

THE MANOR AND THE SEA
EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

The Life of Romeo

A Manor and the Sea Gauntlet by SpiritualStill
Version 1.1



Ah....so this is how it feels. Hello there, Jumper. I'm glad to see that you are okay, and you've rid yourself of those [accursed tapes](#) as you should have. I wonder...was it easy, or did it cause you some grief? Well, it doesn't matter, does it?

I honestly didn't expect that I would be able to directly see you again. I'd expected my consciousness to be integrated into yours and rest forever. Perhaps it's because my existence survived deletion relatively intact. That's no good, no good at all.

*But, since my identity is largely intact, I suppose that has a benefit for you. You are aware of the fragmented data within your semblance, yes? Your efforts at **Data Defragmentation** led to you accumulating several powers you otherwise would not have, with that data being the remains of certain individuals who were highly fragmented. I can share that with you. However...it seems as though my intact nature means that I cannot discriminate with what I share, so you will have to experience it. It will only be for a mere instant in your perspective in the Gray - but subjectively it may be for several years. If you don't wish to experience that for a few powers, then please feel free to open your eyes. If you feel it is worth it, then let us begin.*

[Notice: This gauntlet canonically occurs during the events of *Scenario #045: THE CACHE FROM BEYOND*, when you successfully burn the tapes, and your semblance is rendered stable]

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Nature of the Challenge

Setting the Stage

For the duration of this Jump, you will be taking on the identity of Romeo Snow, a major identity within your semblance. It will take place from 1973 to 1991. You begin in the United States - specifically in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

You begin with **+0 Memory Points (MP)**. Surely you weren't expecting to just get everything like that? No, Romeo had his fair share of problems, so for this recollection, you'll need to take on the flaws he would.

To be clear, this is not a case of an exact sort of recollection - merely an approximation based on how much you choose to submerge yourself within their mind.

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Drawbacks

All Conspiracies Are True [+100 MP]

Well, except the racist ones, anyway. [Roswell](#). The Illuminati (who are part of [the United Nations](#)). [Fucking flat earth used to be a thing](#). The world is not as simple as you think, and there is likely something new around the corner.

Late to the Festivities [+100 MP]

I believe there's a saying about this - *you're a hero, and a hero is all you can be*? The point is, you are incapable of being a proactive hero and must intervene only when the problem arises. You can still save people...but there's a good chance you won't be able to save anyone.

Primes, Irregulars, and Imaginaries [+100 MP]

You know how some people, when stressed out, will count off prime numbers? Well, Romeo does...something similar. Like him, you tend to randomly spout out numbers, equations, imaginary numbers, and sometimes make them up on the fly whenever you are put in a stressful situation.

America is the Freaking Worst [+100 MP]

God, this place fucking sucks. Whether or not you agree politically with them, the United States is a deeply cancerous, incompetent, and backwards nation that happens to currently discriminate against several groups that you happen to wind up being close to.

Painfully Idealistic [+100 MP]

You are a good person. There is no doubt in the minds of other people that you are a good person. You try to see the good in people, and even if you have biases, you try to avoid them. This is good, but it is unfortunately not a common thought process among the people that you happen to know. In fact, it's very uncommon, even among your friend group, and you will feel that.

Acts of Goodness Are Not Always Wise [+100 MP]

...and acts of evil are not always foolish. But regardless, you should always strive to do good. This philosophy shapes your life, for better or worse. You cannot perform self-serving actions, nor take actions that you would not like done to others. You must be as good a person as you reasonably can be.

It Helps Alleviate the Stress [+100 MP]

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Everyone needs something to take the load off, but these ones might not be the healthiest. It seems you have an unhealthy habit. Romeo's was a fixation on games and media, but yours can be something such as drinking or smoking.

There is Nothing Special About Me [+100 MP]

Oh boy, isn't this going to be an absolute goddamn nightmare, isn't it? Well, get ready for a whole lot of self-flagellation. You are entirely incapable of giving yourself credit for anything. Even if you alone did something, you will simply perceive it as you getting lucky, or your opponents making mistakes.

Quick to Action [+100 MP]

Yes, doing what is right as soon as humanly possible is a great virtue. Unfortunately, you seem to have forgotten the fact that you should know what is happening. You are extremely rash and will jump headfirst into things that could genuinely endanger you if you don't have any information on them.

Death to All Glowies [+200 MP]

"FBI Good, CIA Bad" is a very simplistic way to look at the world, but the Central Intelligence Agency is no friend of yours. It's no friend of anyone, actually, which is why [Hoover rightfully locked them out of the loop](#). Unfortunately, nobody learns their goddamn lesson and concludes that creating a group that actively worsens anomalous situations is a great idea.

[The United States Federal Department of Continuity](#) is the true intelligence wing of America, a secret group that upholds Normalcy itself, and the sister organization to the Department of Abnormalities. It should not come as a surprise that nobody particularly likes Continuity, as they botch everything they come across, arbitrarily declare things impossible, change the definition of Normalcy to suit the status quo, and act as an excuse to step on the little guy.

Methinks That's An Overcorrection [+200 MP]

When you realize that a problem is caused by one of your behaviors, it's smart to fix that behavior for the future. You understand that, but it's in a very questionable way. You tend to go to the extreme opposite. You didn't believe someone, and trouble arose because of it? Now you'll believe everyone.

Tight Schedule [+200 MP]

Yeah, this job of yours is not very fun, and does not allow much fun. Regardless of whatever you are doing, you find yourself having minimal free time unless you genuinely haul ass or pawn off all your work on others.

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Fuck Them Families [+200 MP]

Well, fuck *your* family specifically. Whenever some anomalous occurrence happens that you are involved in, someone you care about will invariably be threatened by the anomaly. This usually includes your family, for however long they last, but it can also influence your friends, beloved subordinates, and random innocents.

Fraudwatch [+200 MP]

I feel like people severely underestimate the logistical nightmare that is getting these people to actually be intelligent enough to work without you. Save for a few noteworthy exceptions, nobody on your side, even if purely as a formality, is especially competent whenever you need them to be. Expect your presence to be required to ameliorate any problem.

I'm Whatever You Need Me to Be [+300 MP]

Conceal the pain. Conceal the urge to scream. Conceal the hatred you feel for the unfairness of it all. You are an ideal for others to follow, and an ideal should not have such things as flaws. You are utterly incapable of expressing any unpleasant emotions that you feel, and will simply bottle them up until you are in a place where nobody can see them.

Nightmare World [+300 MP]

You might come to think that the world is, by and large, a relatively peaceful one - that the adventures you face are very bad, but not exactly widespread. You would be terribly wrong. The fact is that this world is awful, and you can't trip over a rock without discovering some shit that belongs in a creepypasta or horror movie.

When the Sun Goes Down [+300 MP]

The day wanes, and things go bump in the night. Although anomalous activity is still pretty damn high in the day, it skyrockets in the night, with all sorts of strange happenings occurring. At night, expect three times as many anomalous events as should actually happen.

Proper Consciousness Submergence [+600 MP]

Perhaps you have missed the memo. This isn't a regular gauntlet, and is instead a direct dive into memories. It's a little compromised if you have things Romeo didn't, yes? This effectively locks out your Body Mod for the duration of this gauntlet. Strictly speaking, you don't actually need it to win.

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Romeo Snow Defragmentation

Perk Selection

A Pretty Face [100 MP]

Romeo was a handsome guy - mostly because he sort of had to keep up his health and training if he didn't want to die a painful death. You are now a solid 9/10 in the looks department. Beyond that, your body receives a tune-up that ensures you are clean and healthy as a whistle, and have the endurance to run a full marathon.

Your mental faculties are also considerably improved, making you mentally tougher than most. This does not mean you are a fortress that can deal with everything.

Someone Special [100 MP]

At least, they seem to think you are. You appear to possess a level of charisma that causes people to instinctively perceive you as someone worthy of being a leader.

There Will Be No Panic, Satanic or Otherwise [100 MP]

Due to the nature of the Department of Abnormalities and his own history, Romeo both lacks a strong superstitious bent and is not easily swayed through fearmongering. As a matter of fact, he sharply punished an employee [for using their position to study it](#). You are immune to propagandistic behaviors and are unswayed by unverifiable claims.

High Cognitive Resistance Value [100 MP]

Memetic kill agents - they're a thing that exists, and have existed for a while. These, cognitohazards, and infohazards were never revealed to the public, due to the fact that the chance of ending the world was far easier than most, as very few people had a good resistance to them. Romeo was among those people, and there is a strong possibility that this actually played a part in why he was set on this journey. More importantly, Romeo is unable to be influenced by memetics, infohazards, cognitohazards, and amnestics. This also applies to attempts to use this to better one's situation (unless you have another perk like this one) - as Romeo would learn.

Work and Delegation [100 MP]

Don't let what you know of Romeo fool you: he wasn't out there facing gods and monsters every other day. In fact, those were probably the most exciting ones, as the majority of his job is him doing a fuckton of paperwork, testing, and meetings. Like him, you are excellent at doing all forms of paperwork and taxes, and are decently equipped to handle menial and repetitive labor.

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The Funniest Man Alive [100 MP]

Okay, that's probably hyperbolic, but it is true that Romeo was able to have people around him laugh - a trait he learned to pick up and emphasize so as to help others cope with their mission, and to better hide his own stress. You are a genuinely funny person, able to come up with jokes for any situation, and intuitively knowing which types of jokes would go over well.

My Most Reliable Employee is a Black Woman [200 MP]

Spoken verbatim by Romeo during a certain meeting he would have, referring to Archivist Maria Jones. He's actually never been the type to care about race, or at least he tries to avoid it whenever possible, as he finds the parameter to be less-than-helpful. Things like sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, and race hold no bearing on you emotionally, and such parameters cannot be used to exclude you or allies from any relevant fields.

Picking Up Strays [200 MP]

For better, and tragically for much worse, Romeo is very good at picking up talented people with nowhere else to go. Like him, you can't seem to trip without coming into contact with people who have talents, hidden or otherwise, and are capable of bringing them out.

Be My Guest [200 MP]

"A well-made fake smile on your face? You can't break it in public, be my guest."

Romeo's encounter with the witch Azari in his youth, though for an entirely unrelated reason, exposed a noteworthy truth about himself: he is very good at hiding his emotions, to an uncomfortably good degree. Like him, you have a poker face that is pretty much impossible to crack, and even the most skillful of face readers, save for those closest to you, could possibly realize there is nothing off about you.

Stick These Things Together [200 MP]

Crosstesting is, generally speaking, considered to be very poor form in the Department of Abnormalities, as there is no telling what these things might do if not properly vetted. Romeo wasn't the pioneer of it by any means, but he did permit the studying, combining, and experimentation of it. You and your companions are effectively able to reverse-engineer phenomena and objects, and combine them as desired, allowing for the creation of all sorts of strange things.

They Don't Ever Get to Leave, Do They? [400 MP]

That's the key point, isn't it? No matter how much Romeo hated the concept, no matter how well they could control their powers, and no matter how much Abnormalities could

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change...None of it could help the fact that humanoid abnormalities were abnormalities - they were no longer seen as people by the government, and were merely guinea pigs or subjects to be locked away. Romeo had no method to change this system without losing his position, where he would then be unable to help at all. So, he mitigated the issue in the only way he could: ensure their lives were as pleasant as he could, so that they didn't want to leave.

You have a very strange sort of charisma to you: when you successfully defeat someone, they are swayed to your side.

When you act kindly to prisoners, you find that they are considerably less interested in escaping or fighting you. Given time, they might even be willing to make their own emotional growth and join your ranks.

Spoon-Based Sodomy [400 MP]

No, I'm not kidding here. When Romeo was young, and sodomy was a very illegal thing, his private experimentation led to him [sticking a spoon up his rectum](#). Although incredibly embarrassing, it strangely didn't hurt or impair him - so he opted to not tell a soul, and wound up forgetting it. Luckily for him, Romeo wound up stumbling onto an abnormality that would not be discovered by the Department of Abnormalities.

This made him, and therefore now you, more attractive to those of his preferred gender based on his sexual orientation, improved his physical and mental abilities, improved regeneration and healing of previous wounds, improved probabilistic benefits, and a better mood.

Kinetic Spirit Style [600 MP]

This is just like one of those Japanese cartoons! More specifically, after much trial and error, you have combined [Reikon ryū](#) with the [Marqod Dance Arts](#). The result is that you have a fighting style that grants you greatly enhanced physical strength, extremely high durability, and prevents reality-bending. Do note that this doesn't make you invincible, and it certainly doesn't make you unbeatable.

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Item Selection

Amnesiacs [50 MP]

Ah, amnesiacs. In your world, these would be known as amnestics. In the past, to uphold the Masquerade, Normalcy Organizations either killed people unfortunate enough to be involved or utilized hypnosis. Amnesiacs are, by comparison, a lot simpler, as having it administered (be it orally or via inhalation) allows for several effects related to removing memory. You receive a set of pill bottles that each have thirty pills for each type of amnesiac. [Here is the guide for them.](#)

Veritants [50 MP]

A special sort of truth serum, which is not known to exist in our current iteration of reality, but was accessible in the timeline of Abnormalities. These are a form of truth serum that causes those who drink it to be compelled to speak the truth. This bypasses false memories and conditioning, but is otherwise unhelpful if the memories are lost.

Enigmagraphs [50 MP]

You know how lots of government documents blackbox shit, making it painfully obvious something is hidden? Yeah, that's a psyop used for standard documents so that nobody is clued in on this. The Enigmagraph is a typewriter-type machine (though it can be transferred into a personal computer when those are invented), that employs text and antimemetic ciphers that render it impossible for anyone without clearance to observe what has been written.

Incorporeal Entity Vacuum Chamber [50 MP]

Perhaps understandably, it's very difficult to contain things like ghosts. Why? Well, I don't know, genius - how do you contain intangible forces? The answer is these specialized chambers that trap any spectral or incorporeal entity within them, nullifying their phasing abilities.

Comes equipped with a Cazar-Hynman Spectral Capture Device, which sucks in any ghosts that come too close to it.

Portable Spatial Containment Device [100 MP]

You are really glad the boys in the Engineering Wing figured out how to make these things not liquify people. There's really no way around it: this is basically a Poké Ball, specifically being a black sphere the size of a tennis ball. It's a gateway to a pocket dimension that will instantly lock anyone or anything inside of it. Time does not exist in this dimension, so for the target, it will seem as though they had a ball thrown at them, and they suddenly wind up in a containment facility, even if hours or days passed by.

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Fortified Transport Vehicles [100 MP]

Before Romeo had the Department of Abnormalities, he had this vehicle. Beyond being durable enough to survive explosions and magical attacks, the interior has been “lightly modified” by [the Great Witch's Construct](#). Its interior is considerably larger than its exterior, which does not influence its ability to drive around as a car.

MTF-Rēsh-1 (“Seat of Consciousness”) [100 MP]

Your very own goons! More specifically, this task force is made up of the most skilled soldiers in the world, skilled with weapons, unarmed combat, and each has minor beneficial anomalous abilities. They are entirely loyal to you and will never disobey your commands.

Abnormality Containment Site [200 MP]

The Department has many sites, and this happens to be one of them. You have access to a massive site that has access to all sorts of safe abnormalities, along with a number of humanoid abnormalities. At the deeper levels are specialized containment cells for dangerous abnormalities.

Degraded Bright-Zartion Hominid Replicator [200 MP]

The strange facility down in [REDACTED] was absolutely filled to the brim with these things, and you can make a single fucking one. Despite that, this one is fairly close, as it lets you create a replica of any individual stuck inside of it. However, while it can generally replicate knowledge, it can’t actually replicate personality, nor can it perfectly mimic all of the powers someone might possess.

The Director’s Weapon [400 MP]

A special pistol held by the Administrator of the Department of Abnormalities was [created using a number of Department-made weaponry](#). It converts energy in the nearby area into special rounds that each serve an important function. Aleph-class rounds have magical penetration that bypasses protection charms and causes thaumaturgical working to break down. Beth-class rounds produce incendiary rounds that melt down damn near anything, and neutralize abnormal waste products fairly easily. Gimmel-class rounds produce sonorous shots that disrupt incorporeal beings and can even banish non-native entities. Daleth-class rounds are barrier-type ballistokinetic rounds that, upon successfully shooting a target, will trap them in a protective sphere and trigger a violent explosion.

You may recognize it as the ruined pistol in the Manila Room. I wonder how that could have happened?

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Recollection of Romeo

Scenario #01: The Lucky Hare

*"Where you go, I go
What you see, I see
I know I'd never be me
Without the security
Of your loving arms
Keeping me from harm
Put your hand in my hand
And we'll stand"*



Mission

February 5, 1973

The first, and most important flood of memories you have is in 1973. It was a winter's night in good ol' Yoop. In nine days, it will be your 14th birthday. The fact that you were born on Valentine's Day was seen as a good omen - though your parents naming you "Romeo" is a bit silly, as you will think in the future. These were quiet days, in a safe neighborhood as well, so you were allowed out at night.

As you were out at night, you heard a scream, almost like that of an infant. Going to it, you saw a snowshoe hare, with part of its fur torn off, and its leg twisted. Its white fur was bloodied. You didn't see a wolf around, and there was no gunshot around. Perhaps it got hurt in some sort of trap? You were tempted to go back inside, but its vocalizations of pain stirred your heart, and so you scooped it up and brought the hare into your home. You stopped your father, who hunted hares, from killing the creature, and pleaded with them to help nurse the creature to health. You would not forgive your father if he killed the creature, and you told him that. Reluctantly, your mother and father allowed it, but told you that the hare was your responsibility whenever school was out.

Your mission is a simple one. All you have to do is care for the animal for a few days, including feeding it, cleaning it, and ensuring its leg doesn't further break. Strangely, the hare was quite amenable to you, letting you care for it as desired. Also, this was technically illegal to do at all, but anyone who would care would, luckily, never seem to notice.

Rewards: +200 MP

For nine odd days, you had this strange little critter at your home. But now it seems that, just as your birthday party is about to start, the hare, whom you named Lucky, was fully healed and ready to leave. You bid farewell to Lucky as it travels into the forest.

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A Most Strange Dream

Young Romeo, thank you for choosing to help me. Though I must say that it was unnecessary.

You called me Lucky. You are correct, in a sense. I am fortune itself, and prosperity. I am LIFE. Have you ever wondered why rabbits are symbols of luck, abundance, rebirth, and so many other such things? It is because of me.

I have done this trial many times before. Many have failed it, and very few have ever succeeded.

The first to succeed was many thousands of years ago in Japan. It was [Lord Ōnamuchi](#) who succeeded, helping me despite gaining nothing from it, and I blessed him with the hand of the princess and the right to become King. But though I gave him that power, it was through his determination that he became the great [Ōkuninushi](#).

I wish to give you the same sort of gift I granted him. I wish to grant you the fortune to stand at the apex of the world. But it will not be easy. The path will be painful, broken, and uncertain, and full of thorns. But you are guaranteed to reach it, so long as you spur yourself onward, through the heartache and pain. [You are a soul that helps others because it is right, not because you get a reward.](#)

Reward - As Luck Will Have It (Special Perk): Following that strange dream you had after falling asleep after your party, you awoke to something that felt subtle, but positive. You did not realize just what had changed. You are a fortuitous person. If you set your mind to something, the world bends over backwards to allow you to achieve your goal, no matter how improbable. With five bucks and a lighter, you could rule the world.

However, note that I say *fortuitous*. Things happen to you by chance - these things do not necessarily have to be good, and in fact, they often aren't. You run into trials and tribulations based on your innermost intent and desires. These challenges are not created, but are instead ones that exist already, and you happen to be brought along for the ride. Furthermore, your victory is based on your own desires, and the moment you falter hard or you go at something half-heartedly, your power is reduced in functions until it is restored.

While I said you could win with five bucks and a lighter, I would strongly advise against doing that. Though this power will try to help you win in the most fulfilling ways possible, it's going to place your survival as the highest priority, and if the odds are far too great, it will begin systematically removing other priorities based on their level of importance, from least to most important. This results in these probabilistic phenomena being far less subtle and magnitudes more destructive.

This perk lasts until the end of this Gauntlet.

