HIGHWAY TO HELL 2: RETURN TO FLORA



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

AN ADVENTURE SEED FOR USE WITH

CONTAGION SAVAGE EDITION

THANK YOU

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This is for you! THANK YOU!

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CONTAGION SAVAGE EDITION

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Steve Heiden for his continuing faith in helping me bring stories to life across multiple platforms.

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Chris Sweeny at Black Heart Comics for giving me an outlet to do some of my favorite kinds of storytelling: making comic books!

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PRELUDE

Stacy shoved the airbag out of her face, growling in frustration. "I knew we should've come in on foot." Once the airbag was deflated enough for Stacy to look around, she turned her attention to the passenger seat. "You okay?"

Her companion, Roger, shoved the airbag down with his left hand while pinching his bloody nose with his right.

"I think my nose is broken," he replied.

"Better your nose than your neck," Stacy offered as she stepped out of the car.

The front end of the car was wrapped around a signpost. Smoke poured from beneath the crumpled hood. Bits of shattered glass from what used to be the windshield littered the area.

"Car is screwed. We walk from here," Stacy observed.

"Best news I've heard all day," Roger spat as he emerged from the car. "How far is it?"

Stacy looked up at the guide sign that dangled from the cracked signpost. The sign read "Flora 2 miles."

"Not far enough," Stacy said to herself as she walked to the trunk of her car. Roger shook his head and followed her.

"So why are we going," Roger asked. "You said you never wanted to come back here. Can't we just leave well enough alone? Maybe pass this one on to someone else?"

Stacy opened the trunk and began placing an array of weapons and ritual objects into a backpack. Roger looked on, surmising that this might not be the best time to push Stacy's buttons.

"I was here before," Stacy said, shoving a thurible into her backpack. "Seven years ago. It was a bad scene. Cultists, cannibals and inbred hillfolk. I barely made it out alive and some of the people I was with didn't, but I was pretty sure we had shut the cult down. Judging by the shitstorm of weird going on around here these past few weeks I was mistaken."

"Even if it is the same cult," Roger offered, "that doesn't make all this your fault."

Stacy narrowed her eyes as she placed an athame in her belt.

"Time's wasting," Stacy said as she slammed the trunk. "Let's move."

"In and out of hiding places
Soon I'd have to face the facts
Wed have to sit down and talk it over
And that would mean going back"

- Genesis, "No Son of Mine"

Introduction

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora is an introductory adventure for the **Contagion Savage Edition Role Playing Game**.

The world of Contagion is a dark and terrifying place. On the surface it is no different than the world you and I live in. Most people go on about their lives never realizing the terrors that walk among them.

Despite humanity's vast ignorance, the horrors are there. Angels, demons, gods and Hellspawn make war in the shadows. Clergy and Slayers rise from the human flock to protect their brethren and work Yahweh's will. Magi and Witches wield powerful magics in their pursuit of enlightenment.

All these supernatural forces work in secrecy to forward their agendas. However, as the world grows smaller through technology and the factions of the war grow bolder, this secrecy becomes increasingly imperiled. Soon, the masses may learn of the existence of the gods and monsters that walk among them.

Recent events in the world of Contagion have caused things to escalate further. The Winter Solstice of 2012 saw gates open to two otherworldly realms previously isolated from Earth. The beings that came through these gates have their own agendas, and secrecy isn't necessarily among them. The events of that fateful day also caused an unprecedented number of gates opening between Earth and Hell. These Hellgates opened in places where great tragedy, pain and acts of evil had occurred.

This story focuses on one such Hellgate, located in the rural ghost town of Flora, Illinois.

In this adventure, the characters investigate bizarre occurrences that have been happening in the area surrounding Flora. If the characters have played through the first installment of **Highway to Hell**, they may feel a personal responsibility to look into the events happening near Flora, remembering the town from their previous experience. New characters could have any of several motivations for investigating the heightened and seemingly unusual demonic and Hellspawn activity in the area, discovering the history of Flora as part of their investigation.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora is an adventure seed for use with **Contagion Savage Edition**. Rather than being a linear module with events that go from point A to point B, this story seed provides information a Gamemaster can use to flesh out their own unique story. Basic events are illustrated along with character snapshots. The ending is left open and ambiguous, for the Gamemaster to decide.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora serves as an introductory story for **Contagion Savage Edition**. Certain elements of the setting are explored and expanded upon in this adventure seed. Due to the nature of the disturbances and events in **Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora**, characters from virtually any background or faction could get involved with the investigation. Experienced groups can also use this story seed with very minor adjustments made by the Gamemaster to account for the characters' greater experience and resources.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora

Premise

Several communities in Northern Illinois have seen a steady increase in reports of bizarre supernatural activity over the past few weeks. Calls to emergency services reporting unusual disturbances have been so frequent that the phenomena have made national news. While most reputable news agencies and the local law enforcement seem content to write off the strange occurrences as hallucinations, anyone with knowledge of the occult recognizes that the reports are not only plausible, but also frequent and unusual enough to warrant investigation. Characters could be outsiders who choose to visit the region to get to the bottom of these strange reports. They could also be local to the area, witnessing the odd events first hand. Characters who played through the first Highway to Hell will likely not have forgotten what happened in Flora and may begin their search for answers there.

