

Dogs in the Vineyard

a playable outline

Dogs in the Vineyard is set in a fictionalized, fantasized pre-statehood Utah, with demons, monsters, magic, and a supernaturally charged landscape. The PCs are like circuit preachers, missionaries and marshals - they travel from congregation to congregation, holding the "vineyard" together both socially and spiritually. They're responsible for the faith of the communities they visit, which will often mean identifying, getting to the heart of, and resolving the sins of the community members.

The PCs' uniform, their like badge, is a long coat, hand-pieced and quilted by their families or the people in the communities they've helped. I picture the PCs in like Erie Canal boatsman shirts, Quaker-oat-guy hats, and these long, beautiful, colorful Seminole-pieced coats. I like it as a nod to Joseph in Egypt.

Text by Vincent Baker, ©2004.

This game owes such a debt to Ron Edwards I can't even tell you. I mean, it'd probably be a better game if it were a *Sorcerer* mini-supplement, that's how much.

I intend this text to be used by people who've been following the game's development and who already get the subject matter and my design goals. If you're reading this blind, it won't tell you everything you need to know. Contact me at lumpley@earthlink.net and I'll point you in the right direction.

Look for the full game in print at GenCon '04, King of Life willing.

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Player Section

1. God's Watchdogs

By the time you're 12 or 13, your local Faith leader is already considering whether you would make a good Dog. Some kids are so obviously unsuited that the Faith guy dismisses the idea at once, some kids show promise, some kids have destiny on them like a light. There's a spiritual-intuitive component, divine guidance, if the Faith leader is even remotely qualified - so the "obviously unsuited" kid might be the kid who's outwardly dedicated and actively pursuing Doghood, and the kid with destiny might be the town's delinquent troublemaker. From 12, 13 to 17, 18, 19, the Faith guy keeps his eye on you and guides you as best he can, mindful always that he's not responsible for building you into a Dog-to-be. It's your own duty.

So at 18-20, the Faith guy formally interviews you and then calls you to be a Dog. You say your goodbyes, pack up a few things, and make the trek to Salt Lake City (whose name I'll change for the game) to be initiated. The whole process, starting at the interview and ending at your first assignment, is an initiation. Yes, you get some practical training and theology, but you also participate in all sorts of magical ceremonies and receive all sorts of blessings and ordinations. You were called to be a Dog; now you're set apart as a Dog. You spend 3 months in Salt Lake City.

While you're there, your family and your home town are making your coat. It's an honor and a point of pride to make a coat. Primary responsibility is your mother's, your grandmothers', your aunts' and sisters'. If your coat is poor, it reflects badly on them foremost. The boys and men in your family are expected to help and participate, but to do what they're told. The women are expected to have the skills necessary to oversee the project and coordinate the efforts of everybody else.

There's a traditional party where everybody in your extended community who can and will comes to your parents' house and puts a stitch in your coat. At the end of the party, all the men bless it (in whatever state of unfinish it is at the moment) with consecrated earth and laying on hands.

So toward the end of your 3 months' training and initiation, you receive the package from home containing your coat and letters of blessing and well-wishing.

You'll serve actively as a Dog for 3 or 4 years, usually, sometimes less and sometimes more - sometimes lots more - and your beautiful new coat won't hold up. It takes a fierce beating in the field. It becomes the responsibility of the communities you serve to maintain your coat, patching, piecing, repairing, even replacing it as you need. Some Dogs come out of their service with 3 or 4 coats, the earlier ones packed carefully away to preserve them. Some come out with only their original coat, and it's torn and battered and ruined. In later life, as you're called to higher and higher sacred offices, you are always allowed to replace whatever vestments accompany your office with your old Dog's coat, no matter how beat up it is. And if you end up in Salt Lake City training and initiating new Dogs, your old coat is powerfully significant.

(I have a picture in my head of one of the Dog teacher guys in his coat so faded and stretched across his shoulders that you can see his shirt through it, and an old stain and crude patch under his left arm where the woman he loved's boyfriend stabbed him and he had to stitch his coat back up himself, and how high in the esteem of the new Dog initiates he is, and how he regards them all with love, hope, and very mixed feelings.)

All of the above: typical case.

Some Dogs' years of service are in communities where getting the people to stop murdering and screwing each

other is hard enough, let alone them making you a beautiful piecework coat. These Dogs do the best they can. I imagine one with only a remnant of her original coat, like reef-stitched to the back or around the arm of a normal wool or canvas coat like anybody might wear.

Some new Dogs don't have families who'll make them coats. They can't go without, so sometimes their teachers in Salt Lake City work together to make one. Sometimes such a coat will be made with just as much love as a family-made one, but often it'll be just thrown together. There are also people in the Faith who make coats and send them to Salt Lake City for whoever needs them, with a similar range of made-with-love to just-thrown-together. Rarely, a new Dog will fall through the cracks and not get a coat, and have to fend for her or himself, like Tom's character in the game we played, who stitched a rough dog's head onto the back of his plain ol' wool coat. Again with the spiritual-intuitive component: somebody in Salt Lake City watched Tom's character do it, and let him be: it was as it should be, for reasons known to the King of Life.

The administrators of the Dogs assign you a route and companions, based on needs and spiritual-intuition. Over the course of your service, you return periodically to Salt Lake City, maybe twice annually. At those times, they might reassign you.

Some Dogs serve faithfully until they're released from service. They're bang! on the fast track in the Faith's administration. At the end of faithful service you can expect just about any local-level office you ask for, if you're a man, and given that you won't ask for an office where the person currently occupying it is doing a good job (why would you?). If you're a woman, you can expect prestigious suitors, and far more say in your future than non-Dog women have. Nobody can demand that you marry him, for instance, where most women - even if nobody does demand them, there's always somebody who could. The prophets and ancients of the Faith, the seventy old men in Salt Lake City, when they want another wife, they always court and propose to just-finished Dogs, for instance, and you can turn them down if you want to. Which is a big deal, actually.

When you do marry, you can expect your husband's respect, and if you marry an office-holder, you can expect to participate in the administration of the office. You can expect to be regarded as a spiritual advisor and, if your inclinations run that way, a theologian in your own right. If your husband treats you badly, you can expect the Faith to take your complaints seriously.

Non-Dog men can and do hold office in the Faith, but Dogs are always considered preferentially. Only former Dogs can initiate new Dogs, although non-Dogs can teach them skills and theology, technically, if no former Dog wants the job.

Usually what happens is, if they've decided your service is done, they release you when you come to Salt Lake City. However, if something urgent comes up in the field and you need to be released, you can send to them, they release you ritually when they receive your message, they send back confirmation, and you're supposed to wait for the confirmation before you do anything unDogly. Unless you've done something dodgy already, ending your service this way is as honorable and faithful as waiting for them to release you. (The typical reason you'd ask to be released is: you've met a person you're going to marry, and you don't want to wait.)

Some Dogs leave service unfaithfully, though. You aren't punished at all; everybody knows that the job's hard-to-impossible and nobody expects you to do better than your best. If for whatever reason you need it, you are guaranteed a place in Salt Lake City at the place where new Dogs are initiated (which really needs to be named), working in the kitchens, the stables, sweeping up, doing

household chores, whatever, until you find your way to better. Often if you desert your calling, though, you don't choose to go back like that.

