

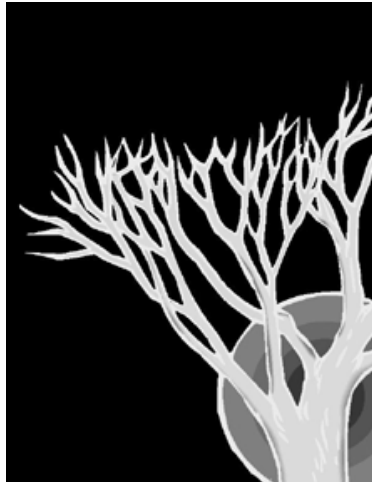
The Heart of Darkness



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**A Campaign Setting and Playing Aid for Dreamwalker:
Roleplaying in the Land of Dreams and Dreamwalker:
Diceless Roleplaying in the Land of Dreams**

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Broodkings

Broodkings are hateful and malicious creatures that can manifest as almost anything. They are formidable opponents who are able to manipulate mana and possess attributes, skills and talents that rival even the most experienced Dreamwalkers. More horrifying is their ability to enter the real world. Broodkings do this by killing a Dreamwalker's pseudophysical form and "riding" his consciousness out of the Emyrean.

Broodkings in the Real World

The worst thing that can happen in Dreamwalker is for a Broodking to escape the Emyrean. Upon entering the real world, each Broodking reacts differently to its newfound freedom. Some go on unheralded reigns of murder and violence while others take a more subtle approach, often retreating to some remote location to set up a lair and create Broodspawn to serve them.

Broodkings feed off negative emotions such as misery and fear, and are therefore almost always found around groups of people. In the real world, Broodkings (and to a lesser degree, Broodspawn) create a sort of mind-numbing, spiritual disturbance, or blight, that increases acts of violence and murder as well as feelings of hate, anger, betrayal

and other base emotions in all those around them.

It is believed that over the centuries, escaped Broodkings and their spawn may have given rise to many mythical and legendary creatures such as dragons, vampires and werewolves to name just a few.

Language

In the real world, Broodkings adopt the speech patterns of their manifestation. In the Emyrean, Broodkings speak their own language---the Low Speech. The Low Speech is a harsh, guttural sounding tongue that addresses the darker parts of a person's soul and is therefore understandable by anyone, even the most righteous and devout. The Low Speech is unpleasant to hear and has been known to drive some listeners mad.

The Sins

Broodkings tend to associate themselves with at least one of what we call the seven deadly sins: Pride, Envy, Gluttony, Lust, Anger, Greed and Sloth. In the real world, Broodkings either gravitate to situations where the "sin" is abundant and/or try to foment these thoughts and emotions in those who enter their blighted territory. Dreamwalkers are immune to this effect.

In the Low Speech, the word "sin" translates roughly to the word "lord", and the two words seem to

be interchangeable. It is believed that Broodkings engage in some sort of deity worship of these sins.

Castes

Within the service of their representative lord, Broodkings adhere to a caste system. This system not only governs their disposition to some degree, but also establishes a loose hierarchy among their own kind.

Casteless

Casteless Broodkings are the most common of their kind. Although still dangerous, they are relatively young and inexperienced and have yet to prove themselves in the service of their lord. Casteless Broodkings generally tend to stay out of the way of other Broodkings, setting up lairs in remote or innocuous locations. In time, most casteless Broodkings are eventually recognized by their lord as warriors, however, some of the more intelligent ones may go on to become rulers.

Warrior

Members of the warrior caste are the most violent and commonly encountered of their kind. These Broodkings usually manifest as something large and violent, although they can appear human and may even infiltrate human society to some degree, provided they can operate under minimal

scrutiny. Several particularly bizarre killing sprees and serial murders have now been attributed to warrior caste Broodkings, as well as a host of alleged animal attacks.

Ruler

Broodkings of the ruling caste are among the most devious and intelligent of their kind. Ruler Broodkings often appear human. They are usually content to stay hidden in the shadows, pulling the strings of those who can further the cause of their lord. Many insert themselves into human society, becoming teachers, lawyers, doctors, religious leaders and other prominent members of the community. Once in place, they abuse their positions of power in order to foment sinful thoughts, emotions and actions among those in their charge.

Ruler Broodkings avoid open conflict when possible, but do not hesitate to use whatever mortal resources they have if they feel threatened (police, security guards, etc.). Those who would face them must tread lightly in the civilized world or else risk ending up as fugitives from the law.

Broodspawn

Beneath the casteless lies the sub-caste of Broodspawn. Broodspawn serve the same lord as the Broodking who created them. Other Broodkings, and sometimes even their own sires, consider

Broodspawn to be lesser beings, worthy only of contempt and sometimes even outright hostility. A Broodspawn who is freed from his sire's service may aspire to become a casteless Broodking by winning the favor of his lord, but this is rare.

Territoriality

Broodkings are solitary creatures who prefer to operate alone. Occasionally, servants of the same lord engage in disputes over fertile sinful territory, with these battles almost always ending in the "death" of one or the other.

While rivalry between castes is great, this enmity is vastly overshadowed by rivalry between lords. Servants of the same sinful lord have even been known to band together against powerful Broodkings of a rival lord. All too often, these shadow wars spill over into human society, causing death, destruction and/or lingering pain and suffering.

Astral Blights

A blight is a real world phenomenon that surrounds a Broodking like a bubble---as if reality itself seeks to defy the Broodking's presence. Blights vary in size and effect. Some produce few changes in the Broodking's surroundings, others significantly alter the appearance of the real world and still others provide gateways to entirely different astral locations.

Broodkings have no direct control over the appearance of a blight although it is often influenced by the Broodking's nature. Because the blights extend like a bridge into the spirit world, they can be much larger than the space occupied in the real world.

For example, a swampy region might manifest in a blight centered around a vicious alligator-like Broodking. Or, an otherwise normal closet door might open onto a giant laboratory in a blight centered around a mad scientist-type Broodking.

Dreamwalkers can home in on a blight using the same rules for Locating a Specific Dreamworld. Once inside, Dreamwalkers can successfully navigate their way out of a blight in the same manner.

Effects of a Blight

In the real world, blights create a mind-numbing effect that increases sinful acts in all those within. Those who have experienced this effect describe it as akin to being in a dream (or nightmare). They sometimes remember what they saw and what they did while under its influence, but had little or no control over their own actions. The mind-numbing properties of a blight seem to have one of two long term effects on these people---some remember fragments of particularly horrid events while others attempt to assign completely rational explanations to the things they witnessed.

Dreamwalkers are unaffected by the mind-numbing effects of a Broodking's blight. In fact, it is possible for Dreamwalkers to track down a Broodking by homing in on this spiritual disturbance (treat as Locating a Specific Dreamworld). Once within the area of effect, they are able to manipulate mana just as if they were in a dream. It is almost as if they have entered the nightmare realm of the Broodking itself.

Broodkings and Mana

Broodkings have vast mana pools and are able to choose from the full range of available mana powers. In order to replenish its mana supply however, a Broodking must enter his own blight and seek out pockets of hidden mana.

Blights and Mana Pockets

Blights are similar to dream islands in many respects and follow many of the same rules. Blights contain mana pockets that are harvestable by Dreamwalkers and Broodkings alike. These mana pockets are often influenced by the Broodking's representative "lord".

For example, the blight of a Gluttony warrior Broodking may contain a mana pocket in the form of a closet full of chocolate. Characters may harvest the mana by gorging themselves on the chocolate. Or, the blight of a Wrath ruler Broodking

may open onto the violent slums of 1860's New York City where a battle between rival gangs is brewing. Characters who pick a side and win the battle receive a number of mana points equal to that of achieving a dream denouement.

More information on locating mana pockets and blights as they relate to dream islands is included in Appendix I at the end of this supplement.

Sample Blights

The following sample blights can be applied equally to Broodkings or Broodspawn, as the Game Master sees fit.

Pride

Kevin Griffin is a human-like Broodking who opened a fitness gym in order to prey upon the vanity and low self-esteem of his customers. Kevin is a weightlifter and bodybuilder. His employees are all attractive male and female Broodspawn posing as physical trainers. Ken and his minions are confident in their own strength and do not hesitate to attack if threatened.

Envy

Janet Wren is the CEO of a large corporation. Her blight encompasses the company's entire office building and she enjoys watching her employees engage in furious bootlicking, betrayal, and

sometimes even murder in an attempt to climb the corporate ladder. Janet encourages this behavior with various perks including such things as coveted parking spaces, cash bonuses, paid vacations and private offices.