Behind the Scenes

Several years ago an evil cult held numerous ritual sacrifices in the rural town of Flora, Illinois. A small group was able to defeat the cultists and the evil creature that they worshipped, but the infernal activities of the cult left a terrible stain on the town. The activities of Father Tucker left a metaphysical wound in the town of Flora. For years, the effect of this wound was relatively subtle. People nearing the site would find themselves dealing with dark emotions such as hatred, fear and self-loathing. Proper magic would allow a temporary Hellgate to be opened from the spot of the wound, but beyond that there was no supernatural effect of the wound. It was simply a place with a very ugly vibe.

During the winter solstice of 2012, when planetary alignments were peaked to permit inter-dimensional travel, opening of Hellgates and ley line activation, the wound re-opened, festered and mutated. A permanent Hellgate opened on the spot where Father Tucker held his blasphemous rites. This Hellgate was not a normal portal into Limbo. For reasons unknown the Hellgate is leaking throughout the area, making Flora something of a nexus between worlds. Flora exists as part of earth, but the laws of physics are off, the area is hellish and disturbing and magic functions strangely.

In recent weeks there has been increased demonic activity in the areas surrounding Flora. There seems to be a spike in incidents of demonic possession and Hellspawn sightings reaching to the nearby communities of Belvidere and Cherry Valley. Even more disturbing are accounts that these hellish entities seem confused by their surroundings, as if their presence in the area is accidental or beyond their own control.

A note to the Gamemaster: As this module is effectively a sequel to the classic **Contagion** adventure seed **Highway to Hell**, it may require some minor adjustments or explanations from the Gamemaster if the group played through the first **Highway to Hell**. Feel free to adjust items of this story seed to fit your campaign's needs at will.

Objectives

Discover the true nature of the disturbances in the area. Find a way to destroy, close, contain or control the Flora Hellgate.

Setting

While the main portion of the story focuses on the small town of Flora, the disturbances that gain the attention of the characters initially are in the neighboring communities of Belvidere and Cherry Valley. The following section gives a brief overview of those towns and the types of disturbances that are being reported.

Belvidere, Illinois

Located about 8.5 kilometers to the northeast of Flora, Belvidere is a small town built between two large manufacturing plants. On the west side of Belvidere is an auto manufacturer that employs about 3,000 workers from the surrounding communities. On the east side, a canned food manufacturer employs an additional 500 people. Belvidere is relatively unremarkable as far as small Midwestern towns go. There is a small, but vibrant downtown with numerous active storefronts, a local history museum, and a relatively large number of churches.

Several strange occurrences have taken place in Belvidere in the weeks leading up to the arrival of the characters. Feel free to use any or all of these events as bait, enticements or red herrings. The Gamemaster may also add events of their own design to spice things up.

Lolita, Interrupted: A fifteen-year-old student at St. Joseph's Catholic School made her way into the news recently after attacking her science teacher and his wife. Alleging that an affair had occurred and that she was acting out of love for her teacher, the student reportedly broke into the teacher's home while the couple slept, assaulting them both in their bed with a baseball bat and eating a portion of the woman's face before being subdued by the teacher. During her arrest, the young girl claimed that a servant of the devil was responsible for her attacks and she begged to be taken to a priest. The student, whose name has not been released to the press, is currently in the psych ward at Saint Anna's hospital.

Death from Above: a week ago, with no warning, four dozen Canadian Geese committed mass suicide by flying into buildings and moving vehicles in downtown Belvidere. The birds came into town from the Southwest, baffling ornithologists who claim the movement was incredibly unusual for this time of year.

