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# Dating a Witch

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for Short Gamebook Fiction

**To GBM**

**About**

*Dating a Witch* is an interactive story. This means that you are going to make decisions on behalf of the main character – in our case – William the demonologist. In order to do so, just follow the instructions at the end of each section (chapter) you are instructed to read.

Please, take a look at the adventure sheet:

William’s specialization	.....
Lauren’s specialization	.....
Energy	3
Relations	3

You will be informed about William and Lauren’s specializations and Energy shortly after the game begins. Relations shows how happy Lauren is with William’s actions.

The main goal of the gamebook is to make sure William and his unexpected date Lauren survive their first night out.

*Now, please, proceed to 1.*

**1**

“I think you’ve been following me,” William said and looked at the long-haired silhouette that had just appeared on the roof. The neon light from the mall across the street was not sufficient for him to see the expression on her face.

“Oh, look,” Lauren murmured uneasily. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to intrude.”

William laughed.

“No problem. I’m sure you have a reason to be here. Usually, no one visits me during my night ... meditations here.”

“Well,” the girl pressed her hands to her torso. “I was going to watch *The Hour of the Witch*, when I saw you going into this building. And I couldn’t refrain from coming after you. Actually, maybe it was a mistake.”

Lauren turned her back at William and headed back towards the exit.

“Don’t go, please! I am sorry if I sounded rude. Come on, get back, the view from here is breathtaking.”

She approached the man with timid steps, put her hands on the railing and looked beyond. Down, there were dozens of pedestrians looking like ants. The numerous colorful commercials made her feel like being in an entertainment park.

“Everything seems so insignificant from here. Just like the problems.”

Lauren looked into his eyes.

“What ails you?” she asked.

William smiled.

“It doesn’t matter. You have a cool tattoo. I couldn’t see at the library. Back then, when you were wearing that purple polo.”

“You’ve seen me only once and it was more than two weeks ago. I wouldn’t expect you to remember who I am, let alone how I was dressed,” she stepped closer to William and tilted her head sideways so as to let him see the picture of angel wings at the base of her neck.

“You do know how to make an impression. I think it matches your dress.”

“I am used to dressing in white. I work as an anesthesiologist at the maternity ward of the New

Hope Hospital."

"Wow. Sounds interesting. I do not know much about medicine. Could you explain?"  
 "Well, if I want to impress you, I'd say that I thrust a needle between the vertebrae of patients and inject anesthetic. I'm skillful. I can help if you need that for your girl."

William shook his head.

"I don't have a girlfriend, if that is what you mean. The most important people in my life went to the shadows."

Lauren raised a questioning eyebrow.

"I'm sure there are more pleasant topics of conversation. For example, what were those strange books, you were so sucked in?"

"Interactive literature. I love the books written by George M. George. As you may know, the film I was about to see is made after one of his works."

William leaned over and took two bottles of beer. He opened them and handed one to Lauren.  
 "I don't drink."

"It's just beer. Low alcohol content. It helps you relax. By the way, you still haven't told me why you came here."

The girl took the bottle and sipped realizing that she had been thirsty all the time.

"Sometimes I have a nightmare," she said. "I'm tied to a stake. The first twigs are set on fire. I start to scream in horror. Then you appear out of nowhere, cut the ropes and set me free, as I fight for my breath. I don't know the meaning of this."

Lauren sipped again.

"If I decide to be cynical, I'd probably say you have been reading too much game books about witches. But I feel some supernatural force in you. Do you happen to be a ... witch yourself?"  
 William looked at her eyes. It was like going deep into a warm hazelnut abyss.  
*Roll one die. If the number is even, go to 2. Otherwise, turn to 3.*

2

"Something strange happened once. A friend of mine was giving birth by Caesarean section. I have no idea what happened," Lauren put her hand on her lips for a moment. "Maybe it was some allergy to the anesthesia. But we were losing her. In fact ... she died. Shortly after the time of her death was announced, something prompted me to touch her forehead with the tips of my fingers," she accidentally looked at them. "I felt a strong energy going through them, perhaps the closest comparison would be with electricity."

Lauren picked up the bottle and gulped.

"Her heart began to beat again. I really don't know what happened that morning. I'm not convinced that I could do it again. But in fact. ... perhaps I don't want to."

"Why? I'm sure the return of human life is the unattainable dream for most doctors."  
 Lauren winked at him.

"Whatever passed through my fingers was obviously very intense. My manicure literally melted."

William laughed and moved his bottle towards hers. There was a ring.

*Write down in your character sheet that Lauren's specialization is a **resurrector**. Turn to 4.*

3

"Something strange happened to me once. I went to a meeting of fans of interactive fiction. I was very excited, because Adrian Wayne and Al Toro would be present."

William looked at her questioningly.

"They are popular authors... and brilliant gentlemen as well. Anyway, the meeting was in the

mountains. I don't know why but I was under the impression that I could make it up to the cottage with a moldy tourists map. At one point I found myself surrounded by wolves. There were at least thirty of them. The leader - a huge black specimen - came close to me and sniffed at me. I almost died of fear. I was sure to I was about to end up shredded to pieces by dozens of powerful jaws. But the dark wolf only whimpered and started dancing around me."

"I've never seen a dancing wolf."

"It was fun," Lauren smiled. "On several occasions, he touched my hand with his damp nose. Then, the whole pack set off. The pack leader looked at me and prompted me to follow him."

"How exactly did he do that?"

"I'm not sure... I just felt it. Before I could make it out, I was running on all fours. I felt so light, free and... strong," something feral flashed in her eyes." Unfortunately, I do not remember anything else in particular."

"Did the pack take you where you were supposed to go?"

"Yes. I arrived just in time for the presentation of an excerpt from the new book by Toro. But I was very ashamed of my broken fingernails."

William and laughed and moved his bottle to the girl's. There was a ring.

*Write down in your character sheet that Lauren's specialization is **lupine changeling**. Turn to 4.*

4

Lauren finished her beer.

"I think I am getting intoxicated. You might say it's absurd as I drank only half a liter, but I'm not really used to consuming alcohol."

"Don't you get invited to meetings ... for example, in the quiet romantic jazz clubs in the area?"

"No, I'm not that kind of girl ... But enough talking about me. Tell me something about yourself. For example, why do you save the witches just before being toasted?"

William shrugged.

"There are many parallel worlds. It is possible that you detected a vibration from one of them. At least, that is what my intuition suggests. But I have no idea whether or not anything important lies behind this dream.

"I guess that if you helped me in that world, I may need to return the favour," Lauren winked at him.

"I guess. You can invite me to the cinema, for example."

"Which film do you want to see?"

"You mentioned George M. George and his Witch. Maybe it is interesting."

"That would be a good choice"

William raised his bottle one last time.

"And I will be in a pleasant company. When is the next projection?"

Lauren glanced at her watch - an ivory-coloured bracelet decorated with artificial corals.

"In about an hour. There is enough time for you to tell me about your ..."

William put a finger to her lips

"Don't mention that word, unless it is absolutely necessary. Something bad could happen. You're not amongst the ones walking on the wide road."

"I didn't know," Lauren said and slowly fell down.

"Are you okay?" William asked.

"Yes, I am just a little bit dizzy. Perhaps because of alcohol or fresh air, or ..."

William went up to her and touched her hair.

"Why did you do that? To make sure I'm not possessed by something?" she asked amused.

"No, I did it for my own pleasure. Your hair is very soft."

Lauren cleared her throat.

"I'm listening," she said.

"Do you know why I like walking the dark way?"

"You have a desire for power?" she guessed.

William shook his head.

"Being a master of the shadows, you can control your own - like fear, envy, pain."

"Sounds interesting. Can you do something to impress a girl on your first date?" Lauren's eyelashes fluttered.

