



# OUR GUARDIAN DEVILS

by Jason A. Petrasko

#### Game-Chef 2006 specifics

**Time Theme:** 3 sessions of 3 hours.

**Ingredients:** Ancient, Glass, Emotion.

#### Document Fonts

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#### Some Inspirations

Many works of **Edgar Allan Poe**.

**Howl's Moving Castle** by Diana Wynne Jones.

Too many well-crafted **Forge** games to name.

**Michelle Branch** for making music that created a awesome atomsphere as I worked on this game.

**Sky Vodka** and **Captain Morgan** Spiced Rum, without which I may have not had the vision for the game.

#### References

Latin proverbs from wikiquote:

[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Latin\\_proverbs](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Latin_proverbs)

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#### At a Glance

**Pages:** 29

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## PASSING THOUGHTS - A Limited Introduction

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*Ab esse ad posse, From being to knowing*

*"The darkness and dream are polar opposites, diametric in all ways..." - Pinkleton*

Since the first man peered up at the stars and dared to dream of what could be, the darkness has been with us. Between what **we can see and feel**, **what is**, and **the stars far above**, **what could be**, there is **darkness**. Not the absence of everything as is often supposed by the educated, but a void of despair and loathing. A thing without shape sans **teeth**, sharp instruments that tear and gnash against the hearts of those that dare to dream. Man, or woman for that matter, is unprepared to face these forces on equal ground. How can one fight through something without shape? Something that exists in the grounds between what is and what could be... something so dark and terrible that looking into it can drive you mad. Simple, with a little help from your guardian devil...

### About Guardian Devils

Throughout history, from the earliest of times, they have been with us just like the darkness. History has given them many names and titles. Just a few of which are: *witches, wizards, shaman, sorcerer, enchanters, warlocks, and such*. All of these names refer to the same beings. These are powerful people who are no longer whole, that operate just outside of what is, always eclipsed by the darkness. These protectors stop the darkness from corrupting the hearts of those that dare to dream.

In the Victorian era of this game, they are known as devils. This rather dirty name comes from the powers of such being clearly clashing with the doctrines of the church. All devils are cast as inherently evil, though they are not demons after any fashion. In fact, the devils are guardians of the heart. They seek to protect those that dream from the despair of the darkness.

## REFLECTIONS - Some Basic Concepts

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*Amor vincit omnia, Love conquers all*

*"My companions in these days of wonder have maintained my heart,  
and for that, I am ever thankful." - Pinkleton*

You may have noticed the name Pinkleton in this text already. Mr. Pinkleton was just one in the long line of guardian devils, but a man of extraordinary intellect. It was his work in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that led to the creation of a book simply known as **The Book of Words**. He spent much time studying what it was to be a devil. In doing so he left behind a legacy which others have embraced. Here are some of the things he discovered and learned, some excerpts from his book:

**The Clay:** The realm of *what is* can be represented as the gray and lifeless matter known as clay. We are creatures of clay, born into it, but we do not belong to it. It belongs

to us, and as our eyes peer into dream we shape it. Lesser devils are mostly clay and still grounded to the earth.

**The Stars:** The domain of *what could be* is easily expressed by the stars as they appear on a the canvas of the sky during night. These are the dreams and longings of men, the desires and fancies of women. Most people only look at the stars. It is those that try and reach them that need help, for the darkness is deep and carries much danger. Greater devils are mostly stars and only by the imprint of their connections to the lesser devils stop them from being lost.

**The Fog:** If you step just outside the clay, but don't reach for the stars, you end up in the fog. This is a place where the solid rules of clay blur but the stars can't yet shine. As a greater devil I spend most of the time in this precarious state. How many steps into the fog can I go and return to the clay? I don't think you can come back from more than five, the furthest I've gone.

**Lesser Devils:** Still mostly clay, the lesser devils are very human. When a greater devil is awakened, they drag handful of people into the fog with them. These are the people they had the strongest feelings about in life. In polite circles, they are known as **stewards**. In personal experience they keep me alive, letting me feel and experience the world as I once did. Stewards are often defined by their attitude and how far they have moved into the fog.

**Greater Devils:** No longer tied to the clay, and mostly stars, the greater devil only appears human. They are something more now, something beyond human. This could have something to do with the ancient magic of the heart glass, which safely houses their still beating and burning heart. The polite term for a greater devil is the **principal**. Though, I've never met another principal and I'm beginning to think that is impossible. A principal can be described by the concepts of fury and wonder.

**The Dark Mirror:** The darkness is nothing but despair and loathing. It is not a hell full of ill-intent voices and nasty thoughts, but simply a state of being. The voices of the dark come from within. Each one a corrupt reflection of self. In a fashion, the heart touched by darkness has simply had it's flaws exposed.

#### Mirrors, Mirrors, Everywhere...

As Friedrich Nietzsche said: "*when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.*" Everything evil, every tooth of darkness that strikes at a heart is a reflection of self. This game deals with people who have the courage to step out of the clay and towards the stars, and the have to face the consequences of that choice.

## **BIRTH OF A DEVIL** - The beginning

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*Audaces fortuna iuvat*, Fortune favors the brave  
"As a steward of Father Sky, I've done both things both great and terrible..." - Jeremy

The beginning of each cadre of devils is a tale of happenstance, and begins with despair. There are things that break the heart, things that hurt. A broken heart can be mended with care though, and what of hearts that can't heal? A crushed heart is one that has been broken beyond repair, and wallows in only pain and anguish. This can be the beginning of an end for the suffering one, or perhaps the start of something new. It all depends on them, as you will soon understand. Here is how Mr. Pinkleton relates his awakening, how he remembers becoming a greater devil.

*For as long as I remember I had been a watchmaker.* I had always wanted to be so, and such I was. Deeper than that, and truer to my heart, I wanted to be a loving father and husband. When Anette took my hand in marriage and later little John followed, I was overcome with joy. All that ended though one evening. They were lost to me, and though I know it happened for all of heaven I can't remember how. Some things of clay are lost you see, once you awaken a devil. The next I remember clearly though, I locked myself away in my shop and poured myself into work. Watch and watch I made. None worked. It seemed as though the pain of my loss infected everything I touched. Days passed and I began to surrender to fatigue. I felt ill unlike I ever has before in my life, and I laid on the bed for what seemed like weeks. This was distinctly a first step towards my awakening, and then I took another.

