

PREVIEW
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Gamemaster's Guide

BEYOND DARKNESS AND MADNESS

KULT
◊ DIVINITY LOST ◊

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introduction

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THE SPRAY PAINT FELT TACKY ON MACK'S FINGER, THICK AS DRYING blood. LOOK! The graffitied word glistened like an unanswered challenge. Whoever'd tagged the wall had skills to reach this secluded rooftop. And they had some balls to mark her territory. But where were they?

Mack crossed the metal gangway between buildings, ignoring the winds tugging at her jacket. Far beneath her feet, the city street churned; an angry river of light, motion, and summer heat. Yet, on the other side, the air grew colder, almost autumnal. The rooftop's mechanical stink surrendered to fragrances of spice and incense. An infinite silence coiled around her. Another tag stained the high-rise's wall in wet, ruddy colors. LOOK!! A crude arrow pointed upwards. Instincts, old and primal, told her to run.

But Mack found herself ascending. There, she discovered an impossibility; an archway rising from the rooftop like an organic growth. Although framed by vibrant skyline, its interior revealed nothingness – a starless void that rippled like oil. She sensed something watching her from that impenetrable dark. "Look," it said. She did. And the darkness swallowed her whole.

FOREWORD

Welcome to **Beyond Darkness and Madness** – the game-master's guide for *KULT: Divinity Lost*. This supplement outlines the gamemaster's (GM's) in-game obligations and responsibilities, including upholding the *Horror Contract*. Furthermore, it provides them with useful tools for managing the conversation and their Moves, and offers insights and inspiration for creating their own characters, stories, and settings. To this end, the supplement is divided into three books; *Storytelling*, *Atmosphere*, and *Reflections*.

BOOK ONE – Storytelling

KULT: Divinity Lost stories can – and should – possess continually evolving narrative levels, requiring the GM to be prepared before, during, and after each game session. Book One provides the tools and inspiration for upholding the GM's Agendas, as well as offers new Principles and Moves to achieve them. In addition, tools for maintaining and expanding the game's fiction will be provided, allowing the GM and players to personalize their experience.

Chapter One – Theater of the Fearful Mind discusses how to construct compelling stories, sustain an effective conversation, and uphold the Agenda. Tools for effectively using the Principles and fiction are discussed. These include effectively using soft and hard GM Moves, as well as generating Moves unique to each story. An in-depth discussion on establishing the *Horror Contract* is provided, including specific techniques for invoking fear in the players. Finally, suggestions for understanding the players' motivations and weaving them into the story will be discussed throughout.

Chapter Two – Foundations of Dread further explores the Intrigue Map and downtime, as well as techniques for generating and sustaining both short- and long-term story arcs. Additional tools for creating bombs, events, and Dramatic Hooks are provided, including how they can enhance the conversation. Finally, advanced GM techniques are discussed, such as new storytelling styles, running generational campaigns, and developing alternative settings.

Chapter Three – Flesh and Soul provides the tools for generating dynamic non-player characters (NPCs), such as Contacts and Leaders. This includes how to develop their narrative roles throughout long-term campaigns. In addition, the chapter provides additional tools for creating comprehensive Cults, Groups, and Organizations, as well as how these hubs can be woven into the underlying narrative and Intrigue Map.

Chapter Four – Pillars of the False Heaven discusses how to create believable and detailed places, i.e., locations. Additionally, this chapter outlines how to introduce the various Influences and Higher Powers into these locations, as well as using GM Moves to enhance the narrative. Finally, the chapter provides the tools for combining places into dynamic campaign settings, such as towns/cities – both real and imaginary.

Chapter Five – Arcana and Apparitions provides new tools for developing new objects and monsters, as well as using them as story-centric elements. In addition, the chapter discusses how these hubs can become integral to the player characters (PCs) and how they can expand the overall narrative.

BOOK TWO – Atmosphere

While characters, settings, and plot-lines are vital to telling successful stories, the GM must infuse their narratives with *atmosphere* to push them to the next level. The world of *KULT: Divinity Lost* drifts between several types of horror, ranging from the grotesque to the sublime. The Atmosphere chapters provide the GM insights into each sub-genre, as well as the tools and techniques for incorporating them into their stories.

Chapter Six – Of Fears Unknown

explores the complex concepts of modern cosmic horror and existential dread as well as their effect upon the PCs and their perceptions. It provides tools and inspiration for weaving these unsettling themes into compelling narratives. The chapter also includes an in-depth analysis of the Influences and how the Higher Powers and Realms affect Elysium and Humanity as a whole.

Chapter Seven – Disturbing Behaviors

explores the concepts of extreme horror and graphic violence. The chapter provides the tools and guidance for striking the proper balance between disturbing and repulsing the characters (and players) with unsettling imagery and situations. The chapter also explores various styles of extreme horror and ways to portray the realism of pain.

Chapter Eight – New Flesh, Ancient Desires

explores the transgressive concepts of body horror and eroticism, delving into the corruption and transformation of body and self. The chapter discusses the various themes and narratives involving the Flesh, and provides tools for introducing the transformative aspects of horror. Finally, it explores the issues of role-playing sexuality and intimacy, while adhering to the *Horror Contract*.

Chapter Nine – Exquisite Horrors

explores the narrative concepts of the sublime, an aesthetic literary technique where beauty and horror mesh together. Heavily rooted in gothic horror, the sublime's atmospheric and philosophical ideals are naturally infused within the *KULT* mythos. The chapter provides tools for developing these ideas, and expressing them throughout the game's narratives.

Chapter Ten – Prisons of the Self gives the gamemaster a guide on how to handle trauma in play and explore the inner horrors of the player characters.

