

The Murder of Achilles Grey

How to use this Guide

Welcome to what will likely be your first delve into Æther Jacks. The Murder of Achilles Grey is a highly detailed guide for GMs to help them run a game of Aether Jacks. This Guide plays out a short campaign that is aimed to be run over 3 sessions of around 2-3 hours each. It is intended to be read in its entirety by the GM before they try to run sessions and then used as a reference during the sessions.

Overview

This campaign follows the investigation of the murder of Achilles Grey. The players will be taking the role of forensic Aether Jacks who are trainees in a branch of The Academy known as Watson.

The Jacks have been placed together as a party by executives at Watson in order to test their capabilities as a team. They will progress through 3 Marks, finding more clues about the murderer until they can identify and potentially have a run in with the killer. Their success in this campaign will determine whether they are ready to enter the field as Aether Jacks.

Marks and Their Story Threads

This is a very quick rundown of the 3 Marks in the campaign. It only gives a very small outline and how they progress the story.

Lady Marian Pendergast — Primary Witness

32 y.o female - Historian - High Lucidity Mark

Marian's dream has the players at the site of the murder trying to see the face of the killer but they cannot; instead, they notice the neighbours kid in a position where the murder could have been witnessed.

Timmy Wallace — Unknown Witness

10 y.o male - Toy Enthusiast - High Empathy Mark

Jimmy has the players trying to get out of Jimmy's room in time to see the killer. Instead they find a briefcase filled with documents that mention another connection.

James Miller — Murderer

40 y.o male - Accountant - High Mentality Mark

James Miller is the killer and the players end up in a trap for survival where they have to expose the killer without being kicked from the dream.

Watson - Syndicate

Watson is a syndicate aimed at retraining medical personnel as Aether Jacks. This does not mean that the pilots have to be in the medical profession but this could be used as inspiration. Watson is very above board and tries to ensure that the Jacks they produce are the best of the best.

Being a Member of Watson has its benefits. The first of which is that every party is assigned a supervisor who can help the Jacks. The name of this party's supervisor is Millie, who is a high ranking Meteorologist Jack. She will not be entering the dreams with the players but is who they communicate with.

Other benefits are more mechanical.

Communicators - Once per dream the players can call on Millie to give them some guidance with the dream.

Dream Stabilisers - Once per dream the players can request the dream be stabilised to shift the dream 2 towards the centre of the chaos scale.

Playlists

There are playlists on Spotify for each of the Marks to set the personality of the mark.

Marian Pendergast

Marian is a historian with one of the local museums and spends most of her days cataloguing artefacts of the old world. She lives in a small apartment in a wealthy area of the upper city. She dreams of a world where she can escape the expectations placed on her and explore the old world herself rather than working away in a basement.

She was on her way home when she witnessed someone being stabbed in the middle of the street outside her apartment. All initial questioning has come up with nothing as Marian is either trying to hide something or has blocked out the event.

It is the Jack's task to enter Marian's dream and find out if there are any trace memories that could be used to identify the killer. She has been mostly cooperative and intends to work with the Jacks in her dream. Her parents are influential politicians so ensuring as little stress as possible during the dream is important for Watson's image.

Goals

Primary Goal

Identify the face of the killer or some other information that can be used to find the killer

Secondary Goal 1

Marian has held questionable acquaintances, find the name of her previous partner without her knowing.

Secondary Goal 2

Ensure no harm comes to Marian, she is a high profile dreamer and excess stress looks bad for Watson.

Scenes

Great Library —

Jacks explore a great library to find where Marian will be within her dream.

Road of Rohirrim —

Lady Pendergast is living out a "Lord of the Rings" fantasy. Once the Jack's help her she will lead them to the site of the murder.

Street —

The Jacks come face to face with the Murderer but they have no face. Marian, never saw it. Instead they see a kid across the street looking over. And Marian is able to identify the kid giving the Jacks a new witness.

Dream Features

Æthers

Luc +1 Men +1 Emp -1

Natures

Friendly - This Mark's occupants are quick to side with the Jacks.

Sci-Fi Fantasy - This Mark sets their dreams in vast fantasy worlds.

Lucid Dreamer - The Mark is always present somewhere in the dream and so has an Aura.

Hostility Scale

Marian's dream starts at 7 meaning that any positive interaction will have her become friendly towards the players.

Chaos Scale

Marian's chaos scale starts at 6.

Traits

Held Strikes - These occupants cannot deal Permanent Conditions with weapon attacks. Instead, they apply the Basic equivalent.

Helpers - These occupants can help an ally as a quick ability each round.

Creatures - Some of these occupants are creatures and work under the Menageries creature rules.

Ranged - These occupants have the Ranged Augment.

Weapons

Marian's occupant's weapons are often ranged Ranged so they use a d8 and miss on a 7 or 8.

Marian Pendergast's Aura

Portrait



Æthers

Luc +1 Men +1 Emp -1

Specialisation - Lvl 1 Architect

Passives

Dream Weaving related to objects or furnishings are one difficulty easier.

Abilities

Make a staircase, tunnel or bridge up to 100DU long and half a 10DU wide. It starts crumbling after 5 rounds and collapses after 10 rounds.

Weapon - Sword and Shield

D6 slashing weapon with the defender augment.

Trinket - Amulet of Order

-1 Chaos Scale

Affinity - Joyous

Passives

Your first attempt with a decision roll cannot lead to a normal failure, instead there is a complication and you can try again.

You begin dreams with the perceptive condition.

Characteristics

Marian does not have a high empathy and so is focussed much more on herself and the places within the dream that she is in.

Her Occupants are simple and not high in number, usually only being used as a means to enhance her own importance in the dreamworld.

She is handy with a weapon and is confident in a pinch.

Her worlds are also high in detail due to the large and creative imagination she has.

Scene 1 - The Great Library

Intro Scene 1

Darkness

The smell of old books and leather hits your nose.

Light... streams through huge, tall windows into a great library. You stand between two large doors at the entrance to this library. Huge sandstone pillars border Book covered walls. Rows and rows of books flank the walls. Behind you is a cobbled path that leads to a bridge and then continues into an endless field of sunflowers, this appears to be the way you came. Ahead of you through the great doors is a grand semicircular bench behind which stairs rise to another level of the library where the rows of books seem to recede endlessly.

A young receptionist pops up from behind the desk lifting a giant ledger and dumping them onto the desk.

Describe your Jacks and how you make your way up to the desk...



Overview

The Jacks find themselves at the entrance of a huge library. This library has a stream that flows in a ring around it and outside of that ring is a field of sunflowers that extends to the horizon. A small bridge crosses the river leading into the field of flowers.

