

# Too Friendlies

By Caleb Stokes

*The Group discourages emotional attachments. You're the reason why.*

## Content Warning

This operation deals directly with themes of gaslighting, depersonalization, and body horror. Events in the game may suggest scenes of domestic violence and abuse. Inform all players of the content before engaging with the scenario, and do so only with experienced roleplayers comfortable with such subject matter.

A scenario for three adults: 2 Agents and a Handler. A romantic partnership between clueless DG Friendlies makes first contact with the Unnatural. Designed for experienced roleplayers, all participants must agree beforehand to acceptable levels of adult content and mature themes.

Both 'Agents' are employed by the Library of Congress in DC. Nearly any profession is available: archivist, facilities manager, congressional researcher, security personnel, janitor, etc. Both have served as Friendlies under some misconception about what DG represents. They work odd hours in the periphery, erasing the existence of the D-Stacks and its contents. Neither knows they are laundering evidence for an illegal deep state conspiracy.

Agents start off as Bonds, with a romantic history defined before play. Character creation is done as a group. The Handler works with each Agent to define how their profession connects to Delta Green (see Briefing p.xx). The players work together to define the relationship *outside* and *despite* Delta Green. They may have additional Bonds, but the relationship between the Friendlies remains important (even if it's over). The players work together to define the affair before play. The Handler helps with the setting and NPCs until Delta Green comes along to ruin everything.

*Too Friendlies* starts by building the foundation of a complicated, mature relationship between two Agents. Then everyone joins the Handler in kicking it down.

## Building Bonds

Work as a table to define the relationships each Agent shares. The “friendlies” should have each other as Bonds and a history of romantic involvement. Many RPG systems build bonds as well as DG destroys them (such as Emily Care Boss’s *Romance Trilogy*). The scenario was playtested using “Breaking the Ice” to inspire character creation. Utilize the rules and safety tools of whatever romance game the table is comfortable playing (*Fog of Love*, *Star-Crossed*, *Under My Skin*, etc). Or agree to work collaboratively to establish content guidelines for designing the relationship out of play. Whether using a framework or riffing, the only constraints in building characters are...

1. employed somewhere within the Library of Congress (LoC)
2. in a world like our own
3. now or once in love
4. about to become a Delta Green character.

In any instance of *any* game, **consent is the primary rule defining the Bond between Agents**. If some aspect of the Bond between characters is established prior to the game (especially on issues of sex, family, and the relationship’s definition), it must be established *with the consent of all players*.

When a player doesn’t consent to some aspect of the relationship, that’s a boundary. **Boundaries are individual, infinite, and indisputable**. One player is enough to veto any aspect of a Bond’s story. Players have as many boundaries as they need. Boundaries are never disputed or debated. If a player expresses a boundary, change the story and brainstorm other options until consent is achieved.

**Issues that affect your own character (ethnicity, identity, orientation, etc) are intrinsic boundaries**. No one can tell your character who they are.

## <H1> Briefing

Both Friendlies have worked with Linda Toth, the Deputy Director of the Congressional Research Service. “Ms. Hearsay,” — as she is known by the Library’s legal team — holds sway in the LoC Office of General Counsel. Her influence over the scheduled hearings determining national security classification for library collections has been rumored for years. As a group, decide what artifact, manuscript, recording, or evidence Agents helped Ms. Hearsay ‘misplace’ amongst the 173 million items in the LOC catalog. Ask the ‘Friendlies’ why they agreed to help, and what lies, bribes, or blackmail it took Hearsay to lead them there.

Ms. Hearsay calls the Agents to a nondescript, unmonitored section of the vaults beneath the Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Virginia. Officially, they've been ordered to help catalog new additions from an unexpected estate donation. When they arrive, they are told the real mission.

*“There’s a woman in the Rm. 011 conference room of the film preservation sub-basement. Do not let her leave. Keep her fed, clothed, clean, and comfortable. No matter what she says, she doesn’t leave the film vault or see the public areas. Do not let her contact anyone. Order whatever she needs online and bring it in, but nothing leaves. She’s a danger to herself and needs 24/7 monitoring. I packed up some of her stuff. It’s locked in 009. If she needs toiletries or clothes, look there.*

*There’s some sort of film reel inside the trunk in Rm. 009. While you’re stuck here, you need to get me the right equipment to view it. Set it up and make sure it works. Do not watch the movie. Don’t mess with anything else inside the trunk. Text me when it’s ready and I’ll come get it. I’ll get our guest out of here in a couple days.”*

If the Agents refuse the task, Hearsay threatens mutually-assured destruction using the blackmail of past interactions. She’s desperate enough to mean it.

## <H2> What Hearsay Knows

Linda Toth — referred to as Ms. Hearsay in the halls of LoC — is known as **Agent Helga** to her cellmates. FBI Agent Frank Vaughn is **Agent Harrison**. The third is **Agent Hiller**, the 69 year-old deputy director of Discovery and Acquisition Services, Dr. Ararat Bedrosian. H-Cell does not manage the D-Stacks directly. They are tasked with erasing its existence from the institutional memory of the US government and denying its treasures from the Program.

Bedrosian was found dead that morning from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. The body had multiple superficial stabs and cuts on the hands and forearms. These came from the kitchen knife found embedded in neck of Bedrosian’s dead wife. The mailman spotted her body through the front bay window.

Agent Hiller called in sick the last couple weeks. Using Agent Harrison’s FBI authority, he and Helga took control of the local investigation into their cellmate’s death. They found Bedrosian’s body in the attic, next to an open trunk full of film equipment. Outside the trunk was a single film reel, unopened and without a projector. There was a return address on the box the film reel came from, sent three weeks prior and left in the corner of the room.

