A demon is nothing but sin given will and power, and a man who makes a deal with a demon is inviting that sin into him. It does more than consume him — it defines him. It wears him. It rots away at the core of his being. Demons can do it to places, too — whole cities, given the chance. They can alter the supernatural landscape, and despite the prevailing rumor that demons can be bound by rules and symbols, the intelligent occultist must always remember that it was the demons themselves who revealed most of these rules in the first place.

Here, then, is the result of sin, hubris and impatience, and here is a chance to banish a demon back to Hell and right a great wrong — or to seize power. Which will the characters choose?

Fallen is Babylon is a story for the World of Darkness inspired by and using systems and material from World of Darkness: Inferno. While having this book would be very helpful in running Fallen is Babylon, it isn’t strictly necessary, as the relevant systems are reprinted herein.

This story works best when the characters are members of a supernatural race with a defined social structure — vampires, werewolves, mages and changelings are all superb choices for Fallen is Babylon. Prometheans, Sin-Eaters and mortal characters (with or without using the structures in Hunter: The Vigil) can easily be the protagonists of this story; it simply requires a bit more setup from the Storyteller. A brief discussion on how to spin the story for the different game lines can be found below.

### ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you’ve chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven’t included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you’re a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the free SAS Guide, found at the SAS website: www.white-wolf.com/sas

Here are some of the features available in Fallen is Babylon:
- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in blue will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It may also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

The characters are alone in this city, unable to locate any of “their kind.” They might form any number of theories as to why this is the case, but the truth of the matter is that an ancient pact with a powerful demon makes the city inhospitable. Now, though, the desperation of a man bound into a pact with a lesser demon might undo this older bargain — and set the greater demon free. This might ultimately benefit the characters and their people, but can they truly manipulate the forces of Hell?

In Fallen is Babylon, the characters arrive in the city in response to rumors, assignment or curiosity over the fact that none of their people seem to dwell there. While there, they learn of a lecture being given by a noted occultist and demonologist which is drawing protest from religious groups. The occultist, Dr. Eric Rasoletti, collapses during the lecture and is taken to the hospital, and the characters soon learn that something sinister is happening. Investigating Rasoletti’s condition, they learn that his malady is of his own making. In trying to cure it, he might release something even worse.

The story proper begins on a Tuesday night, when Dr. Rasoletti gives his SAS. The characters might go because the subject interests them (the Satanic Panic of the 1980s), or because of Rasoletti’s claims to compare and contrast the purported “Satanism” of that mania with actual demon worship. They might also wind up in the area because of the protesters. Because Rasoletti is claiming to be discussing real-life demon worship, religious groups are picketing the event. News crews, of course, are on hand to document this. The protesters aren’t actually allowed into the university auditorium where the lecture is taking place, so many of them are massed in the shadow of the church across the street.

During the lecture, Rasoletti begins speaking in the language of demons (the Dragon’s Tongue) and then collapses. Paramedics determine that he appears to be asleep, and can find nothing physically wrong with him except that he can’t be woken. A note in his pocket leads characters to his apartment (the Dragon’s Tongue) and then collapses. Paramedics determine that he appears to be asleep, and can find nothing physically wrong with him except that he can’t be woken. A note in his pocket leads characters to his apartment, where they witness the machinations of two demons — one a demon of Sloth to whom Rasoletti is indebted (called Hush), and one a much more powerful demon of Pride (called Ai’tahe) who is trapped beneath the aforementioned church.

The characters, at this point, might choose to investigate the church, or might choose to do some research into the demons. Walking into the church prepared is certainly better than the alternative, but in either case the characters meet the priest of the church, who is well aware of what lurks there. He tries to warn them off, but if they persist, they wind up entering into negotiations with the demon. The results of those negotiations might change the spiritual and magical landscape of the city forever, or might simply reverse the curse under which it currently labors.
Fallen is Babylon has three main themes. The first is sloth. Eric Rasoletti made a deal with a demon because he didn’t want to work for the accolades he felt he deserved. He wanted to skip over the “hard part” and live what he saw as the cushy life of a successful academic. The characters have the temptation at any point to walk away from Rasoletti and the trouble that he’s causing, because any usual society that the characters would have simply isn’t present here. No Prince will tell them what to do, no seasonal King hands down orders, no Hierarch recruits them to look into the matter. If they want to know the truth, they have expend the effort to look for it.