*I lied there sullen, my face no longer damp with tears.* Staring up I could feel my scarce breathing like a dying breath, and the slight and fast patter of a dying heart. I should have wanted to die, should have wanted to go into heaven after my beloved family, but I felt something else. As sure as I felt the sheets against me I felt a rage building. This fury tickled my mind, and I could hear a soft voice in my mind. It was saying strange things, but it whispered the promise of just what I wanted. If I only did the few things it said, I could have it all back! How could I deny it? It asked so little. Then as the fury within sparked and began to flame, I held my hands to my breast. The moment had come, the second step.

*Speaking the strange words, my hands began to burn and my chest tightened.* The pain was unreal, but it only fueled the fury within. The words poured out of me and a flame of red and yellow jumped from my breast and into my hands. I cupped it quickly, the fury and rage of it was amazing. It wanted free! It wanted to escape from me and into the stars beyond. Wait, I was still speaking. A few more strange ancient words and then my hands cooled. From between my shaking fingers red and yellow rays of light beamed forth. A surreal calm overcame me and I opened my hands. There is was- the most lovely glass vial I'd ever seen and inside was my heart. I had coughed it up full of flame of fury and somehow encased it thus. Calm and collected, I stared at it and it whispered to me of my youth. Then the third and final step happened.

*I felt compelled. I felt a natural urge to open my bedroom door, so I did.* Once opened it led not to my hallway but to the interior of an old mill. This was a mill I remembered

well, one I used to play within when I was but a lad. This was my place, my special place. With a clarity I never had in life I began to understand. This was going to be my new home, a place from which I could learn. Thus I was awakened, and so I set forth into the mill to see what I could see.

#### **Birth of a Greater Devil, in Short**

There are three steps that occur in the birth of any greater devil, any principal. Here they are in sequence:

- The heart of the victim is crushed beyond repair by some tragedy.
- The victim succumbs to the darkness, falling ill by some plague of chance.
- As they lie dying, the darkness whispers to them. It makes promises that inspire hope, and the fury begins to build in their heart.
- The words of ancient magic are spoken, and the heart of fury is drawn from them and into a heart glass. In that moment they have awakened, a greater devil has been born.
- In the communion with their heart they see a childhood place which still lives within them. When they open the nearest door they are taken there- to their sanctuary.

#### **Basic Setup for the Game**

You will need to gather three to seven players, with one taking on the role of the whisperer and the others selecting emotions to play (more on this a little later). Gather together six or more six-sided dice (the cubes) and one sheet of paper. Something to write with will be needed as well.

#### **The Format of this Document's Remainder**

The rest of this document begins to weave the rules needed to play the game. These are presented in these note-like sections, with the body-text describing what the devils actually know, see, and understand. Examples are given when they seemed needed, but are sparingly used since the body text offers up pretty clear ties into the after-life of Mr. Pinkleton. Without further ado, let me get into the heart of the matter...

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS - The Sanctuary

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*Caveat emptor, Let the buyer beware*

*"I was at first amazed and awed at the sanctuary of my mind...  
but it left me hollow like an empty egg shell." - Pinkleton*

The sanctuary is a matter of wonder and playful childhood dreams. Deep inside of it is a special place, a place of some power and import. Here is where the principal lays their heart glass in relative safety. The sanctuary is a matter of wonder, a field of memory that shields the fury of the heart from the stars above. All sanctuaries have the following characteristics:

- They are buildings or enclosures of some sort, surrounded by open terrain that ends in some kind of natural formation that would impede travel.
- They have a clear and unimpeded view of the stars above (at least from the outside).
- It always a specific season, chosen by the heart of the principal.
- Darkness surrounds the edges of the outside perimeter but never encroaches.

Father Sky's sanctuary is an old, run-down mill which is no longer in operation. It is surrounded by flowering green hills which are split in twain by a small river that runs through the mill. In every direction are steep mountains that shield it from the surrounding darkness. Springtime always abounds here, and the air has just a touch of chill.

### Creation of the Principal and Sanctuary

The first job for the playing group is to create both the greater devil and their sanctuary. This is done as a community, a team-effort needing some measure of cooperation. Every player should get to contribute to one of the two parts at least.

Don't worry about mechanics yet, just fill in this information:

- **Who was the principal?**
- **What drove them to despair?**
- **How did they fall and awaken?**
- **What is sanctuary like?**

### Maintain Feel and Theme

Maintain a feel and embrace the themes of Victorian age England in your creativity. Think about the world as it heads into a new era, as machinery is born and science begins to gain ground versus belief. It is a time of change, a time of wonder and possibility.

Mind that the play does not take place in our mundane world. You are not only welcome, but encouraged, to spin off and create a colorful alternate one where themes and feels are more easily evoked.



## THE MARCH OF THE STEWARDS - Introducing the lesser devils

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*Dum spiro, spero, As long as I breathe, I hope*

"When I went out my door and ended up looking over green flower-laden hills,  
I was not surprised in the least. I was violated. I was only angry." - Jeremy, steward of Father Sky.

After the greater devil awakens, the lesser ones are dragged into the sanctuary. The next time they open a door, it will lead to the sanctuary of the principal. They will know in that instant what has happened, who they are, and why it has happened to them. More important than all this is that the shock of being dragged out of their normalcy inspires a feeling in them. This event has been labeled by Mr. Pinkleton as the march of a steward, before that it was often called a summons. This is their truest feeling towards the principal, towards their greater devil.

### The Six Words of Feeling

The ancient book of words has reference for each of the six possible feelings that come over a marching steward. Here they are, with Mr. Pinkleton's details. The name stems from the first temptation (action) of the steward.