Harrison traced the address of the film to Janine Yaron. Upon learning her name, they learned she'd been arrested for assault along with four accomplices that morning. Fearing an unnatural contagion, Harrison scrambled to claim jurisdiction on the assault as a failed bank robbery. After Agent Vaughn was finally able to review the Bank Recordings (p.xx), he pulled the victimized Janine Yaron out of lock up and had charges dropped. Harrison is now busy keeping the four other offenders from bonding out or joining a general prison population before he can understand what happened. Without any law enforcement credentials, Toth (Helga/Hearsay) is short staffed and needs to insinuate LoC into the Bedrosian investigation to keep control of the narrative. Yaron is a vital witness. As she is concussed and exhausted from hours in lock up, they do not have to talk to her right now.

The Friendlies are babysitters while Helga and Harrison put out fires. Keep Yaron calm and safe until they get time to question her. Find H-Cell something to watch that movie on. Stay quiet and keep the doors shut.

## <H1> The Truth

The woman in 011 is Janine Yaron. She was infected by The Prism after handling contaminated cellulose acetate stored in the trunk currently located inside 009 Preservation Archive Sub-basement 2B. The film reel is a 16mm print of *The 1001 Dreams*, commissioned in 1999 as a 1-of-1 by Janine's deceased father — Philip Yaron — as a personal keepsake. It is the only copy and sole surviving evidence of Philip's brief encounter with the Fate and Stephen Alzis.

The film's content is an inscrutable, incomplete computer-animated version of *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah* or *One Thousand and One Nights* (see "Production" p.xx). The cellulose acetate of the film isn't covered in dust, but "spores." These particles were added as part of a hypergeometric ritual. They were cultivated by Philip Yaron and embedded in the paint he applied to individual film frames post-production, using a rotoscope technique of the amateur sorcerer's own design. The film is the fruit of the obsessive attempt by the lunatic filmmaker to recreate the performance that drove him mad beneath Club Apocalypse in 1997. Though haunting, Alzi's mo-capped performance of Shaharazad does not spread the curse of the film; the substance used to apply his image is an unnatural contaminant. Projecting or handling the film — even for transfer to another medium — sends the particles airborne, infecting anyone present with 'The Prism.' Spores inhaled or absorbed from the direct contact with the film transfer the curse. The 16mm film reel is the creature's reproductive organ.

The Prism is a five-pronged, transparent jelly that grows unseen across the face of any character that handles *The 1001 Dreams*. Its surface is utterly clear and without outline. It is a frictionless aerogel. To the touch, the Prism is barely noticeable as air resistance before the jelly mashes too thin to be

distinguishable from skin-to-skin contact. If measured, the Prism scores 100% transmittance on the Snellen Sheet Materials Test for transparency. The invisible jelly can be pierced by needle or razor, but it reseals instantly unless the surface tension is altered by extreme temperature or chemicals (see “Removing the Prism”).

Damaging the Prism or killing the host makes it momentarily visible. It looks like a gnarled hand of jellied roots spread across the face of the afflicted, digging into tear ducts, nostrils, and the corner of the mouth. It throbs with a gossamer-thin circulation system, outlining its tendrils in wispy silver networks of alien nerves embedded across the victim’s cheek and neck.

## <H2> The Prism

The Prism exists to distort and pervert all aspects of communication *besides* language. Having a Prism attached is the equivalent of a nonverbal Tower of Babel: the thing psychically confuses all inflection, mannerism, and unspoken communication between human beings. Invisible to the naked eye, the thing telepathically radiates alienation and threat from where it rests on a victim’s face, altering the perceptions of every uninfected creature nearby so quickly that the change is imperceptible from reality. Smiles are interpreted as frowns. Closed mouths are read as snarling teeth. Every statement’s tone and inflection perverts into a twisted mirror of its intended meaning.

Society’s disgust at the psychic miasma of The Prism falls on its host. Prolonged exposure causes ‘normal’ people to hallucinate crimes or provocations attributed to the carrier. These post-hoc rationalizations fuel the dismissal, hatred, and violence that become inevitable after prolonged exposure to the thing’s radiating gaslight.

Anyone who watches *The 1001 Dreams* on a projector and/or handles the film with exposed skin becomes ‘Cursed.’ The Prism is invisible and cannot be felt growing, but the psychic perversion of every perception *around* it begins immediately.

- **Phase 1 — Contact with *The 1001 Dreams***: The frictionless, clear jelly begins to form on the face and transmit psychically. The Handler’s descriptions of the Cursed’s appearance differs when responding to questions about the game world. If Agent X asks “What is Agent Y doing right now?” the Handler’s answer differs from what Agent Y said they were doing. NPC attitudes suggest that Cursed postures and ‘vibes’ convey meanings they did not intend. Facial expressions are interpreted as tired, disinterested, or forced, regardless of verbal context. The Cursed’s actions are ‘real,’ but consistently misinterpreted by witnesses. People ask “Are you tired?” “Are you mad at me?” “You Okay?” Constantly.

