



THE CHAMELEON ECLECTIC WORLDWIDE WEB GAME ARCHIVE

# THE GORDIAN KNOT

An Adventure For  
*Psychosis*

Psychosis takes the expected and turns it on its head. The players are trapped in a situation totally foreign to them. They have forgotten much of their identities, their abilities and their dangers. All of this they must rediscover throughout the course of the adventure.

**Written by Angel Leigh McCoy**

---

Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment, Inc.  
P.O. Box 10262 Blacksburg, Virginia 24062-0262  
800.435.9930  
info@blackeagle.com  
<http://www.blackeagle.com>



© 1997 Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. This document has been made available on the internet for the free personal use of *Millennium's End* players. Except where noted, no portion of this text may be otherwise reproduced without the written consent of Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment, Inc.

---

# THE GORDIAN KNOT



## GENESIS

Project X-O Com began in 1965 as an experimental government program, designed to investigate psychic potential in human subjects. Research into the source of psychic powers and the brain indicated that genetic engineering could enhance a person's psychic abilities. Unfortunately, all babies manipulated to carry the psychic genes died.

Near the turn of the twenty-first century, research in test-tube baby growth came into its own. Scientists working on this project, called Project Genesis, discovered that test-tube babies could be genetically manipulated. The two programs, X-O Com and Genesis were joined into Project X-O Genesis. The program "created" people who had psychic abilities.

Project X-O Genesis succeeded far beyond the expectations of the scientists and parapsychologists involved. So well, in fact, that the risk to national security ignited red lights throughout the Pentagon. The President, along with a special X-O Genesis taskforce, decided the test tube children must never learn they are different from other human beings. They would be raised in a family environment, strictly monitored, and told they had a natural gift.

The government dispersed the X-O-G babies into families and monitored them through a surrogate "aunt" or "uncle" who ingratiated himself with the family, bugged the family's home, followed them and compiled data on the child's progress. Sometimes it was one of the parents who served as the monitor.

The government led the general public to believe that humankind had merely reached a new evolutionary plateau and this explained the large number of true psychics emerging in the world. The year 2015 ushered in the Psychic Revolution. By 2033, the use of psychics in the medical field had allowed medicine to take great strides. Psychics can diagnose and treat diseases and injuries, both physical and psychological, that at one time were considered incurable. Now, more than five hundred psychics live and work throughout the United States, fully integrated into society.

## THE PLAYERS

The players work as med-psychs, psychics in the medical field, specifically dealing with coma patients. It has been found that many

---

coma patients can be “rescued.” A psychic must enter the comatose patient’s mind, find their psyche and bring them back “up” to reality. This therapy can be extremely dangerous to both the patient and the med-psychs.

## **RUNNING “The Gordian Knot”**

In this adventure, the players will psychically enter the mind of a comatose patient. This process will disorient them and cause temporary amnesia. They must figure out who they are and rescue the patient from his own mind.

The basic rules follow those in “Ship of Fools,” a previously published Psychosis adventure, with the exception of the following changes:

1. Cards remaining in the player’s hand will be discarded after each episode and a new hand will be dealt her. Her trace, however, will remain.
2. Major Arcana cards add spice to the adventure. They produce special results which the referee uses as a monkey wrench in the system. Players draw Major Arcana cards at varying points according to the instructions given in different scenes of the adventure. Before the final confrontation, deal each player a Major Arcana card. This card will either help or hinder them, depending on the card, in the action to come.

### **Special Abilities**

The players start out unaware of the following abilities which they possess. Be on the alert for any random actions which resemble an attempt to use these abilities. You will have to give these abilities to the players during play, since they don’t know they have them.

**Telepathy:** At times, players may attempt to communicate with each other telepathically, even when in different psychoses or different episodes. This can be accomplished, but at a penalty to both players involved. In order to do this, both players must win a challenge against 20 Cups. And then, they must each draw an Arcana card. Whether successful or not, they must discard all cards in their hand and trace. If successful, the players have a short amount of time, at your discretion, to communicate before they shift Psychoses and lose touch.

**Creative Visualization:** The players also have the ability to create things with their minds. Because this reality is not entirely static, they can “think” items into existence. For example, a threatened player may strongly wish she had a weapon. If she wins a challenge against 20 Cups, the object suddenly becomes believably available. Make it seem to the player that she has just noticed the item for the first time. These new med-psych interns should not realize at first that they have the above abilities, although they may figure it out as time goes on.

### **SPINE REALITY**

The term “spine reality” refers to the uncut, undistorted action. In this adventure, the spine reality consists of James Blackmore’s memories without the influence of his psychoses.

Entering the mind of a comatose patient can be dangerous, especially in the case of James Blackmore. James’ mind continues to replay his memories of the events which led up to the shattering of his psyche. In these memories, James relives his abusive childhood and his turn toward

### **Icons**

Six distinct items play a key role in the reconstruction of Blackmore’s psyche and his return to consciousness. Finding these items, reuniting them and then healing them constitutes the goal of this adventure.

Each of these icons represent a different aspect of James Blackmore. When his psyche shattered, these icons were created. In the Spine Reality, the icons appear as varying versions of James Blackmore. They have a certain sentience and may resist being captured.

Each player will encounter only one icon. When the icons have been reunited, James Blackmore can put an end to his nightmare. Describe the icons to the players as appearing lost or lonely. The player will hopefully attempt to ally with it.

In order to capture an icon, the player must touch it and request that it come with her in some way. Touching it will keep it with her temporarily, but in order to get it to stay with her permanently, she must tell it to do so. This is the only command to which it will adhere. Merely saying, “Come with me,” or “Follow me,” is enough. The icon will then remain at her side through each subsequent episode.

Whenever a player is kind to the Child or the Adult, an uncaptured icon will approach the player. Otherwise, the player will find it extremely difficult to get near the icon. It will hide in the shadows, watch shyly from a distance, or run away.

---

the dark side of government service. James is a Psychic Purifier. When it was discovered that his psychic talents lay in the area of telekinesis, he was immediately recruited into a special organization made up of agents whose only job is to hunt down and destroy rogue psychics who pose a threat to national security. This includes anyone who becomes aware of the true nature of Project X-O Genesis.

### Special Considerations

This adventure carries with it some special considerations in comparison to the typical Psychosis adventure. First of all, the true spine reality for the players shows them sitting around a hospital bed, eyes closed, each with a hand on the patient's body. In this case, the spine reality would not enhance the game. Because of this, the next layer of reality, the memories of the patient, will be used instead. For ease of play, we will call this the spine reality. The entire adventure takes place in the linked minds of the patient and the players.

Secondly, because no physical reality exists, the players cannot be killed. The worst that can happen would be that one of them would enter a coma herself. However, the pain is real. All damage dealt is non-lethal damage. Even this, however, incurs certain penalties. Whenever a player is wounded, she automatically shifts both episode and psychosis.

### The Memory Ring

The players pass through James Blackmore's memories in Episodes. The memories replay over and over in Blackmore's mind, forming a never ending cycle through which the players travel. Once the last memory has been reached, the memories start again from the beginning. Each player will enter James' mind at a different point in his memories, in a different Episode. Decide randomly where each player begins the cycle.

Four events signal the end of an Episode:

1. The memory reaches its conclusion without the player making any changes to its course.
2. The player becomes Wounded.
3. The player leaves a given geographical area.
4. If the player has somehow changed the normal course of the memory, the Guide must decide when it ends.

Blackmore's mind recognizes the players as intruders and sends his mental monsters after them. Like white blood cells attacking the body's foreign objects, they increase in number the longer the players are in Blackmore's mind. These attackers appear as Doctors in the spine reality.