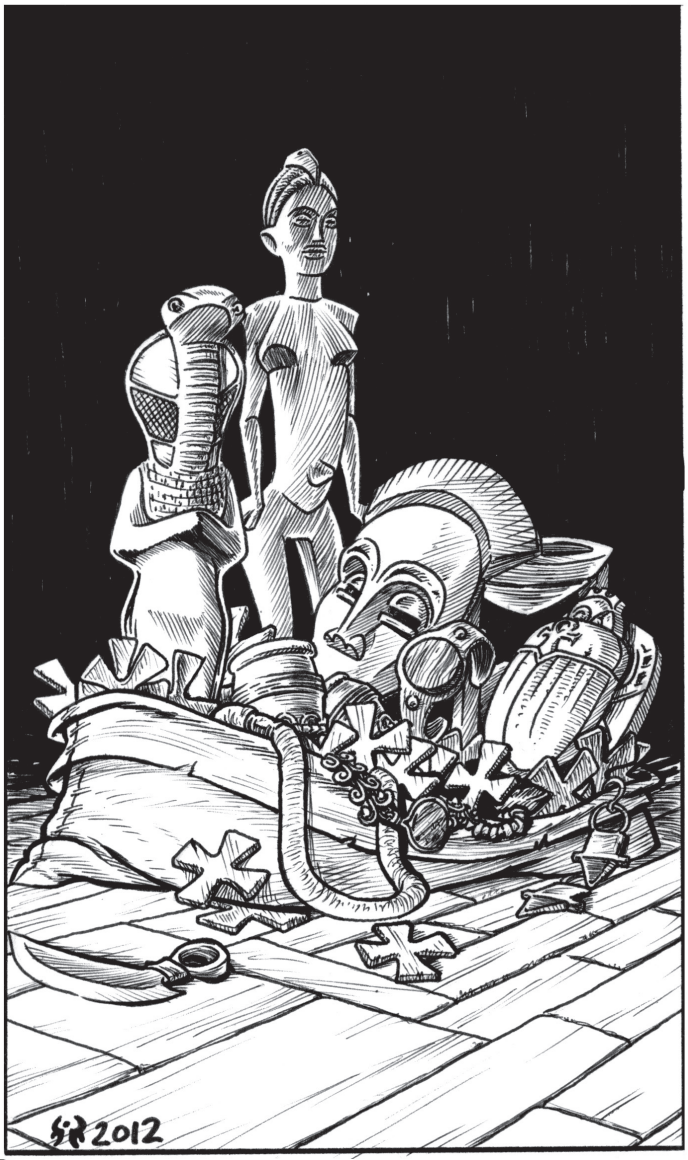
Cemetery Games: A group of four teenagers have gone missing from Belvidere. One of their friends told local police that the kids had intended to go to Blood's Point Cemetery, an old, disused graveyard just outside of Flora. Investigating the area, authorities found the car that the kids had allegedly been driving, abandoned about a kilometer from the cemetery. The authorities claim that they have searched the graveyard and found no evidence of the children having gone there, but locals claim that the cemetery is haunted and perhaps something unnatural made off with the missing teens.



Cherry Valley, Illinois

Cherry Valley, a suburb of Rockford, Illinois, sits approximately nine kilometers to the northwest of Flora. Though the village itself only has about 3,000 residents, the massive shopping mall in the center of the village brings an immense amount of traffic from neighboring cities, including Rockford.

Several strange occurrences have taken place in Cherry Valley in the weeks leading up to the arrival of the characters. Feel free to use any or all of these events as bait, enticements or red herrings. The Gamemaster may also add events of their own design to spice things up.



Chopping Mall: one night after the Cherry Valley Mall closed for business, a man survivors described as being a massive, lumbering burn victim terrorized several mall employees. The attacker did not speak and gave no sign regarding his possible motives. Five of the mall employees were killed in the attack, each by extremely gruesome means. The attacker was able to evade capture despite one mall employee's claim that he had shoved a replica longsword through the attacker in an attempt to defend himself. The Mall Stalker is at large and is considered armed and extremely dangerous.

Curious Curios: Among the many stores of the Cherry Valley Mall is a curio shop named Great Pyramid. Though the principal décor uses an Egyptian theme, the store carries odd knick-knacks and strange items from various cultures. In recent weeks, employees have begun to claim that certain items within the store appear to be relocated during the night, showing up on different shelves or in entirely different sections of the store each morning. One of the store's employees decided to set up a camera overnight and got footage of items apparently moving under their own power while no one was in the store. The video was uploaded to the Internet and has sparked a great deal of interest from the occult community.

Each of the scenarios above can serve to bring the characters into the region and lead them toward the region of Flora. If the characters have played through the events of the original Highway to Hell, they may well want to look in on Flora based on their experience with the area. If not, the Gamemaster should leave behind solid clues for the players to pick up on tying each of the disturbances to the area of Flora.

Flora, Illinois

Once characters enter the town of Flora, things become odd. The buildings all appear run down and rotten. Bizarre vines that resemble veins grow over the exterior walls of every structure, occasionally intersecting to form Fleshy Tumors (see page 14.) Each of the buildings contains a unique, hellish environment, reflective of the terrors that came before.

The streets of Flora are abandoned and battered. The Gamemaster may feel free to place as few or as many Hellspawn as they choose within the streets. For a suspenseful excursion, perhaps one or two Hellspawn scurry through the shadows, teasing and tormenting the characters. If the Gamemaster prefers a hack-and-slash adventure with mayhem and destruction, dozens of Hellspawn can roam the streets, forcing the characters to shoot, stab and bludgeon their way through the town.

Places of note

Farmer's co-op

The co-op has become overrun with hellish plants and vermin since the opening of the Hellgate. The inside of the building acts as a Verdant Oasis (see page 17) and any number of vermin can be found inside. The co-op could serve as an excellent location for the Gamemaster to place one of the survivors of the town, a clue to closing the Hellgate or some other McGuffin to lure the characters in.

Church

The abandoned church is unremarkable in architecture. From the outside it appears as a typical small Baptist church, though like every other structure in Flora it is rundown and covered in venous growth. The church looks as though it seated about three hundred people in the sanctuary, though most of the pews are now splintered and unusable.

The main entrance to the church is at the south end of the building, leading directly into the sanctuary. There is a baptismal pool to the east side of the main room, and an office to the west. The north side of the building houses a supply closet with candles, incense, and various ritual supplies. There is a stairwell in the northeast corner that leads into the basement.