Outlining the Boundaries

The *Horror Contract* should be established prior to or at the beginning of the first session (KDL, p. 172). This helps the GM and players set the boundaries for their stories, and will provide insights into what narratives and themes they wish to explore – or avoid – early on. In addition, this collaborative agreement allows the players an opportunity to request concepts and ideas that will challenge and frighten them throughout the role-playing experience, intensifying their investment in the game itself. It also provides GMs with insight into what pre-generated scenarios the players may wish to alter or avoid all-together.

Specifically, the GM and players should establish two key elements of the *Horror Contract*: *What They Fear* and *What Is Forbidden*. This allows the GM to *Know Their Players* by learning what narrative elements will frighten them and which are strictly forbidden. Although *KULT* stories *Dare to be Unpleasant*, the GM must respect the players' boundaries to establish the safest and most enjoyable roleplaying experience. Nor are they entitled to explanations, even if they seem odd. The player's word is final; the *Horror Contract's* purpose is to create the safest 'terrifying' gaming experience possible for the players.

What They Fear

Although they portray characters, each player possesses their own fears. By recognizing and reflecting these personal anxieties, the GM can increase the player's tension and draw them deeper into the story. The players themselves can infuse these fears into their characters, exploring them through Dark Secrets and Disadvantages during gameplay. Again, this creates investment in the narrative, increasing their disquiet and unease.

In short, What They Fear is the players' wishlist for their *KULT* experience. Each player notates what subjects they want to frighten them. They should try and write more than just one word. As an example, writing "Claustrophobia" can help the GM but if they try to describe why they fear it and what emotions are connected to it, then they give the GM much more to work with. With the player's consent, the GM can ask additional questions to better *Know the Player*.

To continue the example with claustrophobia: After elaborating and having been asked some questions from the GM they establish that the sound of a door locking is enough to cause discomfort in the PC. Together they decide that this will be connected to the PC's Dark Secret and the player decides to pick **Phobia** as one of their Disadvantages.

Doing this has given the GM several tools to use in the game:

- ◆ The GM adds "Claustrophobia" to the PC's Dark Secret on the Intrigue Map.
- ◆ "Claustrophobia" is added to the "What They Fear" part of the *Horror Contract*.
- ◆ She makes a mental note to emphasize the sound of locks whenever the PC's **Stability** has dropped a few steps.
- ◆ The Move "**Separate Them**" and "**Capture Someone**" can now be made more impactful by connecting them to the PC's **Phobia**.

What is Forbidden

Although *KULT: Divinity Lost* explores many dark subjects, the GM and players are not compelled to roleplay themes that offend or upset them. Both the GM and the players add things they don't want to see in the fiction. These themes are compiled together and listed on the *Horror Contract*, so the group knows they are forbidden and not to be introduced under any circumstances, even off-screen. This will help the GM and players shape their specific narratives, as well as initial character creation. Furthermore, if they are accidentally introduced by players during gameplay, the GM simply states that the topic is "forbidden," and requests the player alter the scene appropriately. No explanation is required.

What is Forbidden should not be used to eliminate integral aspects of the *KULT* mythos; e.g., "I don't want the Archons to be a part of our game." Instead, the actions/effects of these narrative aspects would be restricted. For example, forbidding "sexual violence and/or the ramifications thereof," might limit stories involving the Death Angels Chagidiel and Gamaliel, but they'd still remain in the general fiction. Similarly, characters with **Sexual Neurosis** may be unsuitable for that particular game. The GM and players should simply proceed with respect and understanding.

Evolution of Horror

As a general rule, the GM can introduce concepts/themes not yet addressed as Feared or Forbidden into the narrative. However, she should still use common sense, drawing guidance from the group's specific *Horror Contract*. Furthermore, as the game progresses over the long term the group may wish to amend their specific *Horror Contract*, adding or subtracting themes from the *Fear/Forbidden* lists.

Prior to each session, the GM can ask if the players wish to amend the *Horror Contract*. If no amendments are required, the session proceeds normally. If amendments are requested, The *Horror Contract* is then adjusted accordingly. Note, unless every player consents, no Forbidden themes should be removed – only added. The GM should remain cognizant of these changes, and change the story appropriately.

Similarly, the GM may wish to provide content warnings for each session, if she has specific themes she wish to introduce. This allows players the opportunity to request amendments, if necessary, without disrupting the story mid-game. She may also wish to add *Forbidden* themes to the *Horror Contract* herself. As above, she does not need to explain this amendment; only inform the players of the required change.

Author Note: The core rulebook for *KULT: Divinity Lost* is cited throughout this supplement. For all page citations marked KDL, please refer to material in the core rulebook (ex: KDL, p. 160). All other page citations reference material within this supplement.



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- ◆ **Group:** A group of misfits and misanthropes, the Spirit-Talkers have effectively taken over the local pub, meeting there every night. Like the PC, most of them are victims of **Visitations**, and believe the pub's cellar sometimes opens into another reality (it does).
- ◆ **Leader:** One of the PC's **Street Contacts**, the ageless woman, lives in the city park. She offers sage advice to those who bring her fresh honeycomb and milk. She rules over the vagrants and runaways like a queen, holding court every solstice.
- ◆ **Monster:** The PC is a **Survivor** of childhood violence, and their imaginary friend murdered their abuser. The ancient entity has returned from Limbo, and wishes to resume protecting them from any threats.
- ◆ **Player Character:** The PCs worked together. While on a corporate trip, they witnessed the ritual murder of their colleague. This unsettling encounter has forever entangled their lives, as they deal with the consequences thereof, as **Victims of Crime**.

CONTRAST

Contrast hubs represent plot points paralleling the main narrative and/or PC story arcs. These offer the players another perspective on the events their PCs experience, possibly even offering new opportunities. Contrast hubs provide the GM more narrative freedom to allude to vital plot information and foreshadow possible events to come, thus adding to player tension.

