

THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

BY
KENNETH
HITE



GUMSHO  E


Pelgrane Press

KEN WRITES ABOUT STUFF

THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

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Ken describes it as so:

"A burst of Hite goodness that you can imbibe or not as you see fit, secure in the knowledge that there's another one coming down the pike in a month at a reasonable price. I'll be putting about 4,000 words worth of fun together every month — maybe an optional rules system, maybe a longish DramaSystem Series Pitch, maybe a "ripped from the headlines" mini-scenario, maybe a campaign frame or a mini-setting, maybe an extended riff on some worthy intelligence organization or serial killer or astrophysical anomaly. Leave requests in the comments, and I shall take them most indubitably under advisement."

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THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

INTRODUCTION

"There is a legend associated with this spear that whoever claims it, and solves its secret, holds the destiny of the world in his hands for good or evil."

-- Trevor Ravenscroft,
The Spear Of Destiny

Is it the Spear that pierced Christ's side, or the Spear of Odin? Does it grant true kingship or invincibility? Who has borne it through the millennia, and who seeks its true whereabouts now? This issue pierces the legend to reach the truth — and then makes the legend invincible.

THE LEGEND OF LONGINUS

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

-- John 19: 33-34

The Roman soldier who stabbed Jesus was later identified with the centurion who declared him the Son of God (Mark 15:39) and much later (mid-4th century) given the name Longinus (likely a Latinization of the Greek *lonché*, meaning "lance"), and later still named Gaius Cassius Longinus (likely in confusion with the conspirator against Julius Caesar of the same name). The Holy Lance or Holy Spear then passed into the realm of legend.

The Spear, they say, is the secret identity of other famous spears such as the spear Constantine carried from Britain to victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312, the spear that Attila hurled at Rome rather than sack it in 452 (or the spear Aetius wielded to defeat Attila in 451), and eventually the spear of Charlemagne. From Charlemagne, it passed down to the later Holy Roman Emperors and into the house of Hapsburg, eventually being stored in the Hofburg Palace museum in Vienna with the other regalia of the Hapsburg emperors.

Which is where Adolf Hitler saw it in 1912, while he was still a would-be artist starving on the Vienna streets. Suddenly, his true destiny revealed itself to him and he resolved to restore the Reich of the emperors to new and greater heights. With the Spear, he would be invincible. In 1938, after the Anschluss annexed Austria to Germany, Hitler was able to secure the Spear, removing it to a secret SS chapel in Wewelsburg. He left a forged duplicate in St. Katherine's Cathedral in Nuremberg, where the Spear had rested until the Austrians spirited it away from Napoleon in 1796.

The U.S. Army liberated Nuremberg on April 20, 1945, and discovered the hidden bunker under Nuremberg Castle holding the (a?) Spear two months later, on Midsummer's Day. Rumors flew: the Spear in Nuremberg was a fake; the SS had submerged the true Spear at the bottom of Lake Zell, near Salzburg. Notwithstanding, Lt. Walter Horn of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section of the U.S. Army identified the Spear in Nuremberg and secured it under guard on July 19. By this time, Wewelsburg had also fallen — but the precise whereabouts of the Spear, and which Spear emerged from the rubble of Nuremberg, are questions to which there can apparently be no answer.

The U.S. returned a (the?) Spear to the Vienna Hofburg on January 4, 1946. General George Patton, who believed himself the reincarnation of Longinus, and who had ordered the search for the Spear across Germany to prevent a Nazi insurgency rallying around it, had died in a freak accident two weeks earlier. Is the true Spear affixed in a trapezohedral chamber in the basement of the Pentagon, entwining America's destiny with its own? Glowing in some Fourth Reich refuge in Argentina or Antarctica, waiting to emerge again when the next true Führer emerges? Or is it resting in the Hofburg once more, an innocent memetic trap, psychic bait for future monsters?

In point of fact, we don't know.

PIERCING THE MYTH

In even more pointed and actual point of fact, the modern legend of the Spear is a near-

complete fabrication. In November 1960, the Irish writer Max Caulfield produced a lurid story for the *Sunday Dispatch* describing Hitler's lust for the Spear, its role in "blood lodge" rituals with Himmler, Goering, and Julius Streicher, and the shadowy SS Colonel Conrad Buch, "personal adviser to Adolf Hitler on occult matters." This article seems to have been the modern source (perhaps even the sole source) of the tale of the Spear's power to grant victory and fulfill destiny. Caulfield claimed to have uncovered the story in the papers of the late esoteric historian Walter Stein (1891-1957).