The basement of the church has concrete walls and an earthen floor. At the south end of the basement an altar has been erected. The stone slab is large enough to hold a full-grown human and is decorated with various occult symbols. The slab glows with an unsettling red light and emanates a low, disturbing hum. Characters succeeding at a Notice test can make out what sounds like the individual pleas of human voices within the hum, begging for release. A very difficult (-4) Knowledge (occult) test will reveal that the symbols are part of a ritual to offer supplication to the demon Ba'al.



The altar is the focal point for the chaos in Flora, and is the location of the physical Hellgate.

Note that groups who have played the original **Highway to Hell** may have destroyed the church during that adventure. Regardless of what may have happened, the church now appears as described above. This could be a point of interest to characters, and the answer behind the church's appearance is relatively simple. The church is basically a physical manifestation of the spiritual stain caused by the Hellgate. As such, it is virtually invulnerable to physical destruction. There are many ways a Gamemaster could allow the Hellgate to be destroyed, but it shouldn't be so simple as "burn the place down."

Henry's Diner (north side of highway)

Henry's Diner is a hellish reflection of a stereotypical greasy spoon/mom and pop lunch counter. Mold covers the countertops and booths. A swarm of twelve Skeeters (see page 17) have taken up residence in Henry's diner. The cook's line and walk-in freezer are fully stocked with rotten, decaying food, which can be animated by a nearby expenditure of Contagion energy. If two Contagion Points are expended within the same scene inside Henry's Diner, the piles of rotten food will become animated, bursting forth from the kitchen area and merging into one being. This compost ooze has the same traits as a Holocaust Host (see page 15.)



Earl's B & B (south side of highway)

On the south end of the highway sits Earl's B & B. Before the Hellgate opened in Flora, the gas station was run down and in poor repair. Now it is little more than a rotting shell of a building. The windows are all broken out, the gas pumps are stripped to the bare metal and the lights do not function. The food on the shelves and in the coolers has rotten to the point that it can be smelled from the street.

Unfortunately, the tanks beneath Earl's are full of gasoline. Worse still, explosive fumes leak from the skeletal remains of the gas tanks, making Earl's an enormous powder keg, one spark away from a massive explosion. The smell of the rotting food masks the smell of the gasoline (A successful Notice test allows the characters to notice the gas fumes) meaning that characters could very well ignite the whole place without even knowing that the risk was present.

The Price Home

A den of abuse and terror, the Price family home sits on a lot at the northeast corner of the church grounds. From the outside, the Price home appears to be nothing more than a run down and abandoned early 20th century farmhouse. The home is overgrown with the same venous vines that cover every structure. The interior of the house is dusty and in disrepair, appearing as if it were abandoned in the middle of a dinner. Rotten food sits on the table, with four distinct place settings.

If characters investigate the bedrooms, they will discover family photos of the Price family (see **Highway to Hell**) as well as personal items such as clothing, games, toys and hobby items. Several books can be found in the master bedroom, many of which focus on hunting, taxidermy and auto repair, though a few occult books can be found as well. These books may assist in demon summoning, exorcism or finding a route to closing the Hellgate, at GM discretion, offering a +2 bonus to any relevant roll.

The smallest bedroom in the Price home holds evidence that the occupant was a young woman. Clothing items, stuffed animals, music boxes, discarded makeup and pop music CDs from the early 2000's litter the room. Amid the detritus is the diary of Karen Price. If the characters read the diary, they are treated to a truly disturbing tale of a young woman kept in captivity by her abusive brothers. The diary also details the terrifying practices of the cult run by Father Tucker of the local church, which include ritual human sacrifice and cannibalism.

Gamemaster's Note: The abuse suffered by Karen Price at the hands of her family is a sensitive topic and may be a potential trigger for players who have suffered traumatic experiences in their actual lives. Please handle any sensitive topics gracefully. Gauge what your players deem appropriate and in appropriate and feel free to adjust the content of your campaign accordingly. The game is meant to be fun, not offensive or painful. Use common sense and always be respectful of your players' boundaries.

The last several entries in Karen's diary mention a general feeling of illness, comparable to the flu. The diary abruptly ends, with the last entry complaining about spending the morning vomiting before heading in to work her shift at the diner.

Christopher Price: The second in command of Father Tucker's cult was Christopher Price. In life he was a twisted, Hellbound individual and death has not softened him in the least. His cruelty and abusive nature have caused him to transform into a Painshackle (see p.

16.) He haunts the town in this form and will take particular offense at anyone trying to close the Hellgate or trespass on his family's property.

Possible Outcomes

There are several ways to have the characters deal with the Hellgate. Perhaps the occult journals in the Price home have some ritual that can permit the Hellgate to be closed. Characters with Arcane Background (Miracles) may be able to usse a consecrate ground spell or some other sort of blessing ritual. Perhaps there is a quest that must be undertaken. Clever groups may try to force the Hellgate closed by pushing an earthbound character into it. Others may seek to control the Hellgate by repairing the damage to the area, but not closing the gate itself.