Gluttony

Adam Barker is a grossly obese, human-like Broodking who manifests as the owner and operator of a local comic book and collectable store. Adam's regulars keep him well fed with their overwhelming desires to obtain the next issue of their favorite comics, or the full card set of their favorite baseball team, or the limited edition action figure of their favorite hero---all at no thought to the cost.

Lust

Zera Hawkins is a Broodking who manifests as a crazy old woman. She owns the junkyard at the edge of town and feeds off the lustful energy of young boys who go there after school to masturbate to skin magazines as well as teenagers who park there on the weekends to have sex. Zera sometimes seduces a youngster who catches her eye, either through use of her powers or (preferably) by threatening to reveal what he or she has been doing to their parents or the police.

Wrath

Legends say that once every three months or so, the Black Woods

Demon roams the nearby forests in search of prey. The Black Woods Demon is actually a cougar-like Broodking that hibernates between feedings. It is responsible for a variety of mislabeled animal attacks, unexplained hunting accidents, disappearances, livestock mutilations and abductions.

Greed

Carlos Lester is a human-like Broodking posing as an accountant. Recently, his financial advice has prompted several wealthy friends to enter into a bidding war with each other on various properties and lucrative business ventures. The resulting bad feelings and dissolution of more than one friendship have been like lumps of sugar added to the coffee of their greed, and Carlos has drunk his fill.

Sloth

Bill Potter is a Broodking who manifests as a young heroin addict. He always has a hype or two that he is willing to share with fellow addicts so he can revel in the feelings of apathy and sluggishness that accompany a good hit. Bill also has a fetish for death and has intentionally caused more than one person to overdose, just so he can watch them die.

Procreation

Like Taeniid queens, Broodkings are driven by the need to produce offspring. In the real world, they reproduce by creating Broodspawn. This occurs in a variety of ways, depending upon the Broodking's manifestation.

For example, a Broodking who manifests as a giant cockroach may reproduce by laying egg sacs. One who manifests as a large, crab-like creature may mate with normal crabs to give birth to other monstrous crabs. Or, one who manifests as a zombie-like creature might create lesser zombies by attacking others with its infectious bite.

In the Emyrean, Broodkings reproduce by seeding the astral waters of the Periphery. This is done by orally expelling a cloud of maggot-like Taeniid queen larvae. Many of these queen larvae die before they find hosts, but many more sink into the Dreamworlds beneath the waves and infest the psyche of sleeping beings.

New Talents

Broodkings have developed a variety of dark talents for use in furthering the cause of their lords. These Talents are only available to Broodkings.

Violation of the Mind

Rather than "ride" a Dreamwalker's consciousness into the real world, Violation of the Mind enables a Broodking to embed itself in the

Dreamwalker's subconscious mind. The Broodking then begins subtly influencing the Dreamwalker's daily behavior in a variety of ways, often causing the host to undergo radical mood swings, bouts of uncontrolled emotions, violent tendencies, and to display other uncharacteristic behaviors, usually those associated with the Broodking's representative sin. Eventually, the Dreamwalker's psyche is so weakened that the Broodking is able to assume control of the person entirely.

There are several advantages to invading a host's mind in this manner. First, the Broodking is able to foment the cause of his lord without emitting a spiritual disturbance. Second, he is relatively safe from harm---the death of the host only sends the Broodking back into the Emyrean. And third, the Broodking may be able to infiltrate and disrupt real world organizations, especially those that involve Dreamwalking, without being detected.

However, there are several disadvantages to using this Talent as well. The Broodking cannot use mana in the real world and is limited by the Dreamwalker's own physical characteristics. In addition, the Broodking does not gain access to the trapped Dreamwalker's memories so he must tread carefully around friends and family (although depending on how long he inhabited the host before taking over, he may have learned quite a bit about the Dreamwalker's life).

It is possible to expel an embedded Broodking without killing

the host. In order for the Broodking to maintain control, the host body must be well rested. This means the Broodking must assume a normal sleep cycle and when it does, it becomes vulnerable. This is because the violated Dreamwalker's consciousness continues to exist inside his own Dreamworld as a non-lucid Dreamer, trapped inside a horrific cage (or prison, or maze, or hospital, etc.) and guarded by Unreal agents of the Broodking.

While dreaming, other Dreamwalkers may enter this Dreamworld and free the trapped Dreamwalker. Once freed, the Dreamwalker may attempt to seek out and destroy the Broodking infesting his psyche. Unfortunately, the Broodking's spiritual disturbance disrupts the fabric of the dream enough so that the Dreamwalker does not receive the normal benefits of being a lucid Dreamer. Instead, the Dreamwalker operates as if he were inside the Dreamworld of another.

While the host is dreaming, the Broodking may be found anywhere within the Dreamworld. Once the Dreamwalker is freed, the Broodking becomes trapped within the Dreamworld, unable to escape into the Emyrean. If attacked, it avoids killing the host if possible and concentrates its attacks on anyone else. A Broodking who is destroyed inside such a Dreamworld, ceases to exist, so many choose to flee if it becomes clear that the Dreamwalker is about to be freed from his prison.

Clenched Talons

Clenched Talons enables the Broodking to dampen the spiritual signature of its blight. This makes it almost impossible to detect in the real world through normal means. Only Dreamwalkers who possess the Sight may attempt to home in on the Broodking's blight. Otherwise, only Dreamwalkers who stumble into the blight are alerted to the Broodking's presence.

Necros Bleed

Necros Bleed enables a Broodking to transfer necros (see Necros, below) into the spirit world at will, without having to leave the real world or wait until the appointed time. The transferring process requires intense concentration and greatly enhances the spiritual signature of the Broodking's blight, making him much easier to detect (double the normal chances). Necros transferred in this manner travels directly to the Broodking's sinful lord who resides deep in the heart of the Emyrean.

Mind Breaker

Mind Breaker enables a Broodking to force his way into the real world by attacking the mind of a sleeping Dreamer. This produces one of three effects---success (the Broodking enters the real world, the Dreamer dies), annihilation (the Broodking is instantly destroyed, the

Dreamer dies) or imprisonment (the Broodking is trapped inside the Dreamworld, the Dreamer falls into a coma). Of the three, imprisonment is perhaps the most intriguing and is the only one that offers the Dreamer a chance for recovery.

An imprisoned Broodking becomes trapped inside the Dreamworld, locked in an ongoing struggle with the Dreamer's psyche. This conflict can manifest as anything from a direct physical confrontation to an ongoing war between two opposing nations. It can last for days, months, years or even decades, depending on the strength of the Dreamer's will and the continued good health of his physical body. The conflict initially favors the Dreamer, however, in time, the Broodking may eventually gain the upper hand. The Dreamworld itself comes complete with a detailed history and background, and mana pockets also occasionally manifest over the course of the dream.

For example, the Dreamer initially manifests as a king in a Medieval fantasy Dreamworld while the Broodking manifests as a rebellious baron. According to the history, the Broodking is actually the king's uncle who believes he has a claim to the throne. If not dealt with, the Broodking may eventually amass enough followers to overthrow the king. Meanwhile, life goes on in other parts of the realm and adventures and side-quests (such as slaying a rampaging troll or rescuing a princess) may provide

opportunities to harvest mana pockets.

If the Broodking wins the battle, the Dreamer's body dies and the Broodking returns to the Periphery. If the Broodking is defeated, it ceases to exist and the Dreamer wakes from his coma. Those lucky few who do awaken seldom, if ever, remember the experience.

In the past, Dreamwalkers who have tried to enter the mind of a coma victim have reported a Barrier that is impossible to cross. However, in some rare instances, the Dreamer's subconscious mind may allow access to Dreamwalkers whose intentions are benign. These Dreamwalkers may then aid the Dreamer in defeating the Broodking if they wish. If not, they too become trapped inside the Dreamworld and die if the Dreamer's mind is destroyed.

Because of its inherent risks, only the most crazed or desperate Broodkings attempt to use Mind Breaker.

The Nature of the Broodking

What is a Broodking? Many have dared to ask this question, but very few ever learn the answer. Those who do are often shocked and appalled to learn that for all their power, Broodkings are but servants to a greater and older evil. This evil lives and grows in a lightless place known only as the Kingdom of Malice.

The Kingdom of Malice

Deep in the darkest reaches of the Empyrean lies the Kingdom of Malice, a place of evil where the child lords dwell, where hope has fled and the screams of darkness echo in the swirling depths.

Malice is a vile place made up of seven dream islands revolving around an enormous, black maelstrom. The origin of the kingdom is steeped in myth and legend and known only to a few. Much of its history has been lost or revised to suit the whims or vanity of its dark rulers, but the grim truth refuses to be denied.

The Rise of Malice

In the beginning, there was darkness---and the darkness was alive. Alone for an eternity, its dreams were of darkness, its thoughts were of darkness, it *knew* only darkness.