- **Nasaq** (*Love*): The first desire of the steward is to embrace, and possibly kiss the principal. Mostly likely this person was rather unhappy and looking for escape from their life.
- **Daku** (*Hate*): The impulse of the steward is to kill the principal. This could have many reasons behind it, and I won't discuss them all here.
- **Addar** (*Fear*): The immediate response of the steward is to cower and hide from the principal. They are afraid of their power, and their lack of humanity.
- **Gisban** (*Shame*): This steward thinks themselves unworthy of the role and power they have been given. Their first instinct is to ask the principal for forgiveness.
- **Kalu** (*Pity*): Upon the march, the steward feels an overwhelming compassion for the principal. They want to smother them with sympathy, make them better and well again.
- **Leku** (*Envy*): Oh my, the power of such wonder and fury! This steward covets the amazing ability of the principal and wants to steal it for themselves.

Each player, except the one who has chosen to become the whisperer, gets to create a steward for the principal. In effect, you end up with players minus one stewards in each game. Begin by selecting a unique feeling from the above list for the steward. At the end of this point, you should have created: a greater devil, a sanctuary, and several lesser devils.

## THE DOMAIN OF THE HEART – The six mighty emotions

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*Fide, sed qui, vide, Trust, but take care whom*

*“For us lesser devils, us stewards, passions run hot and deep.” - Sarah, Steward of Father Sky*

Once dragged from the clay and into the reach of the fog, each devil is much different than they were in life. The calm and prudent find they become both reckless and prone to action. Those that were foolhardy now realize they are wild and nearly without care. Once pulled away from the clay, the heart beats faster and stronger. It is unfettered after a fashion and seeks expression.

Each of them has a darkness inside like all of us, and this exposes a weakness. For every steward, they are cursed by a emotion. This emotion is part of their darkness, and is a link to it. Embracing this feeling is tempting fate and letting the darkness into the sanctuary.

### Six Mighty Emotions

These are not to be confused with the six words of feeling, for those are deep things now buried. This list of six has been carefully chosen to both: be neither good nor bad, and inspire action. Each lists one or more action types that trigger ownership. The players have to each select one emotion from this list (unique):

- **Anger.** Trigger: *Violence.*
- **Desire.** Trigger: *Temptation.*
- **Hope.** Trigger: *Desperation.*
- **Courage.** Trigger: *Fear.*
- **Pride.** Trigger: *Slights.*
- **Mercy.** Trigger: *Displays of Power.*

The players that represent emotion do not own any character, but instead they control any given character when they are inspired by that emotion. When the trigger arises in place, it allows a consequence free challenge for control of the character to occur.

Once the players have chosen, and each has a different emotion to play listed above, then they chose a steward to curse. Cursing a steward is creating a hole in them such that when they feel that emotion, darkness can creep in. Mechanically this is much like letting the whisperer have their way with the character, and they usually end up in a bad place.

## THE FURY AND WONDER – What is the principal?

*Homo sui iuris, Man is his own judge*

*“Everything is clear from my vantage, except where my stewards are concerned...” - Mr. Pinkleton*

I have established that the stewards are still mostly human, while the principal is not. They appear human, they talk like a human, but they are something more. Their heart has been removed, both physically and metaphysically. They cannot feel except through their stewards, who they share with by the ancient magic that binds them. From all external standpoints the principal seems a calm as a windless sea, like nothing can touch them. It is only the connections to their stewards that keep them thus, for at the core they are bubbling with force.

The core of a principal is a war between wonder and fury. Wonder is the response of the principals heart at the beauty of the stars. Fury is the rage of the heart at their loss and what they have become. Their passion is not only removed from their form and mind, but trapped in a battle between two views. Each view drives the principal in a different direction, and at any given time they are in one of three states: Furious, Wondering, or Unstable. Each state of the principal makes play different, because the demands of the principal upon the stewards will be different. The principal is furious when their fury is greater than their wonder, they are wondering when their wonder is greater than their fury, and unstable when the forces balance out.

### Setting Starting Fury and Wonder

The two internal forces of the principal are tracked as numeric values. The higher the value the stronger that force within them. The whisperer gives the principal 1 wonder and 1 fury. Then clockwise around the players, each assigns 1 point to either wonder or fury.

### Opinions that Keep them Human

In addition to the scores of wonder and fury, each principal has one or more thoughts that keep them human. These are things they are holding onto, ideas about themselves in particular. Perhaps they think they are smarter than everyone else, incredibly attractive, or the nicest person you will ever meet. The whisperer decides what opinion(s) they hold that function in this capacity.

## THE FRAGILE GLASS SHIELD – The Bonds of Community

*Docendo discimus, We learn by teaching*  
“I really had no idea how hard this would be...” Sarah

At the metaphorical center of each sanctuary lies a single heart glass. It is powered by, and therefore represents to some degree, the spiderweb of passions that tie together each devilish echelon. When the passions are unified the glass is strong and solid. Each time passions act in discord the glass weakens and may crack.

Cracks in the heart glass are one of the things that concern all of the devils in a given sanctuary. It should not be surprising, but given the removed and surreal calm of the principal, they care little about the cracks. It is the stewards who feel for them, and they fear what the cracks mean and what they might release.

The heart glass can withstand a few cracks, but no more than five. The sixth crack always shatters it, destroying the glass and letting loose the fury and wonder held within. The more cracks it gains, the more fragile it becomes. It is an accelerating process, cracks beget more cracks. The glass cannot be repaired, and will only degrade over time.

When the glass is under duress, it can do a number of interesting things. A weak amount of stress on the glass makes it shine. This moment of shining, sparkling curiosity draws more wonder into the glass. A moderate amount of stress can cause the glass to ring out. This cry of anguish draws forth more fury into the glass. More stress than moderate makes the glass crack, and a great deal of stress makes it burst. A glass burst releases some amount of wonder and fury out into the sanctuary (or beyond that), but does not add a crack to the glass.

### The Mechanics of Cracking Glass

When a steward acts against another devil, or they draw from the fury or wonder in the heart glass, they risk cracking the glass. This is the roll of a single six-sided die plus the number of cracks already in the glass. Compare the total to the numbers below to see what happens to the glass:

- 3-        The glass **shines** (+1 Wonder)
- 4-5      The glass **rings** (+1 Fury)
- 6-7     The glass **cracks** (+1 Crack)
- 8+       The glass **bursts** (special rules)

Handling each type of glass event is described in detail on page 24.