This slapdash hoax would have died without a ripple had it not somehow come to the attention of Trevor Ravenscroft, a former British commando turned occultist and heroin addict. In 1972, badgered by his publisher and desperate for money, Ravenscroft cranked out *The Spear of Destiny*, making the Jewish Stein into one of Hitler's occult mentors and inventing ancient texts and modern conversations out of whole cloth. (In 1982, Ravenscroft admitted to having lied about knowing or even speaking with Stein — "except through mediumistic communications.") The resulting farrago was riveting reading, and a multi-million copy bestseller. Ravenscroft had channeled or churned up a compelling modern myth that has since manifested in a political horror novel, DC Comics, several different anime, and a devoutly bizarre episode of the special-forces TV show *The Unit*.

A FOREST OF SPEARS

*"Whereabouts were you roaming
When our master lost the spear?"*

-- Richard Wagner, *Parsifal*

So if the pious legend is unreliable, and the modern legend is borderline slanderous, where do we go when we seek the Spear of Destiny? The answer is apparently anywhere we want to: the chorus of antique origin stories to choose from is only matched by the panoply of candidate Spears to wield in the modern day.

K E N W R I T E S A B O U T S T U F F

THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

SHAFTS

The Spear might be the Lance of Longinus mentioned above, which would technically have been more of a *pilum* or javelin. Or it might be a ritual spear-head (as seen on the Magus' table in the Tarot) forged by Tubal-Cain in 3061 B.C. from UFO memory metal, or the spear hurled at David by Saul (1 Samuel 18:11) later used by the boy king to capture Jerusalem, or any of the spears following.

THE SPEAR OF ST. MAURICE

According to pious legend (ca. 440 A.D.), in 287 A.D. the Emperor Maximian called on the Theban Legion (recruited from Egyptian Christians) to attack rebellious Christian peasants in the town of Agaunum in Gaul. Under their commander Mauritius, the soldiers refused to kill their fellow Christians, for which crime Maximian decimated the legion and executed their commander. That martyr became St. Mauritius, better known as St. Moritz or St. Maurice, patron of infantrymen and swordsmiths.

The Lance in Vienna bears the name of Maurice, who supposedly inherited the Spear from Longinus via the Christian underground in the Roman military.

GUNGNIR

Cast by the dwarven smith Dvalin, the spear Gungnir ("swaying one") came to Loki and then to Odin. So well balanced it could strike any foe, Odin further increased its power by impaling himself with it while hanging for nine days seeking wisdom. This may have been how Gungnir became chased with runes of mighty lore – in Wagner's opera *Siegfried* the Spear's runes are the source of the magical contract or spell that gives Wotan (Odin) his power and authority. When Siegfried breaks the Spear, Wotan vanishes. The Lombard royal clan was the Gungingi, implying a connection to Gungnir, perhaps as their sacred spear of office. Charlemagne defeated the Lombards in 774, and perhaps took their Spear as his own.

SLEG LOGA

The "Spear of Lugh" came from the mysterious island city of Gorias. The *Cath Maige Tuired* (ca. 900 A.D.) says: "No battle was ever sustained against it, or against the man who held it in his hand." Which of Lugh's

SPEAR CARRIERS

A few more unusual suspects have left their grubby fingerprints on the Spear, if only in the fringier zones of history, mystery, and imagination.

Boudicca: In 60 A.D., the rebel Queen of the Iceni looted the Spear from Glastonbury, where it had been taken by Joseph of Arimathea after the Crucifixion. It availed her not, as the Romans crushed her forces the next year.

Alaric: The Gothic king sacked Rome in 410, and added the Spear to his own royal regalia. He died that same year, his body buried – with the Spear? – in the diverted channel of the Busento River, and the gravediggers killed to hide its location.

Justinian: Supposedly dissolved Plato's Academy by the power of the Spear.

Aethelstan: The chronicler William of Malmesbury says King Aethelstan of Mercia (924-939) received the Spear from Hugh Capet (more likely, given the dates, his father Hugh the Great, son-in-law of Henry the Fowler) in 937 and bore it to defeat the Vikings and Scots at Brunanburh that year. His half-sister took the Spear as dowry when she married Otto I.

Frederick Barbarossa: Died in Cilician Armenia in 1190; like Arthur he sleeps until his kingdom needs him again. Perhaps he clutches the true Spear in his undead slumber.

