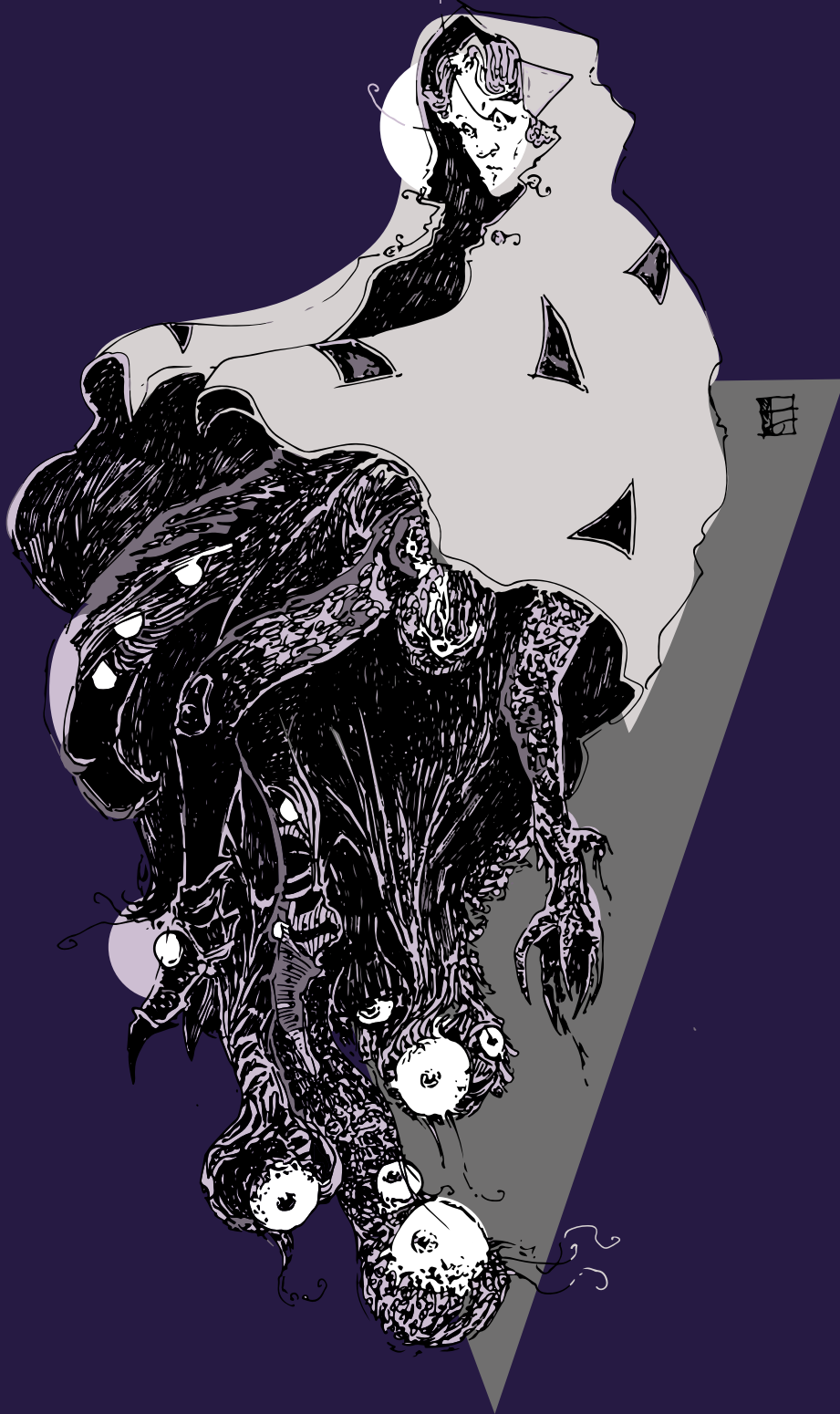


Codex

The Gauntlet's monthly RPG zine



DARK

For this issue of Codex, we are exploring the theme of darkness from a number of different angles. We start with Called, an original microgame by Wendy Gorman that is played in the dark. From there, we move to The Conjunction, a custom set-up for The Final Girl involving a dark basement filled with murderous cursed objects. Then comes Pizza Time!, a scenario for Lovecraftesque that explores a number of dark themes. We switch gears a bit with Plunged Into Darkness, a 6d6 scenario by Jaye Foster involving superheroes in a city whose lights are going out. Finally, in this month's miscellany, we visit some dark & seedy taverns.



www.gauntlet-rpg.com

CALLLED

A nanogame by Wendy Gorman

Illustrated by Dirk Detweiler Leichty

Gathered in the darkness, you sit, shivering, waiting. The time has come to summon... something. You've all read the text- you know you know what it is you summon, but every time you close the book, your mind rebels. It rejects what it has learnt. You know only that you desire above all else to be a vessel for the creature. It promises power, real power, to those who accept it. Now is the time to reveal what it is that you've all worked so hard to bring into being. You check your supply list.

You will need:

- 12 candles
- matches
- a darkened room
- space to sit and summon
- a group of people interested in summoning an unknowable creature into their human bodies

Sit in a circle on the floor facing each other. Light the candles, and distribute them to the summoners. If there are 2 summoners, place 6 lit candles in front of each summoner. If there are 3 summoners, place 4 lit candles in front of each summoner. If there are 4 summoners, place 3 candles in front of each of them. Do not attempt the ritual with 5 summoners.



Sit behind the candles for a moment. Breathe. Think. Watch. Look at the light dancing over the faces of your companions.

This may well be the last time you see them as they were. The ritual changes people. You are all excited, but nervous to accept the creature into your body. Take a moment and tell the group why you are here at the summoning. Why do you want this power? What will you gain?

Starting with the instigator of the summoning, take turns blowing out a candle. As you blow out your candle, the darkness is allowed to creep into the room. Describe how the increased darkness allows the creature to take hold of you. Inviting in the darkness changes a person—emotionally and spiritually, but especially physically. Describe what the change is, and explain how it affects you. Once you are done, the next person in the circle blows out a candle, and the increasing darkness causes the creature to manifest in new ways in the body of the next vessel.