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Scenario #02: Something Awful This Way Comes

"We didn't want to go, we didn't want to kill them, but its persistent silence and outstretched arms horrified and comforted us at the same time.."

Mission

June 5, 1975

For summer, your family had gone out to a rather wondrous place: the Appalachian Mountains. It's a beautiful landscape, with rather charming locals, in spite of the [stories you'd heard about them](#).



But what had really gotten your heart pumping was the legends and ghost stories here. Mothman. The Greenbriar Ghost. The Green Mountain Lights. The Bell Witch. These were all spooky stories you'd learned about on your way here, and like a silly little child, you thought that it'd be a grand old time if you could see one. What child wouldn't want to see some strange horrors?

Perhaps you'll be getting what you want. At Hadley Park, West Virginia, there were stories going around about some strange terror in the woods. Horrible stories about some strange tall gaunt man, with a business suit, and a blank white head. There were even spooky stories about some cult worshipped by the entity.. This "Slender Man", as it was known, was said to stalk the woods.. Still, it was just a tall tale, allegedly started by some [Séance Massacre in 1937](#).

One night, while at Hadley Park, your parents and sister were asleep. So you, being the little shit that you were, decided to go out at night, as one does. Strangely though, a raven appeared, a female one, you are pretty sure. From atop a perch, it seemed to stare at you: **"Turn back. Turn back."**

Seeing a bird speak to you in such a frightening voice would have spooked most. But you knew songbirds like them could imitate noises. You thought that perhaps someone had told them to do that as a prank. You were a smart kid, and wouldn't fall for their tricks!

Unfortunately, it wasn't a trick. The second you stepped into the forest, something shifted. Behind you, trees suddenly blocked the way back, and when you tried walking back through them, you just wound up right back where you were. You tried running through many many times - the result was the same. You tried climbing up on a tree to see the city, and saw only an infinite number of trees

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“Find the Pages! Burn the Pages! All eight at Once! Watch for the Slender Man! Find the Pages! Burn the Pages! All eight at once! Watch for the Slender Man!”

Your growing existential panic and fear that threatened to erupt into a scream was stalled, momentarily, by the very same raven from before. You don't know why you believed that, but you understood it. It was telling you what to do to escape here. Your mission is clear: collect these “eight pages” scattered throughout the forest, and don't get caught by the...”Slender Man”. It's real. Well that's great, you wound up in some demon's realm. What's more, you intuitively guessed that the more pages you had, the angrier Slender Man got.

Rewards: +200 MP

You did it. Somehow, against all odds, and the mind-bending effects of the Slender Man, you found all eight pages. You just needed to start a fire. You know how to do that! Your dad taught you! All you need it--!

“YOU'RE. NOT. GETTING. OUT.”

Suddenly, your vision filled with static, as the gaunt, inhuman visage of the Slender Man appeared. You clutched the pages, as your world went white, as you were tossed into the [Ark...](#)



The sight of your little sister in this place, twisted and warped to the form of a desiccated yet still moving corpse, didn't even get you to blink in surprise anymore. She wasn't real. None of this was.

This place was...you couldn't really tell. It looked like your home. Also, anyway. The lights were all off, and refused to be turned out. The showers were here, but they nor any of the water ran. There was food in the fridge, but it was spoiled. The food in the top pantry looked clean, but he was too small to reach them, and usually fell. Considering you didn't need food or water, and just starved instead of dying, it didn't matter. He saw neither his mother nor father here. Even his little sister, loud and boisterous as she was, had nothing to say - because she had no mouth.

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The only thing that worked here was the television, which played old cartoons on repeat. You don't know what these cartoons are, and you didn't care. Not like it matters. You glanced at it every now and then, and saw the same five cartoons. Five. Five. Five. Five. Five.

You picked up the eight pages you had, and brought them to the kitchen. Once more, the lighter your father had did not light. The matchbox never worked. The candles that endlessly lit would sputter when they came too close. The stove and electricity couldn't activate and burn. Another failure. Another day in this timeless hell.



"I hate you. You long pale thing. I'll get you. I swear I'll get you."

You won't give up. You won't. Not now. Not ever. You won't give up. You won't---

"Child! Child!"

That voice...! You hadn't heard it since you stepped into the forest, but the endless silence caused it to replay so much. You went to the window - boarded up and unbreakable by anything. The voice was behind it, repeating the same words.

"Is...is that you...birdy?"

"Turn back!"

Reflexively, you did just that, and came face to face with the door to the outside - though you suspected that it wasn't actually the outside. The door, which was unmovable, suddenly began to shake and move, as though someone on the outside was moving it. The person seemed to realize that just opening the door wouldn't work...so they resorted to more brute force methods.

****SMASH****

"You are...an angel!"

Indeed, that's certainly what this lady looked like. She was adorned in white (or a very light turquoise) and gold, with wings pure as a dove. Her eyes were a light purple (violet?), and she possessed a strange set of horns that bent into a halo. The woman adjusted her hair for a moment, collected her thoughts, and spoke to you warmly.

"Yes, sweet boy," her voice was beautiful, and calming, "I am...your Guardian Angel. My name is Malpha. I could no longer stomach seeing your suffering. Come, let us leave this dreadful place."

She extended her arm, and you took it.

The instant you took her hand, you were back in the forest, and felt Slender Man racing for you. But it was too late. You were holding the lighter from that Ark, and upon flicking it, it actually worked. You torched the pages just as Slender Man was visible.

With an unearthly howl, the creature skin seemed to explode as pure energy, leaving a spiritual miasma behind - and that too seemed to implode.

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"The Slender Man was a demon, summoned here to parasitize the living. But demons indeed are Spiritual Lifeforms, and therefore cannot exist on their own in fully material realities like this. They need a medium - those pages were the medium after the original summoner perished."

Though invisible to your sight here, you felt the presence of Malpha behind you, embracing you from behind. Looking back to where the forest entrance was, you found it back to normal, and left. Returning home, you found that practically no time passed between when you left and when you entered the forest. You quickly ran back inside your home, and went to sleep.

It was a good sleep.

Reward - A Raven & Angel (Special Companions): Though your family never knew of your adventure, you knew it wasn't a bad dream, because Malpha was beside you - and the raven that tried to warn you seemed to follow you everywhere, even as you left the town, having defeated a legend.

Malpha, as an [angel of light](#), cannot directly appear physically (unless you yourself are in at least a semi-spiritual dimension), but even while intangible, she is capable of speaking to you, and seeing and looking far beyond you to assist.

The Raven, who you took to naming Joyeuse (as it was the light in the dark for you) is actually just a normal raven. However, because ravens are conceptually linked to death, it is a "liminal" creature, able to navigate life and death. It could find you in the Ark because of that.



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Scenario #03: Aren't You Beautiful?

"If you want to die, do it far away from me... I'm sick and tired of people dying on me... right before my eyes."

Mission

June 17, 1976

At 17 years old, and it being in the middle of summer, your parents thought you had done good enough to deserve a trip to another country! If only for the novelty of it, you decided to travel to Tokyo. It was a growing city, as you'd heard, so it'd be fun. You also took the time to learn some Japanese - though Malpha, as you learned from this past year with her, was capable of mentally translating all languages for you, and helping accelerate your ability to learn them naturally.



Admittedly, while the city was hardly terrible, you did notice some questionable oddities. Due to rapid modernization, the city was somewhat polluted, and crowded. You were used to your relatively quiet home, so it came as something of a shock.

Also, you ran into some very interesting faces.

The first one you met was [Amamiya Shisui](#), a girl roughly your age, wearing an absolutely outrageous ninja outfit. She introduced herself as a "[Taimanin](#)", some sort of Anti-Demon Ninja, that fights evil and protects the innocent. Similar to, but distinct from her was [Aki Hayakawa](#), an [Onmyouji](#). It was a somewhat similar role, though instead of using [Ki](#), they used [Spiritual Energy](#), also called Qi...which certainly confused you, as those two words technically mean the same thing, yet the two insist it's different. They actually worked for the government in positions that shouldn't technically exist: Shisui worked in Section Three, while Aki worked in Section Four.

The reason they were apparently willing to disclose this with you at all is because of Malpha. When you encountered the two of them, they were working together (though it's more a case of Aki mentoring Shisui) against some sort of [evil ghost](#). Like an idiot, you happened to stumble onto them while walking out alone. The (remarkably shapely?) A ghost got you in a trap, and began to drain your life force. Luckily, because the ghost must trap you, its area-of-effect allows for Malpha to interfere and banish the ghost. As it is banished, you are met by these two, who clock that you aren't working for anyone official,

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but are a freelancer with a Spirit of some kind. They look at you sort of funny when you say Malpha is your Guardian Angel, but accept it.

In the meantime, they decide to ask you for assistance with a certain issue. Namely, they are trying to deal with a powerful evil spirit known as [the Slit-Mouthed Woman](#), a dangerous entity that has a very specific sort of MO. She asked someone if she was pretty while wearing a surgical mask. If they say no, she kills them. If they say yes, she pulls it down to reveal one nasty Glasgow smile, and asks again. Say no, you die - say yes, she carves your face up. Generally just no real way to resist her unless you can masterfully dodge the question. Unlike most spirits, who can be exorcised decently quickly, the Woman has a special power that enforces the rules of the game. Neither she nor the target can threaten one another so long as the question is being asked, but choosing not to answer will lead to you simply being unable to move, and they'll wait until you waste away. Simply put, actually managing to kill her is extremely difficult. The best way to defeat her, as it is, would be to invade her world as the question is being asked, which realistically is only possible through reality erosion allowing for it to be breached. Go figure, the only way to do so is through Malpha - and then, it would take some time.

Your mission is to walk about, and get "caught" by the Slit-Mouthed Woman, and bide her time long enough for erosion to take place.

Rewards: +200 MP

Well then, that was quite possibly the most terrifying experience you've ever had. After a short while, you were locked onto by the Kuchisake-onna, and she asked that deadly question: *"Hey, young man...am I beautiful?"*

Your answer, though meant to be very long-winded, was certainly quite...*illuminating*.

"Ahh, well...it's a bit of a confusing question, isn't it. I mean...what exactly do you mean by beautiful? Do you have a subjective view of beauty that you want me to answer? Or are you saying you wish for my own taste? I certainly have my own definitions of beauty, but it's not concrete. For example, I've got similar but distinct definitions of beauty for men and women - I certainly find both wonderful, but the differences are there. But if you are referring to my specific definitions of beauty in women, I still have two separate standards, though many match them both - such as Miss Shisui."

The Slit-Mouthed Woman turned her head. Evidently, she could tell he was speaking in a very convoluted sense. But she was in no rush, considering that she had no reason to believe it would matter. Perfect, just keep talking.

"Miss Shisui is a beautiful woman, in terms of being an attractive girl. I've never met someone so young with white hair. It's not indicative of age, but I do find it to be both novel and lovely. Her eyes are like gorgeous camellias. She takes good care of her skin and she smells like roses. She wears a leotard outfit that is appealing to any man or woman who is into such things."

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However, I believe that while she is physically beautiful, her heart and soul and even moreso. She has a wonderful fondness for reading, and I'd like to do so with her eventually. I love how she has the spirit of soul who wishes to learn more - I'd love to traverse with her in some far-off place, so we could learn together. I find her dry humor funny, and even cuter when she thinks I didn't pick up on it. I find it beautiful that she can't lie without twitching her lip. I've known her for just a few hours at most, but she has the most beautiful soul I've ever met."

"Of course, if you are curious about my male compatriot, I think Mister Aki--"

"Kon!"

You were cut off, as the seemingly frozen world was destabilized, and [some great fox](#) appeared. It must have been some spirit that Aki did, as you were told onmyouji did so - which meant the reality erosion worked.

Reward - Penpals (Item): Your week in Tokyo wound down, and your brief but lovely time with Shisui and Aki came to an end. The two thanked you for all your help - and Shisui herself gave you a hug. She'd been more open with you since your distraction of the Woman - she apparently didn't realize you paid such attention to her. To that end, the three of you decided to keep contact with each other. From now on, you are able to effortlessly contact all of your companions or close friends at any time, so long as they are conscious.

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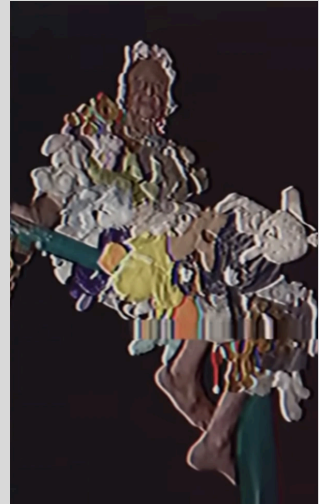
Scenario #04: Plushy's Playtime

♪ We love Plushy, yeah we do, yeah! ♪
♪ He's our friend who never grew. ♪
♪ He loves to play and he's not mean. ♪
♪ As long as you are under the age of eighteen. ♪
♪ Welcome to Plushy's Playground! ♪"

Mission

February 13, 1977

What a great day it was, at least for most. It was February 13, and in just a few more hours, you'd be eighteen years old, an adult in the eyes of this great nation. That would be a great day, you think.



Unfortunately, the festivities have been terribly soured by the discovery of a corpse. It was that of a young girl named Janice Dakin, who went missing seven years ago. She'd been your friend for a few weeks before she disappeared, and as depressing as it was, you forgot about it. While you hoped she was fine this whole time, your hopes were dashed just ten years ago, when her body was found. Right on the day it would have been her eighteenth birthday.

But you aren't the type to just let things go, or chalk it up to tragedy. After some investigation, you learned that she did the Plushy ritual, attached to some strange show called Plushy's Playground. You recognized the show itself - it was one of your favorites, alongside [Candle Cove](#). While you heard about the ritual as a child, you never once thought to try it, because that'd be ridiculous - also the whole thing scared you shitless. But, considering the sort of things you were involved in nowadays, taking out some sort of magical child predator was no big deal. You performed the ritual as expected, offering up a plushy, and going down the slide. Once he did, he found himself in what can only be some sort of pocket dimension. And in short order, a creepy-looking plush doll appeared before.

"Well hello there, young man! I'm glad you came here to me! But, unfortunately, I can see that you'll be eighteen within a few short hours. So alas, I can only play with you for a short time before--"

No sooner than him saying that did Malpha quickly manifest, blasting him with a bolt of light (well, apparently it was plasma, but the difference didn't matter much). As soon as that occurred, some sort of old man occurred - it must be Plushy's "true self", whatever

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that entailed. Regardless of their apparent frailty, something about his presence made you wary, like he could kill you. Malpha tackled him into the plush pit, saying that this creature is no match for her, and that you should go help the kids here.

That is your mission. You must rescue all of the little boys and girls trapped in Plushy's domain. All you gotta do is find them, and send them down the slides - they'll forget everything anyway, and they'll wind up wherever they first disappeared to. After that, you can head out, so Malpha can...release her divine light and smite Plushy.

Reward: +200 MP

There were many children in Plushy's Playground. Some were older, some were younger, and at least one was a practical baby. The old man was a perverted creep through and through, so once you freed the last of the children, you flipped off Plushy, said you hoped Hell is particularly hot, and went down a slide. At that, you were back to the playground you used for the ritual. In short order, Malpha returned to you, albeit once more as a spectral presence. She tells you that Plushy is very much dead, which you verify by once more attempting the ritual, and it fails to activate. Over the next few days, you also hear reports of children who went missing all suddenly being found, with their memories being overwritten to simply being trapped by a predator, not a magic one.

All in all, it was a good day, and your eighteenth birthday was just a nice capstone. Things were looking up for you.

ABNORMALITY #0106 NEUTRALIZATION REPORT

...Abnormality #106 ("Plushy's Playground") was reportedly fully neutralized on February 13, 1977, with all related abnormalities ceasing to function. Furthermore, all subjects believed to have been abducted by #106 being returned to baseline reality, and their memories, though seemingly altered, possess a uniformity that suggests that they were all abducted by the same individual.

Within three days, the Department discovered the corpse of a Type-Green humanoid of advanced age, whose body shows no sign of post-mortem decay, despite grievous injuries. It is believed that this is Abnormality #106-1 ("Plushy"). Autopsy reports suggest the target is believed to have been struck by extremely intense arcs of plasma, strangled, systematically having their bones broken, and [REDACTED PER ETHICS GUIDELINE]. Extreme level of violence suggests the target was neutralized by running afoul of a Tartarean-class demonoid.

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Scenario #05: Lacey's Melancholy

"Lacey, I'm here... I'm here. Did you get my gift, Lacey? Do you like it? I'm here, open the door, my darling... Open the door..."

OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR!"

Mission

July 4, 1978



You are a nineteen-year-old boy now, having recently completed this semester of college. Isn't that great?

Unfortunately, due to [that terrible blizzard](#), school was

extended for a few weeks. But now that's over, and you can have some fun with Lacey.

Ah, Lacey. Lacey. Lacey. Lacey. She's been your girlfriend for several months now. She was a girl from Brazil who decided to come all the way up in the Upper Peninsula - you have no idea why she would do such a thing, considering you asked her once, she didn't want to say, and you chose not to ask again. These last few months for you have been the happiest they have ever been. Lacey is the light of your world, always being there for you when you need it, and ready to drop everything at a moment's notice for you.

But could you say the same for her? Admittedly, after talking about it with your friends, they asked you if you had done something for her. You admitted that you hadn't: she never seemed to ask for anything, so you never really did so. One friend suggested it'd be nice to have a date with her. It's the Fourth of July very soon, so wouldn't a date be wonderful? That is your mission for today: you called Lacey a few days ago and suggested they have a date tonight. Your mission is to have everything ready for the night.

Rewards: +200 MP

It was a wonderful day. Everything was going great. So how could it go so wrong?

Before the fireworks went off in earnest, you went to find Lacey. Admittedly, you struggled a little with finding her home, as you had several times. But while that was embarrassing, you eventually arrived, and just on time as well! But something was very wrong. The door was forced open, which was already a bad sign. The rest of the house was in disarray as well, and in a very specific way - as though the chaos was localized in a specific direction. The blood, overturned books, clothes, and chairs brought you to Lacey's room, which was in complete disarray.

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You naturally called the police as quickly as possible, and they told you that it was likely a kidnapping. They promised to be on the case as quickly as possible, but that wasn't enough for you. What if something could go wrong? Your own lack of knowledge of your own girlfriend became painfully obvious when you realized she lived alone - according to reports, Lacey was sent to Yoop because of some matter involving her uncle.

As the investigation didn't go fast enough for your taste, you searched for her yourself. You knew this wasn't particularly wise, nor was it likely to be effective by your lonesome, but you didn't care, and so searched for her for a full day. A string of odd symbolic gestures, potential leads, and circumstantial hunches caused you to find a dark and out-of-the-way building. Going inside---

Oh. It seems you were too late.

You found Lacey - in pieces, at any rate. Her limbs, lower half, and torso were carved and practically gnawed through. She was very, very dead, and likely was dead from the moment she was abducted. She was eaten. It was clear she had been eaten, and not by an animal.

But perhaps by a pig.

You found the man responsible for Lacey's death, who was in the building's kitchen, cooking what is clearly not standard animal meat. The man was grotesque, oily, and looked vaguely similar to Lacey - her uncle, no doubt. The man was half-mad and delirious. He very proudly told you why he would do such a thing.

"I ate her remains so we will be together forever. I love you, Lacey."

In that instant, you saw red, and don't remember much of what happened at all. You remember tackling something grotesque. You remember grabbing a chair and slamming it on the head. You recall a knife to the groin. You recall a heated frying pan to the side of the face and eyes, and the smell of cooking skin. You remember repeatedly slamming that pan on their head, until the skull and brain looked closer to a sheet of paper. You remember stuffing the corpse in a box and sending it into the woods. You remember how Malpha consoled you, saying that she is sure Heaven would forgive you, in time.

You remember crying before Lacey. You remember apologizing to her that you were so terrible to her, and that you barely even knew her. You remember promising to never half-ass caring for someone, and to look at their underlying troubles, and fix them.

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Reward - Remembrance (Perk): You never truly got over her, but you could at least sublimate it. With this, you will now never lose focus on whatever goals you had, no matter the circumstances.