- ◆ **Event:** A dozen people disappear from the local trailer park, leaving only one comatose survivor behind. The mass **Strange Disappearance** mimics the PC's childhood trauma in disturbing ways. It triggers buried memories, driving him to dig deeper. Later in the conversation, the GM incorporates the survivor as another hub.
- ◆ **Leader:** The PC and his former classmate encountered something inhuman beneath the city, mentally scarring them with **Forbidden Knowledge**. Recently, the roommate has had a meteoric rise in political power, after several competitors mysteriously quit or died.
- ◆ **Monster:** The PC encountered his doppelgänger, living the life he'd always dreamt of. He murdered it, but it didn't stay dead. Now, **Guilty of a Crime**, the PC must deal with its machinations and watch it live his life from the outside.
- ◆ **Organization:** After his **Occult Experience**, the PC recognizes the supernatural threats posed by his particle research. However, his previous funder, the Mayweather Foundation, has taken his findings and continued pushing the boundaries.
- ◆ **Player Character:** The PCs are both **Chosen** by the Daughter of Knives. One PC completely denies his destiny, resisting his cult's influence and refusing her gifts. The other plays the dangerous game of accepting her gifts, hoping to use them to eventually destroy the Forgotten God.

Links

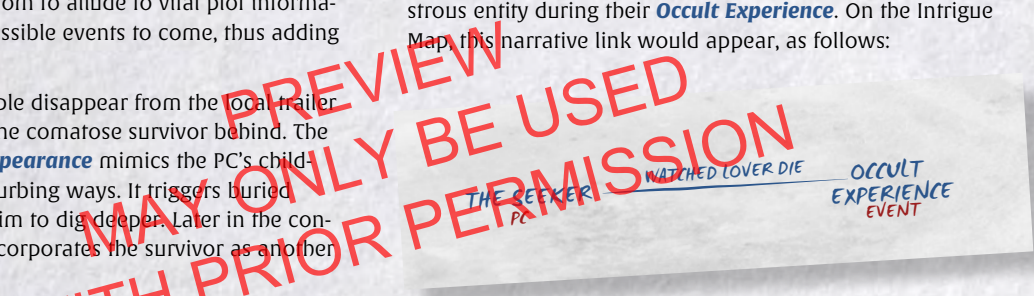
On the Intrigue Map, *links* represent the narrative threads connecting the various story hubs together. The GM should provide each link with brief descriptive tags, representing some story element, such as background information, character traits, motivations, Reactions, symbols, themes, etc. These descriptors depend on the link's purpose within the Intrigue Map, used to better define the relation between hubs. Furthermore, although the descriptor on the Intrigue Map may be brief, the GM and players are free to develop them, adding more complexity. In most cases, links fall under one of three definitions: *narrative*, *plot*, and *relationship*.

NARRATIVE LINKS

Narrative links bind two hubs together, possibly without the PC's knowledge. On the Intrigue Map, these are marked as narrative elements, such as past actions, experiences, and influences. However, narrative links cannot be further resolved, as they've already occurred. Be they emotional, mental, or physical, these plot elements create the narrative foundation upon which the story arc rests, influencing and shaping the PC and their world.

Depending on their defining statement, narrative links may act more like hubs, creating additional story arcs and indirectly affecting other connections and aspects in the PC's life.

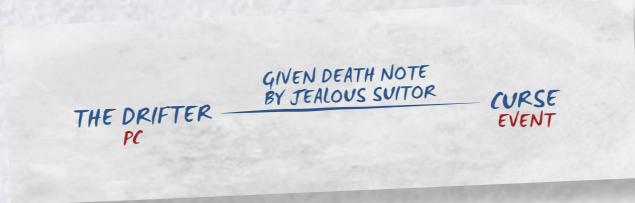
The Seeker watched his lover horribly killed by some monstrous entity during their **Occult Experience**. On the Intrigue Map, this narrative link would appear, as follows:



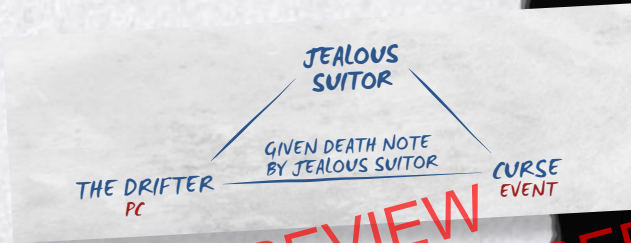
This traumatic experience prevents the PC from making intimate connections with other people, including his closest **Relation**. His continued secrecy about this incident has created additional stress on his relationship. As such, this narrative link could spawn a relationship link; connecting the PC, his **Relation**, and the **Occult Experience** on the Intrigue map. The GM may develop this connection further, be it through bombs, Moves, or Reactions. *What happens if the relation begins digging into the PC's mysterious past? What if he discover the horrible truth? What if something finds him first?*

Although the players contribute to developing narrative links, the GM ultimately controls and defines the link's true nature. The players may be unaware of how these links are actually connected to and define their PCs' lives. The GM should create story elements directly associated with the conjoined hubs, fleshing them out, as well as providing the context shared between them. In turn, these connected hubs offer perfect opportunities when developing new bombs, Moves, and Reactions, and even additional hubs/links.

The Drifter describes his **Curse** simply as, “Been cursed with a death note.” The GM secretly develops this into a narrative link, fleshing out its background influences. She decide the death note originated from the PC’s former suitor, driven mad by their unrequited affections. As the story begins, the PC – and player – remains completely unaware of the **Curse’s** true origins.



Later in the story, the GM reintroduces the suitor into the character’s life, adding them to the Intrigue Map as a new contact hub with links to the character and their Dark Secret. As the suitor becomes more integral to the conversation, the GM and player can further develop these new narrative links to define the previous relationship and the curse itself.

