

# God's Light

A *Delta Green* scenario by Shane Ivey and Caleb Stokes

*"Where lies the line between madness and evil?"*

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A hardcover edition sits splayed atop a laminate envelope, the label beneath branded with DOJ classification and serial numbers. The location of seizure reads "ELSEWHERE<aprox. MIT>". The time of confiscation is listed as "???" The book begins at a two-page spread, titled simply INTRODUCTION. A post-it note has its title, "Meaning Without Master: The Mathematical Revelations of Dr. Wesley Cool."

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The speed at which a species translates thoughts into reality is the sole mark of distinction in the cosmos. For creatures bleeding through lower dimensions and hijacking minds across time, few physical laws cannot be shattered and reassembled to new purpose. For gods beyond the impermanence of flesh, the gap between thought and action, between dream and reality, is so narrow as to disappear.

Humanity's sad approximation of this power is called the Internet. The choices we make, the accounts with which we interact, the things we type and say where a microphone can hear. All of it feeds algorithms that decide what matters to us most. It leashes the eyes that control the hands that steer our ecosystem. The combined belief of all humanity affects reality not one iota, but the singular Force that decides the laws of our universe offers no contradiction. It is as we are, a simulation without programmer.

The All-in-One has no animating consciousness to motivate argument against human delusion. It is the gate. It is the traveler. It is by nature hollow and reflective, without an ego to object to any creature tapping its veins.

My "Picky Eater" is a needle through the skin of the Real. It funnels the quantum foam between possible realities through a funhouse prism of human consciousness. It reverses the flow between perception and phenomenon, shaping universes to fit its users' desires and truths. It reaffirms the omnipotence of thought. It allows travel between bubbles of reality.

I journey deeper, as my mind ever demands. I leave behind this record of my teachings as a gift. Armed with my discoveries, humanity now possesses the tools to build heavens uncountable.

But beware, my children. Where conflicting realities touch, madness erupts.

# <H1>Introduction

Professor Wesley Cool began teaching at MIT's Department of Mathematics in 2007. That was a few months before Max Tegmark's "The Mathematical Universe" appeared in *Foundations of Physics* Volume 38, Issue 2, and changed Cool's life.

Cool had come to mathematics from philosophy, finding in each field what he judged the other lacking. He had always harbored a pleasantly inchoate feeling that both fields together expressed something greater than the sum of their parts. In Tegmark's paper, that feeling deepened into something much more concrete. Tegmark proposed that the physical universe is a mathematical structure. Physical objects have no properties except mathematical properties; all structures that exist mathematically exist physically; consciousness itself is a mathematical substructure that subjectively perceives a physically "real" world around it.

Tegmark's proposals inspired Wes Cool to journey into more and more esoteric reaches of philosophy and mathematics. When he read strange suggestions that certain mental processes of manipulating mathematical formulae corresponded to remote effects in the physical world, he pursued them avidly. Others would call this field 'magic.'

Cool found discussions with similar thinkers frustrating. Many proved not just ill-informed but unhinged, the worst conspiracy theorists and occultists. But a few proved fruitful. They pointed him to sections of the *Pnakotic Manuscripts* held in Athens, to fascinating interpretations of the *Book of Thoth*, to seemingly authentic fragments of the infamous *Necronomicon*, and to a recent manual that codified ancient Persian astronomical techniques for perceiving other worlds in visions.

Cool pursued a long project to implement formulae that would let him reach those other worlds. Techniques in ancient tomes proved tedious and unpredictable. Years passed in failure. The careful shepherding of shared meditative states required to prove his theories presented a major recruitment problem. He sought a more reliable method. How else could he share these astonishing discoveries with a skeptical world?

Naturally, he developed an app.

# <H1>Picky Eater

Picky Eater is both app and hardware mod. It creates a microscopic lens to see through reality, a needle into the heart of Yog-Sothoth. It shows a user the Internet from a world where their every belief and opinion is confirmed. Or rather, it creates and approximates such a world. The effect is *not* a simulation. The infinitude of Yog-Sothoth warps itself around perceptions like a bubble blown into suds. Inside the bubble, a psychic hell forms.

The bubble transports first the user's mind, then body, and finally surroundings. Each instance of Picky Eater creates a growing event horizon of overlaid realities. The bleeding wounds of dimensional overlay violently abduct anyone passing their invisible boundaries from base reality, shunting them into different worlds.

## <H2>Worlds and Truths

Picky Eater requires an integrated circuit to run. Cool designed the circuit. He initially had it installed on a microprocessor by Dr. Rajnish Amardeep, an MIT electrical engineering professor working in computational science. The circuit inscribes a scrying sigil taken from the *Book of Thoth* with a constant electrical current. Around it, a separate, stylized Elder Sign also draws power. He prepared the circuit's shape and conductive materials using metallurgy encoded within little-understood trap cyphers found in the *Necronomicon*.

Examined under a microscope—which requires decapsulating the chip—the gates and loops of the silicon layer's gold inscription elude the eye. The ring seems to project up and *around* the nuclear circuit, as if projecting a semi-translucent, melting sphere of gold. It never seems possible to achieve absolute focus. The view costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. The shape was originally intended for mass contemplation and meditation over the course of decades. *The Book of Thoth* describes it as a monastic pursuit meant to “fetter the doubt of Dream and gaze upon Worlds and Truthes.”

Cool's innovation is firmware designed to act as an interface for his miniaturized version of the spell. The program interprets fluctuations in electric current through the circuit as binary code. The code triggers language packets and query algorithms, plug-ins installed for every Internet search engine Cool knew about. All resulting connections are routed through simple Internet browser software not unlike Tor.

A simple key-logger feeds user input to the circuit. But there is no language pack within the app's programming to dictate executables based on that input. That part of the programming is missing. The transistor gates of the sigil just...sort of seem to know.

## <H2>Development

Cool arrived at the design through meditations and directed dreaming. Using all the esoteric techniques and technologies at his command, he sought a guide. *The Guide*. A Guide of such profound awareness and wisdom that the notion of interacting with him—with it—had terrified even the *Necronomicon's* Abd al-Hazred. Some sources called it the Watcher On High. Others called it the All-in-One, the Ancient One, the Prolonged of Life, Tawil al'Umr.

The deep focus of designing the Picky Eater circuit triggered its power before Cool even knew it was on. The professor, in effect, *dreamed* the invention into being. Tawil al'Umr manifested for him at that very moment. Cool's delusions demanded it. The abyss of Yog-Sothoth thoughtlessly reflected back the Truth of the insect that dared tap its veins.

The first run of Picky Eater brought Cool to a world crafted to flatter his innermost thoughts and wishes. He made himself a god, treating the universe as a self-aware experiment. As a sociopathic narcissist, this was not enough. Cool wanted more. He dreamed a world in which his invention was already fact: a machine capable of building realities within realities. Once discovered, he turned on another Picky Eater device and sought revelation *within* revelation.

He touched stony ground and felt the chill dampness of mists that swirled. He smelled and tasted the strangeness of alien air. He saw his computer gutted and splayed on a tidal stone, its wires leading beneath the sands of an endless, low sea. Somehow, his own biological and psychic energies gave them power. They fed inconceivable amounts of data to the devices

running his app on Earth, or uncountable other Earths: data drawn from Cool's barely-glimpsed perceptions of the universes which met at this dim, misty place.

At last, a Guide came. It heard Dr. Cool's wish. It asked certain questions. And it departed. Cool waited, alone. Stranded.

Behind him, across the skins of countless realities pierced by Cool's madness, Picky Eater still runs.

## <H1>Reality Bubbles

Humanity has no access to reality. By the time an event is registered by a "conscious" mind, it lives in the realm of fallible memory. Our every perception is a prismatic shadow of a burning actual. Piercing Yog-sothoth reverses the flow. The lens of creation flips. The light of creation shines through the fragmented nonsense of the human psyche.

Picky Eater allows its user to experience realities in keeping with their innermost expectations and convictions. A link between human mind and the All-in-One is established through perception and mediated by the app's simplistic Internet browser.

Picky Eater finds (or *crafts*) a universe based on what the user unconsciously thinks is true. Continued use widens the hole through the electron-thin veil. The quantum infinity of Yog-Sothoth spills through the device and floods around it. Eventually, the 'bubble' reality grows to overwrite our own, a physically real world only accessible to the user and the figments created to inhabit it.

Picky Eater's wish fulfillment is psychologically total. It encompasses every contradictory thought and delusion, conscious and unconscious, in the user's fragmented mind. Rather than a blissful utopia, most users find themselves in a hell where all their worst fears and outrages are amplified and confirmed.

## <H2>Becoming a User

Anyone who operates a functioning computing device installed with Picky Eater becomes infected by Picky Eater. The device must have the hardware installed, functioning firmware, and a clear display.

It requires input, whether by voice, keystroke, or swipe. It is not enough to stare over someone's shoulder at a screen. Unpowered or broken machines can be handled without danger. But the second a password is entered, a screen swiped, or a voice command given, the operator is infected. The operator becomes a User.

An active device generates a field of reality interference that grows proportionally to the User's input. Having become a User, even just looking at the screen is enough. The more the infected device is used, the more the bubble grows.

Picky Eater replicates itself. A User's perceptions shift towards realities in which the app already exists. The sphere of Picky Eater's influence grows. App and hardware begin installing themselves (or rather, having *always been installed*) on that User's phones, computers, and any

other electronic devices that fall in range. That increases the field of effect still further. So long as a User stays within the range of one of these secondary installations, the bubble that Picky Eater creates is inescapable. False reality scrolls past like the backdrop of a film, an inescapable feedback loop of simulation.

The bubble never shrinks until the User's device first infected by Picky Eater is destroyed or loses power entirely.

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## <S1>Everything Gets Easier

An Agent who uses a Picky Eater device for any computing task requiring a skill or stat test rolls as usual. But ***in any result except a fumble, the test succeeds and the Agent gains 1 WP.***

In a fumble, the device burns out and the bubble breaks. Experimental circuitry and unstable firmware make Picky Eater worse than any malware. The semiconductor often burns out a device's hard drive or flash memory. Portable devices fair worse, their batteries drained far too quickly by the app's constant calculations.

Skill tests to disassemble the hardware of a device succeed or fail normally, not augmented by Picky Eater.

Dismantling the device interrupts the flow of current and stops it from running Picky Eater.

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## <H2>Degrees of Infection

Picky Eater does not affect a user's perceptions. It can't. It is made *from* perceptions, or rather assumptions. Users notice nothing amiss, but their perceptions craft new digital truths and then new physical realities. All users slip into delusion through the same stages, including Agents exposed through investigation of infected devices.

Privately track stages of Picky Eater infection with hearts. Keep a list of Agent names. Draw hearts next to the names as required.

### <H3>Initialization – One Heart

At first the bubble might be only a few centimeters across, enough to hijack a single device. It lets the user see news and social media feeds from other, "truer" realities. Since Picky Eater is an app, and the user believes such an app *exists*, these realities all utilize the same Internet protocol. Importing information from other worlds distorts the user's perceptions, accelerating a feedback loop of increasingly extreme alterations. Draw a single heart next to the Agent's name.

### <H3>Isolation – Two Hearts

Over a few days, the bubble expands one or two meters around the device. When uncorrupted devices belonging to the User come within range, Picky Eater has now always been installed on them. The 'new' chips slave themselves to the User's biases and regurgitate the false

reality. Mobile devices carry engulfing nodes of the User's reality inside their pocket. The bubble splits and grows. Time begins to move strangely within the overlapping bubbles, passage limping unevenly to the cadence of the human memory. Add a second heart.

### <H3>Expansion—Three Hearts

After a week or so, the bubble might be the size of a town. The User vanishes into a reality of massive, dystopian superstructures twisted by self-delusion and lifetimes of propaganda. Any person the User interacts with while carrying an infected device is replaced by a psychological figment composed of social expectation. Life in these systems is typically miserable. The unnatural becomes increasingly commonplace. Eventually, these bubbles have their own mass, detectable by those left behind in native reality. Gravitational anomalies appear on the bubble's edge. Time dilates. A week in the native reality may consume decades inside. These differentials are only perceptible to Users, but they can be pointed out to non-Users, often with terrible consequence. Add a third and final heart.

### <H3>Consumption—Beyond the Op

An Agent who continues using a Picky Eater device after this operation vanishes into their bubble during the next home scene. Remove the Agent from play. Inform the player that their character no longer exists within the reality of their peers. The other Agents become constructs, figments animated into personhood by imagination and unconscious biases. The User goes missing, and no one (not the other Agents, not even former Bonds) notices. The infected Agent lives out the rest of their life in a universe catered to delusion. Let the player describe that however they want. Time dilates and constricts. Years and decades pass for the vanished Agent. If other Agents somehow remember the trapped User and manage to find them before they die of old age, passing into their bubble remains as nightmarish as ever. Bringing them back to the others' reality costs the lost Agent 1D10/1D100 **SAN** from the unnatural.

## <H2>Entering a Bubble

A User—someone already infected by Picky Eater—who crosses into someone else's Picky Eater bubble loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. The effects of success or failure at that roll extend far beyond SAN loss. Success keeps them Outside the bubble. Failure brings them Inside.

This usually results in some Agents crossing Inside a bubble and others remaining Outside. Switch back and forth between them, running parallel narratives. That speeds investigation and keeps tension high. It also confuses the players as to which narrative is real, which is the Agent's experience as well. First, address those who remain Outside. Then those Inside. Alternate scenes back and forth.

An Agent who recognizes the presence of a bubble can attempt to cross into it deliberately. Spending 1D6 WP lets them turn a success with the **SAN** roll to failure.

## <S1> In a God's Teeth Campaign

Bast has no frame of reference for Picky Eater's transitions from reality to reality. Its inability to escape our universe is the very source of its hunger. Dipping into a realm of alien physics, it struggles to interpret the senses of its chosen organs. It scrambles for footing in an

unknowable system it cannot understand. Bast's servants receive its confusion and frustration through strange, dissociative perceptions:

- A shark bathed in an oil spill, the searing choke of gills flooded with caustic chemicals
- A dog trying to gain footing on linoleum and the terror of a world without friction
- A hippo trapped in a bathtub-sized pit, a slow ache of atrophy alongside the sensation of drowning in your own filth
- A horse mating with an artificial extraction mannequin, terrified and screaming
- A cow tasting itself in its feed, its body ground up into the trough from which it eats: the clatter of metal and bellows of fear
- A steroidal chicken stacked atop countless others in a factory farm, bursting with bloated, cancerous muscle that scream in pain for the release of slaughter

### <H3>Outside

If the User's **SAN** roll succeeds, nothing changes. Nothing strange happens. The effect is the same as for a non-User. The Agent cannot see or interact with anything inside the bubble.

In fact, the tethers of reality changes how they think about Agents who failed the roll and went Inside. They rarely think about them at all. Those Outside are convinced that those Inside are standing "right where you left them." If they ask what they see when looking for a missing Agent, insist that the person looks "pretty normal." If they pursue conversation, answer on the Outside Agent's player's behalf—but not with dialogue, only with a vague summary of a half-remembered conversation.

Only if an Outside Agent tries to *physically interact* with a missing Agent does the inexplicable disappearance become real. They must repeat the **SAN** test that might send them Inside. If they still remain Outside, they lose 1 **SAN** from the unnatural for realizing that their companion has been missing after all. If the **SAN** test fails, they lose 1 **SAN** from the unnatural and find themselves Inside.

If an Agent left Outside recognizes that they are within range of a bubble but have yet to be pulled in, they may choose to spend 1D6 **WP** and force themselves to focus on it, going Inside and losing 1 **SAN**.

### <H3>Inside

Agents who fail the **SAN** roll pass through the membrane of the bubble and find themselves in another reality. An Agent Inside recognizes changes in the world as bizarre, sudden, and inexplicable. They immediately note the absence of their colleagues who remain Outside.

Their memories become contradictory timelines that can't both be true. Describe a different version of recent events, rewriting the last scene. Whenever players interrupt to address a contradiction, assure them they are correct. Their Agents remember things *both* ways. Experiencing a different User's runaway reality is always disturbing or terrifying.

An Inside Agent is brought back Outside if those Outside break the bubble. And an Inside Agent can attempt to deliberately and explicitly refuse to believe the reality of the experience, like a dreamer who insists they are in a dream, by spending 1D6 **WP**. A successful **POW**×5 roll takes them back *Outside*.

When an Inside Agent returns Outside, pause their narrative. Try to time their exit for the exact moment Agents Outside break the bubble. Then rejoin their narratives. Make it clear that their quick thinking is the only reason the returned Agent still lives.

Agents who return from a bubble, coming back Outside from Inside, may find that time has moved strangely. After a hellish ordeal that seemed to take days, they may find only a few minutes have passed.

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## <S1>Hints From Inside

Agents transported Inside another's bubble should gain insights into the unnatural 'rules' of Picky Eater. Getting shunted to others' realities is the only way to understand the nature of the threat, question any of its victims, or learn the importance of infected devices as the bridge between worlds.

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## <S1>The First Glimpse Beyond

When the Agents first meet a bubble, ensure that at least one User among them goes *Inside*. Learning that reality is thin and might break at any moment is essential to the investigation. If all succeed at their SAN tests, the User Agent with the lowest **SAN** crosses over.

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## <H2>Breaking a Bubble

The link between realities is anchored at three points:

- The mind of the bubble's creator Inside
- The creator's device running Inside
- The creator's same device still running Outside

Agents can pop a bubble by killing the user for whom the bubble was created or by destroying either device. (Technically there's only *one* device, but it exists in both realities simultaneously, Inside the bubble and Outside. The single circuit of the device running Picky Eater remains omnipresent across both worlds, bridging the user's mind to the All-in-One.)

When a bubble breaks, all others who went Inside it immediately return Outside.

If the User who created the bubble still lives, they crash traumatically back into the "real" world of the Agents. That shattering of their reality costs them 1/1D10 **SAN**. They might come out years older or miraculously younger. They may be citizens of countries that never existed. They may remember living surrounded by "monsters" their prejudice long since erased. Their fondest loved ones may now hate them or cease to exist. Temporary insanity from such



unfathomable cognitive dissonance takes the form of violence. For a user with two hearts, temporary insanity from coming back to reality lasts not a few minutes but about an hour. For one with three hearts, it lasts 1D6 hours.

That User can return to their bubble simply by using another device that already has Picky Eater installed. Ridding a User of the Picky Eater infection requires destroying all their devices that carry it.

## <H1>Timeline

Picky Eater first went online four years ago, terribly unstable and limited to Dr. Cool's MIT contacts. It was hampered by power drain and frequent outages. Grad student Vicki King and theater teacher Charles Bower were the only ones who really took to it.

- **FEB 2016:** The first relatively stable version of Picky Eater goes online. Thinking it was originally only capable of data transfer, Cool spreads flashdrives containing prototypes to Charles Bower and Vicki King.
- **MAR 2016:** Bower begins use and falls Inside.
- **MAY 2016:** Cool vanishes Inside his own bubble and begins active experimentation. He creates a universe in which he has become a messianic academic prophet and experiments on thought constructs at his leisure for subjective years.
- **JUN 2016:** Vicki King learns she is pregnant and is unable to find Cool. Distraught at having been ghosted by the father of her unborn twins, King drops out of MIT that semester and moves to Pennsylvania. The social upheaval keeps King's interactions with Picky Eater minimal.
- **DEC 2016:** Vicki King spreads a copy of the 'web plug-in' Picky Eater to her cousin, Cordell Wallace, after an argument at a family Christmas gathering.
- **JAN 2017:** In preparation for single motherhood, King intensively researches parenting blogs. That dramatically increases her Picky Eater exposure. Her twins, Eryn and Shelia, are taken home from the hospital shortly before the bubble consumes their mother's personal devices.
- **MAR 2017:** Bower's version of the app burns out, crashing him back to reality for the first time in subjective years. He's arrested for possession of child pornography before the end of the day.
- **JUL 2017:** Robert Wallace discovers the Picky Eater flashdrive abandoned by his father Cordell. He begins experimentation with the device, figuring it to be a web aggregator designed to bypass big-government Internet censorship.
- **Approx. 2018:** Bored after years of sadistic experimentation in his own bubble, Cool manifests a device called the Zann Aetherophone inside his alternate history. Cool uses the device to burrow his way into the dimension of Tawil al'Umr. Direct access to the All-in-One

provides enough power to keep the enormous MIT bubble stable around the clock. Cool never returns.