Some Dogs just go on. Salt Lake City doesn't release them - again the spiritual-intuitive bit - and they don't ask to be released. Few Dogs in the field are in their thirties, but I suppose one or two might be.

2. Character Creation

Starting characters are all young men and women at the end of their teens or the beginning of their twenties. They've just spent a month in training, education and ceremony to prepare them for their duties. They know one another, although they didn't necessarily choose one another as companions.

They are, to a one, unmarried virgins. They're allowed to travel mixed and unchaperoned, because their devotion and duties are supposed to drive out all thoughts of romance. Yep.

- Process

Five character templates. Choose one.

Well-rounded:

- 15d6 for Stats;
- 1d4 4d6 2d8 for Traits;
- 4d6 2d8 for Relationships.

Choose this if you see your character as capable, balanced, and effective. This is a great choice for born-in-the-Faith male characters.

Strong History:

- 13d6 for Stats;
- 3d6 4d8 3d10 for Traits;
- 1d4 3d6 2d8 for Relationships.

Choose this if you see your character as having had a good education, lots of experience, or specialized training.

Complicated History:

- 17d6 for Stats;
- 4d4 2d6 2d10 for Traits;
- 5d6 2d8 for Relationships.

Choose this if you see your character as having overcome a troubled, dangerous, or too-exciting upbringing. This is a great choice for Mountain Person characters.

Strong Society:

- 13d6 for Stats;
- 1d4 3d6 2d8 for Traits;
- 4d6 4d8 3d10 for Relationships.

Choose this if you see your character as socially adept and from a strong, caring family. This is a great choice for born-in-the-Faith female characters.

Complicated Society:

- 17d6 for Stats;
- 6d6 2d8 for Traits;
- 4d4 2d6 2d8 2d10 for Relationships.

Choose this if you see your character as socially vulnerable or from a broken, in-crisis, or destructive family.

So, 1) choose a template.

2) Divvy your Stat dice up among your Stats (Acuity, Body, Heart, Will, you recall). No Stat can get fewer than 2 dice but there's no maximum.

3) Divvy your Trait dice up among some Traits. You give the Traits their text. You can't give any Trait mixed dice, but otherwise split your dice up however you want. One of your Traits must be "I'm a Dog." The rest you have to make up yourself. There'll be examples.

4) From the number of Ceremonial Traits you have, calculate your Ceremonial Fallout.

5) Write down one or two people in your character's life and assign some of your Relationship dice to them. Don't

assign mixed dice. Leave the rest of your Relationship dice unassigned; you can assign them in play as you like.

- 6) Choose Possessions. If they're a big deal, like your weapons and your horse, give them dice. Describe your coat.
- 7) Say something that you hope your character accomplished during initiation/training. With the GM, set the stage for a pivotal moment with regard to that accomplishment. Roll and play out a conflict where that accomplishment is what's at stake. Take your win or loss as a 1d6 Trait: "I won distinction in the eyes of the teacher of scripture," "I failed to overcome my fear of blood," "I learned to read," or "I failed to exorcise a demon," all for instance.

Mountain People

If you want, take "I used to be possessed" as a Trait. Choose the Manifestations and Powers you used to have. They'll return if you fall. You can also take Relationships with any demons you might have encountered, if you want to.

You can't play a Mountain Person woman; they aren't allowed into the Dogs.

- Traits

Words vs. Dice

You can state Traits as tidbits of history: "I used to break horses with my dad." You can state them as simple facts about your character: "I'm good with horses." You can state them as skills: "I've worked with horses and I know how they think." You can state them as attitudes: "I'm very comfortable working with horses."

The dice of a Trait doesn't describe your competence. Consider "I'm a masterful horse-breaker - 1d6." If you're in the midst of a conflict and I Raise you "the wild horse smashes through the flimsy gate and comes barreling toward you with intent to trample," you can See me "as it comes I whisper to it and put my hand on its throat, and it calms at once," and Raise me "then I swing up on its back and it's as sweet as a baby." All because, yeah, you're a masterful horse-breaker. But all you get to add to your roll is the single d6.

d4 Traits

Because most of your opponent's dice are going to be d6s and better, rolling d4s makes it more likely that you'll suffer consequences in conflicts. The most straightforward approach to your d4 Traits is to take them as disadvantages: "I'm scared of horses" or "I get winded easily" or "my eyesight isn't too good."

But consider taking them as seeming strengths, too. "I'm a superb hunter - 3d4" means that yes, you're a superb hunter, but not let's say a lucky one: when you hunt, it tends to become complicated or even dangerous.

The same's true of d4 Relationships and bonus dice too, naturally. d4 Relationships are especially interesting.

Ceremonial Traits

A ceremonial Trait is one that indicates some history or experience with ceremony, magic, mysticism, or the occult. "I'm a Dog" is one. "I sometimes have prophetic dreams," "During my initiation I failed to exorcise a demon," "Laying on hands," and "I used to be possessed" all are too.

If you have only one Ceremonial Trait, your Ceremonial Fallout – that is, the Fallout you inflict on demons and sorcerers when you hit them with ceremony – is d6s. If you have two or three Ceremonial Traits, your Ceremonial Fallout is d8s. If you have four or more, your Ceremonial Fallout is d10s.

- Relationships

Assigning Relationships

Only assign one or two Relationships to start! Keep the rest of your dice. You can announce that you're taking a Relationship at any time in play. Name who or what it's with.

By default you get a 1d6 Relationship with anybody you're related to by blood. You don't need to write these on your character sheet unless you assign different dice, which you're perfectly free to do.

With People

A relationship with a person contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when a) the person is your opponent, b) the person is what's at stake, or c) the person comes to your active aid in a conflict.

With Spirits

A relationship with a spirit contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when what's at stake is the person to whom the spirit has a Relationship.

With Institutions

A relationship with an institution (like the Faith or the Dogs) contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when a) your opponent is a person with authority in the institution, or b) what's at stake is your status with regard to the institution.

With Places

A relationship with a place contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when a) you're at the place, or b) the place is what's at stake.

With Sins

A relationship with a sin contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when a) you've committed the sin and it's somehow relevant to the conflict, b) you've resisted committing the sin and it's somehow relevant to the conflict, or c) what's at stake is your commission of the sin.

If you like, you can consider a d4 Relationship with a sin to be a sin you're struggling with, and a d6 or better Relationship with a sin to be a sin you commit habitually.

With Demons

A relationship with a demon contributes its dice to your side of a conflict when a) the demon is your opponent, or b) the demon is what's at stake.

(If you have a relationship with a demon, you can ask the demon for help at any time. Add the situation's Demonic Influence to your side, with supernatural special effects. This makes you a Sorcerer.)

- Possessions

Creating Possessions

Write a possession as you would a Trait or a Relationship: "big knife 1d8" or "excellent horse 2d6." Only bother with possessions you actually care about; you don't have to write down the provisions you're carrying or anything like that.

Here's how you give it dice:

1d6 if it's normal.

2d6 if it's excellent. It's only excellent if people meeting you would notice and comment on it: "ooh, now that's a mighty fine horse."

1d8 if it's big. Similarly: "holy smokes, now that's a big ol' knife."