*Dear Reader, it is time for you to choose the specialization of the protagonist of the adventure. You can choose between:*

*1) extrasensory perceptions (esp) – it allows William to sense things that ordinary people can not.*

*2) transformation – it allows William to temporarily take the form of a powerful demon adept at burning opponents to ashes.*

*3) mind control – it allows William to impose his will on a human being and make them a slave for a limited period of time.*

*Write down in your character sheet William's specialization and note that you have 3 points of energy. Any use of a specific skill of the demonologist will cost you 1 point of energy. If the energy drops to 0, you will not be able to take advantage of the option the particular specialization would offer. Regardless of the specialization, William can throw hellfire balls (and doing so would also cost 1 point of energy).*

*If you chosen specialization is esp turn to 5. If it is transformation, turn to 6. Otherwise, go to 7.*

## 5

"Actually, I may have to disappoint you. You would expect me to be able to summon spirits, to revive the dead, or to throw fireballs?"

Lauren looked at him with wide-open eyes.

"In fact, I may be able to achieve the last feat I mentioned." William continued.

"No, thank you, yesterday I saw an illusionist doing this. What else can you do?" she asked.

"I have the ability to perceive things in scientifically inexplicable ways."

"How?" the girl's eyes flashed.

"It is related to the perception of demons. It's different from humans'. Well, sometimes I manage to combine them.

"Does that mean that you aren't quite human?" she wondered.

William nodded.

"Nobody is the same after allowing a demon to be invoked into him. Fortunately, I was able to win the fight against him ... at least partially."

"Could you use your skill on me? Maybe that way, I can figure out the secret of my recurrent dream and my relationship with you," she said.

"And now... we already have a relationship. How interesting!" William laughed.

"I didn't mean that," Lauren looked down ashamed. William could swear that her cheeks obtained a scarlet hue.

"I know."

*If you want William to use his skills, go to 8. Otherwise - 9.*

## 6

"Actually, I may have to disappoint you. You would expect me to be able to summon spirits, to revive the dead, or to throw fireballs?"

Lauren looked at him with wide eyes.

"In fact, I may be able to achieve the last feat I mentioned." William continued.

"No, thank you, yesterday I saw an illusionist do this. What else can you do?" she asked.

"I can take the form of a demon at will. But I don't like doing it for fear that I might get lost into the essence of the demon and turn into..." the precise term would be a killing machine, but William didn't want to use such words. "... something I would regret."

"Could you show me, please?"

The demonologist gave her a killing glance.

"I want to know what hides in you, William," Lauren said.

He shook his head.

"Everyone has their dark side. Don't you know that during the first date, everyone is trying to hide it?"

"Yes, but... I will take it as a gesture of intimacy."

*If you want William to turn into a demon, turn to 10. If you decide that he should refuse, go to 11.*

7

"Actually, I may have to disappoint you. You would expect me to be able to summon spirits, to revive the dead, or to throw fireballs?"

Lauren looked at him with wide eyes.

"In fact, I may be able to achieve the last feat I mentioned." William continued.

"No, thank you, yesterday I saw an illusionist doing this. What else can you do?" she asked.

"When I decide, I can make people do what I want. Usually, I can maintain the effect for no more than a few minutes."

"What does this have to do with the de ... shadows?" Lauren asked.

"Many of them operate at the subconscious level of their victims. This is my legacy from the demon, who was invoked in me. Temporarily."

"Does that mean that you were not quite human?" she wondered.

William nodded.

"Nobody is the same after allowing a demon to be invoked into him. Fortunately, I was able to win the fight against him ... at least partially."

"Could you use your skill on me? Maybe in that way, I can figure out the secret of my recurrent dream and my relationship with you," she said.

"And now... we already have a relationship. How interesting!" William laughed.

"I didn't mean that," Lauren looked down ashamed. William could swear that her cheeks obtained a scarlet hue.

"I know."

*If you want William to use his skills on Lauren, go to 12. Otherwise – 13.*

8

William held out his hands. Lauren gently offered him hers. Their fingertips barely touched. The demonologist closed his eyes and unleashed the force. He tried to prepare for the storm of emotions that would sweep him away at those times.

He saw a woman who looked like Lauren. She was wearing a bright blue formal dress. She handed a cocktail glass filled with purple fluid to a man dressed in a suit.

"I can't believe we did it," she exclaimed. "I wonder where you've been all this time. Thank you for sending them out. I ... have I never seen so much blood."

William calmly opened his eyes.

"Did you see anything?" Lauren asked.

He tried to smile, but it was only a trick to gain some time to decide what to tell her.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. If you want William to tell her what he saw, go to 14. If you decide it's better to save her the truth, mini 15.*

9

"I am Sorry, Lauren, I can't do it," said William.

He could read disappointment in her eyes.

"Why William?" she asked.

*What should the demonologist answer?*

"Because it may be dangerous for you (16)."

"Because I should not use my gift without a sound reason (17)."

10

The demonologist closed his eyes and unleashed the force. He tried to prepare for the storm of emotions that belonged to the demon.

Lauren's eyes widened.

"William, what is happening to you?"

His image was a three-dimensional shadow, merging perfectly with the prevailing darkness the roof. He felt his lungs fill with air and emit a cry that could not belong to a human being. The girl jumped up and fled back in panic. She bumped into the railing and almost fell from the roof.

The demon was hungry. For a long time, he hadn't had the chance to accompany a soul to the lake of fire. William knew what would happen after a few seconds. By all means, he had to fight the beast. But it was not easy at all. At least now that he was starved.

When she came to her senses, Lauren tried to calm her breathing and stay on her feet, which were bending at the knees.

"This ... was my most frightening experience so far. I thought I was going to die," she said.

*It could have been worse*, thought William.

"I am sorry, Lauren. I really shouldn't have done this," he said.

"That's okay, I asked for it, serves me right!"

William offered her a hand. She looked at him with suspicion, but nevertheless grasped it.

"Thank you! I do need some help."

*Decrease your energy by 1 point. Go to 18.*

11

"I am Sorry, Lauren, I can't do it," said William.

He could read disappointment in her eyes.

"Why William?" she asked.

*What should the demonologist answer?*

"Because it may be dangerous for you (19)."

"Because I should not use my gift without a sound reason (20)."

12

The demonologist stared at Lauren's eyes. They radiated such strength that, for a moment, he was afraid that he would be unable to gain control over her. Once it had happened. The feeling was

terrible – it was as if he had tried to break through a concrete wall with his head.

But his fears proved futile. The stream of thought was warm and pleasant.

"The feeling is very strange," Lauren said. "It is as if someone tickles the inside of my skull."

William laughed.

"I've never heard of such a comparison."

"Come on, show me what you can do," she urged him.

"Aren't you afraid?" William asked.

"If I was afraid of you, I wouldn't come here at all."

"What makes you trust me? You don't even know me. At all."

"It is not polite to make a girl wait," she insisted.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. What do you want William to do: to make her come dangerously close the railing (21); or to make her do something playful (22)?*

13

"I am Sorry, Lauren, I can't do it," said William.

He could read disappointment in her eyes.

"Why William?" she asked.

*What should the demonologist answer?*

"Because it may be dangerous for you (23)."

"Because I should not use my gift without a sound reason (24)."

14

"Please don't make me wait. I'm sure you saw something important," Lauren persisted.

"I am not convinced that you want to know. You know, there are some secrets that are better left untold," William said.

Lauren unconsciously squinted.

"William, I must know."

He sighed.

"In that world, Lauren ... you're an evil woman. An accomplice to a murderer. And you have a strange fetish for blood."

She bit her lower lip.

"Blood is not my problem in this world either. Maybe there needs to be a balance. There, I take away human lives. Here, I help others start their path."

"I feared that you'd not be able to accept it. Few people would think in such a way," William explained.

"I am a witch. I'm different from most ... girls you know."

