomed souls of mankind.

But Andrew's understanding of von Meinhoff's work is incomplete at best, and he's greatly underestimated the inadequacy of human language to convey true meaning. Noought-Iss doesn't so much make reality as it composes reality, and like a creature with chromosomes suddenly cut out of its DNA, existence is sick and malformed while it follows instructions written in an inexact human language. The thing that exists in the barrier between existence and void now finds itself in the position of arbiter, forced into consciousness and made to decide what can no longer exist and how that which remains must be transformed.

Noought-Iss is not meant for this task. Its intellect (if it even has any) is cold and alien; it gives no priority to the survival of mankind. It has no understanding of historical context, subjective interpretation, or inter-textuality. Every line of the Bible is now being used as the code for a new reality, applied literally and without any regard for possible contradictions. The incongruities are tearing existence apart, and the world is faring no better than Noought-Iss in the violent transition.

Perhaps even the animating force of the universe has its limits, or maybe the Vehicle has come to perceive itself as God and exhibits wrath towards a blasphemer's tampering. It's even possible that the will of Andrew Yearta could have been so malignantly hateful that it infected the god he called down. Regardless, Noought-Iss' chaotic, bloody application of the new reality is causing existence itself to collapse, and death will seem a minor problem if the old order cannot be restored in time.

## The Acts

**Act One:** The populace is generally aware that something weird is going on. There's a palpable sense of unease in the air, and strange occurrences are popping up all over town. However, reactions are mixed: while some NPCs may have already started to lose it, most are actively seeking a rational explanation for whatever they are seeing. Some might even be amused. There isn't any reason to panic yet.

**Act Two:** Something is wrong... very wrong. The phenomena are growing increasingly sinister, and their biblical nature has been recognized by the more religious townfolk. Power is out, people are dying, and the only apparent explanation as to why is less than comforting. Panic takes hold. NPCs become focused on taking shelter, finding loved ones, or escaping the town.

**Act Three:** It's the end of days. Cosmic alterations occur all over the town. The populace is aware that escape from Toil is impossible. Survival itself is impossible. The only hope is salvation, and opinions on how to achieve that are... mixed. NPCs resort to religious mania, insanity, mob rule, and worse. It seems that the faster madness takes hold, the faster the changes keep occurring. Chaos reigns.

**Act Four:** Movement to Act Four should wait until all the PCs are dead, insane, or otherwise moments away incapacitation. The disturbance has gone on too long. Things fall apart. Reality itself fractures under the stress, resembling neither the Bible nor anything else in the realm of human experience. The universe ceases to be. GMs are encouraged to take as much poetic license as they wish in describing this event, but as characters are erased from having ever existed at all, the game can merely end with a fade to black (though, it should be noted, black as a color and concept is also erased.)

## GAMEPLAY INFORMATION

### Advice for Using *Revelations*

This scenario is uniquely structured. GMs should be familiar with the whole scenario before running the game and convey the information in the following section to their players at the outset.

**Embrace your Destruction:** *Revelations* is a meat-grinder. Groups that like beating the “bad guys” and winning against impossible odds should look elsewhere. This scenario is apocalyptic. No one will win; at best, some might survive. If the group likes to play characters that are thrown into a nightmare and utterly destroyed by it, then this will be great fun!

Groups might want to make some backup characters, just so everyone can continue having fun once all the screaming and dying starts.

**Accept your Ignorance:** The atmosphere of the scenario is one of escalating, unstoppable doom. There is a mystery to solve. Players will have the possibility of ending the threat, but the narrative by no means depends on this investigation’s completion, or even its discovery. If players pick up on the right thread and follow it towards salvation, it will only be by chance or the GM’s mercy. Expect no such handholding from the scenario itself; the apocalypse plays no favorites.

**Enjoy your Fall:** The locations within the Toil (page 9) are fixed, but what can be found there changes depending on how long the event has been going on. Each location has three Acts, and the changes grow increasingly severe with each one. There is no set guideline for what location the PCs should visit first or when the GM should move to the next Act. The dispatches at the start of each location can be read aloud for the players to pick from, or the GM can ask them to pick a random number between 1 and 14, starting them off with that scene. Escalate according to narrative convenience, or just move through the scenes in order until players move locations and start over. In terms of narrative, it doesn’t really matter so long as characters are never allowed to get comfortable.

### Character Selection

Characters are all members of the Toil City Police department. Though a small town, the farming community employs a number of peacekeepers due to their agricultural wealth and the need to keep hobos “moving down the road.”

As law officers, PCs will be vested with some authority to control the situation as it unfolds, a car to get around, and a radio to inform them about the plot hooks. Encourage players to come up with reasons their characters have for living in Toil, how they came to police work, and what family members they have living in the area. They could even elect a superior to give orders.

The mechanical side of character creation, of course, depends on the rules system chosen to run *Revelations*, but here are a few guidelines to follow anyway: firstly, encourage players to avoid builds not in keeping with the time period. In terms of gear, allow anything that seems plausible (machine guns and dynamite won’t help them anyway). If the rules system has a mechanic for tracking mental health, GM’s might mention that keeping characters sane will likely be more important than making sure they can shoot or lift weights. Lastly, players might find it useful to give their characters some knowledge of history or Christian theology to supplement their own understanding of biblical verse.



## LOCATIONS AND NPC'S

### Initial Dispatches

Winifred Deandria is the kindly old widow that dispatches for the Toil City Police Department. Initially given the work more out of pity than ability (the last of her family died almost a decade ago and the car radios were thought to be no more than a passing fad that would keep her occupied), she has proven quite reliable over the years. Winifred hasn't taken a single sick day in two years, she regularly bakes for the officers, and her cat Rufus is a source of morale for both prisoners and officers alike.

The kindly woman will serve as the character's link to information about what is going on about town. In fact, Winifred is the party's only reliable source as to what's happening, and it's her voice the GM should adopt when dispatching players on initial calls around the map.

The directions Mrs. Deandria gives sending officers to each location are understandably vague; so many panicked reports of impossible things are coming in that she can't manage much more than an address before moving on to the next. She doesn't have much time to answer questions either, between talking on the phone and tying up the radio with dispatches to other officers.

What follows are the initial dispatches that can lead PCs to each location on the map. For additional dispatches Mrs. Deandria provides later in the scenario, see location 15 (**Location Damned Dispatches, p.28**).

### Complaints

**Opener:** Alright, boys. I hope you had a big breakfast because I ain't never seen it so busy out there since that Hooverville popped up on Route 9. The phones ringing off the hook and people is acting foolish all over. It's gonna be a long day...

### The Leowen Bridge

Cora Sullivan says there's a bunch of boys loitering and playing in traffic on the bridge. It's probably them same what was playing hooky the other day. Head out there and run them off before one of 'em gets himself hurt.

### J & P's Lunch Counter

That ol' gossip Jessie Mae got herself all in a tizzy about Jenny and Penny again. She called me just a second ago saying they done poisoned her! Can you believe that? Better get down there before she causes another scene like last fall.

### Silverbranch Tap Room

Mr. Jeffery, god bless him, says that Tugger's "doing something sick" to his nephew down at the Tap Room. I don't know... sound like he might be hitting the poor child again.

### Toil City Hall

Mayor Ford is having a conniption! He says the Ag. Fair depends on y'all getting down there quick-like. I'll be blasted if I could make out what he was saying through all them curse words.

### Toil Public School

Doc Coughlin says he needs your help with a patient he was called out to see at the school. Sounded serious.

### Abundant Harvest Fellowship Church

Now what is the world coming to? Reverend Yearta called in to say someone has broken in and vandalized the church. All my lands... kids these days... I swear.

## Tennant Funeral Home and Cemetery

Morgan called to report in some sort of insect infestation. I couldn't really hear too well; we got a bad connection. Anyway, not sure what y'all are supposed to do about it, but he always was so mousy. You might go out there to calm his nerves.

## Toil Dump & Incinerator

Sawyer said he needed a ride into town to see the doctor. I guess that ol' wreck of a truck of his finally gave up the ghost. Be a dear and go get him; nice man hauled off that busted chiffarobe for me last week and he seemed in powerful need.

## Brown Grocer's

This ain't a crime but I figured I'd pass it along. My girlfriend Penny called me just now and said Brown is having a penny sale on bread. A penny for a fresh loaf! Can you believe that! I'd head down and stock up myself if I could keep the darn phone on the hook.

## Handy Dandy Agricultural Supplies

Handy Dandy foreman called. Said someone broke in last night and planted a tree? Not sure what law that breaks, but I suppose that's why they give you boys the guns!

## Masonic Lodge

Mrs. Wyrick says there's some sort of problem going on back at the Masonic lodge. She said, "You got to see to believe it." Well, I'll take her word for it. I ain't walking over there with these old knees.

## Yearta Residence

The Reverend's wife was in absolute hysterics when she called awhile ago. I couldn't make hide nor hair of what she was saying through all the tears, but she said she weren't in danger so I told to just hold on and that help was on the way.

## Sewell Residence

Now you know I ain't got no patience for the hussy, but that Mary Sewell is moaning about her persecution again. Said someone done dumped a load of frogs in her house? You believe that? The gall to accuse someone of such a thing... I swear. It's a

mercy Buella didn't live the to see that girl become so lowdown. Anyway, suppose we got to respond.

## The Common

That professor from up in Chicago called saying you got to come see his work for "post-tear-ity," whatever that means. I don't care for bookish men myself but he seems the nice sort. Maybe pull over if you're driving by the Common.