When light came, the darkness withdrew. Until then, it had never conceived that anything other than darkness could exist and had been content to dwell in its own ignorance and solitude. But now there was light, and the darkness was afraid. It knew somehow that the light would not be content to simply exist and sensed that it aspired to be even more than what it was.

And so it did. The light brought order to the universe and as the chaos receded, the darkness felt itself diminish. The darkness grew angry at this and was filled with malice toward the light, and Malice became its name.

Malice turned his back on the light and grounded himself in darkness, becoming a great, black tree whose gnarled roots and tendril-like branches became a barrier that no light could penetrate. And so, the Great Tree of Malice came to be, and with it, the dark Kingdom of Malice, of which only the most foolish openly speak.

The light continued to expand and grow, and soon, creation sprang into being as life sprouted within its bright and shining borders. Malice saw this life and would not be outdone. Already, tiny, dark seedlings had grown upon the Great Tree of Malice. These fell to the ground and became his thoughts and emotions made real.

Confidence in his own power turned Malice's first seedling into Pride. Anger towards the light gave rise to the next seedling: Wrath. Envy came next, after Malice saw what the light could achieve. A desire to surpass the light and consume its creation became Lust, Greed and Gluttony. The weariness of this new struggle and the desire to return to an eternity of ignorance and peace became Sloth.

These were the children of darkness; seven spokes in the Wheel of Malice, of whom the world would come to hate and revile above all else. But, there was an eighth child

as well, one whose power was greater than that of all her siblings combined. A child spawned not from hatred or fear, but from Malice's desire to embrace the light as an equal, to rise above his own pettiness and become something more than simply blind Malice. This child's name was Hope, and she would come to be both treasured by her father and hated equally by her dark brothers and sisters.

Now the children of Malice existed, but like the light, they were not content. They wanted power. Power to control the darkness. Power to create their own children. The power of Malice himself. And the only way to achieve that power was by destroying their father. By tearing down the Great Tree of Malice.

And so they plotted. Envy struck a bargain with Wrath who cozened Pride with visions of fame and glory. Together they convinced Lust to seduce Gluttony and Greed to join them, although Greed would have done so willingly on his own. Sloth agreed simply because the others would not let him rest until he did.

Hope overheard their plans and became distraught. She brought the news to her father, but Malice was neither angry nor surprised. He had known the time would come when his own children would rise against him and was ashamed, for had they not been born of his own failings?

All but Hope.

Malice looked upon his youngest daughter with love, fearful that once he was gone she would fare ill at the hands her siblings. He gave Hope a

part of himself, a part of his heart, and bid her use his love as a guide to transcend the darkness. To seek peace and happiness in the realm of light. In sadness, Hope did as he asked and fled the Kingdom of Malice, never to return.

Malice did not resist when his children fell upon him and destroyed him. Together the seven brought the great tree down, then drank of their father's blood and ate of his flesh. Malice's dark heart, the source of his power, was torn from his breast, solidifying into a solid, black mass that came to be known as the Darkstone.

The children of Malice fought over the Darkstone and during the struggle, sundered it into seven shards. Each child ate one of the shards and thereby gained a fraction of their father's power.

But their treachery did not come without a price. No sooner had the heart of Malice been consumed, than the ground began to shake and the very spot where the Great Tree had once stood split asunder. A giant maelstrom formed in its place, drawing everything about it into its black and swirling depths.

Only the power of the Darkstone shards kept the children of Malice from being swept into the vortex. But this very power also held them in place and even to this day, the Lords of Malice are unrepentant prisoners, unable to leave their father's kingdom.

Geography of the Kingdom

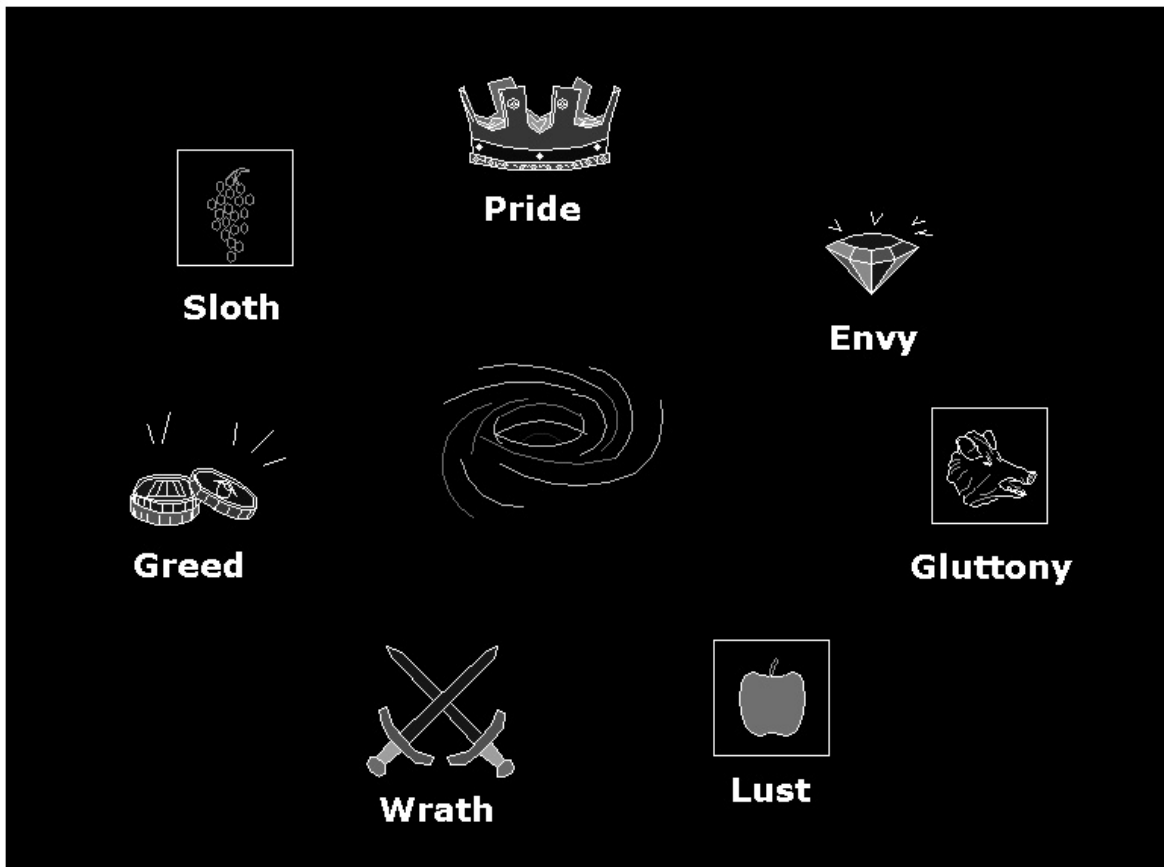
The Great Maelstrom

The Great Maelstrom is an enormous astral whirlpool that lies at the center of the Kingdom of Malice. The maelstrom creates a near deafening cacophony of fear, pain and suffering as it draws negative thoughts, emotions and even beings to it like a magnet. Many believe that the maelstrom is a null void of dark oblivion. That all those who enter it cease to exist. But others believe it is only a portal to a greater hell where the sinful are punished

for all eternity. No one has ever entered the maelstrom and returned, and just being close to it is enough to drive one mad.

The Realms of Malice

The Realms of Malice are seven stable dream islands ruled by the seven Lords of Malice. These realms are caught in the pull of the Great Maelstrom, forced to circle it like dark satellites orbiting a dying star. Each of these realms is stabilized by a shard of the Darkstone and surrounded by Deadland regions of chaos flux (see The Deadlands, below).



Stylized rendition of the Kingdom of Malice

Malice Lore

The Darkstone

The Darkstone was once the black heart of the entity known as Malice. Ages ago, it was sundered into seven parts and consumed by his children. The Darkstone shards are what stabilize the Realms of Malice and keep the chaos flux at bay. Consuming the Darkstone shards gave the Lords of Malice the power to resist the pull of the Great Maelstrom. However, the shards are somehow tied to the maelstrom and the dark lords are forever trapped within its grasp.

Legend holds that he who reunites the seven shards of the Darkstone (some say there are actually eight shards, but that is another legend) can break free of the maelstrom, but none of the Lords of Malice will relinquish their own power to try. As a result, the lords are caught up in a battle for supremacy with each trying to weaken the other, in the hopes that he or she may be able to win the shards by force.

The Darkstone shards are powered by mana. If one ever fails, that realm is lost. Broodspawn regularly journey into Deadland regions of flux to retrieve mana for the Darkstone shards.