- **Phase 2 — One Day’s Growth**: The Prism grows to full size and begins kinesthetically interpreting — then telepathically remixing — every expression the Cursed makes. The Cursed person has trouble ‘looking right’ in the mirror. Make-up struggles to adhere and flatter. Facial grooming is difficult and causes frequent cuts. Hair is never quite right. Interactions with NPCs become strained. Any interaction more complex than a nod of acknowledgement becomes rife for misinterpretation. Arguments and violent over-reaction become likely the longer the interaction takes place.
- **Phase 3 — SAN Loss and Distortion**: The Prism’s purpose is madness. It is now attuned enough to corrupt the impressions of Bonds. At this point, the Prism affects the game’s roleplaying. Give the Cursed the handout “WHAT IS HAPPENING?”. The Handler can call for **0/1 SAN** against unnatural whenever the Cursed interacts with Bonds (after two days, treat these **SAN** checks as automatically failed ). On failure, the Cursed loses **1 SAN** and rolls 1d3 on the *Distortion Table*. The Agent must then repeat their last actions and words — reinterpreted by the distortion of the Prism — effectively creating two different versions of their character from the last few seconds. The bond and outside world only perceive the 2nd version. The second version is the only truth available, and the Cursed must roleplay this “vibe” for the remainder of the scene, especially if they don’t mean to say it ‘that way’ or make ‘that face.’
  - **1 - Threatening**: the Agent’s tone and body language makes others fear for safety, be it the speaker, audience, or innocent bystanders. Facial expressions appear brittle, twitchy, and unhinged. General meaning is preserved, but word choice shifts towards harsher synonyms (“red” to “crimson”), bluntness (“passed on” to “murdered”). The intent of any statement is to shock. Everything sounds like a thinly-veiled threat.
  - **2 - Suspicious**: the Agent’s tone and body language seems dishonest, uncanny, and untrustworthy. Facial expressions bring to mind past betrayals, flattened affect, and recollections of lies later discovered. General meaning is preserved, but word choice shifts towards vagueness (“inventorying the back room” to “doing stuff”) and excessive reassurance (“I love you” to “Of *course* I love you”). Everything sounds like cause for concern and future surveillance.
  - **3 - Demeaning**: the Agent’s tone and body language seem spiteful, sarcastic, and mean-spirited. Facial expressions are reminiscent of past arguments, embarrassing moments, and bad blood. General meaning is preserved, but word choice changes by adding insulting qualifiers (“your job” to “your *little* job”), mocking upward inflection, and sarcastic sighs or smirks at the end of statements. Everything sounds like it’s meant to antagonize or make it personal.

The Handler ascribes unflattering interpretations of body language, glances, or vibes as part of normal scene description. Do not roll SAN for NPCs that are not bonds; their emotional distance from the Cursed ensures they are all robbed of the psychic charity awarded those without the Prism.

- **Phase 4 — Temporary Insanity**: Rollplay the SAN failure and distortion table normally, but the Handler gets one physical action to reflect the perception. The player loses control for that moment and actually does something implied by the tone of the distortion. An act of genuine — not just perceived — betrayal: a sudden stab with cutlery, a damaging lie, a genuinely hurtful comment. The Cursed can try to take it back once recovered, but it comes across as genuine as anything else.
- **Phase 5 — Indefinite Insanity**: The Prism is rooted deep enough that its removal requires excising hypodermis along 60% or more of the face. Interactions with acquaintances and strangers become impossible. The Cursed is asked to leave any occupied space. Otherwise, confrontation escalates inevitably towards violence. Bonds remember the Cursed as they were, but they perceive the loved one as the most nightmarish version of themselves from moment-to-moment. The words the Cursed speaks are received by the uninfected as lies, attacks, and provocations. Meaning becomes twisted, and it becomes impossible to communicate except through text or recording (see “Bypassing the Prism” p.xx)
- **Fumble — The Way Clears**: Traumatized by a cosmic intrusion and social reaction theory, the victim’s ego goes dormant and begins to die. The Prism speaks directly during the fugue: *“The mask rests between self and world. The lens. The current. The connection. All flows through the mask.”*
- **Phase 6 — Terminal**: The Prism invisibly coats the victim’s entire head and cultures respiratory films over the nostrils and mouth. Tendrils crawl down the upper chest and puff out the host’s clothes without obvious cause. Indefinite insanity tends towards symptoms of social withdrawal, impairments of executive function, and trauma associated with the expression of ego. Self-harm and violent outbursts result from temporary insanities caused by psychically-gaslit social interaction. If society or self-hatred don’t kill the Cursed, slow isolation bleeds SAN to 0, at which point the obliterated mind becomes possessed as a new vessel of Nyarlathotep.

## <H2> Stealing Body Language

The same teeth shine under a smile, sneer, or smirk. Mankind’s ‘universal’ facial expressions are anything but. The communication achieved by body language and proximity fall within predictable

bounds due to shared cultural and cognitive development, but no arrangement of facial muscles holds an objective link to a meaning. Flesh itself is meaningless.

The Prism psychically attacks the temporal lobe of every creature in contact with the Cursed, rewiring their ability to recognize the intentions and emotions of the host. Language can contradict these alien impressions, but it never stops them. The human mind requires too much confabulation to read intent and emotion in another's expression. The process is entirely vulnerable to the Prism's invisible corruption.

Outside temporary insanity, the Cursed's actions and body remain their own. What the Handler hijacks is the interpretations of anyone without the Curse. When asked for information — or even when describing scenes 'objectively' — lie frequently about the facial expression, body language, and appearance of the Cursed character: *“Agent Crawford keeps looking at the cop's gun. Over and over. It's more shifty than subtle and it seems like the guy's noticed. He's resting his hand on the grip now and blading his stance...”* If the Cursed character contradicts this description, ask them to clarify what the character is *really* doing. If an unaffected character asks, insist the Handler's description is accurate.

All NPCs behave according to the Handler's version of the truth. If the Cursed disagrees more, have the Agent insist on their interpretation of events in character. The facial expressions, body language, and words of every NPC make it clear they see the Handler's version as true. If those that escape the Prism's touch learn about this distortion, it provokes **SAN** rolls. They must literally disbelieve what they see and hear in front of them to interact with the Cursed.

The Prism is a bioweapon of sorts, designed to obliterate concepts of self and sanity by injecting a psychic allergen into human social structures. The ultimate goal is to 'clear-out' the ego of any Cursed through trauma and helplessness, opening the vessel to psychic inhabitation by something from Outside.

## <H2> Bypassing the Prism

**Psychic Range:** The Prism reads the intentions of its Cursed host, then projects a distorted interpretation into the mind of anyone within recognition. The effect is psychic, not physical. It's a misinformation signal, broadcasting false pattern recognition, misreading inflection, and counterfeiting impressions through means humans cannot understand. Talking with the Cursed on the phone still causes distortions in tone, and body language is misread across real-time video conferencing.