## 0. Off the Map (Route 9)

Acts One-Three: (Revelations 7:1) and (Psalms 104:5)

*"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."*

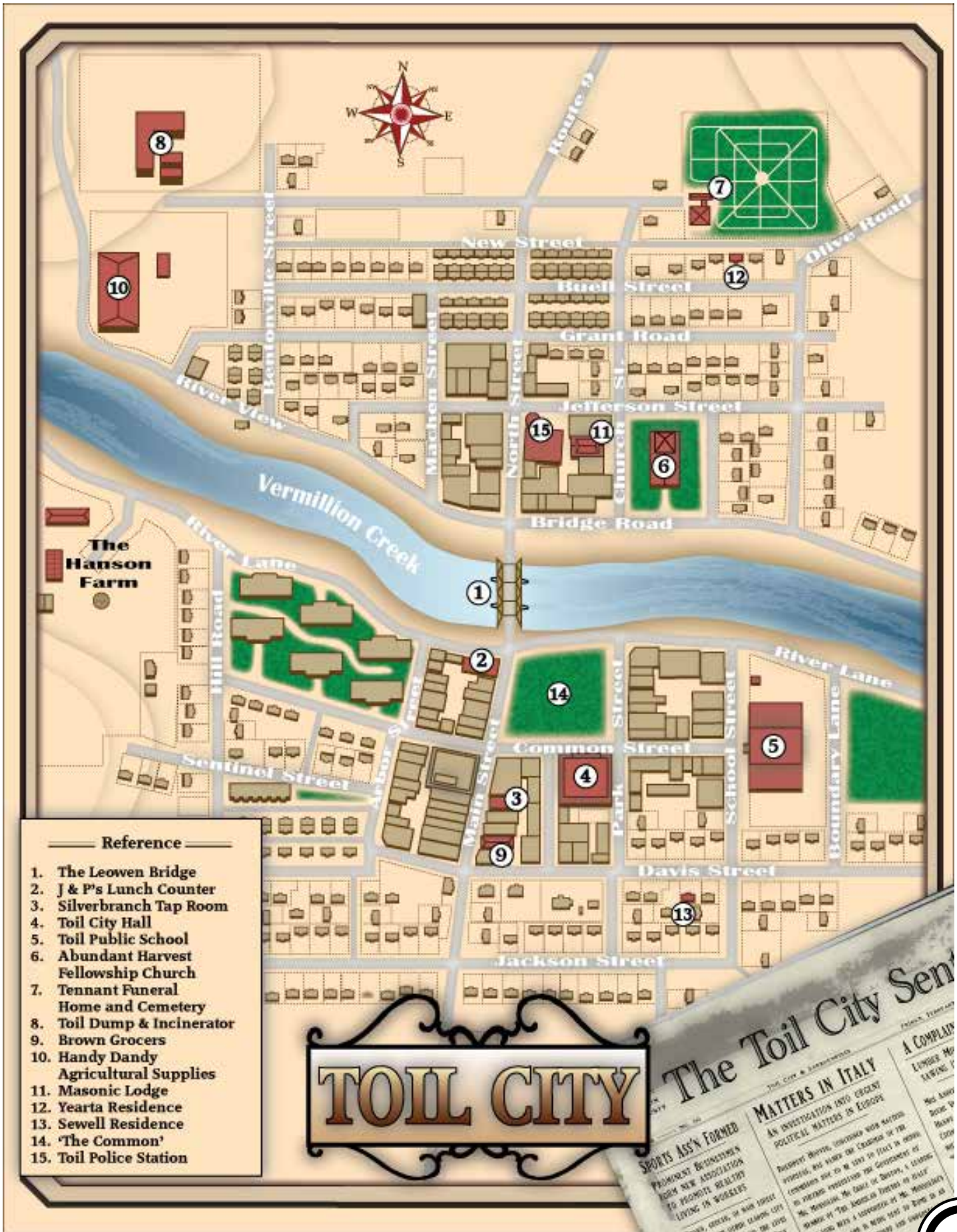
*"Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever."*

Getting out of town is going to seem like the obvious choice at some point. The only major road leading in and out of Toil is Route 9. The NPCs are eventually going to load up their trucks and flee down the highway. Regardless of whether they head North or South, the problem with that plan is that they no longer exist on the same planet.

The Earth is now flat, and it is very, very small. Initially, the border just appears as unseasonable fog. Oblivious characters find out too late that the fog is really a suspended cloudbank rolling across an endless horizon. The town of Toil has been literally cut off, and trying to leave only results in sailing off the edge of the Earth and into the incomprehensible void that stretches forever.

Players investigating the edge discover how hopeless the situation is. The land itself has been sliced out from the rest of the planet, the edge a 90-degree drop past amputated pipes and truncated stone sliced with surgical precision. This makes a perfect square around the town, and each of the four corners rests on enormous pillars that pierce endlessly downwards through the yawning abyss.





Reference

1. The Leowen Bridge
2. J & P's Lunch Counter
3. Silverbranch Tap Room
4. Toil City Hall
5. Toil Public School
6. Abundant Harvest Fellowship Church
7. Tennant Funeral Home and Cemetery
8. Toil Dump & Incinerator
9. Brown Grocers
10. Handy Dandy Agricultural Supplies
11. Masonic Lodge
12. Yeararta Residence
13. Sewell Residence
14. 'The Common'
15. Toil Police Station

# TOIL CITY

**The Toil City Sentinel**

**MATTERS IN ITALY**  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO GREAT POLITICAL MATTERS IN EUROPE

**SPORTS ASS'S FORMED**  
PROBATIONARY ASSOCIATION FORMED NEW ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE RECREATION LEAVING IN WORKERS

**A COMPLAINT**  
LONDON, MAY 10

Each corner is guarded by a silhouette of pure light, radiant wings outstretched and at attention with a flaming sword. These angels do not speak, and they may not be harmed. They merely watch the humans struggling beneath them with maddening eyes made of pure starlight, distant and disinterested.

Staring into the abyss is not healthy for anyone's mindset, and seeing one of the pillar guardians is somehow worse. The edge of the world is the ultimate precipice, and like tourists atop a high building, the insane urge to leap off may be too persistent and strong to resist.

## 1. The Leowen Bridge

### **Act One: (2nd Kings 6:5-6)**

*"But as one was cutting down a tree, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where did it fall? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in there; and the iron did float."*

A group of children are "loitering" on the bridge, excitedly shouting and pointing at some sticks poking out of Vermillion Creek. When questioned, they reveal that they were playing Cowboys and Indians when Johnny dropped his Dad's old hatchet in the water. Before the tears could start, the hatchet's handle rose up out of the water, seemingly swimming against the current.

The boys are now running back and forth between the bridge and their homes, dropping every bladed garden instrument they can find into the water. Players that swim out to the "sticks" (really handles) will find that only the axe heads are floating and resisting the current. Every knife, garden shear, and rake has sunk to the bottom... despite being made of the same metal as the axe heads.

### **Act Two: (John 2:9)**

*"When the steward of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not from where it was: (but the servants who drew the water knew;) the steward of the feast called the bridegroom."*

If they've yet to be retrieved, the axe heads sink as the creek takes a purplish hue. The water has turned to wine: brackish, muddy wine. The novelty of the floating metal is replaced by unease. This phenomenon is obviously biblical, though certainly not a bad omen.

### **Act Three: (Psalm 105:29)**

*"He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish."*

As the wine suddenly transforms into a river of blood and tangles of dead wildlife float through the town, the evil portents of the day's events become apparent to even the most oblivious residents.

## 2. J & P's Lunch Counter

### **Act One: Psalm 102:9**

*"For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping"*

Jenny and Penny run the only restaurant in town. The "sisters" (actually barely-closeted lovers) always have a packed house, but a strange occurrence has driven all but the most stalwart customers from the place.

Jessie Mae Lynnwood, the town busy body and general gossip-monger, has filed an official complaint against the restaurant. This is not the first time she's been after Jenny and Penny (she constantly calls the police to their house for "disturbances" in hopes they'll catch them living in sin), but this time there are witnesses.

Mrs. Lynnwood's food has turned to ash in her mouth, quite literally. As characters arrive, they can see the soot still staining her chin as the woman sobs on the corner. The dissatisfied customer claims this is some trick being played on her by the "vile fornicators" inside. Penny and Jenny, though nervous and infuriated by Mrs. Lynnwood's now very public accusations, have no idea what is going on. They point to Mrs. Lynnwood's sandwich where it still sits on her plate, noting that there are no ashes on it. The pair is eager to cooperate, and they're offering free lunch to everyone on account of all the fuss.



Any character that eats Mrs. Lynnwood's bread will find that the phrase "turned to ash in their mouths" can have far less poetic meanings, or they can simply wait for one of the concerned diners to go back to their meal. Anybody who eats the transforming bread will be fine after some spitting, but they'll find afterwards that they can't stop themselves from crying, constantly, regardless of their mood.

### Act Two: Revelation 8:7

*"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast on the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."*

Penny, when going to fetch more ice for the complimentary drinks the restaurant is offering to its perturbed clients, opens the door to an eruption of flames and blood. She is quite badly burned and trying to recover in the kitchen to avoid spooking more customers with her screams. Players can witness this first-hand if they're on-site, or they can arrive to help after a panicked Jenny calls dispatch.

After calming the poor woman down, players can see that the icebox appears to have melted from the inside. It somehow turned into a kiln despite being filled with ice, and the warped metal walls are caked with blood from an uncertain source.

Though far from the fire, it appears all the vegetation in the alley out back has burned as well. As characters investigate, more shouts can be heard from inside the restaurant. When they return to the lunch counter, every glass of iced tea in the place is now boiling, the ice inside suddenly turned to fire. The glasses eventually break from the heat, spilling a bloody froth onto the ground.

Those few customers still around after the ashy bread take that as a cue to leave in a frenzied, panicked stampede out the door. Unless players can keep the crowd calm, a few people will be trampled in the exodus.

### Act Three: (Genesis 19:24)

*"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;"*

The restaurant lies abandoned as chaos grips the streets of Toil. Penny and Jenny have hung up a laughable "Be Back Tomorrow!" sign on the door before leaving their livelihood for the looters.

