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# Emancipation

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An Entry in the 2012 Windhammer Prize for  
Short Gamebook Fiction

During this short interactive fiction you will only need a piece of paper and a pencil to record your "Log" upon. Your Log is a record events that have happened to you, and helps you record any information you may have picked up. On your Log you may also take notes for personal use.

At times you may be asked to write something specific on your Log, because it may come in use later. This may include vital pieces of information or items you may have picked up during your adventure. These vital pieces of information, or items, will come with a name and an associated number.

(For example: if you find a ring, you may be asked to note down "Ring13" on your Log.)

Whenever you are using an item, add its associated number to the reference number you are on, then turn to the sum of these numbers. If the story makes no sense, then you are unable to use the item at that point in time.

(For example if you were reading section 1 and you realized you'd like to use the "Ring13", you would add  $1+13=14$ , and then read section 14 to see if the combination make any sense.)

Whenever you are using a piece of information, add together the numbers of all information you are using, turn to the reference number that is the sum of those numbers. If the story makes no sense, then you may not have enough information. Information will usually be used to answer a question.

(For example: Someone asked you if you knew the details of an event, and you had "Date17" and "Time2" You would add  $17+2=19$  and read section 19)

You may also want to record how many days pass. Every time you are brought back to your cell, a day has passed. You may use this to rank how well you do; the fewer days before you are "emancipated" the better. The best possible is to reach paragraph 27 on the third day.

N.B. Just because you are brought back to your cell does not mean you have lost; it simply means your must spend another night incarcerated, and should try harder the next day.

Log
Day:

**1**

You awaken. The seconds pass by. Each seems like an eternity. They put you here to torment you. You dwell in the cell in which they have encased you. You know where you are. Hell. This is hell.

You hear footsteps coming down the passage outside your cell. The demons that patrol the halls have come for you once more. As they have so many times before. You can feel the dread in your heart.

Attack your captor? Go to 7

Wait to see what happens? Go to 20

**2**

One of the sigils inscribed on the cabinets attracts your attention for some reason. It reminds you of something about your past; when you were outside. From your glory days as a paladin fighting the darkness. You have to open the cabinet with your mouth because your arms are still bound. You sift through the contents. You see some of the names of other victims. Eventually you find what you are looking for. You pull it out with your teeth and drop it on the floor. You kneel down to open it, again with your teeth. You read. Most you do not understand. A demonic language perhaps? However there is some you do understand. "Sees phantoms", "Aberrations haunting", "world is spurious".

You are distracted by the door opening behind you. Demons flood in. The ghouls grab you and haul you back to your cell. You do not struggle. Something resounds in your head.

Add the word "Epiphany 12" to your Log. If ever you want to use information to answer a question, add together all pieces of information you are using together and turn to that reference number.

The demons take you away. Go to 1

**3**

You leave the room continue on your way, when you notice a ghoul in the next room. It notices you too. It wails alerting others of your escape. You rush forwards to silence the demon, however it is too late. Other demons rush towards you, as you strike the first demon. They attack. You fight against them, but together, their force is too great. There are too many and you are without your sword. They draw blades that flash in the low light. Suddenly you feel the sensation of one entering your skin. The gloomy room fades entirely as you blackout. Go to 1

**4**

You open the box using your mouth, since your arms are still bound. Inside to your surprise is an armory; weapons of all sorts are cached within. Unable to pick up something of size, you grab a razor with your mouth, and carefully use your lips and tongue to place it safely hidden between your molars and cheek. You close the drawer. The door flies open and demons pour into the room. You have not escaped, however you have acquired yourself a weapon.

Add the word "Razor 5" to your Log. If ever you wish to use this weapon you may add the number of this weapon to the reference number you are on and turn to that reference number. If the new reference starts with the words "You draw your weapon." Continue reading. Otherwise you are unable to use your weapon at that point.

The demons swarm you. You submit to them, and they lead you back to your cell. You go willingly. Little do they know, you are now armed. Go to 1.

## 5

The buzzing in your head grows in volume. The drilling words must have penetrated your scalp and now be chiseling into your skull. You try to block him out. "You know why you are here? You know who you are?" he asks. You know the answer; you were the bane of the demons' existence, until they captured you and locked you up here.

You once stood proud with your shining blade in your hands felling all the evil demons of the night. Alone you shone as a beacon through the nights, eradicating the evil of the land with your great sword. And then the demons came for you...

"You don't seem threatening at the moment. So we're going to try something with you." The demon may be right, for now. But inside your mind you are plotting for your freedom. The demon stands, and slithers towards you. You feel the bindings on your body release. You would like to attack, however there are two other demon sentinels nearby with blades in their hands. Attack would be futile. Lucian takes you through a door to another room. Inside the room there is a multitude of other victims. Demons stand as resolute sentinels along the walls. These must be the mines. Lucian speaks to you. "Don't cause trouble. Don't try any heroics." You know you are trapped in here. In this room you suffer with the others. Misery loves company. Lucian leaves you and closes the door behind him.

