

# The Circle of Reflecting Glory 004



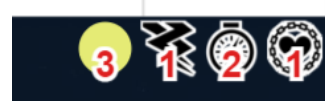
Being the continuing chronicles of the CRG, as written by Helen Drake, Witch!

**RULES ISSUES...** Helen gained a Scar (from Bleed) at the end of the previous Assignment. I described it as veins of red and yellow forming in the whites of her eyes. She collapsed in grief and distress at that moment, but the fight was over, so it didn't matter she was incapacitated. However, I forgot to switch around one of her Actions to represent the shift in her character caused by the event. I'll switch one point from her FOCUS (reduced to 1) and add it to her SENSE (increased to 3) to represent how the use of the magick (her sudden and violent Attunement to the magickal horn) has made her even more sensitive while shaking up her ability to be logical and reasoning.

Between Adventures, the Circle allows her 2 Stitch and 2 Refresh (and also 2 Train due to the recent FAQ/Errata). She'll use 1 Stitch to clear her Marks and 1 Refresh to restore all Drives. The Circle's Stamina ability replenishes back to 3 available Gilded Dice.

On the Roll20 Token for the Circle, I'm tracking these with icons...

Yellow Blob for Gilded, the "braided lightning" for Stitch, A stopwatch for Training and a heart for Refresh.



*For Solo Play – I'm using "Mythic GM Emulator v2" and "The Solo Society" (a small Vaesen Supplement with random tables of Period Horror/Investigation). For this Assignment, I'm playtesting a scenario of my own design called "THEY COME OUT AT NIGHT"*



The Circle of Reflecting Glory, its Chapter House in Briar Green, close to the Mara Winfield Botanical Conservatory and my Solo PC – Helen Drake, are described in the first issue of this story which can be found ...

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At the end of last issue, Helen had banished The Predator, with the help of her Light-Keeper, The Honourable Justice Cornelia Gellis (retired) and Cornelia's manservant Ted. However, in doing so she had used the one and only charge on the magickal horn and couldn't now attempt to use it to rescue her old friend Bethany Cole from The Beyond.

**AND NOW...**

## Assignment Two

I'm going to follow a pre-written scenario (of my own) that uses a strict timeline for the unfolding of events, so there won't be as much use of the Mythic checks for "Expected Scene" and the NPCs and Threads lists.

This scenario isn't an Assignment given by the Light-Keeper, and instead starts with a Dream about a Cat!

It is the night of Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1907, actually it is already Sunday, only an hour or so before dawn, a couple of weeks after the previous Assignment.

### From the Scenario...

Start with a written cinematic opening following a cat on a night-time prowling, suddenly going from predator to prey! This can be a dream for the Circle's Medium/Occultist or the character with the highest SENSE Action rating.

### THE DREAM OF THE CAT

Mr Wiggles (a tabby cat – actually female!) sniffs the cold ground and hurries past the pool of light at the base of the streetlamp. There is a strange smell and a strange feel to the night air. She is nervous, tail flicking.

A rustle from the hedge. A juicy mouse? She pauses, crouching low, watching ahead. Slinks to the edge of the deeper shadow between the lamps for cover.

Yowls in terror as the deeper shadow moves, looms and strikes with claws so black they glitter, reflecting the nearest yellow streetlamp. Sharp. Swift. Life...ending. All is black and silent now.



*Mythic – Chaos Factor 5. No check for Expected Scene, but (because I already know this scenario – as I wrote it!) I'll use some Mythic FATE Checks to determine what Helen decides to do at various points in the story.*

### Scene One – A Cup of Tea on Sunday Morning

After that disturbing dream Helen can't be sure if it was a genuine Vision/Portent due to her increased Magickal Sensitivity or whether it could be put down to fitful sleep and too much brandy due to her continuing worries about whether she should have tried to summon Bethany back from the Beyond instead of banishing the Predator.

Should she report it to the Circle's Light-Keeper?

*Mythic – FATE Check Unlikely : NO*

Cornelia is not a patient woman and doesn't need to be bothered by a nightmare. The rest of her Circle are still not returned from ... well, from wherever Cornelia sent them three months ago. Apparently, it was a "need to know" mission and Helen, all alone at the Chapter House, didn't "need to know"!

Not all alone today, as mid-morning there was a knock on the door.

*The Scenario asks the Players to decide "Which PC has a wealthy Friend with a Cat? Wealthy enough to live in Briar Green." and "Who is this Friend?"*



It was Helen's grand-niece. Her older brother's grand-daughter. One of the few people Helen was close to. As she ushered Marietta Drake into the kitchen, she thought "Mari probably thinks she's got to check on me in this cold weather. See if it's finished off her eccentric old Auntie!". Still, it was nice to see her. The girl often popped in on her way to work. She was a driver for the Newfaire Steam Tram Company. Twenty-three years old and already a driver. Mari loved it, even in winter. Had always loved the steam trams.