The Lords of Malice

The Lords of Malice are immortal beings forced to circle the Great

Maelstrom for all eternity. The Lords of Malice do not possess physical form. Instead, they exist as concepts and ideals related to the sin over which they hold sway. These sinful ideals have taken physical form in the shape of the Realms of Malice. This means that the seven Lords of Malice do more than just rule their individual realms---in effect, they *are* their realms. Those who enter a realm are actually entering the dark consciousness of the sinful lord itself. The Lords of Malice sometimes assume physical form as avatars (see Avatars, below) in order to take a more active role in ruling their realm.

Necros

Necros is the stuff of raw sin. It is the meat and drink of the Lords of Malice. Without necros to sustain them, they would soon perish.

Necros leaks into the Empyrean from dark thoughts, vile acts and nightmarish Dreamworlds, giving rise to such foul creatures as hata sharks. However, necros in its purest form can only be harvested in the real world, from the sinful thoughts and emotions of the living. Broodkings are routinely sent into the real world to collect necros suitable for their lord---in fact, harvesting necros is the sole purpose of a Broodking's existence.

All Hallow's Eve

One night each year, the veil between the real world and the spirit world becomes thin. On this night, which some call Halloween, Broodkings in the real world are able to funnel necros directly into the spirit world. This is often accomplished through a series of symbolic ceremonies and/or bizarre rituals that differ for each Broodking (lustful orgies, blood sacrifices, fasting, etc.).

On this night, the Gatekeepers of Malice (see The Gatekeepers, below) prowl the Emyrean, collecting the raw necros and fouling the astral waters of the Periphery with their slimy wake. The transfer of necros in this manner is believed to be the main reason why All Hallow's Eve has garnered such a negative reputation among the living.



The Realms of Malice

Pride

Pride is an arid, mountainous land with only a few fertile river valleys. The rectangular base of a great monument dominates the center of the realm. This base is a thousand feet tall, a mile wide and several miles long. The exterior is covered with dirt ramps and wooden scaffolding, and bustles with worker activity at all hours of the day and night. The interior is riddled with tunnels, chambers and secret passageways, but by contrast is strangely quiet and devoid of life.

The Temple of Pride lies at the heart of the monument. It is a vast, ornately decorated chamber with a domed ceiling and mural covered walls. Access to the temple is gained by one of four long tunnels that stretch to each point of the compass. Except on special occasions, only the Priesthood of Pride are allowed inside the temple.

The culture of Pride is centered around building the great monument to Pride. For thousands of years, generation after generation has toiled away at its construction. Rock is taken from nearby quarries, cut to shape and polished to a dull shine. Each stone block must be perfect. When finished, the monument will be a replica of Pride, "The Perfect One", that towers for miles above the Realm of Pride.

The people of Pride live in hundreds of small, tent cities called camps that surround the base of the monument. They are shepherds, farmers, laborers, craftsmen, taskmasters, soldiers and overseers, all dedicated to the construction of the great monument. A child's role is decided at the moment of his birth, depending upon the needs of the camp. Dissension is rife in most camps, especially among the younger citizens of Pride, and soldiers are often called upon to break up illegal gatherings in order to prevent rebellion.

Each camp is ruled by a priest of Pride. Members of the priesthood are holy architects, responsible not only for the spiritual welfare of those in their charge, but also for the design and implementation of portions of the great monument. The status of each priest is measured by the yearly work output of his camp, and the priests often try to sabotage other camps in order to elevate themselves in the priesthood hierarchy.

Current technology is similar to that of the Bronze Age. Except for the priesthood, clothing is limited to loincloths, sarongs and sandals. Priests wear more elaborate dress. Arms and armor typically consist of a spear and shield, although only soldiers are allowed to own weapons.

The Darkstone shard of Pride is located in the main temple. It manifests as a golden statue of Pride---a miniature replica of the finished monument. Those who

would invest it with mana must kneel before the statue.

The avatar of Pride is a flawlessly handsome human male who sits upon a great throne in the center of the Temple of Pride. Pride expects only admiration and fawning obsequiousness from those in his presence. Those who worship at his feet are always welcome in his realm. Those who do not are punished in a variety of brutally creative ways. The best fate such a "criminal" can expect is exile into the Deadlands. Other punishments include drawing and quartering, flogging, crucifixion, being fed to crocodiles and being skinned alive to name a few.

Lord Pride was destroyed centuries ago in what is known in some parts as the Black War of Manaed. Recently, there have been stirrings among the priesthood who predict that a new avatar is ready to be born.

Wrath

Wrath is a war-ravaged land that has been torn apart by centuries of fighting. Several advanced civilizations have risen and fallen in Wrath, each ending in some sort of man-made holocaust. As a result, the air is tainted with pollution, many water sources are poisoned and entire regions have been contaminated by radiation. The countryside is dotted with ruined cities and littered with graveyards, blast craters and the smoldering hulks of wrecked war machines.

The people of Wrath are divided into small, fortified settlements ruled by various warlords. Some of these warlords actually try to help the people in their care while others seek only to exploit them.

Overall, technology is comparable to that of the Iron Age (iron weapons, wheeled carts, etc.), but more advanced devices, usually weapons, from ancient times and/or the Deadlands occasionally surface. Clothing is limited to whatever fabrics can be scrounged or traded for.

The Darkstone shard is located in the center of a ruined, modern day city named Hades. It manifests as an unexploded nuclear missile stuck nose first into the ground. Those who would invest it with mana must kneel before the missile and pray. The Darkstone missile is considered to be a divine relic by the people of Wrath and the city is a holy site where no fighting is allowed to take place. Thousands of pilgrims travel there each year to worship at the altar of Wrath.

Lady Wrath revels in war and conquest. She does her best to promote conflict between the various warlords, although she rarely takes an active hand in the fighting. Wrath respects only strength and might of arms. Those who show considerable physical prowess may be taken as a consort, earning them the instant enmity of all other warlords.

Wrath was destroyed in battle during the Black War of Manaed, and the warlords have been vying for power ever since.

Gluttony

The Realm of Gluttony is a small, city-state surrounded by vast crop fields, orchards and open grazing ranges. The smell of cooking food is ever present in the air.

In Gluttony, fine cuisine, healthy eating habits and being overweight are marks of status. Except on rare occasions, peasants are allowed to eat only meager breads and tasteless vegetables. Craftsmen and soldiers are allowed to add meat and spices to their meals while the nobility may indulge in all manner of fine entrees and desserts.

The Hall of Gluttony is a huge Medieval castle centered around a large dining hall. The dining room is surrounded by kitchens where busy chefs prepare fine meals and gourmet cuisine around the clock. The hall bustles with activity at all hours, including various forms of entertainment (jugglers, duels, wrestling matches, eating and drinking contests, etc.).

Lord Gluttony is a bearded, barrel-chested man who never stops eating---soup and other pulped and mashed foods are ladled to him even as he sleeps. Lord Gluttony rarely leaves his dining hall, which also serves as his bedchamber when he falls asleep on his comfortable throne.

Lord Gluttony respects hearty eaters and heavy drinkers. Those who routinely overindulge are always welcome in his hall, but make no mistake, Lord Gluttony is

not one to be taken lightly. Those who seek to earn his favor must first either supply him with something he has never tasted before (highly unlikely), drink until they pass out or eat until they're so full that they vomit up their meals---and then they must keep eating and drinking.

The Darkstone shard of Gluttony manifests as a large, silver platter. Investing it with mana causes food to appear on the platter. This food is summarily devoured by Lord Gluttony.

Sloth

The Realm of Sloth is a stone walled city-state surrounded by a vast jungle. The overall architecture, technology level, customs and style of dress in Sloth are vaguely similar to that of ancient India.

In Sloth, the line between commoners and nobility is sharply drawn. The commoners are an oppressed lot that live at the whim of the nobles. Jobs are hereditary and there is little room for advancement.

Soldiers are eunuch slaves whose unyielding loyalty comes as the result of intense brainwashing sessions and mind-controlling narcotics. They are the strong arm of the nobility and are feared by the general populace. Only soldiers may own weapons and armor, typically a curved scimitar and occasionally a shield.

In Sloth, inactivity is a sign of status---the less one is forced to move, the more highly he is

regarded. Among the nobility, even talking is deemed to be too taxing. Communication with commoners is done through a complex series of facial gestures that include tics, lip wetting, eye blinking and raised eyebrows to name a few. Commoners who force a noble to speak aloud are publicly flogged, sometimes to death.

Lord Sloth lives within the grand Palace of Sloth. The avatar desires only pampered sleep. He is a grossly obese creature whose muscles have atrophied to the point where he can no longer move on his own. Slaves feed, bathe and clothe him and take care of his other bodily functions. When he must move, he is carried from place to place in a gilded howdah atop a tame elephant.

