



The Diseases of Purgatory, Pt. 6
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About Kadrey:

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco. Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnie's *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical." Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A." Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*. The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories. His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*. Source: Wikipedia

Also available on Feedbooks for Kadrey:

- *Butcher Bird* (2005)
- *Metrophage* (1988)
- *Zombie* (2002)
- *A Cautionary Tale* (2002)
- *SETI* (2002)
- *Mudrosti* (2002)
- *Second-Floor Girls* (2002)
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- *Ubiquitous Computing* (2002)

- *Chronalgia* (2002)

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We are privileged to continue with our periodic excerpts from the **Assiel Manual of Afterlife Maladies and Nostrums**, ©Paradiso Publications. While a medical manual for those who've transitioned beyond the mortal realm might seem redundant to the casual reader, we present these excerpts as a reminder that even aetheric beings are complex organisms, with their own special set of gifts, dilemmas and solutions.

Warning: These excerpts are for information and educational purposes only and not for use in actual treatment by beings other than certified afterlife health technicians.

Acute Morphological Aphasia

Etiology: This exceedingly rare ailment is limited to a small subset of souls who in life suffered some extreme frontal lobe trauma, and tested exceptionally highly for extra-cognitive abilities, also known as ESP, psychokinesis, etc. (approximately one in every hundred million). This combination of brain injury and "psychic" ability occasionally produces volatile results in the form of gross morphological alterations. After death, victims of AMA appear to "forget" their physical forms and, over time, "lose" them. A sufferer's limbs can grow wildly and haphazardly, like tree limbs, or they can disappear completely. Facial features can distort into the faces of relatives, a childhood pet, favorite flower or national monument.

Pathogenesis: After dying in a fall from the Teacups ride at Wonderland Park in southern California, Patient K, a housewife from Corpus Christi, Texas, suffered repeated bouts of Acute Morphological Aphasia. Upon entering Purgatory a long-repressed eating disorder surfaced in Patient K and at random intervals her left arm would morph into a large blueberry Pop Tart. It was necessary to put her in a full body cast to keep her from consuming the affected limb.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: There remains no permanent cure for AMA. Often, symptoms spontaneously go into remission after one to two hundred years. In these cases, Purgatory becomes both a cathartic area for sin and a place where Acute Morphological Aphasia can run its course. Those who remain asymptomatic tend to move on to the higher orders of existence. Those occasional souls which don't recover can often find employment as contract demons in the lower realms, where their eating disorders are put to good use.

Morbid Depressive Scleroderma

Etiology: An extreme form of long-term clinical depression which expresses itself in a fossilizing catatonia. Symptoms often appear even before these lost souls are processed into Purgatory. Often depressive in

life, the transition to the afterlife is itself thought to be the triggering cause for the syndrome in some.

Pathogenesis: Due to the long-term immobility of a soul stricken with MDS, those souls left on or near the ground can experience the same mineralization process as fossils on Earth. Often found curled in a fetal position, souls with MDS will sometimes be mistaken for small, smooth boulders. Care should always be taken when clearing ground for new structures that it is merely bedrock and not afflicted souls being quarried.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: No soul that has expressed symptoms has come back from MDS. In hopes of giving the afflicted a sense of purpose, and perhaps spurring a future spontaneous recovery, boulders identified as MDS sufferers are given to Sisyphus to use on his endless climbs.

Late-onset Pathological Refutation Disorder

Etiology: This syndrome describes a small group of souls who remain neurotically insistent that they are not only alive, but still living on Earth. Most LPRD sufferers are Americans and often classified in life as Type A personalities. Those in finance, law enforcement or political office are most at risk of developing LPRD after death.