It's for the best. The punishment for a town allowing the "sinful" love of people like Jenny and Penny has a precedent. Heralded only by the brief whiff of rotten eggs, the restaurant is bombed out by a huge streak of fire falling from the sky. The destruction is fierce and total, as if a meteor hurled from the other side of the galaxy has targeted the building.

Any characters standing inside or near the restaurant would be lucky to survive the explosive blast, and even then disfiguring burns would be unavoidable. The fiery rain continues even after the initial strike, falling indiscriminately amongst the rest of the block and turning every building into an inferno.

All characters must flee the localized hellstorm if they wish to survive, but any escape is temporary. So long as the event continues, the brimstone rain will slowly continue to expand until all of Toil is engulfed in flames... though it is unlikely anyone will be left alive by the time things go so far.

## 3. Silverbranch Tap Room

### Act One: Ephesians 6:5

*"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ."*

Were it not for Mark Jeffery's kind heart, the Toil PD might never have known there was a problem at the local bar. Mark called from his home to report that Tugger, the owner of the Silverbranch, was being exceptionally cruel to Jacob Rich, his young nephew that works for him.

Tugger has a history of abusing Jacob, sometimes even going so far as to hit Jacob when he's indulged in too much of his own stock, but he's never received much punishment beyond a night in the drunk tank. As a 16-year-old orphan working for room and board, Jacob doesn't have much choice but to put up with the man; it's the only work he's likely to get from the only family he has. But according to Jeffery, Tugger's abusive attitude took a turn for the worse in a way he can't quite describe. He just got out of there and called the cops.

When players arrive, Jacob is inside the bar doing handstands while the bar's early patrons laugh and jeer. His face is bright red from all the blood rushing to his face, but he won't stop despite the tears rolling down his face. If players stop the sick little show, Tugger will claim innocence. He just asked him to do it; he didn't force anything.

Apparently, Jacob had bumped into Tugger in the kitchen while he was cooking early in the day. Tugger, abusive as always, had told the boy to stick his own hand in the fire next time before bumping him. He did... for five long seconds. It wasn't until Tugger smelled burning flesh that he pulled his nephew's hand away. He claims that the boy wouldn't seek medical attention but instead begged to stay and finish the shift.

In fact, Jacob will do anything Tugger tells him. The young man agrees with Tugger's story 100%, and he seems eager for the police to leave so he can continue serving his "master." The handstand thing appears to have just been a test of this newfound obedience, one of many in the last few hours. The bar patrons have been entertaining themselves with these bar tricks for the last few hours; asking the boy to drink filthy beer remainders and play five-finger filet just to see if it would work. Had the players not arrived when they did...

Jacob Rich's fanatical devotion to his uncle is inexplicable. He refers to Tugger only as "master" and leaps to perform his every command. At the same time, an unmistakable look of terror haunts the boy's eyes. The only way to stop the behavior is to separate Tugger and Jacob. Tugger will not take this interference well, blaming the boy's "shenanigans" of course. He off-handedly remarks that Jacob "Should

take a nap in Main Street before coming back to work there." As Jacob breaks free from the police, he sprints to do just that. Players must race to prevent an insane tragedy as the boy tries to get himself run over.

## Act Two: Malachi 2:3

*"Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung on your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it."*

Abasi al Atrash is a fish out of water. An Egyptian Muslim, he has travelled to America to oversee the shipment of a large amount of soy oil extract to his country. Employed at a British multinational, he is in charge of developing a soap production operation in Egypt, and the soy oil is to be the first industrial shipment of their agreement.

Abasi, though capable of some English, can understand very little about what is happening. He arrived from Chicago to find that the shipment at Handy Dandy Agricultural Supplies delayed. The factory's owner sent him to wait at the bar with a few foremen, not realizing that Muslims don't drink. There, Abasi watches the odd tortures of Jacob Rich, perplexed by this strange cultural practice. But nothing compares to the confusion to come.

Suddenly and without warning, Abasi falls to the ground screaming. His face and his untouched plate of food have suddenly become covered in dung. Flies swarm him, and the poor man doubles over as a pool of blood spreads outward from his lap. Panicked and confused, a pained Abasi tries to lock himself in the bathroom to hide his shame. Few are willing to touch the screaming man covered in shit, but players that manage to stop him will find him inconsolable. What little English he had goes forgotten with the pain. Locked in the bathroom, Abasi will barricade the door and refuse all entry. He only mutters frantically in his own language.

Anyone capable of speaking Arabic can hear the man praying to Allah through the door. It appears Abasi is a very well-educated man, and he has read the religious texts of his business partners. He references Malachai 2:3 whilst asking the heavens what he did to deserve such suffering.

### Act Three: Exodus 11, Exodus 12

Eventually, the murmurings in the bathroom stop. If any characters or shell-shocked NPCs haven't fled the bar yet, they can knock down the door to find Abasi al Atrash dead by incomprehensible means. Seeing his dung and blood covered body is enough to make most men retch, but those stout enough can search his body for clues. They won't find much save his wallet. Family photos reveal that Abasi was the oldest of five siblings. The firstborn.

## 4. Toil City Hall

### Act One: Exodus 9:1-7

The Toil City Hall hosts the regional area's Agricultural Fair Finals. Farmers from all around journey to the front lawn and courthouse steps to compete for prizes like "Largest Pumpkin" and "Best Goat." Local wives set up stands and sell baked goods. The kids have fun with carnival games and a small petting zoo.

That's on a normal year – today, all the animals are suspiciously absent and stay locked in their trailers. All the livestock competitions have been delayed for hours, and the spokesmen for the WPA Agricultural Committee desperately stalls for time at the grandstand.

Mayor Lenard Ford is the one who called. Once police arrive, the impatient bureaucrat hurriedly trundles behind the building to where the trailers are parked. He points the officer towards the slates in a closed trailer for a horse named Daisy... or what remains of her.

The animal is frightful to look at – frothing at the mouth, shaking, covered in running sores, bloodshot eyes rolling in panic. Every other animal at the fair suffers equally, and they seem to worsen by the second. Mayor Ford is furious and wants the officers to forsake all other calls until the "poisoner" is found. He threatens the job of anyone leaving, regardless of the excuse.

Investigating the animals' food and water reveals no contagion of any kind, and characters with medical experience note that the affliction facing the

creatures makes no biological sense. Such a potent and strange collection of symptoms couldn't jump species so completely. More traditional investigators canvassing the crowd notice that Elmer Hanson, the nearest farmer to the town and yearly favorite at the competition, is nowhere to be found. While this is suspect, it could just mean he didn't make the regional this year.

Eventually, Mayor Ford gets the officers attention again. The agonized braying of the livestock is becoming too obvious to hide and some quarantine measures need to be taken. In short, he wants officers to put the animals down. He's arranged an impromptu shooting backstop off Park Street. He wants some officers to entertain the crowd with a marksmanship competition while one poor bastard uses the gunfire to mask the creatures' euthanasia. While this might prevent the onlookers' discovery and panic, it certainly disquiets the character in charge of the slaughter.

### Act Two: (Psalm 90:3)

*"You turn men back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, O sons of men.'"*

It starts slowly. The Mayor takes the grandstand and tries to explain the cancelled events when a puff of smoke erupts from a spot in the crowd, as if someone had walked through an old campfire. Then there's another, and another, this time accompanied by a frenzied grandmother that screams and claws her hands madly through the dirt.

Mayor Ford gives up the microphone stand to go suppress this new rabble-rouser. As the WPA rep. moves to take over, he suddenly freezes mid-step, tips forward on his momentum, and falls, disintegrating into a million particles of dust on the stage.

There is a stunned beat, then panic erupts. As chaos spreads, so does the metamorphosis. Everywhere, random people are instantaneously crumbling into dust before their loved ones' eyes. Others are turning into solid pillars of salt. The screams are deafening.

Players present for the massacre face two threats: being trampled and going mad. The people remain understandably inconsolable, and the only

hope is to seek shelter or get out of the way. In games with a sanity mechanic, GMs should treat irrevocable madness the same as death. Rather than take control of the character as an NPC, turn characters that lose their grip on reality into dust. Coming unhinged merely speeds the process of reality's revision.

## Act Three: (Deuteronomy 28:53)

*“And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, which the LORD your God has given you, in the siege, and in the distress, with which your enemies shall distress you.”*

Mayor Ford has lost it, but he's already started campaigning for the leadership of a new post-apocalyptic tribe. Ford and those that hold up in the City Hall have convinced themselves that they are under siege by the Lord's Will (and aren't entirely wrong). As they try to secure foodstuffs for the upcoming deprivation before sealing themselves in the courthouse, their frenzied minds have been co-opted by the force at work. Armed with knives and improvised weapons, they are trying to force the terrified children fleeing from the bloody Leowen Bridge (**Location 1, p.12**) into the City Hall before barricading the doors.

The boys are smart enough to struggle against their crazed elders, but they're being overpowered and slowly dragged up the steps. God knows what will happen to them if the players can't stop Mayor Ford and his cronies, though his continual muttering of “The flesh of the sons and the daughters” doesn't breed confidence.

## 5. Toil Public School

### Act One: (Deuteronomy 32:2)

*“My teaching shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass”*

Dr. Dylan Coughlin, the local physician, called in for help from the office of Toil Public Schools. He's seeing one of the teachers, Wendy Ann Weber, for a serious medical condition. When officers arrive, Dr. Coughlin briefs them on the situation while

escorting them towards the storage closet where he's secluded the woman.

When the doctor arrived, Ms. Weber was already hysterical in the hallway, crying and desperately clapping her hands over her mouth. While the principal tried to comfort her, the children in the classroom were running amok. They were having sliding contests across the floor, running and slipping on a thin layer of moisture of unknown origin.