Ultimately the course of action for dealing with the Flora Hellgate is up to the Gamemaster and players to determine.

New Hellspawn

The following creature descriptions cover the new Hellspawn introduced in ths adventure. Feel free to edit or adapt them to suit your story's needs, or to use the in other adventures.

Fleshy Tumors

Fleshy Tumors are hellish mutations that form where the venous vines of Flora intersect. A Fleshy Tumor is relatively innocuous unless disturbed, at which point it will tear loose from the vines it is connected to and attempt to attach itself to a host. Once attached to a host, the Fleshy Tumor will attempt to possess the host and guide its body directly into the nearest Hellgate.

Any time a character enters or exits a building with Fleshy Tumors on the outside, the character must succeed at an Agility test to avoid disturbing the creatures.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8
Pace: -; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Enter Bloodstream:** If an opponent is suffering a wound a fleshy tumor can work its way into the target's bloodstream with a successful touch attack. Aside from the risk of possession (see below) the fleshy tumor may cause strokes, inflicting permanent Attribute loss. Strokes caused by a fleshy tumor can permanently reduce the target's Strength and Smarts score by one step each. The target may resist this ability with a Vigor test at a -2 penalty. Success on this Vigor test ejects the fleshy tumor from the victim's bloodstream, though the fleshy tumor may try and reinsert itself on its next attack, if the victm remains close enough to touch. This

starts the entire process over, requiring a new Vigor test on the part of the victim.

- **Exorcism**: A fleshy tumor can be exorcised by the *banish entity* power.
- **Infectious:** fleshy tumors often carry diseases. Any direct physical contact between a fleshy tumor and another creature risks infection. The target must make a Vigor test to resist this infection. See Disease in the Savage Worlds Deluxe rules to determine the effects of a failed roll. They severity of the disease is left to the GMs discretion. Characters that are immune to diseases are immune to these infections. If a fleshy tumor enters a character's bloodstream, the Vigor check to resist infection suffers a -4 penalty, as the infectious agent is introduced directly into the victim's blood.
- **Possession:** A fleshy tumor can try to possess any sentient being it is touching with an opposed Spirit roll. If the fleshy tumor fails, it may not try that victim again in the next 1 minute.
  After Possession, the Fleshy Tumor tries to force its victim to enter the nearest Hellgate. Every round the victim must make an opposed Spirit roll against the fleshy tumor. If the victim succeeds, they remain free of the fleshy tumor's influence for that round. If the victim fails this Spirit roll, they are forced to take no other action apart from attempting to move toward the nearest Hellgate. If someone or something attempts to restrain or stop the victim, the victim may attack that person.
  Once a fleshy tumor has successfully possessed a victim; the fleshy tumor can only be removed through exorcism or surgery. Characters who are immune to possession do not suffer any ill effects from being attacked by the fleshy tumor in this fashion. Furthermore, the fleshy tumor becomes shaken from attempting to possess such a character.
- **Size –2**: Fleshy Tumors are very small. Even the largest among them are only about the size of a housecat.

☆ *Holocaust Host*

When an act of genocide is committed, the legions of Hell (if they aren't already involved) are drawn to the site like a magnet. Each caste has a use for the remains. But when there is almost nothing left the Barbas slink in and take over. They take the leftover pieces of flesh and earth and use them to create one of the caste's most horrifying creations. A Holocaust Host is an immense, giant sized, mass of decayed body parts and the material that formally housed their remains, be it mud, dirt, sand or ash. The Host emits the sound of the howling souls of its victims. This sound can paralyze even the hardest soul in abject fear.



Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d12+2
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities

- **Blob:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No wound penalties; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Engulf:** A holocaust host may make a grapple attack against every creature under its template (see below). On a success, it has engulfed its foe. Each round the grapple is maintained thereafter, the victim suffers 2d4 damage. Victims reaching Death are absorbed and add to the holocaust host's bulk.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing or hearing the creature's wail must make a Fear check.
- **Mindless**: Immune to Fear and Tests of Will.
- **Variable Size:** The holocaust host begins as a Small Burst Template (Size +2). For each victim it absorbs, it grows 1" and adds +1 Size (and Toughness), until it reaches Size +8

☆The Mall Stalker

The Mall Stalker was a deranged serial killer in the early 20th century. He was never caught and died of a stroke on the toilet in 1956. He was consigned to eternity in Hell, but a demon saw potential in him and turned him into a Maniac. Though he was initially intended to be released into a mall in Southern California, when the Flora Hellgate opened, the Mall Stalker saw an opportunity to visit the area where he lived as a mortal, so he seized it.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Charisma: –6; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6;
Toughness: 8
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, Vengeful (Major)
Edges: Berserk, Brawny, First Strike, Frenzy, Harder to Kill, Improved Nerves of Steel, Sweep
Gear: Bloody axe (Str+6), machete (Str +d6).