And this leads nicely into the second theme — pride. It takes a certain amount of pride to bargain with a demon, because the would-be Faust has to believe that he can succeed in getting the better of a demon where everyone else has failed. Clearly, though, enough of this sort of pride exists that demons continue to whisper their temptations and worm their way into the hearts of susceptible people. Are the characters such people, ready to seize power in exchange for sacrifice? Or do they know when to leave well enough alone?

The final theme of this story is temperance. Looking at the situation rationally and evenly, the truth is that the demonic presence below the church is having a detrimental effect on the city (especially from the characters’ perspective, since none of their kind can remain here). The characters don’t have to sell their souls and become possessed in order to fix this; all they have to do is learn what the demon wants (escape). An attitude of sheer, unwavering refusal to deal with the demon is no better than entering into negotiations with an intent to beat the demon at its own game — unrealistic and more than a little self-important. (Note that if the Storyteller is running this story as a Vampire: The Requiem game, the stakes change a little. The characters have the chance to keep this city free of Kindred, and that might actually appeal to them.)

Mood: Rebuilding Ruins

The characters are walking into ruins. Rasoletti’s life is a dismal failure. The distant attempt to render the Demon of Pride powerless failed; all the Church managed to do was imprison it, but its influence has corrupted the area. And the characters should find remnants of their culture in the city, evidence that at one point it housed a thriving population of their people. Can the characters rebuild? Possibly, but not during this story. The best they can do during Fallen is Babylon is resolve the past, and establish some hope for the future.

A Chapter in Your Chronicle

One of the best ways to use Fallen is Babylon is as a beginning point for your chronicle. This story assumes that the characters are entering a new city, either on their own or at the behest of a superior. No members of the characters’ supernatural “race” dwell in the city, meaning that they are bereft of the usual comforts and backup they would normally enjoy. But by the same token, the city has no political drama, no bad blood and no entrenched power structure. Once the characters finish this story, banishing Ai’tahe and lifting the curse that keeps their kind from the city, they might open it, inviting other members of their social groups (if any) to join them. They might claim the city for themselves (though enforcing that claim will be difficult — unless they get the demon to help them, of course). Because the end of Fallen is Babylon is potentially a new beginning for the city’s supernatural landscape, this story can make an excellent segue-way into whatever kind of chronicle you wish to present.

If this story occurs in the midst of your chronicle, you can simply downplay the “new beginning” aspects of the story. Maybe the curse survives the demon’s passage, or maybe the characters simply don’t bother negotiating with Ai’tahe at all. You can also allow the characters to exorcise the demon, but have them return to whatever their base of operations was before beginning this story. The city remains open (and perhaps a temptation), but now the supernatural beings that were heretofore barred from it can move in and explore. No matter where it falls in your chronicle, Fallen is Babylon allows you to present a city that hasn’t seen any of the characters’ sorts in a long time, and therefore has a wealth of supernatural “buildup” for characters to discover. This is discussed in more detailed below.

A Story By Itself

If, on the other hand, you intend to run Fallen is Babylon as a self-contained story, we recommend that you focus on the interplay between the demons and on Rasoletti’s plight, rather than the strange absence of supernatural beings. The curse isn’t as immediate a concern as two invisible, warring embodiments of sin in the city, especially if the characters don’t have a strong connection to their respective supernatural societies. Beyond that, however, the story works as presented as a one-shot.
Fallen is Babylon Across the World of Darkness

This story is designed to be used for any kind of characters that the Storyteller wishes to include. The assumptions that Fallen is Babylon makes are:

• The story takes place in a large American city, with a population of between 250,000 and half a million. Examples include: Cleveland, Ohio; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Kansas City, Missouri; Tampa, Florida and Portland, Oregon.

