

CWs: Corruption, Possession/Mind control, Dissociation, Impaired Speech/Communication Due to Psychological Shift

- What is the plot's 'story'?

As part of Scratch's exploration of identity and self beyond simply being a copy of Alan Wake (But Evil), he is going to begin exploring different ways of creating art. This is also in part because where he is from The Dark Presence itself cannot create things, it can only corrupt and manipulate pre-existing things to suit its desires. As Scratch was formerly a part of The Dark Presence, this applied to him as well. However, since he no longer is a part of it and therefore no longer is bound to that rule, this is going to lead to him trying his hand at writing stories, looking at Alan and thinking "anything you can do, I can do better."

Scratch is also going to be pledging to the Fog God at some point, and one of the ideas for power gains had included gaining back some of his powers he had as an avatar of The Dark Presence. Tying into this, the idea was that perhaps Scratch asks to also have the ability to rewrite reality into a horror story full of chaos, torment, darkness, and death in service to the Fog God.

The flip side of this is that Alan would also be affected, entering a dissociative state at the same time that Scratch is writing, leading *Alan* to write as well but instinctively trying to counteract what Scratch is writing to stop him. (Part of the reason for this being that Alan has been - just in case - trying to figure out cultural mainstays, common tropes in the events of the peninsula and its history, and essentially the rules of reality because in order to rewrite reality the way he has, there have to be touchstones and kernels of truth in the fiction in order for it to snap into a slightly different place. (This is why I have had so many questions about IC lore finding.))

After both of them spend about a week MIA as they are both writing, manuscript pages will begin to appear around the peninsula describing horrifying events happening to its residents. These events can vary from encountering poltergeist objects, having an unfortunate incident with a Taken (fatal or not), or even becoming Taken themselves (both human NPCs and monsters). Some pages may alternatively have clues or environmental puzzles to solve to help try and stop the dark forces at work from gaining power/control/"winning." Essentially, acts of sabotage against Scratch's narrative.

For example: The events in Alan Wake's American Nightmare involved shifting things into place in an environment in order to cause a satellite to crash down from orbit. *This* allowed a signal that altered the stars (placement, trajectory, etc.) in the night sky to be transmitted to an observatory, and that signal had an encoded message that translated into a manuscript page that allowed Alan to defeat Mr. Scratch.

But eventually, all stories have to end, and depending on whether or not the mods want the event to result in the Fog God becoming stronger (Scratch's ending overcoming Alan's ending), or not (Alan's ending overcoming Scratch's) - or it can be RNG'd/coin flipped -, the story will

wrap up with either a horrible ending with a lot of murder *OR* a tragic but also hopeful ending. After the story ends, anyone still alive who has been Taken will be let go from the grip of Foggy Darkness and return to normal as much as one can afterwards. Any humans that have died during the story will still be dead (unfortunate but true), and monsters will resurrect as per usual conditions if they have died. Everyone will remember what happened during the week, and maybe struggle with the occasional nightmare or two - perhaps even a newfound fear of the dark among NPCs causes the sale of nightlights to increase after the fact (haha)

- What are the results which will affect players?

There are multiple different aspects to how players can interact with this plot!

The first involves **Manuscript Pages**, an element where people can opt-in to have a bespoke manuscript page written by Alan or Scratch (or have us flip for it) about their character during some point of the event. Players can be as specific about the events of the page that they'd like and then work them into threads. These pages can include their character finding a clue or supplies to support them and their survival during the week, *OR* they can be more sinister involving an encounter with a Taken resulting in injury or death. Players can have their character *OR another character* (for CR opportunities) find the pages, and then try to prevent the events on the page if they involve something terrible happening. Players are free to determine whether their characters are successful or are unable to work against the influence of the narrative, causing the events to happen as they are written on the pages.

The second involves **becoming Taken**. Players can choose to have their character become taken and temporarily become an altered version of their original monster type.