**Exceptions:** The effect of the Prism is so immediate it occurs between human perception and conscious recognition of stimuli. The Prism is a tool of mass psychological warfare geared towards sound and sight, but it's powerful enough to manifest in those with neuroatypical facial recognition, the deaf and hard of hearing, and the blind. The narrowing of the Prism's psychic flood into neuroatypical temporal lobes causes intense synesthesia. Alien, notably hallucinatory personality 'vibes' get wedded to incongruous information like scent, body heat, or eye color. For instance, a blind person might have the unshakable impression that the Cursed "sips coffee like a serial killer," with no possible explanation as to what that means or how they arrived at the conclusion. The air tastes yellow around that person. Their face somehow more appears "more blank" than other people. Without hallucinations of sight, sound, and social pressures to rationalize the Prism's psychic assault, the alien nature of the false impressions becomes apparent and disorienting.

**Technology:** Any delayed communication — written text, email, recordings — negates the effect of the Prism. The Cursed and their behaviors seem normal to onlookers at the remove of a recording. If this record contradicts memories other Agents have interacting with the Cursed, witnessing the evidence of their incongruous reactions is distressing (**1/1d4 SAN Unnatural**). The Prism's hallucinatory effect only work inside the time lag in human perception. It can't alter digital files or photographs. A technological lag of a few seconds ensures the Prism can't target its illusions at outside minds.

## <H2> Double Prisms

If both Agents become infected — or if multiple NPCs interact with the 'dust' on *The 1001 Dreams* — two Prisms cancel each other out. Ignore all effects from the Prism between the two Agents until Phase 5.

All uninfected characters suffer the typical hallucinations about the Cursed. This drives the Cursed together, as they are the only people capable of understanding one another. After co-dependence and isolation is achieved, the Prisms start working together to erode each host's last uncorrupted relationship.

## HANDOUT: WHAT IS HAPPENING?

**WHAT IT FEELS LIKE:** *There's something...wrong. It's like you can never get across what you're trying to say. No matter what you're talking about or how carefully it's worded, people scowl. They sneer and grimace around you. They act as if they heard someone else, behind you, say something completely different. It's like gaslighting, but everywhere. With strangers and loved ones. There's no word for it, and if there was, it would be misunderstood. It's maddening. You can't make them really hear or see you.*

### **ROLEPLAYING THE PROBLEM:**

Wherever this is, it affects the 'camera' of the game. The mechanism by which other people interpret your words and actions has broken. The perception of everything your character does and says — their reflection in the minds of others — has somehow distorted. There aren't words for explaining what's happening to you. You can only roleplay it.

1. **Act, speak, and roleplay true to your character's intentions.**
2. **The Handler may call for a SAN roll**
3. **On failure, lose 1 SAN**
4. **Roll 1d3 for *distortion*. Reinterpret *how you said your last words*.** Maintain the general meaning of the words, but roleplay a radically different tone. Create a second, emotionally-contradictory version of your recent statement. The shift in demeanor is always unflattering, confrontational, and distressing.
  - a. **1 - Threatening:** the Agent's tone and body language makes others fear for safety, be it the speaker, audience, or innocent bystanders. Facial expressions appear brittle, twitchy, and unhinged. General meaning is preserved, but word choice shifts towards harsher synonyms ("red" to "crimson"), bluntness ("passed on" to "murdered"). The intent of any statement is to shock. Everything sounds like a thinly-veiled threat.
  - b. **2 - Suspicious:** the Agent's tone and body language seems dishonest, uncanny, and untrustworthy. Facial expressions bring to mind past betrayals, flattened affect, and recollections of lies later discovered. General meaning is preserved, but word choice shifts towards vagueness ("inventorying the back room" to "doing stuff") and excessive reassurance ("I love you" to "Of *course* I love you"). Everything sounds like cause for concern and future surveillance.
  - c. **3 - Demeaning:** the Agent's tone and body language seem spiteful, sarcastic, and mean-spirited. Facial expressions are reminiscent of past arguments, embarrassing moments, and bad blood. General meaning is preserved, but word choice changes by adding insulting qualifiers ("your job" to "your *little* job"), mocking upward inflection,

and sarcastic sighs or smirks at the end of statements. Everything sounds like it's meant to antagonize or make it personal.

5. Continue the scene in this tone. Whatever your character meant to say is inaccessible to other characters. They only perceive the funhouse reflection; the least charitable interpretation; the most hostile and unflattering version of yourself. That is all you can be until you get away.
6. Additional SAN rolls may be necessary.

## <H1> Production

Stephen Alzis's performance as the animated Shaharazad was captured in the basement of Club Apocalypse in 1997 by Philip Yarona. Had it been released, it would have been the first instance of motion-capture performance used for CG animation in commercial film, predating 2000's *Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists*. Originally planned for a DTV release in 1999, *The 1001 Dreams* never released. During the rendering process, the film destroyed the mind of every VFX artist assigned to it, and the production company Rajan Media shelved the project in 2000. The business went under entirely a year later.

Philip didn't take the loss of the project well, but he'd been steadily losing his mind since he captured Alzis's wireframe. Yarona and his wife were multimedia artists active in the SoHo scene for most of the 90's. His skills were enough that he was invited to the infamous Club Apocalypse one night. He'd recently taken work-for-hire from Rajan Media, and while he found the story a soulless rehashing of fine literature for squealing brats, he had a new daughter (Janine) and needed to pay the bills. Asked what he was working on, Philip liked to highlight the new technology and the revolution coming to the industry, rather than focus on the pedestrian content.

Stephen Alzis overheard the conversation and asked to see the technology in action. Aware of Alzis power in the New York art scene, Yarona went to his car, retrieved his gear, and joined Alzis's entourage in the basement after closing. He doesn't remember much after that, but he thought about the wireframe animation created from that night's filming every day for the remainder of his sad life.

## <H2> Motion Captured

Communication is born from the shared interpretation of the sign. It predates and predicates language. The majority of information exchanged in any interaction comes from tone, proximity, posture, and symbol. Witnessing the motion capture of a god distorts this nonverbal communication forever. Alzis's performance was the Tower of Babel put to screen, a dance that forever confuses inflection, mannerism, and the weak psychic communion unspoken between humans. The film's effect is far worse than an empathetic disability or missed social cue. It is the perversion of every text with malign interpretations and double meanings.