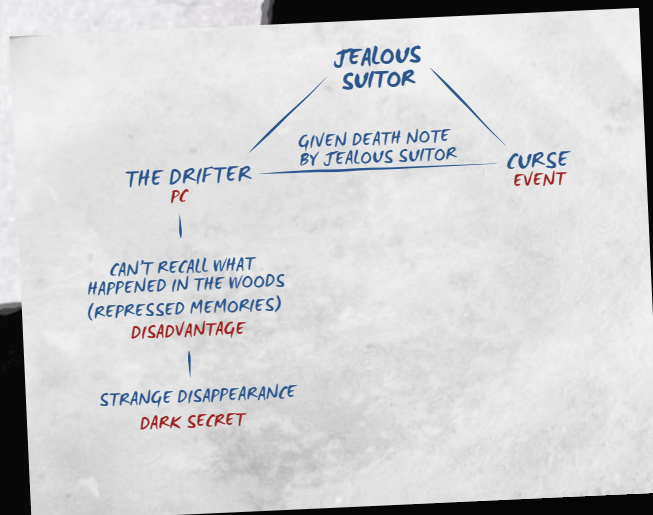


PLOT LINKS

Plot links represent significant narrative elements that directly affect the Intrigue Map’s hubs and its story arcs. By their nature, they are compelling forces within the conversation, motivating the connected hubs toward some form of narrative resolution. In most cases, they are directly tied to the PCs and story elements associated with their various backstories. Plot links continuously progress and evolve, creating potential challenges and worldly changes for the PCs. Supplementing the main storyline, these story arcs promote narrative depth and nuance.

Many plot links are also tied directly to the characters’ Advantages, Dark Secrets, and Disadvantages. As such, these qualities can simply be added to the Intrigue Map, in conjunction with the link’s descriptor. Combined, these represent the story arc and its background.

The PC’s **Repressed Memories** are directly linked to the circumstances around the **Strange Disappearance** of his nephew. The player defines this link as, “Can’t recall what happened in the woods.” On the Intrigue Map, the GM represents this as:



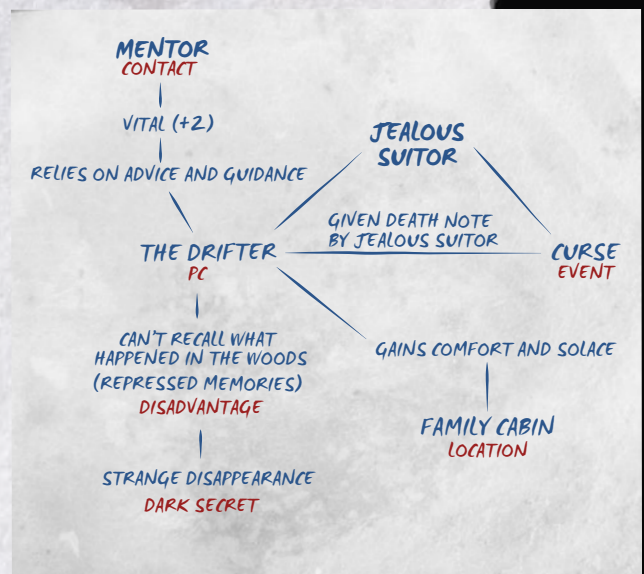
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Important plot links can become heavily intertwined throughout the Intrigue Map, looping back to the original hubs or connecting to new ones, as well as spawn additional narrative and relationship links. In this fashion, creative GMs and players can create entire narratives to produce complex and compelling stories.

RELATIONSHIP LINKS

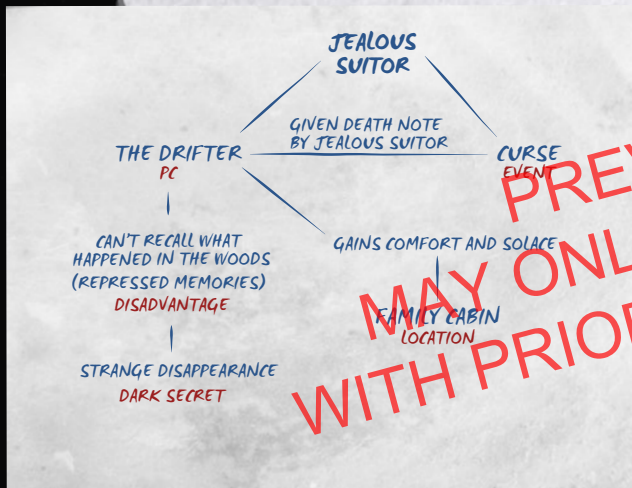
Relationship links define the connections between the PCs and each other, as well as major NPCs. These links also represent aspects of this emotional connection. As such, the links can also represent the PCs' more conceptual relationships, such as those with places and objects.

The PC's **family's cabin** provides him with *comfort and solace*, representing his intimate connection with the building and the land around it. He deeply cherish the location, and his emotional bond with it motivates his daily life. If threatened, this would have significant importance to the PC.



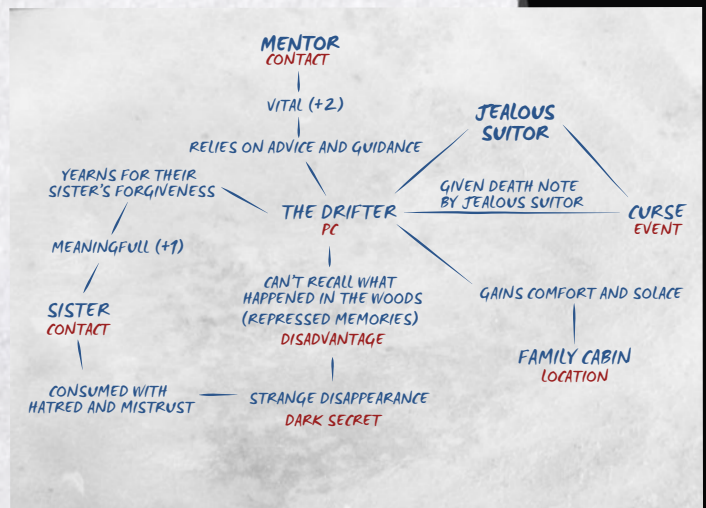
Additionally, relationship links can be unequal or change over time, depending on the associated character arcs. As with plot links, the GM does not need to reveal all aspects of each relationship link to the player immediately. She simply record the dual links and assign descriptors to both on the Intrigue Map.