- **JAN 2018:** Vicki King disappears completely into a bubble of domestic paranoia and drags her newborn twins with her.
- **FEB 2018:** Charles Bower commits suicide while incarcerated and awaiting trial.
- **AUG 2018:** Robert Wallace recreates a crude Picky Eater circuit and sends installation instructions to fellow reactionary Bradley McKay. He disappears into his own delusions by the end of the month. His father cannot notice the absence.
- **NOV 2018:** Bradley McKay's use of Picky Eater consumes him in a nightmare of persecution and misogynistic insecurity. His limited social contacts on campus fail to note the absence. Bureaucratic systems warp around the missing young man, further concealing his disappearance. His last interaction with a real human being is a disastrous study session with fellow student Avery Bell.
- **4 OCT 2019:** Radical Islamists Cavdet Onur and Seyfettin Vedat come from another world and attack a football game in the Friday Night Massacre. Anomalies found on their phones alert Delta Green.
- **8 OCT 2019:** Delta Green Agent Audra Powell correlates circuitry found on Onur and Vedat with an NSA threat assessment commissioned during the Charles Bower case. She secures copies of that evidence and takes it back to Working Group NARNIA for study. By week's end, she has been trapped in her own clandestine fantasies.
- **20 OCT 2019:** McKay's instance of Picky Eater malfunctions. The computer left on standby in his abandoned dorm room shuts down. His bubble pops and shunts Bradley back into base reality. Bradley McKay attacks a sorority, either unaware of the shift or lashing out because of it. He is shot by campus police after killing three people.
- **21 OCT 2019:** The Agents arrive.

## <H1>Briefing

*Sunday, 20 OCT 2019.* In Ithaca, New York, Cornell student Bradley McKay walks into a sorority house with an assault rifle, kills three women, and flees. Cornell campus police find and kill him an hour later. Ithaca police take over the subsequent investigation.

It would be just another weekend in America but for anomalies found at the scene and at McKay's dorm room. Those data points trigger alerts in a buried NSA server. Delta Green's interest piques.

On Monday, 21 OCT 2019, the Program sends the Agents under the cover of an FBI investigation of cybercrimes and domestic terrorism. A friendly deputy U.S. attorney in Albany asserted federal jurisdiction and asked Ithaca police to defer to the Agents.

The Agents are to confirm whether or not there is an unnatural threat, end it if there is, and save lives if they can.

## <S1> Activating MASTICATE

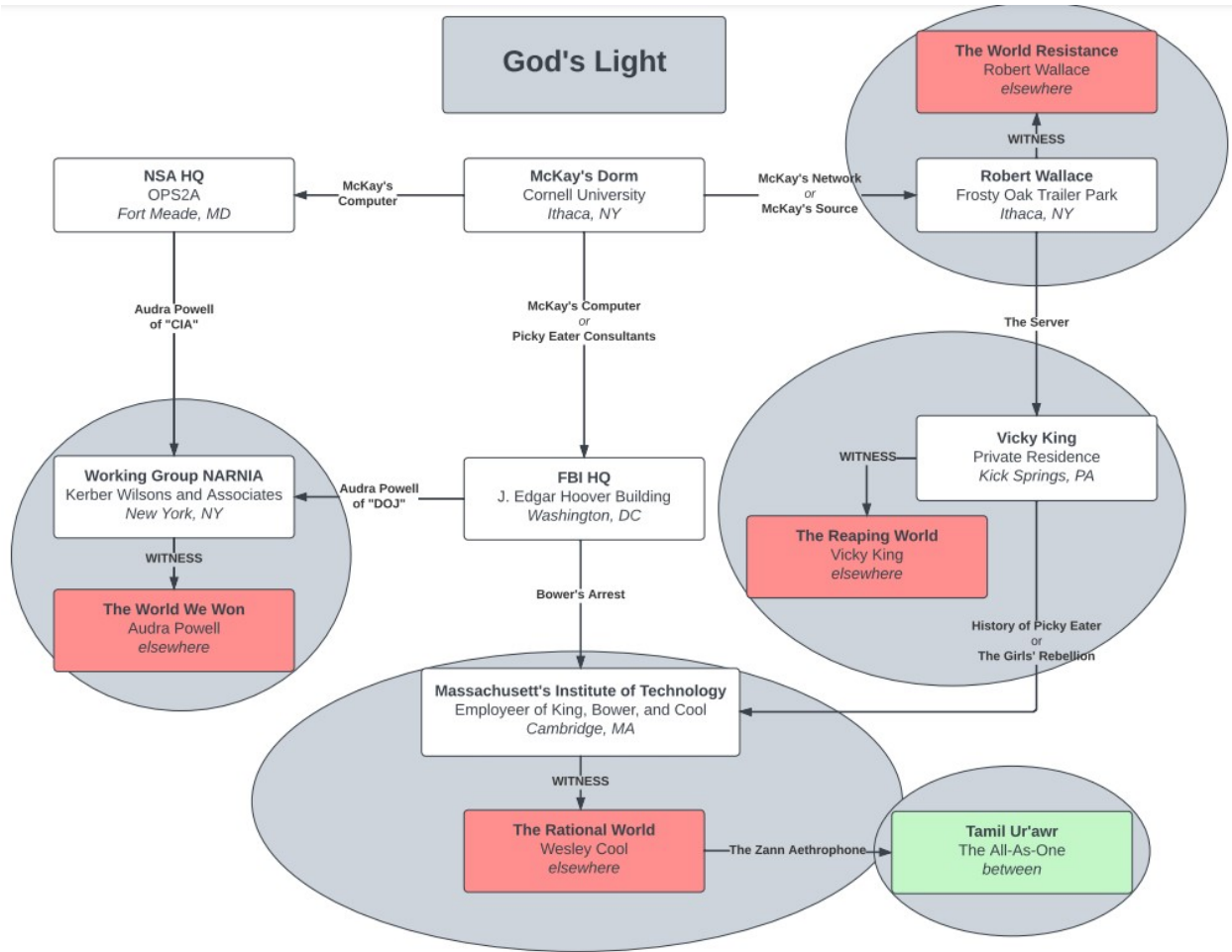
Working Group MASTICATE is alerted of Bradley McKay's death. In the wake of the young man's crime, officials interviewing his grieving parents learned that McKay was adopted. His name was changed from "Finn Smith." Smith is listed on the roster of Cornucopia House. As McKay only recently turned old enough to have his records unsealed, Delta Green lost track of him after the name change.

Born in 1999, "Finn" (a fake name listed on adoption paperwork by his kidnapers) was barely a toddler when rescued from Cornucopia House. He spent very little under the abuse of the Skoptsi. PeaceLove, Inc. (described in *God's Teeth*, page xx) quickly placed him with a foster family after deeming his developmental deficits easier to manage than the older survivors. He was adopted in late 2001 by the McKays. The couple's first act was to change his name. After all, he was already neglected in speech development. He would never know the difference.

McKay held no conscious memories of his time at Cornucopia, but his body kept the score of his trauma. Early tortures permanently scarred the young man's developing mind. In addition to life-long struggles with anxiety, depression, and anger issues, Bradley found himself harboring unconscious prejudice towards women. Even before going to Cornell, 'manosphere' content online had juiced that festering misogyny. Exposed to Picky Eater, his irrational prejudices blossomed to nightmarish proportions.

There's no explanation as to why in his short life McKay ran afoul of *two* unnatural vectors. Some people are born cursed. It's a feeling with which *God's Teeth* should be quite familiar.

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• Convert this flowchart into a US map.

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# <H1>The McKay Killings

Working as FBI consultants or agents, the Agents begin by reviewing evidence already collected by local police. The crime only occurred yesterday and authorities have yet to begin investigation of Bradley McKay's home and interests. Jurisdiction over these crime scenes has been passed to the Agents.

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The manuscript has a number of "Infection" headers with actions that cause infection. They should not be ordinary sidebars but a special design.

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## <INF>Infection

Operating McKay's computer or phone.

## <H2>Local Police

Officer Jim Herz of the Criminal Investigative Division and Crime Scene Unit Investigator Anne McKenna handled the case for the Ithaca Police Department. Herz, age 53, is angry at having an open-and-shut case taken off his stats. McKenna, age 39, is disappointed at losing a role in what was already a fascinating case. She is only too happy to assist the Agents.

Detectives Herz and McKenna have had so little interaction with McKay's reactivated Picky Eater that they are safe. Their own devices are unaffected. If Agents take the detectives along on their investigation, they become users and share the same risks as the Agents.

## <H2>Collected Evidence

Guided by the Program, the FBI claims jurisdiction on all evidence previously collected. McKenna is eager to chat theories about the strange evidence with any Agent that cares to ask. Herz is keen to shut her up, determined to let the feds twist in the wind. He wants to see if they notice the same impossibilities in the evidence he and McKenna noticed before their case got snatched. Ithaca PD's inquiries as to the nature of this strange evidence led directly to Program intervention.

### <H3>CAR 5-58

The first anomaly to catch Herz and McKenna's attention was the rifle. It is not chambered in the 5.56 mm (.223 caliber) of an ordinary AR-15. The receiver and magazines are stamped "5.58 mm." Headstamps on the mass-produced cartridges clearly say "5.58 mm," and their maker's mark, "CAR," does not match any manufacturer. Precise cartridge measurements confirm the weird ammunition size. It could be a hoax, maybe a lark by some gun nut with machining tools. But in that case, it's bespoke gunsmithing performed by a master. Somehow wielded by a sophomore on financial assistance.

### <H3>McKay's Phone

After investigators charged its dead battery, the next oddity was McKay's phone. An app on the phone, "Picky Eater," acted as a kind of virtual private network between the phone and the world. It provided surprisingly robust security, but penetration of its history reveals strange data. The cached websites link to domains that do not exist. The IP addresses are even formatted incorrectly in some instances, containing too many or not enough numbers. The nonsense web addresses track back to August 2018, past which no more data is saved.

### <H3>The Photo Folder

Through the app, McKay downloaded what must be photomanipulated imagery: photographs of college-aged women castrating and disemboweling a young man tied to a table. The women pose in a mockery of ritual, laughing in drunken selfies with the screaming victim in the background gets flensed. Multiple shots depict a game of beer pong, played during and after the killing.

McKenna and Herz have already used facial recognition software to identify everyone in the photos. The man on the table, Cornell student Avery Bell, is unharmed. Police have spoken with him. The partying women have mutilated no one. All the attendees faces match those of sorority sisters, but all have alibis for the time of the shooting and the metadata recording on the photos. Plus, no victim. The victims of McKays spree were all pledges and not included in the doctored photos. Similarly, the interior dimensions of the sorority house don't match those in the photos at all, as if the person creating the images knew the women but had never been inside the building. Herz, McKenna, and a dozen other local officers had just finished a police canvass establishing these facts when the case was claimed by the Agents.

Software analysts examined the photos to see if McKay or someone else doctored them. They found no indication that the images had been doctored at all. Whatever software was used, it must have been subtle and effective. Metadata indicates all the photos were pulled from somewhere online and not taken with the phone's camera. Every listed URL comes up nonexistent, though they match certain nonsense URLs found in McKay's web history.

## <S1> Forensics on McKay's Phone

The owner's blood is still on the device, as well as long generations of his fingerprints. It's a miracle the officer's rounds didn't hit the device. The screen is cracked from where he fell.

Agents reviewing any part of the phone they gain their first hearts in Picky Eater exposure. Agents with **Computer Science** may review the code, learning the information in Picky Eater. Agents with **Craft (Electronics)** and access to magnification may decapsulate the phone's hardware and discover the circuit itself.

If an Agent sees the circuit without mediation of the software, make clear that the device was installed at manufacture. The circuitry is too integrated into the boards to be installed after-market. The fact that no existing cellphone manufacturer makes circuits like this costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

McKay's phone is a secondary device, retroactively infected by coming in contact with a Picky Eater bubble. It signal-boosted Bradley's delusions, radiating out from his pocket until the charge died. The primary device, his dorm computer, was a handmade modification that

burned out the laptop. The quality of the chip's construction is a consistent clue that lets Agents know how close they are to the source of a bubble.

## <H2>McKay's Dorm

McKay's dorm room has traditional college boy decor, posters of *Scarface* and women kissing. Bradley's dorm neighbors describe him as shy, deferring, quiet, and harmless. Some clearly regarded him with contempt. None were close. His insecurity alienated him.

### <H3>McKay's Bookshelf

Bradley had more books than most in his dorm, mostly dedicated to themes of angry loneliness and finding meaning through conflict. An Agent examining his collection closely finds a paperback copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* written by "J.F. Salinger," not J.D. Salinger. It could easily be a print-on-demand spoof, but the hoaxers went to great lengths. The book feels and smells decades old. Its frontmatter details publication data for publisher that never existed.

McKay highlighted a paragraph in red about a third of the way into the novel, a city scene where Holden Caulfield speaks with a prostitute and her pimp. An Agent who makes an **INTx5** test, or who has a relevant **Art** skill at 30% or higher (+20%, if they attended American high school) is startled to recognize changes in the scene. The pimp tells Caulfield to "break free of her control" and to "take the Red Pill," a phrase unknown when the novel was written in 1951. Later, Caulfield blames his sister for his brother Allie's suicide—Allie died of leukemia in the original—and says he is going to protect everyone from women like her.

It's *The Catcher in the Rye* as if rewritten by a furious incel. McKay circled and underlined more and more passages in red. A reader who succeeded at the **INT** or **Art** test loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

### <H3>McKay's Computer

McKay's laptop does not turn on at all, even after the investigators let it charge for hours. The police did not yet get approval to send it to technical experts for analysis. An Agent with **Computer Science** at 50% or higher, or who makes a successful roll, can get it running again after a working for a couple of hours. A copy of Picky Eater on the computer scrambled its firmware and drained its battery.

Picky Eater begins running as soon as the laptop turns on. It acts as a kind of VPN. Others on the same wifi network can log in remotely. An Agent using the laptop to visit McKay's usual haunts finds most web addresses broken, domains nonexistent. Any Agent operating the device begins their own Picky Eater bubble.

A desktop word document holds McKay's paranoid manifesto, dedicated to the need to keep women from finding and hurting men. He saw threats to masculinity and the male identity everywhere. He saw himself as an alpha predator in training, strengthening himself to steal the power of scheming "females."

He mentions the Picky Eater app amongst a list of other Deep Web software useful for "heightening security against the matriarchy." Picky Eater's installation files are still on the computer. They can easily be saved and installed on other devices. A blurb explaining the

filter's basic purpose as web aggregator can be found in a help document, also on the desktop. The document was seemingly pulled from the torrent used to download the software.

The help document warns that the program does not work without accompanying hardware. The original poster encourages users that he can mail them flashdrives, or direct them if they wish to install the circuitry internally. Opening the laptop and succeeding a second **Computer Science** roll finds the eldritch circuit modded into McKay's motherboard (see **PICKY EATER** on page XX). The programming is identical, but the circuit is a crude, large-scale version of the same transistor gates eloquently printed inside McKay's phone (see page xx)

### <H3>McKay's Network

Agents with points in **Persuade** successfully question fellow dorm residents. A few guys on the suspect's floor know about the Picky Eater VPN. They say McKay was trying to set up music sharing between their rooms. Bradley insisted he needed to install mysterious hardware on their computers in order "to utilize the protocol." Everyone declined the invitation, suspecting malware. Otherwise, Bradley's politics and personality were largely unknown. The dude kept to himself, and he barely ever left the private room his parents bought for him.

Robbie Owen, a resident with a window view of the quad below, reports having seen McKay on a few occasions with Avery Bell. they sat across from his window for a couple weeks, books on the picnic table. He doesn't recall the interaction lasting long and can't place the time any more definitively than "a few months ago." Robbie knows nothing about the contents of the phone or the pictures of Bell found on it.

### <H3>McKay's Friend: Avery Bell

Avery Bell was visiting his parents in Newport, Rhode Island last night when a sheriff's deputy came by to confirm he wasn't dead. The whole interaction was very confusing, but the Bells were at last informed it had something to do with Bradley McKay and a shooting at Cornell. Distraught at the news and confused as to why anyone would think he could have been involved, Bell drove through the night and arrived back to his rented apartment the morning Agents arrive.

If Agents question Bell, he admits to meeting McKay in chemistry class last fall. He adamantly denies ever befriending him. After an illness early in the semester, McKay "helped" Bell by offering a few study sessions to exchange notes. McKay spent more time talking about "men's rights" and trying to make Avery read some forum posts on his phone. After a second meeting without any chemistry notes, Bell ghosted the weirdo. He dropped chemistry the next week. He recalls that the "thinker" his classmate raved about was named Robert Wallace. Avery never looked him up. Why would he? The guy was nuts.

If shown the disturbing photos of his own murder, Avery has no idea what to make of them.

### <H3>McKay's Source

The name Robert Wallace shows up a number of times on McKay's laptop or phone. A copy of Picky Eater was physically sent to McKay by Wallace, a fellow traveler in the young man's journey to incel martyrdom and murder. Though their online caches on the laptop are wiped, McKay interacted with Wallace frequently enough to save a few of their chatlogs to the hard drive as screenshots. Wallace approved of and encouraged McKay's most violently outlandish



and paranoid posts about secret conspiracies of women in power. Some of the early conversations between the two are still archived on 4Chan's /pol boards.

Wallace's IP address places him in Bangor, Maine. See **ROBERT WALLACE** on page XX for details.

### <H3>McKay's Enrollment

Despite McKay's crimes, Cornell remains hesitant to share information about his enrollment with authorities. It requires a **Bureaucracy** or **Law** roll to pry administrative records from university authorities.

The reasons become instantly apparent upon review. McKay flunked 15 hours of credits in fall 2018. He repeated those courses in spring 2019 and failed all again. He was enrolled in a third attempt until instructors dropped him for non-attendance by mid-September. Despite this, McKay appears to have been granted a private room in a crowded dormitory for two years. He is two semesters behind on tuition and fee payments, yet Cornell keeps him on campus.

Asked to explain how the shooter was allowed a private room, rent-free, for two semesters, administration struggle. Their only theories regard failures in the university's bursar's office software.

## <H1>Picky Eater Consultants

On their own or with the Program's help, the Agents can seek expert analysis of McKay's devices from sources at the NSA and the FBI. That may lead to the CIA and reveal a separate Delta Green operation that is too far along for comfort.

Any expert's first interpretation of Picky Eater is that it's a photo manipulation program. When they find that it rewrites firmware and drains batteries in record time, their security sense goes on high alert. It starts to look more like hardcore malware. By then, they are already a User.

Then it seems to operate as be a web aggregator, built as a plugin for common web browsers and for the Tor browser. That, in itself, seems weird. If you build something for Tor, it's because you know your users want anonymity. Why build plug-ins for less-secure browsers?

Examination of the hardware and unnatural circuitry provokes the same 0/1 **SAN** test experienced by curious Agents. On a fumble, the expert decides to suppress their findings until they can glean more in private research. This begins the formation of their own expanding bubble of reality distortion, to be crafted by the Handler.

## <H2>FBI: The Bower Case

Success in **Bureaucracy** or **Law** discovers files on Picky Eater held by the FBI Cyber Crimes Division in Washington, D.C. The Program can arrange for the Agents to meet Special Agent Colin Boone in that section's offices at FBI Headquarters, the sprawling J. Edgar Hoover Building on Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest.

Boone is on an assignment that requires him to review child pornography constantly, hoping to identify other consumers who can connect them to providers. The work leaves him deadened,

nearly emotionless. An Agent who talks to him at length about the case and succeeds at a **HUMINT** or **Psychotherapy** roll loses 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness.

Picky Eater came up in a case against Charles Bower, a former theater arts instructor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Bower was charged two years ago with child porn on his computer. The images found on his phone and laptop were doctored, deeply disturbing even for child pornography. The FBI wanted to know where they came from, especially if Dark Web pornographers had developed AI capable of crafting such images en masse.

Special Agent Boone recounts what he can remember of the case. Bower had no priors and had never been subject to criminal suspicion. It all came out of nowhere in 2017, when the once-beloved professor began showing horrific images to MIT coworkers and students.

When arrested, Bower claimed he was testing a fascinating AI tool to create surrealist images that might work as theater props or backdrops. Bower didn't know the names of everyone involved creating the software, but he insisted authorities could look it up themselves. No such app existed. Bower claimed to have bought his phone in a big-box store. He said they were sold in stores everywhere.

After a hours of interrogation, Bower descended into babbling. He was confused as to how something that happened years previous was relevant to his current "persecution." Eventually, the questioning ended in the suspect's violent outburst, restraint, and sedation. The professor overturned a table and tried to smash himself through the mirror of the interview room. Boone still remembers the man's sickening pleas for police to return his "wives" and confusion as to why he was still being persecuted "after the Reformation."