Dr. Coughlin insists that the players quarantine the school to contain an outbreak of whatever it is Ms. Weber has. He assures them it is airborne and that if it is infectious, it is likely the officers should be isolated too. If asked to describe the symptoms, the doctor finds himself incapable. Suspicious characters can press the doctor, at which point he suggests they enter the storage room and see for themselves.

Alone in the storage room, Ms. Weber's hands remain glued to her mouth. Attempts to get her to speak are met with frantic headshakes, but Coughlin can cajole her into speaking, urging her just to repeat what she was talking about in class when the illness manifested. When Ms. Weber starts shakily reciting the multiplication tables, characters witness a thick stream of mist spew from her mouth. The pressure isn't dangerous, nor does it obscure her words, but the dew comes out with more consistent force than can be provided by human lungs.

Ms. Weber has no idea what is happening. Dr. Coughlin doesn't know where all the moisture is coming from either, and he fears the condition could cause deadly dehydration if it goes untreated.

### Act Two: (Exodus 8:17)

*“And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.”*

Whether the quarantine has been enacted or the police have just arrived, the origin of Ms. Weber's rain of words increasingly appears supernatural when the playground's sandbox inexplicably, instantly transforms into a swarm of blood-sucking lice.



Unfortunately, there is a class using the recess yard at the time.

Characters wishing to save the thrashing children from the lice pit may do so if they have the fortitude. Plucking kids from the swarm will be sickening, and the sheer number of the creatures (one for every grain of sand) causes damage as long as the officers are amongst the writhing mound.

Eventually, the insects will disperse from the box. The quarantine, if players created it, now seems quaint. Many students and teachers flee to their homes.

### Act Three: (Matthew 15-18 and others)

*“Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and is very ill: for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I endure you? Bring him here to me. And Jesus rebuked the demon; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.”*

Seventh grader Lyle Winstrom has suffered from epilepsy for most of his life. His mother hasn't yet come to pick him up, delayed by the insanity outside. In keeping with the biblical reality insinuating itself, Lyle's condition suddenly stops being neurological and starts being demonic.

The creature that was formerly Lyle Winstrom cannot be saved by mortal hands. He is possessed by a demonic spirit that only a Son of God can exorcise. The creature is in keeping with its other descriptions (Mark 5: 1-15, Luke 8:27-39, etc) and therefore possesses supernatural strength, wields the powers of a wizard, encourages self-mutilation, and takes joy in the slaughter of innocents. It cannot be reasoned with and only wishes to destroy.

The effectiveness of firearms against a demon thrall is obviously neglected in the texts, so it up to the GM if the creature can even be harmed. Regardless, the demon presents serious danger, and attacking a child – even a fire-eyed, blood-soaked one shooting hellfire from its hands – won't be easy.

### Bearing Bad News

If players know about the goings on at the Yearta Residence (**Location 13, p.26**), they can inform/question the patriarch at his church. If told about the death of his son, the elder will be genuinely grieved and ask his wife be brought to him at church. He's ignorant of all other details save his son's previous scandal and exile to the divinity school (which, in lieu of the boy's death, he finally seems regretful for). Aside from pointing out young Andrew's strange new proclivities, the old man won't be very useful, less so as grief and the frightening new portents of the “prank” continue to assert themselves at the church.



## 6. Abundant Harvest Fellowship Church

### Act One: (Matthew 26-28)

*“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

Reverend Yearta the elder called in a break-in that he’s just discovered at the church. As it is early afternoon, there is no one in the building save the pastor.

It appears that in the night the sacrament was swapped with a grisly substitute. The bread now pulses and is covered with a pale, sweaty skin. Cutting it causes an escape of nauseating gas and a spurt of what appears to be blood. The bread has been made flesh – impossible flesh from no animal in existence. Checking the wine bottles reveals that they have been replaced with blood.

Yearta regards this as a sick, blasphemous prank, but the news about his son (see “Bearing Bad News”) may lead him to more fantastical explanations.

### Act Two: (Jer. 15:16)

*“Your words were found, and I did eat them; and your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by your name, O LORD God of hosts.”*

A few patrons seek comfort in the church as events outside grow increasingly distressing. Reverend Yearta, either out of duty or self-solace, is ministering to the flock. But as he does, a distressing cough enters his voice and soon prevents him from speech.

Eventually, amongst much blood and bile, Yearta pukes up a number of fleshy bits in odd shapes. The giblets are sheathed in the same pallid flesh as the sacrament and pulse in the same vein-y, disgusting manner. Especially educated characters might recognize the bits as characters from Aramaic alphabet. Superbly knowledgeable officers could spell out the chapter and verse Yearta quoted before coughing up the fleshy label.

More disturbing than the regurgitation is the palpable urge everyone feels to put the pulsating letters in their mouths. It takes serious willpower to resist this compulsion, and those failing a check find themselves psychologically damaged by the act of resistance. Of course, resisting the urge isn’t nearly as distressing as succumbing to it.

### Act Three: (John 6:53)

*“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”*

The sacrament and the words continually expelled by Yearta prove too tempting for the ever-increasing numbers of frenzied worshippers. As they rave about the end of days, they clamor to rip chunks from the living bread and guzzle bottles of blood. Those unable to reach seem to be literally wasting away on the spot, doing what they can to subsist off the bloody Aramaic littering the floor around the Reverend. If unable to reach either, those that have already succumb to the desire to eat risk starvation and death within minutes without the sacrament. All present seem to realize this instinctually despite their repulsion and confusion.

The urge to join in “communion” can still be resisted, but preventing anyone else from participating in the horrific sacrament leads to violence. Regardless, players should exit the scene quickly; it’s too terrifying to behold for long and stay sane.

## 7. Tennant Funeral Home and Cemetery

### Act One: (Judges 14:8)

*“And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion.”*

Morgan Tennant waits for the police outside his parlor, flustered and wringing his hands. The dispatch says only that there has been “an insect attack,” but Tennant explains that when he opened a coffin for a prepared viewing there was an explosion of bees from within. He’s baffled as to what to do, but he urges officers to stay outside lest they get stung.

Officers entering the building can avoid serious stings merely by moving cautiously so long as they don't disturb any other coffins. Bees infest every dead body in the place, writhing around like maggots and secreting honey. All three of the bodies awaiting burial in the parlor are subject to a literal instance of this same unfortunate translation of the Aramaic word for "fly."

### Act Two: (Exodus 9:13-35)

Outside the bee-infested funeral parlor, an unseasonable storm strikes the cemetery without warning. Initially just exceptionally thunderous, when the hail starts – in the middle of a bright summer's day – it's extremely disconcerting. The storm seems centered around the cemetery, excluding the rest of the town at uncannily sharp angles. The unsettling storm graduates into a life-threatening hazard the longer it goes on, the mystery hail growing larger and falling hard enough to chip headstones. Anybody caught in the maelstrom for long could be seriously injured or killed.

### Act Three: (Ezekiel 37:1-10)

The nuances of Ezekiel's prophetic vision for the Jewish people seem lost on entities existing beyond space and time. Rather than using death as a symbol for captivity and resurrection as a representation of the homeland's restoration through faith, the dead in Tennant Cemetery literally reassemble themselves from bones and claw themselves out of the earth.

The sight of this is horrifying beyond words. The skeletal and half-rotted remains of every beloved family member to ever die in Toil bursts from the earth at once, staring at the living with hollow eye sockets and agape jaws. Those witnessing the army of dead risk madness, but thankfully the corpses present no other threat. The animate remains seem content to march east, towards Jerusalem, and ignore anything in their path.

Realizing their peaceful nature in the wake of such a shock may be difficult for any characters and NPCs in the area. Harming skeletons is a terrible idea, for they have been united through resurrection under the same faith that follows Exodus 21:23-25 (But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life

for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise). In short, assaulting the undead army is a good way to get torn apart.

## 8. Toil Dump & Incinerator

### Act One: (Exodus 9:10)

*"And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became boils breaking forth with sores upon man, and upon beast."*

Sawyer Harris doesn't get much company out at the dump, and he's fine with that. The notorious town malcontent runs the city's only garbage truck, and he's constantly sorting through the mounds for bits he can sell as scrap or burn in his cobbled together incinerator.

Officers arriving at the scene may discover the cause of Sawyer's distress long before reaching his tiny shack. Any character caught outside at the dump should face some test of their luck, either using game mechanics, a coin-flip, or paper-rock-scissors with other players present. The loser finds their character hissing in pain as a painful boil breaks out on their face. The running sore appears almost instantly and seems as if it's been infected for weeks. Standing outside trying to find the source of the outbreak only leads to more lesions. Every fleck of ash from the incinerator that lands on flesh aggravates another boil, and standing outside for too long will cause serious health problems.

The only shelter is Sawyer's little shack. There they find the garbage man, bed-ridden and writhing in pain. He's horribly disfigured by swollen, pus-filled wounds that cover every inch of his exposed skin. The sheets are soaked through with his sickening excretions, and he's delirious with pain. The ailing Sawyer is as filthy as ever, but the ash of the incinerator that once perpetually covered him has been replaced by blood and infectious run-off.

Characters can stop the poisonous soot flying from the still active incinerator merely by dousing the flame. Doing so safely requires covering every inch of exposed skin from the ash floating out of the chimney. This is easily done with a sheet when approaching the fire, but dealing with blowback of ash from throwing water on the flames could potentially leave an officer in as bad a state as Mr. Harris.

## Act Two: (Exodus 8:20–30)

The flies of the town dump, always numerous, see their numbers swell from an uncertain source. The air is suddenly black with the swarm, and the buzzing is deafening. While not harmful, standing amongst the filthy maelstrom causes the skin to crawl, figuratively and literally. If the incinerator is still spewing ash, or if the exposed characters received boils previously, the creatures won't hesitate to lay their young in the festering wounds. While not lethal, it is disgusting beyond words, and the itching can prove a distraction for the rest of the game.