Inside is a circular desk with the librarian Miss Peablossom perusing a giant ledger. 5 huge columns of bookshelves rise behind her and there is a large locked steel door that leads to a staircase at the left side of the room.

This scene has a puzzle for the Jacks to try to solve. Peablossom tells the Jacks that the Lady Pendergast is inside one of the books in the library and they must figure out which book she is in then enter it to find her.

Occupants

Peablossom - A friendly occupant that tends to cooperate with the players. She has her brown hair in a high bun and wears eccentric colourful clothing.

Weather

Sunny - no effect.

Secrets

The bridge outside has a troll if the players decide to look for one. It offers to trade a player's trinket for a drink of troll's blood. Trolls blood gives the player regeneration that removes one **Pained** each round for the rest of the dream.

Nightmares - Cujo

In the back corner of the Library is a book that has been tucked away. The book Cujo by Steven King 1981. Opening this book unleashes Cujo as a nightmare onto the Jack that opened it. It has no current effect but can come up later.

The Puzzle

The Jacks explore the library and its books to solve the puzzle, alternatively they can try to solve things another way and that's ok, the main way being trying to get into the steel locked door but Miss Peablossom is resistant to letting the Jacks into the steel door as this is a private area for Lady Pendergast. Let's assume the Jacks try to solve the puzzle.

The Library is split into 5 huge columns with books on both sides, these columns match a genre each. These are Mystery, Sci-Fi, Historical Fiction, Romance and Fantasy. If the players walk through the columns they will mostly see half formed titles of books but there are some fully formed books that stand out. The books that can be found in the bookshelves are as follows and mistakes are intentional, Opening the books results in something happening, Italics inform of what happens if the book is opened. Additionally, James and Miller have been crossed out aggressively, this is the name of her previous partner for the sake of the secondary goal.

Mystery	Sci-Fi	Historical Fiction	Romance	Fantasy
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Steig Larson 2005.	Brave New World by Aldous Huxley 1932	The Book Thief by Markus Zusak 2005 <i>One book at random is removed from the columns.</i>	Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen 1813 <i>Change the playlist to that of the 2005 motion picture of the same name.</i>	The Game of Thrones by George R.R. Martin 1992
Murder of the Orient Express by Agatha Christie 1932 <i>Soot applies Blinded to the Jack who opened it.</i>	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams 1979	The Song of Achilles Madeline Miller 2011 <i>Opening the book unveils that it is actually the Odyssey by homer.</i>	Fifty Rings of Grey by E.L. James 2012 <i>The dream becomes Black and white.</i>	The Colour of Magic by Terry Pratchett 1983 <i>The dreams scale chaos increases by 3 as magic fills the dream.</i>
The DaVinci Code by Dan Brown 2003	The Time Lord H.G. Wells 1892 <i>The Library gets filled with plants and becomes overgrown.</i>	Memoirs of the Geisha by Arthur Golden 1992	Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte 1847	Northern Lights by Philip Pullman 1995 <i>Time to fight a bear. A Large Armoured bear enters the Library. Consult monster list.</i>

Peablossom has a giant ledger that can be used to cross check books. It shows the correct titles and dates of the books if the players bring these books to her to look up. Corrections are: "Murder on the Orient Express" Published 1934. "The Time Machine" Published in 1895. "Memoirs of a Geisha" Published in 1997. "Fifty Shades of Grey" Published in 2011. "A Game of Thrones by George R.R. Martin 1996.

To succeed the Jacks need to recognise that the errors in the books make the title "The Lord of the Rings" and that they should be looking into the second book "the two Towers" as there has been a 2 added to all of the dates.

After the Jacks tell Peablossom that they need The Lord of the Rings, She takes the players through the steel door and up a staircase to a reading room with a private collection of the trilogy. If the Jacks bypass the puzzle and sneak into the door they will find these books before solving the puzzle. They may still have to work through the puzzle to figure out which of the books to enter but a hint is that the reading room is in a tower and from here another tower can be seen in the distance.

Trying to enter "The Fellowship of the Ring" will result in an arrow applying **Wounded** to the Jack that tried to enter it and trying to enter the "Return of the King" will result in magma coming out of the book and applying **Melting** to the Jack that tried to enter it.

Other books have other effects if they are attempted to be entered but these are less impactful so have a small sensory effect happen or apply a simple condition if they try this.

Scene 2 - Road to the Stronghold

Intro Scene 2

The book envelopes you...

fluttering through the pages, you land on a scene with Lady Pendergast.

Your feet are swept up beneath you as you plunge into the book. Pages turn and words flicker as mountains and great plains form around you.

The party comes back into focus to see a group of 4 occupants in ragged villager clothes around you. Out the front of them is a more lavishly dressed woman wielding a sword and shield. This is Marian Pendergast and she appears to be leading this small group of villagers to refuge.

In the distance smoke rises from a pillaged town in the neighbouring valley. In Marian's direction you can see a large mountain range and at the base of it is a stronghold.

Marian turns holding her sword towards your party, "Are you friend or foe?" ...

Overview

The Jacks find themselves having to help Marian escort a group of villagers to a stronghold in the mountains. The group is already on the road and the stronghold is near.

Marian is unwilling to move onto the Jack's goals, generally refusing to delve into those painful memories until she is feeling safer. The Jacks could convince her but the main way to progress is by helping the villagers make it to the stronghold and once they are all inside, she is willing to be directed to the night of the murder.

On the way to the stronghold however, the group of villagers are attacked by a group of wolf riding orcs and rounds begin.

The players may choose to fight or flee to the stronghold.

Occupants

4 Villagers - Unnamed and unimportant, they often swap features and remain inconsistent throughout interacting with them.

1 Wolf + Rider duo per Jack - These are quite passive for wolf riders and act to add suspense to Marian's narrative that she is building.

Weather

Overcast - no effect.

Secrets

In a sewage grate underneath the wall leading up to the stronghold is another troll if the players decide to look around that area. It offers to trade a player's trinket for a troll explosive. A troll explosive can be used to apply Burning and Pushed to everything in a 10DU radius when thrown.

Nightmares - nil



The Wolf Rider Fight

There is one Wolf Rider per Jack in the dream including Marian. The riders are in the dream to add suspense to Marian's dream. For this reason the wolves and their riders are generally timid and hold their strikes so as to not cause too much harm. As they are a means to Marian's ideal of making herself a hero, attacking them does not cause the dreams hostility to increase.

