

Escape from Hell!

By Clint Black



He awoke in agony. Michael screamed until he was hoarse and then continued screaming for what seemed like eternity. Finally, he pushed the pain down until it felt merely like a burning spike being pounded in his head. Ending his own screaming allowed him to hear the screaming all around him. He opened his eyes and sat up to see bodies writhing on the ground in every direction.

Michael heard a shout and turned to see a girl running towards him.

“Here’s one over here!” She yelled behind her, motioning towards Michael.

He waited until she arrived and asked the question burning in his head almost as hotly as the spike. “Where the hell am I?”

The girl smiled slightly and shook her head. “Never changes. You all ask the same question and answer it in the same breath. Welcome to Hell. Sorry, can’t explain more now. I know it hurts, but we’ve got to get moving before the demons find us.”

Michael groaned, “What could be worse than this?”

*The girl sighed. “Think about what could be better. There is a way out of here and free from the pain. Or you can stay, and the demons whip you, rend you apart, feed you to a three-headed dog, and then start thinking on how to **really** torture you.”*

Michael stood faster than he thought possible. “Let’s go.”

“Escape from Hell!” is a roleplaying game where the players portray damned souls caught in Hell. Their goal is to journey through all of the spheres of Hell in order to get to the exit at the center. Through it all, they have to deal with the constant pain of being a damned soul.

“Escape from Hell!” is a result of a 24 Hour RPG contest using the terms, “Pain” and “Sphere.” It presents the Christian version of Hell as the true version. This is not meant to be a religious statement of any kind but merely the basis for the setting and context of the game. In other words, just have fun and don’t take it too seriously.

What you need to play the game:

Pencils or pens

Paper (a character sheet for each player would be nice)

People (other than yourself, one of whom must be willing to be the Devil's Advocate)

Polyhedral dice for each player (3 each of d4's, d6's, d8's, d10's, and d12's)

Possibly an open mind

Players should read through Character Creation and Playing the Game, stopping when they get to the character sheet. The person who will be the Devil's Advocate (whose role is explained in Playing the Game, but essentially exists just to put you through Hell... literally and figuratively) should read the rest explaining the Spheres of Hell and its denizens, the Damned and the Demons.



“Have I mentioned how much Hell sucks?”

Character Creation

Step One: You were alive.

Figure out who your character was in life. This can be anyone from any time up to the current time on Earth. You don't have to worry about speaking languages or anything; in Hell, it doesn't matter what language you speak, everyone understands you, and you understand everyone else. It's metaphysical that way.

Step Two: Now, you're dead.

Figure out how your character died. Characters usually appear as they did at the time of their death although at the peak of health. You can pretty much choose any cause of death except suicide (more on that later).

Step Three: Oh, you're damned too.

Your character was damned to the First Sphere of Hell. The short version is for whatever reason you didn't truly believe in the afterlife, but you were mostly good and didn't commit any unforgiven major sins (remember that thing about suicide), so you aren't in the really nasty part of Hell.

Step Four: But hey, you are special.

Pain Points

The first thing that makes your character different from the majority of souls in Hell is your ability to handle the pain of being damned. Your character can accumulate Pain Points. By spending these points, they can focus their pain and have a better chance of success. Unfortunately, Pain Points are hard to come by unless your character accepts their pain on occasion and is able to succeed despite it. No one said it was easy being a damned soul in Hell.

Attributes

Attributes define the innate abilities of a character. It is important to note that as a damned soul your abilities are not limited by your physical appearance, but simply by how you see yourself. A small child could have the strength of ten men with enough belief.

The Attributes are Physique, Agility, Intelligence, and Notice. See how they make the acronym, "PAIN." Just Hell's little way of reminding you who is in charge.

Physique represents a character's strength, toughness, durability, and any gross physical action.

Agility represents a character's quickness, nimbleness, balance, and any fine physical actions.

Intelligence represents a character's reasoning, memory, logic, and any mental ability of pure intellect.

Notice represents a character's perception, common sense, instinct, and any mental ability that relies on intuition.