The first changes may be exciting—night vision, extra muscles, additional eyes—things that you may find useful. The changes are exciting and new.

The fewer candles that are lit, the stronger the creature becomes. Its manifestations in the vessels will become stronger, more drastic, and more bold. It feeds on darkness, and grows in power and malfeasance.

As the darkness grows, the changes shift. They become extreme, gross, and distressing. They will severely change and reshape the body. They will horrify and disgust. Your skin may slough off to reveal sharp blades. Your tongue may elongate and sharpen, becoming a horn protruding out of your mouth. The excitement that started the ritual has fled. There is only the creature. But once the ritual is started, you are compelled to complete it. There is no going back.

As each of you snuff out your last candle, you are subsumed. Describe how the creature takes over, and what has become of your mortal shell.

THE CONJURATION

A scenario for *The Final Girl* by Oli Jeffery
Illustrated by Allan Dotson

THE SETTING

Ted and Elaine Burrows are darlings of the psychic investigation world. Their cases, exorcising haunted houses and fighting off demons, have been the subject of books, movies and a hundred internet conspiracy theories. Not everyone is in love with them, though. Some people think they're full of shit. Some people think they failed.

There's a locked basement in the Burrows' mansion - paid for by their many grateful clients - where they keep all the cursed items from their past cases, including the infamous Clarabella, the haunted doll. Every month, a priest comes by to bless the room.

Tonight, the Burrows are the subject of a TV documentary for *Gauntlet City Stories*. They're going to meet one of their strongest critics - the outspoken celebrity atheist Richmond Hawkins - before the crew film the priest performing his ritual blessing over the cursed objects lurking in the basement below. But there's another, uninvited, guest - someone with a score to settle, and a shotgun.

THE KILLER

A horde of more demons, witches, ghosts and creepy-ass cursed dolls than you can imagine are out, and they do not appreciate being locked up for years on end. Imagine the end of *The Cabin In The Woods* in a New England mansion, blood splattering the chintz.

THE VICTIMS

TED BURROWS, THE SCHEMING MANAGER

A lot of people think that the Burrows are liars out for a quick buck, and Ted Burrows is one of them. He doesn't believe a single thing from one of his cases, but when he found Elaine, he saw a way of making a profit. So he did what any self-respecting con artist would: he married her and started driving her up and down the country to people who thought their houses were haunted or their dogs were possessed by the devil, and charging them by the hour.

ELAINE BURROWS, THE FRAGILE CLAIRVOYANT

Elaine, on the other hand, is a true believer. She's been seeing dead people since Bruce Willis was moonlighting, and exorcising demons since she was in braces. But each case takes its toll on her, and she's now jumping at shadows, not able to tell what's a premonition and what's real life.

RICHMOND HAWKINS, THE RABID SKEPTIC

Previously known for his work in evolutionary biology, Richmond Hawkins has recently become famous for his outspoken views on religion and many, many Twitter meltdowns. He's got some good points, but they're buried under mounds of sexism and racism delivered in the style of an outraged Victorian gent.

FATHER MARTINEZ, THE FAITHLESS EXORCIST

Martinez is a hot young priest who's been going through a crisis of faith since he started having an affair with Ricky, one of his parishioners. He used to really be into exorcisms, but recently he's started to think that he's just enabling the Burrows with his monthly visits.

DONNY WHITE, THE COKE-ADDLED PRODUCER

The network is on Donny's back to keep delivering ratings, so coke has gone from fun to medicinal. Of course, his dealer wants to get paid, and his salary ain't getting bigger. So now Donny has a loan-shark too. It's fine. It's fine. Everything's going to be fine.

LENNY MCGILLIGAN, THE OVERLY FRIENDLY DRIVER

Lenny seems like a nice guy, initially... but then he just *doesn't* leave. He's perfected hovering to the point it's surprising that he doesn't actually levitate.



SARAH McDONALD, THE TOXICALLY AMBITIOUS PRESENTER

Sarah was voted Most Likely To Succeed in high school. Sure, she had to threaten, cajole and bribe to get it, but if that's not succeeding, what is? This is her first gig out of Brown but she'll be damned if she's not interviewing President Trump by year-end - and anyone in her way had better watch out. Oh, and it's pronounced MacDonnel, goddammit.

BECCA DENENBERG, THE SEEN-IT-ALL CAMERAWOMAN

Becca's been to war zones, she's got cutting edge interviews by going deep into gang territory, and once, when a coyote was trying to eat her sound guy, she rescued him by beating it with her own camera. But she's getting a little long in the tooth. Now, she just wants some nice safe jobs with no surprises. Too bad.

MARTY GIOVANNI, THE FRESH-OUT-OF-FILM-SCHOOL SOUND GUY

Marty's eager to please but keen to second guess everyone else on the crew, because he knows he knows his shit, and you're going to know it too.

LORALAINE BURROWS, THE ATTENTION STARVED LITTLE KID

While her parents go off galavanting around the US, eight-year-old Loralaine barely leaves the house except to go to school, where the kids think she's a freak. She's mostly been raised by her nanny, Mary, and she knows all the little nooks and crannies of the house. *Especially* the places she's never meant to go.

MARY O'CONNELL, THE BITTER NANNY

Mary has been the Burrows' Nanny since Loralaine was born. But while they've been moving up in the world, she hasn't had a raise in eight years. Rather than ask for one, she's started stealing objects from their home and selling them as Burrows merchandise.

PAMELA LOOMIS, THE VENGEFUL PARENT

Pamela's little boy, Billy, was possessed by a minor demon. She called on the Burrows. It should have been an in-n-out exorcism, but something went wrong and Billy died. Tonight, Pamela's borrowed her dad's shotgun and tracked down Ted and Elaine. And she's not even the most dangerous thing in the house.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THIS SCENARIO

There's a couple of minor differences in this scenario from an average Final Girl game.