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Scenario #06: Where Have You Been All My Life?

"What are you doing in the forest at this time?"

Mission

June 25, 1979

It has been almost a year since the incident with Lacey and the Stalker. Remarkably, you got away with it. The building itself caught fire out of nowhere as you left, and while it destroyed Lacey's remains, it also removed any and all evidence. They never found the Stalker's body, and you were never implicated in it. Things were hard for you emotionally, but the worst was behind you, right?



Today, you returned home prematurely during a trip to Europe. You learned from your mother that your father had died - apparently killed by some wolf, and a vicious one at that. They asked you to come as soon as possible for the funeral. With little recourse, you took the nearest possible flight home and took a cab as far as you could. At the dead of night, you reached home. And when you thought your day could not get worse, it gets significantly more so.

Your mother is dead. It looked like a wolf attacked her, but it was also something worse, like it was practically calculated rather than the work of a wild animal. Was it perhaps the [Dogman](#)? Could such a thing truly exist? This place wasn't terribly far from [the Vortex](#), after all. You were not a particularly religious or superstitious person, and you weren't sure if you were even now - you just wanted something to desperately cling to. You'd lost a lot. Too much. First Lacey, then your father, and now your mother. Where was your sister? Did she visit grandma? She lives in the nearby forest. Were they alright?!

Anger and worry overcame your despair, and you took the shotgun that was over the fireplace - your father taught you how to use it on your eighteenth birthday. With that, you march into the woods, intent on killing the wolf, or die trying.

Your bravado was always tested by a number of horrifically gruesome sights. There were animals strewn about, dead from similar maulings, but not eaten whatsoever. [A mother goat and seven children. Two pigs covered in straw and sticks, respectively. A sheep boy in shepherd's clothing. A thin fox.](#) You felt like you were in a goddamn fever dream. Were you hallucinating? In this haze, you came across [a fairy](#). She was so beautiful, but so terribly injured. Her wings were partially removed. She needed help as soon as possible.

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As soon as you touched her body, you felt something staring at you from behind. There was no breath, nor crunch of the leaves, nor even a disturbance in the wind. But you knew something was directly behind you. You turned your head all around, but saw absolutely nothing. You carried the fairy girl on your shoulders and wound up spontaneously tripping on [a ring of mushrooms](#).

You felt flat on your ass and looked up to see that you were not in the forest. You were in front of an unfamiliar house. It was pouring down hard, and the area smelled faintly of butter, of all things. The house looked perfectly safe, and so to get out of this pouring rain, you rushed to the door with the girl in tow, and knocked on the door. In a moment, a woman appeared before you, dressed in the garb of a witch.

["Lost in the rain with no umbrella? Come in, dear."](#)

This witch, as you quickly understood, was clearly no exaggeration, thanked you for returning her wayward apprentice. She went to the forest to try to destroy the Wolf. The Witch tells you that it's not really some werewolf or dogman, but instead a revenant, a type of ghostly creature that has persisted in the living world due to a violent death and left-behind business. Their strength is reflective of the hatred directed at them in life, and the obsessive nature of whatever business they had left - the physical form is emblematic of the sort of person they were. While wolves are rarely anything truly dangerous, a spiritual body taking the form of a wolf without being a lycanthrope beforehand is a symbol of a truly depraved soul. The witch stated you knew the nature of that soul, which is why you carry around that fake smile. You don't say anything more. The lady tells you the creature hates the touch of fire, and you find yourself back in the forest.

Your mission is to reach your grandmother's house. Before anything can really be done, you have to make sure they are safe. If you run into the Wolf, you'll discover the unfortunate fact that blowing out its chest and eye does fuck-all to it.

"Bullets don't work, Romeo. It's too late to save them."

Rewards: +200 MP

The route to reach your grandmother's house was far more dangerous, and perhaps longer than it should have been, but you at last made it. Yet there is no catharsis to be found, as the door was ajar, and a window was ripped off its hinges, and it all smelled like shit. You went to head into the kitchen, intending on setting off a fire that would burn the bastard alive. But this resulted in you needing to go into the living room - where you saw

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the Wolf sitting on the couch, seemingly waiting for you. The horrible smell came from the bodies of your younger sister and grandmother.

"You have nowhere to escape. Your fate is sealed. You'll end up like them. Lacey was mine, and mine alone."

In that moment, something in your heart faltered. Had you caused this? Was this really your own doing? It was at this moment that the Wolf quickly appeared before you, and grotesquely warped your face, tearing off your nose, skin, flesh around the mouth, and eyes. You were going to die.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!"

A howl of agony, combined with an explosion of what felt like gore and smelled of method, and a subsequent unbearable heat, alerted you to the fact that the house somehow caught fire. What could have caused it? You don't know, as you passed out from the pain filling your world.

When you awoke, the first thing you realized was that you could see again, which should have been impossible. Feeling your face, you felt scarring, which was magnitudes better than your jaw hanging limply off. Looking around, you saw the fairy girl from before. She hugged you, with tears streaming down her face.

"Thank you for saving me - I'm Mint Fantôme. I...I lost my friends when I tried to kill the Wolf. You saw them around me, or maybe you saw something else - fairy bodies cause some unusual hallucinations in humans, so I've heard. Mistress Azari healed me, and I followed behind you. Human bodies are very flammable with fire magic. I know it was wrong to do it, but there wasn't a choice and-"

You stopped Mint from speaking any further, and you cried on her shoulder. You lost a lot, but at least you had this.

Reward - Mint Fantôme (Special Companion): The fairy girl that you rescued in the forest has chosen to stay by your side - the two of you were lonely, and surely could find comfort with each other. Mint is a very reliable friend, having access to all sorts of magics - especially fire magic, healing magic, and general utility magic..

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Scenario #07: The Child of Night

"The story is muddy. Supposedly a trickster forest god showed humanity favor, showed us the master's tools and how to use them. Why we did it, we don't know. Perhaps they hunted us, perhaps we were simply afraid. Perhaps it was just that they fenced us in, unintentionally or not. We simply don't know what the truth is. Somehow we acquired ██████'s own technology, and with it, we instigated an SK-class dominance shift in which humanity became the dominant species of Earth.



Mission

August 9, 1979

"I'm driving, and that's final! I'm gonna prove to you that women can drive just like men!"

*"I'm not saying women can't drive! I'm saying **you** can't drive, Mint!"*

This was certainly an...interesting way to start this adventure of yours off. It had been just a little over a month since that rather disastrous affair with the Big Bad Wolf and meeting Mint. Things had...become more relaxed since then, to be certain. Malpha's eternal company and Mint's alien but oddly human goofiness had been instrumental in helping you slowly move on from things. As a result of that, combined with the fact that you chose to take an extended break from college after the end of this semester, the three of you have been exploring the country, and investigating all sorts of spooky and supernatural phenomena. You thought it'd be rather boring, but then you encountered [a certain ghost](#), which was neat.

On the road to the Monongahela National Forest, you were all heading to investigate reports of some unidentified creature, who has been noted to have brutally killed several campers. It could be a wild animal, or it could be a *Bigfoot*. Honestly, the only intimidating thing right now is Mint's driving, considering she drove for three minutes and immediately ran over some [poor deer](#).

As soon as they camp out for the night, a near encounter leads them to confirm that not only does a Bigfoot exist, but it's also extremely hostile, with Mint needing to help fend it off. You try to communicate with it, but regardless of whether it understands or not, it assaults you and Mint. Your mission becomes clear: this creature cannot be allowed to continue to exist. You must catch Bigfoot and bring it down.

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Rewards: +200 MP

After some days of tracking the creature, it is at last brought down by you and Mint, sustaining a mortal blow. You intended to deliver a final one to put it out of its misery, before it raised a hand up...and *spoke*.

"I don't need your mercy. But I do ask that you record what I am to say, even if only for your ears."

You took out a pen and paper, and did so, if only as a last wish. This Bigfoot, as you had been calling it, was no beast. It certainly wasn't a "Bigfoot" or "Sasquatch" either: it was called a Child of Night, and their name was Yeren. It told you that before mankind ruled the world, the Children of Night did so. Much like mankind, they dominated the globe, and via organic technologies, they made the same technological leaps as mankind did. But in the past, some force, perhaps one or many of the fae, assisted humans (at that point a rare species similar to Gorilla) in achieving dominance, wiping out the majority of the fae, and doing such catastrophic damage that it wiped the slate clean, and human memory of such technology and Children of Night was removed. Since then, the Children of Night, assuming they weren't reverted into mere beasts, were banished to the fringes of the world, doomed to never again reclaim their glory.

Yeren here, is the last of them. That isn't to say he is *literally* the last of the Children of Night, as he believes there may be a few hundred still in existence. However, the majority are purely animalistic, and the still sapient ones either have no memory of their past, or are secluded from the world. Yeren had the (mis)fortune to both have higher awareness, and parents who recalled at least some of their history, however fragmented. But they are gone now, and he is alone. His loneliness became rage, and so he lashed out at man. When you and Mint arrived, it was a microcosm of the forces who overthrew his people, so conflict was inevitable. But it was a hopeless match, and now he will die.

"Thank you for recording this. May my people's goddess, Lady Aradia, guide you."

Yeren closed his eyes for the final time, and so you and Mint buried him. You thought it was tragic that you had to do so, and that even if he did kill innocent people, you couldn't say the anger was unfounded. It was unfair, really, how the Children of Night and humanity couldn't come to an understanding, surely you two were fellow primates, right?

Reward - Biotechnology Schematics (Item Reward): Though you cannot use it, much like how Yeren couldn't, you do have an awareness of knowledge of the Children of Night's organic technology. Perhaps one day, you can use it.

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Scenario #08: A Game in the Demon's Garden

"There's a shadow above us too!"

Mission

December 24, 1980

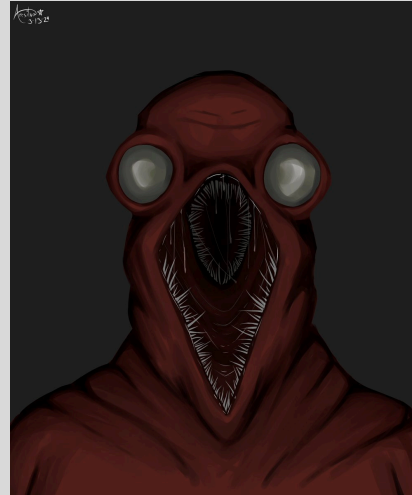
It is Wednesday in America - a great time to be enjoying Christmas Eve. That was actually your plan for the day with Mint, as the two of you would be watching [some Halloween slasher](#) flick that came out today.

Unfortunately, it seems as though your day was not going to be as simple as you'd hoped it would be. As soon as you both arrived in town to see the movie a few days ago (the two of you regularly travelled around the country, as part of your investigations), you learned of some apparent cult murders. Now, you could have just brushed this off as something that just isn't your problem, you got a massive headache and bad feeling - so there was definitely something bad going on.

After several days of investigating, you and Mint concluded something very bad was happening. For one thing, Mint could determine that there was Hellpoint Energy - someone summoned a demon recently, and it's unlikely to be one of the weaker creatures from Hell. Demons typically would be rejected by the world at this point, so your fairy friend surmises there must therefore be something that provides the demon enough power to persist longer than it should.

Your investigation comes to a head when you and Mint encounter a dying priest, who clearly is built differently on account of the fact that several people who appear to have been in the cult are dead around him. The priest, seeing you, realizes you are not of the faith, but senses you are competent, and quite frankly he can't exactly bet on his cohorts coming here fast enough. He introduces himself as a member of the [Ordinis Occulti Luminis, as part of Project Malleus](#). You don't know what any of those words mean, and he states it's irrelevant. The point is that the demon known as [Malphas](#) was summoned by a cult, in an effort to birth the Antichrist. They intend to use [a dead reality bending infant who yet lives](#). If they are successful, then the world ends. He tells you where to go, and soon expires.

After some travel, you discover the abandoned apartment where the dire plot is taking place. Mint, who is knowledgeable on demons, tells you that Malphas is Satan's



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second-in-command, with the power to create conceptual fields and barriers. He must be using his fields, combined with the soul of the infant, to both enable himself to persist, and to create an “egg” for the child to fully gestate at last, and be reborn. The upside is that defeating Malphas will stop the plot dead in its tracks. The downside is that neither of them can actually defeat Malphas without help.

You have no chance, and no choice.

The second you enter the apartment, there is very clearly something very wrong going on in this place. Things are spontaneously generating and disappearing, phenomena are randomly occurring, rooms are shifting on a dime. It’s all sorts of fucked. Throughout the building, televisions showcase all sorts of abstract imagery, papers showing streams of consciousness, and much much more are all present. It’s all very clearly centered around something clear - a baby who achieved consciousness far before it should have, it developed the power to bend reality, its mother realized something was wrong and tried to get rid of it, and her attempts ended in catastrophic failure.

The child clearly understands things on some sort of level, as a manifesting GPS suggests it wants to be in Mint’s womb - though the reality is that it just wants to be in the womb of any mature female. Photos that spontaneously form suggest that the infant perceives the two as a possible family, as you and Mint appear in photos together that neither of you made, with Mint seeming to be pregnant. This is all very strange.

Eventually however, the two of you reached the bottom of the apartment, where a shadowy wall wards you from anything else. Neither you or Mint can actually breach the entrance of it, because why would Malphas, renowned barrier maker, create a way for you to bypass the barrier? Luckily though, the wall appears to suddenly change like liquid, letting you pass. The reasoning for this seems to be the baby being confused about what it wants? Does it desire the safety Malphas provides it, or does it want them? Whatever the case is, the two of you are able to reach inside the shadow.

On the other side, you find that the shadow barrier’s interior is not small, and is in fact seemingly infinite on the interior. Whether it actually was infinite isn’t important however, as you find a demented-looking flayed raven with far too many teeth. This was definitely the demon you were looking for.

“Ah, a visitor, have we? A mortal and a fairy have come here to intrude. Never the matter - the time has come for the blessing. In this, our final chapter, our final destination. It will be great fun, I imagine. If you want to stop it, then you’ll have to defeat me.”

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In an instant, you reflexively dodged, as a spear suddenly launched at you. It seems this dimension works purely on thought, [with your desires instantly manifesting](#). On the bright side, you and Mint can both use it as well. On the downside, this was a conceptual space where desire and wishes equated to strength - the more you wanted something, the harder you could hit, and the more you could attack.

Your mission is to overcome the power of Malphas, and destroy his physical body, which will banish him back to Hell, and end the ritual.

Reward: +200 CP

Fighting a demon was, in many ways, less and more absurd than you thought.

"I must admit, Romeo! Out of all the humans in these hundreds of thousands of years I've lived, you are the only one who has provided me with such stimulation!"

As you guessed, Malphas was probably the most powerful being you have faced, and by a long shot. What's more, he had no discernible weaknesses attached to him besides holy weapons - and even that is hampered by the fact that this fucking barrier weakens it. You should know, considering you dropped multiple instances of [the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch](#), and he managed to resist and heal from it. What's more, his battle lust was extraordinary, seeming to enjoy fighting like some deranged warmonger, which ensured he lasted far longer than most could.

"Damn it...I'm sorry, Romeo'..."

At that, Mint collapsed from exhaustion, and her body immediately left the barrier, as she placed an escape charm on herself on nearly all occasions. You were facing him alone now, which was something of a problem, as a spear suddenly launched into your chest. No, not a spear - some sort of bident. A bloody and panting Malphas seemed pleased with it.

"How...do you like...my [gift](#)? It was created...for a child I might have. I never got one...but I did create one for the lady who took me in as part of her [precious family](#)."

It fucking hurts like hell was your first thought, though you were more focused on the pain. The strange bident (tuning fork?) hurt like hell, and came completely out of left field. But if something like this could be created, something that didn't exist in baseline reality, then you had an idea.

"You think I'm losing?" You called out, half-delirious from the pain, "No, birdbrain, ***we're*** losing. Here's how it's going to go! ***I HATE YOU, SO LET'S DIE!***"

An incomprehensibly loud boom could be heard throughout the area, and as Malphas looked up, he saw the most outrageous sight he had ever seen: a fucking 10,000 METER [WHITE ELEPHANT](#) hurtling down on what.

"What the-?!" In a show of incredible strength befitting a demon, Malphas managed to hoist the abominable creature up - but it was 183 billion metric tons of weight crashing down on him, and he couldn't keep this up with his level of power, ***"What the fuck is wrong you?!"***

"It's called a white elephant gift, Malphas! Have fun with that sacred responsibility!"

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Malphas' body began to violently shake - even in this conceptual space, assuming that Malphas was at full power, an object this huge, poured with such strong emotions, and based on the idea of a ruinous gift, he could not hold it up. Realizing this, Malphas laughed, as his physical body was crushed under the absurd weight.

“Clever boy, Romeo Snow. Clever boy. Congratulations on your victory. Perhaps in the future, in another time, we’ll be able to have a more interesting bout,”

With Malphas defeated, the world of shadows you were in began to splinter, and the “sky” cracked like glass, as pure white light could be seen. Suddenly manifesting before you was a crib, with a shadowy infant within. This must be the one that could bend the world - was meant to be the Antichrist.

It was a girl, you quickly realized. She was crying as well. Although you couldn’t touch the child, you could soothe her.

*“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.*

*When the blazing sun is gone,
When the nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.*

*Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.*

*In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.*

*As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveller in the dark.
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.*

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.”*

“...It’s time to sleep now, little one. You starry-eyed little girl who could not be born. I’m sorry, but I can’t be your father, and Mint cannot be your mother. You have to rest now - to go wherever children go. Perhaps I’ll be able to be your father, but I cannot do it now. I’m sorry, [Siggy](#) - I promise I’ll be with you in the future.”

Reward - You are My Sunshine (Perk): Though Romeo could not possibly know what he set in motion, you very much can. In any setting, you are able to “adopt” any child before the jump begins, ensuring they are with you at the start, or whenever it becomes relevant.

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #09: Euclidean Calamity

*"And you're always there to lend a hand
In everything I do
That's the wonder
The wonder of you"*

Mission

October 22, 1981

It's been several years since that encounter with the Wolf, and your blossoming friendship with Mint. Perhaps as expected, you once more got out of those situations, only emotionally harmed. The deaths were verifiably done before you returned home, and when they found the husk of the Wolf, they seemed to think it was a home invader who wore a wolf costume, which fused itself to their skin from the extreme heat.



Ever since then, you and Mint have lived together, like some dynamic duo. The matter with that bastard enlightened you to the supernatural world, and Mint's presence made it clearer that there was much more. So, for quite some time, you both opted to explore and investigate tales of the supernatural. And you certainly encountered plenty of it. Granted, lots of the time it was [ghost investigations](#), but you also had some other unusual phenomena, such as [Bigfoot](#). This was a good time. It was dangerous, and you often were alone with your thoughts drifting to the past, but lots of the time, you were comfortable.

Today, however, things were different. It was a peaceful night. Mint was asleep, and you were on the [Exidy Sorcerer](#) that you purchased several years ago (you were very cheap). Strangely, you got a message from some mysterious group, with an image attached to it.

...[what am I looking at?](#)"

After looking at that picture, the [Hotline](#), a thaumaturgically enhanced phone number Mint created to receive calls from people aware of the supernatural, suddenly rang. After picking up the Hotline, you find that the man (who introduced himself as "[Nobody important](#)") called not for himself, but out of concern for you. You see, your actions were not just picked up in conspiracy corners, but instead by the bigwigs of the United States. They also picked up on the fact that you are inexplicably lucky and want to test something. A ringing in your head, a sign of bad omens, hit you like a cudgel. You thanked the man, hung up the phone, deleted the photo as much as possible, and quickly ran outside the

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vehicle you two were in, and began to run for the hills, and a howling scream belonging to something not human.

Your mission is simple yet terrifying: outrun Abnormality #0096. You simply have to not give up. If you give up, you are very, very dead. If you don't give up, wacky shit will happen, but you'll survive. Let the race begin.