When players leave an episode, the "white blood cells" temporarily lose track of them. At the Guide's discretion, a certain amount of time passes before they find the players again.

The players can observe memories without drawing attention to themselves. If they interfere, however, the main persona in the memory will recognize them as interlopers and attempt to kill them. The only exception to this is the Child. He will take no action against the players, even befriending them if they are kind to him.

Feel free to move players faster or slower through the episodes in order to bring them together. When a player enters a memory another has just left, the memory resets. The second player sees no indication the first was ever there. If, however, the first player is still there, the second enters

### Red Icon

James' id. The red icon is the manifestation of James' most primal drives and desires. It is the part of him that makes him desire food, water, sex and survival.

### Blue Icon

James' ego. The blue icon embodies James' mental side. This is his ability and need to think, his desire for logic and common sense.

### Indigo Icon

James' superego. The indigo icon serves as James' moral regulator. It holds his ethical values. In it are encoded his religious beliefs and taboos.

### Orange Icon

James' psychic abilities. This piece of him carries in it all that gives James his ability to link minds with other human beings.

### Green Icon

James' ability to love.

### Black Icon

James' ability to hate.

---

the memory as the action is continuing. It does not reset and the second player becomes an added participant to the action.

## The Psychosis Spiral

Psychoses in this adventure are created by a combination of the imagination, fears and memories of James Blackmore. The players must reach the spine reality where they will receive a clear picture of what has happened to James. The psychoses numbered 3 should be the least surrealistic; those numbered 1 will be the most. If one player experiences all of his psychoses before the others have, he moves into the spine reality and continues through the episodes until the others have caught up.

## THE STORY

### Episode 1: Genesis

*Start the Blue Player here.*

James' earliest memories are of the color white, a color he has come to associate with pain and fear. In this episode, the player is in a plain white room with the Child. The Child is approximately two years old. The door is locked.

After the player has had time to look around the room, the door opens and a Doctor enters. In one hand, he carries a syringe. The Child begins to cry and run away from the Doctor, but the Doctor grabs him and cruelly restrains the Child.

If the player decides to make a break for the door, move her to the next episode.

If she tries to protect the Child, the Doctor will notice her and begin his attempt to kill the intruder. The syringe contains a strong sedative, which will immobilize the player. The player will still be completely alert, but will be physically paralyzed. Treat this as a combat attack where a success means the Doctor manages to inject the player. If the Doctor succeeds, he will tie the player's hands and continue his work on the Child. He pokes and prods and obviously hurts the Child.

In the mean time, a single "white blood cell" has been alerted. Once it arrives in the form of another Doctor, if the player has not freed herself from her bonds, it will begin to hit the player, doing repeated non-lethal attacks until the player is Wounded. She arrives in the next episode unbound, but still Wounded.

### Psychosis Blue 1 — The Laboratory

The player finds herself in the lab where test tube babies are grown. There are hundreds of them, all in glass containers in stands on tables. Each one connects to a series of tubes and wires which feed the fluid in which the babies float. Several lab technicians tend them.

#### Personas

**The Child:** One of the babies appears too big for its glass container. It kicks out at the walls holding it in.

**The Doctors:** A lab technician wears white surgical garments. A mask covers his face and he has a white cap on his head. He moves from baby to baby lifting each one out by a foot, leaving its head in the fluid. He injects each one with the syringe.

#### Action

## Personas

The section following describes the different personas the players will meet in their trek through James' mind. Keep the relationships between the personas consistent. The Father will always be a violent, abusive being. The Mother will always rebuke and rebuff the Child, and the Doctors will always watch, test, and terrify the Child.

### The Father

5 Cards, +5 Staves

Physically abusive, James' father instilled a haunting fear in his son. Even as an adult, James continued to suffer terrible nightmares in which his father beats him. James' father worked for the government. He retired early in exchange for raising an X-O-G child. He knew of James' origins.

### The Mother

2 Cards, +2 Coins

James' mother, although much more subtle, was equally abusive. She went to great lengths to point out James' faults, insinuating he was abnormal. She knew on a subconscious level he was not like other children, although she was unaware of his X-O-G creation. This subconscious knowledge manifested in a deep bitterness and hatred for her son.

### The Child

2 Cards, +5 Swords

The Child represents James when he was young. His age will vary according to which episode the players are passing through, but his statistics remain the same.

### The Adult

4 Cards, +5 Coins

The Adult represents James once he has grown up. Again, his age will vary; his statistics will not.

### The Doctors

4 Cards, +3 Staves

Men in white coats plague James' dreams. They represent the doctors who created him and those that continue to watch him. The "white blood cells" appear as Doctors that are not actively involved in the memory.

---

The Child begins to kick and struggle within his glass container. The glass breaks, spilling liquid all over the floor. The baby is cut by the shards and blood mixes with the liquid. He starts to cry, flopping around on the table as a Doctor tries to get a hold of him. Finally, the Doctor succeeds. The Child cries loudly. The Doctor gives the Child a shot and then sticks him head-first down into another container. The Child begins to drown in the fluid. The Doctor ignores him.

Icon:

Another baby, in another glass container, looks exactly like the Child. It manages to pull itself out of the beaker. It can walk, climb and jump like an adult. It sneaks closer to watch the action.

### **Psychosis Red 2 – The Labyrinth**

The player stands at the intersection of two stone corridors. Although he can see the sky above, the walls extend up over 10 stories. The labyrinth contains no exit. Its paths change constantly. The Guide can send the player anywhere, having corridors appear where they were not before. The player is dressed in a white toga with a golden rope-belt around his waist. On his feet, he finds dusty leather sandals.

Personas

The Child: The Child is young, dressed similarly to the player. He is lost in the labyrinth.

The Doctors: A giant scorpion lives in the labyrinth. He chases the Child, trying to sting him. The “white blood cell” Doctors manifest as traps set in the labyrinth. Some are arrow traps which shoot at the player from the walls. Others are pit traps, spike traps or anything else your imagination can cook up. A successful challenge for each trap versus 10 Staves will allow the player to avoid it.

Action: Combat with the scorpion resembles what would happen in the spine reality. The scorpion swings its tail at the player and tries to sting her.

Icon: A small canary hovers nearby or sits on the ground watching the action. It does not sing unless the player shows kindness to the Child.

## **Episode 2: The Apartment**

The player finds himself in the living room of a small apartment. The Child, approximately six years old, is coloring quietly at the coffee table.

The Mother walks through the living room, carrying a vase of cut flowers. The Child grabs his picture and takes it to her.

“Momma,” he says, “look what I made for you. I drew our family. See, there’s Daddy and here’s you and here’s me.”

Suddenly, she turns on him, “Get away from me, you little freak! You’re not my son and you never will be! We don’t have a family!” She stomps away.

The Child begins to cry loudly. This attracts the attention of the Father who comes storming in to attack the Child.

If the player talks to the boy and admires his picture, she changes the entire scene above, depending on when she does it.

### **Psychosis Blue 2 – The Mutt**

The player sits up from where she was lying on the livingroom floor. She is a dog.

Personas

The Child: The Child is also a dog. His ear has a notch out of it and his tail is bent where it was broken. A mutt, his hair sticks up roughly in

---

spots and his coloring is unattractive. The player and the Child can communicate in dog-speak.

The Father: The Father is the Father. No changes, except for the fact that the player cannot understand anything he says. She doesn't speak human anymore.

The Mother: The Mother is the Mother. The player cannot understand her either.

The Doctors: The Doctors appear as large, wild wolves. They even exhibit rabid behavior.

The Action

As it would be in the spine reality. However, combat between the Doctors and the player are represented in bites and scratches.

Icon

Lying in the corner of the room is a dog bone. If it moves, it rolls across the carpet.