## AND THE WORLD REVOLVES – The World Outside

*Boni pastoris est tondere pecus, non deglubere, A good shepherd shears his sheep, he doesn't flay them*  
*"The bloody principal only concerns himself on occasion, all the grunt work falls to me it seems..."*

– Nathan, steward of Mr. Pinkleton

So far I've described the Principal, the Sanctuary, the Stewards, and the heart glass. I, however, have not discussed or detailed what they can do or the challenges they face. Each of the first three has its own power, its own ancient magic. Outside them is the world of clay and just below that is the world of fog.

In the **world of clay**, the devil appears like just your average run-of-the-mill folk. They can move like one of us, drink and eat like one of us, engage in relations like one of us, and so on. The devil isn't one of us though, and this all comes down to **charm**. The devil has natural control over the dreams of others, and this we call charm. Using charm does not change anything, but alters perceptions of that thing. This works on themselves too, such that at any given time the devil can assume the guise of someone else entirely. Most of the game will probably occur in the world of clay, or in the sanctuary. In the world of clay the devils may encounter three special types of beings: **dreamers**, **demons**, and **dark hearts**.

The **world of fog** is connected to the world of clay. Stepping into it seems like nothing, at least the first step. The further a devil steps into the fog, the more things appear mutable in the world of clay. Stepping into the fog allows a devil to actually change the clay itself. You could imagine it as climbing up a mountain to gain a better view of what is going on around you, so you can make changes. The problem is that the fog is a double-edged sword. Stepping into the fog makes things mutable, but the enigma lies in that same fact. The more steps into the fog, the more the clay shifts on its own, turning to mud beneath your feet. You can get lose sight of the clay, and then you have to claw and crawl your way back to reality – drawing fury to do so from the heart glass. This nastiness aside, both **demons** and **dark hearts** can only be dealt with from the vantage of fog.

### Encounters in the Wide World

To get scenes moving, the principal as controlled by the whisperer lays out simple plans for the stewards. Mr. Pinkleton may be contemplating the nature of some celestial matter, and call for Nathan to grab get some bread from the market on Abbey Lane. Simply stepping into the wide world pretty much assures some encounter is going to happen. Not only are the devils magnets for dreamers, demons, and dark hearts, but the principal never commands without some larger plan behind the action. Encounters are literally rolled on the six-sided die, as an encounter die. The results of which differ based on the chapter being played out (discuss later).

## THE DREAMER'S HEART – Our Glorious Mission

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*Credo quia absurdum, I believe it because it is absurd*  
“She was but a small girl of limited years, but what a heart!” - Jeremy

The dreamers are the mission of the devils, or more exactly, protecting them from demons and dark hearts. Everyone has dreams, hopes, and ambitions. Dreamers in the context I'm talking about here are something more. They dream of what could be without regard to the rules of clay, they question the rules themselves. Here are some of the dreamers encountered by the stewards of Father Sky, and their dreams:

**Lilly**, a petite and dainty young girl of some money who dreamed:

*All men will love me.*

**Clinton**, a slender young man of minor education who dreamed:

*I will cure all disease.*

**Ella**, an older but lovely widow who dreamed:

*War will be erased from this world.*

**Myrtle**, an old lady of some weight who dreamed:

*The land will be overrun with flowers and green things.*

**Hugh**, an aged man of high society who dreamed:

*I will own this world in its entirety.*

Notice a trend in the dreams? They are all far reaching, nearly impossible affairs. The dreamer never thinks that their dream will just 'happen', but that they can make it so with hard work and effort. In fact, they aren't far from the truth. Their minds are special and can bridge the fog and clay. By using their inherent creativity (all of them are artists after a fashion) they can alter the clay much in the manner of devils.

### Dreamers in Game Play

The dreamer is a foil in the game to get things rolling. Without them, there is nothing really at stake. The demons and dark hearts, the villains, can't really do much to the devils themselves. The devils aren't in danger, the dreamers and the world around them is.

When a dreamer is encountered, the whisperer will introduce them in the manner above. Each dreamer has a short description of some imagery and then their dream. Upon the initial encounter, the dreamer will be only holding the dream. They will not have actively pursued it yet. It is the initial encounter with the devil that gives them the spark to do so.

## SHARP TEETH OF DARKNESS – The Demonic Mirror

*Deserta faciunt et pacem appellant, They create a desolation and they call it peace*  
“It came at me with all claws, but I stood my ground...” - Jeremy

The heart of the dreamer is like that of any other, and so it contains darkness. This darkness mingles with the fog and demons are born. Once born the demon has no solid relation to it's parent dreamer, except **that it always acts counter to their dream**. For instance, a demon born from Lilly would act contrary to her dream: 'All men will love me.' The demon could work this in any way it sees fit, from eating the men that do fall in love with her, to preventing them from even coming into contact with her.

The demons are ancient, and take one of six ancient forms. In the clay they are like devils though, and have charm that allows them to appear like the common folk. Here are the forms as described in the ancient book of words:

**ALANI** (*The Mighty Axe*): The demon is violent and driven by spite (anger). It always has sharp teeth, which can be in any shape or form: a cutting weapon, deadly teeth, claws, etc.

**MITU** (*The Dead*): The demon is crafty, driven by a thirst for the passion of a heart (desire). It always has the trapping of death and decay. It could be anything from someone that died of the plague to corpse of a rotting giant wolf.

**NOPANA** (*The Faceless*): The demon is stealthy and driven by goal of gaining form (hope). It is always lacking at least one aspect of form. That could be anything from having no face, to no weight, and such.

**BU'IDU** (*The Ghost*): The demon is hungry and driven to consume the fear of its victims(courage). It is in effect intangible, possessing others to the world of clay. In the world of fog it becomes a shadowy menacing shape.

**SISU** (*The Horse*): The demon is patient and driven by the taste of pride. It always takes the form of a pet or lowly servant to someone important (often the dreamer themselves). In the fog it appears as a dark steed with fiery eyes and shiny hooves.

**SARRUM** (*The King*): The demon is wise and driven by the taste of mercy. It always takes the form of a ruler or someone in charge (often of the dreamer themselves). In the fog it dons a golden crown, but remains mostly the same.

### Dial your Demon please...

It shouldn't be too hard to notice that each player's emotion is tied to one of the six demon forms. In play that means the player of that emotion owns that demon. This only becomes an issue when that player is already controlling a steward, no player can control both a steward and a demon. In this special case the control of the demon passes to the whisperer.

