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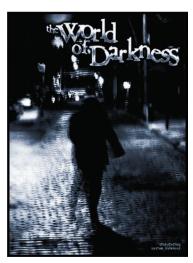
Written by: Dave Brookshaw, David A Hill Jr., Danielle Lauzon, Matthew McFarland, John Newman, John Snead, Stew Wilson, Filamena Young, Eric Zawadzki

Developer: Matthew McFarland Editor: Michelle Lyons-McFarland Creative Director: Richard Thomas Art Direction and Design: Mike Chaney

Interior Art: Andrew Trabbold, Jeff Holt, Sam Araya, Andrew Hepworth, Cathy Wilkins, Justin Norman, James Denton, Aaron Acevedo, Heather Kreiter, Vince Locke, Marian Churchland

Front Cover Art: Sam Araya

Playtesters: Sarah Dyer, Matt Homentotsky, Matthew Karafa, Michelle Lyons-McFarland, John Mathys, Matthew McFarland



For Use with the World of Darkness Rulebook

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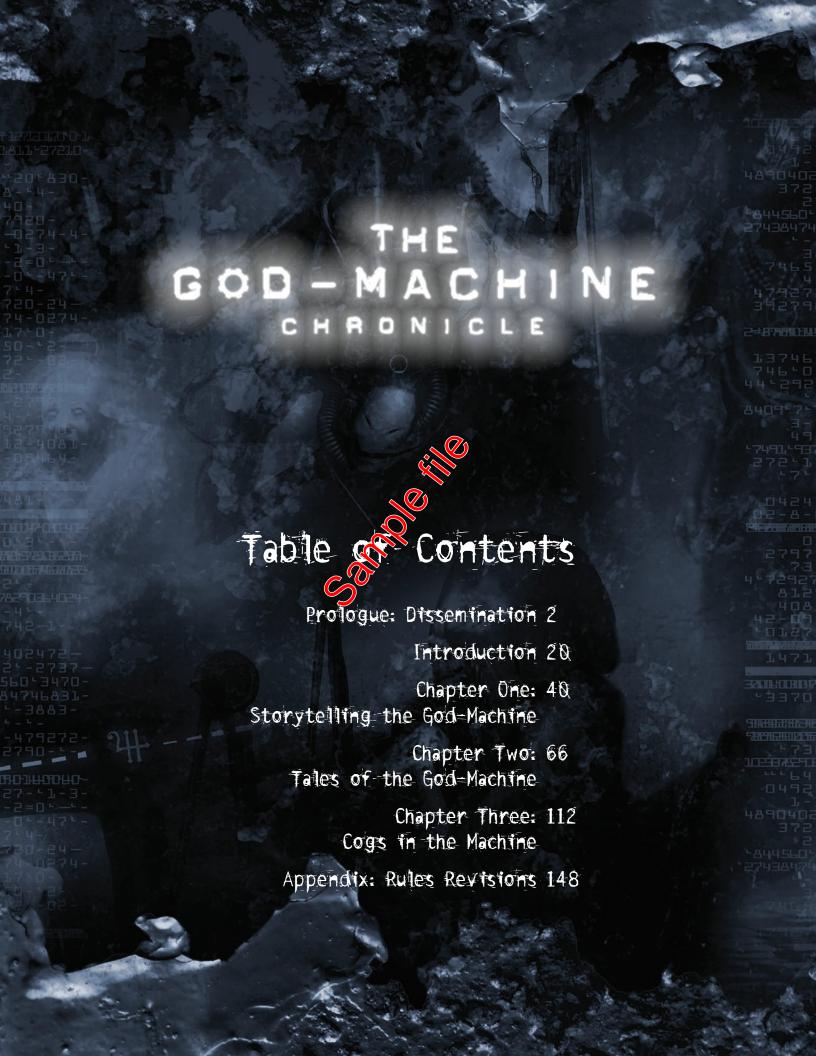
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Detective David Nelson opened the hotel room door slowly. He never knew what he'd find on a case like this. Men who gunned down unarmed people in a crowded church often left living spaces that were just as JUMBLED and UGLY as the crimes they committed.