You turn to face the slave mines. There other victims struggle with their tasks. You feel sorry for them. Many of them have given up. They all look sad. This is not a place of happiness. You feel pity for the others. One looks at you with a face that sends a clear message to you; "Please kill me."

Put the man out of his misery? 10

Talk to the man? 15

## 6

You open a nearby door, within is a small storage chamber. You crawl in and hide yourself behind a large pile of cloths. You work on your bindings, shifting yourself to loosen them. You have heard it is possible to escape the bindings. You twist and turn, slowly working your way out. Footsteps approach. You sit still, in fear of being discovered by one of the ghouls. You barely dare to breathe. You can here the behemoth open the door to the storeroom you are hiding in. It grabs a pile of cloths dangerously close to where you are sitting and leaves. Once the sound of footsteps fades you return to working your way out. Times passes. You fight desperately and contort your body to escape the bindings. Suddenly you find yourself free! You manage to slide yourself out of the fiendish bindings! Now you must plan your next move.

Free the other prisoners and attack the demons! 8

Disguise yourself using the materials in the room and escape? 21

## 7

You sit in the corner and wait. The doorknob turns. The door opens. The fiend enters into the room. With a roar you jump at your captor. However the infernal bindings with which your tormenters have used to hold you prevents you from vanquishing the beast. The creature sinks a blade into your flesh and the world turns black. Go to 1.

## 8

You run through the labyrinthine passages, and eventually find a staircase which you make your way up. You avoid the demons on your way towards the prisoner's cells. Try as you might to open any of the prisoners door you are unable to budge any of them; the doors are locked with a key, which you do not have. Down the hall a demon spots you. The fiend calls others and approaches. You ready yourself for combat. The demons approach; you may not be armed with your sword anymore, but you are still going to put up a valiant fight. The swarm of demons circle you. Their blades are drawn. You

rush into the fight with a war-cry. You pound, and smash many demons that fall easily to your might. However there are too many, and eventually you feel one of their dreaded blades pierce your flesh. Everything fades to blackness. Go to 1

### 9

You walk into the adjacent room and look around. It is dimly lit and very similar to the previous room you were in. Along one wall of the room are large white boxes that hum. On the shelves above them is what appears to be a variety of mixtures and potions.

Sample one of the potions? 19

Move on? 3

### 10

You walk up to the man. You can do it. You've killed hoards of the demons, you can bring yourself to kill this man. You fight for good, by executing wretched demons; a mercy execution of a victim would be for the same cause. As you raise your hands towards him, the face of the man almost looks like one of the twisted demonic faces. Maybe it is?

You get to work silently. You do it for him. The world will silently thank you for releasing one of its trapped souls. A soul wishing so desperately to leave this world, but unable to die. Unlike him, you haven't given up hope yet. You still have the willpower to seek your emancipation. The demons quickly see what you are doing. They don't want you to release him. They swarm you. They want him to stay. To suffer. They intervene with your desperate attempts to help the man be relinquished from the horrors of this hell. Their blades are drawn. They pierce into you. The vision of men and demons is the last thing in your head before it all fades. Go to 1

### 11

You take a chance. You start forwards breaking free of the demon's grasp. Are you free? Where will you go? You have mere seconds to decide where you will run to.

To a staircase? Turn to 13

Down the hall? Turn to 23

### 12

You draw your weapon. Before the demon enters the room you have already used your weapon to cut your bindings loose, allowing you to use your hands. The demon enters the room. "Come." It commands, you don't move. You are turned away from the door so as to hide your freed hands which hold the razor. The demon approaches. When it is close enough you erupt upwards without warning. Swing mightily at the demon and slash it across the face, drawing blood and leaving a laceration in its eye. The demon, completely unprepared for your attack stumbles backwards in shock, screaming and clutching its face. You have the advantage.

Kill the demon and move onwards? 17

Take it hostage to escape? 26

### 13

You dash down the staircase. The demon roars in fury, running after you. You are more agile in going down the small staircase and make it down before the demon can catch up. Now at the bottom of the staircase you have the lead. You must go somewhere quickly. For fear the demon recapture you. In this passageway there appears to be two main ways you can go: into the room with a sign reading

“Archive”, or into a mysterious hole in the wall.