## Act Three: (Leviticus 10:1-20)

As things worsen, many in the community desperately try to appease the angry God heaping miseries upon them. In a panic, a few have come to the dump to perform a sin offering to the Lord. A few dozen are milling around the fly maelstrom, dragging panicked goats, steer, and even family pets towards the incinerator.

If not stopped, the mob will slit the throats of all the creatures in a blasphemously inadequate parody of the offering. However, there is no ritual butcher present, nor is there an altar. The offerings are unauthorized, and the text makes clear punishments for such an offense: death by fire. As the first animal is thrown into the furnaces flames, the whole crowd spontaneously combusts, silently collapsing as the very oxygen in their lungs is burned away.

## 9. Brown Grocer's

### Act One: (Mark 6:41)

*“And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.”*

Clyde Brown of Brown Grocer's has nothing to report; the call came in from the customers themselves. The “deal on bread” everyone seems so excited about is about all that could be called a disturbance, but investigating further reveals something far more sinister is afoot.

When first confronted, Clyde can say nothing about his penny loaves save a lame joke that his prices must be “criminal.” If further pressed, he'll reveal that his sale is the direct result of an unexpected overstock. The bread seems fine, and tasting it causes no ill effects. However, taking a loaf off the shelf and putting it back proves problematic... because there is another loaf in its place.

No matter how many loaves are removed from the shelf, the second the character looks away, the shelf is completely restocked. While amusing at first, seeing the mystery bread pile up quickly becomes scary. It's just wrong. Clyde seems unaffected; he's convinced this is a miracle bestowed upon his business as a reward for his faith.

Players looking for the other half of the famous meal combination will be sore pressed to find it. The landlocked town doesn't have much in the way of fish outside of canned tuna, and taking a tin off the shelf doesn't prompt anything unnatural. Opening the lid and consuming the contents, however, proves impossible; there is always more tuna in the can. Overturning the can be downright dangerous. An endless tide of canned tuna pours forth and won't stop until the can is turned upright. If not righted, a single can of tuna easily could drown everyone in the store in dead fish.



**Act Two: (Psalm 137:9)**

*“Happy shall he be, that takes and dashes your little ones against the stones.”*

John Kaywood moves people out of his path as if an invisible cowcatcher preceded him. He brings a reminder of the world’s cruelty into a room like a cloying stink, and it’s all people can do to keep from crossing the street to avoid his gaze.

John’s wife, Laura, is dead, along with their first child. The infant’s name wasn’t even known before the poor woman tripped down her porch steps while carrying the unfortunate babe. The guilt proved too much for her, and she put the shotgun in her mouth the first day John went back to work. He’s a hollow, joyless man, unable to hold down a job but kept alive by church donations. He’s shopping for whiskey in the store when something odd happens: he begins to laugh.

He laughs hysterically, tears of joy streaming down his face. Nothing appears to prompt it, and he ignores any questions. While disconcerting in its own right, the mad cackling is doubly terrifying to anyone aware of John’s history in town. He starts moving down the aisles, stumbling in his spastic fits of laughter, towards Regina Rossini... and her young daughter in the stroller.

John is just a man, but he’s gone completely mad by order of the gods. Some small part of his brain can still register a threat or a pointed gun as a reason to stop, but it will merely prompt a wild-eyed explanation as he holds the infant over his head: he’s just trying to make Regina happy. Happy like him and his wife.

Officers on the scene, regardless of whether they put Kaywood down before bearing witness to his insane crime, can look forward to many sleepless nights. If John succeeds and they see Regina’s reaction – the same insane laughter as her child’s murderer – they may never sleep again.

**Act Three: (Exodus 10:21–29)**

Darkness floods through the store as if released from a dam, an intangible ink that fills the store in a matter of seconds. While characters can pass through it and breathe, the darkness is absolutely total: no

flashlight, flame, or other illumination even makes a dent in the black.

Even though their in no physical danger from the darkness, the panic of refugees hiding in the store can still be deadly. Mere seconds earlier daylight shone outside, but now the already horrified crowd in Brown Grocers thinks itself suddenly stricken blind. People scream and attempt to flee in all directions at once, bashing into each other and knocking over shelves. Calming the frenzied herd is impossible; it is difficult enough just to avoid getting crushed. The officers’ only hope is to recall the path outside. Once free of the front door, they find the sunlight restored. The display windows of the store merely look blacked out, revealing nothing of the terror happening within.

**10. Handy Dandy Agricultural Supplies****Act One: (Revelations 22:2)**

*“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruit, and yielded its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

Handy Dandy produces a number of products, but their main venture is refining the soybean crops into oil for soap. The men of the factory compose the majority of the town’s male population, and in nice weather they are prone to eat lunch at the fleet of picnic tables outside rather than the sweltering heat of the interior.

Today, they found a tree in the middle of the lunch spot. It’s massive, easily hundreds of years old, and sits rooted by the river in a spot that was empty just that morning.

No one seems to be anything but amused by the prank. The only reason Jason Compton called the police at all was to report someone trespassing on company property. The tree is too clever to piss anyone off. The ground around the trunk remains completely undisturbed, as if the thing had always been growing at that spot. The thing is too massive to lift by hand, yet the bark and leaves bear no mark of heavy machinery. Most astonishingly, the species of the plant is completely unidentifiable. Even its fruit is alien;

each of the twelve pieces hanging from the branches is unique, not matching any of its brothers in color, shape, or texture.

Tasting the fruit is anti-climactic in most instances. It tastes okay, but not much is distinguishable by its flavor. If a character has received injuries in either body or mind, eating the fruit magically restores them to peak condition. The Tree of Life has the same effect on any NPCs that taste of the fruit. However, there are only twelve fruits to go around. The tree grows no more, no matter how urgent the need.

## Act Two: (2 Kings 2:23-24)

*“And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two of the youths.”*

Unable to do much about the strange tree, workers resume their meal. Jim Flannigan, one of the older men on the crew, steals one of Cory Cusik's ham sandwiches. This type of hazing is typical for new guys at Handy Dandy. Cory is used to it at this point; as the other men laugh, he just shakes his head and mutters, “Goddamn you, Jim” under his breath.

Then there are bears.

There just ARE bears. Two gigantic grizzlies appear out of nowhere and start mauling Jim Flannigan to death. And they just keep killing from there, chasing down the fleeing workers, bashing down the doors to the building if they try to take shelter.

Whether they see the sandwich theft that causes the massacre or arrive with the attack in process, officers will have no choice but to kill the animals. There are only 38 men on the workforce (with the exception of a traumatized Cory Cusick, who seems ignored by the creatures). They won't stop until 42 men are dead, and the grizzlies don't care if the PCs join that number.

## Act Three: (Daniel 8:9-10)

*“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.”*

The picnic grounds and factory interior have been reduced to blood-soaked, scattered mess by the bear attacks. Mangled bodies lay where they fell; all the workers have fled. Then night falls, inexplicably early by a number of hours.

Any characters present witness a goat walk over the horizon. It has four horns, but otherwise appears to be a normal, healthy goat. The creature stares intently with its square pupils, but there seems nothing threatening about it until a fifth horn begins growing from its head...

And grows. And grows.

The horn reaches impossibly far into the night sky, growing upwards even as it branches off in a 90 degree angle (pointing south and east). The goat, despite the impossible weight, remains staring and chewing its cud. As its head moves, so does the horn shooting upwards in the vanishing distance. The odd right angle of the thing oscillates wildly across the night sky, making an odd tinkling sound and seeming to erase the very heavens.

The goat begins stamping its hoof as snow starts to fall. But it's not snow; it's the stars themselves. They remain small, all sense of perspective lost, and they hit the ground with tiny puffs of smoke. The goat stamps on one of the eerily beautiful specks as it falls near him, then resumes chewing its cud...

...and staring, always staring with its dead eyes.

## Yearta's Stash

If players have discovered Andrew's room and the Masonic key hidden within, they learn that it fits none of the locks in the building. While searching for what the key might fit into, perceptive characters notice locusts crawling in and out of a panel on the wall. Experimenting reveals a secret passage leading to a basement door. The key opens this door.

It appears the basement is only used for Masonic rituals, and rarely at that. A single set of footprints can be seen amongst the dust, traversing back and forth between the door and a set of cabinets. Inside rests a grisly sight: bloody clothes, a chemistry set with vials of all sorts of strange, hallucinogenic drugs, and a large, bloody knife with a pair of amputated eyelids displayed on the blade. Andrew must have come to this unused space to prepare for whatever horrific crime he committed.

Left behind is a map of town. On it, Hanson Farm is circled multiple times. A note in Andrew's handwriting reads, "Best spot. Isolated and westernmost – toward the End of the Day."

## 11. Masonic Lodge

### **Act One: (Exodus 10:1–20)**

Amanda Wyrick, the woman paid to clean up the lodge the day before meeting, placed the call to the police. She opened the door to find the building infested with locusts. While a little shaken and confused, she merely closed the lodge and walked home to phone authorities.

Investigating officers aren't in danger of anything save bafflement. The insects cover every single surface of the lodge and practically deafen with their buzzing. Despite best efforts there is no way to tell how they got inside the building. The lodge was open for lunch

yesterday and no Masons reported seeing anything unusual. There is no way such a horde could have been bred in such a time, and there is no dirt from which the bugs could have been unearthed. All doors and windows are closed tight. It seems the locusts just suddenly appeared out of nowhere...

### **Act Two: (Deuteronomy 32:42)**

*"I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy."*

Officers with keen ears can hear a crunching sound coming from the locked office near the back of the lodge. Alternately, those with an eye for detail notice that one of the wall decorations in the lobby remains suspiciously free from locusts: a Native American headdress and bow flanked with crossed arrows.