The blankets lay in disarray. A pillow had tumbled onto the floor. Empty Chinese take-out boxes waited in the trash can near the door. No sign that housekeeping had been in here yet today, which meant less likelihood that someone had DISTURBED evidence.

Not that an undisturbed scene was quite so important in a case like this. No question how or when the shooter's victims had died, and the killer wasn't about to make a court appearance. Nelson only cared about the killer's motives and whether he had any accomplices-whether he was a LONE NUT JOB or a TERRORIST, in other words.

Nelson opened the top drawer of the dresser and pulled out a half-empty box of hollow point ammunition. No question where the other half had ended up. THIRTY-SEVEN members the Church of Plenty were GUNNED DOWN during he morning service, and dozens more wounded. He losed

A BROKEN laptop sat on the desk, sass scattered nearby, as though the shooter as smashed it. It didn't hold Nelson's interest or long. The data retrieval folks could probably pull the shooter's files off the hard drive he wasn't getting any information from it today.

As Nelson stooped down on the far side of the bed, he noticed the DIRTY pair of blue jeans with one bulging pocket. The battered cellphone was nothing fancy. Its contacts list was empty except for two names — Clara and Abigail. He found plenty of pictures, though. Most of them were of a redheaded teenage girl. In the last one, she stood in front of a school with the forced smile of a kid who is humoring her parents. Nelson could just make out the name of the school — WELLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIFTED CHILDREN.

Probably the killer's daughter, Nelson thought as he tossed the phone on top of the jeans.

WHAT A SHAME.

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He opened the closet and rummaged through the pockets of the leather jacket hanging there. Nelson removed a crisp, glossy business card from the inside pocket. "Melissa Charles: Collector of the Inexplicable," it read, and then a phone number and P.O. Box.

Weird, Nelson mused, looking at the address. That's on the other side of the country.

He found a SMUDGED sentence scribbled in pen on the back.

"WHAT HAS FALLEN MAY RISE AGAIN," it read, "AND I HAVE TO STOP IT."

Nelson's eyes widened. He had seen those words before in the personal effects of two other spree shooters. Two might be coincidence, but three?



Introduction

Something is out there, something bigger than ourselves. It permeates our world and possibly even stretches into other worlds, other dimensions, and other times. Its power can be felt everywhere; it is the silent manipulator of all of human history. It has a plan, but we are not privy to it.

If it desired our extinction, we would stand no better chance against it than the dinosaurs did against the meteor impact that ended their reign. Anyone who has witnessed the way it casually uses and discards humans to achieve its ends, however, knows it isn't benevolent. Only the most fanatical cultists devoted to it would say otherwise, and even they realize that their faith cannot preserve them from the object of their worship if it decides their death serves its purpose.

It is the God-Machine.

No human mythology ever conceived of a god so alien to the mortal mind. Its power would make gods of storms and catastrophe tremble in fear. Its foresight makes goddesses of professy and destiny seem blind by comparison. Unlike those anthropomorphic deith, the God-Machine cannot be reasoned with, appealed to, or appeased. In the cold eyes of the God-Machine, individual humans are of negligible consequence except insofar as they either further its plans or disrupt them.

The vast payority of humans live their whole lives without knowing the God-Machike wists, even if they are unknowing servants of its schemes. They're the luckyones. Encounters between mortals and the God-Machine often do not end were for the mortal. People see something the God-Machine intends to keep secret. For they are singled out as the right shape of person for a particular task, but this size cog with the right number of teeth — and they disappear. Most never reappear; those who do usually end up as a John or Jane Doe in a morgue months or years later and miles away. The rest return marked by the experience — twisted in body, broken in mind, or just *empty* somehow. Once in a while someone returns seemingly whole but without any memory of what happened, where they are, or how they got those mysterious scars. Rarely, a mortal slips away from the God-Machine's schemes with her recollections intact, but even these escapes might be part of the God-Machine's plan.