Attributes are ranked from 0-3, and you have 4 points with which to buy your character's Attributes based on the chart below.

Rank	Cost	Description
0	0	Average
1	1	Better
2	2	Consistent
3	4	“Damn!”

Talents

Talents are skills or aptitudes that a character may have but isn't guaranteed to have. There are 12 Talents consisting of three each linked to the four Attributes. Talents are rated as either Good (+1) or Great (+2). Your character may begin with one Talent at Great and three at Good.

Physique

Hand-to-Hand Combat – The Talent of striking someone with yourself or a handheld weapon.

Resist Damage – The Talent of withstanding physical injury and illness.

Athletics – The Talent of climbing, jumping, swimming and other physical activities.

Agility

Ranged Combat – The Talent of hitting someone with a thrown or projectile weapon.

Avoid – The Talent of dodging attacks, not falling off ledges, and generally not getting hurt.

Stealth – The Talent of how not to be seen... or heard.

Intelligence

Knowledge – The Talent of remembering facts on any subject with which you are familiar.

Devise – The Talent of solving problems dealing with objects (repair, lockpicking, trap removal).

Trick – The Talent of outsmarting someone else.

Notice

Perception – The Talent of observing and discerning details of physical objects.

Convince – The Talent of knowing how to get people (and demons) to do what you want.

Guess – The Talent of trusting your instincts and unconscious clues when making a decision.



“Hey, I know this guy!”

Playing the Game

One person is the Devil's Advocate (sometimes known as the Game or Dungeon Master in other games). He or she gets to read the section after the character sheet (yeah, like you won't), set up the scenarios, and portray all the other denizens of Hell. The rest of the players create characters as described above and try to get them out of Hell. Simple, huh? Right.

Rolling the Dice

Sometimes situations will arise where the character's success at an action needs to be determined. To do this, the players will roll three dice. For every die that equals the highest number on that die (a 4 on a d4, a 6 on a d6, an 8 on a d8, etc.) the character gains one Success. The more Successes, the better the character does.

Successes	Result
1	Barely Successful
2	Completely Successful
3	"Damn!"

Modifiers

Players can modify their rolls in two ways. First, any Talent that applies to the action adds its bonus to all the dice rolled.

Example: Michael needs to jump over a pit of the Damned. He has Athletics at Good (+1) and rolls 3d8. He gets a 3, 5, and 7. With his +1, the 7 counts as an 8, and he is barely successful in his jump. The Devil's Advocate says Michael will just be holding on to the other edge of the pit.

The second way to alter the dice is through Attributes. Every action is based off one of the Attributes. Each rank in that Attribute allows the player to reroll one of his dice one time.

Example: Michael isn't happy with the result of his jump over the pit. He's being chased by demons and wants a better result. Fortunately, he has a whopping 3 in Physique. He rolled a 3, 5, and 7 originally, with a +1 for Good Athletics. He rerolls the 3 and 5, getting a 6 and an 8. That gives him two Successes for a complete success. Note that even though Michael has a 3 in Physique, he cannot reroll the 6 again as he can only reroll any one die one time; however if all of his dice had failed, he could have rerolled them all.

The Price of Pain

Accepting the Pain

Normally, a player will be rolling 3d8 to determine the success of their action. If a player wishes, before any action, they may choose to Accept the Pain. They do this by using 3d10 or 3d12 for their roll (their choice). This decreases the chance of success, but if the player achieves 2 or 3 Successes, they gain Pain Points. Using 3d10, they gain 1 Pain Point for 2 Successes and 2 Pain Points for 3 Successes. If they use 3d12, the number of Pain Points gained is doubled.

Successes	d10 Pain Points	d12 Pain Points
2	1	2
3	2	4

Characters can gain Pain Points in one other way. If a player rolls 3 successes, disregarding bonuses from Talents, they automatically gain 3 Pain Points. If they do so while rolling 3d10 or 3d12, this is in addition to the Pain Points gained for that as well.

