

THE SOUL HUNTERS



To the common man, the Covenant of the Enlightened are little more than an exclusive club of intellectuals and aristocrats who sit in grand drawing rooms talking much and doing little. One such as this is the Hook and Ladder Club in New York City, so named due to being in a building that was originally destined for the nascent Fire Department. The club members specialise in the emergent field of parapsychology, a subject that the common man might call supernatural.

The club's Auger, Warwick Hudson, leads all manner of discussions and theorising into matters ephemeral and improbable.

Like the club's founders, Hudson believes that all things can be explained by applying the scientific method. He maintains that they are in an age of Industrial 'super-science' and that any reports of strange and mysterious happenings are simply exaggerated or misunderstood by unreliable witnesses. Of particular interest are rumours of a paranormal conflict fought in secret by agents and cults of esoteric origins.

Hudson has been working for many months to assemble his team and to prepare them with such equipment as the most dangerous of environments

and situations require. Armed with an array of bizarre and highly experimental weaponry, Hudson is set upon venturing forth and collecting enough data to present to the Hook and Ladder Club, therefore securing his position in the Covenant. Hudson and his Soul Hunters (as the lurid press would daub them) follow up reports of 'aetheric apparitions' that they believe are at the fringes of this Shadow War.

At Auger's right hand is Erin Meltzer, a scientist and researcher with a passion for uncovering the unknown that almost burns as bright as his own. She is particularly fascinated by reports in the Badlands of Montana of animals growing to an almost impossible size and imbued with some aetheric properties. Ernesto Volk is similarly obsessed with the physical, though more often his thoughts are of his own impressive physique, and he has a reputation in the club as a pugilist of some renown, a skill he developed while he studied at University in Greenwich Village.

Hans Spelmann is the quiet, contemplative member of the group and will often only contribute to a discussion when he deems it a necessity. He believes that the spectral anomalies they have encountered are linked to some undiscovered wellspring of arcane energy. Perhaps the secrets of Mythos hold the answer? Jocasta Tobin is the writer and archivist of the Hook and Ladder Club; she documents all their research and theories and promises to one day publish them as a guide to future investigators into the hidden secrets and mysteries of Mythos and the Shadow War.

Katherine Holst is the engineering risk-taker and the most outgoing of them all. It was Holst who collaborated with the French scientist Girauld Eres and made possible the spectral containment technology on which their research now relies so heavily upon. Eres' passion

lay in animal physiology and specimen capture. He was in his laboratory the night of his accident when a beaker exploded, and the chemicals began to eat away at his flesh. When his fellow scientist Xavier Bichat found him, it was almost too late as Girauld's skin had been flensed from a large part of his body. Fortunately, Bichat was a keen study of the Mythos of the galvanic arts, having demonstrated this by macabrely reanimating a gorilla cadaver the previous evening. Through the rituals of Bichat, and the skills of the Countess Augusta Byron, Eres was saved by transplanting his brain tissues into that reanimated primate.

Although Girauld was grateful to still be alive it would be impossible to return to his old life in society. Girauld was a sickly child and life as an academic did nothing to increase his vitality, so the change to the body of a 700lb gorilla was even more significant. His Mythos wrought brawn and brains soon led him into service with mercenary groups across the Union and eventually into the Shadow War itself. It was during the Atlas Affair that the outlaw Jim Petersen gave him the nickname of Mr Ears. So extraordinary were the circumstances of their adventure together that the name became synonymous for him in the local press and a year later when President Johnson awarded them both the inaugural Presidential Medal of Freedom, it was presented in the name of Mr Ears.

With a newfound sense of purpose, Mr Ears joined the Hook and Ladder Club as they thwart the other forces in the Shadow War. It is clear that these other parties are an enemy to the free thinkers of the world. They do not wish to elevate humanity to a new age but seemed bent on shackling mankind to their own dark agendas. The Soul Hunters cannot allow humanity to fall into such chaos and mass hysteria.