Supernatural creatures are perhaps more likely to know of the God-Machine, but even they know next to nothing about its workings and even less about its ultimate purpose. The ability to wield occult powers does not make beings incapable of superstition. Quite often they assume the God-Machine has something to do with them — a creation of ancient mages, perhaps, or some remnant of power left by a forgotten spirit that is still weaving humanity into its elaborate tapestry. This is no less superstitious nonsense than any that is entertained by the God-Machine's mortal cultists. When faced with something as vast and inscrutable as the God-Machine, imagining it is the product of something within one's knowledge and experience can be a comfort.

Comfort is the enemy of true understanding.

Theme and Mood

Theme: The Hidden System

The God-Machine is a literal machine that spans the Earth and has tendrils in other worlds, dimensions, and times. Cogs turn in the background; the best that most people, supernatural or otherwise, can ever do is peer deep enough into

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

-Clarke's Third Law

the dark to see the wheels turning. Admittedly, they usually misunderstand what they've seen and make up their own stories. Sometimes they see a little piece of it right purely by accident. Sometimes lightning flashes at exactly the right time and someone sees the cogs in the God-Machine, full and clear. Then the moment passes, and the witness still knows no more about the purpose of all those mechanisms.

Mood: Cogs in the Machine

Like all machines, the God-Machine has a purpose, but humans aren't equipped to understand it. Mortals who seek understanding of the God-Machine are like the four blind men trying to describe an elephant by touching just one part of it. The God-Machine is less like an elephant, though, and more like an entire ecosystem. Those feeling around blindly to understand its workings are more than likely going to draw some wildly inaccurate conclusions about it. Its inscrutable system has math and physics and numbers and paperwork and machinery and timetables and we're not privy to any of it. It's not our business, except insofar as the God-Machine needs us to make a cog turn right.

How to Use This Book

The God-Machine Chronicle is a default chronicle for the World of Darkness, giving players and Storytellers a framework for chronicles involving mortal characters. It also revises some of the core rules, though you still need the World of Darkness Rulebook to use this book. The God-Machine Chronicle also includes updates to the core World of Darkness rules to make them fit the intent of the setting as well as some new options accessible to mortal characters.

The God-Machine itself is a cosmic power, but its phous schemes run the gamut from local stories affecting a bindful of people all the way up to pan-dimensional enterprises that threaten the entire world with catastrophe. A God-Machine chronicle begins with a few tiny glimpses of the hidden system and gradually expands into levels of tremendous complexity of purpose. Characters who seek to understand or oppose the God-Machine's designs flirt with madness, death, or worse. They are mice running around in an enormous clock. One false step and they will find themselves ground into paste between its unfeeling gears.

This book is aimed at a gradual revelation of the hidden system over the course of many stories, but even if you don't want to make the God-Machine the focus of your chronicle, much of what you'll find in this book can be dropped into just about any chronicle with a little bit of modification. The God-Machine is one of those great unknowables that are Out There doing something mortals and supernatural creatures alike cannot comprehend. Maybe some element of the God-Machine's plan runs contrary to the characters' goals, or maybe they stand to gain something by furthering one of its projects. Whether you use a little or a lot, the feeling of suddenly realizing you're a very small fish in a very large tank is one that can really add depth to almost any chronicle.

Because human misunderstand has no boundaries, God-Machine cultists have nearly as many faces as there are cogs. One group of fanatical mortals will fight to the death to keep outsiders away from a demon-tainted playground because the God-Machine has told them the demon will escape if the playground is disturbed. Elsewhere, a sorcerer offers the God-Machine the souls of an entire town in hopes of currying favor with it, and the characters might be the only thing standing in his way. Even the unwitting servants of the God-Machine can be dangerous, not to mention fraught with moral peril. The cop with a warrant for your arrest on some pretense cooked up by the God-Machine's servants probably has no idea that you won't live long enough to call your lawyer if you're taken into custody, but does your battle against one of the God-Machine's schemes justify killing him?

Contents

The God-Machine Chronicle begins with this Introduction and advice for Storytellers on how to use the rest of the book. The Introduction explains the methods the God-Machine uses to accomplish its goals in the world and how characters are likely to make first contact with its projects. It talks about the ways mortals and supernatural beings alike respond the icounters with the God-Machine, including an association of myths and other hooks that can Storytellers can use to create their own God-Machine stories. Finally, it is ussess what is probably true about the God-Machine based on the small amount mortals and supernatural beings know about it.