When a player gains Pain Points, they should mark them in the circles on their character sheet with a slash mark.

Example: Michael has to make a roll to resist the violent storm in the Second Sphere. Since it is based on Physique, his best Attribute, he decides to Accept the Pain and roll 3d10 instead of 3d8. After rerolls, he ends up with two Successes and gains 1 Pain Point.

Using the Pain

In addition to choosing to the Accept the Pain, a player may also choose to Use the Pain. If the player spends one Pain Point, they may roll 3d6 instead of 3d8 for their action. If a player spends two Pain Points, they may roll 3d4 for their action.

When a player uses Pain Points in this fashion, they cross the slash mark in the circles for the points used, creating an X.

Example: Michael has to sneak by some demons. His Agility is a 0, and he doesn't have the Stealth Talent. He spends 1 Pain Point and rolls 3d6 instead of 3d8. Let's hope it's enough.

Combat

Let's face it, Hell is full of the worst people who ever lived and, oh yeah, demons too. Occasionally, a fight breaks out. Since generally everyone is trying to perform actions at the same time, there are some specific rules for combat.

First, there needs to be an order in which the characters take their actions. This is determined by looking at the characters' Attributes and going from bottom to top. Start in order of the highest Notice. If there is a tie, go to highest Intelligence. If it is still a tie, go to Agility and then Physique. If there is still a tie, you might want to check and see if the players aren't using the same character sheet. If they aren't, then look at the highest total bonuses for Notice-based Talents and go through the cycle again.

Once each player has taken a turn, a round has passed. In a round, a character can attack, move, and speak or take whatever actions the Devil's Advocate feels is equal to those. A round actually lasts 6.66 seconds if anyone asks (don't tell them, but it doesn't really matter). If combat is still going on after one round, start another.

Now, when each character takes their action, they will attack based on Hand-to-Hand or Ranged Combat, depending on their weapon. If they succeed, they hit the target. The number of Successes adjusts the damage result.

Attack Successes	Damage Adjustment
1	-1 Success
2	No Adjustment
3	2x Successes

With a successful attack, damage is determined by rolling Physique. [Note: this does apply to ranged weapons because all ranged weapons in Hell are either thrown or otherwise based on the user's strength, such as slings, simple bows, spear throwers, etc. There are no guns in Hell. Insert your own commentary here.]

There is no Talent for modifying damage rolls; that's what weapons do. The player makes a roll for damage using Physique and any weapon modifier, then tells the Devil's Advocate how many Successes, modified for the attack roll, were achieved. Opponents have differing number of Successes required to defeat them. If a player gains more Successes in one action than are needed to defeat a single opponent, any remaining Successes can be applied to additional viable targets. It's possible to take out a whole group of the Damned in one attack, but don't bet on it when facing demons.

Modifier	Hand-to-Hand Weapons	Ranged Weapons
0	Barehanded	Thrown Rock, Stick, or Bone
+1	Knife, Club, Pointed Stick	Sling, Javelin, Knife
+2	Sword, Scythe, Pitchfork, Scourge	Bow, Spear



“How long before they remember they can fly?”

Now comes the part where the character doesn't want to get hurt. The Devil's Advocate tells the player if there are any opponents attacking his character. If there are, the player rolls an Agility roll modified by Avoid.

Avoid Result	Effect
Failure	Hit by all attacks
1 Success	Avoid one attack
2 Successes	Avoid two attacks
3 Successes	Avoid all attacks

If the player fails his roll or does not avoid all incoming attacks, he must roll Physique modified by Resist Damage for each successful attack. The result of this roll determines the amount of damage sustained. The exact nature of the damage is irrelevant; as being dead, the characters can't die again. Damage merely incapacitates a character until they recover, be it from unconsciousness or dismemberment. Occasionally, the recovery ability will accelerate in response to trauma, but it isn't a conscious ability.