Sigismund I: Holy Roman Emperor and founder of the Order of the Dragon. That's right, the one Dracula's father was a charter member of. In 1424, Sigismund secretly moved the Spear from the capital at Prague to his birthplace, Nuremberg – another opportunity for a switch.

Baron Alois von Hügel: Commissioner to the Imperial Assembly at Regensburg, and bagman for the Austrian diplomatic corps, Baron von Hügel was the man who removed the Spear from Nuremberg to Vienna in 1796 and sold the regalia to the Hapsburg family as distinct from the Imperial house. This makes him a key link in the chain of provenance for the Spear, and a conspirator in any attempt to forge or steal it during the Napoleonic era.

spears that might be is another question: Gae Assail flew unerringly to its target and back again with the proper incantation, Areadbhar once belonged to the King of Persia and its tip must forever be quenched in water to prevent it bursting into flame, and "The Finest Yew in the Wood" may also have been two other spears in Irish myth.

RHONGOMYNIAD

Formerly the spear of Uther, it passed into the hands of Arthur upon his death.

Geoffrey of Monmouth calls it Ron and describes it as "long, broad-bladed, and thirsty for slaughter." If it's the same as the spear of Celtchar as one poem claims, it must be quenched in poisonous blood (or poppies) to prevent it cutting its wielder. Celtchar, at least, can kill nine men at a throw with it.

The other Spear in Arthurian legend is the one that deals the Dolorous Blow to the Fisher King, wounding him and desolating the land. Percival doesn't ask about the king's wound, forcing the Grail quest. In

K E N W R I T E S A B O U T S T U F F

THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

Wagner's opera *Parsifal* the evil wizard Klingsor tries to kill Parsifal with the Spear but the knight catches it in midair, restoring its holy nature and then healing the King. Malory but not Wagner identifies the Spear as the Lance of Longinus.

POINTS

If the spear shafts begin in the misty past, their points jab multifariously into the present. Mix and match – perhaps there are several Spears, each with its own magical lineage. Or connect them all: Tubal-Cain forged the Spear that David wielded and the Romans looted and issued to Longinus who passed it down to Maurice until it converted Constantine whose heirs lost it to Arthur who gave it to Balin who struck the Dolorous Blow with it and thus lost it to the Saxons who prayed for Wotan to carve runes in it then saw it captured by to Charlemagne whose successor Henry the Fowler (Himmler's "preincarnation") gave it to Aethelstan who returned it to the Holy Roman Emperors who let Wagner commune with it and Hitler grab it before Patton switched it out for the one in the Warehouse next to the Ark.

HOFBURG HEILIGE LANZ

The spear in the Hofburg Palace museum in Vienna is the most accessible, and thus the most popular, of the Holy Lance candidates. It's also the one Hitler actually confiscated and moved to Nuremberg. It has a nearly complete chain of provenance going back to the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I (962-973), when Luitprand of Cremona describes the Spear. In 1354 the Emperor Charles IV identified it specifically as the Lance of Longinus, although he may have swapped out the spearhead for a mysterious blade found in the Tyrol.

Against that, in 2003 the metallurgist Dr. Robert Feather tested the Lanz in laboratory conditions, dating it "only" to the 7th century A.D. This implies it began as a Lombard royal spear, joined with the Imperial regalia possibly under Charlemagne. However, the head of the Hofburg Lance is secured to the shaft by an iron nail, inscribed with four crosses – and Feather argues its size and shape are consistent with a Roman nail used in a crucifixion. Did an unknown alchemist in



671 A.D. hammer a Holy Nail into Odin's spear to break the runes and banish the Aesir forever?

VATICAN SPEAR

The potential chain of provenance for the Spear in the Vatican goes back even farther, to 570 A.D. when a pilgrim saw the Holy Spear in Jerusalem. In 615, the Persian emperor Khusrau II captured Jerusalem and broke the spear point off, sending it back to Constantinople but keeping the Spear. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius defeated the Persians and recovered the Spear, returning it to Constantinople as well. The Latin Emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin II, sold the spear point to King Louis IX of France in 1247; the Turks captured Constantinople

in 1453 and the rest of the Spear once more left Christian hands.

However, in 1492 the Sultan Bayezid II sent the Spear to Pope Innocent VIII as a bribe to ensure that the Pope would continue to keep Bayezid's brother and rival Cem prisoner. Initially dubious about their new relic, the Vatican stashed the Spear by the altar in St. Peter's Basilica where it rests today. The spear-tip, meanwhile, disappeared from the Bibliothèque Nationale during the French Revolution.