Helen used to take her on tram rides around the city in school holidays. Used to take her to see her dad (Helen's nephew) who was a driver for the NTC before the War took him and his own father - Helen's brother Samuel.

Samuel had done pretty well in the War until he got himself blown to pieces. His experience scheduling Trams had translated well into Army Logistics, and he'd risen to be a Captain. His Officers Pension and Gordon's meagre Enlisted Man's Pension had paid for their house in Regent Park Street, over the other side of Regent's Park – a half-mile south. (Revenant Park most called it these days, since those bodies floated up out of the mud during the heavy shelling). [p108 in the Core Rulebook]

If Mariella noticed Helen's dark glasses, she was polite enough not to mention them. Just another bizarre thing about her bizarre great-aunt!

After 20 minutes or so of idle chit chat – Helen finally remembering to ask after Mari's mother, Amanda (who she'd never got on with). She learned that "Mam's alright but worrying herself sick over Ratty. He's been out all Saturday and hadn't come in when I left. She'll be wandering the streets looking for him this afternoon I expect, and it's not the weather for an old lady like..." She trailed off with a cough.

Reminded of the disturbing dream, Helen asks "Not a tabby?". Helen hadn't visited since the War. She really didn't get on with Gordon's widow and it was mutual.

"No Ratty's a black tomcat, all black". She looked worried about him herself, but said "He's stayed away before, but in summer, not in this sort of weather. Maybe some neighbour has accidentally locked him in a shed – I'm sure he'll turn up today or tomorrow.". She was biting her thumbnail, nervously. "I wish I didn't have to work so I could go looking."

Then she heard the jingling bell and soft whistle as the Tram trundled down the street. She grabbed her cap, swigged back the remains of her tea and was gone. The warmth of her hug and soft kiss on the cheek all that remained.

Mythic FATE check – Would Helen link the dream and her niece’s missing cat? Very Likely. Yes, and a Random Event. Random Event Focus: Current Context (so it’s something arising directly out of Helen thinking about the Dream).

The dream scene MIGHT have been one of the streets over by Revenant Park. They’ve certainly got fancy streetlamps like that over there.

A FOCUS roll might be able to pinpoint the Street. Stakes: Low (apparently), Expectation: Confirm it’s the same area and (if choose to investigate in future) get +1d to Survey. Partial: Confirm Rough Area, but not the exact road so -1d to Survey. Fail: Not connected, ignore the coincidence. Critical Success: as Expectation and will definitely Investigate TODAY.

Although a missing cat is a trivial thing, and she doesn’t get on with Mari’s mum, she is very fond of Mari and it’s too much of a coincidence, so she’ll treat this as significant and spend one of the Circle’s two free Training Drives on constructing a Mind Palace to help her remember all the details (+1D) and another +2D for two Intuition Drives.



INTUITION								
Drives Available...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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◇ SURVEY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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👉 FOCUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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👉 SENSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Helen Drake FOCUS	
GILDED successes	0 on 1 Dice
Normal Successes	2 on 3 Dice

**A Critical Success!**  
(the two Normal Successes were 6s)

Yes, those Streetlamps are the sort from around Revenant Park. And that narrow alley between two small front gardens... with railings... Yes. She remembers the place.

Junction of Regent Park Street and Back Alley. She’s sure. Maybe she’d better head over there this afternoon and take a look around. Missing Cats and Dreams about Cats and Clawed Shadows! Best send a note to her Light-Keeper (Cornelia) too, so she stops by the Botanical Gardens and asks Roly to take a message.

Mythic – Chaos Factor can stay at 5. Although I got a Critical Success, the tension has been raised. Again, no “Expected Scene Check”.

### Scene Two – In Search of Ratty

It all looked a lot less menacing in the daylight, but she reached the spot from her Dream about 2pm on Sunday afternoon. She was well-wrapped and gloved against the bitter cold of the Shiver but could feel it on her exposed face.

#### From the Scenario...

- SURVEY (Just one roll, +1 Dice for each PC helper no Drive required +1 dice for the use of Bleed Detectors)

**Stakes:** Low (apparently – so only reveal in advance what’s in red), **Expectations...**  
**Full Success:** Find Evidence/Tracks and a bloody cat corpse (not the Friend’s) to autopsy (half a day spent).  
**Partial:** Find Evidence/Tracks but... + otherworldly maggots giving 1 Bleed mark from contamination.  
**Fail:** waste the rest of the day and all involved, including the Friend, get 1 Bleed mark from contamination.  
**Critical Success:** as Partial, but with a +1d bonus to the next Check.