To digitize the model necessary to paint a digital image of Shaharazad across the bones of Alzis, Yarona had to view the raw footage taken from the basement of Club Apocalypse hundreds of times. He was at **0 SAN** inside the year, driving away his wife and child, losing his job, and retreating from society to work on a defunct children's film.

After the film's cancellation broke Philip completely, he never saw daughter Janine or wife Paula again. He dedicated the remainder of his days to finishing *The 1001 Dreams*, using what limited technology his sad, broken existence could secure.

## <H2> Rotoscoping

The inspiration Philip received from Nyarlothetep's avatar was complete. It not only consumed Philip's every waking thought; it suggested techniques and methods to assist in the film's completion. When the cost of computing equipment and rendering put the film outside Philip's limited budget, rewatching the Alzis wireframe inspired Yaron to try rotoscoping his character into the test print. When he couldn't figure out a paint mixture to adhere to the film, the wireframe "inspired" Philip with the recipe for a special formulated acrylic. By then, the broken man didn't find it odd that his paint mixture required certain ingredients, such as rare fungal blooms, semen, and the blood of sacrificed animals.

Using a collector's print he commissioned with the last of his cash, Philip spent the rest of his life painting Sharahazad's missing performance into the reel, one frame at a time. In the process, the unnatural ritual used to concoct his "paints" birthed the Prism into the world. The 16mm reel, stained in alchemical unguents, became the vector of infection. By the time Philip died, he was entirely encased in the Prism and completely withdrawn from society.

## <H2> Restoration

After fleeing her marriage to Philip, Paula Yaron's photography skills earned her a job at the Library of Congress. It was there she befriended one of her former professors, Dr. Ararat Bedrosian (aka Agent Hiller). Ararat was Paula's senior by many years, but he took on the role of a kindly uncle to the single mother and her child. Aside from his wife, it was one of the few Bonds to survive a life in service to Delta Green.

When Philip died, his tattered estate defaulted to his ex-wife. One of the few items to be salvaged from his filthy hovel was a steamer trunk containing the half-finished film, some ancient mo-cap equipment, and hard drives filled with the raw data of the performance. Paula briefly remembered Philip mo-capping Janine when she was a toddler and mentioned the project to her now-adult daughter. Intrigued by evidence of a father's love she couldn't remember, Janine asked "Uncle Bedrosian" to help digitize the 16mm so she could watch it.

## <H2> Premiere

Agent Hiller had no clue about the unnatural origins of *The 1001 Dreams*. He never worked in New York. He was never briefed on Club Apocalypse, the Fate, or Stephen Alzis. His physical handling of the acetate infected him with The Prism (p.xx), and his viewing of the original wireframe models on Yarona's ancient hard drives drove him to obsession for weeks.

Bedrosian's wife tried to stab him to death with a kitchen knife during one of his brief breaks from the project. The Prism convinced her that her husband — already disheveled and erratic from his weeks of obsessive study — was trying to choke her to death. He was actually just coming to the kitchen for food and water, attempting a hug after days of scholarly withdrawal. Forced to defend himself from the screaming attack, the pair fell in the struggle and Bedrosian accidentally drove the blade deep into his wife's throat. Seeing what he'd done, Hiller returned to his attic studio, watched the film one last time, put it away in its trunk, and stuck a pistol in his mouth.

## <H2> Distribution

H-Cell became involved after the couple's bodies were discovered. The murder-suicide's only leads were the film reel and Janine Yarona's return address. Agents Helga and Harrison looked up the young woman. They found that Janine had been arrested *that very day* for trying to rob a Bank of America branch where she worked as a teller.

Fearing they had arrived too late to an unnatural outbreak, the pair rushed to interfere in the case. The footage of the attack at the bank clearly exonerated Janine from any wrong-doing. She had been attacked, inexplicably and without provocation. The local PD proved resistant to freeing the woman despite clear evidence of her faultless behavior. Afraid that the other bank employees and cops were already "infected" by whatever paranoia killed their friend, the Agents pulled Janine from custody to keep their only lead safe from further attack.

Neither Helga nor Harrison have had time to watch the film. Since Bedrosian's wife, Janine, and the bank tellers never saw the movie, they think the movie is a clue; not the killer. Philip Yarona's trunk — found near Agent Hiller's body — has been de-prioritized in favor of ensuring a bunch of prejudiced local cops stay away from the best and only lead. Agent Helga tasks the Friendlies to watch Janine and prepare the film for viewing. She and her surviving partner are too busy trying to calm the situation with local authorities and the LoC to focus on it immediately. They also have to scrub everything at Bedrosian's house and office of evidence that might lead back to Delta Green.

Once Janine wakes up, the Friendlies find themselves trapped within the psychic gaslit of the Prism. Orders to prepare the film for viewing risk infecting them with the same curse.

## <H2> Viewing

The film is an incomplete anthology, separated into chapters with varying animation styles inspired by the themes of that particular tale. Many scenes include dialogue recorded from characters never animated into the scene. The caption “TEST PRINT” scrawls across these sections. The credit sequence at the beginning has been completed, listing Alzis in the role of Shaharazad. Connective tissue between individual stories centers on Shaharazad’s relationship with the Sultan and other members of his harem. All of these animation sequences have been completed by hand. Philip Yaron hand-painted the character into each frame, using unnatural paints and rotoscoping to approximate the wireframes’ otherworldly grace.

The disconnect between Shaharazad’s simple, child-friendly character design and the too-real human movements is unsettling (0/1 **SAN** Unnatural). Her movements seem predatory, unpredictable, and compellingly hypnotic. Interactions with other characters and her narration stand in bizarre contrast to the animated body language and facial expressions of other figures, the sanitized versions of the ancient tales contrasting with a threatening jitteriness around her silhouette, as if missing frames. The imperfect replication of her body in contrast with the cold computer animated elements is somewhat nauseating. Distressing as it is to behold, Yaron’s failure to fully replicate the mathematical perfection of Alzis’s wireframe dance is the only thing saving a viewer from madness.