## THE HEARTS OF DARKNESS – The Lost Dreamer

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*Duobus litigantibus, tertius gaudet, While two men argue the third rejoices*  
*"It was unlike anything I ever met... Like my principal but dark and terrible!" - Sarah*

The dark heart is a special kind of nasty indeed. It is what happens when a dreamer loses their heart to the darkness. Their dream becomes a dark nightmare that they spread across the world of clay like bloody rain. Dark hearts are drawn to dreamers, drawn to the pure heart just like the darkness.

Like devils and demons, the dark hearts have charm. They pass among the common folk like one of them, but as they do they let forth a ripple of darkness. They spread discord and mayhem, rejoicing in the pain and anguish that soon follows. Mr. Pinkleton calls this their **shadow**.

The shadow of a dark heart will always be the first thing encountered by a steward, for it will affect the clay far and wide. Father Sky's first encounter with a dark heart was a political adviser. This adviser cast its shadow over the government, who then began to turn on its own people. This should give you some idea of the scope I'm talking about. Dark hearts create big issues in the clay, issues that always harden or crush hearts.

In order to confront the dark heart things will have to carefully thought out. The stewards are lesser devils and cannot face it on their own. Instead one or more stewards will eventually face it with their principal by their side.



## THE CHAPTERS – The Structure of Play

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*Experto credite, Believe me, for I have experienced  
"I will always remember those days, days of horror and glory..." - Nathan*

This game is played out in three sessions. Each session is one chapter in the saga of the devils, and cannot last more than three hours. Each chapter lays the groundwork for the next, building up the story to its eventual conclusion. The three chapters play out differently, though they share the same basic mechanics. Here is an introduction to each chapter, which I will then describe in detail individually.

The first chapter is called **The Brewing Storm**. Here we are introduced to the devils, their sanctuary, and their early days venturing out into the world of clay. The major issues here will be presented by introduction to dreamers and their demons, and problems stemming from the devils buried wants. The session ends with the first sign of the coming dark heart's shadow.

The second chapter is called **The Hurricane**. This whole session is about the dark heart and the dreamers already established, a tale of costly confrontation and the passions of the stewards. Stopping the dark heart from spreading by using the dreamers, determining what are acceptable costs, and tension on the unity of the stewards will abound. The session ends with the confrontation that defeats the dark heart, but at what cost?

The third and final chapter is called **The Sweeping Winds**. With the confrontation behind them, the devils are faced with a new situation. The force of the hurricane will have left the principal weak and subject to the sweeping winds that follow such a storm. The stewards have a chance to unearth their buried wants, and possibly achieve them! The session ends when either one steward achieves their want, effectively removing the principal, or the time limit is reached and the principal regains their strength.

Before I get to describing the play of each chapter, let me introduce the roles of each player...

## THE WHISPERER'S VOICE – What they are responsible for in play

*Esse est percipi, To be is to be perceived*  
“The darkness has a voice like no other, sweet and tempting.” - Mr. Pinkleton

During play the whisperer takes on a expansive role. They play the voice of the darkness, and often fill in for everything that the player's aren't actively controlling. The world at large is the domain of the whisperer. This is actually only a minor point though, and real power of the whisperer lies in the ability to... well... **whisper**.

Each whisper is a rather nasty idea for someone important (a steward most likely) being mastered by a player. These ideas have two functions in play. First, they let a little darkness into the spiderweb of passion that surrounds the heart glass. Second, they strengthen the emotion in the spiderweb that is being played by the targeted player. Since many whispers may be embraced over a game, the strength of them is not directly their value. Here is what I mean:

| <u>Whispers/Victories</u> | <u>Strength</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1-2                       | 3               |
| 3-5                       | 4               |
| <u>6-9</u>                | <u>5</u>        |
| 10-14                     | 6               |
| 15-20                     | 6 /1            |
| 21-27                     | 6 /2            |
| <u>28-35</u>              | <u>6 /3</u>     |
| 36-44                     | 6 /4            |
| 45-54                     | 6 /5            |
| [+10]                     | [+0 /+1]        |

As the whisperer, you keep track of these values for each player on the log sheet. Just chicken scratch marks when whispers are embraced by each player. The strength values are used for contests of emotion, for control of characters, and the player without any whispers embraced gets two dice to roll.

In addition to whispering, the whisperer is the default master of the principal. When other players draw fury they get to direct the actions of the principal, but the rest of the time the whisperer is in control of them.

The whisperer never gets mastery (control) over a steward, unless a player seizes mastery of the steward they cursed. This is a special situation called **shadow-casting**, and it dealt with in its own section. In short, the steward to free and open to awesome displays of power which is followed by a descent into darkness that results in the whisperer taking control of the steward for some time.

## THE VOICES OF FEELING – What the players are in charge of

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*Ne nuntium necare, Don't kill the messenger*  
*"I apologize for the rash actions of my stewards,*  
*who are prone to the heat of the moment..." - Father Sky*

The players each take on the role of one emotion shared inside the collective of devils. This feeling is running through the heart they share, running through the spiderweb of passion that surrounds the heart glass. Since they can only take mastery of a character when they are swayed by their emotion, the narratives built by the game tend to be passionate and wild.

Now sometimes the players can have different opinions on how a given character feels. This is called an internal conflict. These conflicts can never occur during a scene entrance though. When you decide how a steward feels and bring them into a scene you are protected by **entrance grace**.