Firstly, there's a little more direction in the introductory scenes than you'd normally have: namely that at some point during scene 3, the door to the cursed basement must be left unlocked, and the ritual to bless it must be messed up in some way - you've got an invasive TV crew, a vengeful parent, a bitter sceptic and an attention starved little kid who all can and will get in the way, so we'll leave the specifics to you.

Secondly, this scenario is shooting for more theatrical-release prestige horror than straight-to-video gore fest, which sadly always means less nudity. Don't use the Screwing relationship. Replace it instead with the Using relationship. Using, unlike the other relationships in Final Girl, isn't reciprocated: designate one player who's being Used, and one who's the User. The Used character can help the User as if they were Friends, and the User can hinder the Used as if they were Rivals.

You can find Brett Gillan's brilliant slasher-movie storygame on drivethrurpg.com. A second edition from The Gauntlet Podcast's sponsor, Nocturnal Media, is coming in 2017!

A Lovecraftesque
Scenario by
Jason Cordova

Illustration by
Ron Thomas



WITNESS

Andy Ramos, a teenager who helps his father clean the local Calamity Raccoon's restaurant after hours. His source of strength is knowing his father can't afford to lose this cleaning contract. His personality trait is curiosity.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Ignacio Ramos, a hard-working man who runs a cleaning business. He has contracts with several local restaurants, but is not yet able to hire another full-time employee.

Scott Hoheneder, the night manager at Calamity Raccoon's. He's usually around for awhile after the restaurant closes, counting the money in the cash registers or playing skee-ball with his girlfriend.

Audrey Nygaard, Scott's girlfriend, who usually hangs out while he's closing-up the restaurant.

Susan Lundquist, the technician responsible for repairing the restaurant's numerous arcade games and animatronics. She has worked at the restaurant since the early 1970s, and is familiar with all the stories and urban legends that swirl around it.

LOCATION AND ERA

Calamity Raccoon's Good-Time Pizza Farm, located in Hugo, MN, the last of a chain of pizza restaurants that started closing-down in the early 1990s. It features numerous arcade games, an air hockey table, a bank of skee-ball machines, a ball pit, and a central dining room with an animatronic stage show. The show features performances by Calamity Raccoon & His Barnyard Band, including Clarice the Cow, Pig Daddy, Farmer Roy, and Vincenzo the Italian Pizza Chef.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Calamity's Dressing Room, where employees change into furry, big-head costumes of Calamity and his Barnyard Band-mates. It's also a popular place for them to fuck, and over the years, many children have been conceived under the gaze of the cheerfully dead-eyed pelts that hang on the walls. The room reeks of stale sweat, unwashed nylon fur, and old parmesan.

The Fun Hole, a maze-like crawl space located beneath the main stage in the dining room. It was boarded-up in 1986, and a number of bizarre theories explaining its closure have taken hold in Hugo. The most popular is that a little person with a sharp stick hid inside one day and poked children as they crawled by, but some say a

girl celebrating her tenth birthday found the remains of her missing grandmother inside the tunnels. Susan Lundquist is the only person on staff who knows the real reason the Fun Hole was closed, and she jealously guards that particular piece of information.

The walk-in freezer, filled with pizza dough and frozen meat. The overhead light is broken, and the flashlight just inside the door is usually missing batteries. There is a rumor that an employee was once locked inside overnight and froze to death. There are wild scratch marks on the interior walls that lend some credence to this tale.

PIZZA TIME! SAMPLE CLUES

An animatronic character seemingly turns on by itself and says something eerily relevant to the situation at hand.

Civil War artifacts keep mysteriously turning-up in the merchandise case next to the stuffed animals, frisbees, and other Calamity-branded tchotchkes. Their price in tickets is always 1,863.

The Madame Zola fortunetelling machine reveals prophecies of an increasingly dire nature.

The characters in the Urban Warriors II fighting game take out handguns and blow their own brains out before the match begins, covering the screen in pixelated blood and a "Game Over" message. You do not get your token back.

A slick of purple ooze is found in the kitchen. For a brief moment, it seems to recoil at your touch.

When viewing the live feed from the security cameras, a child appears to be roaming around the restaurant. When you go to investigate, they are nowhere to be found.

The Barnyard Band show suddenly springs to life, with flashing stage lights and moving animatronics, but there is no music. Instead, a series of terrified screams mixed with chanting and realistic animal noises can be heard over the speakers.

The Employee of the Month wall shows the same picture over and over, that of a worker who hung himself in the main dining room back in 1984.

The ball pit occasionally turns up a clue related to a famous missing child case.

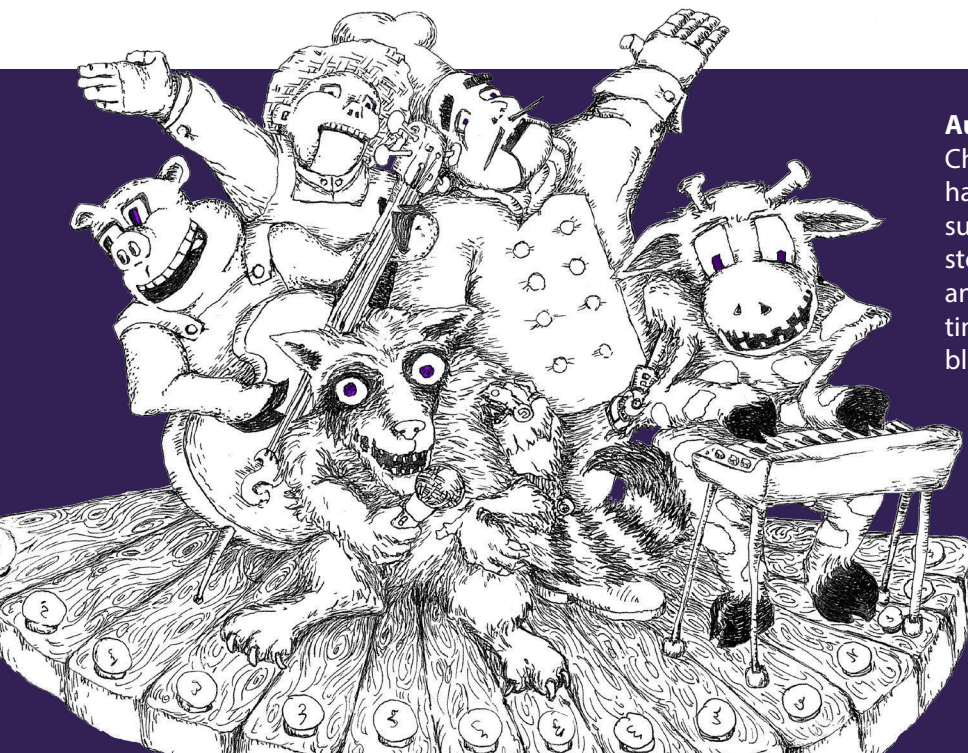
When you turn off the lights in the women's restroom, frantic whispering can be heard coming from one of the stalls.