The Darkstone shard of Sloth manifests as Lord Sloth's enormous, oil-scented bed. Those who would invest it with mana must spend a night sleeping on the bed, usually beside the bloated, snoring presence of the avatar himself.

Envy

The Realm of Envy is a tropical island paradise, home only to exotic animals and Lady Envy herself.

Lady Envy lives in a large tree house near the center of the island. She appears as a beautiful, lonely and somewhat naïve woman who claims to have been marooned on the island years ago. She is initially warm and welcoming towards

newcomers, but this changes the more time they spend on the island.

The more she watches her visitors, the more she begins to envy them. This envy starts as something as simple as the color of a person's hair, the shape of someone's mouth or even stories from their past experiences. If nothing else, Envy begins to resent the fact that her visitors are free to come and go as they please while she remains trapped by the Great Maelstrom.

As her envy grows, she begins to age and become more disagreeable, little by little, gradually transforming into a fierce, bitter crone. When this happens, she attacks and devours the object of her desire. The transformation can be stalled by flattery and humility, but it can never be fully stopped.

Lady Envy has created and destroyed her realm several times in the past, never being satisfied with the results. The center of the island contains a large pit filled with the gnawed bones of her victims. Her Broodspawn are charged with the task of not only retrieving mana from the Deadlands, but also kidnapping people and creatures from other realms. Magi (see The Magi, below) avoid the Realm of Envy whenever possible.

The Darkstone shard of Envy is located inside the tree house where it manifests as an ornate mirror. To invest it with mana, one simply looks inside the mirror. However, the mirror reflects the hideous, envious creature that lies dormant in the hearts of all, and gazing upon

this reflection has been known to drive some mad.

Lady Envy was almost killed in the Black War of Manaed, but managed to escape into the Emyprean and return to Envy.

Greed

The Realm of Greed is a land of temperate forests, hills and mountains. It is the domain of bandits and outlaws, where the weak quickly perish and only the strong survive. Material wealth and the strength to hold onto it are the only marks of status in Greed. Wars, intrigue, assassinations and betrayal are common.

The people of Greed live in fortified holdings resembling Medieval-era keeps that are scattered across the land. These holdings are ruled by fierce robber-barons who send bands of armed men into the countryside to steal wealth and property from the unwary. Those who dwell within the safety of a holding (barkeepers, craftsmen, etc.) are expected to see to the needs of the baron and his men.

Lady Greed lives in a nearly impregnable mountain fortress. She believes that anything within her realm belongs to her. If she sees something she likes, she takes it, and woe to those who resist. Lady Greed respects strength. She despises flattery, but can be won over by lavish gifts.

Lady Greed is usually content to remain inside her fortress, counting

her wealth and collecting tribute from her subjects. However, recently she has forbidden the robber-barons from fighting amongst themselves. Instead, she has instructed them to raid the Deadlands and occasionally other realms. These raiding parties are usually made up of three to twelve individuals led by at least one Magus.

The Darkstone shard of Greed manifests as a golden, gem-encrusted throne. Those who would invest it with mana must kneel before the throne.

Lust

The Realm of Lust is a small, coastal city that caters to pleasures of the flesh. The overall architecture, technology level and style of dress in Lust are similar to that of ancient Rome. Living conditions, even for the poor, are extremely good. The streets are lined with a variety of restaurants, narcotics dens and brothels, each specializing in a particular fetish (men, women, beasts, etc.). Slavery is legal and not all who work in these brothels, male or female, do so willingly.

In Lust, monogamy is a foreign concept and virility and sexual prowess are signs of status. Those who earn a reputation for themselves among the populace are often invited to the Palace of Lust to entertain the Lady.

Lust is governed by an elected democracy. The people of Lust are a diverse lot of exceptionally attractive

individuals who make their living plying a number of mundane trades. Equality between the sexes is absolute. The goal of each commoner is to retire with enough money and slaves to live a happy and fruitful life.

Only the soldiers of Lust are allowed to own weapons and armor, typically a breastplate, helm, shield and spear. Female soldiers also wear skirts of boiled leather. Officers carry short swords. The soldiers of Lust are expected to keep the peace, track down escaped slaves and repel incursions from the Deadlands. Most soldiers were selected by Lady Lust for their beauty and physique and are expected to entertain her when she calls.

Lady Lust rules the realm from her sleeping quarters inside the Palace of Lust, which overlooks the city. She frequently entertains guests with lavish dinner parties that always devolve into orgies of sex and drugs.

The Darkstone shard of Lust is located inside the Lady's sleeping quarters in the Palace of Lust. It manifests as a bizarre sexual stimulation device that must be used in order to invest it with mana. Lady Lust sometimes participates in the act, which is not always a good thing---the strain of coupling with her has killed more than one being and driven many others mad.

The Deadlands

The land beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Malice encompasses a vast, ring-like region of chaos flux known as the Deadlands---an ever-changing world that often resembles the realm it most closely borders.

For instance, a person who crosses into the Deadlands beyond the Realm of Wrath may find himself in a war torn modern day city. One who crosses into the Deadlands surrounding Sloth may find himself wandering trackless jungles, battling fierce pygmies, man-eating tigers and deadly giant snakes. One who crosses beyond the borders of Greed may be robbed or killed by raiders. Since flux also taps into the subconscious mind, these Deadland regions often contain people, places, items or events that are known to the individual. In most cases, these familiar manifestations contain a negative connotation.

Only Deadlanders with the ability to manipulate mana may cross from the Deadlands into Malice. Natives of Malice may pass freely back and forth through the Deadlands. Goods (and carcasses) may be carried in either direction.

Tendrils of flux and chaos flux sometimes seep from the Deadlands into the realms, making the borders an unstable (and often dangerous) place to live close to. These tendrils tend to gravitate toward Magi, snatching them away to other realms of Malice, sending them into the Deadlands, sending them into places formed by their own thoughts

and memories, or sending them to a combination of all three.

Once transported to a Deadland, a Magus has no choice but to make for its nearest borders (treat locating the border the same as Locating a Specific Dreamworld). Those without the ability to manipulate mana have only one way to escape the Deadlands---they must hope they stumble upon the borders of a realm before being sucked into the Great Maelstrom.

The Deadland border may be minutes, hours, days, weeks or even months away and the character may find himself transported again before he ever reaches it. Stories exist of people who are snatched away each time they near a border and are doomed to wander the Deadlands forever.

Sample Deadland Regions

Many unique Deadland regions of flux exist that are not bound to any realm. These have been encountered at different times by different people, and knowledge of these regions has been passed down in stories, songs and legends. Other recurring Deadland regions of flux are easily introduced by the GM. Known regions can sometimes be located by navigating the Deadlands (treat as Locating a Specific Dreamworld at -50 to the Base Chance).

Active Exploits: Treat as Locating a Specific Dreamworld at +5dif.

The Snow Lands

A vast, frozen tundra full of treacherous slopes, ice caves and blizzards. The Snow Lands are peopled by primitive tribesmen, wooly mammoths, dire wolves and other prehistoric creatures.

The Red City

This ruined city bears much resemblance to some of the decaying cities of Wrath. Rusted skyscrapers teeter over streets of broken asphalt, the air itself is poison to breathe, and hostile robots, mutant humans and animals roam the land.

The Valley of Screams

A giant amusement park, filled with every ride imaginable. The rides are in a sad state of disrepair and many are in an imminent danger of collapse. The park is empty of employees and patrons, but the rides continue to run at regular intervals. Riding one of the rides enables Magi to harvest a denouement-type mana pocket, but the danger of accidental injury and even death often outweigh the potential benefit. The only way to exit the valley is by riding one of the giant, rusting roller coasters. However, the coasters are so terrifying that each rider risks immediate cardiac arrest.

The Place of Needles and White Halls

A giant, modern day hospital. Those who enter this Deadland region find themselves a patient subject to some illness or injury. Those who have escaped the hospital recount a variety of different experiences; a few good, but most (very, very) bad.

The Land of Black Roads

An arid wasteland broken up by a series of small, walled communities interconnected by sprawling highways, bridges, tunnels and bypasses. The culture here is based on defense of the community, vehicular dueling and raiding other communities. Each community grows its own meager crops, but most of the day's work is centered around the garage or motor pool where mechanics and drivers make repairs or improvements to their combat vehicles.

The Great Machine

An enclosed region made up of giant cogs, pulleys, chains, wheels and other bits of clanging, churning machinery. The noise here is almost deafening. Oil and smoke make traversing the region dangerous and more than one traveler has died of smoke inhalation, slipped and fallen to his doom, or been crushed between rotating gears.