## <H2> Going Viral

Janine Yaron was infected with the Prism preparing to mail the trunk to Bedrosian. Not from watching it. Curiosity got the better of her and she handled the raw acetate from the film before she put in the mail, looking through the light to spot a glimpse of her childhood in cartoon form. That was enough.

Janine has no idea what is happening to her or how the film relates to it. Her boyfriend of two years moved out within three days of her touching the reel. After some time off to grieve, she returned to work. A gang of four co-workers violently assaulted her within the hour. Confused, concussed, and bleeding in the aftermath, she was then arrested by police for an attempted bank robbery. Her SAN was dangerously low by the time Agents Harrison and Helga pulled her from lock up. She isn’t aware of Bedrosian’s death or what her deceased dad’s movie has to do with anything.

Agent Harrison was infected removing the reel from Bedrosian's projector and placing it back in Philip Yarona's steamer trunk. The Prism grows across his face, causing increasing difficulties in his attempts to cover-up the deaths with local law enforcement. Unless directed back to the sub-basement or other duties, Harrison eventually dies in a blue-blue shooting incident. A half-dozen Virginia cops insist he reached for his gun in the middle of the precinct.

Linda Toth (aka Hearsay aka Helga) is uninfected at the start of the scenario. If the Friendlies follow orders and screen the film using one of the Packard Campus projectors, she gets infected too. More experienced than her cellmates, the LoC director recognizes Alzis in the credits and leaves to report to the Group as soon as possible. Once coated with the Prism, her interactions with the outside world become equally dangerous.

Any attempt by the Friendlies to screen the 16mm print or digitize it releases the spores stored in the rotoscope paint. This curses anyone in the room with the Prism. The infection does not aerosol unless put in contact with the heat of a projection lamp. Handling the print with gloves or inside its metal box is safe, but skin contact with the acetate absorbs the infection through the dermis.

## <H1> On Location

The entire scenario takes place in the preservation archive of the LoC's Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Virginia. The concrete sub-basement is bigger than a football field and stuffed with racks containing the surviving physical copies of US educational films made from 1951 to 1980. It has motion-sensing fluorescent lights that snap on only when archivists traverse the floor. At the rear of the room, a few offices were built for staff, but they have been empty of regular employees for years.

The Friendlies may go elsewhere, of course. However, the curse of the Prism sours almost every interaction with NPCs, potentially escalating into arguments, exile from public spaces, and outbursts of violence. The only explanations available come through observations of Janine and the film itself. The answers await below.

The metal security door to enter Preservation Vault 2B requires a magnetic card to unlock. The Agents provide a copy to Friendlies when they arrive. It comes with strict instructions to keep anyone but Janine and themselves from going inside.

## <H2> Bathroom

A closet-sized restroom sits at the very rear of the vault. The toilet remains, but the sink and mirror have been removed, replaced by a floor sink sometimes used by janitorial staff to empty mop buckets. They service the archival sub-basements rarely, and most of the staff have forgotten the restroom exists.

## <H2> Room 009

Once an office, Room 009 stores excess furniture from around the facility. Agent Harrison dumped the steamer trunk of evidence he confiscated from the Bedrosian scene here. He also left a bag of toiletries and donated clothes, in case Janine needs them. There is nothing else of interest.

## <H2> Room 011

Room 011 was once the office of an archivist working the stacks. It has yet to be converted to storage like Rm 009, but the desk is pushed against the wall and stacks of aged office chairs litter the corners. It still has a lamp and futon from the former inhabitants, so the Agents placed the groggy Janine inside when they arrived. Most importantly, the door still locks and the Agents have the key. Janine is asleep on the futon when Friendlies show up, in possession of nothing save her half-torn business pantsuit and some over-the-counter painkillers provided by Harrison.

## <H2> Room 013

Room 013 used to be the breakroom for the archivist on staff in the sub-basement. The refrigerator has been emptied and unplugged, but the kitchenette sink still works. The appliances and cookware have been abandoned (knives, hot plate, microwave, coffee pot, etc). Aside from cleaning chemicals and old utensils, the room is useful as a place to get some privacy. Conversations on the vault floor itself tend to echo.

## <H1> Janine Yarona

Janine is an innocent victim. For the initial portion of the scenario, the Handler portrays her as the most unhinged, obviously-hostile antagonist possible.

## <H2> In Person

The rules for the Prism (see “HANDOUT: WHAT IS HAPPENING” p.xx) determine Janine’s ‘mood’ for any scene. Shift tones periodically in the middle of a scene. Every dialogue is a shifting minefield of curdling subtext and attitudes. The words themselves should retain a possible unthreatening — even pleading — interpretation, but they are never delivered as such. For instance,

“please don’t hurt me,” is a very clear statement in text. The meaning inverts if it is spoken sarcastically (or rather, heard that way). If whispered as someone inches towards a weapon, it sounds like a stalling tactic. Hissed and backed up with the hint of a giggle, it sounds like the mockery of a sadist.

Yarona is not actually awful, suspicious, or violent. Everything she says or does comes off that way. When Friendlies interact with Janine early in the scenario, they create their own problems. The Handler’s performance and descriptions of her body language are ultimately false impressions, but players hate being talked down to or threatened. Their reactions to the psychic stimuli are likely to make Janine’s life worse and worse.

## <H2> On Tape

If the Friendlies think to record their interactions with Janine and play it back, they see the reality of her personality. She’s a terrified, traumatized woman with no understanding of what is happening. She doesn’t understand why everyone hates her now, or why the shift occurred over the last few weeks. When she speaks, it follows the specific order of words she used in previous statements, but her voice and cadence is quivering, frightened, and barely restrained. If the abuse experienced in the outside world is duplicated by the Friendlies in charge of her stay, Janine hovers at the edge of ego collapse, desperately trying to flatten her affect small enough to avoid attack. Her tone waffles between irrepressible fear and an enforced monotone she hopes might prevent the insane, deadly misunderstandings everyone seems intent on reading into her every move.