When you put a token in the skeeball machine, you get seven normal, wooden balls, plus one covered in pink, slimy flesh.

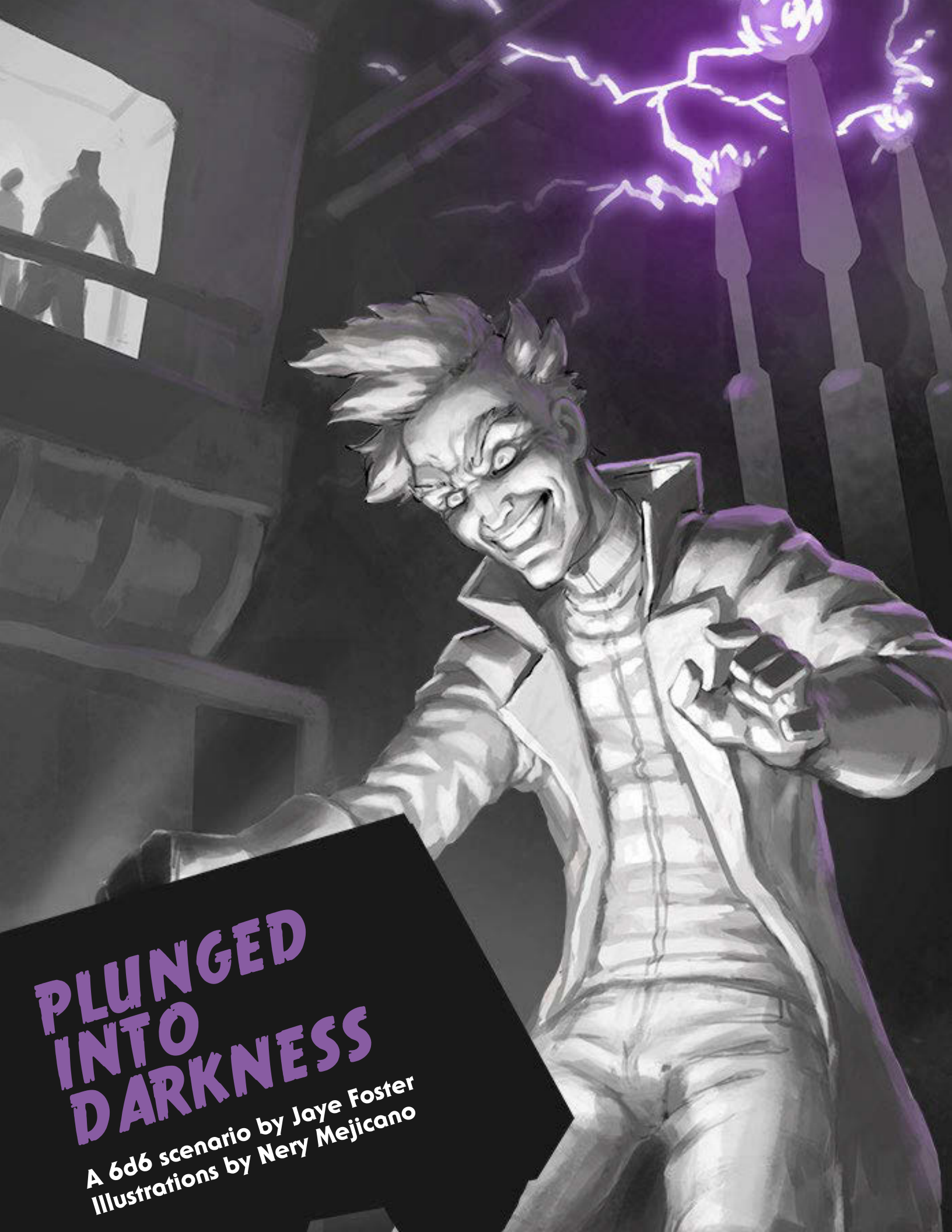
The back area of the restaurant smells like garlic, cheese and cold pizza dough, except for the manager's office, which smells like lavender, burning hair, and feces. There appears to be nothing out of the ordinary going on in the office.

SPECIAL CARDS

- Flashback
- Early Reveal
- Anachronism
- A Strange Location
- Defeat the Evil



Author's note: I used to work at an old Chuck E. Cheese's. In many ways, it was a fun job, but it also had moments where it felt entirely creepy, or even surreal. What I remember the most, though, are the stories. Our location was one of the chain's very first, and it seemed like every employee, particularly the old timers, peddled in urban legends, many of which were bloody and lurid. I've never worked anywhere else where that kind of weird storytelling culture was so pervasive, but I gather it's a similar situation at theme parks and carnivals. Perhaps it's because these are places for children? Maybe these dark stories and the original Grimm's Fairy Tales are two sides of the same coin? Who knows, but when you're exploring whatever Lovecraftian madness is going on at Calamity's, I hope you'll make some room for urban legends, too.



PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS

A 6d6 scenario by Jaye Foster
Illustrations by Nery Mejicano

A STORY ABOUT A GROUP OF NEW HEROES AND THEIR FIRST BRUSH WITH DANGER. IT'S APPLICABLE TO SUPERPOWER, PULP AND SCIENCE FANTASY SYSTEMS AND SETTINGS. THE TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE IS PRESENT OR NEAR FUTURE. NON-PLAYER CHARACTER INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR 6D6 2ND EDITION AND BALANCED FOR PLAYER CHARACTERS WITH 70 CHARACTER POINTS.

