

Diavolus



Masked



Unmasked

The House of Ashe, like most of the ancient families, has long maintained a collection of volumes of quaint and curious forgotten lore, less out of an interest in the subjects these volumes describe than out of an awareness that *others* view the books themselves as precious, and thus an understanding that they can be used as means of striking bargains with them, along with a desire to keep the knowledge they contain out of the hands of the mundane majority. Historically, members of the Ashes who showed an interest in the collection marked themselves as eccentrics among the already eccentric members of their family and were often the subject of cautionary tales in the family folklore. More recently, all such tales have been eclipsed by

those told about the life and career of Nicholas Ashe, better known to the general public as Diavolus.

Born in 1939 to a union between two members of the House of Ashe, the consanguinity of whom was disturbing even to the rest of the house, Nicholas demonstrated his eccentricity at an early date, stealing into the family archives to read just about anything that he could get his hands on in preference to the generally more violent pastimes enjoyed by others of his generation. Just when he moved from studies of history and biography to studies of magic is not actually clear, but by the time that he began his studies at the Maryland Institute, he had developed considerable aptitudes in the area, and a mild hunger to learn more.

That his family discouraged these studies frustrated him, and left him at odds with them, hence his departure from the family home to live in a campus dormitory. They took it for granted that he would return when his disgust for the world outside their House overcame him, as it had overcome any prior member of the family who had ever abandoned it. In the fullness of time, they might have been proven correct, but something occurred which they could not have expected -- and so when he did return, he came back home not alone.

In 1960, [Diane Fortune](#) had not yet fully developed the legend that she would employ to cover up her full identity, and so came across as much humbler than she would in later days, posing as a supplicant to the ancient and noble House of Ashe. The elders of the family were taken in by this posture and so were only ordinarily wary of her, not realizing that she was employing Nicholas as an accomplice and partner instead of being in his thrall. Their scheme succeeded and they got away with not only the knowledge she sought -- which complimented much that she had already learned elsewhere -- but some material wealth as well. It was an outrage unlike any that the Ashes had ever known, leaving them helpless to take vengeance on the varlets.

For a brief time, Nicholas and Diane lived a happy life together, traveling across the country and assembling a private collection of arcana. Her talents for extracting the valuable material from the dross of these works was greater than his, but his talent for putting it all to use was greater, and so they needed each other as well as greatly enjoying a strong mutual desire. Nicholas, at least, believed that it could go on forever, and so he was shocked, much as their first victims had been, when it came to its sudden end.

He had taken it for granted that she looked forward to the forthcoming birth of their child with the same enthusiasm that he did. So, when he awoke from a drug-fueled slumber to an empty hotel room and a note explaining what she had decided to do, Nicholas was as hindered in his ability to pursue her as his family had been before. By the time he had gotten back to Baltimore, Diane had already been there, given birth in the House and then departed, leaving their child to the mercy of his family. He took it for granted that they would try to punish him through the child, and thus believed that there was nothing to be done about any of this -- save to seek vengeance on its author.

That obsession became the driving factor of his personality in the years to follow. He continued

to pursue goals of material wealth and power as well, but ultimately his need to violently avenge the wrongs he perceived as having been done to him was his true focus. The obsession strengthened his command of the arcane forces even further, and when she became one of the absurd "super-heroes" so beloved of the rabble, he naturally answered that by weaving together a costume of his own and taking the guise of the "super-villain" Diabolus, even conspiring with other super-villains as one of the so-called **Agents of Destruction** in 1965. Only Diane Fortune mattered to him in any way, with no other beings even seeming real to him.

And then, quite suddenly it seemed, Diane Fortune was dead and gone. Nicholas at first believed that it was some sort of hoax, but as time passed and his investigations turned up proof that all was indeed as it seemed to be, his mind began to shatter. She had been *his* to destroy, to enjoy destroying, and now she had fallen to some other? What was the use of him, then? What was the use of anything?

Three years later, he awoke from a self-inflicted drug-fueled slumber to find members of his family staring down at him in contempt. Believing that they had finally decided to end him, he closed his eyes and awaited death. To his surprise, they took him back to the family home, explaining that when Diane had given their child to them, she had done so after making an agreement that the House would no longer pursue either of the two of them, and that Nicholas would be accepted back into the family if he ever became a danger to himself. For a decade and more, he had been a danger mostly to others, but that had clearly changed.

Humbled by the foresight Diane had demonstrated, Nicholas vowed to turn over a new leaf, and found a new cause when he was introduced to their child, going by the name Jordan Ashe at the time and showing patterns of behavior that were just like his own at the age of twelve. He attempted to become a true father to Jordan, trying to offer the benefits of what wisdom he had gained through his experiences to them. Already completely self-centered, Jordan was uninterested in such familial bonding, but took advantage of the teaching that Nicholas offered all the same, learning about both magic and crime in the process.

The House of Ashe covertly supported **the Pythonian Insurgency** when it began, though only materially. None of its members had any interest in risking their lives for any cause, even if they were in philosophical agreement with it. Jordan, however -- by now using the name **Jodie Crowley** -- decided to volunteer their services. The results have already been told, and after their escape to parts unknown, the Pythons threatened to annihilate the Ashes for the crimes of their errant member. The leaders of the house offered up several less-useful members of the family as sacrifices to placate their allies, and Nicholas was one of them. He was executed by **Tania** herself in 1987, having made no attempt to escape his fate. Neither did anyone make any attempt to rescue him.

Diabolus -- PL 9

Abilities:

STR 2 | STA 3 | AGL 1 | DEX 3 | FGT 3 | INT 2 | AWE 5 | PRE 4

Powers:

Levitation: Flight 4 (60 MPH) - 8 points

Sorcery: Array (36 points)

- **Discern Thoughts:** Mental Communication 2 (1 mile); Cumulative Mind Reading 9 - 1 point
- **Domination:** Perception Range Cumulative Affliction 8 (Resisted by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled); Senses 1 (communication link with target) - 1 point
- **Lord of Illusions:** Perception Range Cumulative Affliction 9 (Resisted by Will; Figment, Phantasm, Hallucination) - 36 points
- **Portals:** Accurate Extended Teleport 9 (4 km/1000 km) - 1 point
- **Scrying:** Remote Sensing 7 (all senses; 120 miles), Subtle - 1 point
- **Strength of Will:** Perception Range Damaging Move Object 9 (12 tons) - 1 point

Shielded Mind: Impervious Will 9, Limited to Mental Effects - 5 points

Warded Costume: Immunity 10 (life support); Protection 9; Removable (-3 points) - 16 points

Advantages:

Connections, Fascinate (Deception), Ritualist, Trance.

Skills:

Deception 8 (+12), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+10), Expertise: Magic 8 (+12), Insight 6 (+11), Intimidation 9 (+13), Perception 7 (+12), Persuasion 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+9).

Offense:

Initiative +1

Unarmed +3 (Close Damage 2)

Strength of Will -- (Perception Range Damage 9)

Defense:

Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 12/3, Will 12

Totals:

Abilities 46 + Powers 79 + Advantages 4 + Skills 30 + Defenses 15 = 174 points

Offensive PL: 9

Defensive PL: 9

Resistance PL: 8

Skill PL: 8

Complications:

Revenge/Power/Greed--Motivation. Obsession (Diane Fortune.)*

* Becomes ***Guilt--Motivation*** and ***Family*** (Jodie Crowley) later; his Sorcery array drops to 18 points in the aftermath as well.