### **Psychosis Red 3 – The Jester**

The player steps into a large stone room. At the front, two elaborate thrones stand side by side. In one of them sits a beautifully robed queen. A jester attempts to please the queen. The player is dressed in courtly garb to befit having an audience with the king and queen.

Personas

The Father: The King.

The Mother: The Queen.

The Child: The Jester.

The Doctors: The King's Guardsmen. With large weapons and shackles, these men carry out the king's orders. They stand at attention around the room, watching.

Action

The Jester is rebuffed by the Queen and the King orders him hung. The guardsmen take the jester through two large wooden doors into the courtyard where a scaffold awaits. At last, the Queen seems interested in something and the king quite pleased with himself.

Icon

A young water-bearer stands in the shadows, watching. Quite shy, he will be difficult to spot.

### **Episode 3: Darkness**

*Start the Black player here.*

The player finds herself in a dark room. The sound of soft breathing comes from one corner. Suddenly, the door slams open and a giant form is silhouetted against the lighted hallway. The Father shouts at the Child to get up.

The Child is approximately eight years old. He jumps at the sound of the Father's voice and covers in the corner of his bed. The Father pulls the covers away.

"What the hell is the matter with you?" the Father demands. "Get up!" The Child only covers more.

"Did you hear me?" the Father shouts. "I said 'Get up!'" The Father grabs the Child by the arm and jerks him out of bed. A terrible crack is heard as the Child's arm breaks. He screams.

Furious now, the Father kicks the Child, hits him and calls him names. "You see what you make me do?" he shouts. "If only you weren't such a weak little bastard!"

---

If the player tries to interfere, the Father will turn his fury on her, though not physically, at first. He will demand to know who she is and why she is there. He will order her out of his house.

If she says anything about the Child's injuries and pain, he will reply that, "He can just use his damn psychic bullcrap to fix himself up again. What business is it of yours anyway?"

He will eventually attack the player, attempting to throw her out of the house the way he tried to drag the Child out of bed.

### **Psychosis Black 1 – Cat and Dog**

The player finds herself curled up on the floor in a dark room. She soon realizes that she is a cat. There is a bed nearby. From it, the sound of light breathing can be heard.

Personas

The Child: Also a cat, the Child is asleep on the bed.

The Father: When the door slams open, the Father, a large dog, begins to bark loudly at the cat.

The Doctors: Dog-catchers. If they show up, they have cages and traps to catch the cats. They leave the dog alone.

Action

The dog will tear into the cat. A cacophony of barking and cat howling will ensue.

Icon

A small black ball, resembling a racquetball ball rolls after the action, watching.

### **Psychosis Blue 3 – The Jungle**

The player swings from limb to limb in a vast jungle. She is a monkey. It is still dark out. Suddenly the first rays of light burst through the tops of the trees and spotlights another monkey lying in its treetop bed.

Personas

The Child: A monkey, like the player, the Child is obviously young.

The Father: A giant boa constrictor slinks down from the branch above toward the sleeping Child.

The Doctors: Leopards which can climb trees and jump from branch to branch.

Action

The Father's aggressions appear in this psychosis as much slower and premeditated. The boa constrictor will attempt to wrap itself around the Child and crush him. It may switch its attentions to the player and try to wrap around her. The Doctors use teeth and claws in their attacks.

Icon

A gorgeous butterfly floats nearby, watching the action. Its colors are magnificent and it is about the size of a normal human hand.

## **Episode 4: Cruelty**

The player steps into the livingroom of the apartment. Suddenly, the front door opens and the Child runs in, slamming the door behind him and locking it. Outside, the player can hear a group of children chanting, "Jimmy is a freak! Jimmy is a freak!"

The Child seems to be approximately 10 years old. He is crying and curls up on the couch in a fetal position.

The Father and Mother come into the living room. The Father is enraged. He slings the door open and curses the kids outside. They run away.

---

The Mother bursts into tears and disappears into the master bedroom. The Father grabs the Child.

“What did you do?” he yells, slapping the Child. “You stupid little freak. You can’t keep your powers to yourself, can you? Get to your room!” He literally throws the Child toward his room. The Child starts to crawl down the hall. The Father kicks him again and again until the Child has made it into his bedroom.

### **Psychosis Black 2 – Lincoln-Log-Land**

The player finds herself in a strange toyland, herself only the size of a doll. Toys lay scattered around, a squirt gun, a few army men, and some toy cars, all of which seem gigantic to the player. Wading through the green carpet is like wading through tall, fat grass.

Nearby, the player sees a log house, made of Lincoln Logs. Whoever built it paid great attention to detail, working in some windows and a doorway.

Personas:

The Child: The same size as the player, the Child seems to have just as much difficulty wading through the carpet and maneuvering through the toys. He is disoriented and frightened. He appears to be wearing doll’s clothing. They don’t seem natural. The Child automatically looks to the Lincoln-Log house as his first refuge.

The Father: The Father is a giant. He has not shrunk like the player and the Child. He towers over the room. He has no qualms about destroying the Lincoln-Log house with the Child in it. Every shout, every noise he makes is deafening.

The Mother: Also the same size as the Father, the Mother appears quite intimidating.

The Doctors: The Doctors also appear to be normal size. If they show up, they come with little traps which they will use to try to catch the player.

Action

Although the Father, Mother and Doctors could sneeze and do damage to both the player and the Child, they move slowly. Reduce their Swords total by ten.

The voices of the taunting children echo loudly inside the room. The Child hides from them inside the Lincoln-Log house and unless the player intervenes, the Father will crush him beneath the rubble when he kicks the house into a pile of logs.

Icon

One of the toys, a stuffed sock monkey watches from where it is leaning against a huge chair. It blinks its eyes and will even cover its mouth in terror if something horrible happens. If noticed and approached the monkey will flee. If, however, the player is kind to the Child and attempts to help him, the monkey will slowly come toward the player. None of the personas notice the monkey.

## **Episode 5: Test Phase Alpha**

*Start the Orange player here.*

The player is in the all-white room again. Two Doctors have strapped the Child to a table, wires and electrodes taped to his head. Still ten years old, he is conscious and obviously terrified.

The Doctors are monitoring the machines to which they have hooked the Child. They discuss the Child as if he were a machine, a non-entity.

---

“Yes, he seems to be coming along quite well.”

“I agree. It appears that he has reached the second stage. Initiate Test Phase Alpha. Let’s see if his pineal body is performing correctly.”

“Good, good. Quick response. I’d say in a year, he’ll be ready for consolidation.”

### **Psychosis Orange 1 – Frankenstein**

The player finds herself dressed in 19th century clothing, standing at the edge of a bizarre, bubbling laboratory. Electricity crackles between electrodes and the sound of a thunderstorm echoes through the stone walls.

#### Personas

The Child: The Frankenstein monster. Big, dumb and innocent.

The Doctors: One of the Doctors is Dr. Frankenstein. Completely mad, he experiments on the monster with large instruments and thick needles which make the skin crawl. The other is Igor.

Any other Doctors appearing on the scene resemble villagers who have come to destroy the monster.

#### Location

The player can go anywhere within the castle. This offers the potential for including some interesting rooms. Once the player leaves the castle, however, the episode and psychosis change.

#### Icon

A small little boy hides shyly in the shadows of the laboratory, watching. He has blond hair and big blue eyes.

### **Psychosis Black 3 – The Robots**

The player finds herself standing in a large, white room. Her joints are stiff and she feels extremely heavy. She is a robot version of herself. Because of this, her peripheral vision is affected. She moves in clicks and jumps.