Special Abilities

- **Teleport:** The Mall Stalker has the uncanny ability to disappear from sight and then reappear when one least expects it. As long as no one is looking at him (and he is not Shaken, stunned, or otherwise bound), he can disappear, reappearing when dramatically appropriate. This is a free action for the Mall Stalker.
- **Undead:** The Mall Stalker is undead. +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Special):** The Mall Stalker can only be killed by drowning. The demon who resurrected him left his face and body scarred from the flames of Damnation, but thought adding a weakness against water was hilarious.

☆*Painshackle*

Painshackles are crafted from the souls of the emotionally abusive. The emotional torture that these cruel souls inflict during life is revisited upon them when they are changed into Hellspawn.
To create a Painshackle, the Leviathan wraps the offender in thick chains that are covered in barbs and hooks. These protrusions dig into the Painshackle's flesh with every movement, inflicting constant agony on the Hellspawn, and fueling their malice.
Painshackles are not remotely subtle. The rattling of their chains and their shrieks of agony can be heard as they approach. The only pleasure they can receive is sharing their agony with their victims.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

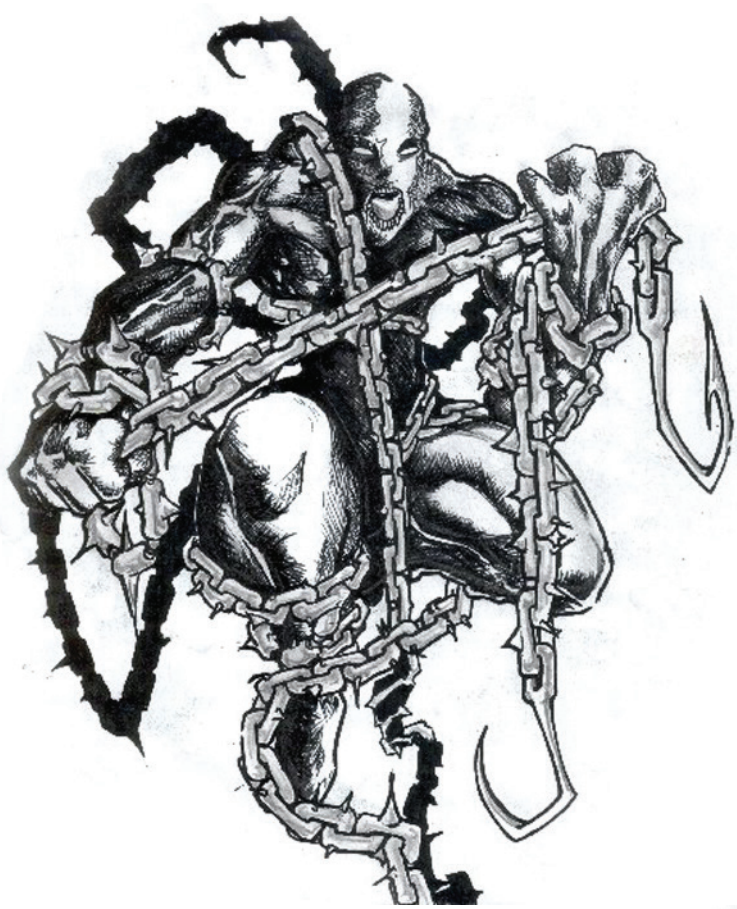
Special Abilities

- **Chains**: A painshackle may make up to three attacks each round. On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. An entangled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the painshackle does its Strength damage automatically by digging the barbs and hooks on its chains into the victim.
- **Chain Snare:** The painshackle may sacrifice his attacks from the Chains feature to instead make a ranged attack with a range of 15/30/60. If the attack is successful, the target is grappled as described under the ***Chains*** ability.
- **Malicious Defense:** Any creature who makes an unarmed attack or touch attack agains the painshackle suffers the painshackle's Strength damage as the barbed chains strung across the creature's flesh dig into the assailant upon contact.

Skeeters

Grown in bodies of stagnant water filled with decaying corpses, Skeeters are mutated mosquitoes. Fed from larva on the blood of murder victims and missing children, Skeeters grow to an impressive size for an insect. They are able to hold a voluminous amount of blood, and their buzzing can paralyze victims with fear. In typical form for the Beastkeepers, Skeeters are an example of the dark underbelly of nature taken to its sickest extreme.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: -; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 2



Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str. Victims must make a Vigor roll opposed by the skeeter"s Fighting) or gain one level of Fatigue.
- **Flying:** Pace 8, Climb -2.
- **Size –2**: Skeeters are about the size of a rat. They have a four-inch wingspan.

Verdant Oasis

Placed in strategic locations for maximum effect, Verdant Oases are enormous plant creatures taking up an area comparable to a small city park. Comprised of a network of plants, trees, and flowers, Verdant Oases turn an entire area into one massive predator. Hell's Journeymen will often place Verdant Oases in the middle of a forsaken area such as a desert or an underprivileged neighborhood. People passing the Verdant Oasis are often drawn in by the area's beauty. Once a group enters the Verdant Oasis, the foliage in the area comes to life, attacking its unsuspecting prey.