How the Taken work in Alan Wake is as follows:

- A person's mind will be taken over by darkness, causing them to be unable to form continuous coherent speech beyond shouting what can be best described as [catch phrases](#) or basic thoughts and phrases that distill the nature of the character and their motivations.
 - To further clarify, canon says something along the lines of Taken being "shadows of their former selves". For RP reasons to ensure that characters can still function (internally), I'd like this to be reinterpreted somewhat as their priorities shifting a bit into having a more one-track mind. Predators with a singular focus, and that's reflected in their speech essentially.
 - Some NPC accounts in notes/journals describe the Taken as "I saw a weird drunk person today" if that helps provide a baseline.
- The Taken are then shrouded in a shield made of shadows. This makes them highly resistant or even immune to physical harm. Only when the shadows are burned away with light (from flashlights, flares, flare guns, flashbangs, etc.) are the Taken able to be harmed.

- Some Taken have special abilities, like being able to move extremely fast, turning invisible, throwing bombs made of darkness, or turning into a swarm of birds and then back into a person. There are also the Splitters, who do not have a shield of darkness but instead go from one large monster and split into two and then four monsters - gradually getting smaller and weaker, but also faster and able to swarm from multiple sides -, which if permitted as a power option might be fun for people to play with mechanically...?
- Once the shadows are burned away (if the Taken has them), they can be damaged physically to be killed.

This will require some adjusting to get right in translation from the source material being used as inspiration to its application in Ryslig, but my first thought regarding the justification of a monster becoming Taken and having - should they choose - a special ability inspired from the above is that it could function as a temporary Fog Boon since this event is being done using the Fog God's power. Also, because the Taken in Alan Wake only have one special ability, monsters would only be able to choose one special ability.

If a player opts in a character for this event that is a Neutral or Fourth follower, this **does not affect their alignment as an individual or any boons** they have from the Fourth god or, for neutrals, Mana boons that have been purchased **because** of the principle of this being a temporary character corruption plot. **However, players would be welcome to have these boons temporarily nullified while their characters are Taken.** (Like how the AU effect caused people to think their alignments had changed but they actually hadn't, it's the same principle here. In fact, if people want to play with the psychological aspect of things and have their character be loyal to the Fog during the event as a result of being taken, they can! But this is completely optional.)

Related, but also outside of the traditional definition of Taken, I am just thinking about a Slime Taken that essentially becomes the [Liquid Darkness](#) because that would be, IMO, so so good. If the player plot is approved, we can do a full bestiary review and propose baselines for Taken/Monster Hybrids that fit the Alan Wake source material themes.

Moving on, because I think that pretty much covers the gist of the Taken element -

The third involves **being touched by Darkness, but not Taken**. This is what Alan, Tor and Odin Anderson, Thomas Zane, Alice Wake, and Cynthia Weaver are in the Alan Wake canon. This results in Alan, the Anderson Brothers, and Thomas Zane being able to manipulate reality through their art, and Cynthia Weaver creates a special light-reactive paint that only those touched by the Darkness can see, which allows her to leave hints and support for Alan to use during his journey against the Dark Presence. It also manifests in other light-based special abilities for Alan, which include being able to focus a light source (handheld, usually flashlight) to become brighter and thus more effective in fighting away the darkness, and - this one is def more just a video game mechanic but including it anyway - recharging batteries slightly when evading danger (when he dodges successfully, it recharges his batteries a lil bit). As for Alice,

she is more sensitive than the average person to Alan's signals from the Dark Place (the ending of American Nightmare) - even leading her to be able to take real, developable photos of him across time and space -, and also makes her able to be sensed by other entities that are touched or Taken (Hartman in the Control AWE DLC).