Machines of all sorts line the walls and sit out in the middle. Wiring streams between the pieces of equipment, making the room seem like a messy electronic spider web. The lighting is stark. In the center of the room stands a table. Another machine, somewhat humanoid in shape, has been strapped to the table. Many wires attach it to the machines which cover the room.

#### Personas

The Child: The Child appears as a robot, somewhat deformed, obviously the creation of a mad scientist. Its parts appear to be pieces from old toasters, tvs, cars, and computers.

The Doctors: The Doctors are seamless robots, alien in appearance. A strip of running red lights circles their heads where their eyes would be. Their mouths are view screens showing electrical sine waves as their simulated voices come out. Instead of hands, they have attachments. Some of them have hypodermics, some have sensors, some have saws.

#### Action

The Doctors attack with the attachments on their hands. Use your imagination.

#### Icon

A little metal ball, decorated with swirls, floats around the room. It has one eye through which it watches the action. The eye looks like a glass version of a real eye and the eye lid is a metal shield which closes down over it when it blinks.

## **Episode 6: Charlie**

---

Back in the White Room. This time, a normal kitchen table stands at the center. Two chairs flank it. The Child wanders around the room, looking at himself in the mirror and biting his fingernails. He appears to be approximately thirteen years old.

The door to the room opens and a Doctor comes in, leaving the door slightly ajar. In his arms, he carries a tray. Upon the tray is a cat. It has been drugged, although it is awake. The Child recognizes the cat immediately as his own.

“Come and sit down,” the Doctor tells the Child. The Doctor places the cat upon the table and sits facing the Child.

“What is Charlie doing here?” the Child asks.

From his pocket, the Doctor pulls a scalpel. With one quick stroke, he cuts a slit into the cat’s shoulder. The cat howls.

The Child watches in horror. “Why did you do that?” he moans.

“Heal him, James,” the Doctor commands.

“No,” the Child replies softly. “I can’t.”

“Yes, you can,” the Doctor insists. “He’s going to die if you don’t.”

“I can’t!” the Child shouts. “I can’t!”

“You can, James, and you know it.” The Doctor runs a deep cut into the cat’s hind leg. The cat screams in pain.

“Stop it!” the Child cries.

He pushes his chair back and grabs the cat, holding it to his chest. Its blood runs over the Child’s hands and stains the front of his shirt. Tears stream down the Child’s face.

“Heal him, James. Do it now or he will die.”

“You hurt him!” the Child screams. “Charlie doesn’t like to hurt!” Suddenly, the cat’s mouth opens as if it were gasping for air. It makes some choking noises and then lays still, dead.

The Doctor stares at the Child and the cat. The Child gently strokes the cat’s fur, making soft cooing noises.

“There, there, Charlie,” he whispers. “All better.”

“It appears,” the Doctor muses, “that we have misjudged your talent, James....”

If the player tries to stop the Doctor from hurting the cat, the Doctor will attack her with his scalpel.

If the player encourages the Child to heal the cat, the Doctor will believe she is on his side and will leave her alone.

### **Psychosis Orange 2 – An Emergency**

The player stands in a hospital emergency room. Around her, doctors and nurses busily treat accident victims. The injured come in one after the other, bloodied and dying.

#### **Personas**

The Child: One of the emergency room doctors bears a striking resemblance to James Blackmore. He seems young to be a doctor, almost a child still. And yet, he is putting on rubber gloves. He enters one of the side rooms.

The Doctors: Only one of the many doctors and nurses in the emergency room is a Doctor. The others are creations of the psychosis.

#### **Location**

The entire hospital is available for exploration. If, however, the player leaves the hospital, the episode and psychosis changes.

#### **Action**

A stretcher is rolled into the side room the Child entered. Upon the stretcher is James’ duplicate. Obviously shocked by seeing himself upon

---

the stretcher, the Child does nothing. The Doctor brought in the stretcher.  
The Doctor takes out a scalpel and cuts the Child on the stretcher.  
Icon  
A young boy in an open-back hospital gown watches from the doorway.

### **Episode 7: Headaches**

The Father and the Child, now eighteen years old, are arguing at home. This exchange is emotional, verging on violent. The Father wants to throw the Child out of his house. The Mother stands by, doing nothing.

“I want your things packed and I want you out of here! Now!”

“But, Father,” the Child replies. “Why? What have I done? This is my home.”

“What have you done? What haven’t you done? You’re a no-good, lousy freak and an embarrassment!”

“Stop it!” the Child yells, completely lost in his emotions. “Just stop it!”

“You’re the worst excuse for a son any man could have!” the Father continues. “We want you out of our lives!”

“But where will I go?” the Child asks.

“I don’t care. Go live in the barracks with those other...people of your kind. We don’t want you. Now, get out!”

“No!” the Child screams. “Papa, I love you. Mama? Make him stop!”

“She won’t do anything. She agrees with me. You’re a freak....a freak....a freak....” The words echo like thunder through the room.

Suddenly, the Child shouts, “I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!” continuing the echo with his own words aimed directly at his Father.

The Father grabs his head and sways on his feet. The Mother screams as the Father falls to the floor. The Child rushes to him.

“Oh, God,” the Child moans. “What have I done?” He begins to run his hands over the Father’s body.

If the player interferes, the Father or Mother will turn on her. This will effect the entire script of this episode, depending on when she acts.

#### **Psychosis Indigo 1 – The Cathedral**

The player finds herself in a gigantic gothic cathedral. Incense hangs like fog in the air, burning the nose and distorting vision. The pews are filled with the congregation, all dressed in black with veils or dark sunglasses. Walking down the main aisle is The Child. He looks around as if unsure of why he is there.

#### **Personas**

The Child: Dressed in rags, the Child has dirt smeared upon his face, hands and body. He smells of sweat and other bodily functions.

The Father: The Father is a bishop with long red and gold robes. He wears the large hat of his station. His attitude is one of judgement.

The Mother: An angel, the Mother floats in the air. Her glowing golden hair and wings light the air around her. She has her face turned away from the Child.

The Doctors: The Doctors make up the congregation. Dressed in the black garb of mourning, they wait silently in the pews, watching everything that transpires. If the “white blood cell” doctors should arrive to confront the player, they come from this audience. The rest remain seated, spectators.

#### **Action**

---

The Father curses the Child, calling him a sinner and a blasphemer. The Mother does nothing.

Any physical contact with the Doctors occurs as it would in the spine reality. Weapons appear as crucifixes and rosaries.

Icon

A small church mouse hovers nearby, watching.

### **Psychosis Orange 3 – The Fairytale**

The player finds herself seated in a stiff straight chair painted in primary colors. Muffled choking noises come from the back of it. If the player turns to look for the source of the noise, she finds that the chair has a face on its back. It breathes deeply once she moves off its face and winks at her.

Everything in this room seems caricatured. Everything is three-dimensional, like the fairy tales done with live actors in film and television.

The room is in a castle. Through the windows, the player can see green countryside. A plastic-looking blue bird sings on the swaying branch of a dancing tree. Happy clouds float by in the blue sky.

The player is dressed in stereotypical fairy tale clothing, including lederhosen and a hat, or a blue calico dress with a clean white apron on the front, pig-tails and shiny patent-leather shoes.

Personas

The Child: The Prince. A human teenager in rags, the Child carries a mop, a cloth and a bucket of water. He is filthy. He enters the room where the player appeared and begins to clean.

The Father: The King of the Scarecrows. Made of straw, the Father is wearing a giant crown on his head and a regal looking cloak with ermine lining the collar. In one hand, he carries a golden scepter. He appears to be wearing rouge and lipstick. His features seem painted in a perpetual frown.

The Mother: The Queen. Also made of straw, the Mother wears a red velvet gown, with ermine at the collar. On her head, she wears a golden tiara. Her face also is painted, her eyes darkened with coal and her mouth drawn angry.