The Wolves begin by racing towards the group from the valley and combat rounds begin with them being 200DU from the group. The wolves will only fire on the group if they are able to get within 100DU from the players at the round's end. The wolf riders will initially try to close the distance and go for the villagers, not stopping until Marian and the Jacks engage them. They will then respond to the Jacks by attacking whoever attacked them during a round and will try to spread themselves out. If a wolf's Rider is defeated, the wolf will gain Feared and run from the battlefield. The Villagers during this time will try to get away from the Wolf riders. If they find themselves being protected by one of the Jacks and not in danger from any other wolf riders, they will Help the Jacks for their round.

Wolves Speed - 50DU Lucidity - +1 Mentality - 0 Empathy - 0 Weapon die - d6 Slashing attack, Bleeding augment 1 - Shaken 2 - Hazed 3 - Bleeding 4 - Bleeding 5 - Bleeding 6 - Pained Traits - Held Strikes, Helpers, Fast, Bleeding, Ridable	Riders Speed - 25DU Lucidity - +1 Mentality - +1 Empathy - -1 Weapon die - d6 piercing attack, Ranged augment 1 - Shaken 2 - Hazed 3 - Pained 4 - Pinned 5 - Pained 6 - Wounded 7 - Miss 8 - Miss Traits - Held Strikes, Helpers	Villagers Speed - 25DU Lucidity - +1 Mentality - +1 Empathy - -1 Weapon die - The Villagers favour helping or running over attacking. Traits - Held Strikes, Helpers
--	---	---

Once the Wolf Riders are destroyed the players can make their way to the stronghold safely.

The stronghold is described to the players making note of the large stone wall, the little sewage grate in the middle and the long stone walkway leading up to the main entrance. On entering Marian will be open to talking with the Jacks about taking them to the scene of the murder. Leaving back through the front gates takes you now out into the street outside Marian's apartment and into scene 3.

Scene 3 - The Street

Intro Scene 3

Day becomes night as you appear to be exiting through not a set of stronghold doors, but the modest door of an apartment building into the it's courtyard.

The courtyard has a small garden with a path leading over a decorative bridge to an iron gate. Through the gate are the flickers of street lights and from that direction comes a feeling of dread and tension.

It begins to rain as Marian steps through the door and closes it behind her...

Overview

The Jacks now stair down the door that leads to the murder they may take a moment to plan their attack as through this gate is the figure of the murderer that has implanted itself into Marian's memory. As the dream Jacks are trained they should be informed that these kinds of nightmares are often hostile and will target the Jack that they are attached to, in this case Marian.

Stepping out of the iron gate the Jacks will look into the street where two figures stand under the spotlight of a street light, all other lights are dim and flicker, focussing attention towards the two figures. One of them crumples to the ground with a stream of red spilling out and beginning to form a puddle on asphalt.

The killer stands motionless with a hood covering their face. It hasn't noticed them but if the Jacks or Marian approach it will turn to them and attack. This leads to the main complication for this scene and most likely a combat with the killer who, as Marian's Nightmare, has taken on the traits of a puppeteer Jack.

Occupants

Faceless killer - the killer that the players are trying to determine the identity of

Timmy - The kid next door, he becomes visible once the Jacks see that the Killer doesn't have a face. He is standing in the yard opposite the direction the Jacks have come from watching everything. He only

Weather

Overcast - no effect.

Secrets

In a sewage grate underneath the wall leading up to the stronghold is another troll if the players decide to look around that area. It offers to trade a player's trinket for a troll explosive. A troll explosive can be used to apply Burning and Pushed to everything in a 10DU radius when thrown.

Nightmares - Faceless Killer

The faceless killer appears in all 3 dreams in this mini campaign. If the players keep loosing or become fearful of the faceless killer you may decide to have one of the players take on the faceless killer as a nightmare for future campaigns.

Faceless Killer fight

The Faceless Killer is a Puppeteer Jack and the players will face him at 3 points throughout this campaign. He starts at level one and each time the players encounter him he will be a higher level. In this encounter the players need to incapacitate the killer long enough to get a good look at his face to achieve their goal. Destroying the killer will result in the goal being failed. For this fight, give your players control over Marian's actions as they instruct her on where to move and what to do to keep her protected.

The Faceless Killer will try to go towards Marian if the opportunity is there. As a Nightmare they are unpredictable and act at the same time as the Jacks, so the players will have to try to predict your actions in order to interact with the killer. As the GM you may want to write down what you plan to have the killer do before the Jacks say what they are planning on doing. You could then reveal what he does and then play out how all the characters interact.

As a note try to encourage the players to not make "if then" statements and instead encourage them to commit to one course of action that may or may not work. This is to emphasise that they lose their tactical edge against an unpredictable opponent. When playing out the rounds, abilities will miss if the killer moves out of range and some attacks may not be able to be

Getting a good look at the killer's face will show that he doesn't have one at which point Timmy will yell from the other side of the street, at this point the Faceless killer will try to puppet Timmy using his first ability if he can and then try to use Timmy to distract the players while he goes for Marian. Timmy is a regular one of Marian's occupants in regards to traits. Once Timmy is seen the players need to defeat the faceless killer to allow the dream to end calmly and for everyone to wake up.

Faceless Killer Nightmare 1

Portrait



Aethers

Luc 0 Men +2 Emp +1

Specialisation - Lvl 1 Architect

Passives

Gain control of any Detached occupant at any time, the hostility scale increases by 1 every time this occurs. These are your puppets. The Puppets cannot do things that cause direct harm to itself or others. You can control a number of occupants equal to your level.

Abilities

Apply Detached to a nearby occupant. Or apply Fugued to a Jack or Aura.

Weapon - Daggers

2 D4 slashing attacks with the poisonous augment.

- 1 - Shaken
- 2 - Hazed
- 3 - Poisoned
- 4 - Bleeding

Affinity - Nightmare

Passives

Failing wake checks simply involve the nightmare slinking away to whatever corner of the dreamer's mind they lurk in.

Each player must roll a d6 if they are nearby the Nightmare, on a 1 they receive the Feared condition.

Characteristics

The faceless killer does not speak or show emotion, it seems driven to only cause harm.

Trinket - Cloak

When receiving the Shaken condition, roll a d6, on a 5 or 6 you do not take the condition.

Marian's dream resolution

Primary Goal

Identify the face of the killer or some other information that can be used to find the killer

Secondary Goal 1

Marian has held questionable acquaintances, find the name of her previous partner without her knowing.

Secondary Goal 2

Ensure no harm comes to Marian, she is a high profile dreamer and excess stress looks bad for Watson.

Rewards

With Timmy being revealed to the players, they have achieved their Primary goal to find a lead by finding another witness. This gives the players 3 experience.