Resist Damage Result	Effect
Failure	Suffer 2 Wound Levels
1 Success	Suffer 1 Wound Level
2 Successes	No effect
3 Successes	Erase 1 Wound Level

Example: It is Michael's turn to go in a round. He is in hand-to-hand combat with three of the Damned. He is using a leg bone from a demon for a club (+1 weapon). He also has a Good rating in the Hand-To-Hand Combat Talent. He rolls 3d8 and gets a 2, 4, and 6, a failure. But since he has a rank of 3 in Physique, he is able to reroll all of those dice. He does so, getting a 1, 7, and 8, two Successes with his +1 modifier. His attack will hit and do normal damage.

He rolls Physique again and gets one Success with his +1 modifier for his club (even with his rerolls). The Devil's Advocate says this is enough to incapacitate one of the Damned Michael is fighting. The other two are still able to attack him though.

Now Michael rolls Agility to dodge the attacks. Unfortunately, he has a rank of 0 in Agility but does have a Good Avoid Talent (+1). He rolls two 3's and a 6, a failure even with the modifier. He will be hit by all the attacks. He then rolls Physique twice. Michael doesn't have the Resist Damage Talent, so he has no modifier. He does get his rerolls if needed. He fails one roll (2 Wound Levels), but gets three Successes on the other (Erase 1 Wound Level) for 1 Wound Level total. In addition, since he got a natural three Successes, Michael has gained 3 Pain Points. Those Damned are in damn trouble.

Should the players decide to attack each other (those wacky sinners), they make opposing rolls. The Avoid Successes of the target are subtracted from the attack roll successes to determine if the attack hits. If it does, then damage roll successes are subtracted from the Resist Damage roll to determine effect.

Recovery

Healing is unpredictable in Hell. Wounds could heal in hours or minutes. In game, players make Physique-based rolls every 10 minutes of real time. Every Success erases one Wound Level.

I Hate Demons...

There is one last aspect of fighting demons or being found after a fight by demons. Any defeated characters are returned to their appropriate Sphere. If all of the player characters are defeated, they will simply wake up, unhurt, back in the First Sphere. If some escape or are uninvolved in the conflict, they may be able to rescue their companions before they are taken back.

But Being a Martyr is Cool!

Remember those Pain Points you've been marking off? Well, when a character has accumulated used Pain Points (the ones with the X), they can trade them in to increase their abilities. Once Pain Points are used in this fashion, erase those X's and those circles can be used for brand new Pain Points.

Ability	Pain Point Cost
Increase Attribute to 1	5
Increase Attribute from 1 to 2	10
Increase Attribute from 2 to 3	20
Buy Good Talent	10
Increase Good Talent to Great	20



“I do *not* want to know what those guys did.”

Escape from Hell!

Character Name: _____

Player Name: _____

Attribute **0 – 1 – 2 – 3**

Physique ● ○ ○ ○

Agility ● ○ ○ ○

Intelligence ● ○ ○ ○

Notice ● ○ ○ ○

Talents **Good (+1)** **Great (+2)**

Hand-to-Hand Combat ○ ○

Resist Damage ○ ○

Athletics ○ ○

Ranged Combat ○ ○

Avoid ○ ○

Stealth ○ ○

Knowledge ○ ○

Devise ○ ○

Trick ○ ○

Perception ○ ○

Convince ○ ○

Guess ○ ○

Weapons **Good (+1)** **Great (+2)**

_____ ○ ○

_____ ○ ○

_____ ○ ○

Basic Success Chart

Successes	Result
1	Barely Successful
2	Completely Successful
3	“Damn!”

Attack Successes	Damage Adjustment
1	-1 Success
2	No Adjustment
3	2x Successes

Avoid Result	Effect
Failure	Hit by all attacks
1 Success	Avoid one attack
2 Successes	Avoid two attacks
3 Successes	Avoid all attacks

Resist Damage Result	Effect
Failure	2 Wound Levels
1 Success	1 Wound Level
2 Successes	No effect
3 Successes	Erase 1 Wound

Wound Levels

Scratched ○

Hurt ○

Injured ○

Totally Out ○

Pain Points

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Hell, a Beginner's Guide

Let's start with the simple questions. Yes, this is the Christian Hell. For the purposes of this game, they were right, and everyone else was wrong. There is no other implied meaning to this than without that concept, the game simply doesn't work. And it certainly isn't meant to offend anyone in any way for any reason. Let's move on.