Investigators found much more material downloaded on an old computer in his office. Based on erratic behavior during his arrest and the severity of the crime, Bower was denied bond. In the run-up to trial, doctors for the defense diagnosed him with schizophrenia and pleaded insanity. The trial had just begun when Bower was found dead, hanging from the light fixture of his cell at Suffolk County Corrections.

Authorities never discovered the identities of the inventors, nor any sign the Picky Eater product Bower was ever released. The FBI sent the NSA a classified information request. Special Agent Boone requested a consult on Picky Eater's efficacy as photo manipulation software, but the request was still going through NSA security approvals when Bower's death ended the case. The FBI never heard back.

Boone is perplexed if Agents say there's a new related case. Nothing similar has come up elsewhere.

If the Agents ask about the devices Bower used with Picky Eater, Boone says it was Bower's phone, still in evidence archives. It is stored in Special File Rooms in the headquarters basement. Boone gives the Agents the case number they need to find the file.

If Agents visit the Special File Rooms, a clerk looks up the file and finds it was last accessed on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> by Audra Powell. Her paperwork identifies her as a Department of Justice investigator. She checked it in again 48 hours later. Going to retrieve the physical file, the clerk is alarmed to find it and the phone gone. The log says Powell was acting on behalf of FBI Special Agent

Fallon Taylor. The Bureau will have to investigate further. There's nothing more the clerk can do for the Agents.

With FBI contacts, the Agents can easily find that Fallon Taylor is assigned to the New York office.

## <H2>NSA: Not Actionable

The Program can arrange for Agents to follow up on the NSA request abandoned after Bower's death. This means meeting an analyst at NSA headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland. That means taking the public exit from the Baltimore-Washington Parkway—not the exit solely for NSA employees—and going through the Visitor's Center, a white, two-story pentagon and the first of dozens of security checkpoints. The Visitor's Center connects to the Operations 2A building ("OPS2A"), a 13-floor black cube.

A mousy tech named Ann Gibbs meets the Agents in a secure room. She says NSA's Operation DIVING BELL has kept track of Picky Eater. DIVING BELL deals with the Deep Web. It catalogs trends, provides technical analysis, and provides teams in other agencies with exploits to gather detailed intelligence.

She says an FBI cybercrimes team recently asked for NSA analysis of Picky Eater. That request is still going through security approvals. They must not have the same connections as the Agents.

DIVING BELL reviewed Picky Eater's specs a while ago. A couple of years ago, maybe? Reviewing her files, she finds the precise date is not listed for some reason. That's odd but not alarming. She'll have to follow up with other techs about it later.

Gibbs says Picky Eater is a search aggregator, running algorithms that find relevant sites. More importantly, it's malware. DIVING BELL flagged it as "Not Actionable." The fact that the app required bespoke circuitry to operate made the threat too obvious. Leadership couldn't imagine mass adoption, and the threat was deemed too limited to warrant investigative resources.

Gibbs says Picky Eater rewrites device firmware so it can't be deleted. Otherwise, its code is a lot of nonsense. It hogs drive space and memory. It runs constantly and uses too much power. It constantly degrades system performance. It burns out hard drives in weeks.

She can analyze McKay's laptop, phone, and data (see **PICKY EATER CONSULTANTS** on page xx).

Gibbs says Agents are not the first to ask after the abandoned Picky Eater research. The file was kicked over to CIA counterterrorism not long ago, something called Working Group NARNIA. Gibbs's CIA contact for the transfer was named Audra Powell.

## <H1>CIA: Working Group NARNIA

Agents can try to track Audra Powell down using her "Department of Justice investigator" identification. When they do, they get a call from their case officer. The Program wants to know

why the Agents are investigating a Program officer. They have not been cleared to make contact.

Audra Powell is a CIA counterterrorism intelligence officer. After the Agents explain things to their own case officer, the Program grants them access to Powell's team, Working Group NARNIA. A long-term, unofficial FBI-CIA task force, it works out of a CIA front company, Kerber Wilson & Associates, posing as a New York law firm that takes up the top floor of a six-story office building.

Powell is not available, but the Program allows the Agents to meet FBI Special Agent Fallon Taylor at the Kerber Wilson offices. The Agents can also reach NARNIA by contacting FBI Special Agent Taylor on their own.

## <INF>Bubble

Entering Kerber Wilson and Associates risks crossing into Audra Powell's bubble.

## <INF>Infection

Operating the Working Group NARNIA network

Operating the Onur or Vedat phone

Operating Powell's computer or phone

## <H2>The World We Won

Each Agent going up the stairs or riding the elevator at Kerber Wilson and Associates must make a SAN test. Failure costs 1 SAN and takes the Agent into the world of Audra Powell's runaway psychosis: see **ENTERING A BUBBLE** on page XX. Powell has been running Picky Eater on her office computer for almost two weeks. The bubble radiating from the device now engulfs everything from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor upwards, centered on a computer on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor.

Three days into the existence of NARNIA, Powell's phone was infected by proximity to the widening reality bubble. From that moment forward, a false reality encased the woman, radiating outward from the node inside her pocket. Powell grew the field with her every spare moment of attention, listening to podcasts never recorded, sending emails to figments of personalities, pressing buttons in a delusional state apparatus that never existed. By the time Agents arrive, she has been gone from her native reality for nearly two decades of subjective time. For most of that period, Delta Green ceased to exist in any recognizable form. It already accomplished its mission.

xxx DESIGN NOTE xxx

Distinguish each Inside section with its own design reflecting the crazy otherworld vs each Outside section with its own more usual design.

xxx END NOTE xxx

### <H3>Outside: Special Agent Fallon Taylor

The Agents see and hear no one else in the law office's impeccable white halls. They exit onto the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. Agents find the offices nearly abandoned. If they try doors, they find the contents covered in a thin layer of dust. Fallon Taylor's office is cramped with maps and documents. He has been deep in research for a long time, focusing on Islamic theology and Middle Eastern geography.

Taylor apologizes for the state of his office and the haphazard briefing. His partner is out pursuing leads and he's barely seen them long enough in the halls to say hello. He says Powell's office is down the hall. Powell handles the technical side of the operation, and given the limited internet connectivity of this temporary office space, storage of all digital forensics. Taylor, in fact, never got their VPN for information sharing to work. All attempts to connect remotely end in a 404. Without technical assistance, all he can do is provide a basic overview of the case.

An Agent who offers to take a look at NARNIA's private network must talk Taylor into it. He says he was cleared to brief the Agents, not to give them full access to the system (some unspoken part of his mind recoils away from what the Agent might discover). If a **Persuade** roll at -20% succeeds, Taylor reluctantly turns gives the Agent a login. The Agent finds that their device connects to the network but no data comes through, just noise. Instead of user error, the encrypted, secure computer acting as the NARNIA team's hub is the problem.

### <H3>Inside: National Clandestine Services Museum, New York Collection

The door to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor reveals a lush red carpet leading down the best lit office hallway the Agents have ever seen. The tasteful navy blue walls hold framed oil portraits next to the office doors. The doors themselves have been removed and replaced with velvet ropes. The interior has been transformed into the diorama caricature of a civil servant's office, more suited to the set of film noir than an actual government agent. Plaques on bronze standees sit next to each door. The name "Fallon Montgomery Taylor" is there. He is listed as a veteran of "NARNIA." He supposedly died in the year 2038.

A small newsstand of pamphlets locates the red carpeted 6<sup>th</sup> floor inside something called the "National Clandestine Services Museum, New York Collection." Around the corner in the mock office hallway, a woman's voice faintly murmurs.

### <H3>Outside: The Friday Night Massacre

Taylor says NARNIA is investigating a recent mass shooting that the media dubbed the "Friday Night Massacre." It happened eight days before McKay's sorority shooting. Two men, Cavdet Onur and Seyfettin Vedat, fired into the crowd at a high school football game in Oleander, Pennsylvania, killing 23 and wounding 12. Agents heard about it in the news. They always do.

Taylor says Onur and Vedat are a strange case. They did not put in the kind of planning usual in such an attack. Investigators did not find them by name or biometrics in any government database. They carried ID cards written in Arabic that purported them to be citizens of the Global Caliphate of the Peace of God, a nonexistent nation. The cards say they were issued on dates that convert from the Islamic calendar to 2119 and 2121 A.D. The killers used weapons

of no known make or model: suppressed rifles apparently derived from Kalashnikov designs but chambered for 5.40×40 mm cartridges seen nowhere else.

Their phones were not made by any known manufacturer. Cached data features online debates where Onur and Vedat argue for the need for ongoing jihad to maintain the purity of the faith. They sometimes shared imaginative tales of battling blindly murderous American or Russian nonbelievers. Most others castigate them, saying the kind of violent jihad they supported was no longer necessary. The Crusaders are long gone. Humanity lives in a golden age under the worldwide caliphate. “The world you want is not this world.”

Both phones had Picky Eater installed. Taylor says Powell cross-referenced the name to the Charles Bower case and is out pursuing any connection. If Agents have identified any previous versions, the specifications are identical to those found on every device thus far.

### <H3>Inside: Director Powell’s Office

Around the bend in the hallway, the office replicas are replaced by the woodgrain paneling and track lighting of a gallery. The walls display photographs from a history Agents boggle to contemplate. They see members of Delta Green that would never consent to photographs leading press conferences and receiving public awards. If the Agents have lost a teammate, that person shows up alive in a photo, impossibly aged past the point of their death. If an Agent has a phobia of some unnatural creature, they see it being murdered by a group of soldiers. The image is framed and features the heroic staging of a Renaissance painting.

Many ‘exhibits’ were printed directly from combat footage. Nightmarish artillery assaults against the surf off America’s beaches. Something fleshy beneath, exploding into frothy red mist. A team of soldiers kitted in unbelievable, science-fiction gear stand stacked outside the door to a hut. They wear armbands with some sort of green triangle on it, an honest-to-god insignia. Some creature awaits inside. It has too many glowing eyes.

If Agents have seen a photo of Audra Powell, they may make **INTx5** rolls to recognize her in two of the prints. In both, she’s drastically older than her identification indicates. In the first, she’s shaking hands with a wizened slab of an old man. He smiles approvingly under a white mustache as he passes her a plaque. In the photo by the door, she sits at the head of a giant mahogany desk, staring beatifically back at the viewer.

The hall culminates in one last office replica. A plaque reads, “Office of Audra Powell, First Director of Delta Green, Working Group NARNIA 2019–2024.” Unlike the replicas in the other room, the desktop computer in this office works. It plays a pre-recorded speech:

*“Welcome! I’m Audra Powell. Thank you for your interest in Delta Green. We’ve been working behind the scenes since before VH Day to keep you and your family safe. I hope you can join us one day in vigilance against the Corruption! As you can see, I come from humble beginnings, but every human can help keep the United States safe from the Spawn. Stay pure and patriotic, brothers and sisters!”*

### <H3>Outside: Dabiq

Taylor got hardcopies of the initial evidence via a flashdrive, so he can show that to Agents without the VPN. He turns on a projector to show the video saved to the phone of one of the

shooters. Powell told Taylor the meta-data was oddly formatted, but replay metrics indicated the file had been played over 2,000 times, sometimes multiple times a day.

An Arabic label in one corner reads “Dabiq.” Footage shows a small town surrounded by a wide plain of short, dry yellow grass. A few hundred Jihadist fighters are dug in behind sandbags, praying. The camera pans in a circle. On one horizon, jets rush ahead of helicopters, tanks and tens of thousands of American soldiers. On another, the armies of Britain come for the plain. On another, the armies of Russia.

Other cameras pick up other angles as the miracles begin. A lethal-looking B-21 Raider heavy bomber—years away from deployment in the real world—suddenly turns to scattering salt in the air. A bomb that it had dropped, a long gray cylinder with red markings, a B61-12 atomic bomb, turns to salt before it strikes the earth. Tanks in the distance, soldiers in their thousands, stop in their tracks, made salt by the glory of God. The faithful rise and celebrate. The video ends.

Taylor says the best photomanipulation experts in the world could not tell how or where that video’s visual effects were created. They can’t confirm that it was falsified at all, beyond the simple fact that such an event never happened. Metadata in the original digital file says it was created on 10 MAY 2021, the morning after Laylat al-Qadr, the holiest night of Islam according to some Sunni believers—more than two years in the future.

An Agent who has **Foreign Language (Arabic)** at 30% or better, or who succeeds at a roll at +20%, notices that the language in the fighters’ prayers and celebration is very difficult to follow. Taylor brings it up if no Agent does. The men in the footage speak an unknown dialect that seems to have undergone extreme linguistic drift, a process that usually takes centuries.

Agents viewing the video and studying the killers’ details lose 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

### <H3>Inside: Propaganda Piece

The contents of Powell’s office look more realistic than the fake museum replicas in other rooms. Unless an Agent makes a **Criminology** or **Craft** roll, any attempt by Agents to cross the velvet rope triggers the installed motion sensor. This sends a silent alarm to the security officer in the lobby. He immediately takes the elevator to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. As the Clandestine Services Museum is contained within the larger Delta Green Security Complex—tasked with logistical coordination for the Atlantic Front—the guard is armed.

A successful **Search** roll reveals nothing odd about the office diorama besides the computer. The model looks deeply aged, the plastic housing of its CPU faded, scored, and repainted a half-dozen times. The machine stays operational because it was cared for with an archivist’s precision. Despite the fact that the attached server claims to have only come out last year...in 2047.

Interaction with the computer reveals it to be wiped of memory and software save the audio player looping Audra Powell’s message. It doesn’t even have a web browser anymore, though the computer of FBI Agent Fallon Taylor is inexplicably listed as online and connected to the VPN. If the Dabiq video has been played, Agents can see it via remote access of the machine. Even as they remember viewing it from behind Taylor’s shoulder, in a completely different room.

### <H3>Outside: The Missing

If the Agents press Taylor on the other members of his team—or if they remark at misplacing one of their own—he gets nervous. The questions leave nagging remainders in his thoughts that he struggles to express. Over time, Taylor realizes he has not seen the others on his team in weeks. Not even in the halls or bathrooms.

Taylor becomes disoriented and confused. “I saw her this morning. Didn’t I? We meet in the mornings. We have coffee and talk. Was it this morning? I can’t remember the last time.” The more Taylor thinks about it, the clearer it becomes that his partner has been missing for days.

Taylor walks with the Agents down the dark gray halls. If a player remembers them being white before, acknowledge that they were. They certainly were.

Powell’s office, like the others, is dusty and abandoned. Filing boxes were stacked high and never unpacked. All of the desktop computers and laptops are burned out and inoperable. Only Powell’s office has a running machine. If they wake it, they find web history as unsearchable as they did on the VPN. The fan in the CPU housing whines loudly, as if is under strain.

Unplugging or otherwise disabling the device violently slams *Inside Agents* back into their native reality, whether or not others yet perceived them missing. Roll **SAN** accordingly.

### <H3>Inside: Security Arrives

As Agents investigate Powell’s ‘old’ office, a guard finds them trespassing in the Director’s Tribute exhibit. It’s after visiting hours, and this display is within a secure government facility. They do not look like tourists. He draws his pistol and demands the intruders freeze. He then issues a “Code Green” and requests “immediate genetic testing at my location” into a chest radio.

The computer in the office is the original instance of Picky Eater used by Powell. Agents that make an **INTx5** roll intuit that the device, as the only thing recognizably from their world, may be the only path back to it. If Agents shut it down—or if the machine gets damaged in a conflict with security—all *Inside* characters slam back to *Outside* reality. They drag across the barrier whatever they were wearing, the contents of their pockets, and anything held in their hands.

Everything else doesn’t just disappear. It ceases to have ever existed.

## <H2>Powell’s Reintegration

“The World We Won” ends when Powell’s computer is shut down on either side of the bubble. Give Agents a moment to share their experiences across the divide. They may have to deal with complications such as temporary insanity, gunshot wounds, or marooned security guards from alternate dimensions.

When they settle down, Agents may check other computers in the abandoned offices. Fallon Taylor, as a linguistics analyst who prefers old books and scrolls to screens, has the only clean machine on the floor. The Handler can make up as many fellow Agents assigned to NARNIA as



they wish. All of them are gone, transported inside bubbles of delusion that went pop before the Agents arrive.

Whether Agents leave via the elevator or stairs, they are interrupted by the blare of a fire alarm.

### <H3>Active Shooter

Gunshots and screams of panic erupt from below. An active shooter is in the building. Taylor, already distressed, does not remember his computer has access to the security camera feed. If Agents ask him or examined his machine themselves, they can remind him and run back to check.

In the lobby of the office building, a woman in her late fifties frantically waves a Glock 19 from behind the welcome desk. The receptionist lies dead at her feet. Without audio, it's still apparent the woman is screaming and sobbing. She fires at anyone standing to flee or passing by the glass windows outside. Agents recognize an aged Audra Powell. She's at least two decades older than the ID photo she used to log into the FBI two weeks ago.

If Agents respond and try to help, Powell is too cracked to see them coming unless they let the elevator announce their arrival. Left to her own devices, she kills anyone she sees, screaming gibberish.

- *"This can't be real! We won! We killed you, goddamnit! I fucking killed you things!"*
- *"Where's the memorial, fish fucker?! What have you done with to it?! Where are the bodies?!"*
- *"I won't go alone! I'll turn the surf red! Red!"*
- *"Give them back. Please...give it all back."*

Powell's **Firearms** skill is reduced to 40% in the midst of her psychotic break. If confronted, she flees up the grand stairs to the second floor, killing cowering innocents along the way and returning fire.

If the Agents flee out the windows or another stairwell, it's not hard to avoid the shooter. Police show up within a few minutes. They attempt to stay behind a cordon of patrol cars but Powell comes out blazing as soon as they arrive. She is unceremoniously cut down. The headline goes around for a day or two, "Disgruntled federal agent shoots up law firm," until worse news replaces it.

## <S1>Powell in Custody

If captured alive, Powell is no threat to the Delta Green or continuing investigation. Local authorities fail to identify the "crazy old woman" as Audra Powell. That woman was in her thirties and carried far fewer scars. Any fingerprint or DNA evidence matching existing records is dismissed as filing errors. The Program engineers a short trial for Powell under a false identity. The rest of her days are spent catatonic in a mental institution, destroyed by seeing her life's victorious crusade against the unnatural reversed into our hellish present.

# <H1>Following the Trail

In the Agents' reality, Picky Eater began with Dr. Wesley Cool. He beta-tested the app on colleague Charles Bower and graduate student Vicki King. From Bower's remains, Delta Green learns it has already encountered Picky Eater in an incursion from another reality. From Vicki King, the app trickled down her family tree, found Robert Wallace, and politically cross-contaminated Bradley McKay.

## <H1>Robert Wallace

Before records of McKay's web history deteriorated into a morass of broken links, Robert Wallace was one of the last meaningful social connections that McKay maintained. It wasn't a healthy connection. The sparse digital records of their conversations show Wallace eager to steer McKay's poisonous incel rhetoric towards eugenics at first opportunity. It's unclear how much McKay bought into this particular flavor of hateful delusion, but the two were close enough that Wallace sent the young man his first copy of Picky Eater. Postal records indicate Robert Wallace is 19 years old and lives in Bangor, Maine.

If the Agents reach out to local police, Officer Kim Bowman says the Bangor police know the Wallaces well. Robert Wallace lives with his father, Cordell Wallace, in a trailer outside town. He left school at age 13 to be home-schooled by his father. Officer Bowman doubts any schooling happened at home. Cordell repairs cars at a garage but has a mean streak that keeps customers away. Robert sometimes works there. Both have records for public intoxication and vandalism. Police are aware of the family's virulent racism, but experience suggests they're too dissolute to be much of a threat.

### <INF>Bubble

Approaching the Frosty Oak Trailer Park risks entering Robert Wallace's bubble.

### <INF>Infection

Operating Wallace's computer or phone

Operating Wallace's Minecraft server

## <H2>The World Resistance

Make SAN check for Picky Eater users as they enter the Frosty Oak Trailer Park. Note whether Agents head to the front office first or proceed directly to Wallace's residence.

Anyone that fails and falls Inside gets transported to Robert Wallace's fantasy of oppression. In the numb, Outside reality, the 19-year-old ran the app for a little under a year. His bubble now covers the entire trailer park and an expanding portion of the surrounding woods. Agents cross at the entrance, where the visitor lot and manager's office meets the rows of double-wides.