2d8 if it's excellent plus big.

1d4 if it's crap. Crap plus big is still just 1d4.

Guns get an additional d4, so an excellent plus big gun gets 1d4+2d8, a normal gun like anyone might carry gets 1d4+1d6, and a crap gun gets 2d4.

GM Section

3. Communities

- Key People

In every community there are some certain people you create in advance: someone representing the secular government, like a marshal or a tax collector or a census guy, someone representing the church, like a bishop, with advisors and clerks and things if the community's big enough, and for each PC someone connected to the PC by blood. The community's a circle; these people are dots inside the circle with arrows crossing out of it, pointing to what they point to.

- Something's Wrong

Now there's something wrong in the community. Of course. That's what makes the game interesting, otherwise you're just roleplaying being welcomed by the people and kissing their babies and shaking their hands. The PCs are specifically called by the church to deal with what's wrong in the communities. That's their job. When they show up, amidst all the baby kissing and being welcomed, some people are acting odd, or something bad has recently happened, or there's something just not right. The GM's job is to reveal the manifestations of the wrongness, not to stonewall - although NPC stonewalling is fine, when called for.

"Something wrong" falls into a tidy little progression, which looks like this:

Pride (manifests as injustice) -leads to-> Sin (manifests as demons outside, like famine, plague, Indian raids, outlaw bands) -leads to-> False Doctrine (manifests as corrupt religious practices and heresy) -leads to-> False Priesthood (manifests as demons inside, like sorcery, possession and demons passing as members) -leads to-> Hate (manifests as murder)

Explanation:

Pride - Considering a) your responsibilities to your community to be more important than others', so that you don't keep your responsibilities without special consideration, or else b) your convenience to be more important than your responsibilities to your community, so that you don't keep them at all.

Injustice - Pride enacted: one person is working while another's at leisure, one person's hungry while another has plenty.

Sin - Since your community is founded on divine principles, a weak person might see its failings to be failings of the King of Life. Sin comes from Injustice unchecked: either the proud person becomes bold, or a resentful person becomes destructive.

Demons Outside - The presence of sin opens a community to attacks from Demons. Since demons are non-corporeal, the demonic attacks take various material forms, some subtle, some overt. The demons will assess the character of the community and act on some or all of these goals: isolate the community, endanger the

community's survival, exacerbate the community's injustices, prosper the community's sinners, oppress the community's faithful. The demons might see the PCs' arrival as a threat or an opportunity.

False Doctrine - Sin causes guilt. False doctrines are the habitual sinner's way to numb her or his conscience and justify the sin.

Heresy - The outward expression of false doctrine. Holding to a false doctrine will corrupt your observances.

False Priesthood - So far everything has been individual.

One person is resentful of injustices, then commits sins, then adopts weird beliefs. False Priesthood is when the heretic develops a following. The followers may themselves be anywhere on the continuum - they might be heretics in their own right, they might just be sinners or proud, they might even be humble and decent but misled. The point is that now the heresy has the force of a (sub-)community behind it.

Demons Inside - Organized worship has power. The power of an organized heresy is that the demons will serve it.

Hate - And here I'm talking about something way more serious than passion and rage. Hate is an organized and deadly assault on the Faithful by the demonic, made wholly personal.

Murder - Hate causes murder, but it's not the only cause.

Murder can just be a sin, although it's always an advanced sin, an escalation of an escalation of an escalation of sin. People outside the Faith murder each other all the time, but when the Faithful murder the Faithful, it means that things have gone as wrong as they can go.

- Creating a Community

- 1) Name the community. I name all mine "the ____ Branch," like "the Boxelder Canyon Branch" or "the Whitechurch Branch."
- 2) Draw a big circle in the middle of the page. On its left, write the names of the PCs. On its right, write "the Faith" and "the Territorial Authority."
- 3) Mark some dots inside the circle and draw arrows from them to the things written on either side. I do this semi-randomly. Sometimes I draw two arrows from the same dot.
- 4) Write a name by each dot. This person is connected via the arrow to whatever the arrow points to.
- 5) Choose a "what's wrong" level. You can roll a d5 if you want!
- 6) Attach some names to the various levels of "what's wrong" and their manifestations. Be sure to consider how what's wrong will touch all of the dot people.
- 7) Give some thought to what the demons' goals might be, specifically, and how they're likely to react to the PCs' arrival.
- 8) Don't I say do not think very hard about how you want events to play out. That's the players' job, via their PCs. Just be prepared to dig in and play your NPCs up to your very elbows.

- Demonic Influence

The influence that the demons are willing to bring to bear increases as the PCs discover what's going on. What's the worst "something wrong" manifestation the PCs have seen here?

Injustice: the Demonic Influence is 1d10. Demons Outside: the Demonic Influence is 2d10. Heresy: the Demonic Influence is 3d10. Demons Inside: the Demonic Influence is 4d10. Murder: the Demonic Influence is 5d10.
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4. NPCs

- People

Stat people like PCs, including relationships. Here's how to roll random:

- Stats: Roll 1d10 for each: 1-2=2; 3-5=3; 6-8=4; 9-10=5.
- Traits and Relationships: Roll 1d6 for how many. For each, roll 1d6 for number of dice and 1d6 for size of dice. Define them as you need, not up front.

How Many	Number of Dice	Size of Dice
1 = 2	1-2 = 1	1 = d4
2-3 = 3	3-5 = 2	2-3 = d6
4-5 = 4	6 = 3	4-5 = d8
6 = 5		6 = d10

- Possessions: provide as you will.

- Groups

Each member of a group gives the group +1 to three of the four stats, plus is a Trait. A Group doesn't need Traits or Relationships otherwise, unless you specifically want it to have some.

Assign any Fallout the group gets to individuals in the group as plausible or, more likely, give Fallout to the players for follow-up conflicts.

- Places

Well, I suppose places can have Traits. But hm.

- Spirits of the Dead

Spirits of the Dead have Acuity, Heart and Will, but not Body. They always have exactly one Relationship, always rated in d4s, for which they've stayed on earth past death. A spirit with no Relationships leaves the world forever. A spirit can add its Relationship to any side of any roll relevant to its person, with supernatural special effects.

- Demons

Demons don't have Stats, but they contribute dice to conflicts by Spiritual Opposition, Environmental Effects, and Possession.

Spiritual Opposition: Whenever a PC tries to accomplish something that calls for a conflict, but there's no clear opponent, roll 4d6+Demonic Influence. This doesn't really depend on an individual demon, it's just how it works.

Environmental Effects: When empowered by a Sorcerer, a demon can add Demonic Influence to any side of any conflict, accompanied by special effects. The effects can be natural-seeming or obviously occult, but they'll always be apparent.

Possession: Rules for possessed people follow.

When a PC acts in direct conflict with a demon, ceremonially, the demon rolls 4d6+Demonic Influence. A group of demons rolls 3d6+1d6 per demon+Demonic Influence.

- Possessed People

Create a person. The person must be either a) a willing, knowing heretic, possibly acting alone, or b) a sinner within the false priesthood of a Sorcerer. In the latter case the Sorcerer has to set up the possession, but the possessed person needn't be in the know. Anyhow give her or him a Relationship with a demon. The number of dice in the Relationship indicates how chronically the person has been possessed.