If the Players were bold enough to grill Marian on her past partners names, or found the hint in the puzzle, they achieve this secondary goal, rewarding 1 experience.

If Marian made it through the dream without receiving a permanent condition then the players have succeeded at the other secondary goal, rewarding 1 experience.

Achieving all of these is great for the syndicate and they are willing to spend more resources on the Jacks in their next dream, granting them an extra communication and dream stabiliser for the next mission.

Failure

You are able to fail the dream by having all the Jacks wake up or by having Marian wake up. In this case you will receive 1 experience and any experience for secondary goals you were able to complete. Rather than doubling down the main consequence for failure is the loss of any information about the faceless killer, or about Timmy. Timmy still gets introduced but there is no information other than some speculation that he may have seen something.

Progressing to the next dream

A week passes and Watson now needs some information from Timmy. It has become common practice to involve Jacks in all investigations as there is always some information that can be gathered from dreams. The Jacks are brought back onboard to find out more info through Timmy's dream.

Timmy Wallace

Who is Timmy Wallace?

Timmy is a kid caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is a ten year old kid living in a nice family home in a wealthy area of town. He is a creative kid that enjoys playing make believe with his friends and loves his toy collection.

On his way to collect his favourite toy, his red fire engine, he found himself becoming a first hand witness to the murder of Achilles Grey.

Watson needs to find a lead to the murder and they are running out of leads. The Jacks need to find something and so after the appropriate legal permissions are gained, they party up and enter into Timmy's dream.

Goals

Primary Goal

Identify the face of the killer or some other information that can be used to find the killer

Secondary Goal 1

Timmy's dream needs to remain as calm as possible, the Chaos scale cannot go above 15.

Secondary Goal 2 —

Try to ensure that Timmy remains cooperative after the dream, The Hostility scale cannot go above 14.

Scenes

Timmy's Room —

The Jacks find themselves in the middle of a giant battle going on in timmy's bedroom between his toys and some cloaked space monsters.

A long way down —

The Jacks need to find a way down to the ground outside. They can head out the window and traverse the pipes and pot plants to get down. Or they can brave the stairs and Scruffy.

The Street Again—

The Jacks come face to face with the Murderer once again. This time the Murderer runs away holding something. Chase them down. Let's go Fire truck.

Dream Features

Æthers

Luc 0 Men 0 Emp +2

Natures

Creative - These dreams are filled with a wide variety of occupants and scenarios.

Busy Brained - There are double the number of occupants than the usual in these Mark's dreams.

Hostility Scale

Timmy's hostility scale starts at 10 meaning that any negative interaction will have the occupants become cautious of the Jacks.

Chaos Scale

Timmy's chaos scale starts at 9.

Traits

Fast - These occupants double their move distances.

Creatures - Some of these occupants are creatures and work under the Menageries creature rules.

Ranged - These occupants have the Ranged Augment.

Weapons

Timmy's occupant's weapons are often electrified .

Scene 1 - Timmy's Room

Intro Scene 1

Carpet stretches out in front of you. It's close as if you've woken up from lying on the floor. A large wooden bannister descends from what would be the ceiling above you but the scale of everything is off. The bundled up fibres of the carpet are like strands of rope and the dresser on the other side of the room seems enormous.

You go to stand up but find that you are already standing and as you look at your hands you see plastic arms attached to dodgy plastic hinges that make up your hands and fingers.

You realise that you are a toy currently standing under a rocket car bed frame. A line of army men hold some sort of front that stretches from one bed post to the next.

"Soldier! You need to get yourself back on the front line!" Says a Commando action figure. Standing next to him is a T-Rex with huge green fists for hands.

What do you do?



Overview

The Jacks need to find a way to get out of this room and down to the street outside. There is a problem, between them and the exits are alien portals appearing to block their path. They have two options, head towards the door and take the stairs, or head to the window and get down that way.

Under the bed is the headquarters of the resistance, led by Commando and Rex and surrounding the bed are army men forming a perimeter.

Attacking the army men are these strange bug type creatures with cloaks covering their faces and bodies allowing sharp talons and legs to poke through the cloth.

This will be a large battle where the Jacks work with Timmy's occupants to help the Jacks make it to the door or the window.

Occupants

Commando - Your standard goofy drill sergeant, he yells but tends to act like he's using swear words but never actually says any.

Rex - Is also goofy but in an overly enthusiastic way as though he made a deal with the devil and needs to make the most of his punching fists.

Weather Indoors.

Secrets

During this battle it is possible for the alien portals to be destroyed and if they are, they grant 6 chaos weapon charges for the Jacks. These add a d8 chaos condition to a weapon attack when used.

Nightmares - nil

The Bedroom Battlefield

The Battle is held at a stand still until the Jacks try to make a break for an exit either towards the door or towards the window.

A key obstacle to both directions are the alien portals. Each round a portal releases 1 Cloak bug to attack the lines of army men. The portals themselves can be destroyed but only by receiving the Broken or Shattered condition which shatters them, any other condition will result in a d6 chaos condition being applied to the attacker.

The doorway is a flat stretch with 3 portals along its path, there are 2 cloak bugs guarding each portal to begin with and the door is 500 DU away.

The window is closer with the wall beneath it being 200DU away and with one portal and 3 cloak bugs guarding it. The wall has a radiator that can be climbed to get up to the windowsill 100DU above, this radiator applies the hot condition to anything touching it. On the windowsill is another portal with 3 cloak bugs guarding it.

Leaving through the doorway or through the window ends the scene.

Cloak Bugs Speed - 25DU	Army Men Speed - 35DU	Commando/T-Rex Speed - 35DU
Lucidity - 0	Lucidity - 0	Lucidity - 0
Mentality - -1	Mentality - 0	Mentality - 0
Empathy - -1	Empathy - 2	Empathy - 2
Weapon die - d6 piercing attack, Pinning augment. 1 - Shaken 2 - Hazed 3 - Pinned 4 - Pinned 5 - Pinned 6 - Wounded	Weapon die - d6 piercing attack, Ranged augment 1 - Shaken 2 - Hazed 3 - Pained 4 - Pinned 5 - Pained 6 - Wounded 7 - Miss 8 - Miss	Weapon die - 2 d4 Blunt attacks, Electrified Augment. 1 - Shaken 2 - Hazed 3 - Charged 4 - Broken
Traits - Pinning, Spiked.	Traits - Fast	Traits - Fast

Scene 2 - A long way down

Based on the previous scene head to Stairs or Windowsill for the next section.