### <H3>Outside: Frosty Oak Trailer Park

The Wallaces live in a run-down single-wide in the Frosty Oak Trailer Park. A Confederate flag flies out front. A Confederate flag in Maine.

Cordell Wallace is 40 years old, hefty, red-eyed, and gnarled. His greeting is the same whether the Agents show up with Officer Bowman or not. “What the fuck do you want?”

Cordell says his son has not come home or shown up for work at the garage in a couple months. He doesn’t know where the kid is. He asked police (“this bitch,” if Bowman is there) to find him but they did nothing. “All they do is harass good white folks like us.”

Cordell admits it’s not unusual to lose track of Robert for weeks. When things get slow at the garage, he makes sure “the boy” stays busy getting an education on the computer. The father bitterly recalls being forced to buy some curriculum software by “those commies at state social services.” Cordell cannot remember the name of it, and, if pressed, admits he never actually logged on. He’s confident “the boy” knows all about that stuff and can handle it himself. Cordell insists Robert is smart and good with “all that computer stuff.”

Cordell knows nothing about Picky Eater. If the Agents seem genuinely interested in finding Robert, and not just to put him in jail, Cordell lets them come in and look at Robert’s things.

### <H3>Inside: Frosty Pines

If Agents stopped at the Manager’s Office and walked to Wallace’s unit, transition is subtle. Ask each User that fails **SAN** for an **Alertness** or **INTx5** check. On a success, point out that the sign reads “Frosty Pines.” That’s the wrong tree. There was also ‘trailer park’ on the end; they feel certain in the memory. When they go to comment on this to their colleagues, they find every Outside member of the team missing.

If Agents drive to Wallace’s house, those sent Inside go tumbling across the gravel road at the residential speed limit, the car no longer underneath them. Ask for a **Dodge** roll. On a success, the Agent manages to tuck and roll well enough to come up unscathed. Otherwise, take **1D4** damage.

If Agents have already questioned Cordell Wallace, it’s difficult for the Agents to separate the vivid memories of speaking with the father from the racist asshole Bowman’s briefing led them to imagine. Did that happen, or is that a memory of who they expected to meet?

Frosty Oaks is the strangest trailer park the Inside Agents have ever encountered. The trailers are not only uniform in design, but also in identical repair. Each tiny lawn has a small picket fence of blazing white plastic pickets. The lawns are uniform, edged and trimmed. Brand-new EVs and Hybrid vehicles sit in the driveways.

Giant wind turbines loom above the trailers, part of a line installed along the neighborhood’s perimeter. The low hum of the blades weighs down on the entire community. Nobody much seems to mind the noise, but then there’s no one outside to complain. Not one curtain opens as they pass by. With the exception of the number on the mailbox, the Wallace residence looks identical to all the others.

(If Agents recheck the house’s location and their phone is infected by Picky Eater, a search confirms its appearance. That is after all what one would hope to see. If their phone remains clean, the result comes up 404. Either way, the Agent remembers the trailer being far more rundown than the one that appears before them.)

### <H3>Outside: The Wallace Residence

The living room of Wallace's trailer is decorated with a few surrealist prints, anonymous Dali knockoffs depicting melting clocks and fractal animals. If the Agents ask about the decor, Cordell glowers. "A white man can't like art?"

Robert Wallace's little room doesn't seem forgotten, but the standard condition seems to be so cluttered and dirty as to match any abandoned flophouse. A cobbled together gaming computer rests precariously on a TV tray crammed in a corner next to the bed. The cheap desk it was assembled on is busy holding empty soda cans and secondhand electronics components. Flags and other crypto-fascist runes tacked to the wall suggest a young man one podcast away from letting the swastika fly. Like father; like son.

The computer does not power on. Cordell Wallace is no friend of federal authority, and any attempt to examine the device closer requires the elder Wallace be further convinced or coerced. If the Agent gets access and succeeds with **Computer Science**, the defects can be identified as a burned-out power supply and crashed hard drive. The disc seems to have suffered head crash and heat damage, as if the machine were overclocked beyond specs. It's doubtful any memory remains uncorrupted.

Once inside the casing, any Agent experienced with Picky Eater finds the circuit integrated into the motherboard. Training in **Craft (Electronics)** makes it clear that this circuit was placed into the board at manufacture, not aftermarket. Though the rest of the machine is standard, the semiconductor bears no serial number. If the Agent has magnification equipment, the microscopic label at back of the chip reads "TRUMP INDUSTRIES ELECTRONICS DIVISION," a company that does not exist, costing 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Successful **Search** rolls reveal another anomaly. Hidden amongst the tangle of wires and beneath a flap of carpet, the Agent finds an extension cord running from the power strip at the back of Wallace's gaming computer and into a hole drilled through trailer's cheap floor. A second ethernet cable—extending directly from the house's wifi modem—is bundled to the extension cord and follows into the floor.

If asked where the cords lead, Cordell reiterates that he doesn't know anything about "any of that nerd shit." He's pissed to learn that his son has drilled holes in the floor and disturbed the carpet. This is a rental.

### <H3>Inside: Reformed Citizen Housing

If Agents knock, a man's voice inside asks who it is. No mention of Wallace, nor any cover story, convinces the voice to open up. Even if impersonating a neighbor in distress, the man insists: "Please leave. I am a good citizen. I want no trouble"

If Agents identify themselves as government officials of any variety, they hear the rough clatter of furniture, followed shortly by repeating shouting: "YOU ARE WELCOME IN MY HOME! I AM COMPLYING WITH ALL REQUESTS! YOU ARE WELCOME IN MY HOME! I AM COMPLYING!" When they enter, the man has his hands behind his head, forehead leaning against the far wall and legs spread. He's a Caucasian male in his thirties, dressed in a formless white jumpsuit. If asked for identification, he gestures to the barcode tattooed on the back of his neck.

The man submits equally fast if Agents force their way in or sneak through a window. There

are, oddly enough, no locks installed on any entrance. The resident assumes home invasion can only be the work of lawful authorities.

Threatening the resident with a gun, fist, or even eye contact causes him to panic. “Oh...oh no. Where’s your barcode? Are you from the Patriots?!” At this point, the resident stops addressing the Agents and begins pleading to the irises of security cameras installed in his ceiling. The Agents can now see they are placed in the top corners of every room.

“Please don’t kill me. I’m not with them! I’m Reformed White. I was at Lewiston Sensitivity Camp for three years! You can check! Please!” **HUMINT** reveals the man to be in genuine fear for his life. He tries to sprint out the front door the moment he feels he might do so without being killed by the “Patriots” invading his home.

The resident was interrupted while eating. A featureless green block of jelloed protein sits half-finished on a plastic plate. Insect parts float in the gelatin. The furnishings of the trailer are sparse as a prison cell, as if the structure were gutted and repurposed. The television plays “The Education Hour!” on mute. If Agents watch, they see a series of inhumanely genitaled cartoon animals. They molest and butcher each other on screen in a screeching orgy that would be distressing in a horror film. The characters are recognizable intellectual property of major corporations that would sue at the mere suggestion of the acts on display, not to mention their meticulous animation. A “Mandated Watch Time Remaining” chevron counts down the hour in scroll at the bottom of the screen (0/1 **SAN**).

### <H3>Outside: The Server

(If Agents disconnect power to Wallace’s server or remove the flashdrive, proceed to **WALLACE’S REINTEGRATION** on page xx. If Agents interface with the device, they become Users and reset results to their own biases. Running two bubbles off the same machine stresses the components, hastening Wallace’s Reintegration at a time of the Handler’s choosing.)

Though it requires peeking under the trailer’s foundations and pulling up some carpet, Agents can trace the wiring in the house to a HP Proliant dl380 server hidden behind the living room’s entertainment center. Faded stickers on the case and the model’s age suggest it was originally used to host Minecraft, circa 2013 or 2014. An HDMI cord implies sneaky connection to the television. Robert likely gamed away his education on the big screen whenever not forced to work for Cordell. A flashdrive sticks out of one of the server’s USB ports. Faded tape on the side reads “WAKE UP COZI!”

Cordell has never seen the server before, but he recognizes the flashdrive. The elder Wallace was given the stick by his cousin, Vicki King. He claims she’s “some bigshot at MIT now,” but the pair grew up together. Cordell was raised alongside Vicki by his aunt after a rotating cast of domestic problems in the 90s broke his own home. After a heated discussion about the election at Christmas 2016, Cordell ceased interaction with family. Before he left, cousin Vicki passed along the flashdrive. She insisted the elder Powell was in a “Facebook bubble” and this would open his eyes. Cordell didn’t care for much for technology or his cousin’s sanctimonious attitude. He brought the flashdrive home and forgot about it. Robert must have found it, as Cordell delegated all electronic installation in the home to his son.

The USB contains a version of Picky Eater that looks cobbled together. The plastic backing is piecemeal, the soldering inexpert, and the circuit printed on a low-quality hobbyist machine. The schematic itself remains hard to look at directly, but anyone with **Craft (Electronics)** can tell it was 3d printed rather than industrially manufactured. A single Read-Me text file contains installation instructions. The metadata of the file's creation links to Vicki King.

In contrast, the circuit inside the server appears integrated at manufacture and claims to be from the same "Trump Industries" as the one in Robert's room (page xx). Training in **Forensics** and a lab confirms the father's story: the only prints found on the flashdrive belong to Cordell, his son, and Vicki King. Robert is the only person to have touched the server.

### <H3>Inside: The Rescue

(If Robert Wallace dies—or if the mirror of his "dead-drop" server beneath the floorboards goes dark—proceed to Wallace's Return on p.xx. If Agents leave the trailer park with Wallace, the bubble is reproduced and carried along by his phone. Once outside the range of the "core" bubble, destroying the man or device returns Outside.)

After a short time inside the trailer, glass can be heard breaking from the bedroom. A man in ill-fitting special operations gear rushes down the hall. He carries a long rifle that looks like it was assembled from spare parts, but he lowers it as he sees the Agents. They recognize Robert Wallace, but he looks *matured*, more muscular than his online photos suggest and with a dashing streak of grey through his hair. Somehow, his chin seems to have squared compared to the formless drop off seen in his latest driver's license photo.

"This safe house is blown! I can't believe the Baptists sent you here." The intruder chides the Agents, pointing at the cameras around the trailer. "Jade Helm will have already scrambled a team! Shoot this race traitor *now* and come with me if you want to live."

It becomes painfully clear Wallace means the Resident of the trailer. If Agents hesitate, he raises his own rifle. Attempts to stop him initiate combat. If Agents go along, roll **SAN** as the murder takes place before their eyes. It certainly looks and smells real.

Wallace leads any rescued 'allies' to a sturdy SUV parked outside. He peels out of the trailer park as soon as they enter. He identifies himself as "General Wallace." He says he has to get them to safety before ANTIFA arrives. If the Agents are armed, he tells them to conceal their weapons. They should know firearms haven't been allowed since Sharia Law replaced the Constitution. He plays with his phone while careening down the highway, looking for someone "in the underground" that can give the Agents barcode tattoos in a hurry (0/1 **SAN**).

As the high-speed escape drags them closer to town, Agents plunge deeper into Wallace's madness. A 30-foot high golden statue of President Obama sits by the side of the road above a plaque in what appears to be Arabic. It was not there on the drive in. If asked what it says, Robert confusedly answers, "*President-for-Life of the Global Caliphate*, of course." If the Agents know **Arabic**, it does not say that. The inscription is gibberish, containing characters only loosely styled after Kufic script.

The SUV speeds past a fireteam of men in some combination of "black bloc" clothing and what can only be described as sci-fi power armor. The ANTIFA Super-Soldiers are arresting a teen and throwing him into some sort of advanced troop transport with FEMA stenciled on the side.

A messianic graffiti depiction of Donald Trump nailed to the cross is being sand blasted from the wall by a trooper. If the Agent or Wallace behave erratically in sight of police, they pursue with suicidal fervor, intent on serving shoot-to-kill Omniwarrants.

With a successful test of any **Art** skill, the Agents realize they aren't moving through physical geography so much as a landscape of contradictory paranoias. This world is idiotic, nonsensical, and completely capable of murdering them. If any of these sights or realizations cause distress, Robert holds up his phone and reassures the Agents. "Don't worry. I still got encryption up and running. The black helicopters won't find us with this little baby on."

Roll **Alertness** to spot the familiar icon of Picky Eater on the screen.

## <H2>Wallace's Reintegration

When "The World Resistance" bubble collapses, the fallout depends on location and method.

- **If the server is disabled before Wallace meets the Agents**, every User trapped Inside returns to Outside wherever Handlers decide dimensions overlap. The reunited Agents are first to find Robert Wallace's dead body, located on the highway just outside the turn into Frosty Oak Trailer Park. His skull and limbs are shattered, His skin was grated off by road rash and left a pink streak down the asphalt. No accidents were reported or vehicles damaged. No one saw where he came from. It looks like a motorcycle accident at 80 mph...without the motorcycle.
- **If the server is disabled during Wallace's meeting with the Agents**, Robert and each Inside Agent reappear in the trailer's living room. Each drags along whatever they were holding at the time, be it a firearm or the terrified Resident. Everyone witnessing the appearance, including Cordell and Officer Bowman, loses 1/1D6 **SAN** from the unnatural. NPCs who fail react violently.
- **If Robert Wallace is killed at the trailer park**, the Agents Inside return with his body the second the confrontation ends. Make **SAN** checks as above. If Cordell is present, he automatically fails any roll at the sight of his dead son and teleporting into existence. He runs towards his bedroom closet and the loaded 12-gauge shotgun inside.
- **If Robert Wallace is killed after fleeing with the Agents (or if his phone is destroyed)**, the results depend on where the bubble breaks. If Agents stop the car first, the return is uneventful. Wallace may even be taken into custody (see **WALLACE IN CUSTODY** on page xx). If they are still in Wallace's conceptual special forces SUV, every passenger's body is sent skipping over the 'real' highway when the vehicle ceases to exist Outside. Damage is 1D6 for every 40 kph (25 mph) of speed.

## <S1>Wallace in Custody

If Robert Wallace survives reintegration, it's possible to take him into custody. The young man remains a murderous racist, corrupted by white nationalist ideologies before he developed critical faculty. He assists only when he discovers President Trump is in office. The only explanation for events he can confabulate casts him as a heroic time traveler destined to prevent "The Fall." His cooperations proves useless. Lines of questioning never get far before ramming into fundamental logical contradictions and circular reasoning. Robert won't stop

delivering dire warnings about the dystopic world government he's imagined into existence. He insists he's capable of stopping it, rattling off a resume of personal military accomplishments that never happened.

If left in the hands of the Program, they rendition Wallace to an undisclosed black site after one day. Asked why, superior officers explain they feared "contamination" and offer no more. For Agents that imprison Wallace themselves, they are first to see the laws of physics and biology catch up to him. Twenty-four hours after return, Wallace's skin begins to pockmark and sag. His nails yellow and his hair turns white. Biologists and other scientists can watch his cells age, falter, and die under a microscope, a time-lapse with the naked eye. Within a week, Wallace dies in his cell, a raving lunatic caught in the body of an octogenarian.

The only hope for explanation requires **Psychotherapy**. On a success, the Agent recalls Wallace was 19 years old when he went Inside. He had a teenager's confidence for accomplishing 'great' deeds, a fool's understanding of politics, and a child's understanding of mortality. Time flew by while he was having fun, but all teenagers believe they'll live forever. If Picky Eater hadn't been shut down, Robert Wallace may have been right.

## <H1>Vicki King

Cordell Wallace's testimony and fingerprints on the original drive point to Vicki King. A partial can even be found inside the flashdrive's casing, meaning she assembled at least one version of Picky Eater herself.

Vicki King lives in semirural Kick Springs on the outskirts of State College, Pennsylvania. Records show King worked tech support for Penn State from 2017 to 2018. She currently has no records of employment. Before Penn, she was a mathematics graduate student at MIT until 2016. She did not leave with a degree. Her advisor was Dr. Wesley Cool. She had two girls in early 2017, twins Eryn and Shelia. They have no father listed on their birth records.

Agents calling the IT department learn that Penn State fired her last year. She just stopped answering help tickets one day. No one at the old job was able to reach her. Her manager, Dhananjay Joshi, drove by the house once but left after seeing a foreclosure sign out front. Joshi doesn't regard King's disappearance as much of a surprise. She came into their employ shortly after becoming a single-mother to twins. She struggled financially and professionally, apparently fleeing some scandal that ended a bright future at MIT. King never got close with her colleagues at Penn, but Joshi couldn't help but get the impression that she was a woman on the run from something.

Contacting the bank confirms that Vicki defaulted on the mortgage late last year. The loan officer claims he knocked on the door, found no one inside, left notification of foreclosure, and went home. Executing the eviction is the job of the Sheriff. Clearing out and reselling foreclosed properties is outsourced to private contractors by another department. He only does notifications. If asked who lives there now, the loan officer doesn't know. Not his department.

### <S1>Bubble

Approaching Vicki King's house risks entering her bubble.



## <S1>Infection

Operating Sheila King's phone

Operating Vicki King's computer or phone

## <H2> The Reaping World

Make a SAN roll as Agents cross the lawn into King's residence.

Weary after days of working IT and concerned about the effects of screen-time on her children, King put hard limits on the use of electronics in her home. Her bubble grew slowly. This kept her alive, despite being one of the app's original Users.

In 2018, the desktop computer using Picky Eater delivered an email offering to move King's position remote. This offer wasn't 'real' but a manifestation of King's desire to spend more time with her infant daughters. She accepted. Increased use of the infected device allowed the bubble to catch up. It expanded enough to consume the home's personal electronics, duplicate itself, and seal the family inside. King's paranoia for the safety of her children accelerated in a feedback loop of confirmation bias. This manifested a world of nightmarish child sacrifice. Her daughters grew up trapped inside it.

### <H3>Outside: The Foreclosed Residence

A sun-faded foreclosure sign has been stabbed into the overgrown grass in front of King's two-story, cottage-style house. King's car remains in the driveway, covered in old leaves and a layer of pollen.

The mail slot in the front door is jammed with soggy junk mail dating back a year. Multiple overdue bills and foreclosure notifications lie amongst the pile. A privacy fence around the small backyard is locked. Peeking over the top reveals the space abandoned. Disused children's blocks and bounce swings and dolls lie half buried under leaves in overgrown grass. The back door leading into the kitchen is shut and the curtains closed across all windows.

A knock at the door gets no response. With continued knocking, Agents watching through windows see the shadows of small girls through the curtains, trying to stay unheard and out of sight. Persistent knocking causes one of them to stumble and knock over a side table so loudly that no one can pretend that the strangers outside didn't hear it.

A young girl sheepishly opens the door and backs away to allow guests inside. Her identical twin is backed against the far wall, a shaking kitchen knife inexpertly held in front of her. They both appear 10 to 12 years old. The girl at the door immediately volunteers that her mom is working upstairs and not to be disturbed. Pressed, she gets flustered and says their mom is asleep. Then sick. Pointing out the contradictions causes her to panic and join her sister huddled in the corner.

### <H3>Inside: The Confiscated Residence

Plywood has been nailed across the windows and doors of King's two-story Victorian house. There's no car in the driveway. A laminated notice stapled to the boards claims the property has been "excommunicated for failure to facilitate Right of Harvest." The order proclaims

“enforced social death for Vicki King and any co-habitants, until such time as The Fruit is returned for rightful custodial conscription to lawful authorities.” The letterhead comes from an organization called “National Child and Family Services,” a federal office that does not exist.

A privacy fence around the small backyard is locked. Peeking over the top reveals the space abandoned. Disused children’s balls and jump-ropes and a broken trampoline lie half buried under leaves and overgrown grass. The back door leading into the kitchen has been kicked and inexpertly reset in the hinges. The boot prints are still visible on the white paint. Exhaust pours out a pipe rigged through the basement window. An engine can be heard humming inside.

The sound of the generator working below means no one inside can hear knocking. The damage to the back entrance makes sneaking in trivial. Agents find the kitchen in good repair, but everything else in the house is tossed as if in execution of a mean-spirited search warrant. Every cushion and wall has been sliced open with knives or crowbars.

The only other room in good repair lies immediately up the stairs. This bedroom at the top of the landing is lit and seems to have been obsessively reconstructed after a rough search. The bunk-beds and clothing suggest two young girls live there. Taylor Swift posters have been taped back together and replaced on the walls. If the Agent is a fan (or makes an **Art** roll) it’s odd that a pair of modern tweens would listen to anything as old as *Speak Now*.

