Signing Up

Deciding to be a member of the underground is a momentous decision. It essentially means that you'll be committing yourself permanently to the destruction of the Conspiracy. The underground cannot allow dabblers, they need committed elements. Mai, Leo, B3, Veronica, Spenser, Darcy, etc, are all part of a “cell” of an organization that is somewhat generically termed “The Empathic Underground” seeking to discover just how far this dark conspiracy has gotten, and find ways to turn the tide.

Codenames

Though it's very possible that your recruiter may know your name, it's important not to share details about one's identity with other members of the underground. Doing so means that losing one member makes it easier for other members to be captured subsequently. To that extent, codenames are used instead of real names at all times. You need to select one.

Otherwise, when not performing operations with the underground, operatives are to maintain a normal life as a cover for their activities. If blown, the operative may live at the base indefinitely.

The Conspiracy

Basics

Beings from other places than our world have come to our world. It appears likely that they've been coming over for all of humanity's history, and perhaps longer (who can say?), but that it appears that their influence was limited in the past. It's possible that ancient conspiracies such as the Rosicrucians were part of the earlier attempts by these powerful beings to send emmisaries. But it's impossible now to say how far they got for certain. Early influence seems to have been in terms of these beings giving ancient sorcerers some small amount of empathic techniques to work with.

The problem with these beings from these other places is that many or all of them seem to have the quality that they feed on emotion, and not on the happy ones. The group in general, owing to the darkly malevolent nature of these beings, refers to them collectively as “Darklings.” A lot of the downward spiral that the world is in, even things like the nuclear war in Australia, are likely the fault of these beings. The consensus amongst those in the know is that very likely they are attempting… and succeeding at… taking over the world.

As of some point in the twentieth century, probably the latter half, the limited interaction level changed, and many more beings were able to enter our world somehow. Humans have always been capable of unexplained powers, but these, too, seem to have become more potent at around the same time as the increase in influence by creatures of the otherworlds.

This also happens to coincide somehow with the appearance of aliens from other stars in our world. Though some speculate that these “aliens” may actually have come from just another of these other

“dimensions.” What the connection is between the darklings and aliens, if any, is unclear.

Chicago Conspiracy Elements

TojiCorp is a Japanese Zaibatsu formed in the years prior to WWII, which didn't come to it's current dominance until the mid 2020s. It now owns companies like Coca-cola outright.

Coke has been spiking it's product with both small amounts of cocaine and blue lotus which has been adulterated in some other locale, and flown into the Chicago area at an airfield run by “Snake People,” a group of darklings that appear human on the surface. The airfield and deliveries are managed through a series of computers installed by TojiCorp that were comprised partly of biological components in the form of small slices of human brain tissue. These were being installed by TojiCorp personnel (the mother of one of the underground members by happenstance), and which have other components which the underground are currently running down in terms of their movements.

The new formulation of coke appears to have the effect, of making folks easy to drain empathically, which can be detected by them projecting a telepathic “buzz.” The blue lotus concoction by itself can temporarily enhance empathic abilities.

Another underground member named Fred, discovered that there's something nefarious going on at a place called the Coca-cola Employee Housing Village (CCEHV), involving one Dr. Seabach, now deceased. This connects Coke with the Destined (see below), as Sebach was also treating the daughter of the manager of Club Doomsday, a center of activity for The Destined.

Toji has yet another subsidiary called BioChem, which has suspicious locations in both the SouthDeering neighborhood of Chicago, and Gary, Indiana, around both of which odd occurances had to be dealt with.

Empaths

There are a number of types of empaths, and there are a large number of empathic abilities that these people possess. These range from mental abilities such as reading minds, telepathic communication, projecting emotions upon others, and even altering memories to moving through space in our dimension and to others (which has a number of applications that one might not expect; see Sorcery below). Others have powers of extra-sensory perception. Some can manipulate matter, from healing bodies to heating or cooling things, or manipulating plants or computers.

The full extent of what humans are capable of using empathy is unknown.

Darkling Empathy

Many darklings (though not all), possess their own form of “empathy” that varies substantially from that of humans. One of their most common abilities is to cause the minds of nearby humans to percieve them as other than their true form. They often use the power to project emotion mercilessly to create fear and then feed off of that fear.

Latent

Most people with empathic talent never discover that they have it. This isn't to say that their empathic potential doesn't occasionally help them. But that these types often just put down their premonitions or feelings as being lucky or just perceptive and intuitive in the normal fashion.

Neuropaths

Neuropaths are individuals who have (usually) accidentally gone down a path of self-training that essentially involves a lot of emotion and stain. Almost all trained empaths believe that this is a very detrimental road down which to travel, because the results almost always include extreme negative effects to the users. That said, some Neropaths are occasionally capable of rather extreme feats of empathic power. They simply tend to pay far too high a price for using these abilites, up to and including dying from over-use.

Mystics

Mysticism is one of the two basic schools of trained use of empathic power. It involves removing one's mind from the normal world, projecting it into the “Astral Plane,” and employing a wholistic approach to understanding what can be done from there. Mystics feel that psionics aren't really seeing the underlying reality of things, and so mystics cannot learn psionics.