The PC with **Repressed Memories** yearns for his sister's forgiveness, struggling to discover what actually happened during the **Strange Disappearance** of his nephew. However, his sister (**Meaningful +1**) is consumed with *hatred and mistrust*, and believes the PC is responsible for the **Strange Disappearance**. She's secretly plotting to avenge her son's death and developing into an adversary, without the player's knowledge.



Relationship links can also help the GM keep track of the PCs' **Relations** on the *Intrigue Map* (p. 47). In addition to recording the link's descriptor, the GM also includes the relationship's social strength (*neutral, meaningful, or vital*). Similarly, as the story progresses and the PCs' relationship hubs/links intensify, the GM can modify the links to signify their evolution into true **Relations**.

Over the years, *The Drifter* has maintained an intimate relationship with his mentor (**Vital +2**). Whenever *he need advice*, he go to her, as she is the only person he trust. Indeed, without her council, the PC would fully succumb to his worst impulses.



Keeping It All Together

When managing the Intrigue Map, the GM must remember its fundamental structure relies upon story arcs, represented by the hubs and links. As with episodic storytelling, these story arcs progress along with the main conversation, adding depth and nuance to the campaign. More importantly, they help define and expand the PCs' narratives, deepening player investment, as they directly contribute to these story arcs through the conversation.

PROMOTE NARRATIVE CONNECTIVITY

From the first session, the Intrigue Map develops alongside the PCs and their Dark Secrets (KDL, p. 167). As the shared story evolves, the players and the GM add new hubs and links, representing newly established connections, events, and threats. Whenever possible, the GM and players should interlink these narrative arcs between several PCs, providing additional plot points and opportunities to interact. This helps enrich the conversation and allow everyone to participate in the collaborative process.

For example, *The Artist* (**Pact with Dark Forces**) and *The Prophet* (**Guardian**) are linked together via their mutual connection to **Rebecca** – an aspiring philosophy student. This singular connection potentially provides numerous character interactions:

- ◆ Rebecca's affections for **The Artist** are intensifying, and she wants their relationship to become more than platonic.
- ◆ **The Artist** also wants a relationship with Rebecca, but remains standoffish, afraid that their supernatural tormentor (**Pact with Dark Forces**) wants to possess her.
- ◆ Rebecca considers **The Prophet** to be her mentor, but feels nothing beyond this.
- ◆ **The Prophet** is secretly protecting Rebecca (**Guardian**) and falling in love with him.
- ◆ **The Artist** knows **The Prophet** is hunting his demonic tormentor, but he's too afraid to reveal the truth.
- ◆ **The Prophet** wants to help **The Artist** rediscover his faith, but his jealousy over Rebecca clouds his judgement.

Each of these relationships can be expanded into a story arc, supplementing the conversation. They can also tie the PCs together via additional hubs and links, such as *The Artist's* demon [Hub: Monster], which *The Prophet* seeks to destroy [Link: *Must stop demon*].

With each additional character involved, the potential number of connections expands, as each engenders new dynamic relationships. Continuing the previous example, *The Veteran* is connected to **Rebecca** as she oversees his rehabilitation [Link: **Nightmares**]. As such, this potentially connects them with *The*

Artist and *The Prophet*, creating unique relationships with both. In turn, these further strengthen the group's character bonds and interactions.

This interconnectivity promotes balanced and dynamic character development and encourages new story threads. Although the GM does not need to detail every potential connection, this lays the narrative groundwork for their potential incorporation into later stories.

MAINTAINING NARRATIVE CONTROL

In contrast, while the Intrigue Map promotes character and narrative development, it can potentially weaken the story structure holding the conversation together. Left unchecked,

the Intrigue Map can devolve into a convoluted web of meandering threads and dead ends, creating confusion and frustration for the GM and the players.

Although the GM may be tempted to weave several hubs into the Intrigue Map, she must remember these additional layers of complexity may inadvertently detract from the story she want to tell.

In short, the Intrigue Map must complement the conversation, not compete with it for center stage. Generally speaking, the GM should only allow two to three personal arcs per PC at any one time; even less in larger gaming groups. Introducing more may detract in several different ways, including:

- ◆ The Intrigue Map becomes increasingly convoluted and difficult to maintain.
- ◆ The story arcs lose importance, obscuring one another until they fade into the background.
- ◆ Time constraints ultimately deny players equal time in the spotlight.

As discussed above, the GM and players should frame the Intrigue Map's story arcs so they turn back in on one another, rather than away. Not only does this create narrative connectivity, but helps maintain control and coherency.



RELATIONS

Humans are social creatures that desire emotional and spiritual connections with those around them. In *KULT: Divinity Lost*, this social interconnectivity is reflected through **Relations** (KDL, p. 170), which represent important relationships in a PC's life. In addition to established PC-to-PC Relations, these also include connections with important NPCs. They can be wide and varied, ranging from the PC's favorite barista to their beloved spouse, from their concerned proctor to an overbearing parent. In each case, interactions with the NPC lend the PC some form of personal significance, lending them inner strength and stability.