How this would work mechanically in Ryslig:

- On a smaller scale than Alan and Scratch, people who are artistically inclined could manipulate the conditions of reality, BUT only if it serves either of these conditions: it follows Scratch's dark narrative/serves the Fog God, OR it directly works to counteract Scratch's narrative, like protecting or saving someone who is otherwise doomed by it.
 - It cannot alter other people or their personality in any way.
 - It cannot have major reality-bending or breaking effects.
 - It cannot force people to do things that they wouldn't otherwise do (with the exception being if the character in question has hypnotic powers outside of this, like siren song or such).
 - It can: create your own environmental puzzle like a supernatural Rube Goldberg Machine to corrupt, torture, or kill someone OR protect and save someone (including oneself) from harm.
 - It can: for the musically inclined, serve as a [Bardic Inspiration](#) for others as they fight against Taken and/or poltergeists.
 - It can: for visual artists, visit upon them images of people or moments affected by the event [in real time](#) and illustrate them. This can be an avenue for CR opportunities, new and old.
 - This ability is not limited by a medium, but becomes more precise and effective the clearer the information is. So, writing a story or a poem will create a more effective result versus the more esoteric nature of music or dance (which *DOES* count, Alan has said as much), or the more singular snapshot of a moment found in visual arts.

~BEWARE THE HIDDEN MEANING AND POWER OF METAPHORS, DOUBLE ENTENDRES, IDIOMS, AND EUPHEMISMS.~
- People who are touched by the darkness can use light more effectively to fight against the shadows and darkness than people who are not. People who are not touched still can use light for safety and defense, however people who are touched will have that extra oomph of being able to increase the intensity of light bulbs without them burning out in the process.
- Also, if you wanna allow players to play in the space: recharge batteries if you successfully get out of harm's way. (But this is optional.)
- **DOWNSIDE:** As mentioned above, Alice is able to be sensed by Taken entities, and presumably based on how Alan is continuously hunted and Cynthia Weaver is hypervigilant about light sources to the point of paranoia (implying she might be hunted too), this would mean that ANYONE who is touched by the Darkness can be sensed and tracked by it. This means that anyone who chooses to be touched will have the Darkness gravitate towards them in many ways to try and stop them.

Aside from player-centric mechanics, the Dark Presence can also affect the environment in a few different ways. Here are some examples:

- Shortened periods of daylight as it gets stronger
- Dark clouds or fog to block out environmental night light like the moon, stars, streetlights, and signs.
- Light bulbs burning out or bursting entirely in street lights, overhead lights, lamps, etc.
- Puddles of liquid darkness that hurt people who step in them
- Poltergeist objects swirling with shadows, which will vibrate, levitate, and launch themselves at high speeds towards people. Can be destroyed by focusing a bright light or by using flares and flashbangs.
- Darkness nodes & walls: A physical barrier manifested from a concentration of shadows in a pathway. The nodes are weak points in the barriers that one must focus a bright light on to destroy the barrier. They can be distinguished by how the shadows swirl and flicker over a darkly shining sphere.
- Areas with lots of environmental cover will *feel* darker than they actually are during daytime hours. For example: forested areas with lots of trees concentrated in an area, taller trees that have dense looming tops in less dense forests, or both. In cities, areas that have taller structures that block out a large portion of visible sky/horizon, narrow alleys, or both will also fit this description.
- Wild animals may behave strangely. Most prey animals are likely to flee areas that are heavy with the Dark Presence, whereas predators are likely to become more aggressive towards *everything*. Birds are likely to swarm together and swoop at people as a group.
- People within the affected area(s), touched or not, will experience a higher frequency of nightmares - especially if someone they are close to becomes Taken. Dreams may directly involve their loved ones having become Taken, or may simply be shadowy manifestations of that person's greatest insecurities and fears over and over again.

- What is your time-of-year preference, if any?

September would be great since that's when Deerfest (<https://alanwake.fandom.com/wiki/Deerfest>) happens in the Remedy Connected Universe canon! And with Alan Wake II, the arrival of Deerfest was used as a major plot point in Scratch's evil plan to change reality and unleash the Dark Presence upon the world. However, we'd be open to other months as well if someone else would prefer September and has less flexibility.

Link to Oct announcement about plot submissions for my own reference:
<https://rysligooc.dreamwidth.org/419590.html>