*As she hasn't involved Amanda Drake (Mari's mum), there should be no risk to anyone else. Due to the Critical Success earlier, she's getting +1d. I'll use a Cunning Drive to make it +2d and one of the Circle's Gilded Dice to give me a chance to restore that Drive. It also makes sense for Helen to have brought a Bleed Detector from the Chapter House store.*

## GEAR

Upto 3 times during an assignment, when you want an item of Gear you can say that you packed up one of these or something else that is common/cheap and makes narrative sense...

X Bleed Detector  
Hand Weapon  
Bleed Containment Vial  
Arcane Text  
Ward (Soak 1 Bleed)  
Occult Supplies  
The Magickal Horn from Assignment One (depleted)

### Helen Drake SURVEY

GILDED successes 1 on 1 Dice

Normal Successes 1 on 2 Dice

*Nice – a Full success on the Gilded Dice, so I recover 1 Intuition Drive.*

Searching the area and scanning under bushes with the Bleed Detector, leads me to a grisly discovery. The corpse of a cat – not black, so not Ratty, thank the Three, but not Mr Tiggles the tabby either. This one was a big ginger with a bell on its collar. Torn open from shoulder to groin, a gaping hole revealing the dark mess inside. The cold had stopped it from smelling too bad.

She feels bile rising as something stirs in the bloody gloop. A fat yellow grub... swimming in the slime!

If only she'd brought something to wrap it in. Ooh! There's a few of the grubs [1d6=4]. She's not an expert on this sort of thing, but they seem pretty big (thumb-sized). The cat hasn't been eaten by anything else (foxes, crows or other cats) so probably hasn't been dead more than a couple of days.

With some squeamishness, she scoops it up, gently squeezing it to close the wound and contain the maggots. Then wincing as the thick, semi-congealed blood oozes out and drips onto her coat.

She passes a few gawking people as she walks back across the Park. The usual mud is frozen now, so no long-buried corpses floating up, but the uneven ground makes it slow going. There are just a few dog walkers and the dogs bark at her – clearly, THEY can smell something – hopefully from the Cat. The dog owners eye her with suspicion and she mutters "It's Dead!" and hurries on. [*Acting Bizarrely to tick off an Illumination Key!*]

### Scene Three – Autopsy!

The streetlamps are coming on (about 4pm) by the time she gets back to the Chapter House. The lights are on when she gets back, and Cornelia's Carriage is outside. There's a lamp in the carriage and a shadow moves across it.

"Evening Ted. Got you out here again, has she?"

A gruff voice from within "Not too bad Miss. Brought a flask. Feel sorry for the horses though, hope she don't stay long, the poor buggers." The two horses have thick blankets, but the steam of their breath shows just how cold it is. Damn the Shiver!

Inside, Cornelia is in the Kitchen, still wearing her thick coat and has apparently just boiled a kettle. Well! There's a turn-up for the books! She's got THREE mugs out! Must be making one for Ted!

The dead cat is carefully placed on the table.

"Do you mind Helen, people have to eat off that table". The Honourable Cornelia wrinkles her nose in disgust.

"There's only me eating off it lately. The rest of the Circle's been gone for three months now" she snaps back.

"It shouldn't be for much longer Helen. Be patient and keep the faith". She finishes the tea, fills three mugs and then sends Helen back outside to take one for Ted.

When they are together around the table again and have gathered some supplies from the Chapter House basement, Helen plucks a squirming grub up with long silver sugar cube tongs.

They seem to have reflective black disks (like eyes!) along their bodies. Each is the size of Helen's thumb and clearly feasting happily on the cat's innards.



### From the Scenario...

FOCUS. +1d if a Doctor. +1d if using a Bleed Detector (or if have already detected Bleed on the corpse)

**Stakes:** Normal (apparently – so only reveal in advance what's in red), **Expectations...**  
**Full Success:** Detect Bleed and discover... otherworldly maggots, definitely killed by a Phenomenon the night before last. They will soon progress to another form.  
**Partial:** As Full Success but... + otherworldly maggots giving 1 Bleed mark to the lead investigator from contamination.  
**Fail:** Waste a half day and all involved get 1 Bleed mark from contamination and the cat corpse animates and triggers a combat scene.  
**Critical Success:** as Full, but also get a warning of something to come. Notice twitching of paws and whiskers early enough to be able to act before there is a combat scene.

- **Removing the Maggots** if one of the PCs declares a Bleed Containment Vial as an item of Gear, they can attempt to extract the Maggots and safely contain or destroy them.
- Depending on the Timeline, the cat corpse animates at nightfall and attacks the nearest human target.