Go into the “Archive” room? Go to 18

Go into the hole? Go to 22

#### 14

You scream, breaking the spell. Even Lucian seems startled. You struggle with the bindings they have wrapped around you attempting to free yourself. The demon spawn regards your torment without pity. “Return him to the cell.” Says Lucian. A group of demons comes to take you away. You struggle but are powerless as they drag you away. Lucian draws a blade and plunges it into you. You give a final scream of torment before it all turns to black. Go to 1

#### 15

You ask the man about the hell, and how he came to be here. “They put me in here long ago,” he tells you, “I’ve grown accustomed to being here, and I no longer want to be outside anymore. I don’t belong there.” The man’s will is clearly broken beyond repair. He will be trapped here until his death. In this hell. You tell him not to give up, and encourage him to escape the slave mines, and the hell. You tell him of your past. How you were a strong warrior, you lived in a fortress, as an icon of goodness during the day, and as a force purging the land of evil by night. He looks at you sadly. “I was once like you. But I moved on; they taught me how. The violence must stop for you to move on.” His words resound in your head. The man has submitted fully to the demons; He is no longer even willing to try to escape. You tell him resolutely that you refuse to give up. You are a champion of righteousness; you must stop your enemies. They cannot continue with their wicked ways, and you cannot remain in this hell. However the mans words remain branded in your mind.

Add the word “Apocalypse 15” to your Log. If ever you want to use information, add together all pieces of information you are using together and turn to that reference number.

Eventually fiend guards come into the slave mines and tell you it is time to return to your cell. You are bound once more and returned to your cell. Whether it is for the night, or for a break you have no idea. You have not seen the sun in an eon, you have no idea what time it is, nor how long you have been in captivity. Go to 1

#### 16

You allow the demons the swarms you. They take hold of you and forcibly guide you down the passages to Lucian. You don’t want to. You dread him. You see the portal approach. You tense yourself. Go to 24

#### 17

You slash the demon once more ending its pathetic life. You move out into the hall. You sneak along, avoiding demons that patrol the passages. Eventually they do spot you. They call others and all too quickly they are surrounding you. You raise your razor. It isn’t your sword, however it is something. They stand away from you cautiously, eyeing your weapon. You strike first. You charge the horde of demons. You sink your razor blade deep into a demon which falls back screaming. You fight against the others, but the demons produce their blades, and all too soon you feel one enter your own skin. You have hurt them. But they have won; everything fades to black as soon as their blade touches your skin. As you sink to the ground they strip you of your weapon.

Remove the word “Razor 5” from your Log. You may no longer use it.

Go to 1

**18**

In the archive room there are several large cabinets, each marked with a letter. In one corner of the room is a box marked "tools". However there is no place to hide in this room. Any minute the fiends will find you. You must hurry.

Look in one of the cabinets? Go to 2

Look in the box marked "Tools"? Go to 4

**19**

You lift one of the bottles to your lips and drink deeply. It has a very strong pungent taste. You drop the bottle and back away in disgust. Pain hits your stomach. You double over in agony. You fall to the ground writhing. You vomit violently multiple times, eventually spewing out blood. Your stomach burns. You have an excruciating death. The last thing you see before you lose consciousness is a storm of demons entering the room, alerted by your screams. And you see the bottle, which you dropped. It reads "Bleach".

The end

**20**

The abomination steps through the doorway. "You know what time it is. Come see Lucian." The creature mocks you. The fiend knows you don't want to see Lucian. Lucian hurts you, he torments you. And yet your must be seen by him each day. He seems to revel in your agony. The demon takes you into the passage and leads you to Lucian's chamber.

As you walk down the blank passage you see other scared victims in their cells. They stare at you with sunken eyes that call for help. But you are as trapped as they are. And you are on your way to be seen by Lucian. You pass by many familiar side passages and staircases. Few you have been down. Who knows what horrors they lead to?

Run away from your captor? Go to 11

Submit to seeing Lucian? 24

**21**

You scour the room and clothe yourself with rags that you find. You disguise actually makes you appear to be one of the demons. With this disguise you stride confidently from the room. You pass by many demons; however none seem to see through your disguise. You aren't sure of where you are going exactly, however you manage to navigate the labyrinthine halls until you see it. A ray of sunlight on the floor in front of you. You follow it until you find yourself at the grand door; the door that lets you out of hell. You walk out into the sunlight. You are free from hell. You walk off, unsure of where you'll go, or what you'll do. You'll go back to your conquest to fight against the dark forces of the demons. You'll likely be recaptured by the demons, and imprisoned once more. But you will never give up the fight.

The end

**22**

You dive into the hole. You manage to squeeze your body into the small opening before the fiend can spot you. You slide down a shaft, tumbling through the darkness. You are falling deeper into the depths of this hell. You land in a heap of rags in a dimly lit room, somewhere deep in the dungeon. You may be free of the demons for the moment; however you aren't safe, that much is for sure. Also, you are still bound.