Choose a number of Manifestations equal to the number of dice: Changes in body shape, changes in hands, changes in facial features, changes in hair nails teeth, changes in eyes.

Choose a number of Powers equal to the number of dice:

- Ferocity: apply the Relationship to every physical conflict.
- Preservation: When the possessed person takes Fallout, discard the two highest dice and sum the next two highest.
- Viciousness: the possessed person inflicts Fallout one die size higher than usual. Punches do damage like blunt weapons, blunt weapons like edged weapons, edged weapons like guns. It still maxes at d12.
- Cunning: apply the Relationship to every social conflict.
- Power: the possessed person gets 1d4 whenever, with environmental special effects.

- Sorcerers

Create a person. Give her or him a Relationship with a demon. It has to be at least 4 at least d8.

Sorcerers can: command demons' environmental effects, set up subjects for demons to possess, become possessed themselves at will, and add their demonic Relationship dice, with special effects, to any side of any roll in their presence.

5. Conflict Resolution

- Arena

Just talking: roll Acuity+Heart.

Physical, not fighting: roll Body+Heart.

Fighting, not with guns: roll Body+Will.

Fighting with guns: roll Acuity+Will.

- See & Raise

- 1) Setup, in play, in words. I'll use the example I've been inflicting on Meg: *The shopkeeper from Connecticut's wife isn't really his wife. He's the like procurer, she's the available woman. Your brother's son, your nephew, is 14. He's been stealing money from your brother to visit her. Your brother's on his way to shoot her.*
- 1b) Somebody sets the stage. *You're walking on the like twin-rut road in the tall green wheat toward your brother's house. The nearest building is his shed with his farm tools, maybe 50 feet further on. You'll meet him coming toward you; he's got his shotgun. Blue, blue summer sky.*
- 2) Somebody says clearly what's at stake. Somebody choose the initial arena. *I stop him in the road and try to talk him out of it [Just Talking]. What's at stake is whether he goes shoots this woman.* Do these in whichever order or simultaneously.
- 3) Everybody figures out how many dice they get. Add your two Stats, declare and add any Traits and Relationships that apply. *Meg's got Acuity 4d6, Heart 3d6, plus 2d10 for their blood relationship. I've got something similar.* Everybody rolls all their dice all at once. I love the way those big handfuls hit the table.
- 4) The sum of your two highest showing dice is your Best Roll. Like if I roll 1 3 3 5 6 9, my Best Roll is 9+6=15. If I use and discard the 9 and one of the 3s, my Best Roll becomes 6+5=11. Easy.
- 5) So until the conflict's resolved, play passes around. Play starts with the person with the highest Best Roll and ends with the person with the lowest Best Roll. In every round, every player gets one go: highest Best Roll determines *what order* you go in, not *how frequently*. Nobody can go a second time until everybody's gone once.
- 6) On your go, you get to **Raise**. say what your character does. It should be something your opponent's character(s) can't ignore. *I say, "hey, you don't go shooting people. I'm here to deal with the woman, you see to your son."* Put forward any two of your dice; that's

"how hard" you do it. $6+3=9$. Notice that it doesn't have to be your Best Roll.

- 7) Everyone affected by your Raise has to **See**. See by saying how you respond and putting forward dice that sum to at least that same sum. You can put forward any number of dice, but how many matters. $5+5=10$. *Feh, whatever. I put up my hand and don't even listen.*
- 7b) If you See with one die, that's called **Reversing The Blow**. Say how you turn the attack back onto your opponent. Keep the die you use to See and put it forward *again* on your go, as half of your Raise. You get to use it twice.
- 7c) If you See with two dice, that's called **Block Or Dodge**. Say how you prevent, ignore, or get out of the way of the attack.
- 7d) If you See with three or more dice, that's called **Taking The Blow**. Say how the blow lands – you don't get to block or dodge. Then you get Fallout Dice, which hold on a bit and I'll tell you.
- 8) Now whoever goes next, in Best Roll order, gets to Raise. Notice that if there are only two players in the conflict, they just trade back and forth. Say what you do then and put forward two dice of your own. Always two. ...*And I raise you a punch in the nose. $7+5=12$.*
- 8) Keep passing the go around: See and Raise, See and Raise, until somebody's out of dice.
- 8) As things change, just roll new dice as called for. For instance, if somebody escalates to a new arena, like Meg's brother with his punch in the nose, roll your Stat dice for the new arena. (Particularly, roll whatever Stats you haven't rolled already.) If your character's experience with horses suddenly becomes relevant, roll those dice! This is where magic and the supernatural powers of the righteous will come in.
- 9) Also! As part of Seeing or Raising, if you introduce a plausible and useful piece of stage dressing, roll a d6 right now and add it to your pool. The GM can declare a stage "fully dressed," though, and after that it's not allowed.
- 10) Eventually, somebody will Raise and nobody on the other side will be able to See. That's the end of the conflict. The person who won gets the resolution of what's at stake. *[After many Sees & Raises of fighting] I hold him face down in the rut, with his arm twisted up behind him. I kick his shotgun out into the field. He doesn't go shoot her.* If everybody's happy, move on. Otherwise, you can spin into a new conflict, by somebody choosing the initial arena and saying what's at stake now. ...*Now I gotta talk him into dealing with his son [Persuasion, what's at stake is his relationship with his son, everybody figures out what dice they get to roll for this conflict and away we go again].*
- 11) But before that, Fallout ...

- Fallout

In conflict, when you use three or more dice to See ("taking the blow"), you get Fallout Dice. You get a number of Fallout Dice equal to the number of dice you Saw with - so if you See with three dice, you get three Fallout Dice, See with four, get four, and so on.

The size of the Fallout Dice you get depends on the nature of the blow you took. Just talking: d4s. Unarmed fighting, non-violent physical: d6s. Hand weapons: d8s. Guns: d10s. Excessive damage, like house fires or dynamite: d12s.

At the end of the conflict, you roll all your Fallout Dice and interpret them.

If you roll a 1 on any Fallout Die, choose one:

- Add 1 to one of your stats.
- Create a new trait at 1d6.

- Add or subtract 1 die from an existing trait.
 - Change the d-size of an existing trait.
 - Create a new relationship at 1d6.
 - Add or subtract 1 from an existing relationship.
 - Change the d-size of an existing relationship.
- Whichever you choose, you have to explain how the conflict causes the change.

In Addition, add your two highest Fallout Dice together.

Whatever you choose of what follows, again, you have to explain how the conflict causes it.

Do they sum to less than 8? If so, choose one of the following:

- Subtract 1 from one of your stats for your next conflict.
- Take a new trait rated 1d4 for your next conflict.
- Change the dice of one of your relationships to d4s for your next conflict.
- Leave the scene and spend some time by yourself. Only choose this one if nobody else launches a follow-up conflict.

Otherwise, do they sum to 8 or higher? If so, choose one of the following:

- Subtract 1 from one of your stats.
- Take a new trait at 1d4.
- Take a new relationship at 1d4.
- Add 1d to an existing d4 trait or relationship.
- Change the dice of an existing d6+ trait or relationship to d4s.

