





There is a place that is not a place, a state of existence outside of normal experience. It is the nexus of the conscious and subconscious, the merging of instinct and thought. In this hyper-reality, real and unreal are one and the same.

The Silhouette Rouge beckons.

Cipher

The Silhouette Rouge masquerades as a mansion without entrance or exit. In truth, it is something else. The Silhouette Rouge exists to initiate the base into the sublime.

The Silhouette Rouge is a puzzle box of semiosis and symbolism. Its secret language is the catalyst for enlightenment. It is the antechamber to transcendence or damnation.

Spatial dimensions are fluid. Time is an illusion. Reality is dreamlike. The Silhouette Rouge is change and evolution personified. Few things remain constant.

There are always seventy-eight rooms in the Silhouette Rouge.

Rebirth

The Sarcophagi are creatures born of mystery and devoid of past. They have been resurrected from flawed and meaningless lives into a new existence. Memory and history are lost to them; their old lives cast aside like a cocoon that has been outgrown. Once the Sarcophagi were human, but now they are something else. Their compound eyes see the world differently. Their four arms manipulate reality in new ways. A chitinous exoskeleton protects their fragile souls.

The Sarcophagi are insects that walk as men.

The Sarcophagi are explorers. They wander the Silhouette Rouge, seeking to divine its truths. Only by doing so, can they escape this place and progress to whatever destiny awaits them.

Menagerie

The Sarcophagi are not alone. Strange, wayward souls haunt the Silhouette Rouge. Known simply as the Others, each of these entities is unique. Some understand the mystery of the Silhouette Rouge,

while some are as unknowing as the Sarcophagi.

The Others have been here for a very long time.

Transmigration

The Gate of Horn is spoken of in hushed and reverent tones. It is said to be the sole means of egress from the Silhouette Rouge. Although no such gate is known to exist within the mansion, the wisest among the Others claim differently. They allege that the gate is merely intangible and imperceptible to all but the worthiest of souls. They assert that solving the Nine Enigmas is the key to unlocking the gate.

The exact nature of the Nine Enigmas remains conjecture. Some believe they are pieces of a puzzle whose proper alignment opens the Gate of Horn. Some believe the Nine Enigmas to be metaphors, stepping-stones to enlightenment.



Perhaps they are both?

If there is anyone who knows the truth, it is probably the Lost One. He arrived from someplace else and spent his time pursuing the mysteries of the Silhouette Rouge. No room, no hallway was left unexplored. It is said that the Lost One lived here many lifetimes, constantly inventing new identities.

One day, without warning, the Lost One disappeared, never to be seen again. Legends claim that he solved the Nine Enigmas and left through the Gate of Horn. Many have tried to walk in his footsteps, to retrace his path, hoping to discover the knowledge he acquired during his explorations. None have succeeded; some still try.

On occasion, someone will claim to see the Lost One wandering the Silhouette Rouge. Has he returned? Did he ever really leave? Is this some illusion, temporal or otherwise?

The mystery of the Lost One remains.

The game

Noumenon is a role-playing game of mystery and abstraction. In *Noumenon*, players assume the roles of Sarcophagi, mysterious creatures half human and half insect. Their single mandate is to experience the horrors and wonders of the Silhouette Rouge. By doing so, they will approach the mystery at the heart of this indefinable place. Only by discovering the secrets of the Silhouette Rouge can the Sarcophagi escape this prison.





Players define much of *Noumenon*. There is no set agenda for them to follow, no obvious path for them to walk. Goals and conflict will manifest of their own accord. By experiencing the Silhouette Rouge, patterns and recurring motifs will emerge. The symbolism will take on meaning. While players shape the game through their journeys, they will find allies to their quest and enemies as well. They will learn the secrets of the rooms. They will evolve.

Advisement

Noumenon is written for experienced gamers. A definition of role-playing and the basics of story construction are absent from *Noumenon*. The text also assumes terms such as Gamemaster, NPC, Initiative, etc. to be common knowledge to the reader.

Noumenon uses dominoes for task resolution.

Rorschach

Between the words of *Noumenon* lurks much white space. This is by design. The white enables Gamemasters to imprint what they will. However, this also means many of the questions posed throughout *Noumenon* will go unanswered. *Noumenon* is a puzzle. However, it is a puzzle that forms many different pictures depending on the individual gamer(s). No two individuals are likely to draw the exact same conclusions from *Noumenon*. The symbolism and recurring motifs exist to hint at underlying patterns. However, the patterns themselves remain elusive. To some, this approach may be frustrating. Others may be exhilarated by such freedom. Regardless, there is more than enough material within to fashion a plethora of stories. Take what you will, and ignore the rest.

