

The Ritual to Save The World

From the ANST Masquerade:

These writes up are not public knowledge. You must have spent the appropriate VIP. Participants can share and describe the events with non-participants, though.

People creating characters mid-chronicle can still spend VIP to be involved - we can update the write up!

Full Description for Players

Beginnings

In 1999, the “Week of Nightmares” occurred, causing psychically sensitive people all over the world to receive violent, disturbing visions of the mythological Ravana, King of the Rakshasa. Shortly thereafter, the Red Star appeared in the sky, visible only to supernatural beings, and widely understood in kindred circles to be a portent of the beginning of Gehenna.

Over the course of the next decade, the number of signs, visions, research, ancient prophecies and so on piled up, all pointing toward the same conclusion: the violent, ravenous awakening of the Antediluvians: Gehenna. Not all kindred believed in this prediction, but some very motivated (and terrified) occultists began hatching a plan. They would design and enact a ritual to avert this future. There was no way of knowing if it would work, or really what it would do if it did work, but the general idea was that striking against the Antediluvians directly would be very unlikely to succeed, but the ritual could somehow change the world in such a way that it would be impossible for Gehenna to occur.

At some point between 1999 and 2009, your character became involved with the group of kindred working to make this ritual a reality. Your character met with others, compared notes, gathered resources, and recruited allies. The plan began to come together: relics of great power and/or mystical significance would be gathered, especially those with ties to the Antediluvians, and ritualists and occultists of all varieties would meet in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to enact a great working together.

Secrets

A few facts not widely known (or believed) by kindred society as a whole were common knowledge among the group working on this ritual:

- The Antediluvians existed.
 - There were a great many conflicting opinions about who or what the Antediluvians actually were, aside from the fact that they were phenomenally ancient and powerful vampires. Were they truly the progenitors of the modern clans? Were they truly the grandchild of Caine? Or Lilith? Or of some other “first vampire” figure? How many were there? What were their names? Do they

still exist, or is Gehenna actually some other kind of apocalypse? All of this was hotly debated, and progress on the ritual only really happened when everyone managed to keep their opinions, faiths, and egos in check.

- Participation in this ritual, if widely known at the time, likely would've been considered heresy among both the Sabbat (who espoused faith in their destiny to destroy and consume the Antediluvians rather than somehow change the world to make Gehenna not occur) and the Camarilla (who still claimed that the Antediluvians did not exist).
 - In 2011, the Camarilla changed its position to claim that the Antediluvians, if they still exist, are "our loving fathers and mothers," which makes participation in this ritual a much safer thing to admit.
 - In 2013, the Sabbat went to Mexico City and disappeared, ceasing to exist as a sect, so their opinion on what constitutes heresy likewise largely ceased to matter.
- The Week of Nightmares was caused by the awakening, rampage, and subsequent destruction of one extremely powerful kindred, presumed to be an Antediluvian.
 - Given the fact that he was represented in visions as the Rakshasa King, Ravana, he was presumed to be male.
 - His precise identity was never determined, so he was often referred to as "Ravana" as a shorthand, though few, if any, of the kindred involved believed him to actually be that mythological figure.
 - Given the fact that the Ravnos clan was more profoundly affected by the Week and its aftermath, occultists determined he must have been the progenitor of the Ravnos clan.
 - He awoke in or near Calcutta/Kolkata, rampaged across the countryside to Dhaka, and was destroyed in Dhaka.
 - Who destroyed him and how remains unclear, in large part because everyone who witnessed the events was struck with profound psychic trauma. Even the most potent powers of the blood were unable to fully heal this damage, and as a result, memories of the events were lost, repressed, and/or garbled. Recordings and what few first-hand memories could be recovered were of minimal use due to the prolific, monstrous illusions that flooded the area around Ravana.
 - Dhaka was chosen as the site for the ritual because it was the site of Gehenna being actively averted (in that an Antediluvian or Antediluvian-like being was destroyed there).