Country music and feet shuffling echo down the hallway, coming from behind the door to the master bedroom.

### <H3>Outside: The Hidden Twins

Except for the twins, the house is empty. Vicki King is nowhere to be found. There’s no wifi signal or computer devices visible. The electricity isn’t even on. The girls appear to have been living in the basement for weeks. Two sleeping bags and pillows are splayed across the floor, alongside the torn packaging and empty cans from a storm ration kit they were pilfering. There’s a master bedroom upstairs, but it has a single queen and remains surrounded with half-unpacked moving boxes. The books inside range from pseudo-scientific conspiracy theories, parenting books, and journals of advanced mathematics. The other bedroom is more of a nursery, complete with play mats and two toddler beds.

The girl that opened the door identifies herself as Eryn King. The sister with the knife is Shelia. **HUMINT** success makes the Agent confident in the claim. **Forensics** and access to a database can confirm their identities based on fingerprints...taken when they were infants. According to birth records, the pre-teens in front of the Agents should be, at most, three years old. The realization costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

The girls are inseparable and might be adorable under other circumstances. They only agree to answer questions after Agents promise they are not ‘Reapers.’ Eryn says it’s stupid to make them say that—Reapers would have killed them already—but Shelia demands it.

The girls insist their mom is home and ‘busy’ in her room. Sometimes, she comes out and takes care of them. The more the Agents challenge that, the more desperately the girls insist she’s there. As long as they don’t look, it might still be true. If an Agent says they’re going to find the mother, the girls panic like they’ve been physically attacked. Proving to the girls that

their mother is not in the house forces them to revisit the worst of their own trauma since Picky Eater came into their lives. It causes them to break down in the equivalent of temporary insanity, curling up and staring blankly into space.

To get them talking more, spend at least 10 minutes coaxing them out of it with a **Psychotherapy** roll or 30 minutes with a **CHA×5** or **Persuade** test.

### <H3>Inside: The Missing Mother

Vicki King is listening to country music on a survival radio and turning her master bedroom into something like a private detective's office. Paperwork splays across the bed in messy piles. Newspaper articles and maps have been pinned to every available surface of the walls and connected with an intricate system of color-coded yarn. The monitor of a desktop computer blazes in the corner, web browser open on a worrisome number of tabs.

How King responds to the Agents depends a great deal on how they enter the house and approach her. If the Agents raise King's suspicions, she immediately becomes convinced that they are Reapers themselves. She begins tearing at her "research" in an attempt to obscure any trail leading to her children. She raves, ignoring questions and swearing to take the location of her children to the grave.

If they are careful and respectful, she is friendly and glad to meet allies. She knows how to spot Reapers, and they are no Reapers.

She immediately seeks to secure their cooperation in finding her daughters. She can't recall how long they have been missing. But she knows they are alive because she never got a "hush check" from the IRS and the black SUVs are still patrolling the block. She says the girls are smart. She taught them to never answer the door and never accept a vaccination. The girls have to be hiding somewhere. She just needs help finding them.

Asked about the Reapers, King becomes visibly disappointed, as if realizing her potential saviors are buffoons. King says the Reapers hunt children for the secret Satanic cult that controls the United Nations. The Reapers usually dress like government agents—maybe a lot like the Agents themselves—but also disguise themselves as pizza delivery drivers, teachers, and clergy to gain easier access to children and homes. They have their own office, National Child and Family Services, located beneath the Denver Airport. King isn't sure if the Reapers actually gain supernatural powers from their rituals or if that's just rumors. They may only be executors of some sick hazing ritual practiced by the global elite. Either way, it's been the law since Right of Harvest passed Congress in 2022.

King is obviously at 0 **SAN**. She has never consciously considered the anti-Semitism at the root of all those conspiracy theories. If an Agent confronts her with it, she angrily denies the accusation. She views her delusions as established scientific fact. She has done her own research. The Agents have obviously been brainwashed by Reaper-controlled media.

If King is killed or her computer destroyed, go to **KING'S REINTEGRATION** on page xx.

### <H3>Inside: The Girls' Rebellion

If the cellphone in Shelia's back pocket is destroyed, go to **KING'S REINTEGRATION** on page xx.

Extended contact with the twins is legitimately off-putting. Their demeanors swing between fearful withdrawal, typical sibling bickering, and utterly flat affect. Periodically, one of their faces spontaneously loses all expression, and the other follows immediately behind. Their speech becomes clipped and distant, as if having another conversation on the phone. Then, just as suddenly, back to kids again.

The twins have seen more than anyone should and possess almost no framework for understanding it. Their answers to a few likely inquires follow.

**REAL OR FAKE:** The tweens don't have the faculties to question the reality of their existence. Agents that understand Picky Eater's effects can roll **Psychotherapy** or **HUMINT**. On a success, they understand that the twins are 'real', but they've had their egos obliterated. Childhood development inside a bubble is unmoored from the objective experiences that differentiate one from their parents' subjectivity. Any individuality that deviated from mother's expectations saw reality reform around it into a corrective life lesson. Mother *could only* know best. About everything. Always. As a result, the girls have had every splinter of personality sandpapered off their minds. They are terrified of themselves, if they could even articulate that identity in the first place.

**WHY LIVE LIKE THIS:** The girls roll their eyes because it's obvious. They have to hide from the Reapers. "We aren't supposed to be out of the house or we'll get custodian conscripted," one says. "This isn't our house, so we have to hide," finishes the other.

**WHAT ARE REAPERS:** The girls know very little. Reapers are bad men from the government. They take children. Mom said the details were "too adult to think about," but insisted they were dangerous. The Reapers are the reason the girls can't go to school, watch TV, or see other kids.

**COMPUTERS OR PICKY EATER:** Asked about strange electronics of any stripe, one of the girl blurts out that they aren't allowed to have cellphones. They make this claim whether or not they've been told about the app. Asked if they ever used Picky Eater directly, the girls get quiet and evasive. They deny it unconvincingly. Then Sheila whispers something about it "making the sky change." Eryn tries to hush her sister, saying "No, it didn't!" (See **OUTSIDE: THE NEW SKY** for more on that.)

**THE SECRET PHONE:** Agents that make a **Persuade** roll (or succeeded previously to read their odd behavior) coax the story out of the twins. Like any tween, they confess to "stealing screentime." Mom told them Picky Eater protected them from the Reapers. It was the reason they could do school on her computer without getting found by the government. When the girls wanted a device of their own, they knew mom would never agree to the 'unsupervised screentime.' But they still didn't want to get caught by Reapers. They found another copy of the device in Vicki's things, copied the software off mom's computer, and put it all into an old cellphone.

Shelia takes the device out and hands it to the Agents. It's a heavily modified cellphone of some sort, something called a "BlackBury." Shelia says she did the install herself. Eryn chimes in that she found the old phone and tools. Both beg the Agents' forgiveness for breaking Mom's electronics prohibition. They just wanted to find their Dad online. Mom never talked about him and forbid all contact, but they knew his name: Wes Cool.

### <H3>Inside: A History of Picky Eater

If King is killed or her computer destroyed, go to **KING'S REINTEGRATION** on page XX.

King only speaks about Picky Eater if the Agents promise to help find her children. Once convinced she's no longer alone in her struggle, she's happy to talk about its development. She helped Dr. Cool invent it as a grad student. Though her programming isn't good enough to quite understand how the formulas she inputted were implemented, "Wes" gave her a finished copy. She believes it to be a sophisticated search algorithm and browser privacy software.

If the Agents encourage her, she provides the information below. The more they earn her confidence, the more she shares.

**DR. COOL'S BACKGROUND:** Professor Wesley Cool began teaching at MIT's Department of Mathematics in 2007. He taught philosophy before that. He always said both fields together expressed something greater and more fundamental than either on its own.

**THE MATHEMATICAL UNIVERSE:** Wesley was powerfully inspired by physicist Max Tegmark. In "The Mathematical Universe," Tegmark proposed that the physical universe is a mathematical structure. Physical objects have no properties except mathematical properties. All structures that exist mathematically exist physically. Consciousness itself is a mathematical substructure that subjectively perceives a physically "real" world around it.

**MATHEMATICAL CONSCIOUSNESS:** Wes Cool wanted to explore the implications of mathematical consciousness. He had to sift through a lot of occult nonsense and conspiracy theories. (Vicki King says this with no trace of irony.) He claimed to have found some old, very rare texts on philosophy, mathematics, and the occult that proved useful. Vicki King does not know titles or details of those texts but expects Cool had them in his office.

**HOW IT WORKS:** Wesley developed Picky Eater to help people experience the world in new ways. He claimed that demographic variables ensure a person's media consumption habits all but mathematically certain. Cool assured King that the algorithm encoded within the app identifies these variables and aggregates feeds towards outlier information, providing a more objective field of sources. King only understands enough to copy the code and recreate the circuit. Otherwise, that's how she thinks Picky Eater actually functions.

**COMPARTMENTAL CONSTRUCTION:** Cool was a specialist in mathematics and philosophy. Though a genius, he lacked the practical experience required to make his invention. A handful of grad students helped code the app in discrete sections, none of them knowing its ultimate purpose. King also said he contacted colleagues at MIT to assist in creation of the circuit, but King doesn't know who.

**KNOWN BUGS:** Cool warned King about problems with Picky Eater before installation. One was power consumption. It has to calculate constantly, draining batteries and clogging processors. It continually updates firmware to facilitate packet transfer, which makes some people worry that it is a security threat. When two copies of Picky Eater operate too near each other, Cool warned they could interfere. He insisted she never install more than one instance of Picky Eater at once, claiming only that she wasn't ready for the problems it would cause.

**THE RELATIONSHIP:** Pressed about the frequent habit of referring to Dr. Cool as "Wesley" or "Wes," King eventually admits that the pair had more than a teacher-student relationship. In

fact, the affair resulted in the birth of her twins. Wes disappeared in 2016 before King had a chance to tell him she was pregnant. King sought help from others at MIT finding him, but soon discovered she was not the first of his dalliances with grad students. Everyone seemed certain Wes was just ghosting his ex and treated her like a crazy woman. The gaslighting and pressure of the pregnancy forced her to drop the program. She gave birth to the girls next year. She'd always wanted children, and she knew Cool's genes carried brilliance, even if he wasn't a good man.

### <H3>Outside: The New Sky

Sheila and Eryn can't say with much precision what happened after they turned on their own version of Picky Eater. Their mannerisms hollow out when talking about it. One rattles off an observation, the other follows with another. Disjointed and half-remembered.

After it came on, the twins were no longer in their house. Everything was mist and clouds and the sky was a funny color that has no name. There were big stone blocks. There was a sleeping man next to a weird machine without its skin. He woke up when the girls prodded him. He claimed he was waiting for someone. Then another man appeared from the mists.

The newcomer was bigger. The tallest the girls had ever seen. Dressed like someone from a storybook. The sleeping man tried to say something, but the bigger man shushed him like mommy does when she has a headache. The big man talked funny, but the girls understood he was asking why they were there. They said they wanted to know more about where they came from. Then, suddenly, they were back in the house. But not their house.

Upon arrival inside the foreclosed King household, the girls panicked, assuming what mother had warned them about finally happened. They got online, the Reapers found them, and they'd never see their family again. They destroyed the computer found running upstairs, blocked all the windows, and hid in the basement. They kept the cellphone charged with a handcrank charger in the storm kit. It's still in standby mode, in case Mom can use it to find them.

### <H3>Inside: King Calls the Reapers

Attempts to **Persuade** King to describe how Picky Eater really works suffer a -20% penalty. The cognitive dissonance is just too great. Promising reunion with the twins only drops the penalty to -10%. If Agents do manage to convince Vicki of the device's unnatural power, the woman panics at the realization that this nightmare is a construct of personal neurosis, media saturation, and fears of motherhood. She can't handle knowing her daughters are not real, only fantasy constructs vat-grown inside the psychic poison excreted by their mother. She would rather call down her devils than admit she imagined them.

Once "awake," King tries to get away from the Agents and reach the landline in the kitchen. The surveillance of the Reapers is so powerful that picking up the receiver is all it takes. They arrive at the door seconds later, knocking like policemen. After a sudden epiphany about Picky Eater's unnatural effects, King concludes her imagined evils must also wield supernatural powers.

As figments conjured into existence seconds before they knocked, Reapers have been constructed in the forms of every Agent currently Outside the Reaping World. If most Agents passed into the bubble, those Inside see their own doppelganger rip off the plywood covering the front entrance. Each non-Agent looks and dresses exactly the same, save for the lunatic

smiles and hoods of human flesh worn atop their suits. The shoulder-length stoles sewn from hairless skin are covered in profane tattoos that seem to shift under the eye. Seeing them costs 1/1D6 **SAN** from the unnatural. The Reapers are armed with unnatural artifacts and anatomy. See **REAPERS** on page XX.

## <H2> King's Reintegration

**If the bubble breaks and Vicki King reunites with her daughters**, the whole family cooperates with Agents out of gratitude. They provide information about Picky Eater once saved from the threat of the Reapers.

**If the Reapers were summoned before the bubble burst**, the twins are so indoctrinated by belief in their mother's fear that the monsters continue to attack across the divide. Even after Agents destroy King's computer, they pursue their prey Outside reality. To exorcise them permanently, Agents must also shutdown the twin's contraband cellphone or kill King.

**If either Vicki or the twins are harmed in reintegration**, the entire family shatters. The girls scream and huddle in a fetal position. King goes catatonic with shock and becomes unresponsive. All three were composed of shared delusions and seeing any of the member of the family harmed feels losing a part one's own mind.

### <S1>King in Custody

Even rescued, the King family is doomed. After a decade of having her every paranoid suspicion confirmed, Vicki can never again trust an institution, not to mention her own perceptions. The demands of single motherhood and her lack of resources were the animating source of her paranoia, and those triggers only worsen now that she's a decade older and homeless.

Eryn and Shelia, in a world entirely free from their mother's monsters, start to wonder if their memories are even real. From there, it's a short step to wondering if *they* are real. Or distinct from one another. Then the dreams start. The visions of the land with the strange sky and the tall man from the mists...

Fissures between mother and daughters escalate quickly. Recognizing her family is coming apart, Vicki King seeks to recreate Picky Eater technology and return Inside less than a year after her exit.

## <H1>The Rational World

If Agents move to investigate Cool, they enter his bubble as soon as they enter the Boston metro area. Cool used the app first and ran it for nearly three years before dipping into another dimension permanently. His bubble encircles all of Cambridge. It covers the entire university and most of Boston. It spreads north as far as Arlington and west past Watertown. Had the doctor stayed, his fantasies may have cocooned the planet.

The bubble's growth has been halted by the absence of its creator. In the wake of his loss, the Rational World only half-exists, stagnant until stirred by the return of a User. A reality on standby.

## <INF>Bubble

Entering Boston risks falling Inside Wesley Cool's bubble.

## <INF>Infection

Manufacturing and operating a copy of Cool's circuit using the blueprints

The Zann Aetherophone

## <H2>Arrival

As always, non-Users can't perceive Cool's utopia. Over the last two years, Delta Green has performed multiple operations within its circumference, left Outside. In contrast, fellow Users might see signs of the sheer mass of Cool's bubble before they enter it. It is so huge as to shimmer with an event horizon.

### <H3>Arriving by Plane

Any Users, regardless of their **SAN** roll, can see the border of the Rational World from the plane. Unlike other bubbles, the sheer size of the Boston phenomenon distorts space around its surface. From the air, the city has been encased what looks like a transparent soap bubble, rainbow swirls dancing up the sphere's edge. Non-Users see nothing unusual.

A successful **Science (Physics)** roll hypothesizes that overlapping dimensions above a certain mass might cause some sort of friction, perhaps a release of energy. Human science has no answer for what damage this 'rubbing' might cause, nor why only the Users can see it.

Upon landing, Agents see the bubble's edge cut across the concourse at Logan International Airport. The building, city, and horizon beyond look distorted. The details never resolve, as if composed by a computer short of rendering power. The sphere has yet to overtake the runways or reach as far up as cruising altitude. Otherwise, Agents might have found themselves dropping into Boston from the air without a plane around them.

Inside the airport, the bubble's edge can be spotted as a minute change of hue in the grey concourse carpet. Non-Users cross the border by the hundreds, completely unaware and unaffected. To Users, the light on the other side seems...wrong. It falls at off angles and every shadow looks like bad photoshop. The glow diffuses as if seen through a globe of ice.

### <H3>Arriving by Personal Vehicle

Travelling at high speed on the ground, the shimmer of the bubble isn't enough to alert most to its presence. Allow the driver an **Alertness** roll to spot the distortion in the air before the vehicle passes through it. If the driver fails to see it, the Agents cross into the bubble without recognizing it.

### <H3>Arriving by Train or Bus

Make the **SAN** check. There's no difference between Inside and Outside realities until Agents reach MIT.



## <H2>Going Inside

Agents who cross Inside find themselves suddenly seated on the inside a passenger train. They sit on the red carpet of a car trimmed in wood with faux-leather seats. It looks classy enough to be a smoking lounge. There are a few passengers in contemporary dress. Cool couldn't drive and hated traffic. He considered trains one of his few non-academic interests.

The train is headed downhill and entering a tunnel. When it emerges from the other side, the Agent sees a different Boston skyline.

If an Agent was driving when sucked Inside, those left Outside get to make **Alertness** rolls. Successful Agents stay awake enough to notice no one is currently at the wheel. A **Drive** success can prevent a high-speed accident.

Otherwise, Agents Outside notice nothing strange. Inform the group that any Agents lost Inside have been dropped off, sent to pursue 'other leads' according to plan. The Agents remember, right? The plan? Of course they do. Ask the Outside Agents where they want to go next.

## <S1>Mind and Hand

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's motto—*Mens et Manus*—translates to "Mind and Hand." Cool's invention has made this distinction literal. Outside reality remains at *hand*, but overlaid by a warped creation from Inside the doctor's *mind*.

Across the two MITs, events Inside and Outside are organized according to leads. The zone is too large for the parallel occurrences of the other bubbles. Cool's world is so developed that Users diverge faster in space, time, and experience than before. From the Outside perspective, Agents drawn Inside seem to 'hop' around the MIT campus. Any Users failing their **SAN** checks during this stage of the investigation start folding themselves in and out of space, their very existence gone fuzzy at the edge of vision and memory. The Agent's perceptions start to skip and stutter in time, contradictory clues gathered and recalled in a bizarre sensory fast-forward. They lose hours or teleport across campus in seconds. The Agents may spend SAN and WP to exploit this power, switching bubbles to pursue parallel truths across contradictory realities.

Just like Dr. Cool.

## <H1>Exploring MIT

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology overlooks the Charles River, with Boston on the river's far side. Boston University is a mile southwest. Harvard is a mile northwest. Picky Eater's first User teaches here, and they still employ Dr. Wesley Cool, its inventor.

## <H2>Inside: MIT

In all respects, Wesley Cool thinks he knows better. This makes the bizarre nature of not-Boston immediately apparent to any witness Inside it.

The city—perhaps the entire east coast—now enjoys a high-speed elevated rail system. Above the tangle of Cambridge’s historic streets glide magnetic rail cars, silent save the low *whooshing* of the displaced air. Anyone who makes a **Bureaucracy** or **Accounting** check realizes that the city couldn’t afford this kind of infrastructure in a dozen annual budgets. **History** searches for monuments to American History around town and finds some bulldozed to make way for public transit lines strangely centered around MIT. Anyone native to the Boston area might lose 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural after noticing the sparse traffic, missing street performers, and erased homeless population.

It's almost more disturbing how little everything else has changed. Newspapers still have headlines about mass shootings and the Israel-Palestine conflict. The president is the same. Global warming continues apace. Cool apparently thought that traffic and his lack of total control were the world’s only problems.

## <H2>Outside: The Charles Bower Case

Bower taught theater at MIT until his arrest three years ago. Most of the two dozen theater faculty members remember him all too well. The department is still traumatized. People pointedly avoid talking about him unless someone is unkind enough to corner them into it.

Bower showed appalling images of child sexual abuse to students and colleagues. He handed them around out of his own wallet, as if they were ordinary and part of everyday life. He seemed surprised when people reacted with horror and reported sexual harassment. He seemed baffled even as authorities dragged him away.

Senior lecturer Anna Braithwaite meets the Agents at the Music and Theater Arts Building. She was the first faculty member to call police on the day of Bower’s meltdown. She had been his colleague and friend for years and thought she knew him well...until he showed her those pictures from his wallet. Recalling the day of his arrest still pains her, but she has an acclaimed stage actor skill at compartmentalizing emotions and helps Agents with questions. Nothing, however, convinces her to describe what was in the photos Bower showed her.