Chapter One: Building the God-Machine Chronicle explains how to build a chronicle that focuses on the God-Machine. It includes deciding the scope or tier of the game and developing the setting. It also provides advice on creating characters and adopting a style of play conducive to God-Machine stories. Finally, it provides four chronicles built from the Tales provided in Chapter Two with enough added detail that a troupe can segue from one to another with minimal work.

Chapter Two: Tales of the God-Machine showcases the many ways the God-Machine's designs can bubble up to the surface in a chronicle. It includes twenty different stories — some of limited scope, others of cosmic scale — that Storytellers can use in a God-Machine chronicle. They also illustrate the process of building God-Machine stories by providing a blueprint Storytellers can use to design their own scenarios, and provide the necessary framework to use the chronicles in Chapter One.

Chapter Three: Cogs in the Machine provides sample characters that can be used to draw players' characters into God-Machine stories. These include several examples of the God-Machine's servants, scholars, and dupes suitable for each tier. Also provided are 20 *angels* (the spiritual servants of the God-Machine), one for each of the Tales in Chapter Two.

Appendix: Rules Revisions provides system changes, additions, and updates to some of the World of Darkness core rules.

All the Truth here Is

What is the God-Machine? We'll state up front that we're not going to provide a definitive answer. Rather, this book provides a lot of possible ways to present and use the God-Machine in chronicles, but not exactly what the God-Machine is and where it fits into the rest of the World of Darkness.

This might seem like we're being unnecessarily coy, but this is deliberate. Providing a specific, objective definition and nature for the God-Machine would make it more difficult to use in other World of Darkness products, but keeping its nature undetermined (that's not the same thing as "secret" - it isn't that we know and we're not telling you, it's that we aren't making the decision) allows us to keep using it without contradicting existing or future material. One guiding principle for the World of Darkness has always been that it's big enough to accommodate a lot of different entities. Does the existence of the God-Machine invalidate, say, the spirit courts

found in Werewolf: The Forsaken or the Supernal Realms of Mage: The Awakening? Of course not. The mechanisms of the God-Machine might be found deep in the Underworld. A motley of changelings might find a section of Hedge behind an immense wall where the Thorns have been cleared out and stacks of machinery sit, waiting for the day they might be useful. On the other hand, the God-Machine might very explicitly be absent from certain areas of the World of Darkness. Maybe vampires corrode the integrity of Infrastructure by their very presence. Maybe the Principle of **Promethean:** The Created is an autonomous subset of the God-Machine, a program that went rogue long ago.

In any case, the God-Machine Chronicle presents the entity within the context of a "mortals" World of Darkness game. That isn't to say that you can't run a God-Machine chronicle with supernatural characters, but rather that if you do that, you might need to make some decisions about "the truth." Even then, it might not be necessary – that decision has less to do with the characters and more to do with the tier (see p. 42).

11th August 2012

Dear Gina,

Listen, it's important I do this by hand. It's weird, isn't it, that at some point we found that the only way we could really certain of the privacy of our written word is to make it just that: written, by hand with pen, on paper. Sure, things can be copied and scanned but you have to find the sist, you have to find the artefact. When you type something on a machine, or phone, or whatever, it becomes so easy to find, so easy to copy.

I want to keep what I'm think I'm away from machines.

That sounds so weird. Just reading it on the page like that, in my own handwriting. I expect it'll turn out that I've gone mental or something, in the end. I think that even if all this has some sort of explanation, I've probably lost some of my marbles. Listen, though, while you're away I want you to be careful, and I want you to know that I love you. I love you, Gina. You're the woman I want to marry. I never said that, and I didn't intend to say it like that, but there it is. Sometimes I don't think that I will get a chance to say to you face to face. I promise I'll ask you properly when I see you again, bended knee and an engagement ring in a box and everything.

But until then, I want you to do something for me, Gina. I just want you to be careful. It's important.

Gina, I'm scared. I'm scared of using the phone, and I'm scared of the Internet, and most of all I'm scared for you. I'm scared someone might hurt you.

I really hope that I am going mental, because the alternative is almost too horrible to imagine.