• No members of the character’s “race” of supernatural beings currently reside there. That is, if the Storyteller plans to run Fallen is Babylon as a Mage: The Awakening story, no mages live in the city, no Consilium exists and mages outside the city have probably heard rumors that “no one over in Cleveland ever Awakens.”

• The city did at one time have a population of such beings, but they vanished or left the city in the earliest part of the 20th century, and were all gone by 1910.

• The curse doesn’t actually prevent members of a given supernatural race from entering the city; it merely prevents new ones from being created, and presents as a subtle driving force that urges them out if they do visit. If this doesn’t work for you, you might consider having the race be represented but only by a very small number of members. For instance, instead of a full freehold, maybe the city only boasts a single motley of changelings.

• The city has a large, urban university and a nearby Episcopal church.

• Other cities in the area do have supernatural populations, and the characters probably hail from one of these cities. The characters may or may not be sent to the story’s city to investigate the lack of their kind.

Below are some brief notes about running Fallen is Babylon using one of the existing World of Darkness games.

Vampire: The Requiem

In a Vampire game, the city does not accept new Embraces. Anyone Embraced in the city dies rather than rising as a vampire. The last Prince of the city perished in 1908 (when the church was erected and the demon imprisoned), and no new Kindred have taken up residence since. The curse manifests as a growing sense of unease and inability to control the Beast; all rolls to resist frenzy suffer a cumulative -1 penalty for every full month that a vampire remains in the city.

Note, by the way, that running Fallen is Babylon as a Vampire story changes the themes in a subtle but important way. Breaking the curse would allow vampires to kill and Embrace citizens once again, and would end this city’s status as a place devoid of the ravenous undead. A coterie that breaks the curse might well be morally responsible for the actions of any vampire that comes to take up residence here — a heavy burden indeed.

Werewolf: The Forsaken

In a Werewolf game, no First Changes occur within city limits. Packs of werewolves pass through the city occasionally, but loci yield minimal Essence (any attempt to gain Essence from a locus receives a -5 modifier), and spirits ignore werewolves as though they have better things to do. The spirit wilds don’t look demonic or contaminated, just somewhat bland. As such, Uratha don’t stay around very long.

No werewolf packs have claimed territory in the city since 1908, but the markings and signs that they made at the time might be found in the scene “History Lessons.” Likewise, it might be possible, at the Storyteller’s discretion, to find an old and powerful spirit that remembers the last resident pack — maybe it was even the pack’s totem, and could shed some light on how the demon was imprisoned in the church.

• Lunes can explain the truth of the matter, as far as they know it. They refer to the curse as “the Pall,” and state that Luna cannot see the city and therefore cannot choose those within it to become werewolves. They do not know why this has happened, and neither do most other spirits.

Mage: The Awakening

Sleepers do not Awaken within the city, if you are using Fallen is Babylon as a Mage story. Mages gradually lose their heightened perceptions over time in the city. For every full month that an Awakened character spends here, apply a -1 modifier to any Mage Sight or Unseen Sense roll. Given enough time, visiting mages decide that the city simply has nothing to offer them and move on.

The Consilium that once existed here, however, left behind notes, records and perhaps even Artifacts. When the characters go looking for data about their people’s past (again, see “History Lessons”), you might consider having the characters discover a treasure trove of information dating back to the turn of the 20th century, all magically protected against decay. The most recent data should refer to the demonic imprisonment (probably in oblique terms, since the mages of the time didn’t know what was happening) and to the gradual “magical death” of the city (actually the simple inability to perceive magic).

Promethean: The Created

The Created lack a social framework, and so finding that a city contains no Prometheans probably isn’t much of a shock. Instead, to make this story work as a Promethean game, the demon’s presence interferes with the...
Pilgrimage itself. When a character is about to achieve a minor milestone or otherwise game Vitriol, she feels it welling up inside her... and then slipping away as though something was siphoning it off. Prometheans cannot gain Vitriol in this city as long as Ai’tahe is imprisoned. If the characters manage to send Ai’tahe back to Hell, any Vitriol they would have gained comes flooding back in a near-orgasmic rush of knowledge and fulfillment.

