

# GOD SAVE US, EVERY ONE

A CLERKENWELL CAROL BY JOE BANNER



*Non-euclidean geometries rise up, above and behind. Ahead you see London, but not as you remember it. The way back is lost, through some trickery of the light.*

*A figure ahead rants to themselves among the freshly laid snow. Your target! From the job that landed you in this hellish plane! He plays some curious drama of his own devising, judged by spirit hosts for sins of the season past, present and future.*

*His spectral eyes stare through you, oblivious... but what of the other ghostly players? They do not register your presence, yet... an aside glance? A momentary break in character? You cannot be sure, yet.*

*What part do you have to play in this most macabre carol?*

## THE SITUATION

The party explore a mysterious dreamscape, powered by the visions of a man they've been hired to steal from.

## WHERE DO THEY BEGIN?

In the middle of a mish-mash version of London, looking on their mark (an elderly Victorian man in a nightcap) apparently talking to themselves, or some invisible ghosts, in the middle of the road.

(They're actually talking to the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST, an invisible spirit who becomes more visible the more the party interact with it. 2D6 hp, STR 7, D6 damage, probably has similar friends.)

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Can the party escape?

Will their mark escape? Who will miss him if he never returns?

What aspects of the dream-world might escape with them?

## OTHER QUESTIONS

What were the party intending to steal?

How did they get here? Why can't they go back that way?

Who is first targeted by a spirit, breaking the facade?

What do you do?

## THE PARTY MEMBERS...

Are employed by the company of Saltpetremen to steal back some magical trickery or phlogiston-soaked relic from a wealthy London landowner: one *Ebenezer Scrooge* of Cornhill, London.

In my playtest, we 'rewound the clock' several hours to see how the party got into Scrooge's house and started the job. The "relic", as suggested by the players, was an oddly lucky painting of a dog.

You might want to avoid using the mark's name for a while, or even use an alternative (how about *Israel Summersby*?) so as not to give the game away.

For clarity, I've used the name from the story we all know and love in this adventure.

## **IMPRESSIONS**

- A mish-mashed London of three different eras: 1666, after the Plague and the Great Fire; 1866, at the height of the British Empire; and 2066, a cyberpunk post-apocalyptic future.
- Spectral ghosts, half-spotted and playing through some strange pantomime of their own invention
- Crisp white snow all around, and other trappings of Christmas

## **ENEMIES**

Three faeries or spirits, in the middle of a wager for Scrooge's soul on whether he can change his ways in one night:

- **THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST**, one or more gremlin-sque cherubs in Tudor-era clothing. (STR 7, 2D6HP, D6 damage.)
- **THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT**, obese and opulent, wielding an elephant gun and slathered in goose-fat. (STR 14, 12HP, 1D8 damage, 1 armour. Save vs WIL when interacting or spend the next turn vomiting in disgust.)
- **THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME**, appearing as a grim reaper from a cyberpunk future wearing shutter shades from the 1980s and riding a neon hoverboard. (STR 18, 6HP 1D12 damage)

... and their hosts if necessary, appearing as lesser versions of their patron.

When they find someone new in the dreamlike snows, roll 1d6...

**Lute Copperhead:** 8HP, STR 6. Filthy latin teacher, frequently drunk, open to possession. Half their face criss-crossed with warty scars. Wants to *pass on horrible secrets*. Save vs WIL when he babbles latin in your face, or find yourself possessed by an angry, drunken demon.

**Olga LaMarque:** 6HP, STR 5, armour 1. French arbalist from the crusades. Short-cropped hair, dented plate, poor skin and a worrying cough. Wants *a cure*. Take 1d6 STR loss and catch the plague when you come within spitting distance. Wields a huge crossbow (1d10 damage).

**Guy Fawkes:** 6HP, STR 10. A man from the Stuart era with a distinctive moustache. Dressed in rags, hands chained. Claims to have escaped from the Tower of London. Has an intimate knowledge of pyrotechnics. Wants to *avoid the gallows*.

**Jim McClaine:** 3D6HP, STR 12. Bald, barefoot, dressed in filthy white vest and sweatpants. Armed with a modern machine gun (1d8 damage, and ho ho ho.) No melee weapons, but all melee attacks they make (with any weapon) are ENHANCED. Filthy mouth. Wants to *contact his missing wife*.

**Tracey Finnegan:** 3HP, STR 10. Carries 10ft of light-up christmas lights (1d6 damage, battery-powered), a tin of chocolates and whatever you got for Christmas for your 10th birthday. Wants to *find their car and get back in time for Christmas*.

**Charles Dickens:** 1d6HP, STR 6. Wants *inspiration* for their next tall tale. Believes all this a dream, and maybe they're right.

## WHAT IS OR WAS THIS PLACE?

Roll 1d6...

**1** **A relic of Christmas yet-to-come: a long-abandoned server room, old systems stood ajar like gravestones.**  
The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME is strong here.

**2** **A filthy tavern, co-opted by the doctors in plague-time.** I'm sure it's very clean now. The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST's domain.

**3** **A school, playground or workhouse** from Scrooge's youth. Liable to advance and decay by ten years at a moment's notice.

**4** **The royal exchange, London.** The brokers bustle through like ghosts, but take no notice of the party. Potentially valuable stock tips may be overheard or spotted.

**5** **A modern-day supermarket.** Perfectly normal to the players' eyes, but madness to the PCs. ("What trickery is this? Doors that open by themselves? Why does this infernal machine keep asking for my Tesco clubcard?" etc.)

**6** **A bustling, modern-day nightclub.** Like the exchange, the partygoers are ghostlike and take no notice of the party. The dazzling lights and music may be very disorienting, though.

## CAN WE GET OUT THIS WAY?

Roll 1d10...

- 1 **Not yet.** There's a monster in the way!
- 2 **Nope, dead end.** Turn round and face the music.
- 3 **Maybe.** There's a humanoid in your way, they look kind of weird. (Roll to see who it is.)
- 4 **There's something going on in there.** Roll 1d6: 1-2 it's a gypsy selling a sprig of heather; 3-4 it's a lewd victorian prostitute; 5-6 it's a busy 1980's stockbroker trying to learn the true meaning of Christmas.
- 5 **There's something going on in there.** As above, except it's a harmless illusion.
- 6 **Mind the corpse.** Someone lies dead and broken on the ground. If the party have time, they're welcome to loot the body.
- 7 **Magical profulsion!** Raw phlogiston seeps from an open gutter, green and oozing. Anything organic that touches it is liable to be transformed. It can be bypassed, if they are careful.
- 8 **Yes - the whole place is decked in Christmas lights,** but otherwise uneventful.
- 9 **Yes, and a Christmas miracle!** Exactly the thing you need (a bomb, ammo, a stiff drink) is right there, partially buried in the snow.
- 10 **Definitely,** and there's a barrel or something you can throw down behind you to block any pursuers.

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