Gina, I love you. I know this is going to worry you, but it's important, Gina. It's important. I keep telling myself that it will be all right in the end. It's the best I can do.

Stay safe, Gina.

Jon

Researching and Presenting the God-Machine

During any God-Machine chronicle, the characters are likely to learn enough about the entity to try to find information about it. This section presents the information that the characters can learn by pure research, as well as some common themes, motifs and images for the Storyteller to use.

Recurring Themes

God-Machine Chronicles work with themes of automation and motifs of machine parts, as well as the notion that someone larger and more powerful lurks behind human achievement. The God-Machine seems to be man-made but isn't. And since it isn't, if every machine is made in the image of this God-Machine, then what does it say about the idea that *we*, as a species, created machines? If the gear has been in existence for millennia before humanity, then was it some angel that gave use the idea? And if so, why did humans existed for thousands of years before the God-Machine chose to grace us with the knowledge of machinery?

These questions are not meant to have answers — something that's true of most questions regarding the God-Machine. The theme at work here is *unknowability*. It is the human condition to ask questions and probe ever deeper into our past and into the unknown, but where the God-Machine is concerned, to know the truth is to *change*. A character who cannot let go of his curiosity might merge with the God-Machine, becoming some unholy marriage of flesh and wire and steel and materials we cannot imagine. A character who wishes to retain his autonomy must be carried by decide to walk away without knowing the full true.

Another important thematic component of the God-Machine is that of recurrence. The phrase "what has risen may fall, what has fallen may rise again" comes up in both the original text, "Voice of the Angel" in the World of Darkness Rulebook, and in some of the stories in the God-Machine Chronicle Anthology. The God-Machine alters conceptions of space, time, and causality, and any character who becomes part of a God-Machine Chronicle leaves behind the ability to interact with the world in a normal way (this is one reason we encourage troupe-style play in God-Machine Chronicles — it's a way to keep characters from getting too jaded!).

Finally, the God-Machine Chronicle includes themes of godhood and ascension. People see the workings of the God-Machine and assume it must have something to do with humanity. It doesn't, necessarily, but it is true that the God-Machine can be accessed and even used in places. This fact, however, is roughly comparable to the fact that a tick can live on a human host — it can, and can even be painful and annoying to the host if motivated to do so, but if the host ever really notices the tick, the tick is likely to be crushed. People can use the God-Machine to achieve amazing things, but they should never delude themselves into thinking that the God-Machine is there to facilitate their ascension.

Research

If the characters research the God-Machine, they might find either the letters of Marco Singe (World of Darkness Rulebook, pp. 26-31) or the collection of letters between Jon Dear, William Dear, Dear Mary, and Stephen Escher (presented throughout this book). If you have access to the God-Machine Chronicle Anthology, you might also consider allowing the characters to find the works of Janet Cohen ("Ouroboros"). Various people over the centuries have learned of and written about the God-Machine, but what's important to remember is this: no one has the complete picture.

Marco Singe wrote an entire mythology about the Ancient Ones, and even learned enough to know about the Crypt of the Butterfly (which forms the basis of one of the Tales: Moon Window, p. 84). Janet Cohen wrote textbooks dealing with linguistics and anthropology and in the process unlocked enough information about the God-Machine to drive her mad. The Deva Corporation ("Eggs," also in the Anthology) was attempting to follow Singe's work. Dr. Henry Girard's mysterious employers (A Journey Into Time, p. 101) were trying to manipulate time with information stolen from the God-Machine. No one really understands what the God-Machine is, so the harsh truth for the characters is this: the transfer out there. No matter what they do, they will nevel unover the full story.

ythology

The human mind has evolved to make sense of the world around it. We've gotten as far as we have through a combination of luck, trial and error, and mental shortcuts called heuristics. Heuristics are simple, efficient rules, hard-coded by evolutionary processes or learned, that have been proposed to explain how people make decisions, come to judgments, and solve problems, typically when facing complex problems or incomplete information. These rules work well under most circumstances, but in certain cases lead to systematic errors or cognitive biases. In the simplest terms, when faced with something it too large or complicated or obfuscated for it to explain or process, the human mind makes shit up that makes it smaller, simpler, or clearer.