The goal, as the player of an emotion, is to score victories for the stewards under your control. The emotion you play sways a steward and leads them towards a goal. If they can achieve this goal then you earn a victory and your emotion gets stronger in the collective. These victories have to be meaningful, which means the principal must be interested in the outcome. Mechanically this just means they have to be challenging. Here is what I'm talking about:

### Setup

Jeremy is talking with Father Sky about adding a new house for him out in the hills of the sanctuary. Well, actually less talking and more yelling in this case. Sky prohibits it and Jeremy stomps off angrily through the mill door and out into the world of clay. *This is all a setup laid down by John who is playing anger, then played out with the whisperer as the principal.*

### Wrong Way...

Jeremy steps out onto Abbey Lane and heads south towards the nearest bar. He huffs and puffs down the street, and as he nears the entrance he sees a woman being assaulted by several street urchins. He steps into the fray to save her... *Is this dramatic, sure. It is heroic, sure. Does the principal care about it? Nope. This is fine as a colorful footnote and fun role-playing, but it will never call any mechanics into play. Of course the whisperer, having the scope they do, could easily ramp up the issue. But right now lets just see the right way off the bat before we go and talk about redirection.*

### The Right Way!

Jeremy steps out onto Abbey Lane and heads north towards where he senses the devil known as Sarah. Sarah is under the sway of Pity (played by Jeff) and is currently working as a nurse and tending to some soldiers come home injured from war. Jeremy, still steaming, plans on recruiting her against Father Sky. *Can you sense the conflict coming? Here is something the principal will care about. He can't have his stewards scrapping all over the world of clay...*

## **TYPES OF CONFLICT** – The Uses of Dice

---

*Scio me nihil scire, I know the I know nothing  
"I've seen demons resist our strongest force, and even militias on occasion.  
Every use of power is a test unto itself." - Father Sky Preaches*

Internal conflicts occur between players for the mastery of a single character, usually a steward. These conflicts are manifest in play by a moment of confusion, which sometimes can be taken advantage of by a foe. The character is hesitant and unsure for a few moments, and often mumbles something to themselves.

### Rolling Pools of Dice

All dice are rolled the same way in this game. You pick up the pool of 2 or more dice and roll them. You never roll more than six dice though, dice beyond that count as a bonus to the roll. Then you figure the value of the roll as:

***The highest rolled value, plus one more for each other die that comes up 4 or better.***

It is actually pretty simple in practice, but it does take a moment to figure out. Try yourself on these rolls:

4, 5, and 1 = **6** (5, +1 for the 4)

3, 6, 4, and 3 = **7** (6, +1 for the 4)

1 and 3 = **3** (3, no other die higher than 3)

5, 1, 1, 1, and 3 = **5** (5, no other die higher than 3)

1, 4, 6, 1, 6, and 6 = **9** (6, +3 for the 4, 6, and 6)

### The Meaning of Rolled Values

Without otherwise being expressed, the result of a roll is the power generated by the action or force. There are five key values we specifically care about, benchmarks for the result of a roll. Here they are:

**III (3): Incredible power and ability. 1 victory.**

**V (5): Legendary force. 2 victories.**

**VII (7): Mythical might. 3 victories.**

**IX (9): Awesome Godly strength. 4 victories.**

**XI (11): Unheard power. 5 victories.**

### Handling Rolls for Internal Conflicts

In this case the players each roll their emotion strength dice and compare their results. The winner either **takes control of the character and lets them have the victories** (the character) or **they give the mastery of the character to the loser and keep the victories for themselves** (as tracked by the whisperer). Both choices have their obvious advantages. Once the conflict has been rolled out, there can't be another one between the two players in that scene until the character has acted on a whisper.

### The Victorious Victories of the Vain... or something

Victories taken by the player just make their emotion stronger in the spiderweb. Victories held by a character can be used as a straight bonus to the result of any roll. All victories have to be applied, you can't hold some back in reserve, though you can collect the ones from the roll back. How about an example, even if I am getting ahead of myself a bit.

*Nathan is taken aside by several impressive looking guards when trying to enter the prison and free the dreamer Ella. Without trying to resort to actual magic, he decides to try his devilish charm. This gives him a 2 die pool to roll for the conflict. He rolls: 2 and 3, for a total of 3 that earns him a single victory. It is the whisperer's job to key challenges, and she set this one at 2 victories. Nathan's charm isn't quite working, and his first attempt at trying to pass himself off as a guard isn't working. He does have one victory though, and that will help him in the next roll if he decides to escalate the affair further.*

External conflicts occur between the devil, demon, or dark heart in question and any external force or foe. There are roughly three levels of effort that can be applied to any conflict this way. The first of which is rather safe, and the second is only a bit risky, and the third is quite risky. Here are the options:

**Minimal Effort:** *Using charm or limited preternatural ability. This implied the use of only a small amount of innately connected fog in the action.*

**Minor Effort:** *Stepping just once into the fog to draw forth some magic.*

**Major Effort:** *Stepping more than once into the fog, casting fog into a form, or drawing fury from the heart glass are all very powerful and often costly actions.*

Victories earned by the steward of a player in excess of those needed for the conflict add to that player's victory track- making the emotion that much stronger in the collective of devils.

### Handling Rolls for External Conflicts

In this case the player gets to roll dice based on just how risky they want to be, with greater risk meaning the potential for more powerful action. Here are the dice rolled based on the amount of effort applied:

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Using Charm or Preternatural Ability | <u>2 Dice</u> |
| Summoning some magic with 1 step     | 3 Dice        |
| Summoning some magic with 2 steps    | 4 Dice        |
| Summoning some magic with 3 steps    | 5 Dice        |
| Summoning some magic with 4 steps    | <u>6 Dice</u> |
| Casting the magic into a form*       | +1 Dice       |
| Drawing Fury from the Heart Glass*   | +2 Dice       |

*\*Only possible if 2 of more steps are used*

Using more than just 2 dice of effort means you have stepped into the fog. If you don't roll at least those steps in victories, you'll get lost and have to crawl your way back to the sanctuary. If you are lost and the magic was cast into the form, you will be cast into a similar form. Drawing fury from the heart glass requires the glass cracking roll from page 12.

The forms of magic are the same as those of the demons, the ancient words of power for them are listed on page 15.

### How many Victories are needed?

The whisper assigns the challenge level to each conflict, but in general they are pretty fixed depending on what the opposition is, as so:

- III (1 victory): Moderate or Strong clay resistance.
- V (2 victories): Impressive clay resistance, Dreamers.
- VII (3 victories): Lesser demons and awesome clay resistance.
- IX (4 victories): Greater demons.
- XI (5 victories): Dark Hearts and Gods.

The number of victories listed here is also the bonus dice they get if they ever need to roll, start with one die and add the victories here.

### Escalation for Repeated Attempts

When a failure occurs, the character can try again as long as they escalate the number of dice rolled. There is a minimum of 3 dice on the second roll, 5 on the third however. I'll continue the example from the last page to demonstrate.