SETTING

Garden City is a community on the edge of failure. Once an important stop on routes by river, rail and road, it is now bypassed and forgotten. Its once beautiful parks are now untended wastelands that the people avoid. Crime and corruption have robbed the city of its finances and its hope.

Not everyone has given up though. The self-titled Garden City Volunteers (GCV) are a team of vigilantes who've taken to the streets to protect their city. They're on their own, with only their own skills and talents to use in their fight to help Garden City. This is their second week of crime fighting. So far the worse they've faced have been small groups of drug dealers and protection racketeers.

ACT 1 - DISCOVERY

IN WHICH THE CHARACTERS AND THE SCENARIO ARE INTRODUCED.

It's mid-winter and just above freezing. There's not been any snow yet, but it's forecast for tomorrow morning. The Garden City Volunteers have been sat on top of a warehouse on stakeout for three hours, waiting for a drug shipment to be moved. The adventure starts with the characters trying to keep warm, amused and attentive. At last, at 9 PM, a van arrives.

Several thugs come out of the van and are met by more appearing from the warehouse opposite the characters' perch. The thugs wheel out a pallet truck of drugs and begin loading the van. Just after the thugs notice the GCV but before the fighting starts, all the lights go out. Anything battery powered fades over the next minute. Once the thugs are dealt with, the characters discover that the entire city is without power.

DRUG THUGS

The number of thugs is the same as the number of player characters. Half of them are by the van, the others by the warehouse door. Use the least threatening NPC for the system, armed with knives and small pistols. Combat should last just long enough for each player character to take an action. Tactically, the drug thugs will split up and attack a player character each.

The drug thugs are 1d6+1 mooks with the following traits - Charge, Ranged Attack (3), Run.

ACT 2 - INVESTIGATION

IN WHICH THE CHARACTERS LEARN MORE AND HELP THE CITY.

The following facts are available should the characters make sensible actions to discover them.

Both local power plants are running at maximum output, but the electricity is being drained away. Management at both sites can't reduce the output as the controls have been overridden. Investigating this

reveals small boxes attached to the control consoles. These are emitting and receiving a traceable signal to an abandoned industrial estate towards the city's edge. It is difficult to remove the boxes safely but doing so allows the power plants to reduce output. Electricity is still being drained from the national grid.

The occasional street lamp is still working. Noting the locations of these on a map reveals several lines across the city. These lines all converge on an abandoned industrial estate towards the city's edge.

The public records office has records of all the electrical cabling work done in the city. Examination of this reveals a whole series of seemingly spurious cable installations. These all seem to lead towards an abandoned industrial estate towards the city's edge.

There's a barely audible hum throughout the city, just loud enough to set your teeth on edge. While the noise seems to come from everywhere, it's definitely louder in some parts of the city than others. Following the increase in volume leads to an abandoned industrial estate towards the city's edge.

As the characters move about the city, they may discover:

- Nothing electrical is working in the city and a few citizens are using torches for light.
- Emergency services are moving around the city on foot, by horse or by push bike.
- Hospitals are in a state of panic with several patients on life support equipment dead.
- Deactivated vehicles litter the streets.
- Looters are taking advantage to break and enter shops.
- The city is strangely both quiet and noisy as there's no traffic or electronic sounds. Instead the air is filled with the sounds of panicked humanity.
- A family of four trapped in a burning building.



LOOTERS

Should the character intervene with the looting, twice as many of looters as there are characters will stay to fight. The rest will run away with what they can carry. The looters have the same characteristics as the drug thugs from Act 1. Armed with guns and knives, they'll pair up to attack the player characters. Once half of them are defeated, the rest will attempt to flee. If questioned, they'll say a local mob boss sent them out to take advantage of the power cut.

The looters are 1d6+1 mooks with the following traits - Charge, Ranged Attack (3), Run.

ACT 3 - CONFRONTATION

IN WHICH THE CHARACTERS SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

As the characters arrive at the abandoned industrial estate, they see it's filled with empty factories and weed covered concrete. One empty lot is surrounded by working streetlights. At the centre is a large metal hatch atop a concrete plinth that's moderately difficult to open. The ladder underneath the hatch descends for ten metres to a wide bunker corridor. Every metre along the corridor there is a wide buttress supporting the roof. At the end of the twenty metre corridor is a large door guarded by four hidden automated turrets. The turrets attack when the characters are in range.

Through the blast door is a lab full of bright lights and sparking equipment. There is a nerve jangling hum in the air and it smells strongly of ozone. The

lab is at least forty metres along each side. A man stands on a raised dais at the centre of the room working a set of control panels. He's wearing a lab coat and long rubber gloves. When he turns around to face the characters, they can see most of his hair has been burnt off and his eyebrows are maniacal. With a cry of "You'll never stop my glorious experiment", he turns off the lights and attacks the characters. The lab is now dark, violently illuminated only by splashes of sparks from the equipment.

On the scientist's defeat it is easy to persuade him to talk or easy to infer from the control panel what is going on. This laboratory is draining all the power from the city to charge an experimental capacitor bank. The scientist is obsessed with energy storage, to the point where he's been able to rationalise putting a dying city in danger. The power draw from the city is easy to resolve and is done via manual relays. However, all the energy stored has to go somewhere. The choices are:

- Dumping it into the lab. This will destroy the lab and most of the lot within thirty seconds of the switch being thrown.
- Sending it back into the grid. The lab will be safe but power conduits across the city will burn out.

AUTO TURRETS

The turrets are fixed in place, one on each surface (wall, floor, wall and ceiling). They use motion sensors to fire on anything that gets within six metres of the door. They are not very accurate but make up for this with rate of fire.

The turrets are 1d6+3 mooks with the following traits - Ranged Attack (6), Resilient (5), Volley Fire (6).