SPEAR OF ECHMIADZIN

The Apostle Thaddeus preached to the Armenians, but it was St. Gregory the Illuminator who converted them to Christianity in 301 A.D. After a vision of a miraculous pillar of fire (coincidentally

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Smith, Jerry E. and Piccard, George. *Secrets of the Holy Lance* (2005). Comprehensive, if clunky and goofy in equal parts.

on the site of an ancient Zoroastrian fire-temple) in the capital city Vagharshapat, Gregory built a cathedral on the site, which he named Echmiadzin (“Descent of the Only-Begotten One”). The Spear brought by Thaddeus (or recovered from Longinus’ putative retirement home in nearby Caesarea-in-Cilicia) became the centerpiece of the cathedral, where it rests today. To unbelievers, it looks much more like the finial on a legionary standard than it does a lance-head.

In the same neck of the woods, the Holy Lance miraculously emerged in Antioch during a siege in 1098. A monk received a vision and dug the Lance up from beneath the Church of St. Peter, breaking the siege and winning the day for the Crusaders. The Lance of Antioch could have wound up in Armenia: the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, among others, recruited Armenian soldiers for his Crusades, and “Lesser Armenia” bordered the Principality of Antioch.

SPEAR OF KRAKOW

Yet another Spear rests among the Polish royal regalia at Wewal Castle in Krakow. Both Poles and historians agree this Spear is a replica, created by the Emperor Otto I in 1000 (or Henry II in 1018) and given to King Boleslaw I of Poland. Unless it isn’t: the Kings of Poland and Holy Roman Emperors repeatedly connived for each others’ thrones for centuries, and substitutions of

substitutions could have played a part in such machinations. King John I Sobieski of Poland saved Vienna from the Turks in 1683, and might have made the swap then and there while his armies controlled the city. Contrariwise, the Prussians looted the Polish regalia in 1794 (and again in 1939), opening up more opportunities for Spear-switching. Otto (or Henry) also made a replica Spear for the Kings of Hungary, which seems to have gone missing in its own right.

The larger question of replica Spears even throws Feather’s forensics into question: what if the Spear in Vienna is a Polish, Hapsburg, Nazi, or Patton-commanded forgery made from genuine early medieval materials? The real Spear, again, could thus be anywhere.

SPEAR STORIES

*“And a spear in his hand he carried, and to each of the walls he stepped,
Red with blood was the spear, as they saw it,
the people they mourned and wept.”*

-- Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*

A spear that spans eternity and at least three gods is a spear that can sustain multiple adventures in multiple game settings. Don’t be afraid to use it as what it should always be: a numinous enigma. Why does its blade cure the ghost flu in *Mutant City Blues*? Which

of the warlords in a *Razed* Europe that claim to possess it has the real Spear? What is it doing in a shrine on an alien planet on the other side of the Bleed in *Ashen Stars*? Here are a few other possibilities for Spear stories in GUMSHOE games.

TIMEWATCH

The Spear is a truly mighty artifact, one of the axles of Time itself. Or it can be. It’s up to the agents.

Pick a spear, any spear: a Roman cavalry lance, a Norse thrusting spear, a pilum, an assegai, a yari. Next, make (or change) history with it, spending 2 Timecraft points to do so at just the right moment. You don’t have to give Jesus the *coup de grace*; you can toss it at the Emperor Julian when he’s not looking, or stab the guy who was going to stab Shaka Zulu, or crown the King of the Jutes with it. Or you can take out Scipio at the Battle of the Ticinum and let the Carthaginians win, or leave it sticking out of a teenage Harald Haardrada to start a Norse civil war, or get Velazquez to paint it into *Cristo Crucificado*. Then steal it back and give it to someone else to make history with (spending 1 Timecraft). A local, not one of you temponaut jerks. Then pick it up and move it to the next guy, or wait a century and carry it back and swap it for itself. Eventually, as your spear gets a name and a nimbus of legend, it gets harder and harder to sneak it out of time: paradox, choral instability, and more begin to follow the spear down the decades. In a word, miracles.

