Draw of the week!

Draw #4, Precognition

PLAGUE RIDDEN PEASANTS

They are desperate for food and shelter.

Are you sure that they're not zombies?

Wrapped in bandages and ringing bells they are shunned by all.

(c) Trinity Knot Studio

SWAMP LAND

Is that something out there in the mist?

"Damp, deserted and dangerous?"

Flies, everywhere, it's the perfect place to bury a body.

(c) Trinity Knot Studio

SOUNDS OF A CELEBRATION

could be thieves celebrating a good haul of loot.

ybe some travellers are gaming with the locals.

ernatively it could be a cult praying to the lord of the abyss.

(c) Trinity Knot Studio

System: The Dresden Files
Publisher: Evil Hat Productions https://www.evilhat.com/home/dresden-files-rpg/
Genre: Modern Fantasy / Horror
Quick Theme: Deception, emotions, feelings, relationships and matters of the heart

GM: Porthos

OK, so with this draw we'll explore another use from the cards: Precognition.

We'll also step away from the classical fantasy genre into the modern fantasy / horror world of Harry Dresden (and yes, we'll be doing a modern horror deck, consider yourselves warned).

We've been playing The Dresden Files on Wednesday nights for a few months; the characters were investigating a breach of the Unseelie Accords on behalf of the White Council of Wizards in modern day Baltimore.

One of the player characters, Bryon "Razor" Cade has a talent called 'Cassandra's Tears' which gives the character insights often via disturbing visions, hallucinations or dreams.

Like most prophetic powers, the players tend to plague the GM with requests for visions on a regular basis and this game was no exception.

There's always a balance the strike with these powers, not give too much away, not make the 'vision' too obscure, just to actually make something up on the spot and most importantly make the power relevant and valuable to the player and the game.

It's all added pressure and workload on the GM and sometimes gets a little annoying.

We were developing the cards during this game and it struck me that this could be a useful tool to take some of the workload off myself and raise the stakes for the players...

So, the next time I was interrupted by the player halfway through the scene introduction with the predictable "do I get any visions' request, I reached for the cards...

Tensions in the room raised immediately as the players realised the GM was playing for keeps this time.

Here's how I interpreted the cards and blended it into the game:

Back Story:

People are being abducted from underground raves in the Baltimore area (that covers the **Hook**, Sounds of celebration).

They are being used as test subject in a biological research programme (that takes care of the **Encounter**; Plague-ridden peasants) by a deep-state organisation linked to the White Court of Vampires just outside of Washington (and there's the **Location**: Swamp).

Bringing the White Court into the game played well into the theme. The White Court are emotional vampires, each of it's family feeding upon a particular emotional state, in this case the despair of being abducted and experimented upon.

How I integrated the story idea:

I started off by hitting Razor with 'flashbacks' of bright lights, loud music and dancing bodies. Essentially, every time the player characters were in a situation where a vision could be triggered by external stimuli, Razor's senses were overloaded with a vision.

Over the next few sessions I gradually darkened the visions, adding sensations of cloying heat, humidity, the smell of rotten wood and festering flesh. I also made them more and more shocking and debilitating.

As the main scenario was running down and the draw had given me an idea for a new game, I really opened up on Razor with a series of living nightmares that would leave the character reeling in a state of shock after each major stimulus triggered a vision.

The first was a faded missing person flyer on a lamp post - a teenage girl who had been missing for months.

The second was an interview with a local DJ, one of the stars of the underground rave scene in Maryland.

Over the course of the last few scenes, I planted enough info to foreshadow the next big adventure and made sure that Razor's player was motivated to follow up on the hook (and never nag me for clues again).