Dr. Braithwaite confirms things the Agents may have already learned. Bower showed no signs of interest in child pornography or predatory behavior prior to the incident. He was active and engaged with the theater program, a reliable part of the faculty and renowned dry wit. But he had always been prone to emotional disconnection, to distance. He made that part of his craft: exploring the distance, connection, and tension between audience and stage, their inextricability. He was fascinated by ways in which online interaction mirrored and expanded this distance.

Braithwaite remembers Bower talking a few times about a contact from the Mathematics department made through faculty senate. She remembers finding the name Dr. Cool ridiculous sounding. *Machine Fugue* was the last project Braithwaite remembers her colleague working on. It was supposed to be a play that utilized the professor’s AI-generated surrealist imagery as a projected backdrop. She never saw it.

Bower was obsessed with the project. He went on sabbatical for a semester, maybe more; Braithwaite cannot recall. When he showed up at her office, he looked like he’d been on a bender. Hollowed out. “Ten years older,” she recounts. She asked how the play was going. He

insisted he'd finished it ages ago and was on to bigger things. He only came by her office to show off photos of his 'wedding ceremony'

Braithwaite was immediately aghast after seeing the pictures. She cannot recall exactly what she said in the moment, but she remembers demanding Bower leave immediately. He cried as she pushed him out the door, asking her what was wrong. She saw Bower showing the photos to others in the hall as she locked him out, raving: "What's wrong with love? Why can no one be happy for me?!"

Braithwaite called security. Police found Bower in his office and arrested him within the hour. They confiscated everything. Braithwaite followed the case in the press for a time, but after hearing of Bower's suicide, she endeavored to never think on it again. They didn't even reassess his office. It's a broom closet now.

## <H2>Inside: What Charles Bower Case?

Charles Bower teaches at the MIT to this day. His name is still on the directory board at the entrance to the Music and Theater Arts Building. His bio is listed in the recruitment pamphlets littering every table in the halls. A caption beneath a photo of the man inside claims he's a specialist in classical theater and an experimental playwright.

Asking around about Bower finds that the students and faculty quite like him. He's often noted as the funniest member of the faculty, and there's a lot of competition to get into his undergraduate survey courses. Any mention of Bower's criminal history is met with shock, disbelief, and great offense. No one remembers any such incident three years ago. Some students are even happy to grab their phones and prove the professor's innocence. They 'Picky' the date of the crime (their verb for searching the Internet, apparently) and prove no such event ever took place.

Bower can be found in his office, none too pleased if he's learned about the "baseless accusations" Agents have been spreading. Seeing him costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. Failure shocks characters across the membrane and into a locked broom closet back Outside. The sight of people blinking in and out of existence terrifies the professor.

Bower is the same age as in Outside photos prior to his arrest. He's as disgusted and offended by accusations of pedophilia as the Agents would be. Questioned respectfully, Bower is happy to talk about Wes Cool and Picky Eater. He regards his friend from the Mathematics Department as "the only literal-minded man I can stand." He admits to beta-testing something called the 'Picky Eater algorithm' in his play *Machine Fugue*. He claims he doesn't talk about the play much anymore. He finds the bragging of early adopters of tech after 'mass adoption' somewhat pitiful. He was happy enough for an acknowledgement in the appendix to *Meaning Without Master*, Cool's bestseller. He lacks the training to understand the text, but he recommends it as the best source for learning more about the man. The former collaborators haven't talked much since Cool made it big, but that's fame for you.

An Agent who succeeds at an **INTx5** roll realizes they aren't talking to Professor Bower. The man before them is the psychic sketch of Charles Bower, animated by Wesley Cool's impressions and supplemented by whatever force fuels Picky Eater. The Bower Inside is not a sexual predator because he was not seen as one by the bubble's User. He is not a real person. No one here is.

An Agent with **Psychotherapy** can convince Bower that he doesn't exist by pointing out inconsistencies in his memory, his lack of interiority, and other facets of personhood Wes Cool could not be bothered to imagine. Doing so is pointlessly cruel. Successful Agents only manage to stun not-Bower into a dissociative state.

## <S1>Meaning Without Master

*Introduction to Chapter 2: Study time: hours. Occult +1%, Unnatural +1%. SAN Loss 0/1D4. Chapter 3 to Chapter 32: Prerequisite: Science (Mathematics) 50% or higher. Study time: weeks. Occult +5%, Unnatural +5%. SAN Loss 1/1D6.*

Available to anyone Inside the Rational World, *Meaning Without Master* contains the information from the excerpt and introduction at the beginning of this scenario. Handlers should share details about Picky Eater's creation and its rules with any Agents who study the hallucinated text.

Cool ceases speaking to a layman audience after the first couple chapters. Understanding the remainder of the text requires **Science (Mathematics)** at **50%** or higher. The bulk of the pages constitute a mathematical proof establishing that the reader does not exist, followed by a dense philosophical treatise on why such distinctions as existence and nonexistence never mattered. Cool does not reserve the privilege of reality for even himself, instead arguing that his own existence is as hollow and slipshod as any imagined reader's. The motivating force he calls "Tawil al'Umr, the All-in-One, the Gate Inside the Key" prioritizes no single universe above another in the tumult of infinity. Cool regards any mind capable of grasping this fact worthy to seize control of the mindless force.

## <H2>Outside: Cool's Reputation

Cool's colleagues and students do not think much about him. They can't. Anyone asked about Cool looks a little blank at first. Some upper-classmen know Cool, but it takes a split-second for the brain to *know* that it knows him. With some prodding, Agents interviewing Cool's colleagues can learn anything from **THE HISTORY OF PICKY EATER** on page XX that they did not learn from Vicki King.

Confronting students or staff with the fact that Cool hasn't been around in years causes profound distress. No one likes proof that their grasp of reality is tenuous as a spiderweb.

Agents can get official access to university records by succeeding at a **Law** roll to obtain a search warrant. Failing that, they can secure the assistance of the head of the Mathematics Department, Annette Maulik, with a **Persuade** roll. Her cooperation reveals her low opinion of Cool's ethics and personal behavior, though it has never quite risen to anything that would let her fire him. Of course, she forgets the conversation almost as soon as the Agents leave her office.

Maulik's permission can be used to view Cool's private records (see **OUTSIDE: COOL'S RECORDS**), though a warrant must be used to seize the documents.

## <H2>Inside: Cool's Reputation

Agents Inside seeking opinions about Wes Cool's time at MIT are treated like dullards. Faculty members point to his book on their shelves, saying they don't have time to 101 non-students. Students point to the Picky Eater apps on their phone and mock the questioners, sarcastically asking if they need wifi explained to them too. One even remarks, "Jesus, I bet you fossils still use Google."

After much frustration, the obliviousness of the questions become clear as Agents near the Hayden Library. At least, they thought it was called the Hayden Library. The sign out front now declares it to be the Library of Discovery. Above the surrounding roads, Cambridge's high-speed elevated rail system shades the sidewalk as rail cars speed by in soundless haste. A life-sized marble statue of Wes Cool stands outside the front entrance, arms splayed in a Christ-like pose. It looks as if he's inviting the visitor to enter both left and right doors at the same time.

In addition to as many copies of *Meaning Without Master* as anyone could ever want, The Library of Discovery contains voluminous documentation on Cool's life. Collections of personal letters from colleagues and esteemed public intellectuals openly admit to being intimidated by the man's genius. A giant, framed diagram of the Picky Eater circuit hangs in the grand lobby above the mahogany circulation desk.

## <H2>Outside: Cool's Records

The Agents find it shockingly easy to get a search warrant for information on Dr. Wesley Cool or to search his home or workplace. The judge, trapped Outside, cannot think about Cool more than a moment and grants the warrant almost as if hurrying the Agents away like an unpleasant notion.

**VIDEO SURVEILLANCE:** With a warrant or Maulik's blessing, the Agents can review Cool's data at MIT Information Systems & Technology, next door to the MIT Police Department, across the street from the Hyatt Regency and from MIT Theater Arts. Computer login records and security video feeds quickly confirm that Cool has not come to work in three years. The last footage and record of him coming to work dates back to late 2016. Video shows him coming into the building and entering his office. The system logs him as having signed into university mail. That's it. The university profile eventually logged itself out automatically. There's no footage of him ever leaving. No one except the night janitor has been recorded entering his office ever since.

**EMAIL LOGS:** Agents reviewing his email history soon find patterns. His opinion is the only one that ever matters. The Agents could search years of communications and never read him admitting fault or apologizing. He responds to perceived challenges with sarcasm and superiority. It is never hard to annoy him, and he responds frequently with one-line dismissals or browbeating screeds. Most colleagues in his department disdain him. Those few friends he has at the university don't have to work with the bastard, and he still treats their regard for him as an excuse to dismiss them as sycophants and toadies. There are messages with Charles Bower, providing install instructions for Picky Eater alongside lies about the app's function as an image generator. There are also sexually charged letters between Cool and Vicki King, though the tone suggests the relationship was one-sided and emotionally abusive.

**EMPLOYMENT FILES:** Agents can review Cool's records at the MIT Human Resources Department, the fifth floor at 6000 Technology Square. It's a years-long track of complaints, all eventually withdrawn or at least unsubstantial enough to avoid legal trouble. Multiple affairs with grad students whose work was just far enough outside his sphere of academic authority to pass muster. Warnings on missed work. Allegations of threats of professional retribution. Bullying of students out of graduate programs. It paints a picture of irresponsibility, impulsivity, and a clear disregard for others. If informed about Cool's disappearance, no one is keen to believe the university forgot about the man for years, dumping paychecks into his account after erasing him from the course schedule. Proving this to be the case causes much psychological distress amongst the administrative employees and prompts their own internal investigation.

## <H2>Inside: Cool's Records

Historical accounts and acknowledgements in the back of *Meaning Without Master* list collaborators in Cool's ultimate discovery (see **OUTSIDE: COOL'S COLLABORATORS**). In Cool's mind, all were recognized for their cooperation with humanity's foremost genius and went on to positions of international acclaim. None are still located in this version of Cambridge, with the exception of Charles Bower (see **INSIDE: WHAT CHARLES BOWER CASE?**) and Vicki King (see **THE FALSE KING**).

Any Agent with at least 30% in **History** or who succeeds at a roll at +20% finds documentation of Cool's biography about as reputable as North Korean propaganda. The vague terms in which Picky Eater is lauded as humanity's greatest innovation never resolve into actual chronological or technical detail, instead taking on the mythic tone of a children's book about Edison or some other famed technologist. For being a supposedly profound and unique historical figure, almost nothing inside Cool's library entertains dissent or disagreement with his theories. Any records of pushback from the mathematical or philosophical communities exist only to set up painstakingly-recorded anecdotes about each detractor's eventual embarrassment and disgrace among the academic community.

Upon making an **INT**×5 roll, the Agent notices the lack of breadth amongst the stacks of a university library. Entire swathes of the Dewey Decimal System are missing despite having majors offered by the university. The Agent realizes that the 'Library of Discovery' contains only enough information to acclaim Cool's brilliance. It is an institution he felt he was owed rather than one with a purpose.

This de-realization quickly spirals out of the Agent's control. Shadowing anyone working at the university traces large, repetitive loops of nonsensical duties. The 'people' working these jobs never notice their work dematerialize and reset. The clocks in every room only advance when the User watches them directly, otherwise freezing in place. Time itself may have only restarted because visiting Users believe it to exist.

The alienation of being trapped within a fantasy on standby costs 1/1D4 **SAN** from unnatural.

## <H2>Outside: Cool's Collaborators

Cool's focus on theoretical and occult esoterica left him without the practical skills required to build Picky Eater. He never published anything about the project. The only contributors given credit are named inside his book, available only to those Inside the Rational World (see

**MEANING WITHOUT MASTER** on page xx). Though the assistants are long-forgotten in Cool's fantasy, three people responsible for the construction of Picky Eater are still accessible on the real MIT campus. None understand what was built, its purpose, or any reason to hide their involvement. Unless informed by Agents, they aren't even aware Cool is missing.

### <H3>Dr. Rajnish Amardeep, Electrical Engineering

Dr. Amardeep doesn't want to talk about Dr. Wes Cool. Success with **HUMINT** reads the source of his reluctance as self-serving. He holds no qualms about insulting the man so much as fear of repercussions. **Persuade** convinces Rajnish to admit knowing Cool, though he's quick to add that he has many acquaintances in the Mathematics and Theoretical Physics Department. All of them warned Amardeep what a conniving, vicious bastard Cool can be when he didn't get his way. He's heard rumors the man could cause TA's to drop out with a single cutting remark.

Cool reached out to Dr. Amardeep owing to his research focus in 3D printing. Amardeep holds numerous patents for manufacturing silicon microchips. His most recent models can mass produce 10-nanometer gate sizes. Cool wanted Amardeep to print him an integrated circuit for a personal project. Though loath to dedicate printer time to Cool's 'primitive' design, Amardeep admits he needed the man's support for a faculty senate vote on the expansion of adjunct positions. He uploaded the designs and ran a print for Cool, earned his support on the resolution, and never spoke to him again.

Amardeep has never heard the name Picky Eater. He regards the circuit he printed as a waste of material, though he admits the design was "pretty, in a useless sort of way." The chip is inefficient, redundant, and leeches too much power. Cool insisted on employing his own metallurgy to create filament for the conductive material, and it played holy hell clogging the tips on Amardeep's machine. Once the sheet was done, Amardeep ran current through circuits, saw they supported a charge, and passed them along. He has no idea what happened after that.

Amardeep has been a User since he tested the conductivity of the chips. But his exposure was minimal and his SAN is so high that's he's never gone Inside in three years working within the bubble.

### <H3>Dr. Michelle Jordan, Computer Science

Dr. Amardeep introduced Jordan to Dr. Cool while she was a computer science grad student. She's now a post-doc lecturer for the department. She assures the Agents that she saw Cool in the building "just the other day." She admits to helping Vicki King and some other grad students help him code Picky Eater awhile back. Whatever became of it?

If the Agents press Jordan to focus on Cool, she says he's notorious among female grad students and postdocs. He had a habit of romancing grads just barely within bounds of the university's ethics guidelines. Jordan admits she viewed such careful coordination of emotional entanglements as a red flag, but not everyone on the project agreed. He was self-possessed and confident, and Jordan recalls Vicki King fell for him hard. Michelle tried to warn the girl, but she needed Cool's name on her CV too much to ditch the project entirely. King made puppy-dog eyes at Cool and he responded. Then, like someone flipped a switch, Cool spent the last weeks of the Picky Eater project freezing her out or verbally demeaning her intelligence. King never came back next semester.

As for what she did for Picky Eater? She cobbled together a bunch of freeware language packs, key-loggers, and webcam viruses into a shoddy network for his ‘digital thought experiment.’ Jordan never understood what the app was supposed to do, but holding her questions seemed a prerequisite for earning her independent study credit. The result can’t have been anything functional, as Cool claimed he was running their software on some piece of hardware she never saw. Jordan and King’s programming was missing the most basic level of abstraction required for firmware, the binary determining which transistors turn on or off. It’s as if Cool expected the chip to handle that part on its own.

If the Agents convince Jordan that Cool has been missing for years, she seems nonplussed about her earlier claims. Then glad. “He’s a creep,” she says. “If you track him down, tell him to stay gone.”

### **<H3>Dr. Jacquelyn Chung, Philosophy**

Professor Jacquelyn Chung has known Cool the longest among faculty. They delivered papers at a few of the same conferences during graduate school, before he pursued his second doctorate in hard sciences. She’s convinced that he’s still around, still working. She openly dislikes him. She describes his personality in terms of subtle selfishness, even a quiet kind of grandiosity, combined with a readiness to cut corners and happily ignore rules and obligations. He’s dishonest. Manipulative. Impulsive. She claims she delivered such criticisms to his face, but the man never much seemed to care what others thought of his personality.

Chung says Cool experienced a tectonic shift in focus and work habits since earning tenure. He devoted more and more time to fringe theories and obsessed over Tegmark’s “mathematical universe.” His teaching became erratic as he became obsessed cross-curricular engineering projects. Despite these problems, his output of theoretical publications remained prolific and highly regarded. The Mathematics department never disciplined him, and she regards this as an embarrassment to the university.

Asked about her contributions to Picky Eater, Chung’s only response is ‘scorn.’ Uninvited, Cool would come across campus to bounce ideas off her for the development of his mysterious ‘app.’ She admits to enduring the tirades out of morbid curiosity. Cool’s philosophical ideas were erratic to the point of Deleuzian schizoanalysis. He veered wildly between libertarian transhumanism, pre-Socratic mysticism, evangelical nihilism, and a vague concept he kept referring to as “preemptive ontology.” Chung has no idea what Cool found useful in her steady bafflement and disagreement, but she found herself unable to look away from the trainwreck of his ideological worldview.

If the Agents convince Chung that, in fact, Cool stopped coming to work years ago, the philosopher is surprised, then relieved. She’s grateful the university finally has grounds to fire him. A few minutes after the interview, she forgets about Cool all over again.

## **<H2>Inside: Cool’s Collaborators**

The Simons Building houses MIT’s Mathematics Department. The building wraps like a horseshoe around the green grass of Wesley Court. To anyone that visited the location prior to becoming a User, the building seems too tall. All the street names are wrong.

There are no other instructors in the Department of Mathematics and Theoretical Physics. The study of “Pre-revelatory Physics” has been regulated to the History Department. The building



now exclusively houses the classrooms the only worthy teacher. Students inside listen to recordings of Cool reading *Meaning Without Master*. They hold class discussions in fruitless attempts to grasp the scope of his genius.

Every machine—in every room and every pocket—has carried a copy of Picky Eater since its manufacture. The app is integrated into education, commerce, and defense software all over this world. People use it for everything. The only reason reality hasn't come flying apart is Cool's inability to imagine other people as real, in this or any reality. His world is populated by figments, half-personalities grasping after his absent greatness, unable to summon the sentence it would take for Picky Eater to reflect their own delusions.

## <H2>Outside: Cool's Forgotten Office

Cool's small office is still set up, undisturbed and unused for years. It's still assigned to him, forgotten on the campus facilities reports and class schedules. No one has been inside since 2016 save the janitor, and even he can't differentiate the room from the dozens of other liminal spaces he cleans every night.

The monitor, keyboard, and mouse all sit on the desk. The computer tower is still on the floor besides the wastebasket. Nothing can be powered on. If they investigate the interior, the plastic casing of the tower is empty. The power cords and wires dead-end inside a plastic case without internal components.

Cool's scribbled notes are scattered everywhere across his desk and bookshelves. Journal pages, strange photocopies, printouts of problems that he found easier to solve by hand. The same information can be found at his other office, in the Inside world.

### <H3>Observer Effects

Years of documents and half-finished equations seek to tie together elements from quantum mechanics, exotic radiation, dark matter, and multiverse theory. To any Agent with **Science (Physics)** or an equivalent skill at 30% or higher, Cool appears to have succumb to the delusion of quantum shamanism: the belief that the observer effect is evidence of any interaction between consciousness and physics. That's undergrad-level nonsense mistaking the mechanical influence of measurement tools on a system for some psychic interference by a thinking observer. On a successful roll for **Science (Physics)** or an equivalent skill, the Agent realizes that the equations are *prescriptive* rather than descriptive. Cool was determined to channel raw consciousness through a mechanical instrument, seeking to rebuild reality from its foundations.

### <H3>Deus Ex Mathematica

A huge amount of Cool's mad notes deal with attempts to understand physical reality as an expression of mathematics, consciousness as the core variable within that code, and mathematical interactions between consciousness and reality. He posits a theory of psychic and physical dimensions conterminous in a singular, fluid multiverse, then theorizes meta-models that might 'translate' data across the divide. He seeks mathematical links between behavioral sets to define predictable 'you-systems' of consciousness existing across infinite sets. He theorizes the capabilities of linking those systems and acknowledges the likely heightened influence of certain consciousnesses with extraordinary perceptive power. Ultimately, Cool convinces himself of a consciousness-archetype that stands above all: a God

algorithm, retroactively determining every event across any time by its ability to calculate with total accuracy.

### <H3>The Book of Thoth

Cool seems to have a singular obsession with Greco-Egyptian magical practices. He takes a particular interest in divination. His office is littered with texts dealing with the ancient *Book of Thoth*, said to contain the secrets of prophecy and of perceiving the gods, supposedly written by Thoth himself, Egyptian god of writing and knowledge. The true *Book of Thoth* supposedly contained secret spells to speak to beasts and to perceive the gods.