The Doctors: Straw men, dressed in black. Their boots seem particularly large, as do their eyes and ears. They carry pitchforks in their hands.

Action

The Father and Mother inspect the work of the Child and find it lacking. The Father/King “fires” the Child and tells him that he must leave the castle immediately. He begs forgiveness and promises he will do better. He asserts that he is a Prince and that he should be allowed to stay.

When the Father refuses, the Child lights a match and sets him on fire.

Icon

From the windowsill, a crow wearing tennis shoes watches the action.

## **Episode 8: The Hospital**

The Adult, James in his early twenties, stands in the doorway of a hospital room. Inside, an old man sits next to the bed of a teenage girl. The girl has apparently been badly hurt.

“It’s true, grandad,” the girl whispers. “I saw it in the doctor’s head.”

---

That military doctor. You know the one.”

The old man hangs his head. “I can’t believe it, sweetie. You’re just a normal little girl like anyone else. Why would the government lie to us?”

“I don’t know.” The girl takes her grandfather’s hand in hers. “All I know is that I’m not normal.”

The Adult enters the room and shuts the door behind him. He stares at the girl. She cries out in pain and the flatline sounds.

The Adult then turns his attention to the old man. Suddenly, the grandfather grabs his chest and gasps. He collapses on the floor.

A nurse runs into the room as the Adult turns to leave.

“I think the old man is having a heart attack,” he says calmly.

“Guess he loved his granddaughter a great deal.” He walks out.

### **Psychosis Indigo 2 – Little Orphan James**

The player appears in a large dining room. The decor is of exquisite quality. Wealthy people obviously live here.

#### **Personas**

The Adult: Standing in the doorway of the dining room, the Adult appears as a hideous monster. His skin is flaking away and his hunched body barely resembles anything human. His eyes are clear white. He is blind.

The Doctors: The Doctors appear dressed as servants. They stand at attention in the corners of the room unless brought into action as “white blood cells”.

#### **Location**

The player can go anywhere in the house. The entire place is just as elegant as the dining room. It is the home of a billionaire. Once the player leaves the house, however, the episode and psychosis changes.

#### **Action**

The girl is bound to her chair. The old man sits near her, feeding her. The Adult steps forward and begins to shove food into the girl’s mouth, choking her. It runs down her chin and onto her dress. He keeps stuffing until she can no longer breathe. Then, he reaches into the old man’s chest and pulls his heart out and lays it in the girl’s lap. Then, he turns and leaves.

#### **Icon**

A small dog sits in the corner of the room. He cowers at the loud noises, but does not leave. He appears to watch the happenings intently.

## **Episode 9: Of My Father**

*Start the Green player here.*

The Adult has gone to visit his comatose father in the hospital. While there, he enters the Father’s mind. Make the player’s psychosis while in this section extremely dark, morbid and horrific.

Start the player in the hospital beside the Father’s bed. When James enters the Father’s mind, the scene changes although the episode does not.

In his mind, the Father, much younger, is walking down a long white corridor. He is wearing a military uniform. The corridor is lined with rooms. Large windows allow the Father to see inside them. The first rooms have approximately ten children in them. Between one and two years old, the children are in cribs or playing on the floor. A Doctor attends them.

One of the rooms opens as the Father walks past and a swarm of

---

two-year-olds swarms out, running into him, screaming and laughing. A Doctor attempts to herd the children into another room. One little boy, James, catches his eye. They stare at each other for a moment, then the little boy attacks the Father, repeatedly hitting him with his tiny fists.

### **Psychosis Green 1 – The Museum**

The first thing the player notices is the sharp smell of formaldehyde. She stands at one end of a long, narrow corridor. The Adult is leaning over the Father, one hand on his chest. Suddenly the Adult falls into the Father as if he were a hole. Then, everything else begins to get sucked into the Father, including the player. She cannot avoid it.

After a long fall, she lands on the floor in another hallway. On either side of the corridor, shelves line the walls. Spaced approximately three feet apart, ceiling lights spotlight objects set upon the shelves. Ahead of her, the Father has just begun to walk down the corridor. The Adult has disappeared.

The items upon the shelves are bottled fetuses of all kinds: dog, cat, monkey and human, as well as many other kinds. Each one has a fancy little card propped up in front of it which describes the fetus in technical, scientific terms.

#### **Personas**

**The Adult:** The Adult does not actively appear in this psychosis once he has entered the Father.

**The Father:** The Father is himself, at a much younger age. He wears a safety suit, like the ones doctors wear when they enter a quarantine ward. The player will only see him from the back at first and may not realize that it is him until they get much closer.

**The Doctors:** Museum guards who attempt to apprehend the intruder in the Museum. They wear guard uniforms and carry pistols.

#### **Location**

This corridor seems to continue on forever, lined with all types of fetuses. It never ends.

#### **Action**

All action occurs as it would in the spine reality. The Doctor comes out of the side-room, not with a crowd of children, but with a cart of bottled babies. One of them is alive. It makes eye contact with the Father, then proceeds to bang on the side of the bottle, as if wanting to attack the Father.

#### **Icon**

An automated surveillance robot sits against one wall of the corridor. Only about three feet tall, it resembles a soccer ball on wheels. It makes no sound, but its camera follows the action, watching.

### **Psychosis Indigo 3 – The Glass Cage**

The player starts out as she did in Psychosis Green 1 above. Once she has fallen into the Father, she lands on the floor of a long hallway made entirely of translucent glass. It is impossible to tell what is on the other side of the glass. A mish-mash of colors and shapes are distorted by the glass. The player is completely nude.

#### **Personas**

**The Adult:** The Adult does not appear in this psychosis once he has entered the Father's mind.

**The Father:** Ahead of the player, walking down the hallway is a man. He has a blanket wrapped around him, but otherwise appears to be naked as well.

**The Doctors:** The Doctors appear as blinding streams of light that

---

burn if they touch the player. They stream through the walls.

Action

From time to time, a gigantic, distorted face may appear to look in through the glass wall. When, in the spine reality, the small boy exits the room and sees the Father, this event manifests as a giant face which peers in at the Father. Their eyes meet and hold. Suddenly, it is as if an earthquake were shaking the hallway. The boy's hands can be seen upon the outside of the glass. He is shaking it, trying to get at the Father. The Father loses his footing and falls. A crack in the glass appears and it may even shatter. In which case the giant boy will grab the Father and carry him away, shaking him in his hand.

If the "white blood cell" Doctors show up, they appear as blinding streaks of burning light which shoot through the glass at the player.

Icon

A tiny ball of light floats in the background. About the size of a fist, its colors flicker and change.

### Episode 10: Pay Off

The Child is still in the Father's mind. The player sees everything here as if through Blackmore. It is as if the player is the one who entered the Father's mind.

The Father is seated at a desk in the white room. He is being interviewed by a Doctor. The Doctor hands him a paper to sign. The Father signs it and takes his copy. They shake hands.

A young boy is brought into the room. He is approximately two years old. He begins to kick and scream when the Father approaches him. The Father looks to the Doctor for guidance. The Doctor hands him a wad of bills.

"Your first installment," the Doctor says. "Don't forget your agreement, Mr. Blackmore. No one must ever know of this child's origins. As a government agent, I'm sure you realize the importance of secrecy. We entrust this child to you in exchange for your early retirement and a healthy pension. It is crucial that no one ever discover..."

The Doctor gently brushes his hand over a souvenir on his desk. It is a large corked test-tube mounted on a stand. Inside the tube, a tiny fetus floats in embalming fluid.

"...the nature of this child's creation."

#### Psychosis Green 2 – The Troll Bridge

NOTE: It will be important in this psychosis that the dialogue not be related exactly as above. This episode must be surrealistic.