Make up your own truths.



Silhouette Rouge

Once the threshold into the Silhouette Rouge is crossed, there is no return. The Sarcophagi are cast into a new reality.

The gateway into the Silhouette Rouge fades away, like a dream upon waking.

The Sarcophagi must fend for themselves.

Their initiation is at hand.

The Silhouette Rouge beckons.

Prima Materia

The Prima Materia is the locus of the Silhouette Rouge and the lower of its two floors. The heart of the Prima Materia is a vast chamber called the Grand Foyer. Twisted monstrosities of flesh haunt this chamber, performing motions with purpose knowable only to them. Giving them a wide berth is the safest course of action.

Three hallways extend out from the Grand Foyer. Immense, dark paned windows, set into ornate frames, decorate the hallways and the initial chamber. Complex locking mechanisms keep the windows forever closed. No one has ever figured out the secret to unlocking these portals, and few have attempted to do so. Most assume these windows lead to the home of the Chiroptera, the leather-winged predators of the Sarcophagi.

No doors on the Prima Materia grant exit from the Silhouette Rouge.

The three hallways each have seven doors. No more, no less. These twenty-one rooms, along with the Grand Foyer, are the alphabet that creates the language of the Silhouette Rouge. Each room is a letter, and their combination opens the gate to enlightenment.

To master the secret tongue of the Silhouette Rouge is to know the mind of God.

The Waste Land

A spiral staircase twists up from the lower floor to the second. The Others avoid this level for reasons unspoken, though the odd wayfarer or two will occasionally make their way here. The cyclopean red eyes of security cameras, nine in all, slowly pan across the floor's main chamber. No one knows who is





watching, or why, or if anyone is even monitoring what the cameras record.

While three hallways extend from the Grand Foyer, there are four that do so from the main chamber of the second floor.: the Walk of Swords, the Grail Passage, the Rite of Pentacles, and the Hall of Torches.

The Others

The Others are as curious and diverse as the rooms of the Silhouette Rouge. Some are monstrous in appearance; some wear human form. Deep thinkers and shallow minds alike are found amongst their number. Some are sociable and eager to aid one another, while some are strict isolationists or apathetic to needs not their own (*or the human condition is simply too alien for them to understand*). In short, the whole gamut of human thought and emotion can be found amongst these beings, as well as experiences extrinsic to anything a human could fathom.

Many of the Others move about with purpose, though some wander directionless, arching and craning their heads about as if trying to define their environment or get their bearings. Most sense that there is a grand design at work, that their presence in the Silhouette Rouge serves a greater calling, even if they cannot see or understand that calling for themselves.

The Others are often devoid of memory and past. Many are not even sure if they ever existed outside of this place. However, there are some who recollect, albeit distantly, the paths they have trod. Those gifted with histories predating their arrival to the Silhouette Rouge often speak of the past in cold and distant terms, more like recorded images in their minds rather than memories rich in emotional resonance.

Although the Others may freely travel the whole of the Silhouette Rouge, most keep to the Prima Materia. They wander the trinity of passages and gather in the Grand Foyer, although they are always careful not to disturb the twisted grotesqueries that haunt the chamber. The twenty-one rooms typically hold little interest for the Others, though some will cross their thresholds.

Though many of these entities are omnipresent in the Silhouette Rouge, a few seem to come and go, disappearing for periods of time or never returning.

Perhaps some leave the Silhouette Rouge, having solved the Nine Enigmas? Perhaps they are simply residing in the rooms and hallways of the Prima Materia, away from prying eyes? Perhaps those who never return have fallen victim to dark destinies? Perhaps the Others can simply come and go as they please – but go where?



Mechanics

In *Noumenon*, there are multiple obstacles to hinder Sarcophagi. These challenges take many forms: from mysteries, to antagonists, to unimaginable environments. There is literally no end to the diversity of situations the player characters might face. When confronted with an obstacle, when the outcome of an action is in doubt, the game mechanics come into play.

Noumenon uses dominoes to determine the success or failure of an action. The game's mechanics require a standard *double six set* of dominoes. A *double six set* consists of 28 dominoes, and both ends of each domino are marked with a number of pips ranging from zero (blank) to six.