In addition, do they sum to 12 or higher? If so, you're injured. Do both of the following:

- Choose again from the 8+ list.
- Roll your Body plus any relevant traits. If you can See your current Fallout Sum in 3 or fewer dice, you'll recover without medical attention. Stop here. Otherwise, bump your current Fallout Sum up to 16 and continue.

Do they sum to 16 or higher? If so, without medical attention you'll die, and with medical attention you might die. Do the following:

- If you get medical attention, launch a new conflict: Your Body + your healer's Acuity (plus any relevant Traits and Relationships) vs. all your Fallout Dice + Demonic Influence. What's at stake is whether you'll live. Your healer takes any Fallout from this roll. If you and your healer win, you'll live; stop here. Otherwise bump your current Fallout Sum up to 20 and continue.
- If you don't get medical attention, bump your current Fallout Sum up to 20 and continue.

Do they sum to 20 or higher? If so, you're dead. Choose one of the following:

- Die now.
- Set up your death scene, during which you'll die.

- Various Cases Helping

When someone else needs to See and you're in a position to help, interrupt, say what you do, and give one of your dice to the other player. This is important: the other player *rolls the die again*. You aren't giving the number you rolled, you're giving the die. Whatever she rolls, it counts toward her See total, but it doesn't count against her for Fallout purposes. Instead, it counts against *you* for Fallout purposes.

So say I Raise your friend "a Mountain Person jumps out and attacks you with an antler on a stick" with a fearsome 15. Your friend is looking at a bunch of 3s and 4s on her dice, but you have a d10 showing a 2 and you can spare it. "I shoot him!" you say, and pass over the d10. Your friend rolls a 7 on it and adds two 4s from her own dice, for the 15 she needs. We consider her to have Seen with two dice.

But now I Raise *you* some Mountain People throwing rocks at you, with an 8. You See with a 5 and a 3 ... but the d10 you passed to your friend counts against your dice. We consider you to have Seen with three dice, and Fallout for you!

If nobody cares about GM-side Fallout

Don't roll it. Give the player the Fallout Dice to roll on her side, if the next conflict follows at all from this one.

Ceremonies

When you introduce ceremony into a conflict, you don't inflict Just Talking Fallout. Instead you inflict Ceremonial Fallout. Look on your character sheet to see what size dice.

Introduce ceremony into a conflict by using elements of ceremony in your Sees and Raises. You can perform an entire ceremony, including many ceremonial elements, as a single See or Raise, or each See and Raise can be a single element of ceremony. Choose whichever better serves the pace of the conflict. *I call upon the Authority of the Ancients! I make the Sign of the Tree! I command you By Name to depart! Raise 9!* vs. *I call upon the Authority of the Ancients! Raise 6! I make the Sign of the Tree! See 7! I command you By Name to depart! Raise 9!* Either is, as I say, valid.

Elements of Ceremony

- Anointing with Sacred Earth: Put a little dab of consecrated clay (all Dogs carry a small jar of it) on your subject's forehead. Sacred earth represents life: use it for healing, protection, Naming, and exorcising demons from the possessed. You can't use it for controlling or exorcising disembodied demons, because they have no foreheads.
- Calling By Name: Say your subject's whole name. All beings - people, demons, whatever - obey their whole, true names. Finding out a demon's whole name is useful but hard.
- Calling Upon the Authority of the Ancients: Proclaim that you act with the Authority of the Ancients of the Faith. Perhaps invoke particular prophets by name, if they were renowned for whatever it is you're doing. All beings are cowed by their majesty.
- Making the Sign of the Tree: Hold your right hand up at shoulder height, palm forward, fingers spread. This is a symbol of the King of Life, and invokes His holy spirit. Demons and sorcerers flee from it, sinners writhe in its presence, and the it brings peace and joy to the righteous.
- Reciting the Book of Life: Say aloud a passage from the Book of Life, the Faith's holy scripture. Choose a passage that fits with what you're trying to do.

- Leaving Play

You can have your character leave play at any time:

- If you like, with the input of the other players, give your character an epilogue.
- If your character reenters play sometime in the future, you can either play her yourself or have the GM play her.
- In any case, make a new character. You get Stat dice equal to your retiring character's +1, Trait dice equal to your retiring character's +1d6, and Relationship dice equal to your retiring characters' +1d6. Only assign dice to one or two Relationships and leave the rest for in-play assignment. Plus you get trappings as appropriate.
- You can choose whether your new character is young and new to the Dogs, or experienced. If the latter, collaborate with the other players on a brief background.

6. Setting

- Mountain People

They live in the foothills, mountains, swells and buttes around and in between the communities of the Faithful.

There are also ruins around, but the Mountain People never live in them. In the ruins you can find evidence of an ancient Faithful civilization, with depictions of proper observance and everything.

Some people think that the Mountain People invaded and destroyed this earlier righteous theocracy. But no, anyone who examines the evidence will conclude that the Mountain People are its fallen descendants.

The Mountain People's religions are demonic cults: they make offerings to and call on the services of demons. The demons are, objectively, hostile to the new Faithful communities here.

The greatest heroes of the Mountain People are warriors who've been possessed so thoroughly and so frequently by their patron demons that they're barely human anymore. Over time, possession changes you physically, so that you might come to be elongated and bony, like a grotesque life-size doll, or your eyes and fingernails and hair might be made of black wood, or your face and body might become bestial and deformed.

The Mountain People dig this, and their fashions mimic it.

Their clothing and architecture both use a wide even chaotic variety of materials: hide, bone, wood, stone, clay, woven reeds, antlers, snakeskins and lizard skins, volcanic glass, thorns. Clothing usually breaks up the silhouette; buildings usually blend in.

There are herds of elk, so the Mountain People hunt and eat and use the leftover body parts of elk. They also eat wild herbs and vegetables, birds, and lots of bugs. They don't do agriculture or husbandry at all, not even dogs or chickens or anything.

They don't worship or have any kind of spiritual relationship with any animals, although some of their demons are bestial. Think of the boar from Princess Mononoke and you won't be wrong. Like the elk demon they worship is the demon who betrays the elk into their hands.

Because the Mountain People are descended from the Faithful of old, the Faithful pity them, in addition to the fear and disgust you'd expect. Sometimes Mountain People even convert, although the church won't allow you to marry one.

- The Faith

The whole name of the Faith is the Faith of All Things in the King of Life, Reborn.

The whole name of the Dogs is the Order Set Apart to the Preservation of Faith and the Faithful. Casually, the King's Dogs or Life's Watchdogs. Dogs are always called Brother or Sister by their first name: Brother Jeremiah, Sister Patience.

The Faith is the only true religion in the world. All other religions are a) actively demonic, like the cults of the Mountain People; b) corrupt and decadent, like the majority religions of the East; or c) idle nonsense, like most of the religions in the wider world.

The Faith has a pretty much normal set of moral codes: don't do violence to one another, don't sleep around, don't lie, cheat, steal, break promises, conspire against one another, or profit from another's misfortune. It has the standard religious ones: worship the correct god in the correct way, don't turn to demons or false gods for favors. It also has a handful of "avoid the appearance of sin" and "separate people" ones: modesty rules, including who's allowed to be alone with whom, who's allowed to touch whom, what people are allowed to wear; consumption rules, being historically no smoking tobacco, no drinking liquor

(homemade wine and beer are still okay), and no drinking coffee or tea, but any dietary rules will serve; and random conduct rules like no swearing (although what's "swearing" and what isn't might still be working itself out, socially).