The player, dressed in overalls and a t-shirt, is seated on the grass beneath a beautiful old oak tree. Rolling hills, covered with wildflowers stretch off into the distance. Nearby, a stream cuts through the idyllic scene. From behind one of the hills, a path curves past the tree toward the stream, to a stonebridge.

Personas

The Child: The Child does not appear in this psychosis.

The Father: A farmer, wearing overalls and carrying a young pig. He comes down the path, apparently on his way to market.

The Doctors: Horrid, ugly trolls. The one that interacts with the Father in the spine reality lives under the bridge.

Action

The troll under the bridge will not let the farmer cross the bridge

---

unless he promises to raise the troll's child in his own home.

Icon

A young lamb nibbles grass in the shadow of a nearby tree.

## **Episode 11: Trapped**

*Start the Red player here.*

Back in the hospital room a Doctor has the Adult against the wall. The Doctor is shaking the Adult. Another stands by the door, watching. The Father is still in the bed.

"What in the hell did you think you were doing?" the Doctor demands.

The Adult looks at him with foggy eyes. "What the hell am I?" he asks softly.

The Doctor pinning the Adult against the wall turns to the one at the door. "He knows," he says. "Get an anaesthetic."

The Adult starts to fight. "I'm not human, am I?" he shouts. "A genetically engineered experiment? A test-tube baby?" He shoves the Doctor to the floor and rushes to the bed, shaking the Father.

"I'm not even your son, am I? Because I don't have any parents. I belong to no one! You, bastard! I hate you! I hate you!" Suddenly the flatline sounds. The Father is dead.

The Adult backs away as several more Doctors enter the room. One of them has a syringe.

"I'm a nobody. A freak. That's what I am, isn't it? I'm a freak!" The Adult begins to laugh hysterically. The laughter turns into a scream. Then, suddenly, there is a bright explosion of colored lights and then complete blackness. The Adult's psyche just shattered.

After this episode, the player returns to Episode #1 until she and all the others have reached the spine reality.

### **Psychosis Red 1 – Hell**

The air around the player heats her skin. A strange red light permeates the area. She is standing on one of many rocks poking out of a vast lava sea. From time to time, pockets of gas explode up out of the lava. The rocks are close enough together for the player to jump from one to the other. In the distance, she hears voices.

Personas

The Adult: The Adult plays two roles in this psychosis. He is the Devil and he is himself. As the Devil, his skin is red and he has horns and a tail. His hind legs end in goat's hooves. He sits on a throne looking down upon the other Adult who is held captive by two demons. The other appears to be an twenty-year-old version of James Blackmore. He is wearing normal pants and shirt, but his clothing is charred and in places, still smoking. He cries out in pain and anger.

The Father: One of the two demons which hold the Adult captive is the Father. The player will not recognize him yet. His body is hideously deformed, all but his face. His skin is gray and wrinkled.

The Doctors: The other demon holding the Adult is the Doctor. White rags hang from his twisted body. Except for his face and the rags, he looks just like the Father.

Action

The player will have a difficult time finding a way to interact in this scene, other than to just watch or attempt to rescue the Adult in captivity. In this psychosis, the Devil slowly tortures the Captive by magically

---

changing his appearance, twisting his body, turning him into various animals and monsters, even turning him into his Father. This will give the player the clue she needs that one of the demons is the Father. The changes look to the player like the Captive is melting in upon himself and then reforming, painfully. The Devil will narrate as he does these things to the Captive, taunting and berating him. The explosion of James' psyche will appear to the player as if the Captive exploded. The Captive's head will land at the player's feet. "Help me..." the head mouths, then the player shifts episode and psychosis.

### **Psychosis Green 3 – Collision Course**

The player is seated in the back seat of a futuristic car. It resembles modern cars in all ways except that there is a glass dome which serves as the roof and upper sides of it. To allow the driver and passengers to exit the car, this glass dome rises straight up on small hydraulic lifts.

#### **Personas**

**The Adult:** The Adult is in the driver's seat. He mumbles to himself and hits the steering wheel from time to time. He drives recklessly through town, apparently oblivious to the danger. People outside the vehicle jump out of the way and curse at him, calling him a freak. They all call him a freak.

**The Father:** The Father is in the front passenger's seat, tubes and wires still sticking out of him like in the hospital. He appears terrified. His eyes are open, but other than that, he cannot move or speak.

**The Doctors:** Futuristic police cars begin to chase the Adult. Police helicopters hover overhead.

#### **Action**

The Adult is freaking out. It will be difficult to carry on a normal conversation with him. He doesn't make much sense. All he says is that he is a nobody; he shouldn't be alive. He keeps pronouncing vague phrases which hint at what he has just discovered about himself. He yells his hate at the Father and a flatline buzzer goes off in the car. The Father's eyes unfocus and he dies.

The Adult turns the car down a road with tall buildings rising upon either side. There are no turn-offs. It seems more like a tunnel than a road. Signs line the road, warning of a dead end. In the distance, the player can see a brick wall where the road ends. The Adult continues to drive fast toward the wall. When they hit the wall, a great explosion ensues, then nothing. Blackness.

## **Episode 12: Carnival**

**NOTE:** Unlike the other episodes, this one has certain prerequisites which must happen before it can occur. It is not apart of the ring of memories that keep playing through Blackmore's mind. No psychoses need to be used here.

This episode takes place once the players have succeeded in collecting all the fragments of James Blackmore's psyche. They find themselves in an empty white room, all together with their icons. In order to reconstruct James' psyche, they must move all the icons together. All the pieces must be touching. As soon as they do, a deep sucking sound is heard and the players are shifted, en groupe, into the final episode, which follows.

The players find themselves standing together at the gates of a dreary carnival. James Blackmore is nowhere in sight. The rain makes them cold and wet. The sound of a crowd and laughter can be heard in the

---

distance, with an intermittent scream or squeal of horror as punctuation.

Many odd and frightening people and creatures inhabit this carnival. Several two-headed animals run past. A tattooed man strolls toward the players. A 700 pound woman rolls by on a cart being pushed by a dwarf with no hair. A bearded lady flirts with a man with three arms. And these are the tame ones.

In cages all along the main run, twisted men and women growl at onlookers, eat live snakes, spit vomit up to thirty feet, unhinge their jaws and other joints, and show off extra limbs. Siamese twins play double solitaire. The goat man clumps around on hooven feet as the gorilla man swings upon his bars.

As in the other episodes, if the players make their presence known, the personas will attack them. In this case, that includes all the inhabitants of the carnival.

James is in one of the cages that line the fairway. Straw lines the bottom of his cage. A crowd of onlookers has gathered to point and laugh at him. They throw food and rocks at him. He has nowhere to hide.

The players will not recognize James unless they succeed at a static challenge versus 30 Cups. James has become severely deformed. His body is twisted, limbs shortened abnormally, face distorted. The hair on his head appears to have been torn out, leaving little clumps between the scabs. He crouches like a caged animal, cowering in the far corner of the cage.

On the back of the cage, there is a padlocked door. The players may break the lock by winning a challenge versus 30 Staves. Once James has been released from the cage, he will stay with the players in the same way the icons did.

Suddenly, the sound of giant footsteps approaches the players and James. The crowd scatters, screaming in terror. A giant face peeks down over the cages at the players. It is the Father. He roars in rage and stamps his foot onto one of the cages, crushing it. He stands nearly four stories tall.

Despite his size, the Father has no more strength against the players than he did before. However, if he were to get hold of James, the result would be catastrophic. James' psyche would once again shatter.

The players can do no more than wound the Father. Only James can kill him. Fortunately for James, his survival instincts are strong enough that if he is truly threatened, he will hurt the Father. It will be obvious to the players that James can damage the Father more than they can.