The God-Machine is so far beyond human comprehension that it should come as no surprise that any contact with it should trigger these coping mechanisms in mortal minds and even those of supernatural creatures with a largely human psychology. In most cases, in the mind's haste to make sense of the inscrutable it makes assumptions that are not just flawed but wildly inaccurate. Of course, the human response to the God-Machine is not so very different from the reactions people have always had to the mysterious or unknown.

Those Who Look Away From It

Most people who accidentally penetrate the chassis of one of the God-Machine's projects ignore it. They look away. They find some explanation for what they witnessed. Maybe



they were tired and under a lot of stress, so they probably only imagined the bus driver was an angel. Or they were drunk. Or it was all a dream. Any explanation that lets them return to their ordinary world will do.

In the World of Darkness, steering clear of strange phenomena is a critical survival mechanism. People who regularly chase shadowy beings or investigate strange noises die or disappear. Even supernatural creatures usually prefer to remain hidden, and many of them are not above abducting or killing witnesses to keep it that way.

Laziness plays a role, too. Sure, it's pretty weird that someone sent three truckloads of beeswax candles into a national park. You might mention it to a buddy at work or even throw out a couple wild theories about what they're being used for, but in most cases, that's as far as it ever goes. It's not like you're going to sneak back to the park to see what happens to those candles. Who has time for that kind of crap? You're curious, sure, but you're not that curious. It's probably nothing.

Most mortals can't see the gears at the center of every God-Machine scheme. Its machinations look like nothing so much as a bunch of coincidences and inexplicable nonsense, and even someone who stumbles onto one project likely won't recognize its connection to the God-Machine's other handiwork. You investigated those candles and saw a bunch of figures in black dancing around a lake ringed in lit candles. Some wolf-man thing with bat wings came out of the woods, and you ran like hell. The next morning, there was no sign of any of it. How can you explain what you saw? Who is going to

believe you when you can hardly believe it yourself? Chances are you'll never see anything that damned strange again so long as you live, so maybe it's better if you forget the whole thing.

- An occupant of a motel at the edge of town orders a pizza from a specific pizza shop every Thursday at exactly 10:37 p.m. with instructions to deliver it to the front office of the motel. One night, no one is in the front office, so the driver tries the motel room. A man with the head of a fly answers the door; the smell of rotten food emanates from the room. The driver sees piles of uneaten pizza crawling with maggots the size of cats. The fly man shoves money into her hand, pulls the pizza from her numb fingers, and slams the door in her face.
- A group of spelunking hobbyists take a wrong turn in a well-mapped cave system. They discover a cavern the size of a football stadium. Inexplicably, it is filled with millions upon millions of identical 2 inch carpentry nails. A smaller chamber adjacent to it overflows with ¾ " steel nuts. None show signs of corrosion or wear. They eventually find their way back to familiar caves, but no one has any idea what they're talking about. Thousands of spelunkers visit that cave every year, and no one has ever reported such a thing.
- While driving along an isolated strip of highway on a road trip, a group of friends fiddles with the radio dial trying to find a station that broadcasts this far out. Just

when they're about to give up, they hear a voice on the radio shouting. "Subjects have broken containment! Repeat, subjects have broken containment! Command, do you read me? Over." Gunshots and screams drown out much of what follows, but it sounds like some kind of request for an airstrike. The station suddenly goes dead. The rest of the road trip is uneventful.

- A woman working late boards an empty elevator in an
 office building. Five floors down, the doors open and
 what looks like some kind of cyborg or robot steps
 inside. The robot doesn't acknowledge the other passenger and gets off two floors later.
- A drunken college student convinces himself he's still sober enough to drive home. As he's walking to his car, a humanoid figure made of light intercepts the student, takes the keys out of his hands, and disappears. The student wakes up on the lawn only a few yards from his car and finds his keys are in his jacket pocket.

Those Who Worship It

Many people who encounter a being as powerful as the God-Machine feel inspired to worship it. Whether they do so out of faith, fear of punishment, or hope of reward, they become the cultists and shadow organizations the God-Machine uses in its projects when it needs someone who is loyal, ignorant, and entirely expendable.