Intro Scene 2 - Stairs

Racing out of the door you find yourself half way down a hallway. At one end is a set of stairs at the other in a large dog bed and lying in it, looking straight at the party is Scuffy. Scuffy is a Bishon Frise, commonly referred to as those white crusty eyed little dogs, but this dog is not little. It is in fact, quite colossal and it springs into action.

The top of the stairs are 500DU away...

Overview

Keep track of how many rounds it takes to get to the downpipe using a d20. This will matter later.

Scuffy is a colossal creature that is very strong compared to the Jacks

The Jacks have got to make their way to the stairs before the dog eats them and then make their way down the stairs to the front door. Note that Attacking and using aggressive abilities on scuffy increases the dream's hostility scale.

Each step is 25DU tall, 25DU long and 80DU wide and there are 14 steps to get down. Jumping down the steps is a normal lucidity decisive roll where failing results in receiving the Pained condition. Scuffy will nervously wait at the top of the stairs barking for 5 rounds before following the players at 2 steps per round.

At the base of the stairs is a 100DU dash to the open door that leads into the front yard and the next scene.



Occupants

Depending on how well the previous scene went, the Commando or Rex or both may be able to follow you

Commando

Rex

Scuffy

Speed - 60DU

Lucidity - +5

Mentality - +3

Empathy - +5

Weapon die - d10 piercing, Expansive, Breaking.

1 - Shaken

2 - Hazed

3 - Broken

4 - Pinned

5 - Broken

6 - Wounded

7 - Broken

8 - Severed

9 - Wounded

10 - Executed

Traits - Rideable, Augmented

x 2, Cute, Fast.

Special - Is so intimidating that it applies Feared to the Jacks the first round it is seen.

Weather

Indoors.

Secrets

Scuffy can be tamed for a huge benefit in the next scene.

Nightmares - nil

Intro Scene 2 - Windowsill

The window opens into the night where rain patters on the rooftop. There is a tiled roof that stretches over a veranda heading out towards the street with rivers of water running along it. You notice some large holes in the roof that the water drains into and realise that these tiles aren't very stable. You can also see some snails around the size of yourselves, At this size they don't look very friendly.

There is a commotion going on in the street and the faster you get there the better your chances

At the very corner of the rooftop is a downpipe that you assume would lead to the ground.

Overview

Keep track of how many rounds it takes to get to the downpipe using a d20. This will matter later.

The Jacks need to get over to the down pipe but there are some traps and obstacles in the way. They have 400DU to travel, the tiles are 20DU wide so the players need to cross 20 tiles, and it doesn't need to be more complicated than that, they need 20 successful tile crosses to reach the downpipe. Each tile however has a 1 in 6 chance of breaking when a player moves over it, this happens when a 1 is rolled on a d6 when moving over it. If it breaks, any Jacks on the tile must make a hard Lucidity decisive roll or they will fall to the ground and receive a Wounded and Broken condition. The strength of a tile can be determined before stepping it by making a normal Mentality decisive roll, then rolling the 1d6 to see if it will break. There are however 3 snails slowly making their way over to the Jacks, they are not inherently violent but would need to be persuaded against trying to slime the Jacks.

The 8th and 16th tile have streams of water passing over them which apply Pushed and Wet to anything that moves through it. If a Jack gets caught in this stream they only have 75DU(likely 1 round) to try to get out with a hard lucidity decisive roll or some other means. If they get swept off, they crash to the ground and take a Wounded and Broken Condition.

The downpipe is a safe water slide to the ground.



Occupants

Depending on how well the previous scene went, the Commando or Rex or both may be able to follow you

Commando

Rex

Snails

Speed - 20DU

Lucidity - 0

Mentality - -1

Empathy - -1

Weapon die - d6 Water, Pinning.

1. Hazed
2. Wet
3. Pinned
4. Cold
5. Pinned
6. Glazed

Traits - Armoured, Rideable, Grounded

Weather

Raining - Applies Wet to everything outside every 5 rounds.

Secrets

Snail Slime can be collected from the snails to apply pinned to a target when used.

Nightmares - nil

Scene 3 - The Streets Again

Intro Scene 3 - The Street Again

The rain pours over the pathway to the front gate and in the distance you can see the faceless killer standing over the body. They are giant in comparison to you and are holding a large briefcase filled to the brim with papers. A light flashes and something startles them, they begin to run.

They run fast and you wonder how you are possibly going to be able to catch up to them, and then you see it. The glistening red paint job on Timmy's favourite toy fire engine parked half way down the path.

The chase is on.

Overview

The faceless killer is At this point the Faceless killer is 500 DU plus 100 DU for every round taken to make it down to the ground, The D20 you were recording with earlier. The faceless killer runs at a constant 100 DU per round.

For the players, every 500 DU is a large puddle that requires a manoeuvre to pass by without the Firetruck receiving the Glazed condition. This manoeuvre is a normal Mentality decisive roll for the driver. Every Glazed on the vehicle makes these checks one difficulty harder.

The players have either Scruffy or their fire truck.

In a round, a vehicle can move, it can then either attack, move again or perform some sort of manoeuvre to overcome an obstacle.

Once the Jacks get within 300 DU they can start using ranged attacks, but the faceless killer will start using attacks and abilities back at them.

Fire Truck - Heavy Vehicle

Move Distance - 100DU

Passengers - 1 to 10

Maximum Conditions - 10

Weapon - d6 Water attack with the ranged augment

Traits - Fast, Weapon Mount, Enclosed

Once you get within 50DU of the Faceless killer, the players can see the metal clasp holding the briefcase closed, one successful attack, ability or Hard Mentality Dream weave will open it right up exposing the files inside.

If it opens the documents explode all over the street, each paper has the bold font of "Business Partner - James Miller" printed across the top with various other scribbles underneath.

Occupants

Depending on how well the previous scene went, the Commando or Rex and maybe even scruffy may be able to follow you

Commando

Rex

Scruffy

Weather

Raining - Applies Wet to everything outside every 5 rounds.

Secrets

Snail Slime can be collected from the snails to apply pinned to a target when used.

Nightmares

Wandering into the tall grass at this point has a 1 in 20 chance of encountering a giant black garden spider and kicking off a slowly growing nightmare related to giant spiders.

Faceless Killer Nightmare 2

Portrait



Æthers

Luc +1 Men +2 Emp +1

Specialisation - Lvl 1 Architect

Passives

Gain control of any Detached occupant at any time, the hostility scale increases by 1 every time this occurs. These are your puppets. The Puppets cannot do things that cause direct harm to itself or others. You can control a number of occupants equal to your level.