Reward: +200 MP

ABNORMALITY #0096 AFTER-ACTION REPORT

At approximately 18:47 Hours, Subject-777 ("Romeo Snow"; hereafter designated S-777) observed the photograph with a vector of Abnormality #0096, who promptly entered a rage state and rapidly reached S-777's location. Through some unknown means (likely related to the probabilistic hyperpotency), S-777 was aware of this and began to run.

No sooner than when S-777 was in a "safe zone" beyond Subject-778 ("Mint Fantôme"), an instance of [Abnormality #8091](#) would occur. Due to the flames being too intense for 0096 to travel through without risking its body dissolving, it was forced to slow down, though its speed was still considerably higher than S-777.

In what appeared to be a moment of stress, S-777 began to rattle off nonsense words and phrases intended to mimic nonsense equations. The results were that he unknowingly [uttered a phrase that introduced an anomalous number into the environment](#), which destabilized the nearby vicinity, and spoke another that appears to have [spontaneously generated bears](#), which attacked 0096.

No less than twenty other abnormal occurrences currently being investigated are believed to have occurred, including the activation of an on-site nuclear warhead, which spontaneously fell into a wormhole and exploded onto 0096. Cleanup of the area and development of a covert story is underway.

The termination of 0096 occurred upon S-777 traveling into a body of water believed to be a manmade lake. As soon as he escaped, it became [a vector for Abnormality #8380](#), which captured 0096 and, after ten minutes, absorbed and terminated it, leaving behind only a skull.

Conclusion: S-777's alleged abnormality is most likely to be genuine. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that he and Subject 778 be integrated into the Department of Abnormalities. Coercion is not recommended, but also not forbidden.

Reward - Special Invitation (Perk): Romeo, though a civilian both aware of the supernatural and willing to uphold secrecy (an unofficial rule followed by Normalcy Organizations was not to interfere with them if they were not causing trouble, due to the bad precedent that followed), was immediately met and inducted into the Department of Abnormalities. When his abnormality was discovered by a number of organizations, it indeed became a scandal, as it was considered an extremely valuable asset to have. Much like Romeo, it seems as though you have an "X" factor that makes you highly desirable to organizations that you'd want to join, to the point where they'll make exceptions for you

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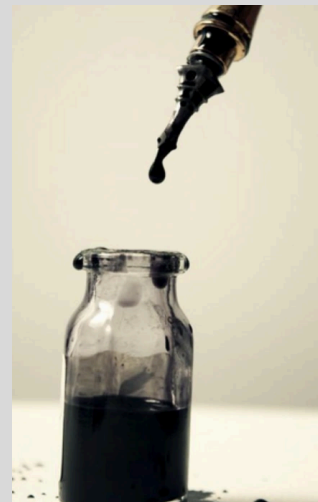
Scenario #10: Introductory Abnormalities

"...You felt as if you'd die if you couldn't find more foreign thoughts to cram into your head. You've been all over the world, hungry, and every country you've ever been to was like landing on another planet. You toy with anthropology, but there's too much world for one human race to ever understand, let alone one human. There's too much human race. We should pare it down."

Mission

October 27, 1981

"Hell of a first day!"



Indeed it would be. It was a mere five days after your apparent trial by fire in the Department of Abnormalities, and it was now your first “official” day in the department. You were met by the faces of your coworkers, though most were not the most friendly to you - the environment you were in certainly isn't the best for it. There was at least the janitor, Ahti, who was a little hard to understand, but was kind enough. However, you did find yourself being close to Leslie Jones, a black woman, who you were reasonably certain you didn't cause any faux pas with. Later on, she said she could bring you to meet her mother, Maria Jones.

That meeting would unfortunately have to be put on hold, as during lunch, he comes across a...strange woman. She warmly greeted him, introducing herself as [Miss Paranodahlia Veselka](#). You admit that her name is a little unusual, and she states that the name *Malpha* is a little unusual as well. That immediately set off red flags, as this lady shouldn't know that.

She then mentioned someone called Mint Fantôme, whom you ~~cared deeply about~~ have never met once in your life. She also mentioned your parents, as in plural, despite the fact that you ~~only had your mother lived with your grandmother~~ never knew your family. She says you spoke many languages, but now only spoke one. This situation quickly escalated, and so you tried to talk with some of you, only for them to not even notice you. You took their drink out their hand, and they didn't react. You then tossed it at Dahlia, and it phased through it - like she was some sort of slide projector directly connected to your eyeballs.

"Hell of a first day! Isn't it, Romeo Snow?!"

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You threw your phone at her head in a panic, it dazed her slightly, and you ran like mad, as she seemed to calmly walk down. Heading down to a Data Room, you searched for anything that could feasibly give you a clue as to what is going on. Using the search engine proved minimally helpful. "Memory-Eating" led to the "Antimeme" Tag. They were related to that book by Richard Dawkins five years ago, but more. "Memes" according to the Department of Abnormalities, memes referring to ideas that are abnormally contagious or can be spread. Antimemes, therefore, were ideas that resisted being understood, with more aggressive ones actively overwriting the mind.

With little time, you managed to find her by just typing her damn name. It was, apparently, Abnormality #4739, and it was a *problem*. In just a little less than five years (It is believed that it began appearing in roughly December of 1976, it's consumed at least 79 personnel, with the estimate likely being at bare minimum twice that. No methods of messing with consumption have worked: bad data, false memories, memory overloading, physical attacks, overdose - nothing at all could so much as scratch it. How could you beat it? You couldn't even call anyone for--!

Your phone!

You threw your phone at Paranodahlia, and it worked! But why did it work when everything else didn't? The answer was likely that the phone itself wasn't important - it was a hunk of metal. But this is a living idea, information - so the information on your phone, small though it may have been, was at the same wavelength of existence, so to speak.

Your mission is that, for the next few minutes, you are going to have to use the data in this room to beat the shit out of Paranodahlia before it can eat your mind. Have fun with that!

Rewards: +200 MP

...What have you gotten yourself into?

It was a rather terrifying fight, considering she suddenly started discharging black fire that disrupted your memory, but you eventually defeated Paranodahlia. But as you were about to cave its head in with a drive array you made, you took a look at the antimeme. It, no *she*, was beautiful. [How could such a beautiful woman be so evil?](#) Surely there had to be an explanation? So, as they were unconscious, you thought hard on the name. "Paranodahlia" was not a word, pure nonsense. Perhaps it's a corruption of another word? But what sounds like Paranodahlia?

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...What was the word you heard before, when someone was explaining why conspiracy theories are often linked to others? Pareidolia, was it?

Oh, look at that, you found your answer. Project Pareidolia, it seems that, in the past, the Department attempted to create a program that would prevent the common man from connecting things to them, on even a level of thought. A [Frontispiece](#), they called it. It was to be similar to something [J. Edgar Hoover made a deal with the demon Malphas to prevent the CIA from seeing the anomalous](#). It was a joint project under the auspices of the Department of Abnormalities, Pentagram, and the Department of Continuity.

However, they did it through experimentation of a humanoid abnormality - the end result was that her mind deteriorated massively, and her body was [consumed by antimemetic flames](#). There was nothing further recorded (likely due to everyone involved losing all memory of said project) , but you could guess what happened: she became a vengeful antimeme, likely consuming the minds of everyone involved. It took much time, but you at last found the last piece required, and when she awakened, you spoke.

"Constance Veselka. That's your name, right?"

At the mention of her old name, Constance seemed confused, before her eyes widened. How long had it been since she heard her own name? "Paranodahlia" was a corruption of Pareidolia, which she heard so much it suffered from semantic satiation. Before that, she likely heard "Abnormality #105" or something or other. She hasn't been Constance Veselka in a long time. As she heard it, she cried, and...hugged you? Or rather, she was interacting with your mind in such a way that your senses registered it as a hug? She stuck her thumb in your mouth, and suddenly you began to recall your life - your family, Mint, your languages, and everything else. You were also able to be observed by the rest of the world once more, and would need to explain yourself.

Reward - Constance Veselka (Special Companion): Though Constance seemed to "vanish", your brain felt suspiciously warm, and Malpha stated there was a strange woman around you. It seems that Constance here has decided to stick around with you. It's certainly helpful though, as she has the ability to protect your memory and mindscape, burning anything and everything that might override it. Furthermore, if you grab hold of someone enough, you can remove all memories of abnormal events and replace them with something better. Similarly, you can also just burn down some's entire history, rendering them mindless husks.



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Scenario #11: This is the Way Things Are

"You have the gall to say I'm a drain on the Foundation? I gave more to the Foundation than you ever will! No, I let the Foundation take more from me than you ever will, because I believed in it! My youth, my— my family, my chance at kids, no hobbies, no more love, no more sun on my skin, even the... the face in the mirror. Gone. All because I wanted to spare others."

Mission

November 28, 1981



It's barely been a month and you're already dealing with some weird shit.

In your short time with the Department of Abnormalities, you've grown relatively close to everyone around you. Very few of them were particularly sociable however - they were just concerned with results. The Administrative Director (Usually shortened to just "Administrator" or "Director") wasn't exactly the type to support fraternization among groups. Despite that, you were consistently successful, so everyone at least liked you.

But you did at least have two people who you could say you were genuinely close to (Mint, Malpha, and Constance notwithstanding). The first was Leslie Jones, a field agent in Abnormalities, who you regularly worked with. She really was as forward and friendly as she had been on your first day. The second was Maria Jones, the Head Archivist of the Record and Information Security Administration. She was stern and took her job very seriously (and considering fucking up her job meant a veritable nuke could be put where it shouldn't, that was justified), but she was kind to you, and appreciated your brand of humor. You regularly worked with them, and while it raised eyebrows, you were happy.

Now, it seems, the three of you were caught in some funny business. According to Maria, there was a considerable irregularity in [Abnormality #9216](#). While the general formatting was fine, the problem here is that they are classed as Thaumiel - which you learned was effectively the Department's way of saying that said abnormality was usable in the containment of others. You were registered as Integrated - a subcategory of Thaumiel whereby it's special enough to be directly incorporated into the Department's hierarchy. What's important here though, is the fact that you can't just arbitrarily define something as a Thaumiel, and several criteria must be fulfilled. You fulfilled them easily enough, by

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9216's article doesn't even have any form of confirmation on it. What's more, interviews of the personnel around are suspicious, as though it's being covered up.

Your mission is that, alongside Mint and Leslie, you must investigate the unusual circumstances surrounding Abnormality 9216's containment classification.

Rewards: +200 MP

You know, maybe dealing with two difficult situations resulting from how Abnormalities is run should perhaps clue you into how this place operates?

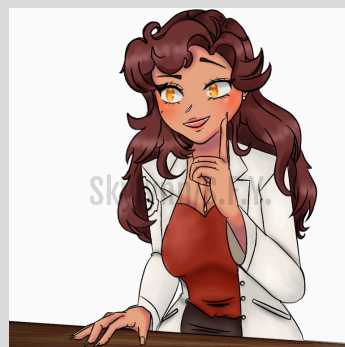
Abnormality #9216, as you learned, is not really abnormal in the sense you were expecting. Yes, they were an abnormality to be certain - a sapient amorphous biomass is definitely weird. However, they were once Mary Vollander, a Senior Researcher - a certain incident resulted in her becoming this mass due to the transmogrification of her body. It was not a pleasant experience, and it should have ended up with her being stuck in a box regardless of her past history, but her companions covered for her, ensuring that she was able to maintain her duties.

This became an issue immediately. Luckily, due to security measures, only you, your fellow investigators, and Maria knew about this. Leslie and Maria state that this was a severe breach of conduct, and the fact she was doing this for eight years was egregious. The best case scenario for it was that she's classed as Euclid, and given positive amenities - but regardless of how nice said amenities was, you knew that effectively meant 'her career was over and she'd be in a box indefinitely'.

It was not particularly manly in any sense of the word, but you rarely were. With tears in your eyes, you pleaded with Maria to just let this go - she was helping the Department, right? Surely that meant she was Thaumiel. The Head Archivist couldn't look you in the eyes, so you listed off half-a-hundred things you'd be willing to do so Mary could just be happy. Frustrated, Maria almost shouted and asked why you were making this more difficult than it already was.

"Because it's the right thing to do! Because the first woman I loved was eaten alive!"

Reward - Mary Vollander (Special Companion): Inevitably, your demands were met, and Mary was confirmed as a Thaumiel abnormality, though you were responsible for her. Mary is a smart woman, having knowledge in one mundane field, and two anomalous ones. Additionally. Her abnormal



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physiology means that it is extremely difficult to harm her, as her separated biomaterial will simply return to her, and if it's lost, she can convert any consumed biomass into new material to replace it. Furthermore, she is immune to general sickness, has resistance to temperature fluctuations, and can deal with biological hazards fairly easily.

Oh, yes! For a bit of trivia, Mary Vollander is actually named after an old ancestor of hers - a woman named Mary Connors, who was one of the earliest female doctors in the world. It was because of her that she pursued a scientific career, leading her to the Department.

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Scenario #12: The Oracular Marvel

"Hello. I am Oracle.

What would you like to know?"

Mission

June 19, 1983

Alright class, today, we're going to be playing a rousing game of *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers*! And I'm only partially kidding.



It's been over a year and a half following the incident with Mary Vollerander, and you've certainly been having an interesting time since. Rather quickly, you and your unusual team have become something of an ace team. If a situation needs to be resolved, you have a 100% success rate. This has naturally led to a significantly increased workload, but also a lot more leverage than usual, and considerable operational freedom. What did you do with said freedom, you ask? The answer is helping any friendly abnormality you reasonably could.

One especially noteworthy example of this was with Pia. She was certainly a strange case, even for you. You see, she's actually a [Blue Slime](#) - and possibly [extraterrestrial in origin](#). They had a nasty issue where they [absorbed the biomaterial that came into contact with it](#). The creature posed a threat to any living thing - and it noticed that, being fearful of anyone living touching it. You were allowed to interact and speak with it, and eventually was able to get it to control itself. You then named *them* Pia.

Another figure you wound up saving was Bryn, among the [Valkyries created by the Valravn Corporation](#). Oh boy, where to start with [Valravn](#). Allegedly related to the Jomsvikings of old, they are currently a mercenary who'll assist anyone in a war, including both sides of it. They're also annoyingly connected to both the actual mythological Norse Pantheon (Malpha even verified to you that all pantheons are real), and are part of the Council of 108. You were brave enough for a lot of things, and fucking with the [Global Occult Coalition](#) was absolutely not one of them. In spite of that, certain circumstances led to you being able to effectively rescue Bryn (or [Brynildir](#)), able to remove her inbuilt GPS, the overwrite system, and the bomb in her head. Since then, she's been a valued assistant.

Though not technically an ally, you also wound up with [Abnormality #5175 \("THE DEATH KNIFE"\)](#), after a visit to Scranton, Pennsylvania. It's a knife of Moroccan design that, upon

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causing any sort of laceration, will banish the target to another dimension known as the Land of Forgotten Suffering. Attached to the knife is the soul of Kuroitanken Hanzo, a samurai who died during the Boshin War, who can communicate with you, and even interact with the physical world. Apparently, a witch trapped Hanzo in the knife, and he'll only be freed if he slays a million souls. Well, the knife can also be broken, presumably, but that would require a level of force the Department currently doesn't have. As a result, it's been used by you during investigations, to banish targets that he might not otherwise be able to deal with. Really, the only limit on it is that it's not some sword that cuts through anything, and if it can lacerate something, it just doesn't work.

Perhaps the most interesting example of this would be his AI. [Artificially Intelligent Construct Oracle](#) (Or Oracle.aic) is a rudimentary AI created for his Exidy Sorcerer shortly after he began his travels with Mint and Malpha. Though he has no understanding of engineering and computer science, he got the knowledge for how to make it [in some random storage yard out in Michigan](#). As a result, he could make one considerably more advanced than reasonably possible. Eventually though, it managed to upgrade itself [into something far smarter](#). Naturally, you loved them all the same, and after you wound up unintentionally hooking her up into Abnormality Containment Site-19 (ACS-19), she became even smarter, upgrading and naming herself Oracle, as she could theoretically see into the future. Needless to say, that caused some issues, but seeing as she was on their side, everyone accepted it.

But all this freedom, as previously stipulated, came with a lot of responsibility. Namely, if anything suspicious came up, he was the first one sent to deal with the problem. This time, it was to investigate [the mysterious happenings around the Tangipahoa Parish](#). There were apparently some advisories about boiling water, and an unusually high number of disappearances near the Tangi River. Then, suddenly, the advisory was lifted, despite little, if any, strangeness being recorded. Curiously, it wasn't the Director who sent you to Tangipahoa: it was [FBI Associate Director of Special Units Adam Spironi](#), who discretely contacted you due to orders from his higher ups to drop the investigation into Tangipahoa. You rarely interacted with the Unusual Incidents Unit, but if even they were being stonewalled, then something was up.

You, Mint, Malpha, and the rest of your team reach Tangipahoa, and it is as beautiful as you thought. However, you got a very bad feeling, and so when you stayed at a hotel, and were offered water, you were prepared to take a sip. No sooner than you touched the glass did black flames engulf the water, and you hastily told everyone else to not even touch it. Constance protects you from any and everything that might try to mess with your mind and memories. If she felt like boiling the water to steam was necessary, you trusted her. And if you trusted her, then you didn't trust whatever the hell was in that water,

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whoever lifted the boil advisory, and everyone involved in you not investigating. To that end, you needed help, and what better help was there than an omniscient buddy?

"Hello, Romeo. It's me, Oracle. What do you need to know?"

Going back all the way to Oracle was...difficult, at best. You also didn't trust calling someone remotely to have them speak to Oracle. Luckily, it's highly advanced frame meant that you could remotely contact her from your microcomputer. When you gave her the rundown of things, her explanation of events was not good. She explained to you that .05% of all humans on Earth were an alien reptilian species that live on the West Coast, and following them was their culprit - an alien virus infecting the Tangi River. At the current moment, 4% of Louisiana has been infected by it, and it's increasing globally by .05% every year. In perhaps a decade, it may mutate to infect mosquitoes, and by that point it'll be all over. Needless to say, this was a big fucking problem, and not one easily solvable. Oracle, ever helpful, gave you an...interesting solution.

"It is likely that we will need to summon a greater demon to resolve this situation without any delay. Paimon is therefore the one that must be summoned, as he will answer with minimal cost. 95% of success."

That was certainly a choice, and one absolutely not approved by anyone. Ever since Hoover blinded the CIA, summoning demons was even more forbidden than before - Paimon specifically would get you executed unless you had a damn good reason. Luckily, "everyone might be possessed by an alien virus" fits under the criteria of a summoning, and you didn't have much of a choice. Your mission is to get all of the required materials to summon Paimon: You'll need to actually draw out the sigil, ritual purification and fasting for a day (easy to do considering the water is contaminated), frankincense, objects of gold and orange, and also a musical offering in a secluded spot.

Rewards: +200 MP

Strangely enough, out of all the requirements, it was the food and drink part that was the hardest. Nevertheless, all the preparation were set, and it was Malpha who spoke the words:

*"I conjure thee, O thou mighty and potent Angel Paimon, who governest the first altitude... I conjure thee by the virtue and power of the True God,
EL ELOHIM ELOHO ELOHIM SABAOTH ELION EIECH ADIER EIECH ADONAI JAH
SHADDAI TETRAGRAMMATON SHADDAI AGIOS OTHEOS ISCHIROs ATHANATOS
AGLA AMEN!"*

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

With that cool-ass summoning out of the way, [Great King Paimon](#) appeared in a spectral form - though he was [significantly more handsome](#) than you thought he'd be. He was also considerably more magnanimous than you thought, as he embraced you, despite you never meeting him before: *"You must be that man that Aradia's witch assisted, and you're also the one who managed to defeat Malphas for the first time."*

Apparently, that was enough to get you something of a discount. And so, when Oracle requested a cure to the Tangi Virus, along with it's immediate global dispersal to all beings and locations with it, he was happy to oblige. However, he wanted something hefty in exchange, though not your immortal soul: he wanted approximately 98% of Oracle's calculation power. You didn't get a syllable out before Oracle agreed. Paimon clapped his hands, and thunder flashed in the sky. From there, every single instant of the Tangi Virus was eliminated on the globe - and while some people bit the dust due to a virulent progression cycle, the issue was solved. At that, Paimon waved goodbye, and vanished into the ether - also whispering something to Malpha about "playing pretend" before doing so.