On the Intrigue Map, these Relations may represent Contacts, Leaders, and Groups/Organizations. As the story progresses, these relationships can evolve and affect the PCs, as well as influence the narrative. The following suggestions can help the GM manage these relationships, as well as better utilize Relations to expand the conversation and fiction.

Relation Strength

As discussed in Chapter 2, Relations can represent important hubs and links on the Intrigue Map (p. 47). Each social link is provided with a narrative descriptor for the relationship, as well as indicates its relation strength; for example, *does research for (0)*, *never judges (+1)* and *brotherly love (+2)*. The descriptor can guide the GM in roleplaying the NPC, as this represents their core motivation when dealing with the PC. These descriptors can also reveal why the relationship began, as well as why it continues. The GM is encouraged to ask questions to expand upon the established Relation and the circumstances it formed under. They and players are free to incorporate any unused PC Relation options or develop their own.

During character creation, **The Detective** needs to establish three NPC Relations. He takes the unused informant option from their Archetype, described an NPC *who snitched for them back in the day (meaningful, +1)*. Next, he describes his former partner from the police force, *who saved him from his addiction (vital, +2)*. Finally, he creates the lady at the midnight cafe, *who always has pie for him (neutral, 0)*.

For most Relations, the relation strength will be **neutral (0)**. However, this does not mean these relationships lack true importance within the narrative. Indeed, they may be significant to the overall story and/or the PC's life, adding subtext and complimenting subplots. The GM can position them within the Intrigue Map, establishing intricate connections between the different

hubs. Effectively, the **neutral** degree represents that the NPC plays some important role in the PC's life, but lacks true intimacy.

Although **The Detective's** relationship with the Pie Lady is only **neutral (0)**, the player considers her narratively significant to their character. She and the midnight cafe are his sanctuary away from the death and ugliness of his work. Although he barely knows her, the woman's smile and friendliness provide him solace. The GM incorporates both the NPC and the Location into the fiction. As the game progresses, both become recurring features in the story.

More intense connections are reflected by **meaningful (+1)** and **vital (+2)** Relations. While many of these represent close friends and family, the GM and players can establish complex and compelling Relations that incorporate non-traditional relationships. As previously stated, these represent the PC's personal connections with their world. The Relation's strength effectively reflects how that relationship fulfills and sustains them mentally and spiritually. Indeed, the narrative importance of the PC's Relation may have little to no meaning for anyone else. Only the GM and player need to understand the significance, as well as how it can affect the story.

The Drifter has a **meaningful (+1) Relation** with the park ranger, *who lets her camp for free*. She cares for him deeply, as he treats her like a human being. In contrast to her years of abuse and neglect, his small kindnesses have won her loyalty and respect. In many ways, she considers him family and will do anything to help him.

Finally, the GM and player should establish if the Relation's strength is mutual or represents an unevenly balanced relationship. Although the PC may consider the connection vital, it may only be **meaningful** or **neutral** to the NPC – if anything at all. These emotionally lopsided relationships can make for compelling narratives with numerous opportunities for roleplaying. Indeed, the GM may wish to create contrasting Relations, where the NPC feels the complete opposite of the PC. In effect, the PC's significance is based on their feelings for someone who doesn't reciprocate them – or may even be hateful towards them.

The Drifter has a **vital (+2) Relation** to their daughter, whom they left behind. Struggling with her literal demons, she didn't wish to endanger the child she loves more than life itself. However, her daughter doesn't understand this sacrifice and hates her mother for abandoning her. Although the **vital Relation** affects *The Drifter*, it has little to no effect on the daughter – it may even be considered a negative **Relation** (see below).

CHANGING RELATIONS

Relationships continually evolve, being affected and altered by narrative events. As the story progresses, Relations can become more important to the PC, increasing their connection. Depending on the



circumstances of this change, the GM may wish to also change the narrative descriptor, reflecting the new connection. These changes usually take place during downtime, but can occur in-game during dramatic moments.

The PC's **neutral** street contact frequently gives them the **lowdown (0)**. However, after warding off crazed Hellers during the story, they become more reliant on each other. The **Relation** increases to **meaningful (+1)**, and their link is redefined as *bonded over adversity*. Although the contact still provides them information, their relationship continues to deepen. Optionally, the player can request this be increased to **vital (+2)**, reflecting the PC's desperate need for the **Relation**.

At the end of each session, players may request one Relation be changed by **+1** or **-1** (KDL, p. 135). The player needs to explain the reason behind this change, as this affects the narrative and overall fiction. As above, these changes usually take place during downtime. However, depending on the Relation's importance to the story, the GM may request the PC resolve certain plot points in-game prior to changing its strength. Similarly, for fairness, if this Relation is with another PC, both players should agree upon the change, especially if they have a Relation as well.

The PC's **meaningful Relation (+1)** with **The Deceiver** revolves around their shared *on-again-off-again relationship*. However, the PC learns of *The Deceiver's* infidelities and the player requests the **Relation** be reduced to **neutral**. Conversely, *The Deceiver's* player requests to increase their **Relation** strength with the PC to **vital (+2)**, reflecting their love and desire to win them back. Both players agree this will add new roleplaying opportunities, and the GM makes the appropriate changes to the Intrigue Map.

Completely new Relations can develop throughout the story, usually manifesting as **neutral** Relations; although, more intense interactions can raise the Relation strength further. Similarly, various Advantages and Moves can directly increase Relations, such as Forked Tongue and Seducer, or even spontaneously create them, such as Academic Network. In these cases, the GM and player should work together to best define the new NPC and their relationship. This can later be expanded during downtime, but should become an important and recurring part of their narrative – as well as the Intrigue Map, if necessary.