LAB DEFENCES

Roof mounted arc launchers that shock for minimal damage. There are two launchers plus one for every two player characters.

The launchers are 1d6+4 mooks with the following traits - Shocking (6), Resilient (10), Suppressive Fire (6).

THE SCIENTIST - DR BRENDAN DEMILLES

He's armed with a lightning wand plugged into the equipment. This is an area effect attack, arcing between anyone standing near the target. Dr Demilles prefers to target groups, for maximum damage. The scientist has high agility and willpower but lacks strength.

Dr Demilles has 4 dynamic potential, 2 static potential and a potential recoup of 3. His advantages are listed as the end of the scenario.

EPILOGUE

As the characters leave the industrial estate, they'll encounter a lone police detective on a horse approaching the estate. Lieutenant Sara Holligan had also figured out the source of the problem and was heading here to investigate. If the characters elected to destroy the lab, Holligan will happily congratulate them. If the characters chose to save the lab, Holligan will be angry at the damage to Garden City. Either way, she'll take custody of a surviving Dr Demilles and warn the characters that if she sees them again, she'll arrest them as vigilantes.

Snow begins to fall as the sun rises.

MOOK TRAITS

CHARGE

Move and attack as a single action. The movement cannot exceed a movement resistance of 3 and must involve an attack at its end.

RANGED ATTACK (X)

Attack an opponent at range using the mook's dice value. X is the range.

RESILIENT (X)

Extra hard to kill. Add (x) to all resistance actions.

RUN

The mook can run using their Mook advantage dice value.

SHOCKING (X)

A ranged attack that stuns and shocks the target by making a potential attack at range. X is the range.

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE (X)

Adjacent mooks combine to hinder an opponent by making a potential attack at range. X is the range.

VOLLEY FIRE (X)

Massed ranged attack against a single target by combining the attacks of all adjacent mooks. X is the range.

Thug

Mook

A violent criminal.

Traits: Charge, Ranged Attack (3),

Run

1d6+1

Auto Turret

Mook

A computer controlled machine gun placement.

Traits: Ranged Attack (6), Resilient (5), Volley Fire (6)

1d6+3

Lab Defence

Mook

A device that attacks with stunning electricity.

Traits: Resilient (10), Shocking (6), Suppressive Fire (6)

1d6+4



SPENT

Dr Brendan Demilles

A man obsessed with electricity and his place in history. He attacks where he will hit the most number of characters.

Dynamic | 4 **MCP** | 11
Static | 2 **CP** | 129
Recoup | 3

Free Resist | 2 [Arc Shield, Manual Dexterity]

Electronics Wizard

Path

Skilled with soldering irons and circuit boards.

Fanatic

Monster, Path

Someone absolutely committed to the cause.

Researcher

Path

Scientific experimentation and academic research.

Belief

Life, Mind

Convinced of a certain truth.

1d6+1
CP: 5

Manual Dexterity

Body, Life

Hand-to-eye coordination and nimbleness.

1d6+3
CP: 10

Memory

Life, Mind

The ability to store and recall information.

1d6+0
CP: 4

Merciless

Life, Soul

A complete lack of empathy for any life form.

1d6+1
CP: 5

Methodical

Life, Soul

An orderly and systematic approach to life.

1d6+0
CP: 4

Problem Solving

Life, Mind

Analytical and adaptable.

1d6+1
CP: 5

Stubborn

Life, Mind

Unwilling to change their behaviour or back down.

1d6+1
CP: 5

Electrical Engineering

Skill

Working with electricity.

1d6+2
CP: 7

Jury-Rig

Skill

Ability to make and repair all sorts of equipment.

1d6+0
CP: 4

Obsession (Electricity)

Knowledge

An unhealthy interest in, and knowledge of, a subject.

1d6+2
Static
CP: 7

Resist Idea

Dice

Resistant to new ideas, thoughts and influence. Reroll ones and twos on the dice.

1d6+1
Static
CP: 5

Science

Knowledge

A broad understanding of science.

1d6+0
Static
CP: 4

Sharp Questions

Skill

Using difficult questions and awkward facts to expose weaknesses in other people's opinions.

1d6+0
Static
CP: 4

Electric Wand

Area (5), Equipment, Range (6)

Blasts of electrical arcs

1d6+5
CP: 19

Arc Shield

Equipment

A field of electrical energy and discharges that reduce incoming attacks.

1d6+6
CP: 25

MUNDANE EQUIPMENT

1d6+0

CP DICE

1 0d6+1

2 0d6+2

3 0d6+3

4 1d6+0

5 1d6+1

7 1d6+2

10 1d6+3

14 1d6+4

19 1d6+5

25 1d6+6



BANK

THREE DOZEN SEEDY TAVERNS



The Snake Eyes is a subterranean den where serpent men and nagas wrapped in opium smoke play dice and sip poisonous drinks.



The Slippery Staircase, built on the top of a craggy outcropping south of town. Incredible view of the countryside from any table. The ascent is safe, but the descent (after libations) has claimed many ankles.



The Golden Onion, a huge tavern with seemingly endless corridors, side rooms, and bars.



The Dusky Reprieve, where the beds are soft, the doors are sturdy, and you better shut up about everything else, got it?



The Dripping Empty is a nice clean tavern with no owner or employees. Locals know better than to shirk their tab or be rough with the furniture.



The Flayer, where everyone knows your name... and your history, why you're here, and how uncomfortable you suddenly feel.



The White Crow, a neutral ground where no violence is allowed. Secret entrances allow clients to come and go unnoticed.



The Knife's Point, where daggers hanging from the ceiling immortalize the victims of every bar brawl and backstab within its walls.



The Rusty Hook, where the locals are salty sea dogs with dark tales from their voyages, or at the very least a saucy sea shanty or two.



Sola Tenebris, where you can have a drink with a lost love who has died, and learn the secrets of the dead.



The Revolving Door, a tavern where you're only allowed to sit if you are eating or drinking. All carousers and card players are swiftly shown the exit by the bulky barman. The atmosphere in the back alley is raucous.



The Circumstance, located at the end of a twisty road of large houses. If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it.