Changeling: The Lost

The Others do abduct people from this city — even Ai’tahe isn’t powerful enough to prevent that. But escapees from Arcadia don’t find their way here. Memories that should lead people to this city simply lead them around in a circle in the Hedge, usually resulting in their being captured once more, unless the can find new memories to guide them.

This in itself wouldn’t stop changelings from coming to the city and forming a freehold, but the secondary effect of the curse is that the Hedge is almost impossible to navigate. The roll to find a gateway out of the Hedge (usually Intelligence + Investigation + Wyrd) is simply the changeling’s Wyrd, meaning that weaker changelings have almost no chance of discovering an exit — unless they leave the city. An old Hollow situated in the Hedge near the center of the city and completely overgrown with briars tells the sad story of a motley that tried to flee the area only to be hounded by hobgoblins and monsters, starved, frozen... and chased right back to where they started. If the characters dig deep enough into this Hollow, they might discover the bones of these unfortunate changelings.

The World of Darkness & Hunter: The Vigil

The player characters might be non-supernatural mortals, investigating the occult or drawn into the events of this story by coincidence or forces outside their comprehension. Such characters might be created using just the World of Darkness Rulebook (possibly in conjunction with such sourcebooks as Second Sight or Asylum) or Hunter: The Vigil. This section applies to both sorts of characters, with the note that mortal characters don’t necessarily have to be driven to find and destroy (or at least curtail) the supernatural in order to participate in Fallen is Babylon. The characters might all be professors or other academics at the university, and respond to Eric Rasolletti’s call for help that way. Or Ai’tahe might entice all of them to become involved somehow — maybe they all attend services at Trinity Cathedral.

Hunters do sometimes belong to established groups, but they are still human, and therefore the curse doesn’t affect them directly. It’s more likely that hunters might look into why another type of supernatural being is excluded — maybe a captured vampire tells them a rumor about a city where the undead fear to tread. In this instance, the cell might look to replicate the effect when they find out that they only reason the city is without a particular supernatural influence is because a powerful demon makes it so. Should they still banish the demon, even though the result might be worse in the long run? Do they think that they could set up operations here and prevent the supernatural from taking root?

One group of hunters requires a special consideration, however: The Lucifuge. Since these hunters are supposedly the descendants of Satan, they have a better chance of detecting (and falling prey to) demonic influence. Lucifuge characters all suffer nightmares from the very first night they spend in the city, nightmares in which they are being dragged downwards, screaming, by flaming chains. If the characters contact their superiors about these dreams, they are told that although other visiting members have reported this effect, the organization has no record of ever investigating the city (and they just volunteered).

Geist: The Sin-Eaters

People die in the city, but they do not merge with geists. Under the curse, while geists can briefly escape the Underworld, they can’t join with human hosts because they slip back into the Great Below too quickly. The Underworld has a strange gravity to it in this city, drawing all dead things down toward it, and this prevents people from making the Bargain.

It also prevents Sin-Eaters from coming back to life in the city. This isn’t something that you should make the players discover the hard way, of course; their geists should warn them, or else they should see information on the Twilight Network. As motivation, the Network also mentions that anyone who finds the truth as to why this happens and stops it will be handsomely rewarded.

If characters enter the Underworld in the city, they might find someone who was present when the demon was imprisoned — a century-old Sin-Eater or geist, for instance — and can give them at least some information about what’s going on. Ghosts, likewise, might be able to help the characters.

Crossover

If you were running this story as a Vampire: The Requiem game, what’s to say that the characters might not run across a pack of werewolves? If you are savvy with multiple game lines and wish to stipulate that the curse affects one “race” but not the others, Fallen is Babylon could make a fine crossover story. Maybe a lone mage meets up with a coterie of curious vampires and they go searching for the truth behind the lack of Awakened in the city. Maybe a motley of changelings decides it needs a guide to the city, but since their kind seem to be absent, they befriend (or bribe) a local Sin-Eater instead. The only major obstacle to running this kind of crossover story is that it requires multiple books and some rules-juggling, but if your troupe can handle that, the themes of Fallen is Babylon stand on their own
regardless of what kinds of character sheets the protagonists use.