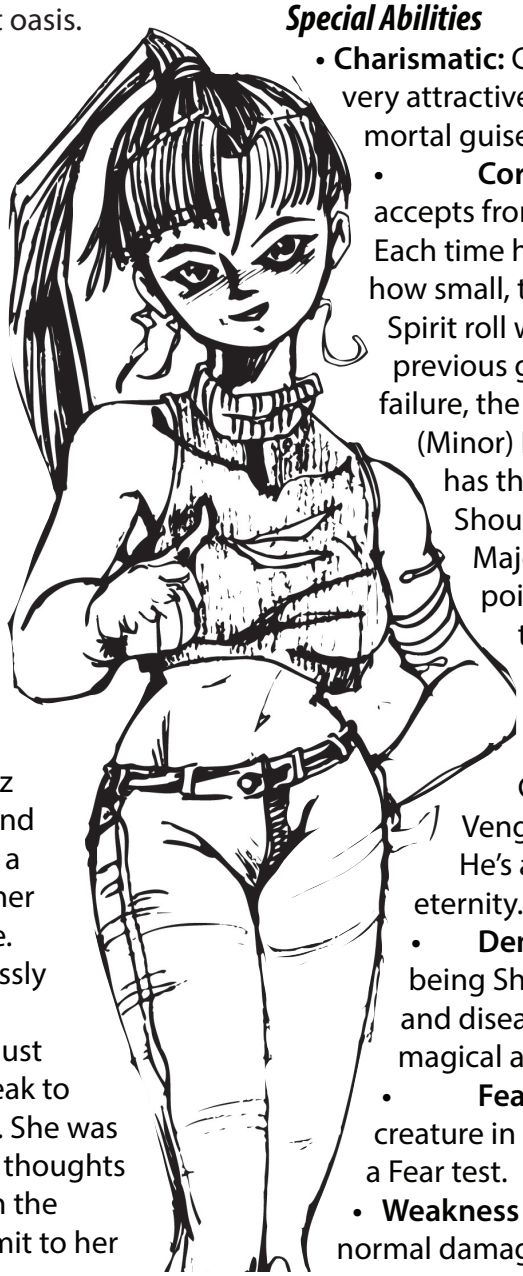
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d12
Pace: -; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

- **Size +6**: the verdant oasis takes up an immense area, often large enough to cover a small house or storefront.
- **Weakness (defoliants):** Verdant oases are particularly vulnerable to fire. Any attack including fire deals an additional 2d6 damage to the verdant oasis.
- **Weakness (fire):** Verdant oases are particularly vulnerable to fire. Any attack including fire deals an additional 2d6 damage to the verdant oasis.

Character Templates

The following character templates represent game statistics for NPCs that may be encountered during **Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora**. The Gamemaster should feel free to adjust each NPC's traits as needed to make the adventure a suitable challenge for the players.



☆Lita Diaz

As mentioned in the **Lolita, Interrupted** section on page 5, Lita Diaz was a Catholic schoolgirl and a faithful student. She had a normal teenage crush on her Science teacher, Mr. Bridge. Due to her beliefs, Lita grossly overreacted to the crush, beating herself up for her lust and being unwilling to speak to anyone about her feelings. She was so ashamed of her impure thoughts that she refused to pray on the matter, embarassed to admit to her Lord that she had such a perverse weakness. Ironically, this refusal to face her own normal feelings opened the door for a succubus to possess Lita.

While under the contol of the Succubus, Lita made advances on Mr. Bridge. When the teacher refused, Lita attacked him and his wife, nearly killing both.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d12+2, Streetwise d12, Taunt d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Charismatic:** Charisma +4, seducers are very attractive and charismatic in their mortal guise.
- **Corruption:** Every gift a mortal accepts from a seducer corrupts him. Each time he accepts a gift, no matter how small, the victim must make a Spirit roll with a penalty of –1 per previous gift he has accepted. On a failure, the victim gains the Greedy (Minor) Hindrance, or Major if he has the minor version already. Should he already have the Major Hindrance, he loses 1 point of Charisma instead. If the Spirit roll is 1 or lower, regardless of the Wild Die, the victim becomes totally corrupt. He gains the Greedy (Major), Mean, and Vengeful (Major) Hindrances. He's also damned his soul for eternity.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half damage from non-magical attacks except for cold iron.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature in its natural form must make a Fear test.
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

J.R. Prentice

J.R. Prentice was a veteran of World War I buried at Blood's Point Cemetery. His only remaining Binding Tie is his grave, which he defends furiously, as he is afraid that he will go to Hell once his time in Purgatory is ended because of all the men he killed in Europe.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness**: 5
Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4).

Special Abilities

- **Ethereal:** Prentice is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear –2:** Prentice causes Fear checks at –2 when he lets himself be seen.
- **Illusion:** With great effort (at the Game Master's whim, but usually no more than once per scene), Prentice can entirely transform the surroundings of his domain (the area in a large burst template around his gravesite) via illusion. The illusion must pertain to his life or death, and cannot cause true damage. If a victim would take one or more wounds, he is Fatigued instead. This cannot result in death; instead, the victim passes out for 1d6 minutes or until aided by an ally.
- **Materialize:** The spirit can materialize at will. It may do so in any state it had in life—such as when it was a child, as it was in gruesome death, etc. The latter should almost always cause a Fear test.