Pathogenesis: Forceful over-achievers in life, LPRD sufferers will often construct crude versions of the tools and circumstances of their Earthly life while in Purgatory. An arrangement of large stones will serve for a desk and chairs while briefcases are commonly woven from fallen tree limbs and reeds that grow along the edge of the Lethe. LPRD sufferers must be approached cautiously. When confronted by the evidence of their passing, they can become abusive or violent. The most acute cases will return to Earth and haunt the places familiar to them in life.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: Fortunately, LPRD is treatable with basic psycho-analytical methods. The only souls resistant are those who were psychiatrists and psychologists on Earth. One of these souls, Patient F, set up a Purgatory office for himself and proved to have a true talent for treating other souls. Because his methods proved so successful, and he had little interest in moving on to higher planes of existence, Patient F was allowed to keep his office and Abariel, his guardian angel, was assigned as his receptionist.

Chaotic Liquefaction Syndrome

Etiology: This is an ailment of a soul's phase transition from matter to aether. It's characterized as a softening of the bones and soft tissues-the soul's projection of these structures while it still regards itself as still retaining its Earthly solidity. Chaotic Liquefaction only affects souls at the

earliest stages of transition. Souls who've already ascended to higher realms and those assigned to the lower depths appear to be immune.

Pathogenesis: Souls with extreme forms of CFS cannot manifest physically and vaporize entirely. Some re-manifest over time. Others never come back, and remain in this vaporous state for eternity. They are known as Sublimes. Neither angel or human, they are a wholly unique class of being.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: Treatment of CLS remains controversial both here and in Heaven. Some orders of Angels (both Heavenly and Fallen) argue that the Sublimes should be accepted as a new aetheric form. Treatments for souls who exhibit simple liquefaction can be helped by being taken back to Earth and re-experiencing their afterlife transition, however a small percentage of these souls go Sublime during the re-enactment. This side-effect of transition continues to be studied.

Systemic Diabolic Infection

Etiology: Colloquially known as "demon possession," this systemic version is limited to souls hosting a particularly powerful demonic infection, otherwise, the possession would have remitted at the death of the host's Earthly body. Like diabolic tape worms, these possessions parasitize the soul's life force even after death.

Pathogenesis: Those possessing other-worldly and/or spiritual insight in life are most susceptible to this infection, with the "saintly" being the most vulnerable. The first documented case occurred in Athens to Saint Xenakis (1049-1098 AD). He experienced a peculiarly unsuccessful, though long lasting bout of demonic possession. The demon that took control of his body appeared to have a stutter or some related speech impediment, so his taunts and curses were seldom understandable. Also, the demon did not speak Greek, and could only taunt those who spoke ancient Latin or Aramaic. The demon's attempts to manifest the wounds of Christ in Father Xenakis' body mostly resulted in the Father passing copious amounts of gas, which the demon later claimed was what it really wanted all along. While the possession was in many ways clumsy, the demon in question was tenacious enough to continue its insidious infection even after death.

A note: Besides saints, the group that most often experiences long-term demon possession are telephone information operators. No one knows why.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: Post-mortem exorcism has proven dangerous. In the worst cases, the soul itself is exorcised to the lower depths along with the demon infecting it. The soul can be returned to the higher

realms, of course, but the process is lengthy and involves centuries of paperwork.

Soul micro-surgery has proven highly effective. Procedures have been developed in collaboration with human surgical advisors as well as ex-demons acting as consultants. More information can be found in the Arcadian Handbook of Anima Chirurgery in the chapter, "Treatment of Conjoined Protoplasms."

God Complex

Etiology: The name pretty much says it all.

Pathogenesis: Those afflicted with God Complex are known throughout the higher and lower realms as the most insufferable beings in existence. The afflicted often include heart surgeons, airline pilots, computer programmers, actors, generals and television programming executives.

Prophylaxis and Treatment: There is no cure. Souls afflicted with acute God Complex must be isolated so as not to infect (or harass) others. Usually, they are assigned some small, meagerly populated parallel universe and sent away to rule in isolation. Some of these "gods" have proven surprisingly inspirational to local populations. Henry Jennings Gannett, a neurologist from Selma, Alabama, so inspired the beetle-creatures on GSN-324 that the entire population of the planet pitched in to roll the largest dung ball in the universe in his honor.

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