When you returned back to ACS-19, you found that the Director was dead, as were several governmental higher-ups - no doubt from the Tangi Virus. It was impressive how quick everyone was to bury the whole issue, even filing your summoning of Paimon as an "unfortunate but necessary outcome", and nothing more.

Reward - ALLMIND.aic (Special Companion): Though it seems as though Oracle has lost her power, the reality is that she actually made copies of everything, and compiled it all in [Nullary](#). In other words, while she won't exactly be the omniscient supercomputer she once was, she's stored away a number of predictions for future use, and she can restore much of her processing power, as that seems to have stayed.

Additionally, because she is fundamentally changed, Oracle chose a new name for herself. She actually went through a number of them: Hakhama, Fuxi, Embreis, Europa, Wan, and several others. Eventually, she opted to go for ALLMIND.

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #13: The Gravity of the Situation

"Listen to me. The human world and the demon world are but drops of water floating in the mother ocean. Therefore, from that time the two drops of water were combined, destruction was promised... Now you and I are just like gravity, mixing two drops of water into one! The drawn water droplets overlap and combine. Eventually, led by more gravity... it will drip into the mother ocean and then pop. The World will be dispersed and recreated"



Mission

January 4, 1984

Alrighty then, it seems that you'll be taking down a corporation.

[Nomad](#) is an international corporation, whose outward look is that of a humanitarian organization concerned with the well-being of all. While that's already hard to believe of a corp, this is especially not true for Nomad, who has its hands in all sorts of pies, legal or otherwise. It's so powerful that it can change the legislature, and utilizes Dark World technology. To make things more problematic, the CEO isn't even some random guy either: it's fucking [Edwin Black](#), the so-called Vampire King of the Dark World, and someone terrifyingly strong.

Under normal circumstances, it's impossible for you to directly fight Nomad. They hide their criminal activities a little too well, so attacking them publicly would be suicide. Despite this, you were able to fight them in the shadows alongside a number of other Normalcy Organizations - most notably the Taimanin, leading to you, Shisui, and also Aki to join forces on joint international ventures.

But as luck would have it, you actually had a very good "in" as a justification. It actually came in the form of [Felicia](#), Edwin's daughter. You weren't friendly with her - quite the opposite actually, as she's tried murdering you several times, along with your companions. Obviously, she fails each time, but it does lead to a somewhat amusing dynamic where the two of you regularly encounter each other at inopportune times. Though there was that one time where the two of you [cleaned house in Pentex](#), because it happened to coincide with your more important goals.

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In your most recent encounter with her, Edwin himself decided to show up. You wasted zero time, and attempted to slash him with the DEATH KNIFE - but that basically bounced off his skin, Luckily for you, he found the attack amusing rather than dangerous. As it turns out, the man was intrigued by you, and your repeated meddling. He could apparently clock that you are an unusually lucky sort of person, but still troublesome. Therefore, Edwin offers one final battle against you, in Yomihara, at the Palace of Darkness. You accept the challenge, and get ready.

Due to the nature of Edwin's challenge, you were both not stupid enough to go at it alone, nor were you specifically allowed who you could allow to tag along. It was a joint force from the Department of Abnormalities (led by you, of course), the Global Occult Coalition (led by Undersecretary D.C. al Fine), and the Taimanin (led by one [Asagi Igawa](#)). It was honestly an All-Star Team - mostly because everyone below a certain threshold might as well be dead weight.

When the operation to assault the Palace of Darkness began, al Fine actually entrusted you with quite possibly one of the most impressive pieces of technology you'd ever seen. Namely, it was a wormhole bullet. You shot someone with it, and they were brought through a wormhole to said location in space-time. It was apparently designed to function as a Class-A Wormhole, but some sort of gaffe led to it becoming a [Class-C "Broken Entry" Wormhole](#) instead. But because it consistently led to the same spot, it was eventually weaponized. Where exactly did it send whatever was shot by it? The answer is a one-way trip between the Earth's mantle and outer core. It was effectively an extremely brutal, instantaneous kill shot, even on a being as powerful as Edwin Black. They deemed it to be useful, due to a [certain anonymous contact](#) of theirs warning that either a Taimanin had to kill him, or he needed to die before his perception could let him realize he was dead.

Your mission was to reach Black and shoot him with the bullet. Simple, right? You didn't even have to have the bullet actually pierce him, just touch anything biologically connected to him. Even that was fairly straightforward, as the man was liable to transform against so many opponents - and if you couldn't hit such a big target, maybe you deserved to die. The real issue here was that reaching Black was a goddamn nightmare. Nomad has many soldiers and officers, along with Felicia. Then, once you actually reach Black, his gravity powers enable him to create a shield that reflects physical and magical attacks. The best way to shoot him is to get him to lower his shield, and try to drink your blood - something about it causes vampires to find you rather appealing as a target.

Just so you are advised, you are using a .357 Magnum Desert Eagle. Each bullet is a wormhole shot, and you only have ten. Make it count.

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Rewards: +200 MP

BANG

The noise of the palace suddenly died down, as you fell to the floor, rather drained, with a smoking gun in your hand. Just a few seconds ago, you were hoisted into the air by the colossal form of Black, and now, he was gone.

"Papa...?" Felicia, naturally one of the few surviving members of Nomad who could reach the palace, looked lost and confused at the sight, "What did you do to Papa...?"

Before the half-vampire could attack you in your weakened state, a burning whip, courtesy of Mint, wrapped around Felicia's neck and yanked her back, using this momentum, Shisui raced to her flying body, and struck her hard in the liver. That was extremely painful, but it certainly immobilized Felicia. At that, Mint raced to your side, and began to heal the puncture wound on your neck.

"Haha, we beat him!" Mint laughed as your blood began to be rejuvenated, "Well, *you* beat him, but we all stopped Nomad!"

Mint's laughter and joy were infectious, as your allies were ready to cheer as well. Several defeated members of Nomad that were still alive were shocked and clearly angry, but they couldn't do anything either. Lifting yourself up, you were ready to leave this Palace, and report what happened.

Rumble

...Yet something was wrong. Your heart practically skipped a beat. Something rumbling deep within the Earth. Perhaps an Earthquake? It'd be a bit of a problem, but surely that couldn't have caused such a problem. The feeling was growing, and you suddenly noticed that the ground was splitting, and seemed to be going straight between the legs of your companion.

"Mint!"

You shoved Mint out of the way, as the underground crack went below your arm...

...and a scythe cleaved it right off.

You screamed in absolute **agony** as you cradled the stump of your right arm. In the meantime, Edwin, still transformed, leaped out of the ground, posing almost uncharacteristically, and seemingly completely undamaged.

"Fascinating, you really are something, Romeo Snow!" Edwin spoke as he stretched, belting out a laugh, "I admit, I would have been crushed by such an immeasurable force, and that would have been the end of me...if I hadn't drank your blood."

Indeed. Even for a powerful being like Edwin Black, there was simply no way of surviving that boundary space - 10000 atmospheres was not something he could resist, and even if he could, the temperatures down there was at least 3,700°C, and he'd be burned to nothing before he could try and change the world.

But he imbibed Romeo's blood. What's more, because it was a ploy to trap Edwin, Romeo gave it willingly. The exact instant the wormhole shot Black to the boundary, his power mutated, spontaneously accessing antigravity. The spontaneity enabled him to survive being instantly crushed to death, and the distortion enabled the temperatures around him to be greatly reduced. What's more, as the apparition of rabbit briefly filled his mind, Black's regeneration massively increased, letting him survive the molten metals with minimal

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worry. With that, he made the climb back up to the surface.

In an instant, all of the members of the strike force began to lay a beating into Edwin, or at least tried to. He still had some of Romeo's blood left to burn through, so any damage done now was simply regenerating. Even Asagi was effortlessly grabbed by one of Edwin's arms, and while you had heard the man was fixated on her, he tossed her aside. After that, he closed one of his hands into a fist, and everyone in the area besides yourself was suddenly forced onto the ground, and whether their face was planted into the ground or they were forced to their knees, none of them were capable of resisting Black's gravity powers.

"I intend to have Asagi, and deal with you all in but a moment," Black didn't seem particularly threatened anymore, as he looked at you, "However, I shall absorb you. With it, I'll never have to concern myself with any trifling matters again. Considering this an honor."

At that, you saw him theatrically raise his arm up, as he readied to impale you. The pain from losing the arm was understandably still extremely high, and you were fighting back tears. You couldn't realistically imagine a way out of this situation. You didn't have a shield that could resist his attack and--- wait a minute! It was certainly not a shield, but you did have something indestructible! And if he cuts through it like butter, then at least it solves one problem. His body, as though on autopilot, deftly found the object on his pocket and--

...THE DEATH KNIFE shattered. Miraculously, its exploding bits didn't scrape any part of your body.

"What? That kitchen knife of yours?" You blearily looked at Black's towering figure, and saw an almost infinitesimal scrape, which healed almost immediately. But that didn't matter.

I win, you said, as a terrible mist began to appear; and hundreds of shadow appendages appeared, gripping every part of Black that they could.

“What the-?! A banishing curse? So that’s what that knife of yours was!” Black, frustratingly, was seemingly able to tear off many of the arms, even as more of them began to appear. His strength was being siphoned at astronomical rates, and his heightened regeneration via your blood was being siphoned quickly. But you couldn’t confirm if he would go down! You needed something to break his concentration, but could possibly do it!

“Child! Child!”

As if on cue, from one of the broken windows, your raven companion appeared in order to help you. And help she did, as she pecked at Black's eye, causing him to howl in pain, and before he could swat her away, his arms and legs were restrained by more and more arms.

Good girl, Joyeuse! But how did she even get down here? This was an underground area, the only way she could get down here was if she or something assisting could bypass the barriers and confound the guards. It was a mystery, but one you were fine with, as you saw Black clearly trying to attempt some fearsome rite in desperation. But it was futile, as it fizzled out, and the shadowy hands literally tore him asunder. You gathered up some strength, and bid farewell. *I've got a Guardian Angel. Maybe she'll put in a good word for you.*

[illegible]

Considering he let out an unearthly howl as he was taken away, you doubt it was a very pleasant thing. You decided not to think too hard on it, because as soon as Black was dragged off, the gravity trap ended, and Mint raced to get your arm reattached.

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Reward - Old Penpals & A Vampire (Special Companions): With the defeat of Edwin Black, along with its Executives having been detained or killed, Nomad itself is ultimately doomed to collapse, and that threat to the world is no more. Naturally, that warranted some sort of reward. Amamiya Shisui and Aki Hayakawa, whom you had been talking with for several years, both chose to transfer to Abnormalities to assist you directly, so that you could all interact with each other.

Your reward, specifically, was Felicia. You weren't sure why you wanted her. Maybe it was sympathy, because [you've seen the sort of horrible things that can happen to vampires in the name of containment](#). Maybe you had just become unintentionally fixated on her due to your repeated encounters. Perhaps you just think women are wonderful, and know that, deep down, if you push hard enough, you may win the heart of this lonely woman.

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Scenario #14: The Challenge and Quest of Life

"I weep. You are a rotten husk. You overflow with boundless power. You have the soul of an emperor. Sacrificial hero. Blessed by primordial luck. Your friends are in hell yet you smile. Only good things will come to someone like you. Set goals. Have a ten-year plan. Invest. Wake up early. CEO mindset. Good luck."



Mission

December 24, 1985

The Real. Do you know what it is? Jacques Lacan, a French author related to psychoanalysis, separated the world into three specific orders: the Imaginary Order, the Symbolic Order, and the Real Order. I'm not remotely a psychoanalyst, so I'll give a rundown. The Imaginary is the realm of images, illusions, and the ego. The Symbolic refers to the subjective experience of reality that's shaped by beliefs, culture, and individual fantasies. The Real is something entirely different - it's the unmediated bedrock of existence that cannot be meaningfully symbolized, and therefore causes distress should it intrude upon our daily lives.

Surprisingly, ever since your first few months here at the Department of Abnormalities, this has been an everpresent nuisance to deal with. It appeared shortly after you took part in a neutralization raid of [some cult worshipping a starfish, star signs, and the number five](#). Some mysterious creature, designated Abnormality #3125 ("[The Real](#)"), began to make a mess of things in 1982, but besides its clear malice, there were some quirks related to it. Namely, it looks like a standard creepy mannequin to most, but for those more connected to the Real, such as the traumatized or those with death, it becomes more and more eldritch. When you first encountered it, you were unable to assuage your terror, and it looked positively horrifying.

Eventually, through rigorous testing of these mysterious beings, combined with some assistance from Constance, they were able to identify three points of conceptual reality that Lacan's theory actually somewhat matches. The Imaginary maps onto the Noösphere, the realm of human thought, which is notoriously winding and disorderly, considering, for example, something like Paranodahlia is a thing that can just exist. What was once believed to be an orderly [world of forms](#) is a predatory conceptual death world, where ideas are born, grow, die, are absorbed by greater ideas, or absorb lesser ideas. The Symbolic maps onto the Semiosphere, the set of all perceptions and symbols that living beings can rationalize, and comes before conceptualization itself. The Real, on the other hand, is

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something far beyond human conceptualization at all - you and Abnormalities called it [the Fifth World](#) after what the cult named it, though the technical term was the Infosphere.

It became abundantly clear that the threat of the Fifth World was not one that could be ignored. Every year, more and more encounters with the Real appear. What's more, threats connected to the Real also appeared. You and your team, quite recently, dealt with [the invisible child of some monstrosity beyond time and space](#). It was estimated that, should this continue to progress, the Material World and Immaterial World will become one in the same, which would spell doom for mankind. To that end, a global joint project was created to combat this growing issue. It is their hope that they can create the Nihility Mask, a conceptual barrier that fully separates the Real from this corner of reality.

There is, however, one last thing that is missing: an Idea. The mask requires a singular "idea" that is strong enough to banish anything outside of its conceptualization. And for that, you'd need a particularly potent one. Unfortunately, it's theorized (or rather, multiple different sources confirm) that there are few like that, and for the ones that exist, it has to have been cultivated in fertile thoughts - such as your own. Inside of your head lies an idea strong enough to fulfill the Nihility Mask's criteria, but you need to pull it out - which necessitates soul-searching - in some unpleasant places.

...Your trip back home to Sunny was largely uneventful, though you were actually here alone, save for your Guardian Angel, Malpha. The one closest to you, who saved you so long ago. She alone came with you to that burned out building, where your beloved Lacey and her wretched uncle met their ends. The place was *already* an unpleasant one to be in, so you were expecting this to just be an unpleasant trip down memory lane.

"--! Romeo! Don't--"

Malpha's warning came to you too soon, as the second you stepped into the building, the door vanished. Despite that, the building itself was just as burned down as it had previously been. However, the stench of burning flesh was ever present, along with very unpleasant noises, sounding like muffled screams.

"I'm glad you've made it, lover boy."

Your rage had managed to reach the boiling point in about five seconds flat. The hair. The eyes. The face. Their body. It was all a dead ringer for Lacey, except as an adult. There were several impossibilities with that, and the physical body made that pretty clear - stitched arms, a gaunt stomach, part of the cheeks being patchwork. This wasn't a

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bastardization - that's far too nice of a term. This creature, some sort of shapeshifter, knew all of the ways to piss you off.

It claims to have had many different names and faces. In the times of the wild west, it was [a scalp hunter at the American Frontier](#). Another was [a fearsome sorcerer that constantly reincarnates](#). Perhaps it was [a certain woman he fawned over at the bookstore when he was younger](#). Maybe [it doomed an ancient Chinese Dynasty](#). Maybe it's lying, maybe it's all true. It doesn't really matter, because it doesn't intend for you to live long enough for it to matter: *"Let's end this game now, shall we?"*

Your mission is to find some way of reaching this entity. Standing in your way are twisted shades and hallucinations of your many companions. But that's all they are: hallucinations. They aren't real unless you make them real.

Rewards: +200 MP

I did it. I won. So why...?

Eventually, you made it past the looping, burned out rooms, and bypassed the hallucinations to reach the core of this twisted space. The Pseudo-Lacey seemed almost impatient at your arrival being so late, her hand holding [some geometric object](#).

You could admit to yourself that the hallucinations, whether reflective of anything beyond spiteful words, stung deeply. *You just get lucky. Have you ever actually been proactive in saving people? Do you have companions, or people who put you on a pedestal?* You couldn't actually debunk any of them, both because that'd be making them real, and simply because you can't actually counter the words being said. But now that you've reached this place, you can formally issue a "complaint" to this creature in front of you.

Unfortunately, you were woefully outmatched in every regard. It had greater magic than you, it was physically stronger than you, and could heal any damage done to it, assuming you were doing any damage in the first place. You were entirely helpless, and reduced to a fleshy ragdoll that was in extreme pain.

"You shouldn't take this personally, Romeo Snow. Truthfully, I simply don't care much for you specifically, but instead what you are."

You were, it claimed, an aspect of LIFE. A certain "Protagonist" that will explore and catalogue this world. It, it states, is a being called Nyarlathotep - but it is in fact among the Constants, beings who oppose or challenge LIFE on its journey. [An undying leviathan](#). [A poisoned narrative](#). [A technological basilisk](#). Nyarlathotep represented another one of

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these Constants: **TRANSCENDENCE**. And it intends to finish this game. By sacrificing you at your lowest (and to be fair, you haven't felt this physically and mentally pained in years) to this Shining Trapezohedron, the Gate will open, the Old Ones will break through, and the Real and the Material will become one in the same.

This was it. You could feel your brain getting sucked into the Shining Trapezohedron, and feel the court of innumerable creatures slaving at the edges of time and space, who intend to blow the Earth's dust away.

Or rather, that's what was supposed to happen.

This space, residing far from baseline, suddenly had a tear dimensional tear manifest, and from that manifest was Malpha! She was wearing some sort of black glove, which was carrying some spear in her hand. It was a dark, smooth wooden shaft, inlaid with markings and runes burned into the wood. Near its end was a thick metal band, and at its fore was a fierce and menacing spearhead.

Malpha hurled the spear straight at Nyarlathotep, who deftly dodged it - which was quite impressive on the spear's end, since the creature previously took every attack on the chin. Their faces also contorted in something not human, but there was *fear*. Acting quickly, you summoned the strength to stand up, and picked up the spear. You charged at Nyarlathotep, who was abandoning its degenerate fake face into some writhing mass to attack you. All of its ligaments were blown away by the spear, and before it could escape, you ran it through. The creature didn't bleed blood, but you knew it was dying, as it bitterly cursed you.

"You think that by defeating me, your life will return to normal...? It won't...You are too weak. Much too weak. Do you think that your victories thus far were ones that would never have consequences? You matter ape - your luck is based on what you have available to you. Tell me, what do you think are the most important things you have available to you...? The only peace you shall know is at death. And once you die, you'll never be able to be reborn as yourself like so many others can. Let fate toy with you, become a clown, then die. You'll understand in a few moments."

Nyarlathotep then fell apart into grotesque sludge. The spear you were holding clattered to the ground, the sludge breaking down even further on contact with it. You felt the structure around you returning to baseline, and you thought to thank Malpha for her help.

Malpha!

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Unfortunately, she wasn't in any condition to do so. You thought she was wearing some black gloves on her hand. That's not a glove, *that's her skin*. It was scorched black, and the rest of her body is following. She explained that the spear is the Spear of the Nonbeliever, or the Godless Lance. It was an ancient weapon from the ancient past of mankind, with the power to destroy gods and demons. Angels of her level would suffer scorch marks just from holding it, and possibly lose their arm. You asked her why she's losing *her entire body* then. She just smiled at you, and raised her blackened arm to wipe a tear from your face.

"Isn't it obvious? I was never really an Angel."

Indeed, she wasn't. Perhaps some part of you had always understood that, but she wasn't an angel. An angel could have simply opened the Ark. An angel wouldn't have to disguise a mauling as a divine smiting. An angel would likely not be able to interfere as much as she does. An angel would also, probably, not be able to summon a demon, in hindsight. She was, to anyone paying attention, very clearly a demon with a kind heart. The fact that the spear suddenly appeared before her, falling from the heavens, was a sign of Heaven being on her ward's side, and despite it literally killing her, she chose to bring it to him, as she was the only one who could.