"I am sure about it!" exclaimed William.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Go to 18.*

15

"Well, in that world, I saw you as a fine young lady – the type spending lots of time in official meetings, wearing a stunning evening dress. And you had a sophisticated gentleman next to you," the demonologist said.

"William, I think you are lying to me. Or rather, you're saving part of the truth."

"What makes you think so, Lauren?"

"I rely on my intuition. You don't think everything in this world is governed by logic, do you?" she snapped back.

The demonologist shook his head.

"Please don't make me wait. I'm sure you saw something important."

He looked at her eyes.

"Lauren, I really have nothing more to say," he tried to sound convincing.

"What do you see in me, William?" she asked.

"I don't understand?"

"Is it a little child who needs someone to protect her from the truth, or a strong woman who is ready to face it? It does not matter. Maybe I shouldn't exert so much pressure on you. Perhaps, you need time to get used to my peculiarities."

*Turn to 18.*

16

"Dangerous... for whom, William?" there was a chill in her voice. It was difficult for him to explain why, but he felt shivers down his spine.

"For you, of course," William answered.

"I'm not afraid. Don't you think I realize what it means dealing with a master of demons? However, I am here. And do not feel any hesitation."

"I understand Lauren. But ..."

"But what? The gift you described doesn't seem dangerous at all. Please just look where I can't see and tell me what I need to know. What you're saying now is an excuse, not a reason," she sighed. "Maybe they I shouldn't exert so much pressure on you. Perhaps, you need time to get used to my peculiarities."

*Turn to 18.*

17

Lauren put her hand on her forehead.

"What a fool I am," she exclaimed.

"Don't say that about yourself, please," William almost shouted.

"It is true. I come here at night, stalking you and I want to use your supernatural abilities to help me assemble the puzzle ..."

Her eyes were full of tears.

"I'm sorry," she blinked and a tear oozed through her eyelashes. "I don't usually behave like that..."

"Please don't talk about yourself in that way," William interrupted her. "I just need a little more time before I can trust you completely. That's all."

"Sorry if it seems I am pressing you. Indeed, this wasn't planned."

"Don't worry, everything is fine. And please, hide those pearly drops rolling imperturbably down your cheeks. You know it's not fair to use them in front of a man."

"Did you make that up now?" she smiled.

William shrugged.

"Not really. But I am trying to improvise."

*Decrease your relations score by 1. Go to 18.*

18

"I think it still would be a good time to watch the Hour of the Witch. If we hurry, we won't miss the latest projection," Lauren said.

"You mean us?" William asked.

"Oh, come on, haven't you ever been invited by a woman to the cinema?"

William scratched his beard.

"In fact ... never," he said.

"Is that supposed to mean 'no'?"

William shook his head.

"I didn't mean that. Perhaps, it will be fun. I haven't gone to the cinema for ages ... especially in such a nice company."

"Well, don't overdo the compliments. I'll think something very bad for you," she smiled.

"Like what?"

"Well, I will keep it a secret. Let's go."

They descended the spiral metal staircase to the top floor of the building.

"Sorry, I don't use elevators," she said.

"Why?" William wondered.

"From time to time, I am getting the impression that tentacles would come out from the buttons and strangle me."

"What makes you feel that way?"

Lauren waved.

"I think it's because of an illustration from the book."

"Please don't tell me! You'll spoil my fun."

"Okay."

William opened the door leading to stairs and held it for her.

"Nice manners," she smiled.

"Well, I it's just the way I was brought up."

"Oh, so it's not a manifestation of personal attitude. Would you do that for any girl?" Lauren said, while her footsteps echoed down the stairs.

"I wouldn't put it that way."

*Go to 25.*

19

"Dangerous... for whom, William?" there was a chill in her voice. It was difficult for him to explain why, but he felt shivers down his spine.

"I'm not afraid," she said.

"Lauren, I don't think you know what this is about. This demon is a homicidal machine. His only desire is to kill. Quite often, the only thing I can do is to direct his anger in a certain direction." The girl swallowed.

"Indeed, I can't understand why you want to wake the beast in me up, Lauren," William sighed.

"What do you need to know?"

"Maybe, I just want to learn more about you. But ... I think I understand why you refuse. I should not put so much pressure on you. Maybe you need time to get used to my peculiarities."

*Increase your relations by 1 point. Turn to 18.*

20

Lauren put her hand on her forehead.

"What a fool I am," she exclaimed

"Do not say that about yourself, please," William almost shouted.

"It is true. I come here at night, stalking you and I want to use your supernatural abilities to turn into a demon and show me something to help me assemble the puzzle..."

Her eyes were swimming in tears.

"I'm sorry," she blinked and a tear oozed through her eyelashes. "I don't usually behave like that..."

"Please don't talk about yourself in that way," William interrupted her. "I just need a little more time before I can trust you completely. That's all."

"Sorry if it seems I am pressing you. Indeed, this wasn't planned."

"Don't worry, everything is fine. And please, hide those pearly drops rolling imperturbably down your cheeks. You know it's not fair to use them in front of a man."

"Did you make that up now?" she smiled.

William shrugged.

"Not really. But I am trying to improvise."

*Decrease your relations score by 1. Go to 18.*

21

"You seem to be a brave girl," William said.

Lauren nodded.

"And you love extreme experiences?"

"I do... you know, I think I have them every day. Because of the responsibility for would-be mothers and their unborn children... I often feel the adrenaline rush while thrusting the needle," Lauren explained.

"Well, I hope you have fun with what is coming up next."

Lauren stood up by William's will. She made a few steps towards the railing. Her belly touched the railing. The demonologist made her look down. It was high. She became dizzy.

"William, are you sure you know what you're doing?" she asked with a trembling voice.

He replied with an absentminded whistling.

"I'm not convinced that we should do it," she said.

Her right foot stepped on the railing, then it went over to the other side. The upper part of her body bent over the abyss. Lauren wanted to scream but could not. Her heart was about to break her rib cage.

She felt two strong hands catching her and pulling her to the other side of the railing. She tried to calm her breathing while enjoying regained control of her limbs.

"This... was really extreme. At one point, you really scared the hell out of me," she exclaimed.

"Actually, this was the purpose," William laughed.

*Increase your relations score by 1. Go to 18.*

22

Lauren felt her left arm rising.

"No," William said. "I think it will be easier with the other one."

Her right hand stroked her hair.

"Actually, I'll need them both!"

"Be careful with my hair. I am taking great care for it and don't want to lose any."

"So you are taking care of it," the demonologist muttered absent-mindedly. "That is why it looks so good?"

"What are you trying to do, William?" she asked.

"Isn't it obvious?"

Lauren's hands were making clumsy movements, which were clearly trying to make a mess out of her hair.

"I don't think so," she answered.

"My idea was to make a braided pony tail. The problem is not the control I exercise over your hands. It's just that I am quite clumsy myself."

"No problem. Come on let me take control over my upper limbs so that I could complete the task."

"Yes, of course."

The demonologist withdrew his thoughts from her. He felt cold - like a swimmer leaving a hot mineral spring and ending up in the middle of a winter storm.

"Is that what you wanted?" Lauren asked and showed him her braid.

"It is beautiful. You know, it was a pleasure for me to control you."

"Just make sure it doesn't become a habit. You know, this demonstration showed me nothing about the story I dreamed, but at least I learned something useful."

"That I can't make a braided pony tail?" William inquired.

"That I can have complete confidence in you," she winked at him.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Turn to 18.*

23

"Dangerous... for whom, William?" there was a chill in her voice. It was difficult for him to explain why, but he felt shivers down his spine.

"For you, of course," William answered.

"I'm not afraid."

"Lauren, I do not think you know what this is all about. I have demonic energy in me. Every time I use my abilities, I take a risk. The victim may be possessed."

She put her hand on her waist.

"Has that ever happened, William?"

"Well, not really. But in theory, the risk remains. I don't understand why you'd want to go through it. What do you want to achieve?"