The God-Machine resembles the scriptural God in many ways. It performs miracles. It issues strange instructions to its followers. It crushes those who try to thwart it. (It) as supernatural servants, many of which resemble a green Most people with even a tiny modicum of religious devotice would leap at the opportunity to serve God directly, especially when He makes His will known to them.

Some of these cults appear almost overnight and disappear just as quickly. Others survive for generations or even centuries, long enough for entire theologies spring up based on their experiences with the God-Machine. These religious treatises vary as much as do the projects of the God-Machine around which the cults form. For some, the God-Machine is merely the Engine of God, created to maintain order in Creation. For others it is God Himself, and mortal flesh is a poor echo of the perfection of the Mechanical Creator. One notable cult believes God created the God-Machine to protect humans — His chosen people — from extraterrestrial invasion, and each of its projects somehow furthers that goal. Another claims the God-Machine exists to make God's will known on Earth and to destroy the world if humans ever stop obeying the orders God gives them through it.

Not that all the God-Machine's worshippers are cults that splintered from more mainstream monotheistic religions. Some believe the God-Machine is Satan and its angelic servants are devils in disguise. Others believe it to be some god from one of the many polytheistic pantheons, or perhaps a powerful spirit made manifest on Earth. A few even believe the God-Machine is a manmade god — the Internet acci-

dentally become sentient or perhaps some marvel created in ancient times by a lost civilization whose technological advancements greatly outstripped ours.

The God-Machine doesn't always find a use for the cultists that spring up around it. They pray and sacrifice and perform arcane rituals in hopes of earning its favor, but ultimately they are no more relevant to it than pigeons roosting in the rafters of a monument. They are no less earnest than the angels of the God-Machine, however, and they can prove just as dangerous to those who would thwart what the cultists believe is the God-Machine's plan.

- The ancient Mayan belief that the sun will stop rising if humans do not make enough sacrifices each year is true. As the world grows more secular, those of us who still believe must sacrifice more to keep the world from ending. All sacrifices are worthy, but none is so earnest as human sacrifice.
- The End Times are here! Rejoice! It turns out that the whole resurrection thing wasn't bullshit. Jesus has a machine that can separate body and soul, and He's looking for disciples to use it. Your mind will live forever on Christ's new Heaven's Gate Server Farm, or maybe you'll get an even better body like a robot! What hippens to your old body? Tsk. I'd hoped you'd was get beyond such worldly concerns....
- come from a family of stubborn cusses, but I love them, and I don't want them to go to Hell because they refuse to accept Christ into their lives. I was praying for them when an angel of God appeared to me and told me I could atone for their sins by doing little favors for Him in this world. I've saved Mom and Dad, already, but my kid brother has always been a troublemaker, and the angel tells me I'm going to have to do something big to spare him from Hell.

Those Who Serve It

Not all who serve the God-Machine worship it as a god. Some try to bargain with it, exchanging their obedience and resources for something of value to them. In consequence, all kinds of people serve the God-Machine out of enlightened self-interest. Politicians seeking reelection, corporate executives eying the bottom line, scientists hoping to make a discovery that will change the world, and even generals who want to ensure their countries are prepared to fight the next war — all come to the God-Machine looking to make a deal or are approached by its servants with an offer they would never dream of refusing.

The God-Machine understands humans well enough to use rewards and punishments to direct their behavior. Most receive simple *quid pro quo* arrangements — unquestioning execution of its orders (no matter how strange) in exchange for some benefit. If they serve it loyally, the God-Machine makes good on its promise. It doesn't have to, of course, but it prefers trustworthy tools to untested ones. Besides, a human who thinks she has a good arrangement can often introduce similarly useful and mercenary servants to the God-Machine. It can never have too many reliable tools.