Every time the Spear (look, it’s got a capital letter now!) makes history, add 1 point to its Destiny rating. (If it’s a major event, add 2 or more. If it’s the Crucifixion, add 8.) The Spears in the Vatican, the Hofburg, even Armenia have got to have Destiny ratings in high double digits – maybe even the hundreds by now. That Destiny rating acts as two things: a Reality Anchor pool usable by the Spear’s wielder, and a Stitch – for history. Using a Spear-Stitch lets the wielder refresh one side of a battle, or an artist’s flagging inspiration. It lets her aid a whole airborne division as though it were her team; increase damage from tiny paradoxes or heal Dolorous Blows to the land caused by untimely dinosaur or alien attacks. Each Stitch spent burns off 4-24 Destiny points; the GM can decide the cost based on the scope of the Stitch, or decide the effect based on the cost she rolled.

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THE SPEAR OF DESTINY



A Spear has a few minor powers as well:

- For 3 Destiny, it also lets the wielder travel through time without a travel test, to anywhen the Spear has been.
- For 2 Destiny, it points the way to the closest other Spear in space and time. (A 2-point Timecraft spend lets the wielder home in on a specific Spear rather than the closest.)
- It's a really good spear: it does +2 damage instead of +1. Spending 1 Destiny increases the damage by 1, up to the limit of the Destiny pool in the Spear.

Destiny never refreshes; it has to be rebuilt with temporal shenanigans.

Naturally, full-fledged Spears are coveted by all manner of ill-wishers in the timestream. And also naturally, creating a Spear is very much against TimeWatch regulations. The specific time-space geometries to which to conform the spear are highly classified, although certain ancient runic and goëtic texts might put clever time-tinkerers onto the correct pattern.

NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS

The true Spear of Longinus, needless to say, is the ultimate vampire bane. (For Damned and Supernatural vampires, at least – and maybe Mutant ones, if vampirism has any psychic component.) The wooden shaft drenched in the blood of Christ can drive the metal head through the skin, shadow, or mist of any vampire: Dracula, Lilith, Zalmoxis, or Judas Iscariot himself. It damages the vampire (+1 damage plus effects of being staked if driven through the heart) regardless of the vampire's form or other defenses.

Since *Night's Black Agents* is all about the style, it's probably most fun if you begin with a heist of the Spear from the Hofburg Palace. Security in the Kaiserliche Schatzkammer Museum is very good for a museum (Difficulties 6-7) but not unbeatable. Anything from a night-time high-tension sneak past laser alarms and pressure sensors, to a daytime chaotic extraction under cover of smoke grenades and a helicopter-zipline rendezvous on the

roof of the palace should work, as long as the agents keep things moving.

The fun really starts once the agents have the Spear. Because while it's great at killing vampires, it's even better at attracting Heat from their minions. Stealing the Spear of Destiny is a guaranteed Heat 5 nine days' wonder of an incident – but unless the agents killed a lot of people, the Heat should die down fairly soon. It's the agencies that don't let it go, that seem more than usually intent on hunting the agents and recovering the Spear, that look more and more like nodes on the Conspyramid. Why does the German rezidentura of the SVR want the Spear? Why is that reporter from *Le Monde* still chasing the story? Who is this Bulgarian arms dealer who's offered a million-euro reward for the Holy Lance? Even if the hunters aren't all vampiric minions, the theft of the Spear opens up passage into a subculture or even a subecosystem of those in the know about vampires. And perhaps about other things – maybe that Bulgarian wants to hire the agents to go back and hit the Hofburg again, and this time steal him the unicorn horn displayed in the same room ...

THE SPEAR OF DESTINY

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

To accompany our multifarious candidate Spears throughout history and legend, herewith a multitude of possible explanations or uses for the Spear in a *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario.

- The Spear is the Spear of Nodens: Nodens' Welsh name Nuada is a version of the Irish Lugh. Those whose blood the Spear drinks can Dream themselves into Nodens' Abyss and ride night-gaunts from there to anywhere in the Dreamlands. Those killed by the Spear become Nodens' night-gaunts.
- The head of the Spear is meteoric iron, specially forged and shaped by alchemist-smiths of late antiquity, deadly to constructs of Shub-Niggurath or even to all terrestrial Mythos horrors (Yig, Mordiggian, possibly Han or Byatis).
- The head of the Spear is volcanic iron, hurled from the depths of the Earth's core by the Crawling Chaos Nyarlathotep. It exists to destroy and enervate the constructions of sapient life – it toppled Valusia, it rove Hyperborea and K'n-Yan in civil wars. Borne by Hyksos invaders, it fragmented nighted Khem; as the Lance of Maurice it collapsed Rome; not even Charlemagne could use it to unify the Franks and Lombards. The Hapsburgs sealed it away and lost their degenerate empire much more slowly; Hitler unleashed it and destroyed Germany and Europe in seven years.
- The Spear is a living geometrical construct mapped into a spear shape. It is a lemma of Daoloth in the living world, and can be tapped for eldritch power. It provides Magic pool points equal to 7 times the holder's Physics rating; lose 1 Stability pool point per gained Magic point. It refreshes its pool completely after blinding someone (a cruel Keeper might rule it can only be refreshed by blinding its wielder).
- The Spear is of Muvian construction, and exists to transfer knowledge from alien minds to human ones. Simply stab the alien in the braincase with the Spear, then stab the human in