The laws of the Territorial Authority are based on the same core moral code: don't do violence to one another, don't sleep around, don't lie, cheat, steal, etc. The thing is, being made by the corrupt and decadent, the *legal* interpretation of the code differs from the *Faithful* interpretation in at least one key way. Maybe multiple marriage is allowed by the law but prohibited by the Faith. Maybe ritual tattooing is considered "violence" by the law but "correct worship" by the Faith.

So but within that framework, I personally don't care what the specifics are. Does the Faith's understanding of "don't sleep around" permit or prohibit multiple marriage? Do its consumption rules permit or prohibit eating pork? What arrangements constitute "conspiring against one another" or "profiting from another's misfortune"? What makes "correct worship"? When are the holy days and what do you do on them? Come to think of it, is "the King of Life" God (if so, YHWH, Jehovah, or Allah?), or Jesus, or the head of a Pantheon, or the Earth, or what? Are "false gods" gods who don't exist, or real gods we oughta not be worshipping? It's all stuff that has to be decided for play, but I'm up in the air about who gets to decide it. Me, upfront? The GM, at need? The players, on the fly? Dunno.

Regardless, the "something's wrong" progression is pretty advanced theology. Your common Faithful person will know what the rules are and will understand that God kicks your butt if you break them, but will care far more about getting the wheat in and are there going to be locusts this year. It's *your* job, Dog, to take care of the religious stuff.

- The Landscape

The mountains are really tall. They peak above the snowline. They have deep canyons, smashing waterfalls, some rivers with ice in them year-round. Winters even in the foothills are fierce and long.

The Mountain People live higher than the Faithful ever do.

There's a fertile strip with lakes and good land, giving way to scrub desert. It's *full* of ruins, which may be why the Mountain People don't live all over it.

The scrub desert is not sandy, dune-y or Sahara-like at all. It's all buttes, swells, canyons, and deep-cut valleys of carved sandstone monuments. It used to be wetter and more fertile, as there are lots of ruins in it too, but it's still got lots of scrub oak, sagebrush, and those hardy little evergreens.

Also lots of Mountain People. The Mountain People here live in closer proximity to the ruins than the Mountain People elsewhere are willing. Probably just because the living is harder.

7. Scenario Creation

- Problematicizing the Faith

Stewardship

The Faith's organization is made of nested domains of spiritual authority, called Stewardship. It looks like this, where "}" means "falls under the Stewardship of":

*Local Families } Local Officials } Regional Officials }
Prophets & Ancients of the Faith*

Families look like this:

Children, Elder Parents, Related Unmarried Adults in the House } Married Adults } Husband

Local Officials look like this:

Various Duty-specific Officials, if there are enough families to need specialized offices } Counselors, if there are

enough families that one guy can't do it all } One Guy, "bishop" in Mormon terms, "Branch" in the game I played with Meg and Tom, final title tbd.

(The One Guy + Counselors is called, in Mormonism, the "bishopric.")

Regional Officials look just the same. The duty-specific regional officials are to the local officials as the local officials are to the families. An example:

Bro Bob is the local official in charge of writing down all the babies' names. Whenever a baby's born he writes down its name, and every year he goes through the list to make sure it's good. He falls under the Stewardship of Bro Joe, the local Bish. Bro Frank is the regional official in charge of baby names. Bro Joe and Bro Frank both fall under the Stewardship of Bro Parley, the regional bigcheese; Bro Joe lives here and Bro Frank lives near Bro Parley. Every year, Bro Frank checks the lists of baby names he gets from all the local Bishes, Bro Joe included, in Bro Parley's region. He exists to help Bro Joe and all the other local Bishes get their baby names written down and in order. He may or may not communicate directly with Bro Bob.

And **the Prophets and Ancients of the Faith** have their own internal structure, but whatever. They speak and act as one, from our point of view here.

Now, **the Dogs!** The Dogs look like this:

Congregation } Dogs Assigned to it } Committee in charge of Dogs } Prophets & Ancients of the Faith

Notice that the local official has Stewardship over the families in his congregation, while the Dogs assigned to that route have Stewardship over his congregation as a whole, including him in his official capacity. Dogs have no authority to solve the problems of families or individuals, that's the local officials' job, except as the problems spill over into the congregation as a whole. (Which they pretty much do, so that's okay.)

Oh, and **an individual person** looks like this:

Day-to-day Behavior, Obedience, Destiny, Personal Relationships } You

You do not have Stewardship over your role in your family, your congregation, or the Faith! That's kinda interesting, isn't it?

What Stewardship means in practice is: the King of Life will talk to you about whatever it is you have Stewardship over, and expect you to keep whatever it is in order. From our regional example: God talks to Bro Parley about Bro Parley's counselors, his duty-specific officials, and all the local Bishes in his region (like Bro Joe). He doesn't talk to Bro Parley about Bro Bob, any of the families in Bro Joe's congregation, any of the Dogs in his region, any of his fellow regional bigcheeses, or any random anybody else.

Another example: Bro Brigham is a man in Bro Joe's congregation. He has a wife, six children (two of whom are unmarried adults), and his wife's aging mother in his family. God does not talk to Bro Joe about Bro Brigham's wife, kids, or mother in law. He talks to Bro Joe about Bro Brigham's family: "Bro Brigham's family is troubled," God might say. "See what you can do about that." Then Bro Joe goes to Bro Brigham and says, "God tells me your family is troubled; what's up?" And Bro Brigham might answer: "well, God tells me that my oldest is impatient and bored, which would explain why he's being so rude to his grandmother. I'm thinking I'll send him to my brother's out in Moab for a change of scenery." That's if Bro Brigham is lucky and on top of things. If he's not, he might answer: "yeah, the devil only knows what's going on with them. Fight fight fight, and I can't keep anyone under control." Now Bro Joe has to say, "okay, well you'd better get right with God and quick, so He'll help you get your family in order." If Bro Joe's congregation is big enough to warrant an official in charge of gettin' right with God, Bro Joe will tell him to go visit Bro Brigham; otherwise, Bro Joe has to see to it himself.

Stewardship applies to interpreting doctrine! God tells the Prophets and Ancients the Truth. The Prophets and Ancients derive from It specific doctrines, as It applies to the here and now, which they tell to the regional officials. The regional officials apply the doctrines to the circumstances of their regions, and tell the local officials. The local officials apply these interpretations to their own congregations, and tell the families. The husbands apply the interpreted interpretations to themselves and their wives, and with their wives apply them to their children and other family members. Responsibility for following doctrine goes back up the line: if family members don't, the husband has to answer to the local official; if a region doesn't, the regional official has to answer to the Prophets and Ancients.

Pride can enter into Stewardship when:

- You think that you'd do a better job with someone than that someone's Steward, like if you think you know better what's good for Bro Brigham's wife than Bro Brigham does.
- You think that your convenience is more important than your Stewardship, so you don't attend to it.
- You think that fulfilling your Stewardship obligations means you deserve recompense or special consideration. (This was the heart of the conflict in my game with Meg and Tom. Bro Benjamin, his wife and her ally thought that Bro Benjamin deserved a second wife, he was doing "such a good job.")
- You think that the person with Stewardship over you is doing a bad job or doesn't deserve it, or you don't have to listen to him.
- You use your Stewardship over someone as though it were power, not responsibility.
- You favor some of the people over whom you have Stewardship above the others, seeing to their needs preferentially.