**Supernatural Tolerance**

Some of the systems in this story refer to “Supernatural Tolerance.” This is the trait that measures the strength of a character’s otherworldly knowledge, energy or potency, and though it goes by different titles in the various games (and means different things), the trait is often added to contested resistance rolls. A character’s Supernatural Tolerance trait is Blood Potency, Primal Urge, Gnosis, Azoth, Wyrd or Psyche.

**Backstory and Set-up**

Before we get into the story proper, some backstory and introduction to the characters is probably helpful. The Storyteller should pay close attention to the events preceding *Fallen is Babylon*, both because it will help him work this story into an existing chronicle (if necessary) and because the players will likely think of avenues of approach not covered by the following scenes. If the Storyteller knows what came before and what the principal characters’ motivations are, he will be much better able to roll with the punches.

**Backstory**

The foundation for *Fallen is Babylon* was laid in 1908, when Trinity Cathedral was built in what would become the downtown area of the city. Trinity Cathedral, formerly Holy Trinity Episcopalian Cathedral, included an uncommon feature for churches of the time. The outside walls had small tunnels, leading from the roof down to the ground. These tunnels, visible even today from the outside of the church, are rectangular, sixteen inches by nine inches. Officially, they were carved as a gutter system for the church, but the head mason, the architect and the first rector of the church knew the truth. The “gutters,” and in fact the entire building, were the prison of a powerful demon.

**The Summons**

The church has records of who summoned the demon known as Ai’tahe and why, but those archives haven’t seen the light of day in close to a century (the characters might discover them in “A Blessing from Father Stepp,” however). Ai’tahe is a demon of Pride, and more specifically the Pride of Those Who Challenge God. The demon reveled in the hubris and power of supernatural beings, and Ai’tahe answered a summons from the same kinds of supernatural beings as the troupe’s characters. This is why it is important for the characters to have some kind of remnant of their culture to find in the city; those were the last of their people to dwell here before the demon laid its curse.

The group that summoned up the demon did so in an attempt to fulfill some comparatively pedestrian goal. One coterie of vampires might have wished to destroy another. A pack of werewolves might have attempted to make Ai’tahe its totem. A cabal of mages wanted to create new Hallows across the city, and so on. But the summons wasn’t executed properly, and Ai’tahe was set free. Fortunately, as a Dominion, it had limited power in the earthly realm, and realizing this limitation, it set about trying to bargain with those that summoned it.

At this point, someone stepped in and convinced the demon to “possess” the church. The demon did so, enjoying the notion of corrupting the building from the foundation up, but it had been tricked — the grates over the gutters formed a seal that trapped it within the walls. And there it has remained since 1908, waiting for someone to enter into negotiations once again and free it, or at least give it the power to go back to Hell.

So who brokered that first deal? The Storyteller needs to make that decision based on the needs of the chronicle. Representatives of the Episcopal Church might have done it, which opens the way for a story involving the Church as handing down knowledge of such matters for decades (good for *Hunter: The Vigil* or *Vampire: The Requiem* in particular). A mysterious stranger might have accepted a bribe from the church in order to trap the demon; *Mage: The Awakening* or *Changeling: The Dreaming* lend themselves to this sort of interpretation. Werewolves don’t usually truck with demons, but demons are subject to many of the same metaphysical laws as spirits, so it’s possible that a pack performed a powerful and forbidden rite to seal Ai’tahe away. Or maybe the beings that summoned the demon real-
ized their mistake and tried to put things right — this kind of self-reliance and responsibility goes well with Promethean: The Created and Geist: The Sin-Eaters. If you are running Fallen is Babylon as a World of Darkness story with mortal protagonists, then any of these options might work, or you might simply frame the story in an evocative way with no need for what game system might be used to emulate it.