Hide in a nearby room? Go to 6

Explore other nearby rooms? Go to 9

**23**

You dash down the hall. The walls seem to stretch on forever. The lack of color on the walls makes it hard for you to tell how far you've gone. The demon is roaring behind you. Suddenly you notice a myriad of ghouls encircling you from all directions. "We're not going to hurt you." one calls out to you. The lie is obvious. Several of the behemoths brandish blades. "Just come with us easily and it will all be alright." Says another you know they are going to bring you to Lucian if you turn yourself over.

Fight? 26

Give up? 16

**24**

You arrive at Lucian's chamber. You are brought inside and placed in front of Lucian. He looks down at you with his sinister eyes. His eyes burn with malice. He begins to speak. The words are slow and enunciated. You can feel them. They're slowly drilling through your skull. "You know why you're here?" He asks. You look into his eyes. His words continue to drill their way slowly into your cranium, intent on brain matter. The sharp buzzing of the drilling fills your ears. You are going to die!

Scream and tell him to stop? Turn to 14

Submit to the torture? Turn to 5

**25**

You grab the demon and put your razor's edge to its throat. You tell it very clearly you are escaping, it is not to say a word and it is your hostage. The demon understands the situation, and recognizes that it is now you who has the power. You walk with the demon slowly through the blank halls. Others notice you and stop to assess the situation. It is futile for them to resist; you have one of their own. This is your ticket to freedom. They try to dissuade you, but you ignore their sinister voices. The demons eventually allow you to go to the doors. The doors out of hell. This is your freedom. You walk through the doors still holding the demon prisoner. Light hits your face. Sunlight. You'd almost forgotten. You toss the demon aside and run. You run until you can't anymore. You are free. You will probably continue your conquest of demon slaying. The demons will be hunting for you too however. They are likely to catch up with you quickly, and you will end up back in your cell once more. However whether they do is another story. All you know is that you are free. For now.

The end

**26**

You charge one of the demons with a war cry. The demons swarm you. Blades flash. The memory of the day you were captured by the fiends comes into your head. You were such a proud warrior. So many of the hellspawn had fallen to your mighty sword. When they all came for you, you fought so valiantly. You managed slice off the appendages of many of the demons, and to sink your sword to the hilt into one of the demons. However there were too many. In the present you do not have a weapon and your bindings prevent you from using your arms. You snap at the demons, foaming at the mouth. A blade swishes towards you. You feel it pierce your flesh. All fades. All is dark. Go to 1

**27**

"Because I am supposed to be here." You say. The words tumble out of your mouth before you fully comprehend what you are saying. Something inside you head clicks into place. You look around the room.

The warped demonic masks suddenly become clear human faces. The blades change into syringes before your very eyes. The blank passageways are the white halls of the hospital. Your hell is a

hospital. You are not the hero. You are a patient. Tears come to your eyes as you come out of your reverie and face reality. You remember, because you let yourself.

The "Slave mine" was just a room allowing the patients to interact in order to develop social ability. Your bindings are a straight-jacket. The weapons you may have armed yourself with were scalpels blades used for neurosurgery on patients. The hole in the wall was the laundry chute. Your "Fortress" where you were a knight was a factory where you worked before they caught you. Your "Sword" was a meat cleaver, you used on your victims. At night you would go out to kill your "demons". Innocent people. Any easy target you could find would be deemed as a demon, and had to be slain. How many innocents have you killed? Not even you know the answer to that.

You slowly tell Lucian of all the memories and truths that floods your mind.

Dr. Lucian Geritz, the head psychiatrist, looks at you with a now clearly human face. "Very good! This is what we call a Psychiatric Epiphany. The moment the patient has a realization, and comes to terms with the real world. One of our nurses told me you had seen your psychiatric file downstairs in the archives. Perhaps this and the social interaction I have permitted you helped? I am very glad for you, and while your treatment isn't finished yet, you are on the road to recovery." His voice, while rough from cigarettes, no longer irritates you; you are no longer scared of facing the truth.

"As you may remember it was determined that a chemical imbalance in your brain is what caused to you to have these delusions in the first place," the doctor goes on, "We have had you on drugs to restore the balance, however it hasn't been easy. As you know in order to change, you have to *want* to change. You've had to redevelop many areas of your brain after the imbalance. I hope that you won't have any more violent fits, and we won't need to use anymore sedatives or tranquilizers. It's not good for your brain's redevelopment. You now seem to be able to distinguish between reality and your phantoms, so I'm sure things will go well." Lucian pats you on the shoulder. "Don't worry. It's all uphill from here."

You are lead back to your room. You return feeling free. Who knows what will happen next? Perhaps you will be like the man who helped you, and help others to get well. You have committed terrible crimes, but you are now free of sickness, and ready to work to wash your sins away. Who knows, maybe someday you'll even be allowed to leave the hospital, and try to regain a normal life? Whether or not you do is another story. For now you have truly been emancipated.

The end