

THE PARASITIC LIBRARY

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE



THE PARASITIC LIBRARY I/41

Complexity: 4

Location: DIVISION HQ, basement

Date: ????

Contact: Marcus Finch, Assistant Archivist (he/they)

OMEN-CLASS MONSTERS, a rogue interdimensional spatial-entity has attached itself to DIVISION HQ. Designated the "Parasitic Library," the entity has begun siphoning off valuable intel from the archives leaving voids in DIVISION's key records relating to already contained Doors of the apocalypse. HARBINGER-CLASS MONSTER involvement is suspected behind this security breach. Should whoever brought the Library to DIVISION recover the siphoned information from within the Library, they will be armed with the knowledge needed to unlock those Doors. Find out who or what led the Library here and dislodge it from DIVISION before these apocalypses have a chance to be unleashed and the Harbinger claims ASCENSION.

CONTENT WARNING: *Memory loss*



Description

The Parasitic Library is a semi-sentient, interdimensional entity that feeds on accumulated knowledge and secrets. It emerges from rifts in space-time to attach itself to locations to siphon off what it needs. Any information consumed by the Library manifests inside it, and is lost from the original source. The Library has been theorized as responsible for different dark ages throughout history as it fed on ancient sources of knowledge.

The Library adapts its form to camouflage itself. It is not known how long the Library has currently been feeding on DIVISION. The current entrance was only reported when a junior agent mentioned retrieving some files from an archive that more senior agents had no recollection of. The current entrance to the Library is unassuming, appearing identical to many standard DIVISION office doors. Inside, the Library conforms to the trespassers' expectations of what a library looks like, resembling a pastiche of libraries from across history. Wood paneling, tall bookshelves, rooms dark and cramped, others that host grand columned mezzanines. The books themselves seem to be organized, but using an unknown system that is difficult to comprehend from surface observations.

Entering the Library is dangerous. The interior of the Library is analogous to a digestive system. Individuals who spend too much time within the Library's gut may start to experience loss and fragmentation of their memories. However, anything the Library feeds on can be recovered if it is found within the records that manifest inside it. Additionally, there are other beings wandering within the Library that pose dangers. Those lost to time and space, strange beings who have specialized to parasitize the parasite, and seekers desperate enough to brave the Library's interior can all potentially become hostile if not carefully approached.

Something or someone has drawn the Library here. DIVISION HQ is warding against most incursions of the interdimensional nature. Either there is a fatal flaw in the system, or someone invited the Library in. The secrets contained within the Library pose an existential threat, being a compilation of deep occult knowledge that spans both time and dimensions. Should all this fall into the hands of one or more Harbinger, the apocalypse will be accelerated.

Beginning the Mystery

The Omen-class monsters don't need to travel far to find the entrance to the Library. The section of the archives where the Library has appeared is located deep within DIVISION HQ. The freight elevator clunks to a stop as the PCs step out into one of the seldomly frequented basement levels. At the end of the hall, flickering incandescent lights illuminate a simple windowless door. Above the door frame, stencilled onto the cold cinder block wall are the words "Auxiliary Archive - 116." Marcus Finch, the Assistant Archivist, stands next to the door looking uncomfortable and out of place, wearing ill-fitting DIVISION tactical field gear.

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Establishing Questions

- ✱ **One of you has worked with Marcus Finch before.** Why did the two of you part on less than polite terms? Why do you regret the rift that grew between you, and why do you suspect they regret it too?
- ✱ **This is not DIVISION's first encounter with the Library.** It was once used to secure something incredibly dangerous, with its siphonovore nature conveniently erasing all records of the mission. One of you was involved in the mission. Why are you the only one from that ill-fated team able to recall scant fragments about the catastrophe that happened?

Contact: Marcus Finch, Assistant Archivist (he/they)

Wry and dry humor, nervous hand wringing, unkempt bookishness. Marcus is not usually deployed to the field, though as he assures the PCs multiple times, they do possess up-to-date field certifications. Marcus often works through plans and ideas out loud, carving a circuitous path to any solution. He always seems to have a small pocket notebook on hand for jotting down observations using a worn fountain pen.