The Plains of Thunder

A vast, open prairie marred by pockets of scorched earth and cloudy skies. Those who cross the plains are subject to lightning strikes. The range is home to several tribes of American Indians who perform rituals to appease the "sky spirits". Species of energy resistant buffalo, antelopes, rabbits and other prairie-dwelling creatures also reside here.

The Water Caves

A twisting, underwater cave complex that contains enough pockets of air to support surface dwelling life. The salty waters are home to several strange, aquatic predators, including a primitive species of sentient fish-men who hunt down any who enter their realm.

The Burning Forest

A hardwood forest shrouded in a perpetual haze of smoke. One out of every three trees in this forest is on fire. When a tree burns out, it collapses and two new trees sprout up in other parts of the forest. Falling trees, clouds of blinding ash, newly sprouting trees, explosions of burning sap and smoke inhalation are constant dangers. The forest is populated by various species of fire resistant fetch (salamanders, dragons, etc.).

The Gauntlet

A long, dark, cobblestone street hemmed in by tall buildings. The architecture here is reminiscent of Medieval Germany. Those who wish to exit this region must get to the other end of the street. Meanwhile, the Gauntlet's shadowy inhabitants emerge from their homes and attack newcomers with knives and clubs, while others line the rooftops and rain rocks and offal down upon the street.

Recent History

Some time ago, the avatar of Pride became intrigued by tales and fables of the Lost City of Manaed. Journeying there, he felt the power of the Great Heartstone and knew at once that it was a lost part of the sundered Darkstone. Intent on winning the Heartstone for himself, he began to send Broodspawn to infiltrate Manaed and foment dissent and rebellion throughout the realm. When the time was ripe, he teamed up with Envy and Wrath to mount an all out assault on the great city.

Although the three Lords of Malice caused much death and destruction throughout the great realm, they were defeated at the last minute when the queen of Manaed (who is believed to be an avatar of Hope) gave her own life force to save the land. The avatars of Pride and Wrath were destroyed outright in the resulting blast. Badly wounded, Lady Envy retreated back to her own realm where she has

dwelt in solitary bitterness ever since.

New Races

Avatars

The Lords of Malice are ephemeral creatures, only aware of their surroundings on the most basic of levels. In order to take a more active role in the ruling of its realm or involve itself in happenings throughout the kingdom, a lord must first create an avatar. This is done by imbuing a powerful Brooding with gross amounts of sinful power. Only one avatar may exist for each lord at a time. Avatars are free to leave the Kingdom of Malice in order to foment sin throughout the Emyrean. However, if an avatar is ever destroyed, its lord is greatly weakened. It effectively loses consciousness for an undetermined period of time and may not create another avatar for many years. During this time, its realm is often subject to depredations by the other lords.

Avatars are addressed in deference to their lords, as in Lord Pride, Lady Lust, Lord Gluttony, etc. An avatar is an entity that is normally beyond the capability of normal Dreamwalkers to defeat. However, many can be reasoned or bargained with to some degree, though they are never to be trusted. Under certain conditions, usually after undergoing a harrowing, epic quest of the Game Master's design, they may even be destroyed.

Gatekeepers of Malice

Also known as Boatmen, Ferryman, Bridges and Charons of Malice, The Gatekeepers were created long ago by the Lords of Malice to ferry necros to and from the kingdom. Gatekeepers are enormous, bloated creatures about twice the size of a blue whale. They are black in color and covered with hairy warts, open sores and oozing pustules. Gatekeepers are only barely sentient and single-minded in their purpose. Only seven such creatures are known to exist, each enslaved to a representative lord.

Gatekeepers lurk in the darkest parts of the Periphery, fouling the astral waters with their sinful slime and causing nightmares in the Dreamworlds they pass over. They are often tended by ferocious schools of hata sharks.

In addition to transporting necros, Gatekeepers may also transport Broodkings (and Dreamwalkers) to and from the Kingdom of Malice by swallowing them whole. The journey is a nightmarish one where the travelers are immersed in the necros of raw sin. Some do not survive the journey, and many more do not make it through with their minds intact.

Gatekeepers cannot be killed, and any attempt to harm them usually results in a sudden, one-way trip to the Kingdom of Malice.

The Saldotti

The Saldotti, known in the Low Speech as the Sick Ones, are beings that are created from raw flux drawn straight from the Periphery. Their existence begins, oddly enough, in the real world, where they manifest as the "imaginary friend" of a particularly creative child. The appearance, nature and behavior of each Saldot is dictated by the child's imagination and desire. As the child grows older and its concept of reality becomes more defined, the Saldot gradually begins to fade until it eventually becomes little more than a fond childhood memory. When this happens, most Saldotti dissolve into the Periphery from which they were birthed, but a few manage to pass beyond the astral waters and find their way into dream realms such as Manaed, and on rare occasions, The Kingdom of Malice.

Many Saldotti are human or animal in appearance, but many also take more exotic forms such as dragons, robots, cars and even rocks, trees or flowers. Saldotti have the ability to manipulate mana and can learn mana Talents.

Saldotti who are trapped in Malice are generally bitter and resentful. However, a rare few have made a name for themselves as heroes of the people and enemies of the lords.

Some Saldotti are inherently malicious and cruel. These Saldotti began their existence not as "imaginary friends", but as bogeymen, closet monsters and

“monsters under the bed”. This sort of Saldotti in particular seem to be drawn to Malice, where they continue to harass, terrify and even harm children until they are stopped.

The lifespan of a Saldot varies with its manifestation, but on the average is comparable to that of a normal human being. If a Saldot is ever killed in Malice, his death is permanent.

Fetch

Fetch are the distant descendants of Saldotti and natives of Malice. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and dispositions, depending in large part upon the nature of their parents. Many resemble horrible creatures from dark myth and legend. Game Masters are encouraged to use their imagination when designing new races of fetch.

Fetch can be found throughout all of Malice and into the Deadlands beyond. Some fetch have the ability to manipulate mana, but many do not. If a fetch is ever killed, his death is permanent.

Dreamers

Idle Dreamers (as opposed to lucid ones) are occasionally drawn to the Kingdom of Malice. Idle Dreamers are virtually indistinguishable from any other creature in Malice and can have any form, abilities, skills and powers the Game Master desires. Idle Dreamers act as they would during the course of a normal dream

(or nightmare). Unlike Dreamwalkers, an idle Dreamer may wake up at any time. Usually this happens through normal means (alarm clock goes off, morning light filters through the window, dog needs to go out, etc.).

Malice is the lingering nightmare that one can (thankfully) never quite remember the details of upon waking. Dreamers who awaken after even a brief stint in Malice often have problems sleeping and feel unsettled for some time.

If an idle Dreamer is killed, he wakes up unharmed.

Factions

Magi

In the Kingdom of Malice, those who can manipulate mana are known as Magi. It is the Magi who bring mana back from the Deadlands to power the Darkstone shards, thus it is the Magi who hold the key to the kingdom’s survival. The Magi are treated with fear and awe by the natives of Malice and are usually allowed to pass through the kingdom unmolested. They are often invited by avatars, warlords and local rulers to attend banquets, parties and other functions where they are enticed to create alliances or share mana in exchange for goods and/or services. Upon returning from a Deadland expedition, Magi are expected to tithe a portion of their mana to the realm’s Darkstone shard (usually about 10%). Those who blatantly refuse are branded as

criminals and hunted down by forces of the avatar, including Broodspawn and occasionally Broodkings.

Broodkings

Broodkings are seldom found in the Kingdom of Malice. Their business is done in the real world, although they occasionally linger long enough to create a few Broodspawn. Broodkings almost never get caught up in the happenings of a particular realm---such affairs are considered beneath them.

Broodspawn

Broodspawn serve only one purpose in the Kingdom of Malice. It is their job to travel into the Deadlands and bring back mana for the Darkstone shards. Broodspawn are treated with fear and respect by the natives of Malice. Each realm has its own contingent of Broodspawn who answer only to the avatar of that realm. Broodspawn generally operate alone although in rare instances, bands of two to six creatures may join together to overcome some great threat.

The Order of the Heart

Originally a Sword of Gaia cabal who attacked a Gatekeeper and were drawn into the kingdom, the Order of the Heart is now a collection of Magi native to Malice. Heart Magi often help those in need (sometimes

unintentionally) as they continue to wage war against the Broodkings and their spawn. The order has grown in popularity, especially among the common folk of Malice, and Heart sympathizers can be found throughout the kingdom.