Like the ancient Greeks, Cool equated Thoth with Hermes, herald of the gods and mediator between world and Otherworld, god of divination and initiation. Hermes in turn seemingly emerged from the great god Pan: god of pastures and forests, of watchful shepherds, of roads and meetings, of fertility, of the holy plays that became all we know of comedy and tragedy. Pan from the similar Vedic god Pushan—from Sanskrit *pusyati*, “to cause to thrive”—and both from a putative shepherd-god of the prehistoric Ukrainian steppes.

Cool links Thoth-Hermes as revealer and psychopomp to early conceptions of Set, god of the underworld, chief god of upper Egypt for thousands of years. He pieces together ancient sorceries to invoke and constrain the gods of the underworld and sacred mysteries. Sanskrit *yuj* or *yog*, “yoke, harness, control,” as in the discipline of yoga; Set, the underworld; Thoth, divine knowledge: “to control knowledge of the underworld,” *yog-Set-Thoth*, *Yog-Sothoth*. Imperative becomes prayer, prayer becomes deity, deity grants comprehension of the force beneath the godhead itself. A key to the gate, whereby the spheres meet.

### <H3>The Abyss and the Guide

By Cool’s accounting, the Upanashads long ago recognized that the gods are but functions of the human mind. The mind assumes a form; the universe takes shape around it. But between human experience and the divine infinite lay a gulf beyond comprehension, a primeval Abyss, the source of every monster in ancient myth. All there is united and undifferentiated, the ultimate negation of light and understanding, unthinking and unknowing: the nothingness from which every reality flickers into being. The initiate must glimpse the Abyss without annihilation, must open a way into a metaphorical Chamber of Darkness in which the mindless hisses and howls of the Abyss become prophecy: the Book of Thoth’s spell to communicate with animals is a parlor trick compared to the potent revelation fueling it. But to face the Abyss, the enlightened mind must awaken to unknowable realities with the aid of a guide beyond the mind itself.

The *Necronomicon* describes a Guide that even its mad author found dreadful. Abd al-Hazred claimed the Guide had been an entity of Earth long before the first mammals stirred, when forgotten shapes moved and thought and built. “*He Who guardeth the Gateway*,” Al-Hazred called it: “*He Who will guide the rash one beyond all worlds into the Abyss of unnamable Devourers*.” An immortal guide to timeless truths, the Prolonged of Life, Tawil al’Umr stands ready to grant passage to the Final Secret. But only if the petitioner has learned and understood enough to withstand the revelation. In meditations and directed dreaming, Cool sought that Guide.

### <H3>The App's Design

Cool discovered that all of reality exists as the dreams of Yog-Sothoth made flesh. But this dream has no ego to drive it. Existence is the runaway dream of an alien mind devoid of thought and desire. The doctor regarded this lack of agency as a security flaw and sought to hack the system.

Cool cobbled together ancient spells from hypergeometric texts and constructed a technological mediator to frame them in a User's consciousness. Using Picky Eater reverses the flow between action and thought. Inside a bubble, *humanity* dreams Yog-Sothoth into being, reshaping existence in the process. At least in his private notes, Wes admits his invention needs testing. Marginalia, reading "That dumbass Bower?" and "Vicki!" with three underlines, leave no question as to who he picked.

### <H3>The Threshold

Cool's ultimate goal was never the construction of pocket realities, not even his own. His writing is obsessed with the idea of accessing the system *between* systems. Between worlds. A bedrock reality from which all possible truths spring. For this, he seeks the Guide: Tawil al'Umr.

Cool's notes on the *Necronomicon* describe a kind of obeisance that a visitor must perform to show the proper deference to the Guide found at that threshold. Warnings of "*Important! Nonexistence at issue!*" head a list of gestures that Cool remarks as having similarities to the so-called Elder Sign. An Agent who deliberately practices this ritual greeting can memorize it. The steps are not elaborate: a crouching glance downward, arms raised and bent in a certain pattern.

How Cool intends to find this guide is far more cryptic, but the notes suggest a three-step process.

1. Stabilize the field
2. Invent a predecessor and close a second circuit
3. Pursue the dream inside the dream.

Ask Agents to roll 0/1D4 **SAN** from the unnatural. They realize Cool's bubble doesn't exist as wish-fulfillment. He imagined another universe into being only so he could reconstruct Picky Eater inside it, plunging deeper towards raw creation. Putting an end to Picky Eater means finding the locus of that connection.

## <H2>Inside: Offices of the Revealer

Cool's office is on the second floor of Building 2. The windowless room and its humble fixtures are maintained now as a historical site. Cool's administrative assistant sits inside at all hours of the day, prepared to manage requests from his many admirers. She stares at the blank walls with a smile on her face. The only sounds are the constant clack of typewriter keys in never-ending transcription. When Agents open the door, she beams at them as if her heart only started beating the very moment before. If Agents had previous interactions with Vicki King, seeing this version nauseates them. Each loses **0/1 SAN** from helplessness.

### <H3>The False King

She looks maybe eighteen, younger than she would have been during Vicki King's affair with Cool. She sits at attention, her posture and smile caught in a sort of rictus. When Agents enter the 'office,' she greets them with all the chipperness of a cartoon character. "Hi! Welcome to the Office of Pre-Revelatory Mathematics and Theoretical Physics! I'm Vicki, one of Dr. Cool's students. How may this Office of the Revealer serve you today?"

The False King serves Cool in some secretarial capacity. A thick ledger, appointment book, and honest-to-God typewriter sit plainly visible on the desk.

If Agents think they can find Cool here, the False King lets out the first of many unnerving giggles. She thanks the Agents for flattering the department with the notion that the Revealer would still work there. She maintains this room as a historical site and public relations office. Cool works in the new High Building at the center of campus. Of course, sometimes requests for his consultation around the globe pull him away, but the High Building is where he does his real research. She is sure the Agents can find him there.

Asked about Cool himself, she can do nothing but heap praise. Dr. Cool showed humanity the world—the universe—the sweep of infinite worlds, infinite realities. He revealed the infinite connections that every person has with versions of themselves. He revealed the immortality that comes with that awareness, with being able to extend consciousness beyond physical form. Who is more rightly revered than one who knows the ultimate Truth and shares it with others? He is the Revealer of the Way. Even when he deceives, the deception constructs a deeper truth.

If Agents ask about a relationship with Dr. Cool, the False King denies any affair, followed by a coquettish, "Ladies never tell, and gentlemen...you know." Asked about Eryn and Shelia, the False King doesn't know them. Told the twins are her own children, the thing laughs. "Oh, I've never wanted any. It is enough to server the Revealer. Besides, kids make you fat."

### <H3>Cool's Appointment Book

The thing in Vicki King's skin is happy to add an appointment with Dr. Cool, but it warns there's no promise the Revealer keeps the date. Cool has been extremely busy with his Zann Aetherophone project lately. The False King doesn't know what those words mean, but it trusts the Revealer to know their importance. He's been working on the project in the High Building nonstop.

Agents that come up with a plausible excuse can roll **Persuade** at +20% to look through the False King's records. On a success, the thing allows Agents to check her documents, no matter how flimsy the explanation. On a failure, it attacks. (See **ANGERING THE FALSE KING** on page XX.)

The documents on the desk show that Cool hasn't had an appointment since 1 JAN 2017. The calendar doesn't even have dates printed after that. The boxes go blank with no numerals or month names. What little text exists in the back pages uses nonsense glyphs as letters and numerals, like they're approximating language in a low-pixel videogame. Before the calendar ceased counting days, previous appointments were nonsense fantasy: Trips to the UN, invitations to New York fashion week, flights to receive Nobel prices, etc.

The most intact text comes from what the False King was busy transcribing before Agents entered: a thick, leatherbound journal. Its pages are stuffed with Cool's meticulous cursive script.

*"With her mean intellect and pedestrian values, she was never a person in the first place. My theories are unnecessary to know this. Her vacancy is her appeal, and her hollowness is the part deserving of love. Vicki was empty before we met and stayed empty after, driven by instinct toward my greatness like a moth to flame. Vicki doesn't even need food. She doesn't need water or sleep. I know these things to have always been true. Her heart doesn't beat until I come around. I can see and feel and know this truth. Vicki is tireless in her service to me, and I am the gravity to her being. Insofar as she knows anything, Vicki knows this to be true."*

The journal goes on and on. Stacks of copies in the outbox and crammed in the drawers indicate the False King has been retyping these words for...months? Years? Agents can roll **Occult**, **Unnatural**, or **Psychotherapy** skimming the transcript or journal.

- **OCCULT:** The False King is a tulpa. A mind-construct made flesh. Using the same direct dreaming and meditative trance states that taught him to reverse the flow of creation, Cool created an automaton of his former lover through sheer will. What's unclear is whether the thing has a purpose, or if Cool just wanted to see if he could.
- **UNNATURAL:** No human mind is capable of containing a universe. Cool entered the bubble fully aware of inevitable gaps in his worldview and the effects those absences would have on Picky Eater. Yet, the False King is less complete and more contradictory than any other figment, despite having an intimate relationship to the User. That makes the thing in the office an experiment. Cool was seeing how far he could hollow out the memory of his former lover before the All-in-One ceased manifesting her existence. He failed to find the limit.
- **PSYCHOTHERAPY:** Wesley Cool is a high-functioning sociopath. He's always been devoid of empathy, but now he's constructed a world where he doesn't have to hide it. Through this victory, he's destroyed his only means of identity formation. There are no more games to play, taboos to break, or enemies to humiliate. The False King is the creation of a compulsive desperately seeking new boundaries to violate. He got bored, and that means he's going deeper.

## <S1>Angering the False King

The thing that looks like Vicki King isn't very smart. Dr. Cool, living a misogynist's dream, lobotomized the memory of the woman in his mind. The False King naively helps Agents plot its creator's murder so long as they stay under the guise of 'business as usual.' The second that changes, so does it.

Cool learned many skills from the *Necronomicon*, including the habit of hiding traps within one's scholarship to destroy any who follow. Cool considered the entirety of the Rational World to be his 'publication' and the False King one of its most interesting discoveries. He wanted it protected, even after he moved on. The latter half of Cool's journal—the one he's had the False King typing for years without food, sleep, or water—talks about how *protective* Vicki King is towards Dr. Cool. How she would and *could* do anything for him. Impossible, inhuman things.

If Agents are fool enough to reveal that they wish Dr. Cool harm, the False King transforms and attacks.

### <H3>The High Building

The High Building is new to any Agent familiar with MIT campus: an immense white tower that glitters with glass windows. Nestled between layers of gardens at the center of campus, there's no street access to the building. As the Agents walk, they pass statues of Wes Cool along the approaching promenade. Entire families pause at their favorites to gaze with wistful admiration or take photos.

Security of the building seems draconian for an academic institution, but a successful roll of **Criminology** or **Military Science (Land)** sees through the façade. The eyes of the guards barely even track the students passing by, and the students themselves move as if extras in a film. No one takes any actions to impede Agents headed towards the office on the top floor. They don't even greet or acknowledge them. Cool had no reason to expect visitors, not to mention attackers. He's not there to imagine a response, so the door isn't even locked.

Inside, Agents find the most nicely furnished office and library they've ever seen. The bookshelves along the walls creep up three stories, latticed with beautiful wood balconies for perusal. On a grand table in the center of the room rests a coffin-sized contraption made of gold gears, copper wiring, and giant crystals. It's connected to the wall by an industrial outlet that emits an electric hum.

### <H3>The Zann Aetherophone

The device on the center of the table is the Zann Aetherophone. It doesn't exist Outside. Inside Agents can find its history in notes splayed around the High Building office, or they can look it up when they learn of its existence from the False King, described on page xx.

Invented by mute German violinist Erich Zann, the Zann Aetherophone was this world's second electronic musical instrument. Inspired by Leo Theramin and various occult texts, Zann began work on its creation in Stuttgart during the 1920s. He bankrupted his small family to fund its construction, then promptly abandoned his wife and daughter and the device. He was found dead in a Paris flophouse in 1925. The instrument was put into storage as a curiosity. Historical documents printed after 2016 note that Zann was predecessor to Dr. Wesley Cool, Zann having been first to develop a circuit similar to the one that powers Picky Eater. Had Zann lived to see the invention of computer, he may have been the Revealer.

Agents may roll **History** at -10% or any **Art** skill. On a success, they are quite certain that no such inventor or musician ever existed. If he did, he certainly never entered the historical record. On a failure, they feel they've heard of Zann but can't shake the certainty that he lived not in the 1920s but the 1820s, far before any synthesizer technology. In either case, Cool seems to have checked the Aetherophone out of the university archives after imagining its existence.

Modifications to the device drip off the table on all sides. Contemporary electrical leads trail between the prism and the cobbled-together connection to the outlet. Hookups for a laptop—power cord, wireless mouse, lectern—look freshly placed nearby, but they surround a blank space where no computer sits.

Calipers mounted to a gyroscope clutch a large prism located at the center of the device. The interior of the quartz is impossibly inlaid with gold wiring. Agents that have seen the Picky Eater circuit recognize the shape, now drawn in three-dimensions throughout the glass and visible to the naked eye. A metal handcrank extends from one end of the instrument, the book containing Zann's own operating manual splayed open beneath it. Notes handwritten by Zann say that to play the Aetherophone, one need only stare at the crystal, turn the crank, and "think on the Spheres."

The bronze and iron contraception would require a Halligan bar and angle grinder to dismantle. Bullets just ricochet off it. Unplugging the power cord achieves nothing; the thing continues to hum with impossible current, somehow powered internally.

On an **INT×5** test, Agents realize that Cool created a new version of Picky Eater. He wanted a fresh install that wasn't already slaved to his mind. Something that could make a bubble *within* bubbles. The power sustaining the hellish world Agents find themselves in is no longer present within it. To shut off the source of infection, they have to go deeper.

Agents that 'play' the Zann Aetherophone hear the beginnings of the indescribable music of infinity, the voice of Yog-Sothoth itself, and find themselves on the shores of the All-In-One.

## <S1>God's Eye and God's Teeth

Agents who have investigated the scenario *Delta Green: God's Eye* might find a number of connections between that operation and Dr. Cool.

If asked about them, Michelle Jordan says Norah Brigid and Kim Boyer, two brilliant mathematics students, worked briefly on Picky Eater before they were hired away by "some start-up" years ago.

Anthony Cooper corresponded with Cool after Cooper learned that's where Clyde Mauch recruited Brigid and Boyer. Cool helped Cooper determine the nature of the Watcher On High that the old sorcerers invoked, and that the act of perception in his ritual need not be *the* Watcher on High but any kind of perception and pattern recognition.

Cooper exposed Cool to the wondrous possibilities of the endless multiverse. Cool's thought went in the opposite directions from Cooper's, into implications of infinity. He studied the Book of Thoth and fragments of the Pnakotic manuscripts and the Necronomicon. He wanted control. He wanted to experience other realities of his choosing, not join forever with some strange Watcher On High.

## <H1>The All-In-One

As the music of the Abyss fades from the mind, vision returns. Light of no assignable colour filters down from a sky, leaking into the eye from baffling, contradictory directions. The glow plays on stone and mist as if intelligent, as if alive.

Fog stirs a ground of unidentifiable stone shoals and impossibly large, shallow pools. Great masses of towering rock are disposed according to the laws of some unknown, inverse geometry. Their faces are carved in alien and incomprehensible designs.

Dr. Wes Cool sits before another Zann Aetherophone, or perhaps the same one. There's no more office or table. He stares dumbly at his hand on the crank, and it's clear he stopped playing in unison with the song that brought the Agents. Now finished, he looks confused, blinking slowly as if in a fugue or waking coma. On the other side of the golden contraption lay a tangle of gutted computer components. Uncountable motherboards and processors have fused with tidal rock. Wires weave over the surface like moss. They sink through cracks in the stone and run beneath the waterline, burying themselves into the black sands of the shallow salt sea. The Agents somehow know they feed madness into every universe unlucky enough to discover Cool's invention.

The chips and components are arranged in a pattern across the tide-smoothed plateau. An Agent who has **Unnatural** at 20% or more feels profound vertigo in every glimpse of those sigils, the dizziness of standing unsupported at a precipice. An Agent who succeeds at an **Unnatural** roll recognizes them as the designs of the Old Ones that ruled the Earth billions of years before humanity arose. How many other Earths did the Old Ones rule?

If the Agents attempt to damage the Aethrophone or any of the computing equipment, Cool comes to life. He springs up shrieking in fury. "No! He'll come back! Leave it on! I need him! Tawil al'Umr! The Ancient One! The Watcher On High! He'll come back!" Cool fights murderously to protect his work.

## <H2>Stopping Cool

Killing the doctor does nothing to return Agents to reality. They cannot attempt **POWx5** checks to jump back. They are trapped beneath now.

If the Agents address Cool peacefully (with or without using his name), he becomes more lucid. "My followers have found a way to join me! You heard and understood! Only by crossing the Veil does the mind gain substance. You have made yourselves *real!*" He begs them not to damage "his experiment." He insists he'll have the results soon. If Cool thinks it might prevent or delay Agent interference, he explains his aims. See the **INTRODUCTION** on page XX for details. He explains that he awaits the Guide known as Tawil al'Umr, the Prolonged of Life, the Ancient One, the Watcher on High.

Asked about the twins, Cool thinks he saw them briefly, but can't recall if it was a dream. He thought they were a creation of Tawil al'Umr, sent to test his mind and patience. Cool does not know Eryn and Shelia were transported here looking for their absent father. If informed, he does not care.

## <H2>Stopping Picky Eater

An Agent can destroy any tangle of computer components splayed across the rock with successful attack roll. Don't force an attack roll unless there is resistance. An attack roll on a computer cannot count as a "fighting back" when Cool mounts a violent defense of the machine. Each node runs a different instance of Picky Eater, its sister hardware omnipresent across multiple dimensions at once.

After Agents have destroyed three computers, they learn that the tumorous fusions of stone and electronics are endless. The plastic and silicon reforms once out of the Agent's sight. Transistors and components of different makes and models bloom from piles of broken



components, just at the edge of vision. While it may be possible to destroy the chip linking Outside reality and erase Cool's work forever, it is too late to contain Picky Eater across the multiverse. It will continue tearing through possible universes, like shrapnel through the Veil.

An Agent can spend 1D4 WP to continually smash the machines on the rock. Spending the WP buys one attempt at a **Luck** roll to leave this place, hoping to crush the right circuit. On a success, the correct chip is destroyed and all Agents exit the All-in-One, reappearing in the Outside behind the dumpsters of a university alley. If they're unlucky, the Agent smashes the machines on the stone for what feels like hours. Each blow pops another bubble, destroying an entire universe in the process.

If they can't find and destroy Cool's instance of Picky Eater, Agents must beseech Tawil Al'Umr to escape.

## <H2>The Guide

If the Agents talk with Cool without fighting, or if they killed him and became trapped, another figure appears atop one of the stone towers, standing on a gigantic hieroglyphed pedestal more hexagonal than otherwise. The figure takes shape slowly: a dim mist gathering at the peak, thickening into a sourceless shadow that darkens and softens rhythmically, an indistinct shape resolving into a dim figure in robes. The legs beneath flowing garment stir to life and pick their way down the rockface, as graceful as a mountain goat or spider. It descends and sails towards the Agents, like a ship on the becalmed puddle that stretches towards every horizon.

The figure moves with head bowed. The five thick points rising from its ceremonial headdress of seem to cleave air around them, leaving streaks of unnamable color behind its passage. There's a shady hole where head would meet hood, and it might obscure a face. Otherwise, further anatomy is impossible to guess. The ill-defined shape implied beneath the folds of beige cloth leaves little certain. An Agent who succeeds at an **Alertness, HUMINT, or Medicine** roll becomes convinced that the figure is not remotely human. Folds of the cloth move around some thick tubular shape. A sudden shift in fabric suggests three arms moving at once.

An Agent who succeeds at **Anthropology** or **Occult** finds the mitre strangely suggestive of a prehistoric relief said to have been carved in the Pamir Mountains. Russian antiquarians sketched it in the 19th century before an earthquake brought it down in 1883.

An Agent who succeeds at an **Unnatural** roll—at a +20% bonus for having studied tomes related to Cool's work—suspects this to be the Guide, Tawil Al'Umr. The gatekeeper of the Old Ones warned about in the *Necronomicon* and the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*. It is the gate and the key and the traveler.