The Captain's Cock, where the large sign of a rooster over the door does not make guests feel better about drinking the tavern's signature thick, white, frothy beverage.



The Toad & Filth, dirt cheap and filled with the unwashed masses. A single lantern in the centre of the room casts ugly shadows along its grimy walls.



The Frowsty Barn, a converted church. All the frescoes and stained glass have been painted black. No tables, just benches.



Faded paint on the front door reads "Silas Marley, Innkeep and Undertaker." It's the only tavern around with its own cemetery.



The Bat's Belly Inn & Pub, where the boy-whores go to dance at night and drink deep of Troll-fucker Ale.



The Last Drop, the sign for which doubles as a gallows.



Guilty Pleasures: the owner of this discrete, moonlit tavern, Belle the Fae, is famous for having exactly the drink you desire; but the door only opens for those who have something she wants.



The Troll Wife Tavern, where the bard sings obscene songs about a barbarian and a fish.



Dice and Hats, where gray-bearded men in tall wizard-y hats gamble their "essence" away.



The Slag, where the rafters are stained with a deep crimson film on account of the smoke that billows from the copper brazier in the center of the room.



Keep your stein lid closed when not drinking at the Tainted Toad, or else one of the many brightly colored frogs on the walls and ceiling may find its way into your cup. A poisoner's paradise.



The Grim Sails, which has walls made of wood salvaged from a terrible shipwreck.



The Sparrow's Sigh, a once lush and decadent establishment now moth-eaten and smelling of cold and dust. The proprietress will trade you a meal for a kiss or tales of your adventures, but you'll find it hard to leave in the morning.



A brothel for slaking intellectual lusts: books & scrolls line the corners, and quiet conversation abounds. Many fathers take their sons here to learn what it is to be a man, few are the wiser for it.



Argo's Tavern, where the fare is common and the common tender is coin, but Argo provides first class service to patrons who also bring him a severed hand for his collection.



The Barking Lizard, where the drinks are served quickly and the meat pies are best not investigated too thoroughly. Located equidistant from the local mortuary, taxidermist, rat catcher, and tannery, but surely that's a coincidence.



The Blessed Colony, whose sign depicts an apparently idyllic landscape of the village. On closer inspection, swarms of rats are pouring from every window in the painting.



An upscale franchise at first blush, but hidden in the depths below patrons gamble away their lives at the tables and in the pits. Many a fool has lost it all to The Baker's Daughter.



The Queen's Chamber, where the crunch of insect shells underfoot speaks to the patrons' exotic tastes.



The Black Pudding, named after its signature dessert. Don't ask for the recipe...Lit only by candlelight so you can't identify the chunks.



The Rising Phoenix Inn has twice burned down and been rebuilt. Spending a night there is rumored to expedite one's recovery.



The House of the Harping Monkey, which looks old, run-down, and derelict on the outside, but ... well, when you go inside, it pretty much looks like that, too.



The Headless Gnome. A large glass jar with the remains of a diminutive humanoid preserved in alcohol sits atop the main bar of this bustling tavern. They say drinking the liquid from the jar causes your darkest desires to be fulfilled.



The Seedy Tavern. An underground pub. Roots stretch from ceiling to floor. For those in the know, you can ask for the "seeds of creativity" and expand your mind.

CREDITS

Cover page Illustration by Dirk Detweiler Leichty
www.patreon.com/dirkleichty

Called: A nanogame by Wendy Gorman. Illustrated by Dirk Detweiler Leichty

The Conjunction: A scenario for The Final Girl by Oli Jeffery. Illustrated by Allan Dotson.

Pizza Time! A Lovecraftesque scenario by Jason Cordova. Illustrated by Ron Thomas.

Plunged Into Darkness: A 6d6 scenario by Jaye Foster. Illustrations by Nery Mejicano

Miscellany: Three-dozen Seedy Taverns. Contributors: Mick Bradley, Jason Cordova, Yoshi Creelman, Kristen D, Robert Doe, Daniel Fowler, Lowell Francis, Ignacio Hernandez, Oli Jeffery, Maxime LaCoste, David LaFreniere, Christo Meid, Jim Miller, Will P, Ferrell Riley, Dylan Ross, Michael Siebold, Slade Stolar, Eadwin Tomlinson, Brian Vo, Isa Wills