Narrative and PC Involvement

Planning and design of the ritual took place over several years, but the final months before the Summer Equinox of 2009 is when it really started to take shape. Camarilla Tremere luminary Nissim Melamed, elder Izz Melamed, ancilla Aisling Sturbridge, and ancilla Ava Schullmann were involved from the very start. Camarilla Malkavian luminary Alaric of Gaul, Unaligned Carpathian Tzimisce elder Andrei Hermannstadt, Unaligned Follower of Set luminary Dom Piet, Sabbat Lasombra luminary Hari, Camarilla Tremere ancilla Jerry Holiday, and Camarilla Ventre Crusader elder Lady Diana Crivelli made notable contributions to this. Anarch Lasombra ancilla Isabella Ramos discovered a potentially disastrous flaw in the ritual: the elders were using outdated ley line information that didn't account for air travel when considering the influence of mortal paths of travel.

Prior to the ritual itself, several months were spent securing locations, leaning on local mortal authorities, and moving relics, ritual materials, and other supplies (including a large supply of preserved blood to replenish the ritualists throughout the casting) into Dhaka. Malkavian luminary Aldmar of the Deep Woods, Camarilla Toreador ancilla Mina Burana, Unaligned Lasombra ancilla Rune Johansen, and Camarilla Nosferatu elder Scarlette Frigard were all involved in sourcing and/or transporting these items.

Preparation for the ritual was extensive, requiring several different sites to concoct various potions, draw all manner of symbols and sigils, draw out the resonances of the relics, and cleanse all the implements. Unaligned neonate Albmaolmmoš, Camarilla Malkavian ancilla Mary Petersen, and Sabbat Telyav Tremere neonate Kelly Laury did a lot of this work.

The casting of the ritual was incredibly complex; few, if any, kindred truly understood all the details. Camarilla Malkavian elder Alareiks had the unenviable job of expanding and fracturing his mind in order to serve as the central point for the various telepathy webs coordinating everyone's effort; his effort is rumored to have wiped out the entire raccoon population of Bangladesh.

Camarilla Tremere luminary Nissim Melamed, elder Izz Melamed, ancilla Aisling Sturbridge, and ancilla Ava Schullmann were involved from the very start. In 1999, and when the time finally came to cast the ritual, theirs was one of the largest and most important contingents. Their casting involved a blending of the ritual traditions of both Jewish Kabbalism and the Hermetic Qabalah, resulting in a lengthy, precise ritual involving much drawing of symbols, symbolic objects, bloodletting, and chanting in both Hebrew and Latin.

An Unaligned Samedi neonate named Herod used the Green Path of Thaumaturgy to gather information and magical resonance from the flora and land that were affected by Ravana's rampage and to cultivate a place of power to support the ritual.

Anarch Gangrel neonate Penelope Riena used Technomancy to improve the security of the ritual sites and also to somehow channel mystical energies from the virtual realm

Unaligned luminary Kamil Kalogeras and neonate Revi worked together to harness the necrotic energies left behind after Ravana's death.

Several Lasombra Abyss Mystics worked on their portion of the ritual, including Unaligned luminary Deaglán Síl Aedha Eaniagh and Unaligned ancilla Katherine Davis. Their entire working took place under the cover of supernatural darkness, so most other participants were not aware of what their portion entailed.

A handful of kindred participated in the casting of the ritual in non-sorcerous ways. Camarilla Malkavian ancilla Syfa McAdams utilized the gifts of her clan to observe the overall patterns of the ritual and bring attention to anything that seemed likely to be deviating from the overall chaotic harmony. Sabbat Salubri Warrior ancilla Mace offered himself as a grounding point for excess magical and psychic energies, which was clearly very taxing.

Your character may have taken other actions in secret, possibly to strengthen the ritual without revealing their true capabilities; to subvert the ritual into changing the world in a way that supported their agenda; to deliberately sandbag the ritual and make it less effective; to try and prevent someone else's interference; and/or some other, even more convoluted goal. The ramifications of those secret actions are much less clear, at least for now.

The roles mentioned above are neither an exhaustive list of who was involved in those roles nor an exhaustive list of each kindred's participation. They're just the most generally memorable contributions by each kindred to each part of the ritual.