## <H2> Bank Recordings

The recordings of the attack against Janine are already online. Reverse-image searching her face gets a hit on YouTube, and her name is mentioned as a suspect in yesterday’s “attempted robbery” of the Bank of America branch in which she works. An employee called in to cover after the attack already uploaded a copy of the security camera footage. The leaker, having not seen Janine in the weeks since she became Cursed, only knows that his manager, the security guard, and two other tellers beat an innocent woman for no reason. Since the cops arrested the obviously innocent victim as well, the upload was an attempt to clear her name. Delta Green is unaware this footage has gone beyond police evidence.

The footage begins unremarkably. Janine opens up the bank and goes quietly about her duties, looking tired but glad to sink into routine. There’s no audio, but conversation with the teller in the next unit over seems to agitate the man. He grows distant for a time, but Janine’s increasing difficulty

with customers causes him first to snipe comments over the counter partition. After a few minutes, he devolves into a screaming fit.

Janine, for her part, seems terrified and tries to remain neutral. Her manager comes over in an attempt to de-escalate the situation, but after whatever Janine says to defend herself, body language makes it clear that the manager aligns with the screaming male co-worker. Both harangue the woman to the point that all business stops. Eventually, the security guard comes over to see what the commotion is about. Janine begins to speak to him for a few seconds before the elderly man jumps back and reaches for the pistol on his hip. The co-worker and manager act in unison, grabbing Janine's arms from behind, seemingly yelling for others to help. A fourth man jumps the counter to join the fray, and the three people beat and restrain Janine against the tile floor of the bank as the security guard holds a gun on her and calls the police.

## <H2> Testimony

It's only possible to get answers out of Janine if Agents "Bypass the Prism."

If addressed through recording and time-lag, previous interactions between Agents and Yaron previous take on a horrifying irony. Witnessing the disconnect between these memories and the recorded facts **1/1d4 SAN** Unnatural (more if Agents treated her poorly). Body language that, in the moment, seemed shifty and threatening is revealed to have been terrified shivering on the tape. Played back, once 'sarcastic' mocking questions are voiced with genuine fear. The woman's recorded dialogue is full of desperate, failed attempts to sound monotone and neutral. This effect is even more pronounced if one of the Friendlies is now Cursed. Janine's true demeanor is revealed when she and the Cursed become two of the few people on earth that can still understand what the other is saying.

Roll **Psychotherapy** to realize Janine would be helped if her jailers sent back recordings of their own questions, removed from the danger of personal interaction. The traumatized young woman has lost the ability to believe she is truly seen and understood. But if interrogated through an AV call and response, Janine calms for the first time in days. It's long enough to relay the facts leading up to her nightmare.

**Identity:** Janine has a Bachelors in Business from George Mason university. She's worked as a bank teller at Bank of America for the last four years. She used to have a fiance, Tommy Brown, but they recently separated. Brown moved out roughly a week ago.

**History:** Janine Yaron was born in 1994 to Paula and Philip Yaron. The family lived in New York for

most of the 90's. Janine only had contact with her father for three years before Paula left in 97. She had no contact with Philip until finding the film reel and equipment in her mother's garage. Paula explained she had been sent the trunk after Philip died in 2003. Jaylyn remembers the funeral when she was 9, a closed casket ceremony for a man who was essentially a stranger. From the meager estate, Paula was bequeathed old junk. Asked what was on the film reel, Paula remembered Philip had used young Janine as a model in one of his animations before abandoning the family. She looked so cute crawling around in that silly ping-pong ball suit! Paula thought the reel contained a work print. With Janine curious and Paula guilty for denying her daughter one of the few keepsakes left of her father, the elder woman contacted her old professor — Dr. Aarat Bedrosian — to see if he could help with digitizing the film. He agreed. Janine packed up the materials and mailed them to Bedrosian's house, two weeks before he died.

**The Curse:** For the last two weeks, Janine Yaron's life has spiraled into hell. First, she and Tommy couldn't stop fighting over nothing. He started gaslighting her about her mood and throwing fits about everything she did. Her girlfriends from college were not sympathetic, and after the most awkward dinner of her life, they stopped calling back. Tommy left without so much as a note while she was running errands one day. Heartbroken, Janine took a week off work and soaked in her misery. On the first day back, her fellow teller accused her of robbing from customers in the middle of the shift. To her horror, customers joined in. When her branch manager came out to defend her, the initial benefit of the doubt gave way when he claimed she "came at her." Before she knew it, a combination of strangers and co-workers were beating her. It took security zip-ting everyone involved to stop the attack. Before the strange man and woman came to get her out of lock-up (Agent Harrison, and his friend Helga), the police were saying she started it, and she'd been isolated in a solitary cell to protect her from the other inmates.

## <H1> Interruptions

Some events to make things worse.

## <H2> Unstable Prisoner

The Prism complicates all interactions with Janine. Though terrified to leave and hoping to be left alone, something as innocuous as asking to go to the bathroom reads like an escape attempt. She's physically threatening and antagonistic towards the Friendlies. If they react in kind, her response makes it seem as if she intentionally provoked their hostility to manipulate them. Attempts by the PCs to "protect themselves from that crazy bitch" are likely to perpetuate the abuse Janine has already suffered. Yaron might attempt actual violence against the Friendlies, out of frustration or self-defense.

## <H2> Infection

If either of the Friendlies get infected, it makes using the Packard Campus facilities dangerous. Securing equipment, using labs to digitize the reel, or even getting food become expeditions fraught with danger. The NPC misinterpretations increase in severity the longer the interaction continues. This becomes very problematic if one of the Friendlies is infected while the other remains clean (as is likely to happen if one stays to watch Janine while the other tries to follow Mrs. Hearsay's orders to make the film watchable). The "clean" Friendly gets to witness their loved one shift into a sneering, hostile doppelganger using the voice of their deepest Bond. Meanwhile, the infected watches helplessly as everything they say or do gets perverted in the eyes of their lover, unable to make themselves understood no matter what words they choose. The SAN rolls caused by this unnatural, helpless confusion only speed the social decay caused by the Prism.