Veronica is a mystic.

Psionics

Psionics is a rigorous, scientific approach to empatic power. Psionics feel that the whole Astral Plane phenomenon is just a form of weird sorcery, and that most powers mystics use are just being channeled unscientifically. Therefore, psioncs may not learn Mysticism techniques.

Benny is a psionic.

Sorcery

Sorcery is an expanded use of the ability known as dimension walk (see below), where portals are opened to other worlds, and the differences in the worlds exploited to create effects. What effects can be created are myriad. Before one can be a sorcerer, one has to learn dimension walk as either a mystic or a psionic. Sorcery is a huge array of abilites, and most sorcerers tend to focus on one type of sorcerous power associated with a single alternate dimension.

Panix is a psionic sorcerer specializing in fire sorcery, Spenser is a mystic sorcerer speciaizing in water sorcery.

Empathic Organizations

The term sorcerer itself is often used to describe highly trained empaths (who may, or may not actually know sorcery) who may not belong to the underground.

Order of the White Circle

One such group that formerly existed in Chicago was the Order of the White Circle, who likely comprised 90% of the trained empaths in the city who were not members of the underground or The Destined. Panix and Spenser are former members of this order.

The Destined

A shadowy group of powerful individuals that seems to have control of organized crime in Chicagoland. Members of this organization have exhibited empathic abilities. Many speculate that an individual known as Sahashradala is the leader of this organization, but if so, it is difficult to prove this. What is clear, however, is that he is a massively powerful empath of great training, who may not even be human.

Travel Along Other Dimensions

As mentioned, the enemy comes from other worlds than ours.

To Other Worlds

These other worlds are often referred to as “proto-dimensions” as these other worlds are thought to be generally more rudimentary than ours. Though some feel that's just our perspective on the subject. He gives substantial details on how humans can travel along dimensions in our world quickly, or, by turning just right, enter other proto-dimensions… in theory. This ability to walk along other dimensions to other worlds is referred to as “Dimension Walking.”

In practice only a few humans are known who can go to these other dimensions, mostly because they simply don't know which way to turn to get to them. Benny is one of the few, knowing how to get to two other dimensions now. The underground has another member, “Veronica” who is a “mystic,” which means that she is capable of easily entering and exiting a dimension of mind alone, which they refer to as the Astral Plane.

As for why one would want to go to these other worlds, at this point it's basically all about gathering information, and getting a clearer picture of who the enemy is. That said, such efforts have been rudimentary up until this point.

Known Proto-Dimensions

This is a listing of the few proto-dimensions known to exist.

Astral Plane

A world of mental projection, this world may be somehow in between all other worlds, and travel here physically can be disastrous.

Changing Lands

This is a place where reality seems to change fairly quickly and with no rhyme or reason. There are myriad types of sapient beings in the Changing Lands, but few are easy to communicate with.

The Fae Realm

Bearing some slight resemblance to the Changing Lands, in that it tends to be naturalistic in terms of the landscape, The Fae Realm has none of the changing nature of the Changing Lands. Rather it seems that time there passes far more quickly, but little ever changes. The dark “elves” who are the Realm's primary inhabitants are malign, twisted beings. They appear to follow a titanic elemental being that they call “The Earth Mother,” but the direction from this being is delivered to them by an entity known as The Green Man.

It's pretty clear that many of the beings from the Fae realm can befuddle people's minds into making the victim think they look like just normal people, or whatever they like. Anybody you know could, theoretically, be a Dark Elf in reality.

Mai rescued a unicorn and a couple of elven kids from this proto-dimension.

Bog Realm

Possibly the same proto-dimension as the Fae Realm, the denizens in this swampy area are somewhat diferent from those of the Fae Realm, including the three Fauths that have been brought into the Chicago area.

Mega-Fauth Bog Realm

Again,the relationship of this realm to the Bog Realm or the Fae Realm is unclear, but this marshy dimension collapsed when the gargantuan Fauth that inhabited it was destroyed.

The Black Chamber

Peopled by a generally tall and slim race of beings (therefore referred to as “The Tall Ones”), the dimension of the Black Chamber is small and odd, repeating back upon itself after only what appears to be about a Kilometer or so. In it's “center” is a lake, in which is a vaulted edifice whose Tall One inhabitants refer to as The Black Chamber. These beings have some sort of odd social structure, and seem to be obsessed in many different ways with flesh.

Apparently at the top of their hierarchy is a Tall One several times taller than the rest, though little is known about this entity, other than that it's name is The Lord of Lies.

It is also rumored that Sahashradala is originally from this dimension, possibly from long ago.

Serpent People Dimension

One serpent person spoke of a home dimension, and once a massive serpent-man-thing was seen trying to cross over through a dimensional portal.

Mirror Dimension

Apparently mirrors are doorways to a proto-dimension where things are the reverse of the real world.

In Our World

Dimension Walking is also possible along dimensions that do not remove one from our world, but simply allow for more rapid transit of this world. See Mai's recollection of how Benny trained her here.

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