As part of the negotiations, though, Ai’tahe laid a curse upon the supernatural beings of the city. The particulars of this curse, as discussed, depend on the supernatural beings that summoned it, but the curse has remained in place ever since.

Set-up

Jumping forward to the present day, a young would-be academic named Eric Rasoletti calls up a demon of Sloth called Hush. It makes a pact with him, but makes the deal too quickly — it doesn’t command Rasoletti to give it a secret name and thus make it available for summons by other demonologists. It anchors itself to Rasoletti’s apartment (though through the terms of their pact, it can affect him at a distance) and waits there, hoping to find a way to influence Rasoletti to give it what wants. As a demon of inertia, though, its efforts on that front are almost nil.

Rasoletti himself isn’t happy with the arrangement, and schemes to find a way out. He eventually hits on the more-powerful demon at the church, and reasons that if he can call up that demon from its slumber, one can destroy the other and Rasoletti will be left free of any demonic taint. Unfortunately, naturally, isn’t keen to see this happen, but it also can’t kill Rasoletti without losing its own link to the mortal world. And so a strange game of cat and mouse began — Rasoletti would try to get to the church, but Hush would intensify its hold on him, putting him to sleep or making him simply not care. Finally, Rasoletti decided to do something drastic.

Knowing that his annual talk on the Satanic Panic draws a crowd of strange individuals, Rasoletti added a new twist this year — a discussion about real demon-summoning. He plans to speak in Dragon’s Tongue, the language of demons, and hope that one of the people in the crowd can recognize it. He knows that Hush won’t let him say much, but he has taken precautions. Anyone who puts forth the effort that he cannot will find out the truth. Rasoletti is taking a large gamble, of course — the person that learns the truth might want to kill him as a demonolater. But he truly feels that his only choice is to rot here, and he doesn’t want to do that anymore.

Involving the Characters

Aside from curiosity to investigate once Rasoletti collapses, the characters need a good reason to be at the lecture hall and in the city in the first place. Some suggestions include:

• One or more of the characters might attend classes at the university and come to the lecture for class credit, or just out of curiosity.
• The characters might be present in some professional capacity. Police and EMTs are on hand in case the protests turn ugly, or the characters might be reporters for local news, campus papers or underground media.
• Rasoletti might know the characters by reputation, if they are well known among occult circles, and have invited them. If he knows that they have a direct connection to the supernatural, he makes eye contact with one of them just before collapsing.
• If the players are creating characters specifically for Fallen is Babylon, you might consider requiring one of them to take the Dragon’s Tongue Merit (p. 8). In fact, all of the characters might have it, and this might be what unites them at the lecture — they are the only ones who understand what Rasoletti says before falling over.
• The characters might be investigating why the city doesn’t contain any of their particular “race.” The lecture might be revealed as a place to start by a Contact, by research (especially if demons come up in the research, which is appropriate) or by a power that allows glimpses of the future.

The characters might simply be in the area of the lecture hall (across the street from Trinity Cathedral) and be drawn in by the protests. Vampires might wish to hunt amongst the angry, sign-bearing folks; changelings could revel in the strong emotions present. Other types of characters might just be curious.

At least one of the characters needs to be in the lecture hall for Rasoletti’s speech, so that she can hear him speak in Dragon’s Tongue and witness his collapse. Depending on the nature of your players’ characters, you’ll need to decide if one is enough.

New Elements

A brief discussion on the nature of demons in the World of Darkness is necessary to fully make use of Fallen is Babylon. Some of the material below is reprinted from World of Darkness: Inferno.

What Are Demons?

Demons are otherworldly beings that resemble spirits or ghosts in many ways. In fact, it is possible for spirits (the same sort found in the Shadow and that werewolves and some mages often interact with) or ghosts (as described in the World of Darkness Rulebook) to become demons. The transition between “spirit/ghost” and “demon” is a blurry one — it’s possible for a conceptual spirit to focus on a Vice-like concept or for a ghost to be evil, and yet neither might actually be a demon.

So where does the break occur? It’s not so easily defined. Once a spirit