- There's an ATM in a lonely part of town one of the older sort with deposit envelopes. It will accept anyone's ATM or credit card, as long as the PIN is valid, but only the Deposit button works. If you put a lock of someone's hair into the ATM, it will spit out a single \$20 bill, but it has to be someone whose hair it doesn't already have. Maybe it will accept other forms of deposit, but all the homeless in the city know about the hair trick.
- Some junk mail is worth opening. If you get a letter from "Uncle Gerald's Sweepstakes " and do exactly what it says, no matter how strange, you'll win the next game of chance you play. That compulsive gambler who sold everything he owned and bet it all on a spin of red or black? He knew what he was doing.
- Those three new city council members? An architectural firm made huge donations to their campaigns—the same firm that was denied a zoning variance by the current city council. Yeah, just politics as usual, sure, but you tell me why any company would build a 30-story apartment building in a town of less than ten thousand people.
- Making a deal with an angel isn't much different from making one with a demon. They're just worse at haggling and they aren't trying to screw you. Their demands aren't that bad, either — weird enough to prove that God works in mysterious ways, sure. I have no idea why the angel's got me looting my employer recycling bins, but my back hasn't given me a ways in three months, so I'm not complaining.

Those who betray or fail the God-Machine seldom get a second chance to prove their loyalty and ase liness. That isn't to say that the God-Machine is vengeful, just that if a particular cog doesn't fit, the God-Machine isn't likely to spend a lot of time and resources trying to recalibrate it. There are too many other pieces to try.

The God-Machine kills some of these disappointments, certainly, but some are too valuable to be discarded so easily. These are the same kinds of servants upon which the God-Machine often bestows gifts as a reward for their service — ones in key positions or who have especially useful abilities. They often recognize that these gifts come with special liabilities only after they fail the God-Machine for the first time. If they are very loyal after this first failure, they may eventually win their ways back into the God-Machine's good graces, but usually they spend the remainder of their lives one more mistake away from being discarded.

Material wealth: Unimaginatively mercenary sorts are
often in it for the money. The God-Machine plies the
servant with jewelry, fancy sports cars, and even priceless collector's items. If the servant wants something
that isn't portable, briefcases full of cash do nicely.
Just don't ask where any of it came from. For every
dollar a servant of the God-Machine receives, someone
somewhere loses a dollar. Maybe it just disappears from

a bank account, or maybe the God-Machine's fanatical cultists robbed a bank. In any case, lots of that stuff is traceable if the authorities are given any reason to come sniffing at the recipient's door - i.e., if he ever outlives his usefulness to the God-Machine.

- Health: The God-Machine can heal any human ailment
 — disease, chronic conditions, injuries, even old age. The
 God-Machine has even offered to bring dead friends
 and family of its servants back to life as an incentive to
 perform extraordinarily grand services for it, although it
 is unclear whether it has ever actually made good on such
 a deal. Of course, some of the God-Machine's angels can
 cause illness instead of curing it; these occult diseases
 are often more terrible for the patient than any merely
 mortal plague. The more important the servant's work to
 the God-Machine, the more likely such terrible pestilence
 will strike her loved ones first should she falter.
- Good Fortune: The servant lives a charmed life for as long as he serves the God-Machine faithfully. Twists of good fortune preserve him from many hardships and make him more likely to come out ahead in games of chance, raffles, and even lotteries. If he fails in his duties, the servant's fortunes quickly reverse.
- Occult Powers: The God-Machine grants the servant a supernatural ability or has one of its angels do so. This is usually a fairly minor talent like psychometry (object reading) or reading surface thoughts, but creatures with occult powers of their own often demand something a bit more impressive than that. If the servant disappoints the God-Machine, not only does she lose that power, but quite often some of her other supernatural abilities are suppressed. This last is a terrifying hint at the God-Machine's abilities. If it can negate or weaken a servant's magic, what keeps it from countering the occult abilities of other supernatural beings?
- Sanctuary: The God-Machine offers to protect the servant from whomever or whatever is hunting him.
 Of course, if his service is less than acceptable, those hunters can easily be informed of the hunted servant's location — in exchange for a small service to the God-Machine, of course.
- Altruism: The God-Machine can often convince people to do its bidding simply by making it seem like failure to obey will hurt thousands or even millions of people. They're convinced kidnapping someone every month and feeding them to the God-Machine's bloodthirsty gears is the only thing preventing worldwide earth-quakes or devastating famines. In fact, the two things are unrelated, but the God-Machine usually only needs to demonstrate these consequences once to prevent future testing of cause and effect.