Stewardship probs will generate conflict in the game by themselves pretty much only insofar as your group is interested in the Faith's structure, order, and who has to obey whom. But it underlies everything that follows, so best to have a good grip on it.

Women's vs. Men's Roles

Girls are expected to:

- be retiring, demure, quiet, polite, patient, and deferential.
- do boring, repetitive, menial work without complaining.
- be afraid of spiders, mice, guns, horses, climbing, falling, and swimming.
- not be afraid of blood.
- tend their younger siblings.
- help make meals, keep the house clean, and keep the animals fed.

Boys are expected to:

- be obedient, energetic, respectful, enthusiastic, smart, and confident.
- do hard physical work without complaining.
- not be afraid of anything.
- take on increasingly adult male responsibilities.
- not be too hard to clean up after.

Unmarried women are expected to:

- keep to their families.
- be receptive to courtship.
- fight to keep their courtships proper.
- overcome their girlish fears.
- continue on essentially as girls, otherwise.

Unmarried men are expected to:

- aggressively court multiple women (intending to marry only one of them, until called to marry another by the Faith, which may never happen).
- travel.

- work as men.

Married women are expected to:

- bear and raise children.
- serve their husbands.
- keep house.

Married men are expected to:

- provide for their families.
- educate their wives and children.
- defend their homes.

Old women are expected to:

- help their daughters raise their grandchildren and keep their houses.
- be sweet, patient, indulgent and wise.

Old men are expected to:

- help educate their grandchildren.
- be clear-spoken, opinionated, stern and wise.

Pride can enter into Gender Roles when:

- you aren't satisfied with the roles of your gender: you want more freedom, or the roles of the other gender.
- you want someone of the other gender to act outside her or his roles.
- you deny someone full access to her or his roles (by locking your unmarried adult daughter in the house or overprotecting your son, for instance).

People, especially women, who want to transcend their gender roles are sympathetic. Lots of good, interesting, very satisfying conflict possibilities there.

Love, Sex, & Marriage; Virtue & Sin

- Between husband and wife, all sex and all love is virtuous.
- Between two men or two women, no romantic love is virtuous (although familial and comradely love can be) and sex is a sin (and, coincidentally, a crime).
- Between two people married to others, no romantic love is virtuous and sex is a sin.
- Between an unmarried man and a married woman, no romantic love is virtuous and sex is a sin.
- Between a married man and an unmarried woman, romantic love might be virtuous, and sex is a sin.
- Between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman, romantic love is virtuous, and sex is probably a sin.

Except for the non-ideal case of a husband and wife who don't love one another, in the absence of romantic love, sex is never virtuous.

Now, see that "probably"? That's because the King of Life is, occasionally, a realist. Sometimes, when it matters, God prefers a loving family to official recognition.

Especially because getting married isn't just a church thing. It's also a Territorial Authority thing. Not all people who should marry are able to, legally, be it because of fees, corrupt TA representatives, or various other difficulties - all the result of the unrighteousness of the non-Faithful and the corruptness of the TA and the other religions.

Pride can enter into love, sex etc. when:

- you demand the love of, or impose your love upon, someone who doesn't love you.
- you act as though you love someone when you really don't.
- you consider your love to transcend sin and virtue, like when you're in love with someone inappropriate.
- you want sex, without considering love, virtue or sin (here's Sis Avigail).

And you know? That stuff's all rare bloody story meat.

Polygamy

Polygamy (technically polygyny; polyandry isn't allowed a'tall) is, in the Faith, a reward to men for long-term service and dedication. No man under, say, 30 has a second wife, and no man under 40 has a third (or fourth, or fifth, or sixth...). To get official allowance to court a woman after your first wife, you must:

- have been called upon by the King of Life to do so, as confirmed by the person with Stewardship over you.
- be fulfilling the Stewardship of your office in the Faith in an exemplary fashion (or have retired from a lifetime of doing so).
- have a woman in mind.
- be able to support the addition to your family, including the inevitable children and elder parents.

And pride can enter into Polygamy when:

- you consider polygamy to be your right, instead of a reward you have to deserve.
- you think that you deserve polygamy when really you just want it (here's Bro Benjamin et al again).
- you're a wife and you don't welcome a righteous subsequent wife.
- you're a second or subsequent wife and you resent the wives before you.
- you put your relationships with your fellow wives over your relationship with your husband.
- you're pursuing or part of a polygamous marriage unapproved by the Faith.
- you're a wife who wants an additional husband.

Polygamy is love, sex etc. times two. Or more. It puts people in complicated and high-pressure situations. Problematic polygamy can drive your game.

Money

Nobody in the Faith should be hungry when someone else is eating. The King of Life has said so, and it's maybe the Faith's most constant struggle.

Pride can enter into money when:

- you think you deserve more than someone else.
- you don't want to give up what you have when someone else needs it more than you do.

And that's pretty good story stuff, but it's sure not sex.

An Illustration of Stewardship

Bro Brigham is the worst thing in Bro Joe's world. It's not just that he's a sinner, it's that he's unteachable, unreformable. Too mean and too proud.

Bro Brigham is single-handedly destroying Bro Joe's congregation. But when Bro Joe goes to the King of Life for guidance, it's all: see to his needs, call him to repentance, cultivate him, serve him, help him, show him compassion. That, after all, is Bro Joe's job: look after each family in his care. The King of Life tells Bro Joe what's best for Bro Brigham. Bro Joe has invested more time and care and worry in Bro Brigham than in any other single thing in his life.

You come to town. The congregation's a septic wound. A thousand resentments, sins waiting to burst free. If you leave it as it is it'll self-destruct. Bro Joe's doing his very best by every family, but it's stone clear: Bro Brigham will become too much for him to carry. Bro Joe will do something terrible, with lots of people caught up in it, and it'll be bloodshed, Sorcery, and damnation.

The King of Life doesn't tell you what's best for Bro Brigham, He tells you what's best for the congregation. You drag Bro Brigham out of his house and shoot him in the street.

Bro Joe comes in a rage. "All my work, all my time, all my investment in Bro Brigham's salvation! And for what, you kill him!"

"Your job is to heal the infected wound," you say. "My job is to save the body."

- Procedure

Setup

Draw a circle. Put a dot and arrow in it for each PC plus one for the Territorial Authority plus one for the Faith. Leave room; you can add dots whenever you feel like it.

You can also repeat steps if you want. A town might have one situation going all the way up to murder, and a second, unrelated situation still at the sin level, and then four more budding prides. If I wanted a town to take more than a session or two to sort out, that's how I'd do it.

Step 1

1a: Pride. Scroll through the list of Pride thingies in the "Problematizing the Faith" section (it's on my LiveJournal). Choose whichever one jumps out at you. Attach it to one of the dots and write a (very short) paragraph.

1b: Injustice. Pride creates injustice. How is somebody better off or worse off than everybody else, because of the pride? Attach it to one of the dots and write a paragraph.

