

Demons & Doctorates



A hack of John Harper's *Lasers & Feelings* by Mark Silcox
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You are a group of professors at Niflheim State U. Earlier today your boss, Dean Syms, summoned you to the basement of the university's vast, historic library, where they insisted you help them perform a diabolical ancient rite. You (of course) obeyed instantly. Your memory of what followed is blurry. But now you're all standing inside a pentagram scrawled on the floor. Dean Syms is nowhere to be seen. A scent of sulfur pervades the air, and there is a faint sound of cruel incorporeal laughter.

Players: Create Characters

1. Choose an academic discipline for your character: (e.g. theosophy, prehistoric religion, landscape gardening, criminal justice).
2. Choose an obsession for your character: (e.g. Gnosticism, Linear A, CrossFit, Theatrical Costuming).
3. Choose one piece of equipment you're carrying that might help you in your adventure (e.g. inverted crucifix, dead Dad's cloth hanky, concealed firearm, fertility totem).
4. Choose your number, from 2 to 5. A high number means you're better at **LOGOS**. A low number means you're better at **THANATOS**. (further information below)
5. Your character's name is: Professor _____.

Players: Create the Group Dynamic

- As a group, pick one **Affinity** that might help you stick together. (e.g. Secret Satanism, Local Bowling League, Pansexualism, Hatred of Townies, Cringing Subsistence to Admin).
- Also, pick one source of **Controversy** that might tear you apart: (e.g. Donald Trump, Critical Race Theory, College Athletics, Grammatical Prescriptivism, Poetry that Rhymes).

Rolling the Dice When you do something risky, roll **1d6** to find out how it goes. Roll **+1d** if your discipline, obsession, equipment, or affinity might help you out. (The GM tells you how many dice to roll, based on your character and the situation.)

⇩ If you're using **LOGOS** you want to roll **under** your number

⇧ If you're using **THANATOS** you want to roll **over** your number.

Tasks involving **LOGOS** include anything that has to do with reason, observation, *phronesis*, cool-headedness, or understanding of campus politics.

Tasks involving **THANATOS** include anything that has to do with willpower, violence, charisma, *ressentiment*, or anticipating the whims of university administrators.

If none of your dice succeed, it goes wrong. The GM says how the forces of doom advance upon you.

1 If one die succeeds, you barely manage. The GM inflicts a complication, cost, or curse.

2 If two dice succeed, you do it well. A+!

3 If three dice succeed, you get a critical success! The GM tells you some extra reward the cosmos bestows upon you.

! If you roll your number exactly, you have **Death Logic**! You get a special insight into what's going on. Ask the GM a question and they'll answer you honestly. (some good questions: Where are the books of ancient magick? Which of my colleagues has something to hide? What is our adversary's crucial weakness?)

Helping: If you want to help someone else who's rolling, say how you try to help and make a roll. If you succeed, give them **+1d**.

GM: Create a Scholarly Adventure! Roll or choose on the tables below.

You have summoned	
1. Baal	4. Satan his very self
2. The Great Cthulhu	5. The Librarian, now demonically possessed
3. Dean Syms' ghost	6. One PC, now demonically possessed
who is headed for	
1. HR, to revoke everyone's tenure	4. the football stadium, to steal a trophy
2. a local megachurch, to devour the flock	5. outer space, to destroy the earth therefrom
3. the sewers, to retrieve a monstrous pet	6. anywhere havoc can be wrought
and can only be stopped with	
1. an occult tome, hidden in the library.	4. fifty tons of road salt.
2. a mystic spell in a forgotten tongue.	5. a <i>deus ex machina</i> .
3. Dr. Wilcox, your annoying colleague.	6. true, selfless love.

GM: Run the Game Find out whether PCs defeat the entity they've summoned.

Call for a roll when the situation is uncertain. Don't pre-plan outcomes. Instead, use failures to push the action forward. Ask questions and build on the answers.