"Maybe I just want to learn more about you. My intuition tells me that it will get me closer to answering the questions that torment me. But... I think I understand why you refuse. Maybe I shouldn't exert so much pressure on you. Perhaps, you need time to get used to my peculiarities."

*Turn to 18.*

24

Lauren put her hand on her forehead.

"What a fool I am," she exclaimed.

"Don't say that about yourself, please," William almost shouted.

"It is true. I come here at night, stalking you and I want to use your supernatural abilities to take control of me... Perhaps, you aren't taking me seriously. Maybe you think I am crazy. I certainly gave you a reason for that."

Her eyes were full of tears.

"I'm sorry," she blinked and a tear oozed through her eyelashes. "I don't usually behave like that..."

"Take it easy, Lauren. When the time comes I will help you get to know what you want. But it needs

to be done in a safe way. I just need a little more time I can trust you completely. That's all."

"Sorry if it seems I am pressing you. Indeed, this wasn't planned."

"Don't worry, everything is fine. And please, hide those pearly drops rolling imperturbably down your cheeks. You know it's not fair to use them in front of a man."

"Did you make that up now?" she smiled.

William shrugged.

"Not really. But I am trying to improvise."

*Decrease your relations score by 1. Go to 18.*

25

The lights went up again. Lauren and William stood up and began to make their way on the aisle.

"Did you like it?" Lauren asked.

"Of course. I haven't seen a movie with so many different types of wizards in a while. The voodoo bokor and the ritual of evocation – they were well done."

She paused and looked into his eyes.

"Are you familiar with voodoo?"

"Just a little bit. I tried some tricks, but it's definitely not my favorite specialization."

"And what about the main character?" she asked.

"Well, she was great. Especially during the sacrifice."

They left the hall.

"You like her?" Lauren asked him jokingly.

"Which one?"

"Monique Bell."

The actress looked really nice, and the pale hair and delicate facial features slightly resembled Lauren's.

*What do you want William to reply?*

"I know that many men like her, but she's definitely not my type (33)."

"She's beautiful, but not as much as you (34)."

26

"I must stop it," Lauren shouted and ran after the demon who was fleeing via the elevator to the ground floor.

"Don't, you're gonna die!" William shouted back.

But the girl wouldn't hear. She moved at a speed that was beyond imagination. William hoped that she would not turn into a beast in the middle of the mall. Or lose her out of sight.

*If you have chosen the **mind control** specialization, William may try to stop Lauren (28). Otherwise, he can go after her (29), or examine the victim of the demon attack (30).*

27

"What on earth was that?" Lauren cried and ran to the window.

William looked at her, then at the demon who was running away. The demonologist didn't want to leave Lauren alone. At the same time, he wouldn't allow the shadow to escape.

*What should William do - follow the girl (36) or trace the demon (37)?*

28

William focused on the receding image of the girl.

*I want you to stop. Now!*

Lauren froze mid-stride. She lost her balance and only the proximity of the railing saved her from falling.

*William, let me go. You can't do this to me! I will kill this monster.*

*Are you crazy? You don't know anything about it. You will be his next victim.*

*And you know nothing about me. Let me go. Immediately!*

*William can fulfill Lauren's request (31) or reject it (32).*

29

On several occasions, William had to push passers-by out of on their way. He knew that if he went near a guard, he could be detained and then he would lose track of the witch. But there were none in sight.

He left the mall and his lungs filled with fresh air, something he urgently needed. He saw Lauren stumble and the front part of her body touched the ground. Her shape changed, turning into something with a tail and four legs.

"Now I can't catch up with you, my dear witch," William thought, but continued to run despite the embers he was feeling in his chest. He turned around the corner and saw her – a light gray wolf. She was sitting at the beginning of a blind valley, sticking her tongue out and sniffing the air.

"You know," the demonologist said panting. "I think you're quite pretty even in this form."

Lauren looked at him with almost human eyes and licked her nose.

"So, you tracked him up to here. Good job, girl!"

*What do you want William to do? To enter boldly into the blind street (30), to use his esp (38), to ask Lauren to search the location of the demon by using her feral sense of smell (39). Or, if you think it's too dangerous, William may propose Lauren to leave the place (45).*

30

William made a few tentative steps, trying to hear any noise the demon would make. He knew he would hardly make such a mistake but nevertheless hoped.

The street was dark. After some time his eyes adjusted to the darkness, but he wasn't sure he wouldn't miss anything important. For a moment, he wished he had the eyes of Lauren in her current form. He was even tempted to ask her to come with him, but decided not to. He didn't want to risk her life.

The corner behind the trash cans was an ideal place for an ambush. William remembered a spell that he hoped would work. He looked for a moment and withdrew. But there was no demon there. He continued forward, looking around. He had almost reached the end of the street when he heard Lauren's howling. William instantly turned and saw the demon no more than three meters from him.

*If you have chosen **transformation** as William's specialization, go to 49. Otherwise, turn to 50.*

31

It was very difficult for William to maintain his control over her. He felt great relief when he released her and stopped feeling her resistance.

*The demonologist can go after her (29), or to examine the victim of the demon (30).*

32

Lauren fell to the ground. But it wasn't the same way as she did above the roof. Her knees and hands rested on the floor. Her head leaned down and her hair fell forward. Several passers-by looked at her, but nobody tried to help her stand.

*Something is wrong*, thought William.

He could swear he heard her growling – a sound no woman could emit.

*William may try to take her to a secure spot before she transforms into a wolf (41). Or, he could wait. (42).*

33

"You know, I've heard from at least four people who don't know each other that I look like Monique Bell. I suppose you've noticed it already. You may have failed to do it in the library, or it was too dark up there on the roof ..."

"In fact, I think, maybe there are some similarities," William admitted.

"Yeah. And then neither of us is your type, right?" she asked in anger.

"I didn't mean that."

"I hope so."

*If you want William to change the topic, turn to 35. He can also just shut up (71) or continue explaining his viewpoint (72).*

34

Lauren looked down and blushed.

"You know, I've heard from at least four people who do not know each other that I look like Monique Bell. But no one implied that I'm prettier."

*Increase your relations score by 1 point.*

"Well, at least that's my opinion, although I haven't seen the famous actress in person," William said.

Lauren poked him in the ribs with her elbow, with her eyes set on something.

"A shadow!" the demonologist whispered.

The demon was wearing a dark gray coat with a hood that fell low over his face. He walked with a predatory grace – to the queue of a fast food restaurant about twenty meters from Lauren and William. The shadow made several very quick movements with both hands. There was a scream. An elderly gentleman flew half a meter above the window, covering it with a copious blood spray.

*Check out Lauren's specialization. If it is **lupine changeling**, go to 26. If it is **resurrector**, turn to 27.*

35

"Would you like popcorn, Lauren? I love it with cocoa and caramel," William asked.

The girl froze, staring at something.

"William!" she exclaimed.

"Is this supposed to mean yes?"

Lauren poked him in the ribs with his elbow, with his eyes set on something.

"A shadow!" the demonologist whispered.

The demon was wearing a dark gray coat with a hood that fell low over his face. He walked with a predatory grace – to the queue of a fast food restaurant about twenty meters from Lauren and William. The shadow made several very quick movements with both hands. There was a scream. An elderly gentleman flew half a meter above the window, covering it with a copious blood spray.

*Check out Lauren's specialization. If it is **lupine changeling**, go to 26. If it is **resurrector**, turn to 27.*

36

"I'm a doctor, please make room," she shouted as she fought her way in the crowd.

The victim was wearing a black suit and a shirt, which apparently used to be white, but now its predominant color was red. He had three deep wounds - one in the abdomen, the second - between the left ribs, and a third - on the throat.

Lauren leaned over him and muttered something.

William also managed to break through the crowd.

"I can't help with anything," she whispered. "Probably each of them was deadly."

"I think you should go," William said.