*Nathan makes no progress with the use of charm, these guards are smart one indeed. He decides to take two steps into the fog and cast some magic into a form, giving him 4 plus 1 for 5 dice to roll. He selects the form: MITU, the dead. He rolls: 2-6-4-4-1 for a total result of 8 for 3 victories. More than enough for the 2 steps into the fog, and also more than the impressive clay challenge (2 victories). He turns dark for a moment, like a shadow in space and undead hands grab at the guards from below. They drag them down to the ground and hold them tight, as Nathan walks over them to the prison. "Sorry about this..."*

## RAMIFICATIONS OF EXTERNAL CONFLICTS – Possible Consequences

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*Ut sementem feceris, ita metes, You'll reap what you sow*  
“I find myself much like a father to my stewards,  
for they often end up over their heads and in dire need of me” - Father Sky Preaches More

When the **conflict is lost**, though uncommon in this game, the whisperer gets to decide the ramifications, which should be a logical extension of what is going on. Really bad things happening to the characters just won't happen. Instead, the greater devil will come to the rescue. The nature of how they do so depends on their current state, as discussed on page 11. A raging greater devil will wipe away the opposition that would incur such bad things to the victim with fury filled violent magic. A wondering devil will use magic to alter the situation in clever ways that nullify the opposition. Either way the use of this magic will cause a heart glass burst (*which is yet to be described, see the next page*) that often can cause the loss of fury or wonder. An unstable principal takes to raging or wondering at the choice of the whisperer, who also gets to describe how the principal uses their magic.

If the **steward gets lost in the fog**, they will appear in the sanctuary shortly thereafter. They have to crawl back to the universe we share, with the greater devil casting them a line of wonder tied with fury. This action draws both one fury and wonder into the heart glass, but costs the player (the emotion) strength if they had any above 2. Just record a 1 die penalty against them on the log sheet.

Things get even worse if the **steward is lost in the fog while casting magic into a form**. When they return to the sanctuary (as above) they will be cast into a demon of that form. While in this state they must listen to any whispers they get from the whisperer. It is quite a precarious state, and can only be rectified by the whisperer at the close of a session.

## MATTERS OF HEART & GLASS – Handling Heart Glass Events

---

*Vincit qui patitur, He who perseveres, conquers.*  
*“Hell hath no fury like a greater devil driven into action...” - Nathan*

The heart glass is at the core of the devils power. All of the amazing things the greater devil can do, all of their might, stem from the fury and wonder contained within. The heart glass is not unlike a physical representation of the harmony and peace between the devils, and it will mostly likely crack. These descriptions here are expounded from those briefly given on page 12, that describe glass events.

The heart glass can shine when under duress. This draws an additional wonder from beyond into the glass. The lesser devils can feel this, and the greater devil seems uplifted by it.

The glass can also ring under stress. This draws forth an additional fury from the beyond into the glass. Just like the shining, the lesser devils can feel this and the greater devil seems agitated by it.

The glass can crack. When this occurs all the devils know it, they can feel the fragile nature of their situation. They feel the strong passions that both hold them together and tear at the same strings.

When the glass is fairly cracked, it often lets forth a burst, a blast of magic. This can happen when the damaged glass is cracked and stressed, or just when the greater devil is forced into action. Regardless the pure amount of magic let loose is impressive to say the least, and often makes sweeping changes to the world of clay.

### Handling Bursts from the Heart Glass

These bursts of fury and wonder from the heart glass are the only way to affect real lasting change on the world of clay. Even the magic of the fog does not stand the test of time.

Bursts are costly outpourings of magic. Roll the pool of the higher contained force plus 3 more dice, with one special caveat: Every die that comes up 4 or more is a point lost from the heart glass. In this special case, results of 13 are worth 6 victories and results of 15 are worth 7 victories. Duly note that the last point of any force cannot be extinguished from the glass, regardless of how many loses are rolled.

The magic pours forth through the greater devil, and it is influenced by their state. If they are raging, the victories are destructive in nature. If they are wondering, the victories are clever mischief. Either way, the greater devil appears in some context of the situation and carries out the effects. Since usually you are either drawing fury to power magic, or being saved from a horrible fate, these victories should be easily placed into context.



## **RISKS OF SHADOW-CASTING** – A special type of risky but powerful play

---

*Naturalia non sunt turpia, Natural things are not shameful*

*"I had never seen darkness expressed like that, as when Jeremy was roused to anger.  
His fist like Thor's hammer. His eyes like raging fire of a burning city." - Father Sky*

Each steward is cursed by one emotion. When the player of that emotion masters them, they tap into an inner-darkness. Once per session shadow-casting can happen on any one steward. The steward gets three additional shadow dice that apply to each of their external conflict rolls. Every time they overcome a conflict, they lose a shadow die. During this period, no other player can call for an internal conflict and try and master the steward, they are singularly possessed. The player gets to rampage pretty freely during the this time, until their shadow dice are gone.

After the shadow dice are all lost, the steward's inner-darkness overcomes them. The whisperer takes over, gaining mastery over the steward. It is only during this special time that a whisperer can control a steward. The steward always turns on the other devils, and possibly joins forces with demons or the dark heart for a spell. Just like before, the lesser devil gets extra dice, three darkness dice in fact. They are lost just like the shadow dice are, one per conflict overcome. During this period the player that initiated the shadow-casting becomes the whisperer, a sort of role-reversal.

### **What is the purpose?**

Shadow-casting is a terrible thing to see and to do, but it offers the player a way to earn massive victories for their emotion. This is supposed to be a gripping game of drama, and once per session each player can really go all out.

## CREATING AND EMBRACING WHISPERS – A simple how-to for whispers

*Mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiat, The world desires to be deceived and therefore it is*  
“I don't know... I mean it just sounded so good, so I did it.” - Jeremy

The whispers are always dark things, mean and despicable. Sometimes they are even depraved, but that is really in the hands of the whisperer. The whisperer creates the whisper with the idea of making for dramatic play. Add a little evil intent, a little spite into the action of the steward. You can even try and tie it into the ancient nature of the steward to further embrace theme. Good whispers shouldn't seem all that bad, but are things that could lead to other bad things and so on.