Layout: Oli Jeffery. o.jeffery@gmail.com

Editing and proofing: David LaFreniere

Editor in Chief: Jason Cordova

CODEX KEEPERS

Tommy Rayburn, Keeper of the One Who Grinds Your Skin

Paul Sheppard, Keeper of the Invisible Candle

Luke Wayland, Keeper of the Unknowable Words

Eloy Cintron, Keeper of the Burning Pages

Mikk Pristavka, Keeper of the Amber Horn of Heléthe

Ferrell Riley, Keeper of the Rodent's Wisdom

Tor Droplets, Keeper of the Charming Wind

Daniel Lugo, Keeper of the Winter Reverie

Tom McGrenery, Keeper of the Two Tongues

Dirk Leichty, Keeper of the First Lines

Antoine Pemple, Keeper of the Jale Dream

Chris Sniezak, Keeper of the Undying Voice

fylefou, Keeper of the Inscrutable Circle

Isa Wills, Keeper of the Feathers of Regret

Tomer G, Keeper of the Squamous Beast Below

Eadwin Tomlinson, Keeper of the Dreary Island

Christopher Meid, Keeper of the Tainted Feast

Johannes Oppermann, Keeper of the Temporal Rift

Aaron Berger, Keeper of the Abyssal Ore

Mark Diaz Truman, Keeper of the Clockwork Corvid

Phillip Wessels, Keeper of the Dun Putrescence

Stephen Tew, Keeper of the Emerald Path

David Rezak, Keeper of the Three-Headed Coin

Jacob Densford, Keeper of the Rusted Metropolis

River Williamson, Keeper of the Blazing Sigil

Charlie Etheridge-Nunn, Keeper of the Unsolvable Riddle

Lowell Francis, Keeper of the Black Quill

Robert Nolan, Keeper of the Furtive Manikin

Richard Rogers, Keeper of the Fathomless Well

Mark Tygart, Keeper of the Oblique Atlas

Kristen Davis-Owen, Keeper of the Whispering Menace

Michael Mendoza, Keeper of the Sleeping Pygmy

Wesley Naval, Keeper of the One-Way Door

Jim Morrison, Keeper of the First Starlight

Dylan Ross, the First Keeper

Donogh McCarthy, Keeper of the Nine Dread Names

Derek Grimm, Keeper of the Spirit Discs

David LaFreniere, Keeper of the Six Questions

Josh Gary, Keeper of the Windswept Plane of Dust

Michael Barford, Keeper of the Eternal Chime

Robert Ruthven, Keeper of the Hidden Moors

Steven Watkins, Keeper of the Three Wicked Kings

Matthew Gushta, Keeper of the First Oak

Shervyn von Hoerl, Keeper of the Titan's Womb

Daniel Fowler, Keeper of the Unidentified Artifacts

Daniel Lewis, Keeper of the Unspeakable Fixation

Christopher Wiegand, Keeper of the Head of Nerva Atellus

Brian Vo, Keeper of the Seclusium of Loshe the Living

Fraser Simons, Keeper of the Neon Veil

Kyle Simons, Keeper of the Tome of Heroes

Ray Otus, Keeper of the Endless Page

Stewart Wieck, Keeper of the Ink-Black Night

Matt Stuart, Keeper of the Ulfire Door

Lester Ward, Keeper of the Golden Knot

Candida Norwood, Keeper of the Weeping Cells

Sean Smith, Keeper of the Crimson Hood

Jared Neubrandner, Keeper of the Library of Eidoloss

Jeremy Scott, Keeper of the Brazier of Azad-Kan

Patrick Brannick, Keeper of the True Name of Abbadon

Wesley Naval, Keeper of the Tenebrous Chapel

Patrick Perkins, Keeper of the Vernal Extraction

Mikael Tysver, Keeper of the Hymnal of St. Evelyn the White

Richard Ruane, Keeper of the Sacred Malignance

Tim Jensen, Keeper of the Pilgrim's Forge

John Nolan, Keeper of the Crown of Good King Edwall

John Roberts, Keeper of the Sword of St. Murienne

watergoesred, Keeper of the Rose Maiden's Labyrinth

Aaron, Keeper of the Child Upon Whom We Dare Not Look

Jacob Wood, Keeper of the Protoplasmic Pit of New Life

Jorge Salazar, Keeper of the Red King's Heart

Yoshi Creelman, Keeper of the Triton's Blessing

Samwise Crider, Keeper of the Golden Scar

Victor Wyatt, Keeper of the Blood-Soaked Corridor

Steven Warble, Keeper of the Basin of Vile Ablutions

Andrew Mayer, Keeper of the Sandstone Mysteries

Jim Miller, Keeper of the Conch Shell Horn of Nammu

Kevin Lovecraft, Keeper of the Flesh-Bound Book

Nicholas Hopkins, Keeper of the Passage to Dim Carcosa

Christopher Onstad, Keeper of the Ancient Ungulate

Slade Stolar, Keeper of the Crone's Black Verse

Jeffery Collyer, Keeper of the Oneirophrenic Chords
Gary Anastasio, Keeper of the Bludgeons of Ecstasy
Manuel Suarez, Keeper of the Sentient Mist
Jason D'Angelo, Keeper of the Merry Abbatoir
Flo Hoheneder, Keeper of the Bone Reliquary
Dan Shimizu, Keeper of the Child Who is Wreathed in Flame
Adam Nordin, Keeper of the Vault of Atrocities
Bay Chang, Keeper of the Heart of Lursiss
Vincent Arebalo, Keeper of the Dolm Sarcophagus
Saul Alexander, Keeper of the Ebony Cat and All We Deem
Above Her
Jesse Burciaga, Keeper of the Beast Masks
Ron Thomas, Keeper of the Spectral Visions
Jeremy Mahr, Keeper of the Almanac of Leng
Casey McKenzie, Keeper of the Pain Repast
Mick Bradley, Keeper of the Man Who is Naught but Mouths
Steve Mains, the Keeper Who is Beyond Our Reach
Johan Jaurin, Keeper of the Laughing Chaos
Volker Mantel, Keeper of the Children of Malgoliant
Edgar Gonzalez, Keeper of the Iridescent Forest
David Beaudoin, Keeper of the Nightmare Crèche
Luke Cox, Keeper of the Screaming Statuary
Simon Appleton, Keeper of the Last Tears They Shed
Aniket Schneider, Keeper of Nine Rooks
Lachiel Vaher, Keeper of the Box Into Which We Dare Not
Reach
Maxime Lacoste, Keeper of the Silver Rods
Shane Lieblich, Keeper of the Unlearnable Alphabet
Michael Heiligenstein, Keeper of the Child Who Repeats the
Numbers
Jeremy Strandberg, Keeper of the Central Stone

Christopher Thompson, Keeper of the Library of Atlantis
Rob Abrazado, Keeper of the Purple Falsehood
Lee McDaniel, Keeper of the Crown of King Ahanu the
Laughing
Jennifer Erixon, Keeper of the Spider Tombs
Joby Morey, Keeper of the Milk-White Putrescence
J.D. Woodell, Keeper of the Hymnal of St. Aasu the Butcher
Greg Sanders, Keeper of the Fragrant Void
Joe Nehmer, Keeper of the Pungi of the Serpent Queen
Adam Ness, Keeper of the Axe of Jeffery Bleakwood
Robert Corr, Keeper of the Ram That Whispers Lies
Kevin Flynn, Keeper of the Vermin Chaplet
Jason Martinez, Keeper of the Woman Whose Face is Naught
But Tentacles
Ian Donald, Keeper of the Dying Grottoes
Acritarche, Keeper of the Diary of Sanguine is the Eye
John Campbell, Keeper of the Dark Shard of Nemrath
Neko Cam, Keeper of the Child Who Sings the Final Song