The girl apparently didn't hear him.

"Maybe I can revive him. I've done it once."

She looked at William's eyes.

"Will you help me?" she asked.

"Lauren, I'm not familiar with resurrections. The closest specialization of demonology is necromancy, but I'm not into it either. And I am convinced that your goal isn't to create a zombie."

"Yes, but... there is power in you. My intuition tells me that you could help me."

"The intuition of a witch. Something all demonologists envy them for. And what will happen to the wounds. Does your inner feeling say they will be cured?"

Lauren nodded and held out her hand to William.

*If you want him to spend part of his energy to help the girl resurrect the victim turn to 43. Otherwise - 44.*

37

William decided it was more important to track the demon. On several occasions, William had to push passers-by out of on their way. He knew that if he went near a guard, he could be detained and then he would lose track of the demon. But there were none in sight.

He left the mall and his lungs filled with fresh air, something he urgently needed. He continued to run despite the embers he was feeling in his chest. He turned around the corner and saw the demon enter a dark blind alley.

*What do you want William to do? To enter boldly into the blind alley (46), to use his esp (47), or, if you think it's too dangerous, William may go back to Lauren in the mall (48).*

38

*The demon might believe that he would hide and stab me at the back, but he needs to think again,* William thought.

William unleashed his demonic perception. Almost immediately, he was able to locate it - he was on the wall around the corner, near the scattered garbage cans. At around seven meters above ground. That was an excellent place for an ambush.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. Go to 51.*

39

"Lauren, would you be able to use your sense of smell to find the demon. I'll be just behind you in case he turned up from somewhere and attacked you.

The she-wolf yapped and jumped to her feet. She made a few steps forward and carefully sniffed the air. Then moved forward.

William felt the adrenaline rush in his veins. He knew what a demon was capable of. If he decided to attack Lauren, he would probably kill her before the demonologist would react.

The she-wolf came to the corner with the garbage bins. She raised her right front paw and froze with a muzzle pointing around the corner.

The demonologist got closer to her, patted her on the head and gave her a sign to withdraw.

*Go to 51.*

40

William let Lauren chase the demon alone. He had the vague feeling that he was making a big mistake. He made his way in the crowd of passers-by gathered around the massacre and approached the victim. He was wearing a black suit and a shirt, which apparently used to be white, but now its predominant color was red. He had three deep wounds - one in the abdomen, the second - between the left ribs, and a third - on the throat.

Apparently, the demon was particularly dangerous, since it was able to cause three fatal blows within seconds. Now Lauren was on his trail. Chills went all over the body of the demonologist.

*Do you want William to try to find Lauren and the demons, despite it being against the odds (52), or go home (53)?*

41

William ran to her, took her under the shoulders and made her stand. Lauren emitted a silent howl, which turned into screaming. The demonologist failed to take her to the water closet before she transformed completely.

"Lauren, it's okay, just calm down," said William. See, we'll get there, we'll talk and take off the pressure."

She was a beautiful, light gray animal with human eyes. William gently nudged her to the section for changing baby diapers. He thought the probability of finding nobody inside was highest. He opened the door and was relieved to find he was right. He allowed the she-wolf to enter before him, followed her and sat on the ground. She stuck her tongue out. William admired the length of her canine teeth. They could probably tear his carotid artery in seconds. Fortunately, she obviously had no intention of doing so.

"Good girl," he said, stroking her head. She licked his face in response.

"I am sorry for taking control over you. I know it's not a pleasant feeling."

Lauren growled and moved her ears backwards.

"I didn't want you to go after the demon," William continued. "I was afraid for you. I did it for your own good. I ... I do not want anything bad happen to you, my dear."

She began restoring her true form. The transformation didn't take more than two seconds. Before William, it was again the girl he was on a date with. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and shaking uncontrollably.

"Did I ... lose myself?" she asked.

William nodded. He walked up to her and hugged her.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist kissed her forehead.

"William, I do not know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger at ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you were able to stop me. I don't think I could handle it ... beat him."

"You really wouldn't be able. Can you walk? I do not want anyone to see us two here ... Not that I

don't like to feel my hands on you," William said with a smile.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points.*

"I'm," the tremor had stopped. "Let's go and see what happened to the victim," she proposed.

When they returned in the hallway, they found they were too late.

"They took him to the ambulance. It was horrible, there was so much blood," one elderly woman said.

Lauren turned to William.

"I feel remorse. It was my duty was to go to him and help him."

*If you decide that William should object, go to 74. Otherwise - 75.*

42

I just two seconds, Lauren transformed into a beautiful light gray wolf. The people around her screamed. Four guards, who seem to have been called in because of the attack of the demon, approached the wolf. She exposed her teeth, apparently about to fight. But she stood no chance against the four guards.

*If William has two points of energy, he could make two of the guards to stop the other two, while he pushes the wolf to a safe place (54). If William has only one, turn to 56.*

43

William touched Lauren's hand and electricity passed through his. He had goose bumps and marveled at the magic that Lauren was probably about to make. He closed his eyes and allowed his energy to flow into her.

The witch had put the top of her index fingers on the temples of the man. With some weirdness untypical of William, he thought that the blood on her arms made them look quite beautiful.

*Reduce William's energy by 1 point. Roll a die. If your score is 1-5, go to 57. If it is 6, turn to 58.*

44

Lauren looked at the demonologist with wide-open eyes, filled with disappointment. William was unable to handle the quiet prosecution and lowered his head.

The witch bent over the victim and put the tips of her index fingers on the temples of the man. With some weirdness untypical of William, he thought that the blood on her arms made them look quite beautiful.

Her whole body shook in uncontrollable spasms. Tears flowed from her eyes. Initially, they were transparent, but later obtained scarlet hues. Lauren fell down next to the victim.

Then came the paramedics. They forced William to leave the crime scene and put an oxygen mask on Lauren. Then, they carried the victim's body away and left the witch in the hands of the police. Contrary to the expectations of the demonologist, both were briefly questioned and released.

"William, I could have raised him," Lauren said. "I was so close. You should've helped me.

Why didn't you?" she asked, while trying to clean the blood from her face.

"Lauren, it was a long day. I think it's best to walk you home."

"Maybe you're right," she shrugged. "What's done is done. It's not the first time I see a dead person."

*Decrease your relations score by 2. Go to 68.*

45

William looked into the eyes of the she-wolf.

"Lauren, I think neither of us should enter into this street," he said.

She growled and shook her head.

"Yes, I'm sure. That's what this demon wants - an ambush. But we are not getting into that trap. We'd better get out of here."

William stared into the impenetrable darkness of the alley and listened. He failed to notice anything, as he expected. When he turned back to her, she was again a girl. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and she was shaking uncontrollably.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist approached her and embraced her.

"William, I don't know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger at ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you were able to stop me. I don't think I could handle it."

*Increase your relations score by 1 point. Go to 81.*

46

William made a few tentative steps, trying to hear any noise the demon would make. He knew he would hardly make such a mistake but nevertheless hoped.

The street was dark. The corner behind the trash cans was an ideal place for an ambush.

William remembered a spell that he hoped would work. He looked for a moment and withdrew.

But there was no demon there. He continued forward, looking around. He had almost reached the end of the street when something heavy fell on him and knocked him down. William received a strong blow to the crown and lost consciousness.

*This is a sad end to the adventure. Please, go back to 1 and start again.*

47

*The demon might believe that he would hide and stab me at the back, but he needs to think again,* William thought.

William unleashed his demonic perception. Almost immediately, he was able to locate him - he was on the wall around the corner, near the scattered garbage cans. At around seven meters above ground. That was an excellent place for an ambush.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. Go to 55.*

48

William returned to the mall - at the place of the crime scene. Lauren had just ended giving testimony to an elderly policeman.

"I couldn't," she sobbed. "I thought I could raise him. But ... I fainted while trying."