Marcus Finch is unusually qualified to act as this mission's field liaison. A past supernatural incident has given them what DIVISION theorizes to be a resistance to the Library's anti-gnosis effects, allowing him to preserve his memories within the Library. Marcus does not know, or has perhaps lost, the exact details of the incident that gave them this ability. However, those details are most likely contained within a file somewhere deep within Auxiliary Archive - 116. Additionally, Marcus possesses an extensive knowledge of DIVISION archives and archival methods. He may not know everything contained within the texts and records of the archives, but they do have a reputation of being a walking table of contents. Also, the Chief Archivist was indisposed at this time.

Once the PCs enter the Library, Marcus will choose to stick relatively close to the entrance door and begin setting up a small base camp. He will ask some of the PCs to assist in assembling monitoring equipment; a collection of odd metal dishes on tripod stands connected with thick black cords to various readout monitors and a small generator. They also make sure to check that all members of the team are using the same communication frequency on the supplied standard issue DIVISION walkie-talkies.

Marcus will accompany PCs as they foray out into the Library if necessary, but is clearly uncomfortable and nervous, likely needing some form of encouragement to attempt more dangerous feats. A mix of fear of being in the Library, and working with a number of Omens makes him quite skittish.

People of Interest

THE LIBRARIAN (they/it)

The semi-independent manifestation of the Library's slumbering subconsciousness. Wears a slightly worn tweed jacket and pressed slacks. Has eyes that never settle on one person. Smells of old books. The Librarian views the PCs as curiosities, strange visitors to a place it views more of as its home than origin. They don't quite grasp that they themselves are merely a small aspect of the Library, glossing over any attempts at elucidating its true nature.



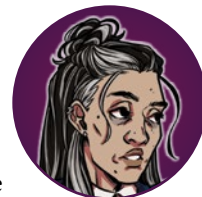
They are willing to assist the PCs in their mission, but as soon as they begin to reference or enact plans against the Library, the Librarian—in a fit of instinctual defensive aggression—will lash out at the trespassing PCs before vanishing. Should the PCs encounter the Librarian again, it will not recall what happened, almost as if it is a different individual.

The Librarian appears almost human but wears a different face each time the PCs meet it, though they are always accompanied by the same distinct scent of aged books and ozone. Each face is a remnant of some devoured memory catalogued deep within the Library, some may feel strangely familiar to one or more PCs. The Librarian speaks with a staccato, lilting voice and moves as if half-marionetted through the space. Light reflects off them in strange ways.

QUOTE: *Well hello there and welcome to the Library. I do so love visitors, shame they tend not to last long. Oh well. Now, where were we? I can feel unspoken words vibrating around you like a beehive. So many secrets that are just desperate to burst out. Might I tempt you to share a few? If not, perhaps you are looking for something specific to add to your collection?*

JEN FABLE (she/her)

A time-lost agent of DIVISION. Frazzled and tired, has bags beneath her eyes. Rarely speaks above a whisper, but always with a sense of desperation and urgency. Jen Fable is an unfortunate clerk who stumbled into the Library several decades ago. She wears outdated office clothes, but still carries her old DIVISION ID badge, though her name has been siphoned off of it, leaving behind gibberish. She has adopted her current name because "it felt right?"



Her own memory is fragmented and scattershot. Having spent so long within the Library, much of her past is a mystery to her and the PCs—none of whom can recall anything about this individual, despite at least one of them feeling an uncanny sense of familiarity. She is desperately searching for her lost memories, having spent her time trapped inside the Library to create a somewhat reliable map of the extensive archives. She will oppose any plans to destroy or damage the Library before she finds and secures her memories, growing increasingly desperate the closer the PCs get toward any such goals.