Opening up the office reveals a greenish-red stain on the wall surrounding a mounted Masonic sword. Used in induction ceremony, the dull blade's only purpose is to be placed over the initiate's breast during rites, but now it appears to be repelling locusts somehow. Those wise enough to observe the sword before grabbing it find out why.

When one of the bugs crawls too near, the sword bends in its mount, metal whipping outwards like a frog's tongue. The folds of steel at the edge open and close around the insects, actually chewing them before coming to rest again on the wall. The sword doesn't merely slice flesh; it consumes it.

The arrows in the lobby operate similarly, though they do not bend to capture prey. Any locust crawling over the heads finds itself suddenly cut in half despite a complete lack of force or leverage. Characters that can keep their wits about them after witnessing such a sight will notice that the bug's fluids seem to be absorbed by the stone arrowhead. The truly adventurous can get close enough to hear the slurping sound.

As the sword and the arrows suffer from the same transubstantiation affecting the rest of the town, they make for extremely powerful weapons if a character has the archaic skills necessary to wield them.

If the sword sinks into flesh of any kind, it sticks and begin chewing along its entire length. Anything struck with the blade not strong enough to dislodge the writhing steel faces a very agonizing, horrific death. In contrast, the arrows drink blood, and they will find a way to drunkenly fly to a source no matter how they are aimed. The vampiric bolts, if not removed, will leave their target a desiccated corpse in a matter of seconds.

Though powerful, the weapons are equally dangerous to their users. The sword will seek to eat flesh whenever it is unsheathed. If there are no enemies around the blade will whip around, seeking to feast on the wielder's arms and face. Likewise, if the arrows are launched at anything save a living target, they will redirect and sink into the closest living thing they can find, even if that is the man behind the bow. Despite the risks, when faced with the other nightmares roaming Toil, the unreal armaments may be the only hope of survival.

## The Deserter God

Though made unique by madness and the linguistics of Klaus von Meinhoff, Andrew Yearta's theology can best be described as "deicide." The writings in his room reveal the musings of an atheist that finds nothing but despair in a directionless universe. In fact, the young man regarded the Bible as a completely accurate historical text. It's not that God never existed; mankind destroyed God. The continued sin and corruption of humans (specifically Andrew's lust) made the Lord realize the futility of another flood. As such, the human race was damned completely in the worst way possible: they were ignored. Rather than show his love through a rebuke of fire and brimstone, God wiped himself from existence, removing his love from the universe. Andrew, in his insanity, feels that his tryst with Mary Sewell was the exact sin that destroyed all mankind's chance of salvation.

As the slayer of God, Andrew regarded it as his duty to become the prophet of His resurrection. When he discovered Noought-Iss in von Meinhoff's obscure tome (see **The Monster: Noought-Iss**, p. 5), he saw his chance. Andrew's scribbled notes are unclear about his feelings towards the monster of meanings. Sometimes he believed Noought-Iss to be the devil that replaced God in his absence. Other times he believed von Meinhoff's claims that the creature always existed, rationalizing that God would have the power to wipe his existence from all time. Regardless, Andrew saw the ancient force as his chance to rescue mankind from an uncaring, meaningless universe.

By binding Noought-Iss and rewiring the basic metaphor of reality (that which IS NOT will BE), Andrew planned to either infuriate his God back into existence through his blasphemous gall, or to mold the mindless Noought-Iss into his Judeo-Christian deity. The young man didn't care which or if it led to his death or damnation. He didn't even pause to consider von Meinhoff's own warnings about the possibilities of unmaking reality itself. The boy's shame was pathological and pervasive, and it combined with his genius to make a volatile mixture indeed.

Though reading von Meinhoff's text itself requires fluent German, there is enough in Andrew's journals to figure out the basics of the ritual he performed. Binding Noought-Iss requires a sentient creature to maintain a supreme focus on the new center of perception, ignoring all earthly distractions, and maintain that perception through the transition back from IS to IS NOT.

It's uncertain how the ritual was completed (see **ENDGAME**, p. 30), but investigators can find an odd-looking key hidden in the back cover of von Meinhoff's book. Smart characters will recognize a Masonic symbol etched into the head (see **Yearta's Stash**, p. 23)



### Act Three: (Peter 5:8)

*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”*

The sight of the lion alone poses a serious threat. It just appears in the dining room of the lodge, blank space one second and snarling predator the next. The contortions the human mind has to make when perceiving this manifestation would drive most mad.

Aside from unholy red eyes and a maw seemingly filled with flames, the creature is just a lion. This is far from comforting because “the devil” seeks to devour them quite literally. It’s up to GMs discretion whether or not firearms have an effect on the beast. The sword is the most effective weapon against the hellish creature, but the arrows will miss or sink into the flesh of any nearby humans; they are too “drunk with blood” and therefore not “sober” enough to harm the devil. If officers are not present when the hell lion manifests or fail to destroy it, it breaks out of the lodge and roams the town looking for more victims, perhaps even attacking PCs at other locations.

## 12. Yearta Residence

### Act One - Three: (Deuteronomy 32:33)

*“Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.”*

Mrs. Yearta is in hysterics when characters arrive. She’s discovered her son dead in the kitchen, collapsed with a bottle of wine in his hand.

The young man’s face is contorted in agony, his mouth surrounded by black veins and tongue already beginning to rot. He bleeds out of his eyes and nose. The blood still runs and won’t congeal, yet there is dried blood under the fingernails. Characters with exceptional medical skills discover that death resulted from ingesting some toxin that has both anti-coagulant and necrotic properties. If there is a character around with biological knowledge, they realize that the best bet for that type of substance is the venom of exotic snakes. But how would someone in Illinois be able to

extract enough snake venom to fill a wine bottle, and how would they get it inside without popping the cork? Most importantly, why? (The answer: apparently not even the harbinger of this biblical apocalypse would know that the punishment for his disbelief would be so swift and literal).

Mrs. Yearta is too distraught to be of much use. She can reveal that her son recently returned from a divinity school in Germany, though she can’t recall the name (no one can, oddly enough...). She suspects he was depressed because he rarely left his room and never allowed anyone inside. Earlier that morning, he had stormed through the front door practically dancing with manic joy. Mrs. Yearta hadn’t even known her son was out, but there he stood, crying tears of joy and saying it was time to celebrate. Next thing she knew, he’d popped open a bottle of wine, took a long pull, and was convulsing on the floor.

Though utterly confused, Mrs. Yearta casts suspicion on Mary Sewell for the poisoning. “That harlot has always been plotting to destroy my sweet boy!” the woman screams. Beyond that information though, Andrew’s mother is just a mousy minister’s wife without much to contribute. She will fall into a stunned silence, leaving to inform her husband of their son’s death at the church, if allowed.

Players that kick open the door to Andrew’s room find it wallpapered in his madness. Obscure diagrams and notes hastily scrawled in multiple languages cover the walls and collect in corners. A special place amongst the academic refuse is reserved for an ancient leather-bound volume entitled *Die Bindung von Noought-Iss durch die Objektive Sprach: Eine Studie herein der Semantische Hierarchie der Basis-Ausprägung* (The Binding of Noought-Iss with the Objective Tongue: A Study in the Semantic Hierarchy of Base Instantiation).

Those fluent in German can spend time studying the tome to discover reality’s master and how it came to be tamed (see **The Monster: Noought-Iss**, p. 5 and **ENDGAME**, p. 30). Others without the language necessary can still find an odd key squirreled away between the covers with a Masonic symbol etched on the head (see Location 11 and **Yearta’s Stash**, p. 23). English-reading characters can eventually sift through young Andrew’s notes and learn a

vague paraphrase of Noought-Iss' powers and what the madman hoped to accomplish with it (see **The Deserter God, p. 24/ The Monster: Noought-Iss, p. 5**). Whatever the language, at least one character must dedicate some time to studying the dense academic language of Andrew's notes and source material. And as the ideas and implications grow more complex, the researchers risk the same maddening implications that destroyed the boy's mind.

**NOTE TO GAMEMASTERS:** As Andrew Yearta's room is the only hope for fully understanding the insanity gripping Toil, characters staying behind to research are given refuge from more biblical atrocities. However, GMs are encouraged to keep the readers in contact with the party through the police car's radio. Additionally, it's a good touch to throw in the occasional panicked, blood-soaked citizen running down the street to keep the sense of dread escalating. Even just having the bushes in the front yard burst spontaneously into flame can let the group's researcher know that they need to read faster.

## 13. Sewell Residence

### Act One: (Exodus 8:1–8:15)

Mary's house is covered in frogs and she's pissed. Long ago branded the town whore (characters native to Toil will have heard the story about her deflowering the Reverend Yearta's son), she is convinced that this is a new brand of ostracism by the petty townfolk of Toil. She demands they be found, prosecuted for breaking into her home, and fined for all the frog shit she's going to have to clean up.

There appears to be no signs of forced entry, though: just frogs hopping over every surface of the house. Mary claims she came home from getting groceries and they were everywhere, but it's unclear how so many frogs could be transported in such a short time.

Mary thinks that the return of Andrew Yearta is the cause of her newfound bullying. She'll relate their initial meeting through her mother's hospice, the unfortunate end to their love affair, and Andrew's subsequent exile (see **Forbidden Fruit, p. 3**). In fact, she's very forthcoming about her sexual relations in general and flirty with all the

policemen. In her middle age, she's taken on the label of town slut willingly as a form of rebellion, and she's far freer with her sexuality than most other women.

The reason Mary thinks the frogs have something to do with Andrew's return is her interaction with him the other day. Walking to work, she encountered Andrew carrying a bag down the street. Wanting to rekindle the old flame and see if "the wine got better with age," she ran to catch up with him. Upon seeing her, Andrew grew terrifically, almost violently agitated. He buried his hands in his pocket and demanded she keep away from him. He claimed that he was urgently needed at the Masonic lodge and sprinted away from her.