Fundamentals

Noumenon uses the same basic mechanic to resolve all actions in the game. Below is a brief overview of the process:

1. The player declares what his or her character is attempting to do, and the governing *trait* is determined.
- 2.—The Gamemaster sets a *difficulty* level for the action. *Difficulty* levels range from 1 to 9.
3. The Gamemaster randomly draws one domino from the pool and lays it down. This is called the *lead*.
4. The player randomly draws a number of dominoes equal to the rank of the governing *trait* of the character. This is referred to as the *draw*. In the case of group actions, the character with the highest rank, called the *trump*, determines the draw, and the remaining participants each draw one domino.
5. The player connects his or her dominoes to the Gamemaster's *lead* by matching the end of any drawn dominoes to the ends of the *lead*. In the case of a group action, all the players attempt to connect their *draws* to the Gamemaster's. Players *are* allowed to connect their *draws* to one another, but at least one of the group's dominoes must connect to the Gamemaster's *lead*. *Draws* may be connected vertically or horizontally to the *lead* or to one another. A collection of connected dominoes is called a *chain*.
6. Every domino that is connected to the *lead* is called a *victory*. If the number of *victories* equals or exceeds the *difficulty* level, the action is a success. Otherwise, the action has failed.

For example: A PC is attempting to sway a jury's opinion. This jury is already inclined to believe the character, so the Gamemaster sets a *difficulty* level of 1. The Gamemaster draws the *lead* domino. The *lead* is a 5:6 (a five on one end of the domino and a six on the other). The PC's appropriate *trait* has a rank of 3, so he is allowed to draw three dominoes. He draws a 1:2, a 2:3, and a 2:4. Although the player can connect all three of his dominoes to one another, he cannot connect any of them to the Gamemaster's 5:6 *lead*. The action has failed.





For example: Three PCs are attempting to sway a jury's opinion. Since the jury is already inclined to believe the characters, the Gamemaster sets a difficulty level of 1. The Gamemaster draws the lead domino. The lead is a 1:6. Two characters have a rank of 3, and the other one has a rank of 2. One of the characters with a rank of 3 is the trump and draws three dominoes. His draw is a 1:2, a 2:5, and a 0:0. The other two players draw one domino each. One draws a 3:6 and the other a 0:4. The trump connects his 1:2 to the Gamemaster's lead (1:6) for one victory. He also connects his 2:5 to the 1:2 he previously laid down. He is unable to connect his 0:0. The second player is able to connect her 3:6 draw, but the third player is unable to connect his draw (0:4) to anything laid down. The action has yielded three victories (the 1:2, the 2:5, and the 3:6), which exceeds the difficulty level (1). The action is a success.

For example: A PC is attempting to strike an opponent. The difficulty level to land the blow is 2. The Gamemaster draws the lead, which is a 1:2. The character has a rank of 2, so the player draws two dominoes. She draws a 1:3 and a 1:4. The player is able to connect the 1:3 and the 1:4 to the Gamemaster's lead. Since she connected two dominoes, she has achieved two victories. Since this meets the difficulty number (2), the action is a success.

For example: Three PCs are attacking an opponent. The difficulty level is 2. The Gamemaster draws the lead, which is a 1:2. One character has a rank of 2, and the other characters each have a rank of 1. The character with the highest rank (2) is the trump and draws two dominoes (a 1:3 and a 1:4). The other two players draw one domino each (a 4:6 and a 6:6 respectively). The trump can connect both of his dominoes to the lead (1:2), and the other two can connect their draws as well (the 4:6 connects to the trump's 1:4, and the 6:6 connects to the 4:6). The group has achieved four victories, more than enough to beat the difficulty level (2).



There are a few important elements to keep in mind when creating a *chain*:

- With group actions, the *trump* does not have to connect to the *lead*. It can connect to the other draw(s) or need not connect at all. As long as the group as a whole connects a number of dominoes equal to or greater than the *difficulty* level, the action will succeed; it doesn't matter who connects to the *chain*.
- Solo *victories* are hard to come by, especially for fledgling characters. The colony will have far more success if it works together. *The more participants, the greater the chance of success.*
- The pool of dominoes drawn from, called the *boneyard*, refreshes after every action (i.e. all

draws are returned to the boneyard after each action).

- If the *lead* is a *doublet*, i.e. both ends are identical (1:1, 2:2, 3:3, etc.), it is much harder to connect to, especially during solo actions. Bad luck might sometimes befall the colony.
- If two characters have the same rank in a *trait*, one must be designated the *trump*. In these instances, determining the *trump* is left to the discretion of the Gamemaster and players (with the GM having final say in the matter).

In *Noumenon*, succeeding alone is a very difficult proposition. Sarcophagi who go it alone quickly find themselves overmatched. To survive, the player characters will have to work together.

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