*Our Circle usually includes a Doctor, so I put on their usual gown. Gloves and surgical mask and fetch a Bleed Containment Vessel (a specially-treated glass demi-john, 2ft tall) and start digging out the maggots and studying the corpse.*

### GEAR

Upto 3 times during an assignment, when you want an item of Gear you can say that you packed up one of these or something else that is common/cheap and makes narrative sense...

- X Bleed Detector
- Hand Weapon
- X Bleed Containment Vessel
- Arcane Text
- Ward (Soak 1 Bleed)
- Occult Supplies
- The Magickal Horn from Assignment One (depleted)

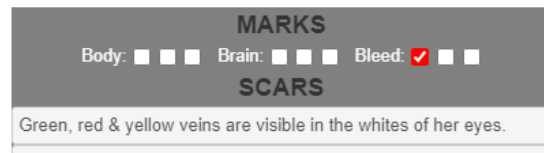
Helen gets 1d for FOCUS, will spend an Intuition Drive for another +1d and use the second (and last) of the Circle's Training Dice.



Helen Drake FOCUS		
GILDED	3	
Normal	5	4

You may notice I've changed the Roll20 Macro so it now shows the actual dice rolls instead of just counting Successes. Just a Partial Success on the Normal Dice.

From her examination of the cat and the maggots, Helen can tell that it was killed a couple of nights ago. Although the giblets should have frozen, the presence of the maggots appears to have kept everything liquefied. The maggots appear to be close to bursting and there's a faint outline of a moth-like form visible through their skin. Despite the gloves and the tongs, Helen feels a strange sensation as she is contaminated by Bleed.



**From the Scenario...**

Getting Maggots (any number) from a Corpse into a jar will require a Control (finesse) or a Hide (Sleight of Hand) check.

- o CONTROL or HIDE (+1d for some surgical tongs, +1d if the PC is a doctor)

**Stakes:** Normal, **Expectations...** (risking a scratch or contamination)  
**Full Success:** Safe Transfer.  
**Partial:** Transfer but 1 Bleed mark - feeling psychosomatic itchy skin even if gloved  
**Fail:** 1 body and 1 bleed mark as you drop and instinctively catch one and get scratched  
**Critical Success:** as Full, but also notice that the Maggots are going to burst soon and release a sort of Moth.

Helen has just 1d for Control and no Nerve Drive, so this will be a risky procedure. Would she decide to kill the Maggots or study them? I'll consider it Very Likely she tries to study them as one of her Illumination Keys is to Collect Oddities. A Mythic FATE Check gives an EXCEPTIONAL Yes.

I'll allow the +1d for the use of tongs (ones designed for sugar cubes rather than surgical, but close enough in a solo game!).

Helen Drake CONTROL		
GILDED	0	
Normal	3	5

A Partial Success so the 4 maggots are safe inside the jar now, but the Bleed Contamination feels a bit worse!



It's a difficult few minutes, fishing the horrible things out of the corpse and dropping them into the Bleed Containment Jar, but it is done. Helen feels slightly sick and can tell she's taken some Bleed. But they can't hurt anyone now.

Cornelia had watched silently from the kitchen doorway, sipping her tea. “You look terrible! You’re going to have to burn that...” pointing at the cat. “...and probably that tablecloth and I’m glad I don’t take sugar!”

It’s almost dark already!

*The scenario Timeline has the Moths bursting out at nightfall and the cat animating as a zombie cat at the same time. Would Helen burn the body straightaway? I imagine they have an iron brazier in the garden for burning garden waste, but would she act quickly enough? Let’s say 50/50. Mythic FATE Check says No.*

“The cat can keep ‘til morning. I want to watch what happens to these little squirmers. They look ready to pop!”. With that she wraps the bloody mess in the tablecloth and drops it outside the back door. “At least the damn Shiver will keep it from stinking the place out and attracting foxes”. She rinses the gloves and the tongs and then carries the jar up to the Library.

As night falls outside, the maggot skins burst and from each of them a moth wriggles free. It takes a few minutes for the wings to unfold and then there are 4 otherworldly moths fluttering about noisily inside the jar. After a few minutes of agitated fluttering, they settle on the left-hand wall of the jar and fall still. The wings have the same reflective black discs as the maggot bodies.



There are noises – rattling of the bins – from downstairs, in the back garden. By the time they get downstairs, the tablecloth is torn open and a trail of bloody pawprints leads across the garden towards the Park.

*The scenario says that the zombies are drawn by partial memories back to their homes and filled with hatred for those they formerly loved.*

*Would Helen realise the thing has animated as a Zombie, or assume it has been carried off by a fox? Would Helen pursue? Perhaps with the help of Ted?*



*Mythic – Chaos Factor to 6. I’ll add Zombie Cat to the NPCs List and Moths to the Threads List..*