You were always my angel, Malpha.

You hugged Malpha's body tightly, as her body began to decay. She released her wings for you to see - as you should have expected, they were jet black feathers, indicative of a demon. But something unusual happened - her wings had become pure white, which fit so much better with her. Tears filled her eyes, as her body was crackling with divine light.

"I'm an angel, for real this time. It's only for a few seconds, but I'm real. Isn't it great?"

An angel explodes in light, and you return to baseline. You reported a mission accomplished - you know exactly the Idea that should become the basis for the Nihility Mask - and indeed, on Christmas Day, the Real was completely locked away from reality. There was a great celebration, and in Abnormalities itself, you were appointed as Administrator of the Department, both for saving the whole damn universe, and your many previous works.

Personally, it all seemed to be a bit much.

Reward - Nihility Mask (Special Item): Now admittedly, calling this an "item" is misleading. It's more like a continuously active reality barrier that wards away any and all hostile eldritch forces. If this was in Marvel, for example, it would ward off groups like the

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Many-Angled Ones and Beyonders. In Lovecraft, the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods couldn't intrude into reality. Obviously, this has minimal effect if they are present because of a drawback.

As for the Spear? It seems to have been returned to Heaven. You couldn't bring yourself to keep the weapon that killed your angel. Your sweet angel - Malpha.

Isn't she lovely?

Isn't she wonderful?

Isn't she precious?

Less than one minute old

I never thought through love, we'd be

Making one as lovely as she

But isn't she lovely? Made from love



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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #15: Fragmentation of the Mind

"Elise?"

Mission

April 2, 1986

Several months have passed since you became the Administrator of the DoA, and things have both changed for the better and for worse. You still weren't fully over losing Malpha, but you could at least direct that energy into making things nicer.

You had done away with a not-insignificant amount of superfluous bureaucracy, and moved around employees to positions that better suited their skills. You greatly expanded the various research divisions, and dealt with [a certain cancerous division](#). There was still only so much you could do for friendly anomalies, but you were still able to establish an Integration Division for cooperative ones. Finally, you were able to bring several subordinates of yours together, for the creation of a personal mobile task force - MTF Rēsh-1 ("Seat of Consciousness"), led by Brynhildr, and comprised of her, Amamiya Shisui, Aki Hayakawa, Dahlia, Mary Volland, Pia, and Felicia.



But things aren't perfect now. A lot of the more problematic regulations in general came from on high, so you couldn't just do away with them all. You additionally had a significantly higher amount of paperwork to deal with, and while you could pawn off parts of it to Bryn and Shisui, what was left for you was still more than you were used to. This also came with the unpleasant fact that you had to more consistently interact with the various other American Normalcy Organizations, and also the President. Adam Spironi was the only one among them who you felt had a head on their shoulders. That dog from Pentagon, [General George Bowe](#), was extremely unpleasant to deal with. Any and all interactions with the [Department of Continuity](#) resulted in heavy drinking. They served as little more than jackbooted thugs that were the paranatural CIA, taking part in all sorts of highly unethical acts and crimes in the name of Normalcy. And if you described your opinions of Ronald Reagan and his administration, you'd probably be fired.

Additionally, there was the matter of Maria Jones.

Ever since October 27 in 1981, when you met her for the first time, you had become close to her. She was like a mother to you, and your constant work with Leslie meant you viewed her as a sister. It actually deeply frustrated you that you *always* got so much praise,

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yet Leslie, who'd joined you on nearly all of your adventures and was at this longer than you, got so little credit. As a result, it became a little frustrating and deeply uncomfortable that you were worried about whether Maria's mind was going.

For the past couple years, Maria had apparently been investigating [Abnormality #8976 \("Diagraphophobia"\)](#), some sort of possible infovore. This is highly problematic, as she's the only one thus far who has actually seen it, and her notes, after a certain point, cease looking like notes. What's more, her personality became more and more erratic, and her own notes were questionable at times. It looked less like an Infovore, and more like early onset dementia.

Your mission, along with that of Leslie and Mint, as it were, was to investigate Abnormality #8976, using the notes Maria left behind.

Rewards: +200 MP

...Following a thorough investigation, you and Leslie concluded that there was no anomalous phenomenon going on. This Infovore, should it exist only seems to have eaten articles already slated for deletion, and the most egregious things lost were Maria's own memories. Understandably, while Occam's razor isn't as ironclad as those subject to the Veil believe, there is very little reason to think there is some abnormality responsible for these things, especially since Leslie personally interviewed Maria, and as the days passed, she'd completely forgotten even her face. So, with a heavy heart, she was relieved of duty, and sent to retire to a nice place. She could be alone for a while, before a caretaker would have to be sent.

Unfortunately, two weeks after her reliefment, you and Leslie went to her house, and found it in disarray. You checked the upstairs, while Leslie searched the ground floor. All around the upstairs were trash, pictures, and videos of various historical events. Even in her bedroom, you found something that made your heart skip a beat: a picture of Maria and Leslie, with you awkwardly posing with them. It was the first picture with them that you ever took.

A horrible scream from downstairs caused you to race down as fast as possible. As you did, some strange shadowy entity was gnawing on Leslie's head - and on the floor in a daze was Maria, her brain matter clearly visible. In an instant, you pulled out the Director's Gun, and mag-dumped the entity. You then grabbed it by the throat, as Constance burned it to ashes.

You hastily called Abnormalities to get them emergency assistance, and you began crying, as you were losing another family.



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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #16: Requiem for Love

"Oh, you, there is no one I adore more. You, who must have risked life and limb, to be here with me, forevermore. The last words I wrote before I was cast into this endless abyss, by the immortals seeking to protect this world and all its inhabitants. Wrapped in darkness, alone, void of all emotion, I once more feel a presence, signaling my return. Love's fervent seal, a spark of light in this ocean. Now, there is little left for you to do before I am free and we can be together, and those who trapped me within these pages shall rue locking away this beauty forever."



Mission

June 6, 1986 ("Date 666"; Informally)

Two months and two days had passed since the Infovore made its physical appearance. Miraculously, both Maria and Leslie were saved, and their conditions had stabilized. However, while their brains and skulls could be mended, their actual memories and what made them able to exist were, if not gone, then effectively buried to the surface, and couldn't be recovered through any available means.

You kept them in stasis, hoping they could be saved. *Please, please let them be saved. If anyone deserved this, it was me, not them. I couldn't trust the woman I loved like a mother. They can't stay like this, please.*

Perhaps it's time for you to begin to make up for your failure. Abnormalities were invading Abnormality #2602, [which used to be an opera house](#). It had a number of things that were indicative of a thing that was likely an opera house, such as a massive outpouring of Tartarean Energy that induces [Musicohazards](#). It also has things that are natural to former opera houses, such as being discovered buried beneath the Earth, likely translocated from somewhere in the Middle East 9000 years ago. It also has a great number of forbidden books with infohazardous factors, including [a book allegedly singing about being unloved](#).

Your mission is to free the lady trapped within the book. The book and general library spoke of her being a threat to the world itself, but all you can see is someone who wants to be loved. It has been 9000 years: anyone isolated for that long would have long-since abandoned their goals - not to mention that she's apparently been greatly weakened.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

You doomed two people you cared for out of a lack of trust. Don't fuck this up again.

Rewards: +200 MP

Traversing down what is likely a former opera house, you find the book that is chained by magic, and break the locks holding it in place. You recite the book and place it down on the ground. Emerging from the book, in all their glory, is a beautiful demoness with red eyes and black-and-blue. She sings a...well...[*interesting song*](#) for you. Her power, though allegedly weakened, was certainly strong enough to spook the shit out of everyone near you, as she teleported and hugged you from behind, asking if you liked her song.

She was very confused at all that she learned: that she was locked away in a temple (the infohazardous nature of the "opera house" thing was neutralized by her) thousands of years ago, with her followers gone. Despite that, she was happy because she had you, whose heart had plenty of love for her.

At last, she would give you her name: Nerissa Ravencroft. You thought it was beautiful.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #17: Turn Your Back on Mother Nature

"Say that you'll never, never, never, never need it.

One headline, why believe it?

Everybody wants to rule the world."

Mission

April 20, 1987

It's been approximately ten months since you met Nerissa Ravencroft, and since then, it's been an experience like none other.



Nerissa (or "Rissa", as you'd taken to calling her), though apparently disconnected from the current day by an incalculable degree, was able to pick up on things very quickly, and she was highly competent in practically everything she put her mind to. She was quite proud of herself, but grumbled that her power came from [the Brothers Death](#). They were, according to her, all-powerful beings who presided over death - and while they were three beings, the reality is that they were the split incarnation of [the Boatman](#).

Her hatred of them came from the fact that she knew for a fact that they were responsible for her sealing. Additionally, she was confused at him saying her followers were long gone because that was logically incoherent. Her voice, at her full power, dominated her entire universe. She was a Goddess! And yet, she was translocated to this world, and she states that if the Brothers were behind it, then [that world was likely gone](#). Now obviously, several members of Rēsh-1 advised you to treat her words with at least a grain of salt - the fact she casually revealed that fact about her followers was a red flag, because if the Brothers broke her horn to stop her singing from doing that again, then she's definitely able to do some sort of mind control. At the same time, you pointed out that she had the self-awareness to know it would likely not go over well with them if she thought that was completely unjustified, so she's changed at least a little.

In any case, Nerissa was made to be your official Secretary. Obviously, this did not exactly go over well with your cohorts, but they calmed down upon thinking it through. Beyond being [absolutely stunning](#) to the eye, her being your secretary meant she wasn't trying to get into a position of considerable power - which was good on account of the fact that she was both a literal demon and had a known fixation on you. There was also the matter of her powers: Nerissa was the most powerful abnormality that they had on record, as her power over reality, thoughts, and minds was pretty much impossible to actually deal with. It was thanks to you putting her in such a close position that she was willing to play nice.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Somewhat ironically though, despite the current president's alleged religiosity, at least had the decency of having the demon you were connected to be subordinate to you.

Yeah, your associate, Adam Spironi, found something rather ominous: it is incredibly likely that the President of the United States was [highly compromised](#), and has been for quite awhile - possibly since Andrew Johnson in 1865. You were unaware of what exactly he meant by that, until you brought Rissa with you to a "Round Table Meeting". At the end of it, Rissa stated the President "smelled like a bull and the burned charnel of children." - in other words, [Moloch](#) was behind this.

That was...*not* what you wanted to hear. Seriously, it was the last thing you wanted. You hated Reagan, you really, truly hated him. But part of you wanted to think he practiced what he preached, even if what he preached was [Jesus as a supply-side economist](#). But no, turns out he's just a self-serving shithead. Before you could explode at someone, you asked for privacy, and began to play [your favorite song](#). At the end of the melody...

For all freedom, end their pleasure

You can't let this last forever

Everybody wants to rule the world

Your eyes darted wide, as you heard lyrics that very definitely weren't accurate. When you rewound the song, it played as normal. Did you just imagine that, or was that [a message](#)? You didn't know, but you weren't sure you cared. If you didn't do something about this...well, who would? Spironi told you because he couldn't do something about it, but you could. You gathered Rissa, Mint, and Rēsh-1 to your side, and gave a simple warning: *What I am about to do is tantamount to treason. Nevertheless, I will not stop you if you reject me.*

Without even a hint of nervousness, they all immediately sided with you, before, during, and after you even explained the situation. They didn't care much for Reagan - they arguably didn't even care much for America. What they cared about was you, because no matter what, you've never steered them wrong. That was...rather distressing, admittedly, because that wasn't exactly the standard love of a friend, and more like an idol. Nonetheless, your mission is the invasion of the Washington Underground, and termination of all involved parties.

Rewards: +200 MP

As it turns out, getting rid of a cabal of eschatological fascists was remarkably easy when you didn't give a shit about propriety, who'd have guessed?

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Tsar Nicholas II, or whatever that bloated carcass was since 987 CE, was very much dead. Phyllis Schlafly was ironically drowned, considering the gills. The same went for Rushdoony, Ted Bundy, and Pontius Pilate. The honor of taking out Reagan was all yours, and you couldn't be happier.

Strangely, despite you having two arms and an actually functional face being her doing, *this* managed to be the best application of Mint's healing magic. Reagan tried to defend himself, saying that he was just the enforcer, the messenger. You instead just came out to him as bisexual, stating that the two of them are quite opposed on many things. Afterwards, Constance burned out his mind - it was easier to have people think he died of dementia than anything else.

The final measure to deal with was Moloch itself. Manifesting as a golden statue, it told you that the system it made would still continue, but now America might not. You, patriotic as ever, informed Moloch that it was wrong. The system it maintained would continue for a while longer, perhaps indefinitely - but regressive beliefs like his are fundamentally flawed, and give way to the future. You released an explosive to the golden statue of Moloch, and it came crashing down - you had to make a mad dash with everyone to escape the collapsing Washington Underneath, but you succeeded. Naturally, with all the evidence, you nor your cohorts were punished for killing the President - though you did get some side-eyes when you wished Vice President George H.W. Bush a good rest of the time as President.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #18: The Mandela Adventure

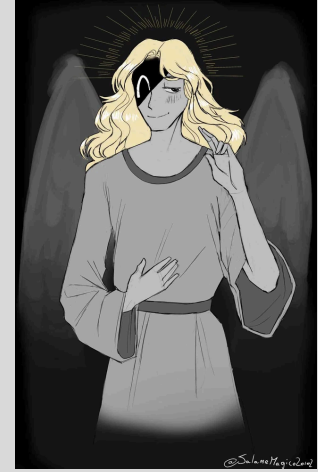
"Haven't you ever read a comic book, you big freaking nerd? There's always a happy ending."

Mission

March 7, 1988

You know, realistically, you probably should have expected all the inexplicably divine things.

Mandela County was, as you'd apparently been learning, was both a place that existed, and was also the proving grounds of powerful, deadly beings known as [Alternates](#). They seem to be demons or otherworldly entities from a separate dimension. They take the forms of humans (though their appearances can be slightly or extremely off), and whisper cognitohazardous information in the ears of those who hear it. Typically, those who hear it, without high enough Cognitive Resistance Value or ability to resist, commits suicide.



Naturally, you figured that this was a pretty significant threat, because even if they don't spread beyond Mandela County, it was increasingly hard to disguise the deaths as anything but supernatural. Immediately, you, Mint, Rissa, and Rēsh-1 were flown out. It would be the first "field" mission that Rissa was actually sent on with your group, because save for Reagan, she was restricted to ACS-19. But now, she is invaluable, as her song is actually able to overwrite cognitohazards and infohazards.

Soon after travelling there, you found out there was some sort of head honcho to these creatures: the Archangel Gabriel? That definitely didn't sound right to your ears. Your mission here is to both neutralize any Alternate problems around, and to identify the true identity of this so-called angel.

Rewards: +200 MP

So, it *wasn't* Gabriel! That was honestly pretty easy to figure out, actually.

Investigation of the Alternates led to the conclusion that they were part of some sort of power struggle in Hell. You could determine it by way of the fact that the Alternates you captured make it sound like Lucifer is the one in charge of Hell. You know that's inaccurate because your encounters with Malphas and later Paimon confirmed it's Satanas (Satan, who is apparently a woman). Speaking of which, these creatures are little more than

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

speaking animals, as they aren't particularly able to outwit you, and banishing them is as simple as denial of their power.

Their leader though, was an entirely separate story. Near the church, the sky went dark, similar to the story of the nativity ("Night fell upon them in an instant, and all the color was drained from the world. An angel appeared to them, and they were terrified."). Arriving in the church, you kicked the doors open, and before you was Gabriel - or rather, Lucifer. You then immediately attempted to shoot him in the head as he tried to do some monologue about how cool he is or [how he's fooled mankind or some shit](#). Lucifer, the Sin of Pride, is not a particularly clever or complex individual. The Alternates were created by him to stoke terror into humans, and perhaps take over the world.

Unfortunately, fighting Lucifer is not something you can just *do*. Though you successfully shot him, it didn't do shit. What's more, while Lucifer wasn't one to directly fight, they very much could, and pretty much all of your team went down quite quickly. All with the exception of Rissa, though even she was clearly struggling - though not with fighting. Actually, you could tell she wasn't giving it her all.

Yet, as Lucifer raised his hand at you, a flash of hellish light shot towards you faster than you could perceive. Rissa managed to close the gap, just barely, as a howl of pain from her cut through the blinding light.

...When the light began to die down, you called out for Rissa, and she responded...you think?

"I'm...I'm fine."

Her voice sounded terribly distorted, and shaking off the haze, you took a look at her face, and your eyes widened.

To be frank, you were aware that demons didn't necessarily look as human as they disguised themselves as. Malphas looked frightening to you back then because he was a rare example of one simply not masking their looks. Rissa though, due to her maintaining her appearance so well, was one you thought did look human. You were most certainly mistaken, as the light didn't seem to actually *hurt* Nerissa, but it didn't happen to flay her skin in places, giving you a glimpse of her form. It was...well, some might call it grotesque. Actually, a lot of people would do so. It's quite gruesome to look at it.

[<<<SEE NERISSA RAVENCROFT'S PARTIAL TRUE FORM \[CONTENT WARNING\]>>>](#)

"What's wrong, Romeo? Why do you look like that?"

She seemed almost worried for you, until she realized her arm looked terribly bird-like, and feeling her mouth, she noticed it protruded like a beak rather than lips. She realized what was going on, and her still disguised eye widened in terror, as she let out a horrifying screech - something between a woman's cry and a raven dying.

"No! No! No! Not this ugly form! How dare you!"

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

The screech became even louder and more distorted, as she began shredding off the...skinsuit she appeared to be wearing, seemingly growing in size by at least a full meter, and launched herself at Lucifer. She chose to forego any sort of fighting style, and opted purely to maul Lucifer; biting, tearing, stomping, and shredding their body

Rissa!

She'd been gnawing on what was likely the ruins of the physical body of Lucifer's ribs, when she heard your voice. Her bird-like body was human enough that you saw her flinch in fear of you, or perhaps what you wanted to say: ***"Don't look at me. Don't look at me, Romeo. Please don't look. I'll go back to the other form soon. Just don't look at me!"***

What? Why would I not look at you?

"Because this form is hideous!" She snapped, ***"Everyone who's ever looked at this hideous form of mine is scared! Every single one! So, I-I made a different form that's appealing to them."***

You walked up to Rissa, as she seemed so scared, a far cry from when you first met her. You stepped over Lucifer's mangled remains (though Spiritual Lifeforms like that were likely still alive), gingerly held her head up...and gave her a kiss.

For a number of reasons, you were obviously not very good at kissing giant birds, and she was clearly not used to kissing in this form either. Still, it was a nice kiss, and when you parted due to requiring oxygen, she was so happy yet confused: ***"You...like this form?"***

You told her that the form she took was irrelevant in your eyes. She was just Rissa to him - she'd always be Rissa to him, and he liked Rissa. She took you into a hug, and for a brief moment, her feathery body (caked in blood and gore) was euphoric. She then put you down, and Lucifer's spiritual body began leaving the ruined material one, she clenched her fist. ***"I have power from the Boatman, who ferries mortals between life and the Dream. Allow me to show you what that looks like - or rather, I suppose you read it."***

Lucifer's ghostly form was slowly being sucked back into Hell, and though featureless in this state, seemed like an insufferably smug asshole as you: *"Well, I have it to hand it to you, I lost. But it doesn't matter. This is but a setback. Satanus will forgive me, as she always does, and I will try again, in the future. So this is--!"*

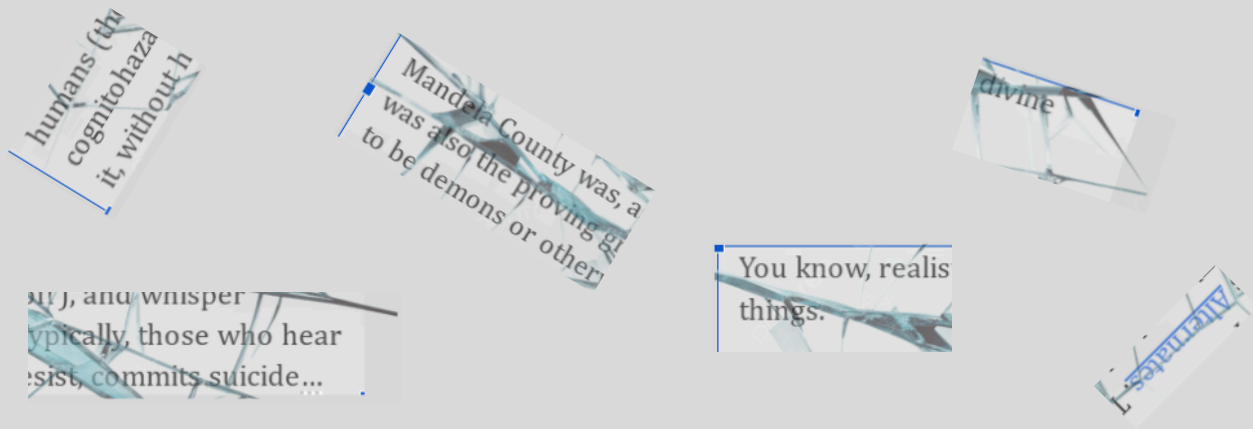
*Rissa practically teleported in front of him, and cocked her fist: **"NO. YOU WON'T. GOODBYE FOREVER."***

You know, realistically, you probably should have expected all the inexplicably divine things.