"It's all right, Lauren, it's not your fault," William said.

"Maybe you're right," she wiped her tears. "Where were you?"

"I tried to catch up to the demon, but I lost track of him. I think it's best to take you home."

She nodded.

*Decrease your relations score by 1. Go to 68.*

49

*Decrease your energy by 1 point.*

William needed less than a second to release his demonic self. The time stopped.

*I knew that you would call me.*

*Yes, in this case I have no choice,* William admitted.

*I'm hungry. I haven't been served anything delicious for eons. Perhaps I could have the soul of the child?*

*Don't be ridiculous. I never allowed anything like that.*

*You're right. It is a secret to everybody in the abyss that it is the most delicious thing on this realm.*

*You should be content with someone like you - a shadow.*

*Well ... So many years went by, do not make me wait for more!*

The attacker swung both of his hands covered with long spines. But William was no longer there.

And he was no longer a man. His flesh was a combination of blood red scales and thick darkness.

The demonologist attacked in turn. A moment before he hit the shadow, William became a shapeless pyre that engulfed the creature.

*Go back to hell, now!*

*Thy will be done. Besides, I have digestion problems in this world.*

William regained its normal appearance and looked at Lauren.

*Go to 73.*

50

William had no time to react. The demon stabbed him several dozens of times. Lauren barked and ran to the shadow, only to join William in the world of the dead.

*This is a sad end to the adventure. Please, go back to 1 and start again.*

51

William remembered a potent spell. It took him several minutes to recover all the details and bring it back to mind. Then, he boldly went behind the containers and looked up. He held out his hand to the shadow and turned him into a pyre.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. Go to 73.*

52

William tried to leave the mall in soon as possible without attracting the attention of the guards, who were running from all directions to the location of the crime scene.

Fresh cool air greeted the demonologist outside. He knew his chances of finding Lauren and the demon before it was too late for the girl were slim.

*If you have chosen esp as William's specialization and want to use the skill, go to 60. Otherwise, turn to 59.*

53

William came home. Just as he put on the lights, he realized that something was amiss. There was a strong smell of sulfur. There were also traces a pair of hooves that led to the kitchen.

"Fear me not," the voice was soft and soothing. "I didn't come here to fight you."

The demonologist opened the door carefully. Someone, or something, was sitting at the table. His hood was lowered on the face and hid it completely.

"Won't you ever leave me alone?" William almost cried.

"Do you want to see what happened to Lauren tonight?" The Hoofed one said without answering the question. And without waiting for a response, he rolled a crystal ball to William. The demonologist caught it. His eyes remained fixed at it for a few seconds. Then, William screamed and broke it on the floor.

"Game over, Will. How many people you love need to die before you give up? Your parents did. Your sister is a soulless shell. Lauren was your only chance to escape. But you blew it away!"

William fell to his knees, his vision was stuck somewhere where his eyes could not penetrate.

"Can I take your soul already? Together we can accomplish a lot."

The demonologist nodded.

*This is a sad end of the adventure. Please, start again*

54

*Reduce your energy by 2 points.*

William took control of two of the guards, who attacked their surprised colleagues. William used the time to get close to wolf and embrace her. Obviously, this calmed her down, because she stopped growling and licked his face.

"Lauren, I want you to come with me. I'll take you to a safe place," he whispered in her ear.

William ran to the bathroom with her. William gently nudged her to the section for changing baby diapers. He thought the probability of finding nobody inside was highest.

He opened the door and was relieved to find he was right. He allowed the she-wolf to enter before him, followed her and sat on the ground. She stuck her tongue out. William admired the length of her canine teeth. They could probably tear his carotid artery in seconds. Fortunately, she had no intention of doing so.

"Good girl," he said, stroking her head. She licked his face again. "I am sorry for taking control I over you. I know it's not a pleasant feeling."

Lauren growled and moved her ears backwards.

"I didn't want you to go after the demon," William continued. "I was afraid for you. I did it for your own good. I ... I don't want anything bad happen to you, my dear."

She began restoring her true form. The transformation didn't take more than two seconds.

Before William, it was again the girl he was on a date with. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and shaking uncontrollably.

"Did I ... lose myself?" she asked.

William nodded. He walked up to her and hugged her.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist kissed her forehead.

"William, I don't know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger with ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you were able to stop me. I don't think I could handle it ... beat him."

"You really would not be able to. Can you walk? I don't want anyone to see us here ... Not that I don't like to feel my hands on you," William said with a smile.

*Increase your relations score by 1 point.*

"I can," the tremor had stopped. "Let's go and see what happened to the victim," she proposed. When they returned in the hallway, they found out they were too late.

"They took him to the ambulance. It was horrible, there was so much blood," one elderly woman said.

Lauren turned to William.

"I feel remorse. It was my duty was to go to him and help him."

*If you decide that William should object, go to 74. Otherwise - 75.*

55

William remembered a potent spell. It took him several minutes to recover all the details and bring it back to mind. Then, he boldly went behind the containers and looked up. He held out his hand to the shadow and turned him into a pyre.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. Go to 48.*

56

William managed to take control of one of the guards, but his actions were not sufficient. One of his colleagues reached the wolf. She bit his thigh. The man yelled and pulled out his gun. There was a bang and whimper. A mixture of blood and brain splattered on the floor.

The time stopped. A figure wearing a cloak appeared next to William. His hood was lowered over his face and hid it completely. He carried a strong odor of sulfur with him.

"Game over, Will. How many people you love need to die before you give up? Your parents did. Your sister is a soulless shell. Lauren was your only chance to escape. But you blew it away!"

William fell to his knees, his vision was stuck somewhere where his eyes could not penetrate.

"Can I take your soul already? Together we can accomplish a lot."

The demonologist nodded.

*This is a sad end of the adventure. Please, start again from 1.*

57

A blue haze appeared around the body of the dead man. His wounds began to disappear and only the torn clothes suggested exactly where the demon had made the fatal blows.

The man opened his eyes and coughed. He wanted to rise, but Lauren gestured him to remain on the ground. At this point, the paramedics arrived and pushed her and demonologist aside.

The witch beamed. She embraced William and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"It was great," she said. "Thank you very much for helping me. I managed to get his life back ... We did it together, William, I still can't believe what happened. My knees are so soft."

*Increase your relations score by 3 points.*

He helped her to seat at a table next to them.

"Do you want a drink?" William asked her.

"No thanks, I'm better," she answered. "But I feel tired."

*Go to 82.*

58

Her whole body shook in uncontrollable spasms. Tears flowed from her eyes. Initially, they were transparent, but later obtained scarlet hues. Lauren fell down next to the victim. Then came the paramedics. They forced William to retire and put an oxygen mask on Lauren. Then, they carried the

victim's body away and left the witch in the hands of the police. Contrary to the expectations of the demonologist, both were briefly questioned and released.

"William, I could have raised him. I was so close," she said, while trying to clean the blood from her face.

"I'm sorry I really tried to help," the demonologist muttered.

"I know. And I'm very thankful for that. I felt a huge force, while your energy flowed into me.

It was very pleasant," she tried to smile.

William put his arm on her shoulder.

"Lauren, it was a long day. I think it's best to take you home."

"Maybe you're right," she shrugged.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Go to 68.*

59

*Roll a die. On a roll of 1 or 2, go to 61. Otherwise – to 62.*

60

William unleashed his sixth sense and tried to feel the demon ... or Lauren. He managed to do so, and headed for the intersection nearby.

*Reduce your energy by 1 point. Go to 61.*

61

The demonologist heard a noise coming from a small dead-end street. The light was scarce, but he managed to notice the demonic creature with spikes on its tentacles that was trying to get hold of a dog. No, it was actually a wolf. It dawned on William.

**Lauren!**

*If you have chosen the transformation specialization, go to 63. Otherwise, William can attack the demon with a flaming ball immediately (64) or to allow time to aim carefully (65).*

62

William couldn't find them. After an hour's search, he decided to go home (to 53).