Mary knew this to be a lie because Freemason meetings were never scheduled for that time of day. She suspects Andrew's sexual repression took control at the sight of her. In Mary's own words, "If anyone can spot the handiwork of an overbearing bitch of a mother, it's me." She suspects Mrs. Yearta had something to do with the frogs after her Momma's boy came crying home.

### Act Two: (Psalm 12:3)

*"The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things"*

Still fuming about the frogs infesting her house, Mary Sewell mutters under her breath about her hatred of the Toil townfolk: "Every town's got to have a whore. Do they care I was locked up until I was 26? That I loved Andrew? Naw. Town just needs a slut for all its husbands to court at night and spit on after Sunday service. So they pick the sexiest ass in town and..."

Mary's rant is cut short when her tongue and lips fall from her face.

The woman launches into an unintelligible, choking scream as blood suddenly comes gushing from her face. Depending on their fortitude, officers may be too stunned to help. Mary's lips and tongue simply fell off: there was no assailant, no sign, no noise. It was as if the air itself decided to disfigure her.

If Mary is to survive, characters need to keep Mary from choking on her own blood and stitch the stump of her tongue. Doing so under surgical conditions wouldn't be easy, and the agonized woman thrashing around a frog-infested living room isn't going to make things easier. Untrained characters can only hope to have the woman die in their arms, and that is still a serious risk for officers with medical experience.

But Mary can be saved from bleeding out...for now.

### Act Three: (Zechariah 14:12)

*“And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall rot away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall rot away in their sockets, and their tongue shall rot away in their mouths.”*

Understandably, Mary Sewell's interactions with the Yearta family have left her without faith. She views her very existence as a rebellion against the sanctimonious busy-bodies at church that ruined her life with scandal. At many time over the years, her refusal to kowtow to their gossip and ostracism has led to physical conflict. It's uncertain whether these spats or some other altercation placed her in the path of Zechariah 14:12. The characters will never know.

Whether she is already dead or merely unconscious from blood loss, her life-long fight against the holy finally exacts a terrible, final price. Her body stands up from wherever it rests, opens eyes and mouth wide, and begins to rot on the spot. Her eyes pool into blood and drip down her face. The stump in her already bloody mouth turns black and decomposes in seconds. Her very skin peels away until only a sickening pile of gristle collects on the floor.

Witnessing this is mind-shatteringly scary, more so if the standing Mrs. Sewell was already dead.

## 14. 'The Common'

### Act One: (Leviticus 11:20-22)

*“All winged insects that creep, going upon all fours, shall be an abomination unto you.”*

The wildlife living in and around Vermillion Creek has attracted a number of biologists from the Chicago universities in recent years. Dr. Cody Wallace is the latest scientist taking a sabbatical in the town, and he's called the police because he needs a witness to the greatest discovery of his career.

Aside from the very excited little naturalist, the Common ground at the park appears perfectly normal upon PC's arrival: the elderly stroll, couples picnic, dogs fetch balls. Dr. Wallace, however, practically shakes with excitement. He demands that the police come to his car and officially confirm “the find of the century.”

Wallace's trunk is filled with glass specimen jars containing insects of all types: grasshoppers, flies, beetles, etc. The species are all quite mundane and abundant in the area, but Wallace insists there is something remarkable about the creatures. He refuses to tell the officers though, as he insists that even their untrained eyes should be enough for “independent confirmation.”

Indeed, no special skill is necessary to notice something very off about the creatures. The insects are all missing two legs. The very definitional portion of their anatomy is gone – not amputated, but seemingly never formed. Every insect in the jars has only four legs, and time spent combing the grass around the Common reveals the same for every other “insect” in the area.

Wallace is thrilled when characters confirm his discovery of the mass mutation. He insists the officers fill out an official report at once and phone the university to get his colleagues to Toil immediately. The bookish little man, his genius verified and orders passed on, continues feverously collecting specimens.

### Act Two: (Genesis 2:7)

*“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*

The Common remains the center of town life even during the destruction of Toil. As the event moves into Act Two, a confluence of other horrors

begins bleeding out towards the folks exposed on the idyllic greens. The pained braying of animals and horrified screaming can be heard coming from somewhere on Park Street (**Location 4, p.15**). A mass of customers seems to be fleeing the restaurant across the street (**Location 2, p.12**) and an odd purplish hue seems to be creeping up Vermillion Creek (**Location 1, p.12**).

Park attendees don't have much time to process these terrifying events before an otherworldly wind whips through the field. The force of the gale is equal to that of a tornado, but it's impossibly directed downwards, blowing hats, picnic blankets, and leaves down and outwards from the center of the park. Standing up against the sudden maelstrom is hard enough, and characters should be hard pressed to make out what occurs at the center of the storm. Those that do see it may wish they hadn't.

In the middle of the park, dust swirls together with what appears to be agency. The particles form the shape of a man, then solidify, impossibly transforming into actual flesh. As the storm winds finally dissipate, it seems that it is only because the naked man is breathing them all in. Just as the storm dissolves completely, the naked man turns and walks towards the East, disappearing into a copse of impossibly tall trees that, seconds earlier, didn't exist. Witnessing such a miracle was never meant for human eyes, and seeing it will be too much for many minds to bear. Any NPCs still in the area flee in panic, and the PCs will be hard pressed to resist doing the same.

Attempting to follow the man into the forest is fruitless. Any character that does so simply gets lost in the mysterious new trees until they pop out of

## Damned Dispatches

"Boys, Gabby Candy pulled some scrap wood out of the trash last week for a soap box car he was making for his son. If y'all are going by that way, be a dear and burn his house down, will ya? Make sure to bar the door good first; remember the code say he's got to go along with all his possessions. God bless." (Joshua 7:15)

"Calling all cars. Calling all cars. We got a tip over the wire that Mordachai Sanford called the score of last week's ball game against Shelby Creek dead on. He's been spotted sleeping on a couch in his basement. Head on over there and kill the fortuneteller." (Leviticus 20:27)

"Gentlemen, I got an easy one for you. Max Evron and his boy just broke into the Harner place and raped his kin. Now Max the elder already did for Mrs. Harner and her husband—so you can save yourself some stones there—but Max Jr. done went and left little Missy Harner alive. Now they got to get hitched. Can one of y'all go out there and officiate the wedding? Don't forget to make Max give up his 50 pieces of silver for the dowry." (Deuteronomy 22:28-29)

"Calling all cars. Calling all cars. The fellas over at the bowling alley done got their blood up and invaded the row houses across the way. Now, they're killing all the married women and children like good boys, but there's apparently some fuss about dividing the virgins equally. Get on over there and sort them out before there's a real tussle." (Judges 5:30 and Numbers 31:7-18)

"Awww, now before y'all start fussing at me, know I ain't gossiping over here. We got reports that Cheyanne Rica been fooling around with that Owen Virgil character outside matrimony. They're huddling together in the crawlspace underneath Owen's house at the moment, saying goodbye to each other and sobbing and such. Let's play this by the book, go by there, and make your swords drunk with their blood. Good hunting." (Leviticus 20:10)

"Well, gosh darn it—here I was thinking we were gonna get through this little spat. It appears that Fox Kunneman lives out by Route 9 still believes in his pagan gods. That's technically still in city limits, so we're going to have to burn the town to the ground. It's been a pleasure working with you fine young men." (Deuteronomy 13:13-19).



the forest near the same place where they entered. It appears that wherever the man of dust went, no one else is granted entry.

### Act Three: (Genesis 2:17)

*“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.”*

To the East, on the outskirts of the mysterious new forest that cropped up (perhaps in front of the PC's very eyes), a massive tree has sprouted near the river. It's huge and radiantly healthy, covered in fruit of some indeterminate type. Though seemingly hundreds of years old, no tree stood there even a few hours before.

Eating one of the glistening red fruits is possible, but inexplicably foreboding. As this is the Tree of Knowledge, anyone eating of the fruit will get just that: Knowledge. Of everything. All at once. The omnipotence provided by the fruit is mind-meltingly powerful and utterly deadly. Characters eating of the fruit are doomed to a writhing, poisonous death on the ground, but they will learn all about Andrew Yearta, Noought-Iss, and how to stop what is happening around town. Essentially the player is granted access to all GM information about the plot, and then told that they are very soon to die. What remains to be seen is if eater of the forbidden fruit will be able to convey this information to someone else before dying in agony from internal hemorrhaging and madness.

## 15. Toil Police Station

There isn't much to see at the Toil Police Station: a couple of desks, a filing cabinet, some wastebaskets. It's where the officers keep the guns they never use, the jail cells never occupied, and the huge car radio system most feel the county wasted money on. Mrs. Deandria and her cat Rufus are about the most interesting thing present, and the attention of the officers is certainly being drawn elsewhere. Considering the panic spreading about town, PCs shouldn't be spending much time there.

With her switchboard lighting up, Mrs. Deandria refuses to leave her post in a time of crisis; she will continue dispatching around the clock for the officers.

But beyond directing them to locations she can't be of any help as to what is actually happening. When things begin to turn increasingly bleak, power and phone service fail, making it impossible for the widow to contribute even in her small way. Or at least it should make it impossible.

As the situation around town grows out of control (sometime around Act Two), GMs should shift Winifred's role from friendly advisor to inescapable voice of terror. Increasingly, Winifred will dispatch officers to incidents she couldn't possibly know about, either because they would never have been reported or no phones remain operational. Equally impossible is the continued operation of the radio, which should have gone silent as power started failing across town.

Despite her typically polite and cheery tone Mrs. Deandria's advice for these new infractions of law grows increasingly biblical. The accompanying list provides some examples of unsettling communiqués that can come in over the radio:

Any attempt to clarify Winifred's crazed dispatches is met with radio silence or confused questioning: “What dispatch?” She doesn't remember saying anything, or she was on the phone taking another complaint. Actually responding to the incidents end up with the “lawbreakers” long gone or the events never having happened at all.