James must confront the Father in order to kill him. The final goal of the player players involves staying alive while convincing James to confront the Father, to take charge of himself again and put his fears aside. If, in the end, he does, the player players have successfully retrieved him.

### **Episode 13: Return to Sanity**

All together, James included, the player players revert to the true spine reality. They are seated around James' hospital bed, with their hands on his body. James slowly begins to wake up. The players are still woozy from the experience, so they don't immediately notice the six Doctors standing around them, each with a hypodermic in their hands. An empty hypodermic.

"You should have followed orders," one of the Doctors says. "Now that

---

you know the truth, what shall we do with you?”

This could potentially lead into a second half of the adventure, but for the demo game, it all ends here.

## **FLASHBACKS**

Give out the Level One flashbacks when the players capture their icons. It does not matter who gets which flashback. Hand them out randomly.

The Level Two flashbacks are intended for those players who draw an Arcana card which offers them another flashback. Any of these can be used more than once for different Players. Although you should try to give each player a different flashback, if the situation arises, feel free to give the same flashback to more than one person.

Flashbacks occur suddenly and violently. Time literally stops for the player and resumes afterward exactly where it was when the player began the flashback. In order to increase the dramatic effect of this, stop the action at a sudden point and hand the player his flashback sheet. Once the player has read the sheet, continue the action immediately as if it had not even stopped. Ideally, do this in the middle of a conversation, in the middle of a sentence, or in the middle of the description of an action.

### **Level 1 Flashbacks**

- You are a small child, seated in a chair, your feet dangling over the edge. A beautiful young woman is crouched in front of you, her hands on your shoulders. She is your mother.

“Come on, sweetheart,” she says. “It’s time to go.”

“No!” you say. “I don’t want to go to the doctor.”

“Now how did you know that’s where we were going?” your mother asks.

“I saw it in your head, Mom. And I don’t wanna go.”

“Oh, don’t be silly, honey. The doctor won’t hurt you. He just wants to make sure you’re okay.”

“He does hurt me,” you whisper, hanging your head. “I don’t like him.”

- You are standing in a crowd of people, all approximately twenty years old. Dressed in graduation caps and gowns, you are listening to an old man in a military uniform make a speech.

“You are our future!” he cries, shaking his fist in the air. “You have a mission in this world which you must undertake with the courage and dedication that being a United States citizen demands. You are special, not so that you can glorify yourselves, but so that you can glorify our great country.

“Congratulations on your graduation from Psy-Tech. Remember. Even the small things that you do in your life will send shock-waves throughout the world and its future generations. Live well and serve your country and the people that count on it to serve them.”

You feel a surge of pride in your chest as the national anthem plays. You think about all the great things that you will do and all the people that you will save as a med-psych, a psychomedical technician.

- You are nervously pacing in the lobby of a large hospital building, waiting for an important meeting.

“Hi.” You hear the voice in your head. It was not spoken aloud. You

---

look around to see a young man sitting on a couch. He smiles.

Aloud, he says. "No need to be so nervous. We're just people too." He gets up and comes over to introduce himself.

"My name is Frank. What's yours?" You reply and shake his hand. A strange tingling passes between you.

"Are you here to be placed as well?" you ask him.

"Yah," he returns to his seat and pats the couch next to him. "I'm transferring from Boston General. I guess I should be grateful that Chicago Metro decided to let me in. To tell you the truth, I'm a little fed up with this psy-team stuff."

"How come?" you ask.

"Well...look, I don't want to burst your bubble. I know this is all new to you, but it just seems so anticlimactic once you start. I mean they tell you at the academy that you're going to be molding the world, changing the future for the better. Bull-crap. All you're doing is rescuing bitter, unhappy people from their own self-isolation. Frankly, nine times out of ten, the people coming out of the comas don't thank you for it. They want to go right back in."

"Oh, come on," you reply, beginning to dislike this guy. "It can't be all that bad. I mean, you're doing them a favor. These people are sick. They need psychotherapy and the only way to accomplish that is to bring them out of their comas so that they can undergo treatment."

"I suppose," he nods. "Just don't expect it to be a glory ride. The patients hate you for messing in their heads. The doctors and nurses hate you because they're afraid you're going to mess in theirs. In the end, all you have are your fellow psychics. We're alone in this world, not matter what anyone says. I hope we get put on the same psy-team."

You smile politely, wishing just the opposite.

• You are in your early teens, sitting on the floor in your room, crying. Your mother comes in.

"Honey, what's the matter?" she asks, sitting down beside you.

"I hate myself," you reply.

"Why?"

For a long moment, you don't reply. Then, "Mom, why do I have to be different? Why can't I be like the other kids?"

"You're special, baby. You have a special talent that God gave you so that you could help people."

"I don't want to be special and I don't want to help people. I just want to be like everyone else!"

"Tell me what happened," your mother says. But you don't want to talk about it.

"Nothing," you reply, thinking about how the guys at school laughed at you and called you names like "psy-freak." You tried to hide it, but the school nurse kept calling you to help her fix broken arms and skinned knees. Why couldn't she just do it herself. That's what she was getting paid for!

The principal hadn't been any help either. When you told him that you didn't want to help any more, he got mad. He called you a selfish brat. He said that the school was lucky to have a gifted kid like you and that he was going to use your talents for as long as you were there. And if you wanted to continue to get good grades, he recommended that you not put up any more of a fuss.

"Never mind, Mom," you say. "It's nothing. I'm just a little tired, that's all."

---

• You are standing a hospital room. The rest of your team has already left. Preparations have been made for the retrieval. It will take place tomorrow. The patient is a middle-aged woman of hispanic origin. All you know about her is that she used to work for some secret government agency in Washington DC. Why she would be here in Chicago, you have no idea.

She looks like she is sleeping peacefully. The truth is that she has been in a coma for the past month. No apparent physical reason exists for her condition. You and your team will get a chance to try and bring her back up.

This retrieval makes you nervous. The military has been snooping around. The other day, you heard that the patient's entire family was being interviewed, one by one, for hours on end. The military makes you nervous no matter what. Even more so than doctors do.

You turn to leave, sure that everything is in readiness for tomorrow. As you go, a tall man in a black suit and dark sunglasses passes you and enters the room. You look at him and he stares back as he closes the door behind him. You hear the lock engage.

Shrugging, you head toward the nurse's station where the rest of your team waits for you. They are all there. You smile at them. They are your best friends. Perhaps it is because you have so much in common: the loneliness, the isolation. Comrades in isolation.

Suddenly, a buzzer goes off at the nurses' station. The nurses scramble.

"It's Mrs. Hernandez," you hear one of them say. Mrs. Hernandez is the patient you were to retrieve tomorrow.

"There goes another one," one of your team members comments sardonically.

One of the nurses gets on the intercom and you hear her tinny voice broadcast, "Code 3 in Room 445. Stat!" Several of the nurses rush down the hall toward the room.

The man in the black suit and dark glasses walks slowly and calmly down the hallway to the elevators. In the elevator, he turns around and looks straight at you. The doors close on him and he is gone. A shiver runs up your spine.

• Tomorrow is Monday. You think about going back to work and you're not really happy about the idea. You hear a loud crash. The cat has climbed on top of the mantle trying to get at a moth. He managed to knock off the urn that holds your father's ashes. You cry out in anguish and anger. The cat runs out of the room.

Ashes have scattered everywhere. Gently, you try to scoop them into a pile, distressed. That's when you see a small electronic device in among the ashes. You pick it up and blow the dust off it. It looks like a tiny microphone. A bug. What should you do?