QUOTE: *Finally, a rescue party! You are from DIVISION aren't you? You all seem oddly familiar. Perhaps we've met before? It appears I've lost more time than I thought. But it can't have been too long since I've been trapped here, right?*

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HUNGRY WORM *(he/him)*

A parasite's parasite. Long, vermiform, and coiling. Constantly moving, even when standing still, always slightly writhing. Speaks with a wet curiosity. Hungry Worm, or just Worm as he first introduces himself to the PCs, is a being from another plane that resides within the Library. Worm wears a long tattered cloak that obscures a soft coiling body, and rarely speaks above a whisper. His cloak obscures a leech-like mouth, filled with sharp tooth-like projections.

Hungry Worm has been dwelling within the Library for a long time. He feeds on the books inside the Library, deriving nourishment from the countless secrets that the Library itself has already consumed. Hungry Worm is quite secretive, unwilling to draw too much attention to himself, lest the Librarian discover and destroy him. Some of what Hungry Worm feeds on, he internalizes. As such, he has amassed a vast collection of secrets and may be willing to exchange information in return for a delicious secret. Hungry Worm wishes for the Library to grow fat and happy.

QUOTE: *Ahhh, hello fellow interlopers. Care for a bite to eat? Or perhaps you seek something else within the Library hmm? I, of course, would be delighted to assist you in finding whatever that might be, but before all that, an exchange would be most delectable. Yes?*

FORMLESS ANAMNESIS BETWEEN *(any/all)*

A traveler from afar. Tall, looming, monolithic. Follows the rules of a different set of physics. Polite, secretive, non-confrontational. Formless claims to be merely a traveler, visiting the Library from somewhere else as a tourist. They are tall, standing a head above even the tallest PC present. His head and face are obscured in shadow no matter the quality of light or angle, and she speaks directly into the minds of any listener with a slow and methodical voice.

Anamnesis primarily strolls through the Library, picking books off the shelves as if casually perusing a used bookstore. Occasionally they can be seen checking things off on a written list, something that seems unusually mundane for someone clearly so strange. Some volumes they place back while others are placed into a bag, perhaps to be read later. The PCs might catch Between in conversation with the Librarian, though once they are noticed, the conversation politely, but quickly dies. Formless remains vague about its purpose within the Library, preferring to turn the questions back on the PCs, but it seems clear that they are looking for something specific. The most Anamnesis will easily divulge is that she is "picking some things up for some friends."

QUOTE: *Pardon me, might I reach past you and take that book? No no, don't pay me much mind, I'm just here for a few items. Which ones? Well hmm. Well, has anything in particular caught your eyes? I do appreciate thoughtful recommendations. And before I take my leave, have you happened upon the Librarian? There was something I needed to ask of them.*



SHADE OF WHAT WAS *(they/them)*

Fragments of lost knowledge given form. The Shade of What Was is a collection of fragmentary knowledge and secrets. Scraps that the Library was unable to digest that coalesced into a singular form. They appear in a form roughly the shape of a cat, composed of a swirling mass of scraps of paper. When referring to themselves, they use "we" and "us" and their voice is like the wind.

The Shade acts listless and speaks in short bursts, as though their thoughts are pulled in many different directions. They feel a sense of emptiness and incompleteness and will ask the PCs to assist in finding the wholes that their many pieces belong to. They grow stronger, and bolder with each puzzle piece filled.

QUOTE: *Please... can you... help? I am... lost in this place. Something... many things... are missing. I can... feel them. Out there... somewhere.*

Locations of Interest

THE STACKS

The Stacks make up the largest section of the Library, its labyrinthine series of looming bookshelves seem to stretch on for impossibly long. *What evidence of habitation do you find scattered amongst the books and tomes here?*

THE LECTURE HALL

The Lecture Hall is a large circular room filled with tiered seating and decorated with warm wood paneling and depictions of unknown constellations. *What whispers of forbidden secrets do you catch floating toward you from the center of the room?*

THE LOFT

The Loft is the upper floor of the Library, accessed from a series of stairways and ladders. Its mezzanines and balconies offer a bird's-eye view of the Stacks and beyond. *Looking down, what strange pattern hidden in the spaces between shelves below do you begin to perceive?*