## <H2> Cover Blown

Even if the Friendlies minimize contact with the outside world, the suspicion radiating from the Prism causes problems with the staff at the Packard Campus. Though by no means primed to question the use of an useless archival sub-basement — approved as it is by LoC directors — security staff might be provoked into investigation solely by the 'bad vibes' of the Cursed. Personnel on the site aren't armed with more than pepper spray and batons, but their interference has the potential to blow up the whole operation.

## <H2> Agent Helga's Interrogation

Eventually, Agent Helga returns to interrogate Janine about what the hell is going on. From here, everything depends on whether or not she watched the film first. If she saw the word "Alzis" in the credits, Linda Toth's questions become instantly more hostile and threatening. Friendlies already aware that Janine magically 'never means it' may have to intervene to keep their boss from getting violent. The presence of such a glaring unnatural red flag in the film has primed Toth into believing Janine is responsible for her friend's death.

If Friendlies screened the film using one of the Packard Campus projectors — before taking time to digitize the images — then Agent Helga gets infected too. If the Prism has time to develop (anything Phase 2 or beyond), Mrs. Hearsay's demeanor softens bizarrely to anyone that fears her interrogation through a recording. Linda sees Janine as the victim she is, and Janine recognizes someone who can actually understand her. However, if viewed in real time by those who are uninfected, the conversation

between the two Cursed women sounds like two schizophrenics trying to antagonize each other into a violent outburst that never seems to come.

## <H2>Agent Harrison's Desperation

Harrison has the second-most developed Prism infection of anyone besides Yarona. He's the heavy for the largely academic H-Cell, keen to solve problems utilizing his federal authority and a predilection for violence. After the Prism irrevocably taints interactions with local police and his own colleagues in the FBI — or after learning that the legend Alzis is involved — Harrison decides that Janine is the source of the unnatural problem and he must solve it. He comes to the vault to retrieve his “witness” from “protective custody.” His true intent is to take her to a secluded location and put a bullet through her brain.

Ironically, being Cursed makes it much harder to detect this plan. Multiple Prism infections cancel each other out, and attempts to see past Harrison's expert deflections suffer a -10% to HUMINT. Harrison is an experienced covert operative, and he acts convincingly as a concerned-but-nonchalant law enforcement officer. He wants to take the poor victim home for some much needed rest, and he thanks the Friendlies profusely for their service. Janine is actually thrilled to see him, as his feigned niceties and the cancellation of their Prisms makes Agent Harrison appear as the sanest person she's encountered in weeks.

However, if Harrison interacts with a Friendly who has not been exposed to the Prism, the psychic filter sticking to the man's face instantly makes his intentions clear. Harrison comes off as domineering, unstable, and threatening not only to Janine, but to the Friendlies as well. He speaks in double entendres of violence, and his body language implies he could draw his gun at any second.

## <H1> Removing the Prism

The operation is resolved when the sole-surviving print of *The 1001 Dreams* is destroyed. Destroying the film is easy: fire or chemical dissolution work fine. It could simply be buried somewhere and forgotten. Digitized versions remain unsettling to watch, but without the spores contained in the ritually-prepared rotoscope paint, the curse no longer spreads. Hosts of the Prism are not infectious to others.

Dealing with the Prism is harder. It is only removed after the Cursed host's death or by cutting away the skin into which the invisible, frictionless jelly has lodged. Killing a host is the best way to determine where to cut on a living victim's face. It sloughs off a dead body as its optical camouflage fails, making

the face look like it's melting onto the floor. After a few minutes, the remains drip off entirely and pool like a dead jellyfish. It evaporates entirely within the hour.

Removing the Prism from the living requires changing the jelly's physical properties enough to stop self-healing and provide friction. This can be done by injecting caustic chemicals (both acids and bases work, provided an extreme enough PH) or by heating/freezing the affected area. Doing so causes a greyish 'crust' to form across the Prism's millimeters thick surface. Damaging the gel makes it possible for fingers to find purchase and pull, but there's no getting it off the host's skin without surgery.

Removing the Prism from someone's face is nightmarish torture, and it gets worse the longer infection takes hold. The pain and terror mean the Cursed can't perform the procedure themselves; no one has the POW score required to cut off portions of their own eyelid. If someone assists, excising *only* the infected tissue requires a DEX x 5 roll. Depending on who is doing the cutting, remove one multiplier from the DEX roll for each factor.

**Complications (x5 to x4 to x3, etc)**

- The surgeon shares a Bond with the Cursed. Slicing into the face of a loved one isn't easy, even for those adapted to violence.
- The tools used isn't designed for delicate facial surgery.
- The Cursed isn't fully sedated.
- The surgeon is not infected by the Prism. The substance defends itself psychically against those without its touch. This provokes SAN rolls as the jelly-thing projects images of the Cursed trying to bite at the surgeon's hands, false impressions of arousal or laughing at the pain, or pleas for mercy. Even if the Cursed is asleep.

It's possible to kill the infected while attempting to remove the Prism. Those that survive suffer facial scarring that can never be hidden or corrected with plastic surgery.

Phase of Infection	Chemical/Temperature Damage required to view The Prism	Successful DEX x5 Damage Roll	Failed DEX x 5
1	1	1d1	Max Damage. Roll again.
2	2	1d3	Max Damage. Roll again.
3	3	1d4	Max Damage. Roll again.
4	4	1d6	Max Damage. Roll again.

5	5	1d10	Infected dies
6	6	1d20	Infected dies

If the person removing the Prism has medical skills, they only suffer a -5% penalty for every complication. Failed rolls see the Handler roll the dice instead of inflicting max damage. At least one successful roll is still required before the infection is entirely removed.