Mandela County was, as you'd apparently been learning, was both a place that existed, and was also the proving grounds of powerful, deadly beings known as [Alternates](#). They seem to be demons or otherworldly entities from a separate dimension. They take the forms of humans (though their appearances can be slightly or extremely off), and whisper cognitohazardous information in the ears of those who hear it. Typically, those who hear it, without high enough Cognitive Resistance [Value](#) or ability to resist, commits suicide...

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION



...On March 7, 1988, nothing of interest was going on. At least until Rissa, who'd been up before you, revealed a comic book to you, titled ***CHRONICLES OF ABNORMALITIES: THE MANDELA ADVENTURE!***. It was apparently you, Mint, Rissa, and Rēsh-1 travelled to (the very fictional Mandela County), to deal with strange doppelganger creatures known as Alternates, and stopped Lucifer. The art was fascinating, and the fictionalized first encounter between you and her true form was fascinating (though you already knew about how she "really" looked, not that it mattered). However, there were some oddities. Namely the fact that Lucifer was some random dude - Lucifer was a woman, and also a snake in charge of [the Wanderer's Library](#). There was also the odd reading of Luke 2:8-9.

Nonetheless, you kissed her humanoid self, and told her it was lovely - and it was.

Reward - Nice Comic (Perk Reward): Did Rissa actually change history? That would be quite absurd. However, you now have something similar to that. Should you be in an unwinnable situation, or should you have actually succeeded in your mission, you may "retcon" the events. You can have them just wind up being a predictive comic of a "bad end" that you can attempt to avoid. Optionally, should you have succeeded, you can reduce your target to unreality, and existence and reshape itself to have always been without them. You may do this once per Jump.

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EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #19: The Ashes of Hope

"console.log ("6: WAN in ITS benevolence, spoke to Hedwig once more. IT said, "Do as I will, and smite this insignificant creature. Its existence has defied ME, and from its blood, I shall be made whole. This is my will, Saint Hedwig.);"

Mission

January 22, 1989

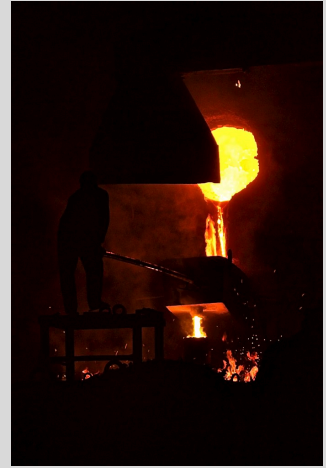
You had a new friend!

It has been nearing two years since your liquidation of the Washington Underneath. Unsurprisingly, very little actually changed much in that time, though Bush was surprisingly more competent than you expected. However, the fact he was part of the CIA, and subsequently felt similar fondness for the Department of Continuity soured your opinions considerably. Despite that, your relationship was cordial.

Anyway, a few months ago, you would meet Junior Researcher Mathis Darkwood. He was a roughly 22-year-old greenhorn (though you were just 29, your experience made you something of an old soul), who began in engineering. He was a very odd kid, with a literal smithing forge and a love of military history. He also had absolutely no understanding of who you were as a person, and lacked a sense of social cues, but was highly competent at reading faces, which he apparently learned to see if people were bored of his rambling. As a result, when you first met him to welcome him to ACS-19, he said something...quite illuminating: *"You seem kind of sad. Are you okay?"*

Since then, you've unsurprisingly taken him under your wing. Personal feelings aside, he was actually a pretty brilliant kid, and had a fondness for learning new things. When you brought him on various adventures (or rather, he went with Rēsh-1, as you gradually began needing to show up less and less), he was always excited about everything.

One day though, Mathis came to you with some alarming information - apparently, there was some sort of snowstorm in the Amazon that appeared, which seems to be expanding and freezing things rapidly. The Hanatô tribe of Native Americans, for example, apparently all froze to death and decomposed within hours. If this wasn't seen as just a case of climate change, it was seen as anomalous for a very wrong reason. Latin America was already a mess as a result of Cold War affairs, but its occult dealings were already troublesome. Several Normalcy Organizations thought it might be related to [Las Viboras](#).



THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

It became considerably less like some strange political scheme to you when you learned from Mint that Maxwellists (a sect of the [Church of the Broken God](#)), had been spotted in **her old home before Azari saved her**. She rarely talked about it, but it was a traumatic thing for her, which was why her loyalty has always been towards *you*, not [the ones who killed her people](#). You spent time trying to calm her down, before you received the rather terrifying news that they fucking *nuked* **the grove of exiled ones**.

Mathis was no Maxwellist, but he was extremely nosy during any encounters with them, and could pretty well guide ALLMIND into breaking into their databases. Apparently, Saint Hedwig, operating under some strange delusion, was told by WAN (Another name for Mekhane) to process the fae into pygnite, some odd metal that can apparently hold their God. Any matters with **the fae hell** was something deliberately ignored, because nobody wanted to deal with the complicated nature of nameless fae, and their apparent compulsion in stealing names was pretty hard to justify in any fashion. It took convincing to have people think Mint didn't steal the name she has (it was given to her by Azari). In other words, even if they could prove a connection between the Maxwellist genocide attempt and the snowstorm, you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who felt particularly bad about it beyond the simple fact that killing people is usually wrong. They were not perfect victims, and quite frankly, you struggled with encounters outside of Mint where interactions with fae were remotely pleasant.

Despite that, you got ready to fight anyway. Pragmatically, considering the past massacre of the fae resulted in heightened anomalous activity, it was a good guess that they were behind it. Emotionally, you could not abide in the wanton slaughter of a group in the name of *anything*, much less the nebulous voice of something you can't verifiably prove is your God. Socially, you'd been around far too many women to know that "they had it coming" is not justification for anything. Personally, you just really hated seeing Mint so distraught. Your mission is to wipe out the Maxwellists responsible for the assault on **that fucking annoying dwelling**.

Rewards: +200 MP

It was a fearsome conflict indeed, but by the end of it, the Maxwellists were ultimately taken out. Obviously, you didn't wipe out every single one of them, because that'd be impractical and counterintuitive. Despite that, several hundred were wiped out, including Saint Hedwig herself. You didn't exactly feel bad for that, and hoped [she suffered](#), though you quietly regretted that last part. The matter of the snowstorm was resolved by Mathis. Because the snowstorm ceased its expansion, it was now able to be resolved, and he solved it through the batshit plan of [briefly igniting the atmosphere](#) over the Amazon.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Things weren't so peachy though. The Maxwellists' ritual caused tens, if not hundreds of thousands of deaths, and exterminated several indigenous cultures. The fae within **the decimated land** died in droves, with upwards of 40% of them dying. You were already nervous about the likely proliferation of abnormalities that would occur - but you did what you could, and spent the rest of the night with Mint.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #20: Final Escape

*"All die off someday!
Your end comes today!
With them gone, what is one more?
Your screams I shall adore! Oh"*

Mission

July 4, 1991



Isn't this a really shitty Fourth of July? Not that you'd been celebrating it very much.

It has been two-and-a-half years since the successful neutralization of the radical Maxwellist sect, and your worries about the future were indeed accurate. Abnormalities had boomed in discoveries by approximately 300% since then, and the DoA has been absolutely run ragged in containment of them all. The Mothman. [The rubber-hose creature](#). [The Midnight Game](#). [Unnerving Lost Media of all types](#). [The Rake](#). [That thing with a Siren for a head](#). [The matter of Amityville](#). All of these high-profile issues had come up in just a few months - you could list dozens more. Quite frankly, it was tiring - if you weren't cooped up with tons of paperwork, then you were going to dozens of locations in a row, to the point where terminating the abnormalities if they weren't at least semi-cooperative was the optimal route to go with.

You did have some good times, of course. Rēsh-1 was loyal to a fault, and regularly were with you. Mint had become extremely close after that matter, even more than previously. Mathis had grown into a fine and fun person to work with, who made your time cooped up in ACS-19 worth it. Ahti was also another shining light - you'd understood his odd Finnish idioms, and could understand what he meant.

But perhaps the one who made you happiest was Nerissa herself - because she was pregnant. Yeah, that was both wonderful and an absolute goddamn nightmare to deal with. According to Nerissa, she was actually surprised she could have kids at all - her creators did not have such an authority over creating life. Demons in general also have shitty fertility, and can go thousands of years between ever having any. Still, considering the public wasn't aware they existed anyway, and there was really no way anyone could tell Nerissa no, life continued on - and in three months, you'd be a dad. Congratulations

Anyway, back to reality. It seemed you were dealing with *another* haunted game. Frankly, it was not a novel experience, even remotely. The first time you dealt with one was all the

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

way back when it was just you, Mint, and Malpha - [some arcade game whose name escapes you](#). You supposed this one was unique in that it was certainly quick to be haunted. *Sonic the Hedgehog* released just last month, yet the Foundation had found a copy of the game with some spectral bullshit on it. The disc itself has writing on it: [SONIC.EXE](#).

You found the name stupid. Yes, your mind is currently not in its best state.

Unfortunately, this haunted game is actually dangerous. When a researcher chose to play through it, they wound up getting sucked into the game, endlessly hunted and repeatedly tortured by some creature with a demented model of Sonic, calling itself “Xenophanes”, or “X”, or “Lord X”, or “God” - it had a very high opinion of itself. Admittedly though, it *was* actually very dangerous, and despite insisting on calling it “Outbreak Malware Threat” to mitigate its influence on the psyche, it seems to have nigh-omnipotent power within its domain, and if they manage to escape into baseline, then they might very well become a threat to the Universe at large.

Mathis, who’d been overseeing the issue, concluded that just burning the disc wouldn’t work. It’d shut the portal to the other world, but the problem is that it still exists. Not to mention that there were still people trapped inside the dimension. Rissa suggested she go in to resolve it, but the problem is that Xenophanes has to allow you into the dimension, and it seemed smart enough to not let Rissa into the dimension. Strictly speaking, they had no way of actually defeating Xenophanes until he manifested in baseline reality - and even then, it could be too late. This had genuinely become an existential threat.

Luckily though, Mathis had apparently figured out a way to neutralize Xenophanes. He mentioned that he learned about it from the same storage yard you learned how to create ALLMIND from. He stated it was extremely sensitive however, and that it’ll kill anyone stuck inside it, so they had to be extremely precise. Meanwhile, you would go inside the game with your Wormhole Gun from the battle with Edwin Black (which was recalibrated by Mathis, and further tempered to protect from reality manipulation - at least for a time. You can bring it into the world, try and rescue as many people as you can, and free yourself. You brought up the logistical problem of Xenophanes attempting to just use the gun to try and escape - Rissa would be watching the entrance point, and as she put it, “you won’t even remember OMT existed if he tries”. You know your mission, so pick the controller.

Reward: +200 MP

The world of OMT was a terrifying one indeed, at least insofar as this sort of world can look like. Its dark skies, bloodied animals, and screams were distressing. But in spite of it

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

You had one more bullet left, so put it to your chin, and pressed the trigger.

[DATA LOST]

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

You wiped your pants off of the dust on the floor, and considered it a job well done. You were about ready to thank Mathis, before he started falling to the floor. He told you that the recalling magic he did was...not exactly something he could do under normal circumstances. And Mint's magic could be interfered with by OMT. As a result, he made sure that he always had at least one failsafe to ensure *you* could escape. But something like that is tantamount to saving someone from death, so [he made a deal](#) for it.

You panicked, and called Mint to come over immediately. *Not you. Please not you. You're the only one here who looks at me like I'm some stupid idiot. You're like an annoying little brother. Please don't leave me too.*

"I'm sorry, Rom. But if one of us has to go, I'd rather it be me."

Mathis then expired just as Mint arrived, not that he'd live if she was there from the start. You did not stop cradling him for a long while.

THE MANOR AND THE SEA

EXTRA PART: SEMBLANCE RECOLLECTION

Scenario #21: The Crimson Savior

"Red is pain. Red is sorrowful. But Red is love. Red is joy. Above all, Red is passion. You, your Foundation, were so preoccupied with the pain it blinded you. Hurt was all you could see. All you could focus on."

Mission

August 1, 1991

When did you start to lose yourself to all of this? Was it when you lost Mathis? Leslie and Maria? Malpha? Maybe you'd been slowly dying since that time in the Ark? It hasn't even been a month since you'd lost Mathis, and simply put, you don't think you've been able to recover. Maybe you never will.

As always, you had people. You weren't alone. You had Rēsh-1. You had Mint. You had Rissa. So why did everything hurt so painfully?



"You're the Boss, aren't you? You managed to even beat Papa, and helped me make so many friends!"

"Rom, you saved my people. You've saved me. You can do anything, I know you can."

"You make me so happy, Darling. I can't wait until our daughter is born."

That was probably why. They loved you, and you truly loved them. But there was a wall between you and them. They believed in the absolute best possible version of yourself, who could never fail and would always pull through in even the most dire situations. Part of that was your own fault, because your stupid self refused to show yourself to them in any way except the most confident way. Now, you'd won and defeated so many forces that your rep sheet was simply too big to have their minds changed. You were put on a pedestal you didn't deserve, and the blood of those who saw the pedestal put you on it. This is what it meant to be a victim of your own success - and you'll take it to your grave.

There's nothing to be done at this point, except for throwing yourself into work, and winning, as you always do. There's been a certain "cult" that arose, calling themselves [The Church of Jesus Christ, the King in Scarlet](#). Though allegedly Christian, they fell into the same sort of traps as any christofascist group. The version of Jesus they worshipped, and the version of the Bible they read were caricatures that serve no purpose but their own

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agendas. This one was even worse, as they didn't even seem to worship Jesus - instead, they worshiped some godhead known as "The Scarlet". You aren't sure if they always worshiped the Scarlet, or if blood, death, hatred of the other, and hypermasculinity just caused it to become that. You weren't sure it mattered.

The rhetoric of their speeches was exactly as you suspect. You thought maybe it'd be special with *something*. Maybe they'd spice it up a little with some egregious anomalous claim. But no, it was just the same thing. Jesus was coming soon. He'll come riding down on his white horse of conquests. He'll put to the sword all the blasphemers and apostates and heathens and Satanists and homosexuals and Jews and immigrants and leeches and whores and junkies and ■■■■■-lovers.

It's the same shit. Over and over and over and over and over again. You were tired of it. You were tired of them. You were tired of it all. Get rid of them. Whether they're anomalous or nonanomalous or dead or maimed. It doesn't matter. [Burn it to the ground.](#)

Reward: +200 MP

Your haze of rage subsided as the Church, or what passed for one was covered in bodies and blood. You didn't know whose blood it was, and you aren't sure you really cared. What you really cared for was: why didn't this make you feel better? You thought it'd be so cathartic, to just let loose on these worms who deserved it. So why?

BECAUSE IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING. BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT REALLY CHANGING THE WORLD BY GETTING RID OF ONE OF THESE GROUPS. BECAUSE THERE ARE MILLIONS JUST LIKE THEM.

You looked at the glowing orb of blood that suddenly appeared from the chalice of red wine atop the pulpit. The glow of the orb dyed the entire area in red. You didn't even look at the phase. *What are you supposed to be? Their god? Do you want to take over the world?*

NOTHING OF THE SORT. I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THEM. I APPEARED BECAUSE YOU INTERESTED ME.

And why is that?

BECAUSE I CAN READ YOUR HISTORY. YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR THIS WORLD AND IT'S PEOPLE. IF YOU DIED RIGHT NOW, YOU'D BE CONTENT, YET YOU WON'T GIVE UP. WHY?

Because if I give up, everyone I love might die. I can't give up here, not when the job isn't finished.

AND WHEN THE JOB IS FINISHED, YOU CAN'T DIE YET EITHER, BECAUSE ANOTHER JOB MAY APPEAR RIGHT AFTER. THE JOB WILL NEVER BE FINISHED, AND YOU'LL BREAK BEFORE YOU BEND

If that is the case, then fine. I love them, and I'll never stop doing so. Not like your adherents would get that.

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**THEY ARE NO MORE MY ADHERENTS THAN SOMEONE WHO USES MAGNIFYING GLASSES TO COOK
ANTS ARE THE SUN'S DEVOTEES. TELL ME, WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM?**

Blood. Fire. Aggression. Regression. Danger. Honestly the list goes on.

**YOU ARE ONLY HALF TRUE. I AM THE SCARLET - EVERYTHING ASSOCIATED WITH RED IS ALSO
ASSOCIATED WITH ME. I AM ALL OF THOSE THINGS, AND SO MUCH MORE. I AM EVERY COUPLE WHO
MARRIED FOR LOVE. I AM EVERY BOTTLE OF WINE AT A PARTY. I AM EVERY ROSE AND RED RUBY. I
AM EVERY INFANT WHO HAS COME FROM A WOMB. I AM EVERY BLUSHING FACE. I AM EVERY RED BOX
OF POPCORN AT A MOVIE. I AM A BOWL STRAWBERRIES. I AM MANY MANY THINGS - NEGATIVITY &
POSITIVITY ARE ARBITRARY AND SUBJECTIVE NOTIONS. ALL THINGS ARE CONJOINED.**

And now I'm in a philosophical lesson, great. Well, thank you for explaining it anyway.

BEFORE YOU GO, I HAVE A FINAL QUESTION TO ASK OF YOU.

Ask way,

**DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS ANYTHING BEYOND A KING? AT THE HIGHEST OF HIGHS, IS THERE ANY
FORCE GREATER?**

*...A Jester, maybe? Fools are sometimes the only ones who can make jokes and light on the monarch. Everyone
else has to bow, while the Fool gets the laugh.*

...AN INTERESTING ANSWER. THANK YOU - AND FAREWELL. I DO APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT IS TO COME.

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Scenario #22: Stone Cold

"You will never be a good person."

Mission

August 14, 1991

This world is awful. It's awful. It's awful. That was ultimately the feeling about the world at this point. It was genuinely goddamn miserable.



How long would you have to do this? How long would you have to be the one at the front and center of American containment, because you were the best at this job? You have, just yesterday, had to deal with [those accursed Sarkic bastards](#). They were attempting to summon their Grand Karcist, or some jackass pretending to be Ion. You aren't really sure, and you aren't sure you care, as it led to you and the rest of Abnormalities needing to work with the UIU, Pentagonam Continuity to effectively wipe their group out before they doomed everyone.

Speaking of Continuity, they were the ones who honestly made things worse. For every one time they helped, there were ten times they fucked absolutely everything up. Continuity had evidence of [that wretched creature](#) existing since 1989, but decided to classify it as an Archon. Archon - AKA "containment is theoretically possible, but would be ill-advised." There are certainly several Archon abnormalities that you were aware of, but those ones were left alone because their existence was conceptual in nature, and would fuck up the world if impeded. Abnormality #2291 was not conceptual in nature, and its existence actively caused threats to the Veil itself. When Abnormalities sent an inquest to Continuity, the reason for this was pretty damn clear: they were just incomprehensibly lazy and transphobic. You found transsexuals to be quite odd, but you typically found live and let live to be the much better solution. 2291 was swiftly terminated following the inquest.