The player fails the **Keep It Together** roll after confronting a Child of the Underworld. They become *obsessed* with it, gaining **+1 Relation**. Although this is a *negative Relation* (see below), the character succumbs to their unnatural attraction, dreaming and thinking of the creature constantly, and seeking it out at every opportunity. The GM adds this creature to the Intrigue Map and begins developing it further during downtime.

Relation Moves

As with important relationships, Relations can inspire and motivate the PCs, as well as influence their beliefs, feelings, and actions. Due to this intimacy, the PC can manipulate the Relation into doing odd or abhorrent things, all to preserve the emotional connection. Similarly, the PC may find it difficult to ignore the Relation's sway over them. The more powerful the connection, the harder their influence is to ignore. During the conversation, the following Moves can be used to represent these complex interactions. These optional Moves are in addition those listed in the core rulebook (KDL, p. 135.)

Take Advantage: The PC can attempt to *take advantage of their Relation*, using the shared intimacy to force the character into doing something outside their normal beliefs. For example, this can be an abusive use of *Influence Other* or some similar interaction. Prior to taking advantage of their trust, the player rolls **Keep it Together**. On a *complete success (15+)*, they may proceed as normal. On a *success*

with complications (10–14), they can proceed, but must reduce their **Relation** strength by one. In the case of *failure (-9)*, they cannot bring themselves to proceed, reduce their Relation value by one, and suffer **-1 Stability**. Note: these factors are in addition to any factors associated with the action itself.

Resist Influence: The PC can actively resist someone's influence when a **meaningful** or **vital Relation** emotionally forces them to act against their best interests. The player rolls **Keep it Together**, subtracting the **Relation** strength – reflecting the difficulty to resist strong relationships. On a *complete success (15+)*, they resist the influence and can deny the request. The **Relation** strength is reduced by one. On a *success with complications (10–14)*, they can choose to refuse the request, but suffer **-1 Stability**. In the case of *failure (-9)*, they cannot resist the request and must fulfill it accordingly. Also, the GM can require the **Relation** strength be increased.

Inflict Emotional Harm: A **Relation** can *inflict emotional harm* on the PC, or vice versa. In effect, they use the relationship against the target. The player must roll **Keep it Together**, subtracting the **Relation** strength. On a *complete success (15+)*, the emotional harm has no true lasting effects. The **Relation** strength can be immediately reduced by one. On a *success with complications (10–14)*, the PC suffers **-2 Stability**, but cannot reduce the **Relation** strength. In the case of *failure (-9)*, the emotional harm inflicts a condition on the PC (KDL, p. 126). The GM may request the **Relation** strength be increased by one.



◆ **Shorgun Shack:** Thanks to its stubborn owner, the one room house has survived nature and time. Lawn chairs sit in front of the brightly painted home, usually occupied by one or more of the neighbors. Hundreds of photos line its interior; faces of an entire community, who've come and gone over the years.

◆ **The Penitent Smile:** Graffiti artists have transformed the railway tunnel's entrance into a leering grin. Locals visit the painted mouth, calling their secrets into the dark void. People believe that the Burnt Man waits deep inside, offering forgiveness to the worthy. All attempts to permanently close the tunnel have failed.

◆ **Museum of Broken Things:** Situated under the mall, the museum is open daily to the public. The owner is a man of indeterminate age, who has an encyclopedic knowledge of the city. People bring damaged items here; broken toys, torn books, ripped clothing, etc. All were destroyed during local tragedies.

◆ **The Monument:** The patinated statue stands at the park's far end. Unmarked, most have forgotten who it depicts. Veterans from different wars spend their days here, playing chess and checkers on the marble tables. They leave game pieces to commemorate their fallen friends at the statue's feet.

◆ **The Owl's Nest:** The English gastropub attracts the city's New Agers, where they can meet and talk about religion and theology freely. Symbology from various different faiths decorate the quaint interior. Local occultists host weekly seminars, and folk bands play every weekend.

WHAT LIES BELOW

Finally, the GM needs to consider the setting's spiritual qualities, even if they never appear physically. In *KULT: Divinity Lost*, every location has an underlying existence, be it Metropolis, Inferno, or another Realm. At any given moment, the Illusion can be shattered through the PCs' actions, revealing the True Reality. This can play into the

conversation, as the GM can utilize her Holds to represent these barriers falling. As such, the GM needs to be continually aware of the place's dark reflection and prepared to present it.

Most locations have some connection to the Higher Powers, as well as their associated geography in Metropolis or Inferno. However, many Realms, entities, and Forgotten Gods can also influence and manifest in specific locales. The GM can connect these otherworldly realms directly to PCs and NPCs, incorporating places from their traumatic lives and fractured psyches. These supernatural connections only need some internal logic, even if the players never fully understand them.

◆ [Limbo] The bedroom is a wonderland of abstract art, surreal paint, and modern fixtures. At night, its dreamlike angles and colors shift and swirl.

◆ [Gaia] Across from the burned out school, the overgrown playground has devolved into nests of weeds and choking vines. Its equipment and furniture are crumbling, as the area slips farther into Gaia's Borderland.

◆ [Inferno] Outwardly, the peaceful kindergarten classroom appears innocent and welcoming. But upon closer look, children's pictures take dark undertones, paint peels in the corners, and low moaning echoes at night. In truth, the room hides the former teacher's purgatory, where they're perpetually tortured for their hideous crimes.

◆ [Labyrinth] At the edge of town, the deserted junkyard remains an eyesore of discarded things. Its maze-like scrap piles shift and change each night, serving as a gateway to the Labyrinth.

◆ [Metropolis] Built in the 1950s, the avant-garde theater has become popular amongst the college crowd. While it features foreign and independent movies, some grindhouse presentations imagery reveal Tipareth's Citadel, slowly corrupting the movie-goers.