The Agents cannot harm Tawil Al'Umr. Even if they bring overwhelming weapons to bear upon it, causality breaks down and the weapons vanish, having never existed. Any Agent rude enough to assault the Guide must make a **POW×5** roll or vanish as well. Surviving Agents don't have to roll **SAN** if they see this. They no longer remember the erased Agent having ever existed in the first place.

If he's still alive, Cool erupts into a mad smile at the appearance of Tawil Al'Umr, full of confidence and the joy of every aspiration fulfilled. He runs to whisper a Question to the hunched 'ear' of the impossibly tall thing. The mists in the sky swirl and part. A shaft of brilliant, shifting light falls upon the man, and he is gone.

Witnessing Cool's disintegration requires a **Sanity** roll. Success costs 1 **SAN** as the Agent sees the man vanish in a blink. Failure costs 1D4+1 **SAN**: The Agent is reminded of turning on a flashlight in a deep shadow. The shadow doesn't vanish or decay; the light is instantaneous. Obliterative. There was never a shadow at all.

## <H2>The Choice

The Shape intones in a voice that is not a voice, in words that have no form in the air and mist, that take shape in the mind.

*"Flickering entities. Have you come to glimpse, for a dying instant, the timeless scope of creation?"*

(In a *God's Teeth* campaign, the Shape's greeting is different for the Teeth: *"Hunters and prey. Servants and nourishment. Slaves to a One that found the hunger of eternity. Have you come to glimpse, for a dying instant, the timeless scope of creation?"*)

Each Agent interacts with the Shape alone. The others seem to have teleported away, mirrored across space impossibly. Their backs are turned as each speaks to their own version of the Guide, who has copied itself to address all supplicants. Each Agent is alone in determining their fate.

**If an Agent thinks to ask whether this Shape is the dreaded Tawil al'Umr**, the Shape gives the clearest answer it can: *"You ask of the Prolonged of Life, the Ancient One, the Watcher on High. I am He much as a spark is the Sun that spawns all that burns."*

**If the Agent performs the formal bows and obeisance that Cool's notes suggest**, the Shape asks another question: *"Do you come then as a creature of Truth?"*

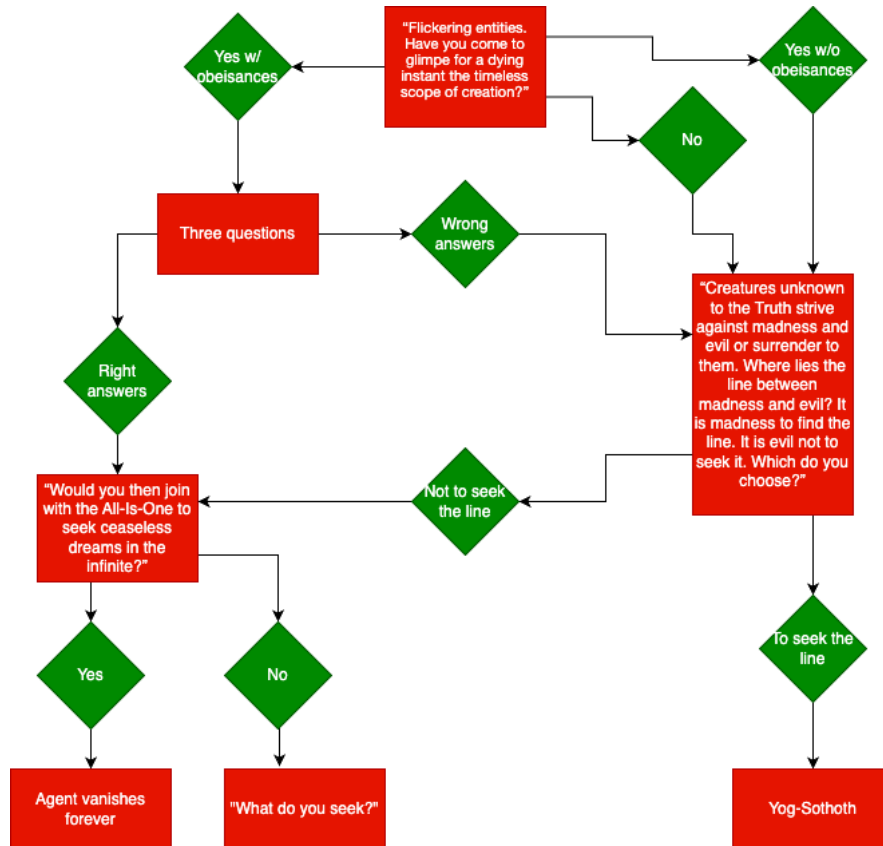
If the Agent says yes, the Shape poses a test and expects certain responses. Agents may have learned the answers from Cool's research on the Threshold (page xx), or they may have intuited an approximation of the truth from their own nightmarish experiences.

- *"What are good and evil?"* (Phantoms: a fantasy; a delusion; unreal; untrue.)
- *"What is reality?"* (An illusion: a false pattern dreamed by fleeting minds; a simulation without purpose; chaos imagined into order.)
- *"What is substance?"* (An impostor: a trick of perception that comforts the mortal mins; a consolation to the impermanent.)

If the Agent's answers to the questions are essentially correct, Tawil Al'Umr deems them **A CREATURE OF TRUTH** (see page xx).

If the Agent fails to make the proper obeisance, answers “no” to coming as a creature of Truth, or answers any of the three questions incorrectly, see **A CREATURE UNKNOWN TO TRUTH** on page XX.

xxx DESIGN NOTE xxx



*Make this flowchart interesting.*

xxx END NOTE xxx

### <H3>A Creature of Truth

The Shape asks the Agent: *“Would you rejoin the All-Is-One to seek ceaseless dreams in the infinite?”*

(In a God’s Teeth campaign, the Shape’s question to one of the Teeth is different: *“Seek you then the freedom of a hunt never ending?”*)

If the Agent answers yes, the Agent vanishes, merged with some insignificant part of the essence of Yog-Sothoth. Gone forever.

If the Agent answers no, the Shape asks: *“What do you seek?”* The answer is important.

- **TO DESTROY PICKY EATER:** The server crumbles to dust and the Agent returns to their reality.
- **TO GO HOME:** It's done. No surprises or twists. The Agent appears where they expect.
- **TO GO TO SOME OTHER TIME OR REALITY:** The player must attempt an **Unnatural** roll as the Shape plumbs the Agent's mind to shape such venture. If it succeeds, the Shape aligns the planes and angles of the Agent's thought with the planes and angles of the reality they seek. Quite suddenly, the Agent is gone from the campaign forever. On a failure, the Agent is sent home.
- **TO TRAVEL BETWEEN UNIVERSES AT WILL:** The Shape actually sighs at this response. "Such did the other demand, in his arrogance, and came to enjoy what he could of that gift." The Shape vanishes. The Agent is stuck here like Cool was.
- **KNOWLEDGE OR A PARTICULAR ANSWER:** The Shape grants it. The Agent loses 1/1D10 **SAN**. The more SAN lost, the more of the knowledge the Agent comprehends and retains after insanity fades. After receiving the answer, they return to reality.
- **SOMETHING ELSE:** The Shape's purpose is to dispose of visitors ill-suited to the All-Is-One. Mundane or quotidian desires of the flesh are a disqualifier. It places the Agent in their own world, at a place or time where that thing can be found.

xxx TEXT BOX xxx

## <S1>A World of Fangs

In a *God's Teeth* campaign—if one of the Teeth is recognized as a Creature of Truth and chooses to pursue the hunt never ending—the Guide crafts a heaven for the beast riding the Agent. Human desires and perceptions are irrelevant in negotiations between gods.

The Agent awakens choking on the reek of meat, as if the ground itself were a grill sizzling all who cross it. The campus of MIT appears initially unchanged, but news stories playing on flatscreens in the building lobbies and student union are bizarre and otherworldly. Big networks excitedly report on the latest research into the entropic predator that lurks unseen within the models of theoretical physics. "Experts" have named the force Bast, after the protective goddess of ancient Egypt. A yellow chyron reminds viewers that Bast acts upon causality through a so-called "Bast particle" in order to feed upon certain patterns of energy.

A screen within a screen shows split-second footage of some blurred ocean island with the title "Point Nemo Awakenings." A tracker counts global suicides in the millions next to daily weather weather.

A baby cries somewhere. Under a faintly luminous mauve sky a billboard proclaims, "The First to Bast, the Rest to You." A black collection truck is painted with icons, thin bald sexless people in black suits, sporting clawlike fingernails and smiling around sharp teeth: "Our Protectors."

Boston proper is now hollowed out by a new lake. From its center rises a ziggurat where the firstborn are forged into new Teeth, isolated so few need hear their screams.

A passing woman, visibly pregnant, shudders at the sight. “I only hope it’ll be one of the Called,” she says quietly, a hand on her belly. “Not just bait.”

The Tooth, never more fulfilled or sated, gains 1 SAN. They never return home.

xxx END BOX xxx

### <H3>A Creature Unknown to Truth

*“Creatures unknown to the Truth must strive betwixt madness and evil lest they be ruled by twin tyrants. But where lies the border between madness and evil? It is madness to cross the threshold. It is evil not to seek the threshold. Which do you choose?”*

Each player must decide privately and inform the Handler privately.

When the Agents have chosen in secrecy, the Shape produces from certain folds of its swathing a long sceptre whose head is carved in the shape of a grotesque and archaic mystery. It’s a fractal shape beyond human description, from which a scribbled Elder Sign is but two of its infinite dimensions.

If an Agent turns away from the threshold between madness and evil: *“Perhaps this is a creature of Truth, after all.”* See **A CREATURE OF TRUTH** on page XX.

If an Agent chooses to seek the threshold between madness and evil, the Guide awakens the Agent to its own ultimate, animating essence. Tawil al’Umr is older than the robed body that it occupies now, older than Earth, older than reality itself. It reveals the supreme archetype of which this Shape is but one instantiation—a fractal eruption of awareness and power in every reality—the Gate to every world and the Key to every gate. The revelation costs 1D10/1D100 **SAN**. An Agent reduced to zero SAN vanishes forever, scattered across the infinity that is Yog-Sothoth. Survivors awake Outside and can recall the traumatic revelation only in dream.

# <H1>Aftermath

Shattering a bubble caused by Picky Eater grants each Agent involved 1 **SAN**.

Shutting down Picky Eater from within the All-Is-One grants each Agent 1D6 **SAN**. The app deletes itself from every Outside device. Every piece of hardware players interacted with suffers burnout and decay, never working again. The same goes for any people or items dragged across bubbles. Any circuits undiscovered by Agents outright disappear, as if never installed in the first place.

Even in victory, Agents must wonder whether this world—with all its horror—isn’t just someone else’s psychic prison. Do they exist? Does the enemy? Their bonds? Is everyone just a figment, playacting roles in a production of someone else’s madness?

Or is reality derived from the Agent? Assembled around them like steel bars? Does Delta Green fight to preserve a nightmare? Is the Agent responsible for every evil in the world? Is the whole universe an abattoir, slaughtered to feed one ego?

# <H1>Characters

## <H2>Wes Cool

See the **INTRODUCTION** on page XX for Cool's background.

### <H3>Wesley Cool, Ph.D.

*Mathematician who would be God, age 45.*

**STR** 9      **CON** 8      **DEX** 9      **INT** 17      **POW** 14      **CHA** 15  
**HP** 9      **WP** 14      **SAN** 0

**SKILLS:** Computer Science 85%, Foreign Languages (Arabic 40%, Greek 40%, Hebrew 43%, Sanskrit 44%), History 51%, Occult 72%, Science (Mathematics) 81%, Science (Physics) 79%, Unnatural 30%.

**ATTACKS:** *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4–1.

**RITUALS:** None that matter now.

## <H2>Vicki King

See the **FINDING VICKI KING** on page XX for King's background.

### <H3>Vicki King

*Mad mother of mad children, age 34.*

**STR** 12      **CON** 13      **DEX** 11      **INT** 15      **POW** 12      **CHA** 11  
**HP** 13      **WP** 12      **SAN** 0

**SKILLS:** Computer Science 70%, Melee Weapons 50%, Science (Mathematics) 61%, Science (Physics) 59%, Unarmed Combat 50%.

**ATTACKS:** *Lamp* 50%, damage 1D6.

*Unarmed* 50%, damage 1D4–1.

## <H2>Gen. Robert Wallace

Robert Wallace spent decades fighting the Obama World Order while missing for only a month. If he returns home, he's older than his father and deeply broken.

### <H3>Gen. Robert Wallace

*Leader of the White Evangelical Resistance, age 39.*

**STR** 13      **CON** 10      **DEX** 9      **INT** 9      **POW** 11      **CHA** 8  
**HP** 12      **WP** 11      **SAN** 0

**SKILLS:** Alertness 45%, Driving 50%, Firearms 49%, Heavy Weapons 50%, Melee Weapons 51%, Military Science (Land) 40%, Navigation 38%, Search 40%, Stealth 52%, Unarmed Combat 50%

**ATTACKS:** *Freedom Rifle™ by Unreplaced Defenses, LLC, 49%, damage 1D12 or Lethality 10%, Armor Piercing 3.*

*Homeland Defense Dagger™ by White Knives Matter, Inc., 51%, damage 1D6+1, Armor Piercing 3.*

*Unarmed 50%, damage 1D4.*

## <H2>ANTIFA Super Soldiers

Wearing balaclavas, red armbands, and polymer body armor from head to toe, the imagined opposition to Wallace's revolution roll out in four-man 'death panels' to execute the will of the Obama caliphate. They don't have names. Agents that unmask one find a blank, featureless mask of skin across the skull. It snaps into features the second Wallace looks at them, the orb of flesh decaying into a nose, eyes, and lips in a flash. If asked, Wallace muses that they look kind of like his old bullies from junior high.

The ANTIFA Super Soldiers behave more like enemies in a videogame than federal authorities. While the death squads are well-equipped with the resources of a unified world government, their training is incompetent. They never take cover, aim carefully, or retreat to call back-up. They prefer to charge ahead in cavalry lines, firing wildly. They only exist to valorize General Wallace's struggle and wither under his brilliant tactical mind. The problem, of course, is other Users augmenting Wallace's perceptions. A more realistic understanding of armed conflict held by Agents alters the perceptions that 'write' the super soldiers into existence, making them much more dangerous.

### <H3>ANTIFA Super Soldier

*Delusions of oppression assembled into a fire team*

**STR** 18      **CON** 10      **DEX** 10      **INT** 8      **POW** 8      **CHA** 8  
**HP** 14      **WP** 8      **SAN** 0

**ARMOR:** *NWC Powered Exoskeleton and Ballistic Defense System for 5 Armor.* It boosts the strength of wearer to 18 for the extent of its four-hour battery life. Without it, an ANTIFA Super Soldier has STR 8.

**ATTACKS:** *M-1 Oppressor 5.56™ by Builderberg Arms 20%, damage 1D12 or Lethality 10%, Armor Piercing 3.*

*Political Corrector™ Taser Baton* 30%, damage 1D4 and Stun.

*Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4+2.

## <H2>Reapers

Vicki King fears losing her children. Every possible locus for this paranoia—government agencies, international cabals, sexual predators, supernatural cults—grew inside the feedback loop of Picky Eater. The sources of anxiety grew so large that they overflowed the container of her mind, mixing into a monolithic group known as the Reapers. Yog-Sothoth has written these monsters into existence and set them to work in King’s world.

The fears animating Vicki King’s universe gives Reapers unnatural powers through post-hoc rationalization. Vicki has never seen a Reaper, so they must be able to turn invisible. No human could enjoy the torture and murder of innocents, so Reapers can’t be human. Governments wouldn’t sacrifice their citizens for nothing, so they must offer power in exchange. The unnatural weaponry only expanded once Vicki started telling Eryn and Shelia about the dangers of going outside. As Users themselves, the fears of mother and daughters fused together.

Vicki King alerts the Reapers if Agents cause her to realize her worst fears, described on page xx. Forced to write years of neurosis and fear into matter, Yog-Sothoth cribs the physical appearance from the Agents. It then alters their anatomy, garb, and personalities until they match the runaway paranoidias of the King family. As creatures of gestalt nightmare, Reapers are extremely powerful, difficult to kill, and motivated attackers. They can pursue across the bubble to Outside reality. The best means of dispatching them is to destroy The Reaping World itself, but doing so requires destroying the machines on both sides of the divide or the death of King. Reapers prefer victims alive and try to pin them down and drug them before abduction.

### <H3>Reaper

*Child-sacrificing bogeyman with a badge*

**STR** 14      **CON** 12      **DEX** 14      **INT** 15      **POW** 12      **CHA** 8  
**HP** 13      **WP** 12      **SAN** 0

**SKILLS:** Alertness 80%, Bureaucracy 90%, Criminology 90%, Dodge 60%, Firearms 50%, HUMINT 100%, Melee Weapons 70%, Navigate 90%, Search 80%, Unarmed Combat 50%, Unnatural 60%.

**ATTACKS:** *Sacrificial Knife* 70%, damage 1D6+1, Armor Piercing 3.

*Grapple* 50%.

*Fentanyl Lolipop* 50%, lethality 5% and unconsciousness for 1D6 hours. The victim must be pinned first.

**HOOD OF OFFICE:** A leather hood and stole worn by all Reapers, made from ritually-tattooed skin flensed from living human victims. Wearing it grants the effects of the ritual Exaltation of the Flesh, described on page 179 of the *Handler’s Guide*.



**OPEN GATE:** A Reaper may use this ritual to bleed into any physical space located Inside. They may only travel Outside if a member of the King family is using Picky Eater to anchor their existence.

**SANITY LOSS:** 1/1D4 **SAN** if the Reaper looks like a peer or 1/1D6 if it looks like yourself.

## <H2>The False King

Before developing Picky Eater, Wesley Cool correctly diagnosed himself with antisocial personality disorder. After successfully fusing Tegmark's proposals with ancient rituals, Cool came to view his condition as a gift. Only he could recognize the fundamental emptiness at the heart of all existence. Only he was worthy to reshape it.

The doctor knew that any world birthed from a human psyche would be hollow, incomplete, and contradictory. He relished his own bubble as an opportunity to test the limits of creation itself. Everything from history to basic biology was altered inside the Rational World, but Cool's primary experimentation involved the memory of Vicki King. He began already aware that he was incapable of conceiving other human beings as real, so Cool used guided meditation, narcotic chanting, automatic writing, and every other esoteric mind hack he'd learned to push his objectification beyond the limits of a scientific mind. He then recorded these thoughts into a journal and instructed King to transcribe it repeatedly. This created a feedback loop for the figment of King—a perverted, miniaturized version of the confirmation bias between app and User. After years of transcribing the records of Cool's self-enforced brainwashing, the False King is the result.

The False King lives inside Cool's old office. It literally cannot imagine why it would ever want to leave. It doesn't need food, water, or sleep. Cool is convinced it doesn't deserve them. Its appearance suits the purpose in the moment, as Cool believed was the case for all women. He relished seeing how many alterations he could make in its appearance from one day to the next, making even the body's shape negotiable. The False King fights rabidly to protect Dr. Cool because he is the only force capable of giving its life meaning.

### <H3>The False King

*Misogynist fantasy molded into grotesque flesh.*

**STR** 22      **CON** 14      **DEX** 15      **INT** 6      **POW** 18      **CHA** 18  
**HP** 18      **WP** 18      **SAN** 0

**SKILLS:** Alertness 30%, Computer Science 50%, Science (Mathematics) 41%, Science (Physics) 39%, Unarmed Combat 70%.

**ATTACKS:** *Nails* 70%, damage 1D4+1.

*Grapple* 70%.

*Devour* 40%, damage 1D20, costing 1/1D4 **SAN** from violence. (The victim must be pinned before the False King can unhinge its jaw. If successful, False King engulfs the victim's skull in its mouth and begins biting through the neck.)

**ANIMA TRANSFORMATION:** If Cool is threatened, False King transforms into a misogynist's nightmare of womanhood, a hellish succubus more fitting a fairy tale than a university office. It rises from the desk and unfolds into the room at an impossible, emasculating height. The body's proportions lengthen distressingly, anatomically impossible. Enormous breasts taper into an alien stalk of a neck. Its arms hang pale and spindly from thin shoulders, the brightly-painted nails at the fingertips elongating into claws. Its waist gets thinner and thinner, as if disembowled. The creature's bones and musculature seem insufficient to support its size, speed, and power.

**SANITY LOSS:** 1/1D6 from the unnatural after it transforms.