





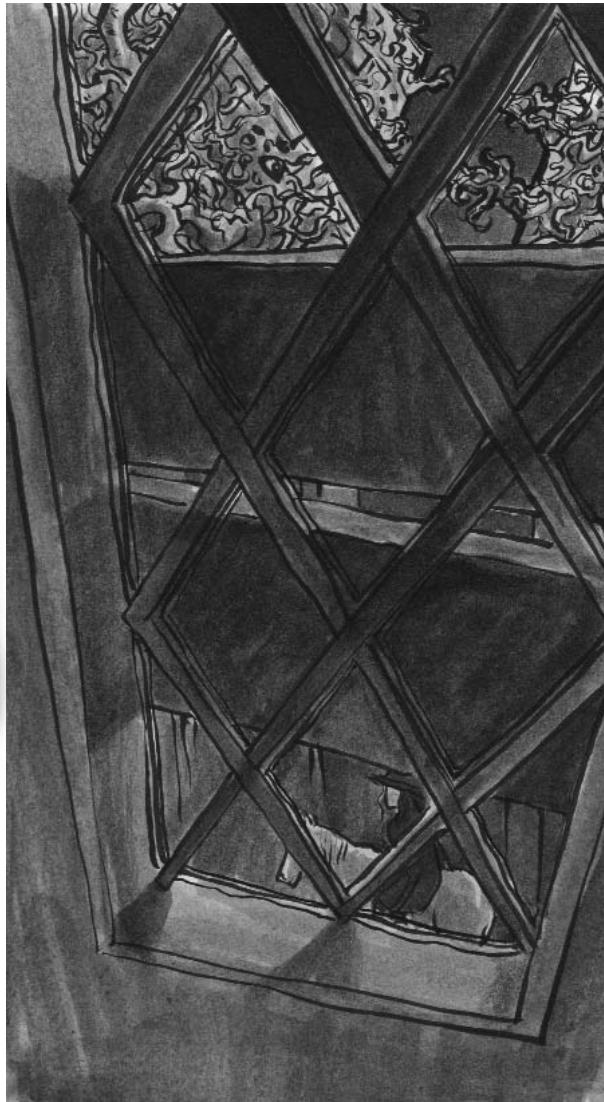
Strange Aeons

Adventure Master of Hounds

By Keris McDonald

Introduction

The year is 1665 and London is in the grip of the Great Plague. One third of the population is dead or dying, and much of the rest has fled: the Royal Court were among the first to abandon the capital. Those who remain are mostly the poor, who have nowhere else to go and no means of bribing their way. The sick are walled up in their houses and the dead are thrown, unmourned and naked, into common pits. The churches are empty while the churchyards are heaped high to overflowing with bodies. London is dying. And in her fever, the city dreams...



Keeper's Background

'Master of Hounds' is a one-off, nightmarish dream-quest into the roots of London's history. Everything except the last scene takes place within the dream version of London. The City, in her crisis, requires someone to renew her strength, to go back to her foundations and re-enact that which created her in the first place. Only then will she have the strength to throw off the Master of Hounds.

When running this scenario, keep player information to the minimum. Don't tell them they are in London. Don't even pass them a character sheet until they've woken up and had a chance to look around them, and to work out that they are children. The characters remember nothing of their waking life, and do not know that the Plague is in progress. Dates and the names of landmarks are for your information as Keeper Notes: the players might be able to work out what is going on, but their characters should be disoriented, helpless and at the mercy of powers beyond their comprehension and control. Dream London is not connected (at least in this scenario) to H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands. Neither **Dream Lore** nor the **Dreaming** skill should be offered as an option. There is no need for Sanity checks either: since the children have no memory of sane reality to compare their current predicament to, they should not lose sanity for any encounter except the final scene ... at which point it's a bit academic really.

Remember that in Dream London the primary logic of events is not causal but symbolic. Time is not linear. Use any tricks you can to keep the players confused, scared but basically on-track. If they completely mess up an encounter and end up dead, feel free to run them through it again – that's the sort of thing that happens in dreams.

This scenario can be run for a solo character (Thomas Craven) or include one or more pre-adolescent siblings. The more players, the more aggressive and ruthless the Keeper should make the challenges. It can also be run with William Cole as a (carefully briefed) PC.

1665 AD

The Great Plague

The characters wake. It is dimly lit, hot and stifling. They are lying in wooden beds with high sides of wooden planks. They have no memories, though they slowly recall their own names, and self examination proves they are small children, filthy dirty, wearing simple tunics and breeches, or dresses if they are female. Catherine Craven