The Chaos Hand

The Hand is a small order of Magi who worship oblivion. They actively seek to destroy the Kingdom of Malice, often waylaying Broodspawn and other agents in the Deadlands. By depriving the Darkstone shards of mana, they hope to weaken the sinful lords enough so the Great Maelstrom can consume the realms. The Hand is hated and reviled throughout all of Malice.

People of Note

Bill Gantry

Bill Gantry is a powerful and ambitious robber-baron who lives in Greed. He covertly seeks to bring about the destruction of Lady Greed so he can usurp her power over the realm. Bill often employs Magi to steal from her agents, but has thus far been unable to infiltrate her fortress.

Archangel

Archangel is a Saldot who manifests as an angel from Judeo-Christian mythology. Archangel wanders the kingdom, doing his part to ease the

suffering of its most downtrodden natives. He has many enemies and is hunted by Broodspawn and their ilk. During battle, Archangel is fearsome to behold as his eyes and his sword glow with holy light. Archangel normally wears a thick cloak and a broad brimmed hat to cover his wings and angelic features.

Gish

Gish is a gluttonous Broodspawn that manifests as a blob-like, pinkish ooze. Gish possesses only animal intelligence, but is relentless in both its hunger and its search for mana pockets. Gish appears to be slow moving, but is deceptively fast when hunting. It attacks by enveloping its prey and digesting it with acidic fluids. Gish's mass varies from two hundred pounds (man-sized) to two thousand (bus-sized)---the more Gish eats, the more Gish grows. Gish can usually be found searching the Deadlands of Gluttony for mana pockets. Gish is feared by the people of Gluttony and sacrificial animals are often tied to a post at night when Gish is known to be around.

The Tarkun

The tarkun are a malicious race of fetch who appear as pale, bat-winged humanoids with crow-like heads. Tarkun hunt in packs of three to eight individuals. They are carnivorous predators who surround the bed of a sleeping victim and wait

for him to awaken before attacking and devouring their terrified prey.

Redbrand

Redbrand is a vile fetch who manifests as an ancient dragon with mud brown scales. Redbrand has six legs and can breathe fire, but is wingless and cannot fly. His cave lair is located in a scorched and blasted Deadland region known as Gnar-heath. Redbrand sometimes ventures into the realms in search of prey, and has even been known to attack Broodspawn and Magi who venture to close to this lair.

The Skinless

The skinless are a tribal race of fetch that dwell in an irradiated wasteland near Wrath. The skinless manifest as humanoid creatures, completely devoid of skin. Their lack of skin causes them no additional discomfort, but they seldom wear clothes or other coverings as the cloth is soon soaked through with blood. The skinless are a reclusive race that prefers the company of their own kind. They are distrustful of outsiders, although they fight only in self defense. For many years, they have suffered the depredations of both man and beast, hunted by humans who detest their appearance, and by animals who find it easy to track their blood scent.

The Making of a Broodking

Broodkings come into being in a variety of ways, but all begin their existence inside the Kingdom of Malice.

A Broodking may be created when a Taeniid infestation overwhelms a Dreamer's psyche. In this case, when the Dreamer dies, part of its dark consciousness lives on and is pulled toward the Great Maelstrom. Those that stumble upon the shores of a realm instead of being swept into the vortex are invested with the lord's power and given purpose. A similar transformation takes place when a particularly sinful man (or woman) dies, and his consciousness finds its way into a realm.

A sinful native of Malice who earns his lord's favor may be transformed into a Broodking. This is considered a high honor by some and a curse by others.

Lastly, Dreamwalkers who become trapped in the Kingdom of Malice often begin to exhibit sinful characteristics of the realm in which they are trapped. In many cases, the Dreamwalker eventually becomes a Broodking and is sent back into the Periphery to gather necros for his lord.



Characters

The most difficult thing for a player to understand is that despite its darkly surreal and terrifying nature, the Kingdom of Malice is not a dream world or even a dream island in the common sense---it is as real as the world their characters live in. Because of this, certain rules are different in Malice than they are in other parts of the Empyrean.

Getting To Malice

The Kingdom of Malice is far removed from the normal reaches of the Empyrean. There is only one way to get to or from there---characters must allow themselves to be swallowed by a Gatekeeper. This is a grossly unpleasant experience that subjects a character to sin in its rawest form--necros. Characters who are swallowed by a Gatekeeper must make an immediate Sanity + Intuition check at -50 to the Base Chance or else gain a phobia or dementia. Gatekeepers always deliver travelers to the realm to which they are bound.

Active Exploits: Characters who are swallowed by a Gatekeeper automatically gain +1dem.

Leaving Malice

As hard as it is to enter Malice, it is even harder to leave. Those who wish to leave Malice must first earn favor with a particular lord, usually through retrieval of mana or in forays against the other realms. Without permission from an avatar, a Gatekeeper will not allow anyone to leave the kingdom. Those who persist in trying are subject to being swallowed and digested in the Gatekeeper's vile stomach. There are rumors and legends of a hidden portal inside each realm that connects directly to the Periphery, but these rumors have never been confirmed.

Time in Malice

The Kingdom of Malice is a real place. An hour of time spent inside a realm is an hour of time that passes in the real world. However, a strange thing happens to a character who crosses into Malice--his period of REM sleep increases, allowing him to remain in a dream state almost indefinitely, or at least as long as his body can survive. In some documented cases, those being monitored have actually ceased to register brain and heart functions for short amounts of time. Unless the character is a trained Dreamwalker, those few who wake up after a stint in Malice frequently forget the details of their visit, but experience night terrors and an aversion to sleep for some time after.

Mana

Mana Points

A character loses all Mana Points upon initially entering the Kingdom of Malice---the nearest Darkstone shard siphons them off as soon as the character exits the Gatekeeper. Characters do not regain mana when they sleep in Malice. Those who wish to use mana, must first retrieve mana pockets from the Deadlands.

Mana Powers

All of the common mana powers are available to characters who can manipulate mana except one--- Possession. This power only works upon the Unreal and the people of Malice are real, as are those who dwell in the Deadlands to some degree. In addition, passing into or out of a region of chaos flux (such as a Deadland) is considered crossing a Barrier for purposes of determining the duration of certain mana powers (such as Gain Skill or Increase Attribute). Also, remember that altered items (Create and Reshape) disappear upon crossing a Barrier/crossing into a region of flux.

Mana Talents

Characters lose access to all Talents upon entering Malice. Only those Talents earned while in the Kingdom of Malice may be used

however, these Talents do not carry over into other parts of the Empyrean.

Death

Characters must be extra careful when adventuring in the Kingdom of Malice. A character who is killed in Malice ceases to exist.

Crossing Over

Those who have crossed over may spend as much time as they like in Malice, although they too can only leave by earning favor with an avatar. While in Malice, mana Talents must be purchased at the normal cost instead of the usual half cost for those who have crossed over. These Talents may not be used outside of the kingdom and vice versa. If a person who has "crossed over" dies in Malice, he ceases to exist.

Factions

Project Dreamwalker

Thus far, the existence of the Kingdom of Malice is nothing more than a vaguely hinted rumor among Project circles---one that even if true, they have no wish to explore.

The Clinic

Clinic analysts have recently discovered that Malice is rumored to be the birthplace of the Broodkings. Because of this, Dr. Gunther R. Endell has devoted many of his resources to determining its location. It has long been known that Dr. Endell wishes to harness the power of the Broodking for his own purposes. However, more recent rumors have surfaced suggesting that his secret desire is actually to become a Broodking himself.

The Sword of Gaia

The elders of the Sword of Gaia know of Malice's existence. Some

of the order's most powerful have even traveled there in the past, but only a few have ever returned to tell what they learned. Sword elders have extensive knowledge of Malice's true history, but are divided in their views of what to do about the Kingdom. The most radical believe they should take a more active role in Malice's destruction, thereby striking at the source of the Broodking threat, while other more moderate members warn that this might cause unforeseen upheavals in both the real and spirit worlds. Attempting to reach the Kingdom of Malice is strictly forbidden.



Adventures

Most characters who find themselves in the Kingdom of Malice are searching for a way to get back home. To do this, they must earn the favor of a lord's avatar, and the simplest way to do that involves the retrieval of mana pockets from the Deadlands. Characters may also retrieve mana for their own personal gain or they may decide to offer their services to a faction or local ruler. The Deadlands provide a wide range of diverse settings and locales for the Game Master to design adventures. The rules for dream design in the core rulebook (pg. 91) and previous articles on different types of fluff may be helpful when designing these adventures, as the same basic rules apply to Deadland regions of flux. These adventures may also be complicated by factions and agents of other lords who seek to waylay characters in their travels.