Ah you ask, if it's the Christian Hell, why are there references to the Greek underworld? Well, since you read ahead, maybe you should have read the part about Dante. See, it's his fault. He wrote the *Inferno*, and most people have accepted his architecture of Hell, including the Greek aspects. That's one of the tricks about Hell's metaphysics; it's become what humanity expected it to be. Dante had a big effect on it, but even his writings are not 100% accurate anymore. Mankind has had time to do a little redecorating... ugly redecorating.

The Layout of Hell

Hell is divided up into nine Spheres. Those damned characters (hey, it's true) start out in the First Sphere. If they can make it all the way to the inner circle of the Ninth Sphere, it is possible to climb up a precarious cliff in the presence of Lucifer himself and escape Hell. Piece of cake.

The River Styx

It is important to note that the river Styx runs all the way through Hell. Sometimes it simply runs through a Sphere, sometimes it surrounds a Sphere, and sometimes it is a Sphere. Despite the story of Achilles, bathing in the river will not make a character invulnerable or have any effect other than getting them wet. Due to the increased traffic in Hell, the river has more than one ferry and ferryman, but Charon is still there, taking jobs that interest him. While the river runs through them, no boat can pass into the Eighth and Ninth Spheres.

First Sphere

This is the sphere of the unbaptized and unbelievers, who still lived relatively sin-free lives. Dante claimed these souls were not punished, except by being denied God's presence. That has changed now, and these souls are in constant utter agony. Although, that may be the effect of being denied God's presence in the afterlife. The players' characters come from this sphere and start here.

Second Sphere

The Sphere of the first real sinners, the lustful. This sphere is a barren land overwhelmed by a constant violent storm. The sinners are blown about by the wind, forever unable to touch each other. However, that doesn't apply to those trying to travel through the storm. This is not the place to get caught by one of the Damned.

Third Sphere

The Sphere of the gluttons. These Damned are trapped face-down in the mud. They would do anything for a taste of something other than dirt (hint-hint!). As if they weren't bad enough, Cerberus, the giant three-headed dog, hangs around, gnawing on the Damned here, and he's not picky.

Fourth Sphere

There Sphere of the greedy and the indulgent, those who hoarded possessions and those who wasted them. These Damned are forced to push huge boulders in opposite directions. Should they push it on someone, oh well.

Fifth Sphere

The Sphere of the wrathful and the slothful. This sphere is a huge swamp off the river Styx. The slothful are trapped under the water of the swamp and are really too lazy to try to pull anyone else down with them. They are more than made up for with the wrathful who battle each other and anyone else continually in the swamp.

Sixth Sphere

Hell's suburbs. Just getting into this Sphere is tricky. It lies, along with the rest of the Spheres, within the walled city of Dis. Those walls are surrounded by the river Styx as well, and the only gates in are guarded by demons. In fact, demons start becoming more prevalent from this Sphere on. At least the Damned of this Sphere are easy to avoid. This is the Sphere of the heretics, and they are all trapped in burning tombs. They don't really bother travelers, though the smell and screams are a different matter.

Seventh Sphere

This Sphere is for the violent and is the first of the more complex Spheres. There are three distinct rings within this Sphere. The outer ring is home to those Damned who were violent against others or property (vandals); they are trapped in a river of boiling blood. The middle ring is home to suicides and others who purposefully harmed themselves. The suicides are unique as they have been transformed into thorny black trees with their own corpse hanging from the limbs. The others in this ring are chased through this forest of suicides by vicious dogs. The last inner ring is for those who were violent against God and nature such as blasphemers and sodomites. They are condemned to a desert of burning sand where fire rains down from the sky.