Puppets have an additional Trait, in this case it will be spiked. additionally, remove all conditions from an occupant when it becomes a puppet.

Abilities

Apply Detached to a nearby occupant. Or apply Fugued to a Jack or Aura.

Take control of any target for one round. The target can do anything they would usually be able to do in a round regardless of any conditions on them. Targeting an Occupant or Aura Increase the hostility scale by 1.

Weapon - Daggers

2 D4 slashing attacks with the ranged and expansive augments.

- 1 - Shaken
- 2 - Hazed
- 3 - Poisoned
- 4 - Bleeding
- 5 - Miss
- 6 - Miss

Affinity - Nightmare

Passives

Failing wake checks simply involve the nightmare slinking away to whatever corner of the dreamer's mind they lurk in.

Each player must roll a d6 if they are nearby the Nightmare, on a 1 they receive the Feared condition.

Nightmares can hide in plain sight and requiring a decisive roll two difficulties higher to be seen while doing so.

Characteristics

The faceless killer does not speak or show emotion, it seems driven to only cause harm.

Trinket - Cloak

When receiving the Shaken condition, roll a d6, on a 5 or 6 you do not take the condition.

Timmy's dream resolution

Primary Goal

Identify the face of the killer or some other information that can be used to find the killer

Secondary Goal 1

Timmy's dream needs to remain as calm as possible, the Chaos scale cannot go above 15.

Secondary Goal 2 —

Try to ensure that Timmy remains cooperative after the dream, The Hostility scale cannot go above 14.

Failure

You are able to fail the dream by having all the Jacks wake up or by having Timmy wake up. In this case you will receive 1 experience and any experience for secondary goals you were able to complete. The Players still move onto James Miller for their next mark but they have a very loose connection and have less of an idea as to him being the killer.

Progressing to the next dream

Watson is convinced that James Miller is linked to the killings or could even be the killer. Often getting a confession from a mark of their involvement in criminal activity will hold in courts so an in dream confession is valuable. The Jacks are brought back on board to figure out if James Miller was involved in the Murder of Achilles Grey.

Rewards

With a stronger connection to James Miller, the Jacks now move to enter James Millers

If Timmy's dream did not go above 15 on the chaos scale, one secondary goal is achieved, rewarding 1 experience.

If Timmy's dream did not go above 14 on the hostility scale, the other secondary goal is achieved, rewarding 1 experience.

Once again Achieving all of these is great for the syndicate and they are willing to spend more resources on the Jacks in their next dream, granting them an extra communication and dream stabiliser for the next mission.

James Miller

Who is James Miller?

James Miller is the business associate of Achilles Grey. They had planned on going into business together on some sort of project they had been working on and they seem to be connected to the murder in some way.

The players are in for a shock as the dream is about to be a lot more intense than they had been expecting, as this is the dream of the killer and they have a lot of angst and regret filling their mind.

Goals

Primary Goal

Identify the killer, if you suspect it to be James Miller, try to get a confession out of him.

Secondary Goal 1

Determine the nature of the project James and Achilles were working on.

Scenes

Floating platforms —

The Jacks find on a series of floating platforms, these appear to be fragments of memories making their way down to a tangled maze of the Mark's mind.

The Maze —

A huge maze stretches out in front of the players and somewhere in there is what the Jacks came to find.

The Arena —

After making their way through the maze, the Jacks find a huge arena and James' Aura is running the show. The players fight off porcelain dolls as James embodies the faceless killer for a final bad guy showdown.

Dream Features

Æthers

Luc +1 Men +3 Emp +1

Natures

Self Centred - There are almost no occupants in the dream. There is always an Aura.

Intelligent - The Mark and their occupants think they are pretty smart.

Orderly - The Mark starts making wake checks at 15 on the chaos scale. Take care not to get stuck in these dreams forever. The dream's chaos scale decreases by 2 each scene.

Hostility Scale

James' Hostility scale starts at 13

Chaos Scale

James' chaos scale starts at 5.

Traits

Brave - These occupants cannot receive the Feared condition.

Lost - These occupants begin the dream disconnected from their Mark with the Detached condition.

Brainy - These occupants gain +2 to their Mentality.

Keen eyed - Decisive rolls to see things are one difficulty easier for these occupants.

Cagey - Decisive rolls to speak with these occupants are one difficulty harder.

Weapons

James' occupants weapons are often Orderly

Scene 1 - Floating Islands

Intro Scene 1

Darkness

With a flash of lightning, Grey storm clouds light up like the neurons of a brain across the sky. It lights up for a brief moment the dull greys that make up the dream. You stand on a small floating island looking over a giant open stone maze. From your vantage point you see the maze move and rearrange twisting and folding over itself.

Beside you stands a dead tree and leaning against it, the unmoving body of a porcelain doll.

Another shock jolts across the sky lighting the maze once more. A voice echoes across the whole dream from the direction of the maze.

Voice 1 "Tick tock Miller, you're running out of time"

Voice 2 "My work, please no, my work, you can't"

Overview

The islands leading down to the maze are all suspended in the air but even though their position is surreal, their surface is highly detailed and normal. There are a series of about 8 small islands all resembling parts of a pre-Ætherlink suburb such as parks, streets and shop fronts. The players can make their way down the small gaps between the island without any trouble, passing through each environment to get to the entrance of the maze, however there are 3 with notable scenery on them.

The first is the island with a large knotted willow tree that has lost most of its leaves. Against it is a detached porcelain doll that remains motionless but can be interacted through Jack abilities and is generally sad and resentful towards the Jacks if they are awoken. The tree has the initials M.P. and J.M. carved in a heart on the tree.

The second is a hall that is filled with many empty fold out seats. There are many shattered porcelain dolls but standing out are a row of 3 intact dolls close to the front, these dolls express envy and try to steal from the players and run if awakened. One stands up at the podium and is embarrassed and fearful if awakened.

The Third is the carpark of a baseball stadium that is shadowed by a bandstand. On the curb sits a small doll holding a bat and a glove. If interacted with, the doll is aggressive and will lash out at the Jacks.

All the islands are intended to create a sense that the Jacks are delving deeper and deeper into some emotional key moments from the marks past, getting younger as the islands continue.

Occupants

The platforms are scattered with porcelain dolls that are disconnected from the Mark's mind. Many of these dolls are shattered and a pieces spread over the floating islands.

Weather

An electrical storm lingers above and around the platforms - Applies Zapped to anything outside every 5 rounds.

Most of the dream is grey scale but with a huge amount of detail in everything that is lit up whenever lightning strikes.