63

*Decrease your energy by 1 point.*

William needed less than a second to release his demonic self. The time stopped.

*I knew that you would call me.*

*Yes, in this case I have no choice, William admitted.*

*I'm hungry. I haven't been served anything delicious for eons. Perhaps I could have the soul of the child?*

*Don't be ridiculous. I never allowed anything like that.*

*You're right. It is a secret to everybody in the abyss that it is the most delicious thing on this realm.*

*You should be content with someone like you - a shadow.*

*Well ... So many years went by, do not make me wait for more!*

The demonologist attacked, as quick as a lightning. A moment before he hit the shadow, William became a shapeless pyre that engulfed the creature.

*Go back to hell, now!*

*Thy will be done. Besides, I have digestion problems in this world.*

William regained its normal appearance and looked at Lauren. Before William, it was again the girl he was on a date with. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and shaking uncontrollably.

"Did you ma... manage to kill him?" she asked.

William nodded. He walked up to her and hugged her.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist kissed her forehead.

"William, I don't know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger at ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you came after me. I don't think I could handle it alone."

"And I'm glad that you were able to avoid his attacks long enough. Otherwise it would've been more difficult for me to help," he said. *And you would have ended sliced in irregularly shaped pieces, scattered in a bloody soup,* he thought to himself.

"Somehow I was able to predict his every stroke. That body is very flexible. Thank you for what you did for me tonight," she smiled.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Turn to 81.*

64

Roll a die. On a roll of 1- 4, turn to 66. Otherwise – 67.

65

While William was trying to concentrate, the demon reached the wolf. He caught her with one hand and inflicted several quick strokes at the base of her neck. She whimpered and fell on the dirty pavement.

William was shocked. His brain simply refused to accept reality. Faster than death, the demon reached him and cut his throat.

*This is a sad end to the adventure. Please, go back to 1 and start again.*

66

*Decrease your energy by 1 point.*

William needed less than a second to release the power of fire and direct it towards the demon, turning him into a pyre.

He looked at Lauren. Before William, it was again the girl he was on a date with. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and shaking uncontrollably.

"Did you ma... manage to kill him?" she asked.

William nodded. Walk up to her and hugged.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist kissed her forehead.

"William, I don't know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger at ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you came after me. I don't think I could handle it alone."

"And I'm glad that you were able to avoid his attacks long enough. Otherwise, it would've been more difficult for me to help," he said. *And you would have ended sliced in irregularly shaped pieces, scattered in a bloody soup*, he thought to himself.

"Somehow I was able to predict his every stroke. That body is very flexible. Thank you for what you did for me tonight," she smiled.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Turn to 81.*

67

William needed less than a second to release the power of fire and direct it towards the demon. Unfortunately, he missed him, setting a trash bin on fire. The explosion blinded the wolf for a second and the demon reached her. He caught her with one hand and inflicted several quick strokes at the base of her neck. She whimpered and fell on the dirty pavement.

William was shocked. His brain simply refused to accept reality. Faster than death, the demon reached him and cut his throat.

*This is a sad end to the adventure. Please, go back to 1 and start again.*

68

She lived near Central Park, so the demonologist and the witch enjoyed a pleasant night walk around the lake with sleeping black swans, garnished by the song of crickets.

"Aren't you afraid after what happened tonight?" William asked.

Lauren shook her head.

"It's not so easy to scare me, I think you already know it."

"Actually yes, I'm sorry," he said.

"It's ok. I feel protected when I am with you."

"Why?" he wondered.

The girl shrugged.

"All my life, I have been a magnet for all kinds of evil creatures. It's not safe to hang around me," William said.

Lauren laughed.

"Am I evil?" she asked.

"Not at all, as far as I am concerned," William answered.

They reached the end of the park and headed for the residential part.

"I live in this block of flats," she said.

*Check your relations score. If it is at least 6, turn to 69. Otherwise – 70.*

69

"Would you like to come up for a coffee or something?" she asked, mesmerizing him with her sparkling eyes.

"Of course," he answered quickly. "But I don't want to bother you."

"That's not the case. And I think there are many things about you I'd like to hear."

"It seems it's going to be a long night," he sighed.

"I hope so."

The girl took his hand and led him toward the entrance. Lauren's flat was on the first floor.

"Please, excuse me for the mess at home. I don't think I'm a good housekeeper. Perhaps this is one of the reasons I am still single," she joked.

"Don't worry, whatever the situation is, it would hardly be worse than my bachelor's dwelling."

It turned out that inside it was cozy and clean, with a little disorder caused by the dozens of medical journals, textbooks and game books.

"Coffee, tea or cappuccino?" she asked.

"Tea, please. I avoid taking caffeine in. It makes me nervous."

Two minutes later, he and Lauren were sitting at a huge wooden table and drinking a hot infusion of mint and hibiscus.

"What is it?" William asked and took a book placed in a cardboard folder. Several small cards fell from it. "Sorry, I hope I didn't lose anything important," he said and bent to collect them.

"It is my passion," she explained. "It's a combination between a book and board game. This one is called Lord and Sorcerer is one of the most successful. I have three sets, so don't worry."

"Well, and it was created by George M. George – the author of the Witch?"

Lauren nodded.

"Would you like to play with me?"

*If you want William agreed with the proposal, turn to 76. Otherwise - 77.*

71

After a few minutes break in their conversation, Lauren decided to be the first to speak.

"I've heard that in embarrassing situations, men simply remain silent. I think it's what is happening now. Sorry, for pressing you."

"It's ok," William tried to explain.

"Of course, it is not necessary to like me."

"How did you arrive at that conclusion?" William was dumbfounded.

*Decrease your relations score by 1 point.*

Lauren poked him in the ribs with her elbow, with her eyes set on something.

"A shadow!" the demonologist whispered.

The demon was wearing a dark gray coat with a hood that fell low over his face. He walked with a predatory grace – to the queue of a fast food restaurant about twenty meters from Lauren and William. The shadow made several very quick movements with both hands. There was a scream. An elderly gentleman flew half a meter above the window, covering it with a copious blood spray.

*Check out Laurens specialization. If it is **lupine changeling**, go to 26. If it is **resurrector**, turn to 27.*

72

"Lauren, I don't think there is a problem with your logic, however, it leads you to wrong conclusions."

The girl raised her eyebrows.

"If I really didn't like you, I would've shown it in some way, don't you think?" William continued.

"Well, I think you just did it."

"Not at all," William raised his hands.

"Okay, if you insist," Lauren smiled.

"Actually, yes."

"I like open people. I hope you're such one."

"I'm sure I'll have plenty of time to convince you," he smiled back.

Lauren poked him in the ribs with her elbow, with her eyes set on something.

"A shadow!" the demonologist whispered.

The demon was wearing a dark gray coat with a hood that fell low over his face. He walked with a predatory grace – to the queue of a fast food restaurant about twenty meters from Lauren and William. The shadow made several very quick movements with both hands. There was a scream. An elderly gentleman flew half a meter above the window, covering it with a copious blood spray.

*Check out Laurens specialization. If it is **lupine changeling**, go to 26. If it is **resurrector**, turn to 27.*

73

Lauren had restored her true form. Her hands were crossed around the abdomen and shaking uncontrollably.

"Did you ma... manage to kill it?" she asked.

William nodded. He walked up to her and hugged her.

"The last time I was also very cold when ... I returned to my human form," the girl trembled.

The demonologist kissed her forehead.

"William, I do not know what happened to me. At one point, I was filled with anger at ... this shadow. My desire to follow him and destroy him was very strong," she explained.

"It must have been the Spirit of the wolf within you," William said.

"I am very glad you came after me. I don't think I could handle it alone."