PREVIEW
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WITH PRIOR PERMISSION



PREVIEW
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6. Chesed



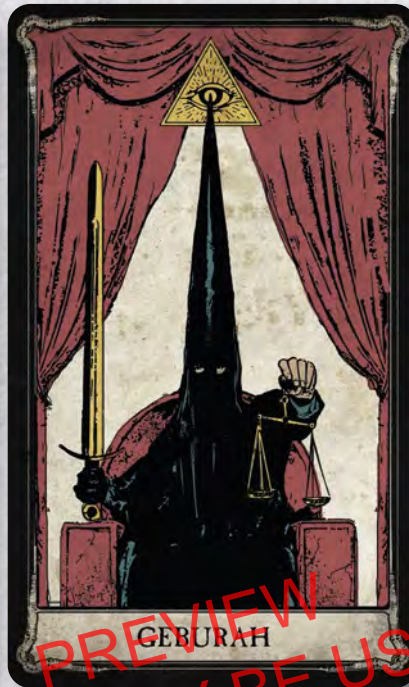
This card represents the Archon Chesed and the Principle of Safety.

Chesed's influence manifests as people's longing for safety, the desire to feel comfortable and safe from dangers threatening you, encouraging friendly behavior, and the sense that you are protected against the unknown and dangerous.

Once, Chesed's servants were to be found amid generous noblemen, monasteries, wise women of the forest, doctors who did anything to find cures for diseases, aid organizations, benevolent charities, and warm-hearted people. Now, his power has faded.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

7. Geburah



This card represents the Archon Geburah and the Principle of Law.

Geburah's influence generates bureaucratic institutions, stricter laws, increased policing, and societal control over its citizenry. Those so influenced yield to increased control, typically out of their fear of chaos.

The Archon has a strong influence over legal systems of every kind. Lictors are often judges, chiefs of police, or lawyers. They have a great presence anywhere bureaucracy is strong, and where laws and rules are used to control people.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

8. Tiphareth



This card represents the Archon Tiphareth and the Principle of Allure.

Tiphareth's influence incites a manic craving for beauty and affirmation, which must be fulfilled by any means necessary. Celebrities are worshipped as prophets, the mediocre waste their days imbibing the internet and television shows, and despise and ignore anyone who doesn't meet the social 'norms.'

Her influence is great everywhere in society, but especially via the media, advertising, and the Internet.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

9. Netzach.



This card represents the Archon Netzach and the Principle of Victory.

Netzach's influence strengthens patriotism and nationalism, unites societies against a common enemy, and feeds the *us-versus-them* mentality. The righteous obliterate all that threaten them, strengthen their military, justify their violence in the name of the Greater Good, and incite people to arm themselves.

His influence is strongest within the military, military academies, private armies, manufacturers of weapons, lobbyists, and mercenaries. Has his largest influence in North America.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

10. Hod



This card represents the Archon Hod and the Principle of Honor.

Hod's influence conflates honor with prestige, elevates one's status among others above all else, and sets the law aside in favor of personal vendettas. Expecting admiration for their adherence to their inflexible values, the honor-bound ruthlessly ostracize any who have brought shame upon themselves by failing to uphold their honor and fulfill the many duties it demands.

The Principle is strongest in areas and communities where the honor culture still is very dominant, including the Middle East and countries in Asia, such as India, Pakistan, and Japan. In large parts of North Africa, Hod's servants and ideology are also still strong, even though these traditions have started to be questioned.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

11. Yesod



This card represents the Archon Yesod and the Principle of Avarice.

Yesod influences society through greed, capitalism, economics, consumer frenzy, and increased corporate power, as well as by promoting the admiration and respect of wealth as a sign of personal intelligence and ambition. It encourages contempt for the poverty-stricken, who are associated with laziness and stupidity, and supports the dismantling of social welfare institutions.

The Archon has control over large parts of the Western world and nowadays also China.

The card shows a connection or opposition to the Archon and/or its Principle. The bond might be in the present, the past, or something that is about to happen.

BEYOND DARKNESS AND MADNESS

Journey beyond the city's neon glow, snaking through fetid alleys and darkened corridors. Descend past echoing subway platforms and smothering steam tunnels. Follow the trails of blood, raining down from the streets and apartments above, perpetually fed by atrocity and sin. Explore the city's darkest labyrinths and ritual chambers, where cold concrete meets warm flesh, where shadows dwell and insanity reigns. Sink into soothing depravity and sublime anguish, where forgotten worlds wait beyond the threshold of darkness and madness.

Beyond Darkness and Madness provide the gamemaster with an assortment of cruel and delicate tools for creating horrifying narratives in a safe and responsible way. The book is divided into four sections:

Storytelling

The narrative aspects of maintaining the Conversation at and away from the table, as well as upholding the game's Agenda, Principles, Fiction, and Moves in the process. Tools and techniques for expanding and utilizing the Intrigue Map, as well as how to generate compelling events, monsters, non-player characters, objects, and settings.

Atmosphere

In-depth examinations of common horror themes and milieus, as well as techniques for using them to enhance the storytelling experience. Experience the wonders of body horror, extreme horror, existential dread, trauma, and the sublime.

Reflections

Reflections provide variant settings for *KULT: Divinity Lost*, opening up new horizons for players and Gamemaster alike to explore. By utilizing the techniques and tools presented here, the Gamemaster can create scenarios and campaigns tailored to the genres of action horror, Asian horror, magical realism, survival horror, uncanny horror, and young-adult horror.

The KULT Tarot

The *KULT Tarot* offers an additional Gamemaster tool for spontaneously generating plots, antagonists, locations, and allies when planning a campaign. It can also be used during play when introducing new locations and characters in the heat of the moment.



Beyond Darkness and Madness is meant for an Adult audience.

You need *KULT: Divinity Lost* to use *Beyond Darkness and Madness*.



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