Classic Highway to Hell Conversions

The following information allows Gamemasters to run the classic Contagion Adventure Seed Highway to Hell using **Contagion Savage Edition** rules. The system information included here replaces and supersedes the information listed in Highway to Hell, and with this information, Gamemasters should be able to run both Adventure Seeds with the **Contagion Savage Edition** rules.

☆Father Tucker

Father Tucker was once a good pastor. He cared for his flock and did his best to be Christ-like in his daily life. As time passed he began to grow prideful in the attention he received from his congregation. He realized that he could control their actions, making them follow his every whim. He succumbed to the sin of Pride and began taking some of his parishioner's wives. One evening, Rebecca Price (mother of the Price boys) refused to submit, fighting the priest off and accidentally killing him. He immediately rose as a Skin Feaster and devoured the woman. Since then he has constructed and promoted the cult among his former flock.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Disguise:** A skin feaster wearing the skin of a victim looks exactly like its victim. Through arcane magic, it also sounds like the victim and has their mannerisms and memories. It has none of their Hindrances or Edges, however.
- **Fear –2:** Anyone seeing the creature without skin must make a Fear test.
- **Regeneration:** Each time a skin feaster dons a new skin, or devours a skin, it

recovers one wound. This is the only way it can heal damage.

- **Skin Loss:** Every time a skin feaster takes a wound, it must make a Vigor roll (with wound penalties). On a failure, the skin it is currently wearing is damaged and begins to peel away, revealing the creature in its natural form. Once the skin feaster has failed two such Vigor rolls, its skin is completely destroyed and cannot be repaired. Each hour the creature spends without a skin, it must make a Vigor roll or suffer a wound.
- **Strip:** Skin feasters can skin an Incapacitated victim in three rounds, pulling the entire skin off in a single piece. It then takes 1d4 rounds to don and meld into the skin. If the skin feaster is currently wearing a skin, the skin feaster can devour the new victim's skin, which heals any damage done to its current skin. This also takes 1d4 rounds.
- **Undead:** The skin feaster is undead. +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.

☆Christopher Price

A trained sadist, Chris learned the arts of abuse and intimidation from his father. Being a star football player, Chris is in excellent physical shape and has no qualms about using that advantage to bully anyone he perceives as weaker than him (which includes everyone except Father Tucker). Chris doesn't have any redeeming qualities and revels in the evils of the cult. He is a prime candidate to one day become Hellspawn.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant
Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), New Power, Power Points

- **Powers:** Fear (unearthly shriek), obscure (cloud of darkness), puppet (hypnotic voice), smite (balefire along blade), zombie (special powder),15 PP.
- **Gear:** Ceremonial robes, cursed dagger (Str+d6+2 damage; wounds can only be healed naturally).

Typical Cultists

These statistics work fine for the cultists featured in the original Highway to Hell adventure seed.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal (to cult)
Edges: —
Gear: Ceremonial robes, dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities

• Fanatical: If a cultist is adjacent to a cult leader when the latter is hit, the follower takes the blow for his master with a successful Agility roll.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora is an introductory adventure for the **Contagion Savage Edition** Role Playing Game.

The world of **Contagion** is a dark and terrifying place. On the surface it is no different than the world you and I live in. Most people go on about their lives never realizing the terrors that walk among them.

Despite humanity's vast ignorance, the horrors are there. Angels, demons, gods and Hellspawn make war in the shadows. Clergy and Slayers rise from the human flock to protect their brethren and work Yahweh's will. Magi and Witches wield powerful magics in their pursuit of enlightenment.

All these supernatural forces work in secrecy to forward their agendas. However, as the world grows smaller through technology and the factions of the war grow bolder, this secrecy becomes increasingly imperiled. Soon, the masses may learn of the existence of the gods and monsters that walk among them.

Recent events in the world of **Contagion** have caused things to escalate further. The Winter Solstice of 2012 saw gates open to two otherworldly realms previously isolated from Earth. The beings that came through these gates have their own agendas, and secrecy isn't necessarily among them. The events of that fateful day also caused an unprecedented number of gates opening between Earth and Hell. These Hellgates opened in places where great tragedy, pain and acts of evil had occurred.

This story focuses on one such Hellgate, located in the rural ghost town of Flora, Illinois.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora Savage Edition is an adventure seed for use with **Contagion Savage Edition**. Rather than being a linear module with events that go from point A to point B, this story seed provides information a Gamemaster can use to flesh out their own unique story. Basic events are illustrated along with character snapshots. The ending is left open and ambiguous, for the Gamemaster to decide.

Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora serves as an introductory story for **Contagion Savage Edition**. Certain elements of the setting are explored and expanded upon in this adventure seed. Due to the nature of the disturbances and events in **Highway to Hell 2: Return to Flora**, characters from virtually any background or faction could get involved with the investigation. Experienced groups can also use this story seed with very minor adjustments made by the Gamemaster to account for the characters' greater experience and resources.

Learn more about **Contagion Savage Edition** at
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