Eighth Sphere

This Sphere begins the descent into the literal "pit of Hell." This Sphere is a descending rock cliff all the way down to the next Sphere. The rock is circled by ten concentric trenches cut into it. Within these ten trenches, the deceitful, those Damned guilty of deliberate evil are punished.

Trench 1: Seducers, pimps, and others who took advantage of other peoples' sin are chased and whipped by demons.

Trench 2: Sycophants/flatterers are steeped in human excrement.

Trench 3: People who bought religious power are stuck headfirst in holes with fire burning their feet.

Trench 4: Sorcerers and false prophets have their heads attached backwards on their bodies.

Trench 5: Corrupt politicians are trapped in a lake of burning pitch.

Trench 6: Hypocrites are forced to wear brightly colored lead cloaks.

Trench 7: Thieves are chased by venomous snakes. When bitten, they become snakes, and the snake becomes a man.

Trench 8: False advisors are trapped in flames (the classical vision of Hell).

Trench 9: Spreaders of conflict and dissention have their bodies ripped apart, heal, and are ripped apart again.

Trench 10: Falsifiers (liars, counterfeiters, impersonators, identity thieves, etc.) are afflicted with nasty diseases.

Ninth Sphere

The last Sphere and home to the worst sinners of all time, traitors. Getting in the Ninth Sphere is a challenge itself as it lies in a deep smooth-walled pit. Giants of myth roam these walls and may be convinced or tricked into lowering others into the pit. Once in, this Sphere is made up of a frozen lake of ice, and the Damned within are encased in the ice in differing levels. Some are only up to their waist, while others are sealed completely beneath the surface. As with the previous two Spheres, the Ninth is divided into four concentric areas.

Area 1: Known as Caïna, is reserved for traitors to family.

Area 2: Known as Antenora, is for political and national traitors.

Area 3: Known as Ptolomæa, is for traitors to guests.

Area 4: Known as Judecca, is for traitors to lords and benefactors.

In this last area, lies Satan, trapped and frozen to his waist for his own betrayal of God. The worst of the traitors are eternally consumed by him, including Brutus, Cassius, and the head of Judas. Beside Satan is a huge mountain. The top of the mountain brushes the ceiling of Hell, and in that ceiling is a crevice. Should someone make it that far and crawl through the crevice, they will come out in Purgatory, and their pain will be over.

The Denizens of Hell

Because all the random elements are in the players' control, the Devil's Advocate only needs to know one mechanical aspect of the others in Hell, how many Successes it takes to incapacitate them. Creating a combat challenge is simply a matter of the number and Success Rating of the opponents.

Incapacitated by	Character Examples
1 Success	Most Damned
2 Successes	Named Damned, Minor Minions of Hell (Dogs of the 7 th Sphere)
3 Successes	Lesser Demons (wardens of the 1 st -5 th Spheres)
4 Successes	Greater Demons (wardens of the 6 th and 7 th Spheres)
5 Successes	Major Demons (wardens of the 8 th and 9 th Spheres)
6 Successes	Named Demon Lords

The Damned

Charon

Charon is listed under the Damned, but really is a unique individual. According to myth, he was the child of gods, but he doesn't mention anything about his origins to anyone. He certainly doesn't appear as he was represented in myth. Charon has the ability to appear as any depiction of Death personified in human existence. His current favorite is Brad Pitt in a suit, but he also likes young Robert Redford in a policeman's uniform. He tends to have a scythe in whatever form he takes but loses them easily, perhaps purposefully. Unlike everyone else in Hell, Charon really seems alive, and he takes an interest in those who buck the system, like the player characters. At worst, he may not aid them due to the restrictions of his job, but he won't go out of his way to hinder them. At best... well, unlike demons, Charon can know love. Perhaps that's why he is listed under the Damned.

Damned Bureaucrats

Demons have to be demons; they don't really have free will (though appearances are deceiving). For Hell to run in the fashion it does, some of the Damned have to work in Hell. Typically, these Damned are those who truly regretted their sins in life but never obtained forgiveness for them. They serve a variety of roles in Hell, sometimes passing between different Spheres as part of their duties. Needless to say, they are perfect for a player character to try to impersonate.