The realms themselves can be a place of dark mystery, excitement and adventure, at least in small doses. Here, one may become embroiled in court intrigues, square off against potential rivals, foment rebellions or indulge in local customs and vices. The characters may stumble upon a forgotten ruin or chamber and choose to explore its secrets. Or the characters may meet someone who wishes to hire them for a particular task. Friends and enemies are easily made,

especially if a character is a native of Malice, or if he allies himself with a particular faction or realm. Chaos flux is always a danger and the characters may find themselves transported against their will out of a realm and right into the middle of an adventure.

It should be noted that The Heart of Darkness supplement was designed to add background flavor to a Dreamwalker campaign and essentially close the book on the Dreamwalker cosmology. Due to its inherently bleak, disturbingly graphic and often fatalistic nature, The Kingdom of Malice is not recommended for use as a long term campaign setting. Game Masters who wish to run adventures set in the kingdom are encouraged to come up with unique reasons for why the characters have entered this nightmarish land. Rescuing trapped Dreamers (or coma victims), hunting down a particular Broodking, retrieving a long lost spiritual artifact, destroying an avatar or undertaking some other epic quest of the Game Master's design should be the true focus of adventuring in Malice, with other smaller adventures and complications thrown in as either diversions or to provide opportunities to harvest mana pockets.

The End

Appendix I: Dream Islands and Flux

Dream islands are pseudophysical manifestations formed by the thoughts and dreams of thousands, sometimes millions, of people that were inspired by the same concept or ideal.

Islands vary greatly in size, shape and content. Some are based around a certain time period, some are centered around a particular person, organization or movement, while others have deep religious significance. In recent years, several well-known books and movies have given birth to brand new islands.

Designing an Island

Islands follow the same rules for design as do Dreamworlds although they do not have denouements. The inhabitants of an island are usually considered to be Unreal. Of all the Taenia, only Broodkings have been known to manifest on an island. Islands are most useful for Game Masters who wish to run long campaigns using the same setting.

An island constantly floats through the Periphery. Therefore, Dreamwalkers wishing to return to an island may do so only at the Game Master's discretion.

Islands are shifting and malleable and concepts like time

and distance can never be trusted. Some islands undergo normal changes with the passage of time but many islands do not. Instead, they continually repeat major events as they originally happened and only change if a Dreamwalker intervenes. In these cases, the island splits off into two parts--- one part reverts to its original form, while the other becomes a "new" island.

This new island is entirely dependent on the Dreamwalker (or Dreamwalkers) who caused it to form and dissolves if the character leaves the island for a variable length of time. Therefore, only characters who have "crossed over" may permanently alter the fabric of an island.

Flux

New islands enter into a perpetual state of the phenomenon known as flux.

Flux is the result of either conscious or subconscious manipulation of mana. Flux is both everything and nothing. Flux is change. It is the earth of thought and the waters of the Periphery, molded into clay by will and desire. Flux is the stuff of dreams.

Flux surrounds all of creation, forming the border between the ordered realms of the real world, the malleable spirit world of the Empyrean and the disorder of complete chaos.

The ability to create flux is innate in every individual.

Dreamers send the Empyrean into flux each night, when they dream. Dreamwalkers create a miniature state of flux whenever they manipulate mana. The spiritual disturbance created by a Broodking is often a region in flux. Dream islands especially are in an ever-changing state of flux.

Flux taps into our subconscious minds, allowing us to experience new events, relive old memories and sometimes help solve problems that plague our waking lives. A person may be thinking of a lost pet and then come across a puppy, or a mural depicting the pet. A person agonizing over whether or not to take a new job may walk into a region of flux that resembles his current workplace, clearly highlighting all of its good and bad points.

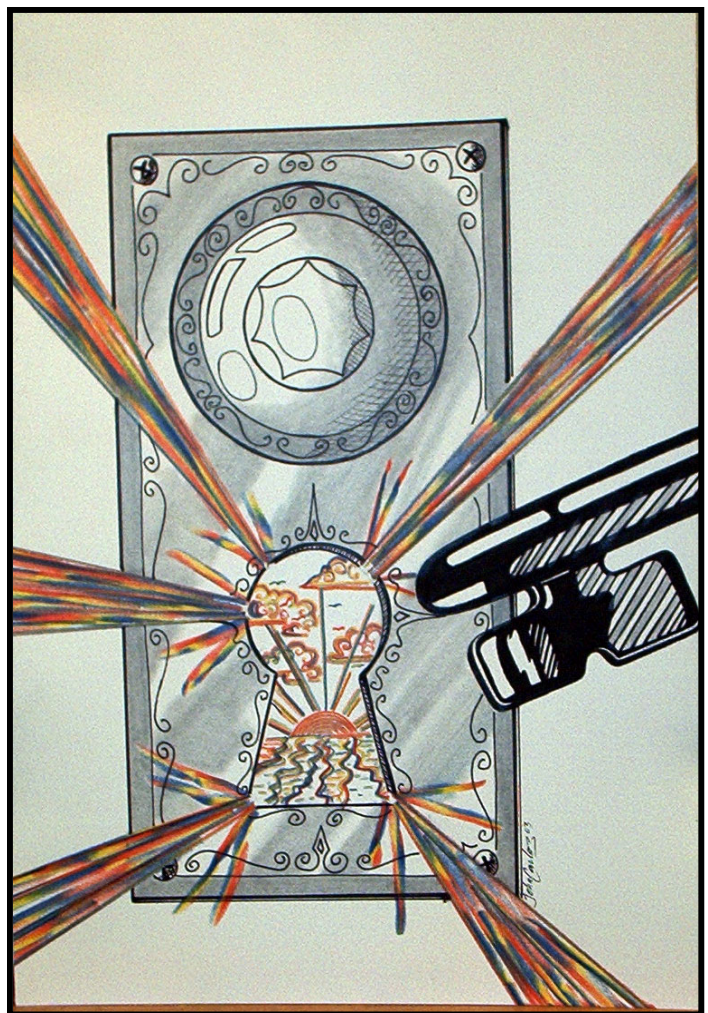
In many ways, flux is similar to dreams, and specifically to fluff. In fact, nearly all of the rules and special effects for dreams and fluff apply to flux. And yet in some places, flux is far more than just a dream.

Regions in Flux

On a dream island, any region can slip into flux, generating a new set of circumstances for characters to deal with. Put simply, flux creates adventures. For example, the characters can be exploring a "science fiction-themed" dream island and be approached by an interstellar trader whose daughter was abducted by space pirates.

Or the characters could be exploring an "ocean-themed" island, rescue a research submarine from the clutches of a giant octopus and then be asked by the crew to provide security while they explore a set of underwater ruins. These adventures are generated by the character's presence and may not have even been part of the original island's makeup.

The change from order to flux can be a subtle one but it is sometimes dramatic. A person can be on a dream island, walking down a hallway and suddenly find himself in a gloomy dungeon. A person might find the door to a



pantry open onto a vast shoreline. Dreamwalkers immediately realize when they have crossed into or out of a region in flux.

Dream Islands and Mana Powers

Characters who explore a dream island for a prolonged period of time find they do not regain used mana points by "sleeping" on the island. Instead, they must search regions in flux for mana pockets if they wish to replenish their supply.

Certain mana powers operate differently on dream islands than they do in standard Dreamworlds. Even though the inhabitants of an island are usually Unreal, Possession in particular is often either limited to certain creatures or is completely unusable (GM's discretion). In addition, long standing effects (such as Gain Skill and Increase Attribute) and altered items disappear when the characters cross into or out of a region in flux.

Flux and Mana Pockets

In addition to problem solving and opportunities for adventure, flux often provides opportunities to harvest precious mana pockets. These mana pockets may be worth anywhere from 1d6 to 5d6 Mana Points (GM's decision).

Mana pockets may take the form of deeds, much like a denouement--the character does something significant and is rewarded with

mana. For example, while exploring a Broodking's spiritual disturbance, a character enters a town plagued by disappearances. The characters learn the disappearances are caused by a band of harpies and kill them. Along the way, they discover a lost child and return it to its parents. These should be treated as denouements and subdenouements respectively. Only Dreamwalkers may retrieve mana in this fashion.

A mana pocket may also take the form of an item. For example, the characters are exploring a dream island and come across a treasure chest. In it, they find a coin printed with a picture of a character's mother on one side. This coin is actually a mana pocket that can be harvested (dissolved) for its mana point value. Anyone may retrieve mana in this fashion, even the Unreal, but only Dreamwalkers can absorb the mana they contain.

Mana pockets in the form of items are usually stable and may be taken anywhere in the Emyrean. If the character wakes, the next time he sleeps, the item manifests with him in the Dreamworld. For this reason, certain items, such as readily recognizable clothing, swords, helms or armor, sometimes take on mythical proportions throughout the Emyrean.

The End