Mechanically, you just suggest a course of action to the player mastering the steward. If they choose to embrace that course, then they get to roll an additional die for the conflict. This is in addition too the whisper mark the player earns that counts as a victory for their emotion. In essence the gain from embracing a whisper is two fold, helping the steward and the emotion. The downside from the whisper is that collects inside the spiderweb of passion that holds the devils together, and rears its ugly head during the conclusion of each session.

The real 'bad stuff' only occurs if the whisper results in a failure for the conflict. In this case the whisperer chains on another conflict which stems from the current one, of the same challenge or one higher. This conflict is forced, and the steward must deal with it somehow. I'll toss out an example using the same scenario presented on page 21 and 22.

*Nathan had to get past these impressive guards to reach the free the dreamer Ella, held in the prison just over yonder. He has failed in his attempt to charm them, and needs a new solution. The whisperer suggests 'Kill the captain and then they will be demoralized.' Nathan embraces the whisper, because it gives him an additional die and warrants another roll without using any fog (any obvious risk). The whisperer marks down the whisper mark, and the player of Nathan (John – anger) rolls 3 dice: 1-3-4, a 4 total. This is not enough to overcome the impressive resistance of 5, and the conflict is lost.*

*Now the whisperer gets to add a nasty turn of events (bad stuff) and possibly escalate the conflict. Nathan strike out and kills the captain, but an alarm sounds and men pour out of the complex with rifles, raising the conflict one level higher and forcing the steward to continue.*

## PLAY: THE BREWING STORM – A simple how-to for chapter one

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*Luctor et emergo, I struggle and arise*

*"The beginning is a delicate time... I think." - Sarah*

This first chapter is shorter than the others, since it has the same time frame and some of that is eaten away by the creation of the devils and sanctuary. This session is all about the devils and their relationships. There is no big bad evil, just devils who often disagree and how they handle these differences.

The whisperer takes on the role of the principal more often in this chapter, and in fact they start the game. The first scene always begins the same. The player to the left of the whisperer starts off by just picking a steward. This steward is called before the principal, who relays some minor duty to them. How the steward feels about the duty is always equal to the emotion of the player, but why they feel that way is up to them.

The duty will take the lesser devil out into the world of clay, and once there we have to use the old encounter table. Yes! I said an encounter table! You never know what you may meet in the wide world after all. Toss a six-sided die and compare it to the following:

**1-4:** Another steward seeking solace away from the sanctuary.

**5-6:** A dreamer, or a demon of a dreamer.

After the roll, and a bit of play, it is time for another player to step up and introduce the steward, dreamer, or demon. Either way, it will be under the sway of their emotion such that they can play it.

Encounter dice are tossed during each scene in the world of clay until all the stewards have been introduced. From that point on, the goals of the stewards driven by the player's emotion should drive play.

The chapter concludes as the play times clocks in at 2:50 hours, with the discovery of the dark hearts shadow that will drive the second chapter. This special scene is an exposition of the whisperer, taking input and ideas from the players. Kind of a role-reversal, with the players whispering to the whisperer. The dark heart's shadow will be some large scale issue facing the world of clay at large, something to inspire action against it in the next chapter.

## **PLAY: THE HURRICANE** – A simple how-to for chapter two

---

*Munit haec et altera vincit, One defends and the other conquers*

*“The shadow of the dark heart must be refuted, for it is a plague upon humanity...” - Mr. Pinkleton*

The second chapter is more intense. It begins with the fall of the dark heart's shadow across the land. Under this kind of influence, almost anyone of importance easily gains demons. Can you see where this is going?

Most of the second chapter is about demons, demons, and more demons. Intersperse some inter-devil drama, and helping along the dreamer, and you have a good solid idea of the play during this session.

A lot of moment should remain from the last session, a lot of goal impassioned stewards should offer up clear avenues of adventure. If not, rely on the whisperer to play the principal and over up avenues to explore.

Regardless, the goal here is for the whisperer to push, push, and push. Make the play dynamic, dangerous, and wild. Given the nature of players as emotions, you need only spark action and drama will follow.

This chapter concludes with a showdown between the dark heart and one or more stewards. Given the nature of this, leave 30 to 45 minutes for it (initiate it between 2:15 and 2:45 hours into the session). Only victories scored by the stewards beyond 4 affect the dark heart, and it needs victories equal to the player count plus three to defeat. If it can't be defeated in time the principal will take it out with a blaze of glory. Even if it is taken out by the stewards, it will take a burst from the heart glass to wipe it out for good- leaving the heart glass intact but empty.

## PLAY: THE SWEEPING WINDS – A simple how-to for chapter three

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*Nunc aut numquam!, Now or never!*

*“As he laid there, weak and disoriented, I knew it was time.” - Sarah*

The second chapter drains the heart glass. While the greater devil regains their strength, they cannot keep the spiderweb of passion in a state of calm. They cannot suppress the wants of the lesser devils, and the buried wants come to the surface. The sweeping winds is a power play among the stewards, each desperate to express their want alone with greater devil.

The only opposition that lies before them is each other, the dreamers already introduced, and world of clay at large. Now is the time for the players to stretch out, to really play their emotions to the hilt. During this period the world of clay represents a place of mutable emotion. The spiderweb of feeling normally moderated by the greater devil is no longer under control, and it spill out over and into the world.

Using their strength scores as dice, the players can shape the emotions of the masses in the world of clay. Unlike the other chapters, the emotions are at the fore-front and the stewards ally with each like generals. The whisperer controls the dreamer or dreamers, who attempt to resist the stewards if at all possible.

Each player gets a chance to establish their emotion in the clay, and toss their strength dice. Victories earned here are placed onto their ally steward. Once these emotions are established (like movements almost) and the stewards have their victories, the battles begin. These conflicts (occurring in the world of clay) score victories for each steward general. If any steward comes out at the end of the session with a clear lead, meaning 6 or more victories over the other stewards, they earn their chance to realize their buried want. Otherwise it returns to business as usual, and the principal regains control of the delivish community.

If a steward is the victor, they earn their chance to act out their want. They get to do so in an exposition scene where the principal is destroyed in one fashion or another, and all the lesser devils return to the world much as they were before they were dragged into the foray of devils.