the spine (1 month to heal per point of Health lost). The human gains an Investigative pool (Mi-Go Lore, for example) equal to one-third the Health damage suffered (minimum 1). He also gains 1 Cthulhu Mythos rating point.

Where the Spear is associated with a given god or titan, wielding or touching the Spear lowers the Stability or Magic cost of casting the corresponding Contact or Call spell to 1 point. This makes the Spear horrifically dangerous if, for example, it's in truth the Spear of Cthugha, forged in the fires of the Magi by blind Persian smiths ...

THE ESOTERRORISTS

The heroin-fueled fabrications of Trevor Ravenscroft opened a pinprick in the Veil – and the millions of copies of *The Spear of Destiny* sold since 1973 have rubbed its fabric thinner. Tying the potent Freudian image of the spear to both Christ and Hitler, through half-remembered Wagnerian fustian and late-night History Channel marathons the Spear abrades the fabric of the world. Hold this and you are invincible. The Spear's might makes you right. You can rise to power if you impale your doubts, drive them deep into the wound and never let them surface. Believing makes it true.

And, of course, it does. Especially when a Falken grabs you as you grab the metaphorical Spear. They only appear as shadows, sharp-cut wings and beaks cast against the cheap pale paint of the walls or reflected briefly in the light of the monitor. They feed on their hosts, and addict them to the drip of certitude. *Only let my beak's blade sink into you, they rasp, and you can never be defeated, because you can never be wrong.* The Falken don't care what the argument is: they feast on belief, in climate change or 9/11 Truthism or My Candidate or Your Racism or which *Star Wars* movies are best. They eventually leave behind hollow shells open to opportunistic infections and infestations of all realities, including those of the Outer Dark.

FALKEN

They only appear when injured, and all attacks on invisible Falken first go through the human it has symbiotized. Gassing or otherwise rendering the human

unconscious gives the attacker one round to act directly against the Falken before it fades with its symbiont. When the entity finally appears, it seems to be a cloud of gold-wrapped Spear-heads – feathers, pinions, talons, beak – driven by a staring golden eye.

Abilities: Athletics 11, Health 4-9, Scuffling 8

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: +2 (mostly invisible)

Weapon: +1 (Spear-talons, Spear-beak)

Armor: All attacks on a Falken first go through its meat puppet. Its iron feathers then absorb +2 vs. Shooting or Scuffling.

Dedication: The act of attacking an innocent to get at an invisible demon is the kind of certainty Falken love to feed on. *"Don't worry. Shooting that girl is the right thing to do."* The attacker must make a Stability test against a Difficulty equal to the Falken's Health. If he fails, the Falken switches hosts (and another smaller Falken spawns in the former host's belief cavity) and infests the attacker. If he succeeds exactly, he can see the Falken for the remainder of the scene, clinging to the back of its symbiont. If he succeeds by 1 or more points, he loses Stability points equal to his margin of success – forcible doubt grinds the gears of your true self.

Infested player characters know they're always right. About everything. The GM should lie to the player, adjust information he gets, and do everything possible to make those who disagree seem like unreasonable idiots. Admitting wrong in word or action costs that operative 2 Stability.

Killing a Falken does at least destroy all other smaller Falken in the area; Falken with lower Health ratings than the dead Falken evanesce, leaving their hosts to lose Stability rating points equal to the vanished Falken's Health.

Tracking the etiology of the Falken back to the Spear comes not through tracking outbreaks of insane-sounding certainty on the Internet – much like tracking outbreaks of sand-burn in the Sahara – but by recognizing their beaks and claws as Spear-heads with **Art History**. What to do about it is another question: the Spear and its Hitler associations have already been debunked to no avail. Ordo Veritatis operatives just have to be sure to keep an eye out for Falken stigmata – but not *too* sure.