"And I am glad you didn't enter the blind alley. Otherwise, it would have been more difficult for me to help," he said. *And you would have ended sliced in irregularly shaped pieces, scattered in a bloody soup*, he thought to himself.

"Somehow I managed to turn that alternative down. Thank you for what you did for me tonight," she smiled.

*Increase your relations score by 2 points. Turn to 81.*

74

"I don't think you are fair with yourself," William said. "First, it's not your fault that the wolf in you is so strong. And second, the death of the demon is much more important than the dubious opportunity to help one of his victims."

"Dubious?" she wondered.

William sighed.

"Lauren, so far, I've heard of only two people who stood on the way of demons and survived."

"So I made the right decision?"

"Absolutely," William nodded.

"I hope I can convince myself and my professional conscience."

*Increase your relations score by 1. Turn to 82.*

75

"We all make mistakes sometimes," William said.

Lauren looked at him without saying anything.

"Shall I take you home? The streets seem to me dangerous place tonight?" the demonologist offered.

Lauren nodded.

*Go to 68.*

76

"I don't think I could make a good player, but I would gladly try," said William.

"Great," she beamed and took the folder. She opened it. Inside, there was a brightly colored map. Several action figures, cards and strangely-looking eight-sided dice fell from the side pocket.

"The story takes place in the fabled world of Freya. There are all sorts of mythical creatures and creepy ..."

"Demons," William said the word.

"Yeah, right. You start on the left side of the map. You need to gather sufficient equipment and defeat the Keeper, who guards the pass to the right side, where the dragon's treasure is. It includes four powerful artifacts," her eyes flashed. "Come on, choose your character."

"I like this dark sorcerer."

"I knew you would choose him. Unfortunately, he's not a playable character. But, you can meet him in a pub and convince him to join you," Lauren explained.

"Then perhaps the one with the horns?"

"This is Lord De ... Shadow. A good choice. I like his balance between physical and magical skills. I choose the barbarian."

"Why?"

"It is the only female character here. And she's a very strong girl!"

"These two characteristics remind me of someone. Your tea is getting cold."

"Yes, thank you. I do get carried away when I talk about this game. Do you want us to play as a team or against each other?" she asked.

"I'm not sure I could handle alone."

"I will help you."

*If you want the demonologist to play in a team with Lauren, go to 78. If you want his character to play against hers, go to 79.*

77

"I don't feel quite ready to play such a complex game after such a long day, Lauren," William explained.

"I see your point. It's just that I wanted to show you this part of myself."

"I am pretty sure we will have plenty of time to do that."

The girl nodded with a smile.

*Turn to 80.*

78

"Well, let's make a team," said William.

"Great! Just be careful with the unicorn. He doesn't respect your sex."

"I'll remember it," William said.

"You can roll first," Lauren winked him and handed him a marble dice. Their fingers met for a second and static electricity went through them.

"I'm sorry," she smiled. "It happens sometimes."

The game was fun. The barbarian girl and the demon crushed scores of attackers and got great loot. "What do you think about the magic?" Lauren asked.

"Well ... I am not convinced that we should talk about it, but I've seen ... people make some of them, or even mix potions with drops of blood."

In half an hour, the characters managed to summon and defeat the Keeper. Even so, they had to

make their way through hordes of monsters in order to reach the treasury.

"Cool!" Lauren exclaimed. "I think we did pretty well."

"I definitely had fun," William said.

*Increase your relations score with 2 points. Go to 80.*

79

"Well, let's see how long I can handle it one on one versus you," said William.

"You like challenges, don't you? You've never played the game, but you are already willing to face my barbarian girl. So be it. I will help you with the rules, but otherwise, I will do my best to defeat your shadow."

"Just as I'd expect you," William said.

"You can roll first," Lauren winked at him and handed him a marble dice. Their fingers met for a second and static electricity went through them. "I'm sorry," she smiled. "It happens sometimes."

The game was fun. The barbarian girl and the demon made their ways through scores of attackers and got great loot. The barbarian managed to persuade an elf to join her party. William played defensively, trying to get away from the team, but eventually had to face them in a final one-way battle.

"I told you I was going to show no mercy," Lauren smiled.

"Well, I definitely had fun," William admitted.

"Me too," she winked at him.

*Increase your relations score by 1 point. Go to 80.*

80

"Would you tell me how it started?" Lauren asked. Her beautiful eyes were fixed on his. He cleared his throat and flushed.

"I'm not quite comfortable talking about it," he said with a trembling voice. "This is something I thought I'd keep to myself for all my life."

"You can share it with me, Will. I'm sure you'd feel much better after that."

"I have... or rather had a sister. She was two years younger than me. I was supposed to take care of her. I thought playing the game of summoning a demon was a fun way to spend the summer weekends. The problem was we actually managed to summon one. How was I supposed to know I had the gift? We... decided to call him the Hoofed one. He said he wanted my soul. I refused. He invoked into my sister. She went mad and was sent to hospital. Shortly after that, she escaped. No-one saw her ever after. Next in the list were my father and mother. Every once in a while, people around me die. Strangers, friends," William was almost in tears. "I don't want to lose you, Lauren. I don't really know you, but..." he couldn't go on.

"It's ok, Will. I am a lot tougher than anyone you've met," she gave him a warm smile.

*Check your relations score. If it is 8 or more, turn to 83. Otherwise, go to 84.*

81

"It's so nice being a wolf. So free and strong, as light as a feather," she looked dreamily at the stars.

"You don't look heavy even now," William said.

Lauren smiled. The tremor was gone.

"I don't mind having my hands on you all night, but I think it would be good to go somewhere else," William offered.

"You're right. Why don't we go to the mall to check out what happened to the victim?"

"I don't think it's a good idea. Whatever the condition of man is, your colleagues certainly took care of him." *They most probably took him to a cool place*, he thought.

"Yes, it sounds reasonable. But my duty was to go to help him.

*If you think that William should object, go to 74. Otherwise - 75.*

82

"Do you want me to take you home?" William asked.

Lauren nodded.

*Go to 68.*

83

Lauren stood up from the table and approached the demonologist. She put her hand on his cheek, bent over and gave him a long kiss. All of a sudden, she turned away and went back to her place.

"I'm sorry, I just felt like I had to do that," she was as red as a daisy.

"It's ok, I really enjoyed that one," William replied, feeling his heart hammer his chest.

*You gain 1 point of energy. Turn to 85.*

84

Lauren held his hand.

"This is your past. The future will be much different," she said.

"How do you know?"

"Trust my instincts, will you?"

William didn't know what to say.

*Turn to 85.*

85

Lauren coughed. She put her hand on her mouth and closed her eyes. Then, she coughed again, this time unable to control the spasm.

"Not again," William cried.

Blood was already pouring down between her fingers. The demonologist jumped on his feet and reached her in a second. He embraced her, trying to comfort her. He feared that would be her final hour. The very same had happened to his mother. But he was a little boy then. He unleashed his energy, desperately trying to stop her bleeding.

*If you have at least 2 points of energy, go to 88. If you have only 1, go to 87. In case you have none, turn to 86.*

86

William felt a cold chill as he realized his powers were simply not there. He cried out loud, cursing himself for using too much of it tonight. He could do nothing more that keep her firmly in his arms while her last shivers sent out more blood than he could imagine there was in her body, mixing it with his tears.

*This is a very sad end of the story. I am sure it would be best to start again from 1.*

87

*Roll one die. If the number is even, go to 86. Otherwise, turn to 88.*

88

William felt his powers sizzling inside his veins, than passing through his fingers into Lauren. Her coughing ceased, she took a deep breath and moved her lips to say something, but the demonologist put his bloody finger on her lips.

*“Shht,” he whispered.*

*He hugged her tightly. He wouldn't let go of her, even to let her clean the scarlet liquid off them.*

*Congratulations! You managed to complete the main task of ensuring the survival of both William and Lauren during that night!*