THE OBSERVATORY

The nerve center of the Library. Several ornate and massive telescopes hang ponderously from the domed ceiling. *Glimpsing through the telescopes, what recent past do you see from a different perspective?*

THE HEART

The Heart is a cramped room filled with an Escheresque array of pipes spreading out from the massive boiler furnace. *Embedded in the whistle of steam, and thrum of the boiler, what message do you hear from the feeding, slumbering, Library?*



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Keys of the Apocalypse

- ✿ a **DIVISION filing cabinet**, askew and unlocked
- ✿ a **scrap of paper**, categorical symbols akin to the Dewey Decimal System scrawled on it
- ✿ a **DIVISION ID badge**, marked top secret clearance
- ✿ **ink stains dripping down a shelf**, foot and handprints trail off deeper into the Library
- ✿ a **ringing telephone**, when answered, it speaks a repeating code in an old-fashioned voice
- ✿ **fragments of a DIVISION report**, one of the PC's names is cut off
- ✿ a **decades old microfiche reader**, ghostly echoes of a disturbing headline still present on its screen
- ✿ a **ripped library card**, issued in a long forgotten language, voided for excessive fines, and belonging to one of the PCs
- ✿ a **lantern**, with a flickering light that reveals secrets through sentient shadows thrown against the walls of the library
- ✿ a **worn scrapbook**, containing black and white photos with redacted faces
- ✿ a **melted down candle**, indentations in it left by strange fingers
- ✿ **case records of old and gone Harbingers**, left behind in a hurry
- ✿ a **ticking clock**, whose hands move in reverse
- ✿ a **small dusty journal**, still being written by an invisible hand in a coded script
- ✿ a **leather-bound tome**, mind-cutting sigils engraved on its cover
- ✿ a **memory split into two surfaces in a PC's mind**, one true and one false
- ✿ an **ancient scroll**, its civilization erased from history by DIVISION's manipulations—the warnings inside are alarmingly prescient
- ✿ a **beaten paperback with dogeared pages** containing branching paths of possible futures
- ✿ **stellar detritus**, twinkling matter that must have come from outside the Library
- ✿ **signs of an occult ritual**, sigils written on the ground are familiar and fresh

Facets

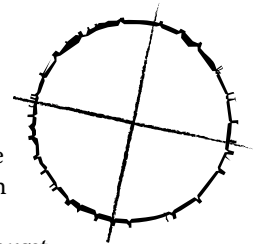
- ✿ The Harbinger
- ✿ The Door of Power
- ✿ The identity of who brought the Library to DIVISION
- ✿ The secrets locked within the Library

Doomsday Clock (ticks: 4)

MOMENT

A flurry of loose pages swirls in a momentary storm. When the pages settle to the ground, they appear to all be from different sources.

- ✿ *Who sees a terrible truth laid bare amongst these pages?*
- ✿ *What future event is written out here, framed as an inescapable tragedy?*



EVENT

Sections of shelves drag themselves into new positions. They create new passages and obscure old pathways; new patterns for new purposes as the Library begins to digest its meals.

- ✿ *Who becomes separated from the rest?*
- ✿ *What new danger is now freed?*

INTRIGUE

A page is torn from an ornate tome. Shadowed hands snap the book closed and return it to a shelf. The hands linger on the spine for a moment before reaching toward a new book.

- ✿ *What once-thought-lost source of secrets is this tome?*
- ✿ *What might the Harbinger be looking for next?*

THE DOOR OPENS

The interior of the Library rumbles and shifts, warping into a twisting convergence of all previous locations. The Library's meal rushes in and inundates the PCs in a crashing maelstrom of records and texts. Having fed, the Library was preparing to slip back into unknown interdimensional space, but the Harbinger now has different plans for it as it gains control.

- ✿ *When the door opens, what happens to all the accumulated knowledge—now dislodged from the Library?*
- ✿ *What power or wisdom does the Harbinger take from beyond the door?*