Quickly you decide. You throw the bug back into the ashes and rush to the kitchen for a broom and dustpan. Then you sweep the entire mess into a trash bag.

The doorbell rings. You wipe your dusty hands on your sweat pants and go to answer it. It's your Uncle George. He's not really related to you, but he was a close friend of the family from the moment you were born.

"Hey!" he says. "What's up?" He walks past you into the living room. You try to stay calm.

"Oh, the damn cat just broke Daddy's urn. I guess it's long past time I got rid of it anyway."

---

Uncle George mutters something about it being a damn shame and that he'll help you clean it up. He sweeps the rest of the ashes and broken glass into the trash, closes up the bag and takes it to the curb.

## Level 2 Flashbacks

- You and the other members of Psy-Team Omega are standing in an office. Seated at his desk is Doctor Fromm, your supervisor.

"I said no," Fromm states.

"But, Doctor," you insist, "I am sure that we can help this man. And so what if we can't? What harm could it do to try?"

"Look, intern," Fromm replies, "many more talented psychics than yourselves have attempted to retrieve this Mr. Blackmore and every one of them unsuccessfully. I am not going to waste your or the hospital's time on a lost cause."

"Tell him we'll do it in our spare time," you hear in your head. You nod to your team.

"We'll do it in our spare time," you say, leaning forward insistently. "We've already discussed this and we agree."

Doctor Fromm stands suddenly and slams his fist on the desk.

"I said no! And I mean no. Not only will you not attempt a retrieval on this patient, but if I ever hear that any of you have gone anywhere near him or even mentioned his name anywhere in-or outside of-this hospital, I will have all your cards revoked and you will be looking for another job. Do I make myself clear?"

- You are at the back door of the hospital. You sneak in, watching for anyone who might spot and recognize you. Your team members are waiting just inside for you.

"Where have you been?" you hear in your head.

You think back, "Sorry. I got caught up with my uncle. He wouldn't leave."

Together you all make your way up to the fourth floor, careful to avoid any hospital staff. Blackmore's room is at the end of the hall. You slip inside and close the door quietly behind you.

"I can't believe we are doing this," one of your team members giggles. "Fromm will have our heads if we are caught disobeying his direct order."

"Awe, so what," another one replies. "Fromm's a crotchety old goat. He wouldn't know how to retrieve somebody if he had grown up in their head."

"Well," you say, "let's get this over with." As a team, you all take your positions beside the young man lying in a coma on the hospital bed. You place your hands on his body.

## THE ARCANA

Below is a guide to interpreting the Arcana as they are used in "The Gordian Knot." Each card is listed according to the name and number that identifies it in most Tarot decks. Following that is a general indication of the card's meaning and a set of specific instructions. Cards annotated as "Immediate" go into effect when drawn. Once used, such cards are shuffled back into the Arcana deck. Those noted as "Delayed" take effect some time later, at your discretion.

### 0 The Fool

---

Innocence, Non-conformity, Self. Give the Player a small clue about his or her real self. Do not give the Player a flashback. DELAYED.

### **1 The Magician**

Creativity, Virility, Willpower. Give the Player a small clue as to his or her ability to perform Creative Visualization. See Special Abilities above. DELAYED.

### **2 The High Priestess**

Duality, Home, Receptivity. Have the Player immediately discard his or her hand and trace, and draw new cards. IMMEDIATE.

### **3 The Empress**

Fertility, Matter, Synthesis. Give the Player a small clue as to his or her ability to perform Telepathy. See Special Abilities above. DELAYED.

### **4 The Emperor**

Political Leadership, Government. Draw a connection for the Player between the Doctors and the government. For example, describe someone as wearing a military uniform or describe a military or governmental seal on something. DELAYED.

### **5 The High Priest**

Ethical and Moral Leadership. Draw a connection between the people that the Player has been working for and the Doctors. For example, have them recognize the white room as located in the Chicago Metro Hospital, even though it wasn't. DELAYED.

### **6 The Lovers**

Choices in Love and Loyalties. If the Player has already captured his or her icon, it will escape. If the Player has not captured it, give him or her a strong opportunity to do so. DELAYED.

### **7 The Chariot**

Victory, Speedy Travel. Advance this Player immediately into the next episode/psychosis. If this moves him or her into the Spine Reality, he or she will stay there until the others catch up. IMMEDIATE.

### **8 Justice**

Balance, Equity. When the player is next at a disadvantage in a challenge, outside forces will intervene to even the odds. For example, the ropes tying her up will loosen. DELAYED.

### **9 The Hermit**

Mastery, Sage Advice. The Player becomes completely aware of his

---

or her ability to use Telepathy. From this point on, the Player needs no longer make successful challenges in order to communicate with the others and no time limit is placed on the communication. The Player still changes psychosis and episode once communication has been completed, however. IMMEDIATE.

### **10 Wheel of Fortune**

Destiny, Determinism, Consequences. At the beginning of the next episode, have the Player discard her hand and trace, and draw all new cards. DELAYED.

### **11 Fortitude**

Mind over Force, Lucidity. The Player gains a bonus of 8 Cups and 5 Coins for the remainder of this episode/psychosis. Give the Player a flashback. IMMEDIATE.

### **12 The Hanged Man**

Sacrifice, Martyrdom, Idealism. Even if the Player attempts not to interfere with an episode, the personae involved in that episode notice him or her. They turn their attention from the Child and attack the Player. In the ensuing scuffle, one of the personae may taunt the Player, giving him or her a valuable clue as to what is going on. IMMEDIATE.

### **13 Death**

Endings, Mortality, Inevitability, Change. All players discard one card of their choice from their traces. This loss is not permanent — unlike a loss due to a wound, this card can be replaced at the beginning of the next episode. IMMEDIATE.

### **14 Temperance**

Moderation, Self-control. The Player becomes fully aware of his or her ability to perform Creative Visualization. Once aware of this, however, if the Player should abuse it by using it more than twice in the same episode, the ability will become less reliable. Guns will begin to misfire and knives will be dull, etcetera. IMMEDIATE.

### **15 The Devil**

Materialism, Lust, Self-destruction. Arrange for the Player to be distracted from the icon by something that he or she would want. This may be a weapon, a treasure, or some source of illusory clue, such as a book. If side tracked, they all turn out to be fakes. Remove the highest card from the Player's trace. This is not a wound. The next time the Player draws new cards, he or she may draw up to the normal amount. DELAYED.

### **16 The Tower**

Catastrophe, Chaos, Destruction. The Player will fail his next

---

important challenge, causing him to become side-tracked, trapped or wounded. DELAYED.

### **17 The Star**

Hope, Grace. All Players are inspired and dealt cards to fill their hands. Discard and replace any aces without drawing new Arcana. This card does not heal wounds. Players are still bound by their normal maximum hand sizes. IMMEDIATE.

### **18 The Moon**

Anxiety, Illusion, Deceit. Choose one card randomly from the Player's hand. This card is set aside and cannot be used until the next episode when it is returned to the Player's hand. The Player cannot draw to replace this card. It is considered still apart of the hand, although unavailable for use. IMMEDIATE.

### **19 The Sun**

Vigor, Health. Remove any Wounds that the Player might have and increase his or her hand back to five cards. If the Player who drew The Sun is not Wounded, another Player, the one with the most Wounds, will receive the benefit of this card. IMMEDIATE.

### **20 Judgement**

Renewal, Reward. Deal the Player one extra card for his or her hand. If the Player already has five, give him or her a sixth. Once this card is played, however, the maximum number of cards in the hand returns to five. IMMEDIATE.

### **21 The World**

Opportunity, Progress, Discovery. This Player's icon allows itself to be captured quite easily, even delivering itself into the Player's hands. Give the Player a flashback.