Secrets

Baked goods can be sniffed out and found throughout the islands, tucked away in little patches of colour. On use they remove a random condition.

They can be found on the windowsill of a house, inside a store on an island, and in the bandstand. Players can find these areas by taking the time to snoop around the islands.

Nightmares

The porcelain dolls can manifest as nightmares in a Jacks mind if they are particularly put off by them.

Scene 2 - The Maze

Intro Scene 2

Large stone columns rise as an entrance to the maze.

They are covered in dead vines that hold large thorns among them. Bits of porcelain scatter the floor of the maze and just the faint smell of baked shepherd's pie wafts through the entrance.

Voice 2 "How could you do this"

A muffled response "It's just this one time"

Voice 2 "Please, I need this I'll take you down with me"

A muffled response "You can't"

Voice 2 "You give me no choice"

A muffled response "I'll make your Choice"

The sky flashes with red lightning.

In front of you is a T intersection made from these huge walls.

Overview

This maze is not a big choose your own adventure style tree of possibilities but instead will mimic a maze without being one. There will be instances where the players decide which way to go based on some information, making a more informed decision will lead to the Jacks having a pleasant time through the dream. The Maze will then present the next decision whether or not the players initially went left or right and the same for the next until the players reach the central arena after making their way through 3 paths.

The Maze morphs behind the players into halls filled with shattered dolls if the players decide to backtrack they will initially be told that a violent screech like a bird comes from down the path and if the path is followed a dead end appears with a birds nest made of doll parts with a colossal sparse feathered nesting parakeet. The Parakeet protects their nest and has a weapon lodged in their wing.

Occupants

The platforms are scattered with porcelain dolls that are disconnected from the Mark's mind.

Colossal Parakeet

Speed - 50DU

Lucidity - +5

Mentality - +3

Empathy - +3

Weapon die -2 d8 piercing, Bleeding, Cleaving, Chaotic.

1 - Shaken

2 - Hazed

3 - Bleeding

4 - Pinned

5 - Bleeding

6 - Wounded

7 - Bleeding

8 - Severed

Traits - Flying, Augmented x 3.

Special - Is so intimidating that it applies Feared to the Jacks the first round it is seen.

Weather

The high walls protect the Jacks from the electrical storm.

Most of the dream is grey scale but with a huge amount of detail in everything that is lit up whenever lightning strikes.

Secrets

The Parakeet's Talon, A sword that is a d8 slashing weapon, with Bleeding, Chaotic cleaving augments and the Mastercrafted Legendary Augment.

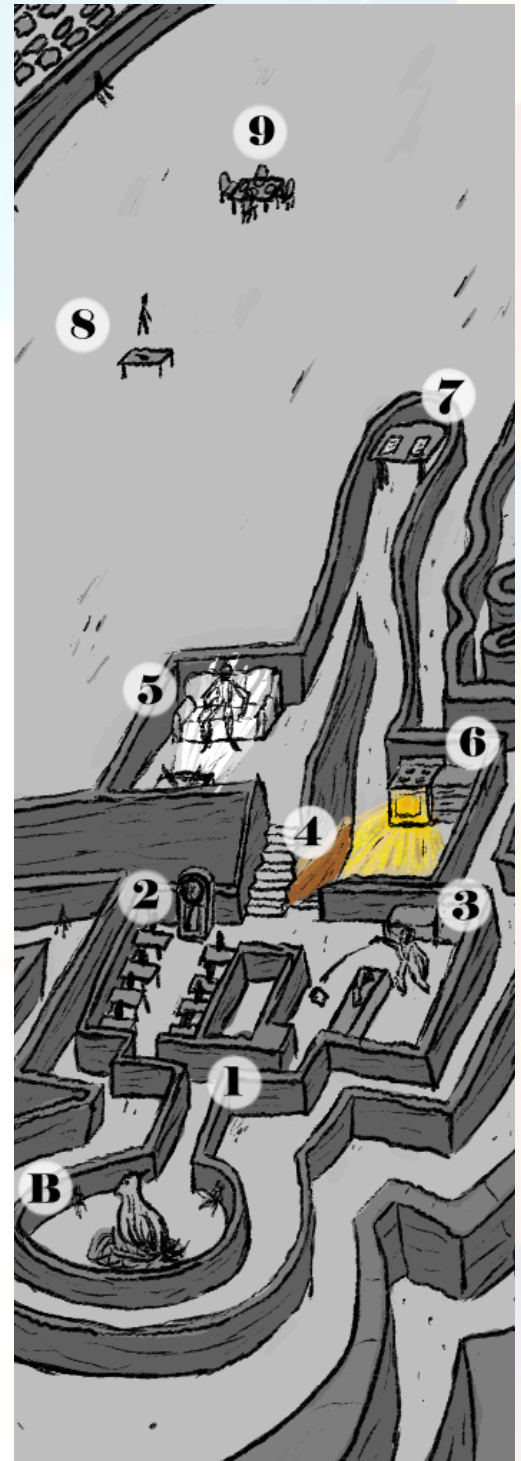
Nightmares - nil

The Maze Outline

Back tracking leads to encountering the Parakeet in its nest.

1. Left or Right - The first option posed to the players is whether to follow the right path with a carved marking of a heart and the faint sound of punk music or to take the path to the left which simply has the sound of a ticking clock coming down it.
2. Left - The left path resembles an office with workers, and takes the Jacks through rows and rows of desks each with a doll sitting at them. The hallway continues on forever with a large grandfather clock always at the end of the hallway and always getting further away from the Jacks. If the Clock is Slowed, Frozen, Cold, Broken or something else that makes sense, it can be approached.
3. Right - This leads to a meeting with a very angry doll representing the breakup with Marian Pendergast, The doll is an occupant that surprises the Jacks by throwing glassware at them and beginning a combat. They can be calmed or destroyed to move on.
4. Up or Down - Huge stairs ascend and descend in front of the Jacks. Up the stairs is the sound of a Baseball game on the TV. Down the stairs comes the sweet smell of cinnamon.
5. Up - The Jacks enter a room where a doll of a man sits in the centre of the room, completely ignoring the Jacks. The TV has static on and the dolls face is that of static. Interacting with anything in this room gives the Glazed condition.
6. Down - The Jacks head down into a warm and colourful kitchen. There is no-one in the kitchen but there are cinnamon rolls in the oven. There is a roll per Jack and they can be used to remove a random condition and apply the Hot condition.
7. One or Two - The Jacks move back into the Maze where a table stands in the centre of the room. Two piles of papers are on the Table, One with just James Miller's name on the cover, the other with both Achilles Grey and James Miller's name on it. Reading either of the papers gives info on an insurance loophole. Taking either one of the papers whisks the Jacks off into darkness.
8. One - The Jacks find themselves in a room with a granite kitchen bench in the centre, on it is a very stylish kitchen knife. At the other end of the room is an occupant. This occupant will try to get to the knife and then attack the players, it cannot be destroyed unless the knife is used on it. Killing the occupant with the knife applies Panicked to the Jacks. The Jacks move onto scene 3.
9. Two - The Jacks sit at a table in a run down building where paint peels off the walls. Half filled plates of rotten food in front of them. Eating gives Judged, Getting up gives Distracted and waiting gives Doubtful. The Jacks simply need to wait 3 real time minutes. The Jacks move onto scene 3.