1c: If you've attached something to every dot, and if the situation seems grabby enough to you, you can stop. Skip ahead to step 6.

Step 2

2a: Sin. Unaddressed, injustice leads to sin. The advantaged person becomes bold or the disadvantaged person becomes resentful - either way, they break the rules. What's the sin? Attach it to one of the dots and write a paragraph.

2b: Demonic Attacks. Sin allows the demons to attack the town. What form does their attack take? Attach it to a dot and write a paragraph.

2c: The demons want the sin to become habitual.

2d: If you've attached something to every dot and if you're happy with the situation, you can stop. Skip ahead to step 6.

Step 3

3a: False Doctrine. Habitual Sin and/or Demonic Attacks create false doctrine. Either the sinner invents false theology to justify the sin, or the victim or witness of the attacks creates false doctrines to explain or repair what seems to be a failure of the Faith. What's the false tenet? Attach it to a dot and write a paragraph.

3b: Corrupt Worship. False doctrine expresses itself in bad religious practice or an incorrect use of ceremony. What's the form it takes? Attach it to a dot and write a paragraph.

3c: The demons want the false doctrine to win over other people.

3d: If you've attached something to every dot, and if you're happy with the situation, you can stop. Skip ahead to step 6.

Step 4

4a: False Priesthood. When a corrupt worship has three or more worshippers, it becomes a false priesthood. Who is the cult leader and who are the cult? Attach 'em to dots and write a paragraph or two.

4b: Sorcery. A false priesthood commands the service of the demons. What does the cult have the demons doing? Attach it to a dot and write a paragraph or two.

4c: The demons want someone to kill someone, plus they want whatever the cult wants.

4d: If you've attached something to every dot, and if you're happy with the situation, you can stop. Skip ahead to step 6.

Step 5

5a: Hate and Murder. Eventually someone kills someone. The demons especially like it when a) the very Faithful and b) possible threats get murdered. Attach the murder to dots or a dot and write a paragraph.

5b: Stop now, or repeat 5a until the situation is grabby enough for you. Unresolved, murder leads to more murder.

Step 6

6a: What does each dot want from the Dogs? Write a sentence or two for each.

6b: What do the demons want in general? What do they want from the Dogs? What might they do? Write a paragraph.

6c: If the Dogs never came, what would happen - that is, what's the next step up the "what's wrong" ladder? Write a sentence or two.

You're done!

Example One: the Boxelder Canyon Branch.

1a Pride: The Territorial Authority guy thinks he deserves his living without working. He's a Faithful who's been assigned to negligible civic duties - keeping census info and reporting it annually - but he thinks that it's enough to warrant his family's maintenance.

1b Injustice: Because he spends his time pestering the town for more money instead of working, he, his wife (Brother Artax's aunt) and their children are dirt ass poor.

1c: I've attached something to the dots pointing to the Territorial Authority and to Brother Artax. I have three unattached dots: one pointing to Brother Benjamin, one pointing to Brother Cadmus, and one pointing to the Faith. I keep going.

2a Sin: The TA guy's wife, Bro Artax's aunt, makes whiskey and sells it to the town's farmhands on the sly.

2b Demonic Attacks: The church meetinghouse burned down. Brother Benjamin's uncle was badly burned in the fire. He's healing but pissed off.

2d: I still have one unattached dot, pointing to Brother Cadmus, and the situation doesn't seem baked yet. I keep going.

3a False Doctrine: Bro Benjamin's burned uncle blames the bishop for the fire, because the bishop's grandmother is a (converted) Mountain Person and lives in the bishop's house. It's dumb bigotry, but he's decided that the bishop's Calling is invalid.

3b Corrupt Worship: Bro Benjamin's burned uncle has taken to ceremonially praying for the bishop's grandmother's death.

3d: I'm happy with the situation, but I still have that unattached dot! I make it Bro Cadmus' younger brother, a farmhand newly arrived in town, and he's listening too hard to Bro Benjamin's raving uncle: he's a potential convert to the potential cult. Good, all done. I skip to step 6.

4, 5: skipped.

6a the dots:

- Brother Artax's aunt, the TA census guy's wife, wants the Dogs to stay out of her business. She wants to keep her whiskey a secret.
- Brother Benjamin's uncle wants the Dogs on his side vs. the Bishop.
- Brother Cadmus' little brother wants the Dogs to tell him who to trust, but not to tell him to stop drinking whiskey.
- The TA census guy wants the Dogs to side with him, that he deserves to be paid a living wage for his (negligible) civic office.
- The Bishop wants the Dogs on his side vs. the uncle. He especially wants to convince them that his grandmother is a convert with no malice in her.

6b the demons:

- The demons want the farmhands to join the cult. They'll attack the town where the bishop oughta be able to

protect it, and undermine his authority where they can.

- They want the Dogs to join with the uncle.
- They want the whiskey to stay secret.
- If the Dogs get close to the whiskey, the demons'll work overtime to implicate the bishop's grandmother. They'll make it look like she's using them to attack the uncle - that's a good twist!

6c if the Dogs never came:

- Sooner or later the cult would get its three members. Then they'd overthrow the bishop, and the demons would whisper to them that leaving him and his grandmother alive is dangerous to them. Eventually, murder!

Example Two: the Whitechurch Branch.

1a Pride: Brother Artax's niece is resisting the appropriate courtship of the bishop's son, for no good reason. She just doesn't like him.

1b Injustice: Consequently, the bishop's son has become obsessed with her. He's buying her more gifts than he can afford, burdening his family.

2a Sin: The shopkeeper, not a Faithful, is marking up his prices. He doesn't consider it a sin to profit from injustice, but it is one. He and his wife - Brother Benjamin's cousin, young, pretty, Faithful - are getting way rich and are lording it over.

2b Demonic Attacks: The demons want to make the situation worse, so they're breaking tools and making them wear out faster. Brother Cadmus' aged uncle's farm is one of the worst hit. The old guy values his independence - whether that's Pride too is up in the air.

3, 4, 5: skipped.

6a the dots:

- The bishop and his son want Bro Artax to talk sense into his niece. The bishop would be content if he talked sense into his son.
- The shopkeeper wants the Dogs to keep their noses out. They'll have to figure out how to deal with him given that he's not Faithful. (Is he a Spiritualist, an Atheist, a Dogmatist or what? Wing it!)
- His wife, Brother Benjamin's cousin, wants the Dogs to assuage her guilt. She doesn't especially want them to convert him to the Faith - she loves him how he is.
- Brother Cadmus' uncle wants the Dogs to stay over and help him get his farm back together, "just this harvest."
- Brother Artax's niece wants to marry Bro Benjamin or Bro Cadmus.

6b the demons:

- The demons want to drive prices and demand up, up, up!
- They want the bishop to pronounce that it's okay for the town to rob the store - which would be false doctrine.
- They want the Dogs to buy stuff, so they'll try to break their stuff too. They don't want the Dogs to pronounce that it's okay for the town to rob the store - because if the Dogs say it, it's probably not false doctrine. That's what Dogs do, after all.

6c if the Dogs never came:

- eventually the bishop would declare the store to be the congregation's property and run the shopkeeper and his wife out. The demons would keep applying scarcity pressure - without the shopkeeper, how will the town restock the store? - until it all blows up.