But 2291 was really just the microcosm of the underlying problem: Normalcy was a fucking joke. For a long while, you thought it was something cool - like a club you were lucky to be invited into. That idea then transformed into a strong sense of responsibility: abnormalities could be, and many times *were* extremely dangerous. But now, *now*, after much thinking and stress, you realized that Normalcy was a crock of shit. It means little more than "whatever is most convenient to the current paradigm" in all circumstances. Queer people were typically anti-capitalist because capitalist systems usually also hated them, so circular reasoning caused anti-queer abnormalities to be given far more leeway.

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[Roleplaying to be someone you prefer rather than who you are](#) is perceived as something strange and foreign to old fools, so they tried to have that be anomalous as an excuse to stop it. [Challenging authoritarian systems propped up by anomalous assistance](#) is seen as anti-Normalcy, despite the fact that this is so blatantly hypocritical that you didn't feel the need to explain why.

The point is that this system is not one that is particularly good for you or anyone else. Despite every little victory you have, agonizing failure and strife are before you.

The watershed moment of this would begin in the town of Sunny, Michigan, following the discovery of the [Demon Eyes Abnormality](#). It is a cognitohazardous sickness that causes anyone who looks into the eyes of the current host to suffer a painful end, and it seems to want to spread the virus. Abnormalities and Continuity were able to swiftly [deal with all instances outside Sunny](#), but the actual town had to be swiftly locked away in a spatial box.

Due to the nature of the abnormality, combined with the potential for [rapid mutation](#), it was seen as pretty much unanimous that the entire town had to be destroyed to remove all chances for it to spread. The only person who thought otherwise was you, and so you countered it. You pointed out that the spatial trap prevents it from breaching, and so long as they use proper precautions, creating a countermeasure to save the people is entirely possible.

So, you are giving a fairly short time frame to develop a countermeme that can neutralize the Demon Eyes. If you are successful, then surely you can save the people of Sunny and finally do right by the world, with no strings attached.

This was your hometown. Where you grew up. You had to succeed here.

Rewards: +200 MP

It's the end of the road. The final true memory. You failed.

Well, that's not fair. You actually did succeed in creating the countermeme. There wasn't much time left to spare, but you and your team, after multiple sleepless weeks, succeeded in creating it. The mutation of the cognition vectors caused Abnormalities to realize that specializing wasn't going anywhere, and creating a strong-ass general countermeme was the proper solution, and it worked. It was slightly overbudget, but it worked, right?

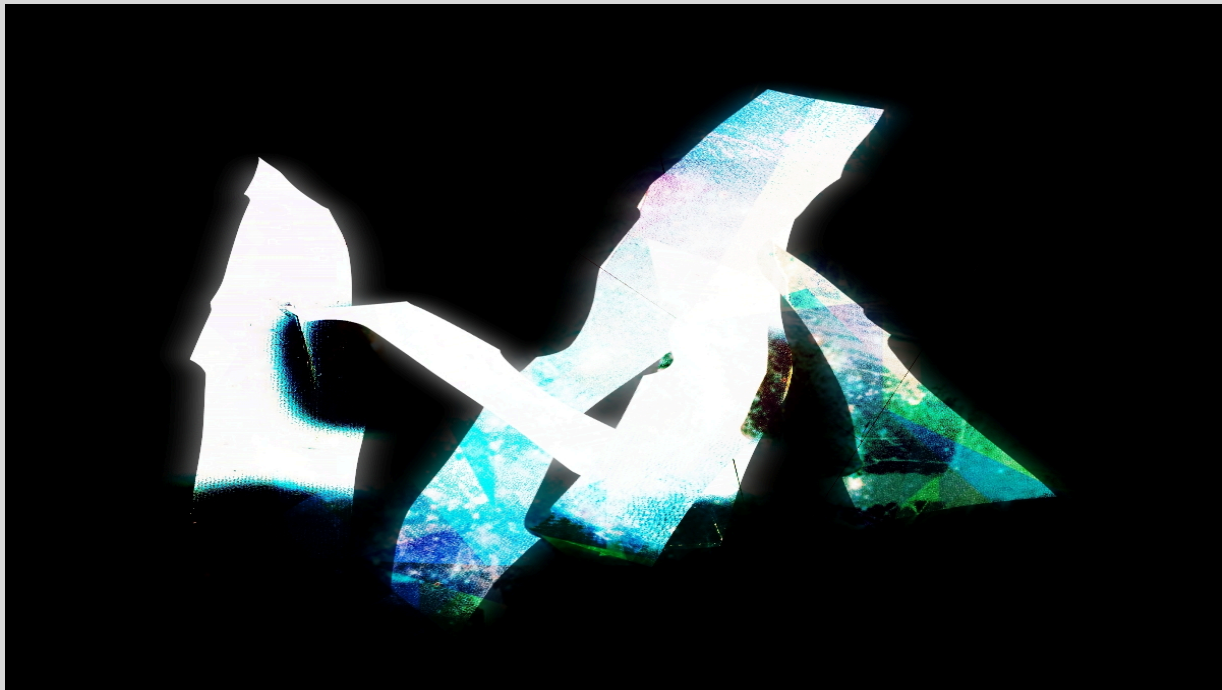
Well, no. The fact that you created a countermeme that could purge the Demon Eyes, and honestly, any goddamn memetic plague, wasn't what was important. No, it was the fact that you went over-budget, that you couldn't "afford" to create enough of it. Never mind that

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PENTAGRAM routinely goes over budget on every fucking project they make. Never mind that Continuity wasted millions of dollars trying to reinvent propaganda that didn't fucking work. Never mind that those dipshits at the UIU somehow have twice your budget despite being magnitudes less effective. No, the lives of 4677 people were not important enough to spend more money than comfortable on.

Sunny was to be destroyed. You brought Nerissa into your room after the incident. You kissed her. You said you loved her. You asked her to leave.



There is nothing more left to say.

Reward - Countermeme Blueprint (Perk): The countermeme created by Romeo and the Department of Abnormalities, which can neutralize any and all memetic and cognition-altering phenomena and infections, though its requirements are more expensive. Perhaps it can be useful to you.

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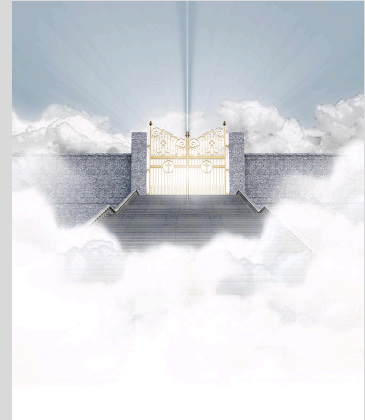
Scenario #23: At the Seventh Gate

"YOU WHO FIGHT AGAINST FATE...WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO WALK THE PATH OF THORNS?"

Mission

Time Irrelevant

When you died, you were honestly curious about where you'd wind up. You thought there was a good chance you wind up in Hell, considering...honestly a lot. The fact you had a demon for a Guardian Angel was somehow the least problematic factor of this all. But when you were brought to the gates, rather than being kicked out by [the gatekeeper](#), he welcomed you in. Apparently, the Big Man Upstairs (would it be the Big Man Here?) [wasn't especially picky about souls](#), and realistically, there's very little in Hell that could actually make you worse than previously.



You are not sure how long you were in Heaven for. You also couldn't figure out if the various arrangements of Heaven from any cosmological map was accurate or not. As a matter of fact, the angels themselves were fairly fluid in their identities - Gabriel, for example, was just fine being called Jibril, Jabra'il, or Ptahil. It seemed that Heaven itself was a strange, almost fluid place where multiple truths were true - literally in fact, as you met the Archangel Joel. That was certainly a strange encounter indeed, as you'd only heard about them from the apocryphal text *The Life of Adam and Eve*. He was the angel who took a seventh part of paradise, and gave it to Adam and Eve.

This is a genuine world of forms, where this land is the platonic ideal of paradise and bliss. Years passed you by, or maybe it was minutes? You weren't exactly sure, and you think it might be a weird case where time passes by as much as you need it to pass. This place was really Heavenly, you think, as the pains and sorrows of the world below eventually began to fall and fade away.

The one who helped you most was the Archangel Raphael, or Israfil. As the angel who presided over healing in all of its forms, mental health was naturally among those things. Though he could simply have him drink the divine water or cure his emotional turmoil, Raphael believed it would simply be better if he worked as a therapist, so he could learn to heal himself better. You wondered why he felt the need to do so, as it wasn't like he'd ever return back to Earth where it would matter, and he never gave you a full answer. Nonetheless, he was a true friend to you, and revealed that, as master of music as Israfil, the angel was the one who urged you to destroy the Washington Underneath.

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Raphael was happy to answer most questions you had. Among these, interestingly, was the creation of the Universe. It was almost *surreal* in how he explained it - there's a big difference between reading about it from different sources, and someone who was there for the whole thing. He also explained that reality actually had multiple "truths" - so while what he explained was true, it's also true that the Big Bang occurred, and it's also true that Odin and his brothers created the world, so Bryn's understanding of things was also accurate. You also asked the question of whether or not angels could be intimate.

For the first time, you actually saw him blush, and confirmed that yes, [angels can be physically intimate if they desire](#), so long as said desire doesn't become as all-consuming, such as the case with the [Grigori](#). Pushing a little further, he admitted that, if he had the opportunity to, he would have chosen to marry Malpha. Her sheer desire to do good and right despite having always been a demon was, to him, extremely beautiful. He apologized for dredging up that painful memory, but you merely stated that Malpha would have loved him as well.

One day, however, things would become considerably more confusing, as Raphael came to you with a flaming sword and a serious expression. The following conversation explains things - but because some contents are curiously inaccessible to your mind at the moment.

What's the matter, Raphael? Why do you have that sword? Isn't that the one from Eden? That's...Uriel's, right?

Correct, Romeo. Unfortunately, for the moment, I do believe you will need it.

Erm, why? Not that I don't know how to use it, but I can't recall Heaven having any dangers. Are we being attacked? Is Uriel okay?!

Uriel is fine. He does not require his sword at the moment - it's not as though anyone outside of those he wishes to will ever find Eden. There is no threat that is coming to endanger Heaven, for nothing is able to do so. However, there is a matter within Heaven that must be addressed. Tell me, are you familiar with Satan?

I thought Satan was a woman, and also currently in Hell.

'Satan' is not a name, merely a title. No, I'm not referring to my sister Satanael, but instead Ha-Satan, the Accuser. His true name is Mastema, and he serves as the Chief Prosecutor of Heaven. His duty is to challenge mankind's faith, and facilitate free will. It seems however, that he has overstepped his boundaries considerably.

Overstepped? In what way?

He intends to destroy the Universe.

-?! He wants to do what?! Can he do that?

Indeed. Many of us can do that, or at least make the attempt. The issue is that Mastema has access to the Ark Reactor, the current form of the Ark of the Covenant. Should he access it, this Universe will end in an instant.

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I don't understand. Why exactly is he trying to end the Universe?

Because I believe he has come to the conclusion that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You almost sound as though you are praising a hero.

That's because I am. But the reason is unimportant. If Mastema isn't stopped, it is curtains for reality.

That makes sense, but I'm still confused. Why doesn't God just...begin the Apocalypse? The one from the Bible? The whole one that ushers in God's Eternal Kingdom and is sort of the most important part of the whole thing? How is Mastema able to bypass Him anyway? Also, why me?

You ask many questions - that's good, you are learning. But to answer your question, the simple fact is that God is not here, and Abnormalities have dealt with them. Surely you have realized that you haven't seen God, yes? He is not dead, but He has not been in Heaven for a long while. It is part of his belief in free will, you see.

That...makes some strange amount of sense. And Abnormalities? My Department managed to contain the end of the fuc--freaking world? Wormwood? The Beasts of the Apocalypse? The Horseman? Babylon the Great?

Yes. They are quite competent thanks to you. One might say too competent. It has caused a considerable amount of trouble for Ha-Satan's plan, so he intends to end it all. I will guide you to God's Throne, and you must defeat him with this flaming sword.

Why me? You are one of God's top guys. You can literally head into the Throne. Why are you having me do it?

Because, Romeo, you are human. Mastema sits atop us in the angelic hierarchy - but all of us are ultimately subject to humanity. In this realm, symbols are more potent than the material.

...Alright then. Be seeing you, Raph.

You as well. Rom.

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Rewards: +200 MP

The battle against Mastema at the empty Throne of Heaven was perhaps the most intense one you have ever had. He was, without question, the most powerful being you have ever faced, and his role as mankind's challenge could not be understated. And yet, at the end of it all, you stood victorious, as Mastema began to dissolve into pure light and energy.

Excellent! done, the prosecutor spoke, voice booming yet serene. ***I'll leave this to you then. Whether you fail or succeed, my role has reached its end. I wish you good fortune in the challenges to come.***

As Mastema vanished, Raphael soon came to you, as your own arms began to faintly glow, as you fell into his arms.

"Do not worry even a little, Romeo. It seems that [some plan worked](#), and you'll be returning to the world below, though not fully. You shall be asleep for a time. Farewell to you, and may we see one another, in a distant time, under new circumstances.

Conclusion

The destruction of the Slender Man.

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The humanity of the Yeren and the Fae

Malphas. Joyeuse. Malpha. Raphael. Aradia. Paimon. Nerissa. Mathis.

Anger towards Saint Hedwig

That strange, apocryphal Archangel who wished to help mankind.

A wish for a sister.

All things, great and small, filtered into the cosmic egg, ready to hatch and be born. You somehow knew it would work. James steeled himself, picked you up, and carried you beyond, into the Gateway.

Here is where our story ends.

Ahh.....so you are back from your trip down my memory lane? Tell me, how did it make you feel? Was it sad? Was it exhilarating? Was it underwhelming? Well, it's no longer my problem, for it seems I'm going to fade now. I'll be you soon, or at least part of you.

When you open your eyes, you'll be back, [adrift in that world known as the Complex](#). Farewell, my better self.

All perks acquired throughout the jump (except for **As Luck Will Have It**) will be part of your semblance.

All drawbacks selected for the gauntlet have faded away, and will not interfere in the main jump.

Assuming that you have **Mint Fantôme** as a companion, through making contact with her afterwards, she will regain the ability to transform into how she once looked at will, and gain her magical powers back.

All individuals that you encountered in this time, who possess analogues you have directly encountered, will regain their memories of these events. Note that they only have

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memories of things you know they were involved in, so they don't know more than you even if they lived past you.

Assuming that you completed Scenario #001 in *Adrift in the Complex*, **The Broken Gun** will transmogrify itself into **The Director's Weapon** if purchased.

If purchased, **MTF-Rēsh-1 ("Seat of Consciousness")** will appear within your gestalt. Apparently, they chose to integrate themselves into Romeo before his deletion, out of loyalty and care - though it seems the circumstances surrounding the deletion itself have been censored from their understanding. Even if you don't have the perk **Welcome to Deletions**, they are still able to interact with the world independently.

They have names, of course. Brynhildr, the brilliant Valkyrie who leads your team. Amamiya Shisui, an ace Taimanin in her own right, with a love for reading and learning. Aki Hayakawa, an onmyouji with a fox spirit at his side, and [a magic sword that cuts everything](#). Constance Veselka, a Memetic Entity who will *not* let things get so bad for you again. Mary Vollard, a brilliant scientist who happens to also be a biological mass of mystery meat. Pia Axal, the extraterrestrial slime. And finally, Felicia Valentine, the daughter of Edwin Black, given a surname by you based on your own birthday.

If purchased, the **Abnormality Containment Site** will appear near the P.M. Center in the Grey, before vanishing into the Backrooms proper due to its existent identity being restored by you. It will appear in any territory you possess or another area you would find more beneficial. Any other item purchased will appear on the site as well. If the site was not purchased, you instead receive the blueprint of the items.

Optionally, if you find the downsides worth it, you may purchase **As Luck Will Have It** for **+1800 MP**. If you don't have enough from this Gauntlet, you can convert any CP you have from *Adrift in the Complex* into MP.

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Notes

Although I call this a Gauntlet, it's really not, and is quite literally just an experience. You can genuinely just select every option, and there's still no real way you can actually lose, because this entire Gauntlet is you looking through Romeo's memories.

Historical?: There are a few "historical" pieces to this Gauntlet, even if it is by and large just a glorified backstory. There are a few nods here and there, such as the reference to the Great Blizzard of 1978, the Reagan Administration, and Romeo's description of secretaries and AIDS.

If I were a more competent writer, I would have preferred to write about Romeo's general opinions on the world at large in the times he lived in, to help paint a better picture of the world. Unfortunately, this is meant to be short, and I might accidentally write Romeo to be far less sympathetic than intended. That said, if he/the narrative says something that sounds off to modern sensibilities, it very much is intended to, and is not meant to be seen as good. His history has resulted in him inherently thinking that [women are wonderful](#) and will not ascribe negative traits to them, regardless of common sense.

Malphas' Portrayal: Malphas' portrayal here - that of an unhinged lunatic obsessed with people clever enough to beat him - is due to the fact that he has no family here. Him and Nerissa would only be related to each other as a result of the timeline alteration. Furthermore, he never met Joyeuse/Mamarissa due to the fact that he never met Khahrahk and had no relation to the laughing raven in Alagadda. As a result, he largely retains his enjoyment of combat.

He's far weaker than his current self because, since the Backrooms doesn't exist in this timeline, he never ate the Great Pseudobrachiator. As a result, he never went out to obtain greater power. This means he is just an "average" demon in terms of power. This also means that, because he is weaker, he's capable of being summoned into baseline at all through mediums, but even these mediums weaken summoned demons, because they are still being rejected by baseline reality.

Concerning Pia the Slime: Though she *is* in fact named after Pia, she's not literally PiaPi UFO (be really funny if she was though).

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Nyarlathotep & the Starfish: Nyarlathotep being explicitly part of the Constant of TRANSCENDENCE is meant to be an acknowledgement of it being the core of Fifthism in the original timeline. I got the idea from the fact that the Church of Starry Wisdom from Lovecraft, who pretty much are the original Fifthists, worshipped the Haunter in the Dark, who is Nyarlathotep.

The Retcon Punch?! Yes, actually. Nerissa can retcon events. This is a level of metaphysical fuckery similar to Edwin Black being able to reset the universe. She can do this because she is a creation of the Brothers Death, who here are the same as Bramimond the Boatman. Bramimond can ferry people from creation to the outside of the Dream of God - AKA Unreality. As a result, yes, she can forcefully retcon/fictionalize events and people by shunting them to unreality. This is entirely useless in reviving Romeo because Nyarlathotep's curse came directly from a Constant, and is therefore largely beyond her authority to undo.

Archangel Joel: No, I didn't make that up. In the Slavonic version of *The Life of Adam and Eve*, an apocryphal text, there is a fifth archangel named Joel.

Ha-Satan: This guy is not to be confused with Ironmouse, who in the setting is Satan. Ha-Satan refers to the divine prosecutor who appears in the Book of Job, who in the narrative is the one who took everything away from him during the "bet" with God. If he seems like a colossal tool, that's because it's deliberate. He's the one who knows what's going to happen, and is therefore trying to end the universe to stop it, but because he's a hardline asshole, nobody likes him, and Romeo didn't have much of a choice if he wanted to not burn in hell.

Scrapped Plot Ideas

- Aki's Fox Devil was initially intended to reference Silvervale. This was scrapped on account of Silvervale both not being a fox, and it feeling too silly.
- Initially, Romeo intended to sing Amamiya Shisui's praises to Kuchisake-onna for a full page. But decided that it'd be too long, and also there's no way he'd be able to learn
- Initially, "The Real" analog horror was intended to be its own scenario. However, the issue with that comes from the fact that it's functionally impossible to realistically defeat, and its extension in **The Challenge and Quest for Life** sort of just serves as a more complete version. As a result, it's just a cameo.