Trying to confront Winifred's unorthodox messages in person is problematic. The characters find the doors and windows to the police station barricaded from the inside when they return to check on the old lady. If they manage to break in, they'll find nothing but Rufus the cat grooming himself on the floor. Any prisoners left in the cells are dead, blown apart by a shotgun before Winifred left for parts unknown.

When characters leave the station again, Winifred continues her dispatches from the ether until the radio is completely destroyed; not even unplugging the unit stops the haunting orders. The effects of hearing the disembodied voice politely demand biblical justice certainly doesn't help the officers' already threatened sanity.

## ENDGAME: THE HANSON FARM

The ritual theorized in von Meinhoff's writing uses perception – which both fuels and results from Noought-Iss' existence – to convey new rules for reality and “bind” the force to someone's will. By anchoring the god to a single person's perspective using the mad German's “objective tongue,” the basic metaphor (that which IS NOT, IS) of the universe can be rewritten by reversing the semantic flow enabling that very perception (that which IS, IS NOT). The roles of Subject and Object are temporarily reversed, and the result is a new reality.

Though described in abstract, academic terms, von Meinhoff's proposed linguistic experiment is disgustingly brutal in practice. Elmer Hanson's family was unfortunate enough to be chosen by Andrew Yearta to enact the profane ceremony.

Players directed to Hanson's farm by Yearta's notes (see **Yearta's Stash, p. 23**) find the farmhouse empty. Overturned furniture and a kicked in door point to a struggle. Blood-spattered tracks lead out the back of the house towards the barn. Inside waits a sight capable of turning a man's hair white.

Hanson's hands and back have been lashed to a post, even his forehead bound unmoving against the wood. His eyelids have been cut off and his torn sleeves flutter to reveal track marks where Yearta injected him with strange experimental compounds over the course of days. The dirt and walls around him are scrawled with all manner of nonsense in white paint, unintelligible words written in unrecognizable characters. The dead man's glazed stare focuses across the barn to a sick altar made out of his family's corpses. Disemboweled and dismembered, Elmer's wife and children have been arranged into concentric circles around what appears at first to be a miniature tornado. In the eye of the storm, somehow contained by the human remains, a single leather bound book appears to float.

The dead innocents served Yearta less as a sacrifice and more as a symbol, a representation of all his victim's worldly concerns. Elmer was kept in a drugged

fugue state for days, forced to literally overlook the butchering of his family, his perception used to lash Noought-Iss to the Earth. By the time he passed away from endless tortures, his perception had been shaped and focused by Andrew's strange manipulation of the objective tongue. His death made the object of his unblinking gaze the new foundation for reality – a copy of the King's James Bible.

Even if characters recover from the grisly sight, gazing upon Yearta's mad work sears the mind. The Bible appears to swirl in the vortex, but at the same times it blinks into the shimmering text of the word “book” or “truth.” The words written in the wind just as suddenly translate into hundreds of other languages, shriek the sound of those words, expand into verses that whip around, a dizzying flurry of language, sound, and raw meaning. Beholding the thing as it sprawls into every realm of perception simultaneously is maddening, and approaching the bloody nexus just makes things worse. Characters can feel their skin turn into the mere idea of skin. Each outstretched finger becomes the word “finger,” letters curling away and being ripped into the maelstrom surrounding the book. To reach into the circle flays the body and mind at once, and there is no hope for any who dare to physically touch the nothingness that is Noought-Iss.

But something must be done. Reality cannot survive the complications of a 66 chapter long code of directions, or perhaps Noought-Iss doesn't wish it to. If anyone is to survive, the Bible must be dislodged and the base metaphor returned to its natural state. Only someone willing to sacrifice body, sanity, and soul can reach into the vortex and rip the book free.

If one of the characters makes the sacrifice, witnessing the horrific unmaking of a noble friend is just the beginning of the survivors' problems. With the book wrenched free, the storm spills outward, free from the cage made by Andrew Yearta's sick attempt at salvation. Noought-Iss expands to encompass all again, and as the events of the last day could not be under the natural order, they suddenly, never were.

Survivors wake from the discombobulating unraveling lying in Elmer Hanson's barn. There is no mutilated man tied to a post, no pile of dismembered corpses. The Hansons are alive in the house, about to sit down

to supper and confused about why the police are there. Toil itself is fine: free of both fire and plague. Everyone that died screaming moments earlier is completely fine and ignorant. All are alive and safe except the character that removed the book. All traces of the hero have been erased. There are no records of the character having ever existed, and the mention of a name to former loved ones will only prompt quizzical looks.

But as with Yearta's attempt, the quick application of a new reality is sporadic and incomplete. The survivors' memories and scars remain; they remember everything. It was, after all, their perception of the book's removal that allowed order to be restored. They must bear witness, but the indignity of knowing that Andrew Yearta sits alive and well in his room might be too heavy a burden.

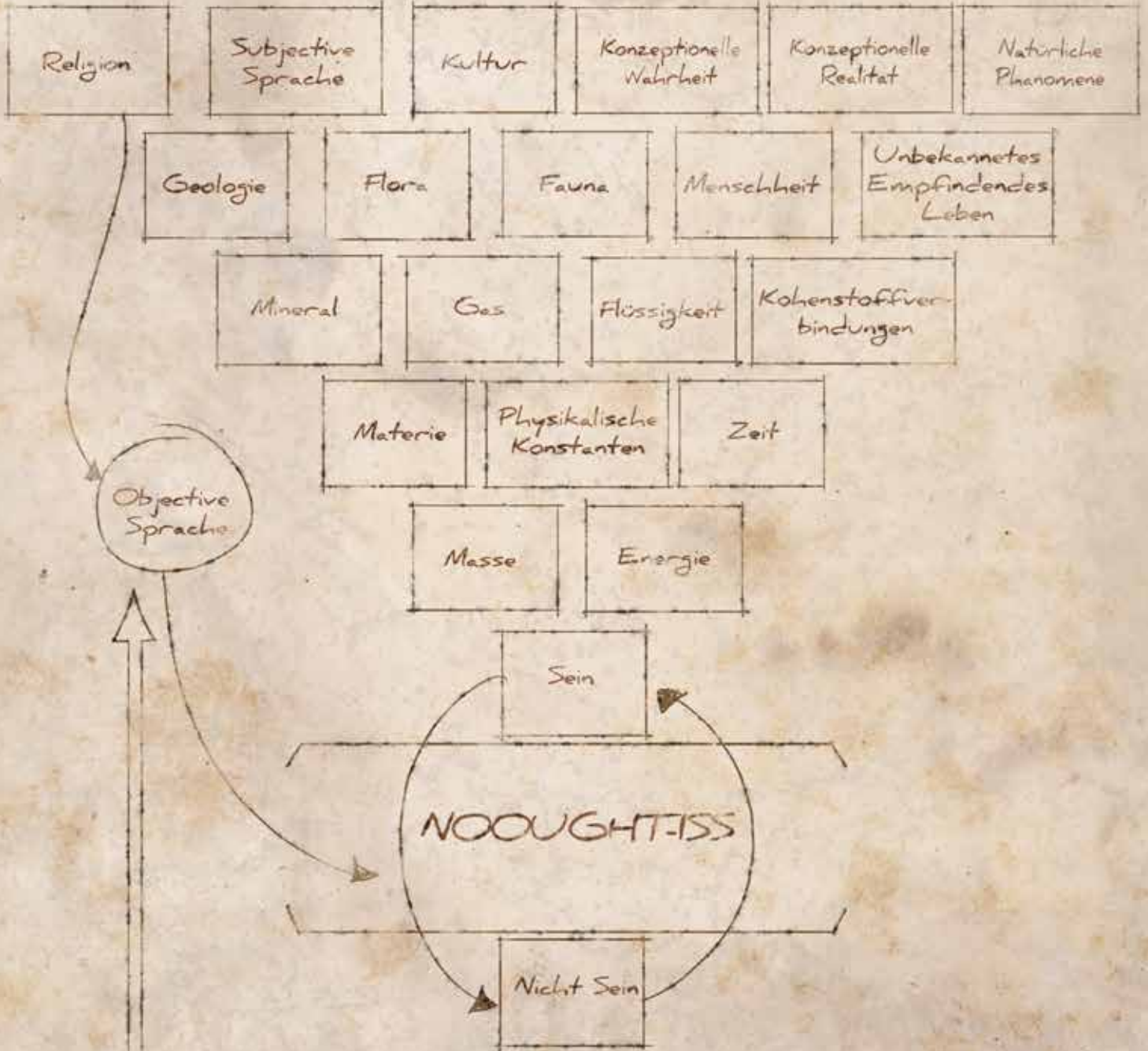
Will the officers drive to the man's home and murder him in coldblood for sins never committed? Will they allow him to live, despite his responsibility for erasing their noble friend's very existence? What if he tries to do it again?

Those that remain carry a terrible burden. Their perception anchors reality itself, but what happens to existence after their deaths remains a terrifying uncertainty. Memories of a hero's death and a holocaust survived hound them through a world that has forgotten. Each must play warden to a mass murderer that committed no crime, forced to choose between carrying out his richly deserved execution or keeping him under surveillance for the rest of his life; each haunted by ceaseless paranoia regardless.

These unlucky few live out the rest of their days in silence, cut off forever from the understanding of loved ones. They're trapped in the hopeless, cold universe Andrew Yearta so feared, each certain the only salvation from despair lay in madness.



Semantische Hierarchie der  
Basis-Ausprägung



Bindung von Nought-Iss durch die Objektive Sprache

Folge: Semantische Kettenreaktion und Reorganisation in bisher unbekannete zweite Ausprägung