NPC Involvement

Two of the early voices involved in quietly spreading information about the Week of Nightmares and urging action were Unaligned Gangrel elder Beckett and Unaligned Malkavian elder Anatole. Beckett had a tremendous amount of Noddist lore dealing with the Antediluvians, Gehenna prophecies, and previous attempts to avert or usher in Gehenna. This information was all considered hugely heretical by the Camarilla and sacred secrets that shouldn't be in the hands of the uninitiated by the Sabbat, so Beckett was very limited in where he could go and who he could spread the news to. Anatole was less of a scholar, but he was a longstanding Gehenna prophet himself and very good at getting other kindred to recognize the urgency of the situation. He was also slightly less wanted by the major sects and had more leeway to move and act.

Both kindred were involved in various stages of the planning of the ritual, though neither had as much insight into blood sorcery as some of the other planners. When the time of the ritual itself finally came around, Beckett mostly busied himself by taking copious notes on everything everyone was doing.

((CW: suicide)) Anatole, on the other hand, had a "vision from God" and spent hours drawing crosses in various locations using his own blood; even other Malkavians couldn't make any sense of what he was doing, but he seemed intensely confident about it. He obtained a spear from somewhere, and at the climax of the ritual, he shocked everyone by falling on the spear and thrusting it into his own heart, resulting in his Final Death. In his last moments, he shouted something in a garbled mix of Classical French and Medieval Latin about a sacrifice being required. Quite a lot of things were happening at that moment, and no one was nearby to stop him or ask him what his motivations might have been.

Conclusion and Results

The ritual concluded at midnight local time in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on June 21, 2009. Everyone involved in casting the various parts of the ritual was busily involved for at least several hours leading up to that point; some components of the ritual required continued actions starting several nights or weeks earlier. During that time, many strange phenomena were experienced by the kindred involved, including visions and hallucinations; moments where time seemed to slow, skip, or loop; the appearance of many ghosts, spirits, and other entities, which may or may not have been hallucinatory; intense fluctuations in temperature, local weather, and lighting; and mood swings, stirrings of the Beast, and intense craving for blood. Perhaps the oddest of these phenomena is the fact that very few of the participants' accounts of the event precisely matched up, even between kindred who spent the entire ritual in one another's presence.

At the stroke of midnight, everything stopped. The strange phenomena ceased. Any spirits or other entities that hadn't been intentionally conjured and/or bound vanished. Even the magic powering the various parts of the casting abruptly ceased, resulting in levitating implements falling, mystical flames extinguishing, supernatural darkness dissipating, at least one magically bolstered tree dying, and all electronic devices affected by Technomancy shutting down. A fresh smell, as of the air after a cleansing spring rain shower, pervaded the entire city. All kindred's Beasts were immediately calmed and could not be roused for the rest of the night.

The oracles and psychics present at the ritual experienced an end to their portents of doom, and indeed received nothing so much as an impression of calm and quiet. One thin-blooded mystic reportedly spiked a can of alphabet pasta on the pavement to find that the letters simply spelled out "AHHHHHH" (as opposed to a similar prognostication a week earlier, which had said "AAAAAGH!"). In the months that followed, the Red Star would fade from the sky, and the Malkavian clan would experience the Jolt (a feeling of unknown change or "wrongness" experienced by most Malkavians), and many kindred worldwide who had previously been plagued by visions of Gehenna were "cured," at least for several years.

Though no one could pinpoint a single definite result of the ritual, there was enough circumstantial evidence that just about everyone involved agreed that it had done *something* presumably positive, and the fading and disappearance of the Red Star was seen as further confirmation. Then, just over two years later, the Beckoning struck, and many of the kindred involved in the ritual wondered if there was some connection between the two events. To date, no clear evidence has emerged one way or the other.

Also, Beckett was added to the Red List, possibly for reasons related to his participation in this ritual.

OOC Note

Players of characters who attended the Ritual to Save the World event who wish to apply their lores for additional information should email the ANST
anst@masq.modernenigma.org and aaNST 13th Hour VIP

(aanst.vip@masq.modernenigmasociety.org). Please include your PC name and your wiki link if you have one, and CC your VST.