Map



Scene 3 - The Arena

Intro Scene 3

Lights flash onto the Jacks in the centre of a grand arena. The stands are empty but of the size that could seat tens of thousand people. The sky is once again visible above and flashes with red lightning.

Coming from 8

The Jacks find themselves standing over the body of Achilles Grey.

“When given the decision, you would have done the same, so don’t place yourself higher than me.”

A man with a face covered in cracks comes into view from across the arena. With him are 3 dolls holding various makeshift weapons.

“I know why you have come and your prying ends here.”

Coming from 9

The Jacks sit at the table still.

“I bet you think you are so special and clever, but you don’t know me”

A grey coated man comes into view from across the arena. With him are 3 dolls.

“You are not going to get what you’ve come for so it’s time for you to leave”

Overview

The dolls start running towards the Jacks and the big bad boss fight with James Miller begins.

James Miller will stay back and try to keep away from the Jacks where possible, letting his dolls do the work. Around the arena are more dolls for him to puppet if one of his is taken out or if he uses his ability to shatter one.

The Jacks need to try to incapacitate him. He is much more aggressive if the players came from the 8 path.

The Jacks need more of a confession from him if they came from the 9 path and need to incapacitate him and interrogate him to gain a confession.

Occupants

Aggressive Porcelain Dolls

Speed - 25DU

Lucidity - +1

Mentality - +5

Empathy - +1

Weapon die - A variety of

physical weapons with

Bleeding, Orderly and

Defensive

1 - Shaken

2 - Hazed

3 - Bleeding

4 - Bleeding/Broken/Pinned

5 - Bleeding

6 - Wounded

7 - Bleeding

8 - Severed/Paralysed

Traits - Brainy, Brave, Keen eyed.

Weather

The high walls protect the Jacks from the electrical storm.

Most of the dream is grey scale but with a huge amount of detail in everything that is lit up whenever lightning strikes.

Secrets

The Parakeets Talon, A sword the is a d8 slashing weapon, with Bleeding, Chaotic cleaving augments and the Mastercrafted Legendary Augment.

Nightmares

If one of the Jacks has the Faceless Killer Nightmare from previous dreams. Give James Miller, the Cloak Trinket and Short Ranged Augment.

Jame Miller's Aura

Portrait



Æthers

Luc +1 Men +3 Emp +1

Specialisation - Lvl 1 Architect

Passives

Gain control of any Detached occupant at any time, the hostility scale increases by 1 every time this occurs. These are your puppets. The Puppets cannot do things that cause direct harm to itself or others. You can control a number of occupants equal to your level.

Puppets have an additional Trait, in this case it will be spiked. additionally, remove all conditions from an occupant when it becomes a puppet.

Puppets may cause direct harm and fight for you. Additionally, puppets now have the same Æthers as the Puppeteer.

Abilities

Apply Detached to a nearby occupant. Or apply Fugued to a Jack or Aura.

Take control of any target for one round. The target can do anything they would usually be able to do in a round regardless of any conditions on them. Targeting an Occupant or Aura Increase the hostility scale by 1.

Apply Shattered to a Puppet applying 3 Pained, 3 Hazed and 3 Shaken to everything nearby.

Affinity - Melancholic

Passives

All decisive rolls you make are one difficulty harder. Once per scene you may automatically succeed on a decision below the dire difficulty (18+).

In addition, occupants and auras see you as less of a threat. As long as there is another Jack nearby, they will be targeted instead of you.

begin each dream with the Doubtful condition.

choose to fail a decision roll without making the roll to receive a lesser Complication.

Characteristics

Unlike the Faceless Killer, James is very emotional in this dream and each attack seems pained.

Trinket - Cloak

3 Baked goods that remove a random condition as a Quick Ability.

Weapon - Daggers

2 D4 slashing attacks with the Bleeding, Orderly and Defensive.

- 1 - Shaken
- 2 - Hazed
- 3 - Bleeding
- 4 - Bleeding

James' dream resolution

Primary Goal

Identify the killer, if you suspect it to be James Miller, try to get a confession out of him.

Secondary Goal 1

Determine the nature of the project James and Achilles were working on.

Rewards

Getting a confession out of James Miller is necessary to succeed at the primary goal.

The documents on the table give information on an insurance loophole which is enough to determine the project's nature, rewarding 1 experience.

Failure

If James Miller is woken or the players are woken during the dream, then a long court case begins with Watson bringing in other dream Jacks to try to break James Miller and the party is taken off the case. The party has not gained favour with Watson and they need to have another supervised case to graduate.

Progressing to the next dream

If the dream goes well, James Miller is found Guilty of the murder of Achilles Grey. It is determined that they had a fight over a billion dollar project to exploit a loophole in G.I.B. Timmy goes back to his toy battles, and Marian goes back to her museum job. The party of Jacks graduate from Watson and go out into the field on their own and a new campaign begins.

What Next?

Extra Missions

If the Jacks failed or were struggling a lot in these first sessions it may be worth doing a few more simple missions before the Jacks leave Watson. The players may want to change their Jacks and try something different which would be encouraged.

Moving on from Watson

If the players are ready to move on you can take a few different options.

1. Move straight into an Aether Jacks campaign to continue the more directed story lines that have been prepared. For this option you will all end up in the same syndicate on a 10 session long campaign linked to a key player in the Overworld. These Campaigns have your players generally working together to solve puzzles, combats and make their way through interesting storylines.
2. Unleash your players on a home-made world to explore. During these stories your players may end up siding with different syndicates and having different goals for each Mark. Marks may be one off missions or linked to a larger story and there is more opportunity for inter-player conflict and personal exploration of goals.
3. If your players are keen to focus more on their Jacks and leave the Overworld behind, send them to Chimera to explore an ever evolving world that is run through roll tables and random events. Chimera gives many more opportunities for the GM to swap players between sessions or even play a Jack themselves in the game.