Dante

He has a lead cloak painted with his design of Hell in bright colors. Dante has been damned for his own hypocrisy in not only pointing out the flaws of others but literally damning them to a Hell he created for it. He's not a very popular guy in Hell, but he is useful as no one knows more of the layout of Hell than him. Even his cloak can be a guide to those wise enough to study it.

Minos

One of the best known of the Damned Bureaucrats, Minos sits in a huge building on the outer edge of the Second Sphere. Here he judges sinners and assigns them to their place in Hell. Unbeknownst to all, Minos is sympathetic to those who seek to escape Hell. If they come before him, he will judge them as potential Bureaucrats and have them placed in a position where they can easily escape to the Second Sphere.

Virgil

Virgil is the same ancient Greek poet who was Dante's guide in the Inferno. Being that he died long before the poem was written, he was a little surprised when people started asking him to guide them out of Hell but was curious enough to try. Perhaps because of the meta-physics of Hell or pure luck, Virgil got out on his first try. He decided to come back and help others as in the story. Virgil doesn't traverse the inner Spheres of Hell anymore; there are so many Damned in the First Sphere that he spends much of his time just searching out those who can make the trip. Virgil is one of the few people in Hell who likes Dante. He realizes that without Dante there may never have been an exit in the first place. One last thing about Virgil, having escaped Hell and returned, he is no longer in pain.

The Demons

The demons of Hell are varied and horrific. Come up with a nice collection of adjectives like barbed, spiny, leathery, horned, vicious, dripping, scaled, etc. and make up your own demons. All demons tend to have "long wicked claws" and the more powerful carry weapons as well. Generally, these weapons are swords, pitchforks, scourges, and the like. The important thing to remember with demons is despite their lack of free will; they are still individuals and believe they have free will. Don't be afraid to break a mold or two when creating demons.

Malachor

If the bureaucracy of Hell discovers a group of the Damned seeking to escape, Malachor is the demon put in charge of stopping them. Malachor is very smart and intelligent, and he does his job to the best of his ability. The twist is that Malachor believes he is doing God's work, not Satan's. Malachor has come to understand that his role is predestined, and he believes (possibly rightly so) that the Damned are supposed to have the option of fighting their way out of Hell and escaping. He also believes they must earn that right by facing the greatest challenges Hell has to offer... such as himself. He will send the Damned back to the First Sphere over and over again; each time congratulating them on their achievement and wishing them, "Better success next time."

Satan

Satan is huge, not just in size but in scope. Characters in his presence should not feel threatened as much as insignificant. Satan never acknowledges anyone or anything. Even the most powerful demon lord is as an insect to Satan. But for all his incomprehensible power, the Damned climbing in his shadow should realize they have something he never will... the power to leave Hell behind.

Running the Game

Here are a few recommendations when running "Escape from Hell!"

1. Reinforce the constant pain and quickly introduce through another character the potential to escape Hell and the pain (Virgil is designed for this role, but you could use another character).
2. There is a lot of explanation about combat mechanics and dice rolling, but don't let these overshadow the other Talents and Attributes. Balance the physical with the mental, even to the point of choosing a mental option that can bypass a physical challenge beforehand. If the players come up with other ideas (and they will) give them a chance to succeed.
3. Give the characters a chance to rest. Sure, it's Hell, but it's huge. The Forest of Suicides is unnerving, but the dogs aren't everywhere. And Dis is a city, full of places to hide out.
4. Remember, each Sphere is a challenge, but also an opportunity to explore each character's feelings about that particular sin.
5. Throw in some people the characters or players know. It could be a friend, enemy, or family member for a character. For a player, it could be some famous personage from history. Hitler is an easy one, but consider meeting Mahatma Gandhi (a Hindu) in Hell. Imagine meeting Gandhi and Hitler playing chess. The key here is to be respectful of the personages and your players' feelings. It's a sensitive subject and needs to be handled maturely.

Good luck and welcome to Hell!