

# The Sequence

A serial killer and their therapist are having a last heart-to-heart. Dreams and memories of murder and manipulation are blending together. This is a closed-room one-shot for two players that ends when either character leaves the room.

A fan-made scenario for KULT: Divinity Lost

# Introduction

“The Sequence” is a locked-room scenario for two players.

**Content warnings:** serial killer, abusive therapist, violence perpetrated by player character, potential violence between player characters, drugs. In particular, memories of past murder victims may be modified to accommodate lines & veils.

These notes are unofficial Fan Content for KULT: Divinity Lost, permitted under the Helmgast Fan Content Policy: <https://helmgast.se/meta/fan-content-policy>

“The Sequence” is a work in progress. This is version 4.

If you decide to run this scenario, I encourage you to change anything you feel needs changing, and keep what you like.

Text in *italics* are examples of what the GM might say.

## Themes

It’s a little on the nose, isn’t it? This scenario is about conflict and resolution. The player characters have been set up to fail, in violent opposition to each other. However, the characters could just let go, and choose to not do it. The players will answer, through their play, whether that is possible.

# What is going on

The Serial Killer is about to finish their sequence of murders and be released from demonic bounds, at least so they think. They have been tasked with killing the Psychologist. During this therapy session, the Psychologist performs a procedure based on psychedelic drugs and Rorschach blots. The purpose is to get into the Serial Killer's mind, understand what is wrong with them, and possibly manipulate their mind.

Each of Rorschach blots come with a scene, where at first the Serial Killer only but then also the Psychologist, are drawn into dreams based on these memories.

**The curse.** The Serial Killer is the scion of old money who for some time ran his family's businesses successfully. Half a year ago he was first visited by a being he calls the Grey-Faced man. The Grey-Faced man claimed to have put a curse on him, and that this curse was the explanation why his life had turned to shit. The only way to escape it is to kill a sequence of seven people. If they do, in the right order, and to the right specifications, they will be spared. If not, they will be cursed for the rest of their short life.

**The alucinade.** In fact, the Grey-Faced man is an alucinade (KDL core book p. 250), a creature of madness formed out of the Serial Killer's guilt over abandoning their children, betraying their partner, and disappointing their parents. Drop hints about this in the form of similarities between victims and people that have been important to the Serial Killer, and similarities between the Grey-Faced Man and the Serial Killer themselves. If the connection is not made explicit, that is okay; it can be a nihilistic mystery without a solution.

**The Sequence.** This is the sequence of murders prescribed by the Grey-Faced Man: The Man, the Doctor, the Boy, the Girl, the Woman, the Priest, the Shrink. The first victims are random people, but they represent people the Serial Killer has wronged and let down. The Priest is the priest that married them to their estranged partner. The Shrink is the psychologist.

If lines & veils demand, change the people in the sequence. For example, the Boy and the Girl could be exchanged for the Stranger (representing the Serial Killer themselves) and the Father or Mother (representing the Serial Killer's most respected or feared parent).

**Dr. Steiner's Rorschach card deck.** The Psychologist's deck of Rorschach ink blots is infused with magic of the dream world. They have gotten it from their mentor after they died under

suspicious circumstances. They have also experienced its effects first hand, in intimate detail. For an in-person game, laminated Rorschach cards might make a nice prop.

**The Psychologist's mentor.** The customised Rorschach blots were created by the Psychologist's mentor, Dr. Steiner. Dr. Steiner was pretentious, cruel, and abusive, but may still command the Psychologist's respect, admiration or fear; after all, most memories of abuse have been repressed. The shape of the relationship is up to the player.

**Metropolis.** Stockholm is close to Metropolis, and the Procedure thins the veil of the Illusion. When they are deep into the procedure and if they look out of the window, they can see through the Illusion to see the destroyed skyscrapers of Metropolis. If the Serial Killer is unlucky, they might leave the apartment and end up in Metropolis.

## Character concepts

These descriptions of the character concepts are for letting the players choose characters. The longer descriptions that follow are for the player's eyes only, because they contain some secrets that should not be revealed before the scenario.

**Setting the stage.** *Stockholm, Thursday, October 6, 2022, quarter past seven in the evening, and time for the therapy session.*

**The Serial Killer.** You are the scion of old money who for some time ran your family's businesses successfully. Then, it all went downhill; you lost your partner, your child, and you are on the verge of bankruptcy. Half a year ago you were first visited by The Grey-Faced Man. The Grey-Faced Man claimed to have put a curse on you, and that this curse was the explanation why your life has turned to shit. The only way to escape it is to kill a sequence of seven people.

**The Psychologist.** You are a successful solo-practicing therapist to the rich and the gullible, and the one protégé of the famous Dr. Steiner who is still active. Your expertise is in combining psychotropic drugs, hypnotherapy and suggestion to make your clients better, as well as getting what you want—or most of the time, just running down the clock while the client is droning on about themselves. After a year of fruitless efforts, you have decided to use Dr. Steiner's procedure on your most recalcitrant subject.

# The Serial Killer

You are the scion of old money who for some time ran your family's businesses successfully. Two years ago, it all went downhill; you lost your partner, your child, and you are on the verge of bankruptcy. Half a year ago you were first visited by a being you call the Grey-Faced man. The Grey-Faced man claimed to have put a curse on you, and that this curse was the explanation why your life has turned to shit. The way to escape it is to kill a sequence of seven people: The Man, the Doctor, the Boy, the Girl, the Woman, the Priest, the Shrink. If you do, in the right order, and to the right specifications, you will be spared.

The Sequence is almost complete. You have evaded detection, using a different M.O. for each murder. Mercifully, the details are blurry in your mind. The last victim in the Sequence is your therapist. Once you kill them, the Grey-Faced Man has promised that the curse will lift, and you can go on with your life. If not, you will be cursed for the rest of your short life.

**Occupation.** Failed business leader, living off inherited capital, serial killer.

**Dark secret.** Guilty of Crimes.

**Disadvantages.** Cursed (the Sequence and the Grey-Faced Man). Choose **Liar** or **Drug Addict**.

**Advantages.** Choose two out of **Exit Strategy**, **At Any Cost**, and **Eye for an Eye**.

**Attributes.** Assign +2, +1 and +0 to the passive Fortitude, Reflexes and Willpower. Assign +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, -1, and -2 to the other attributes.

**Relations.** Describe and rate (neutral, meaningful or vital) your relations to your ex-partner and your psychologist.

## Questions

- What did you do that was so bad that you won't ever see your ex or your child again?
- Is that also the reason your parents won't talk to you?
- You have been in therapy for over a year, without making any progress, without it making any difference. Why do you keep coming? Is it just so you can finish the Sequence?

# The Psychologist

You are a successful solo-practicing therapist to the rich and the gullible, and the one protégé of the famous Dr. Steiner who is still active. Your expertise is in combining psychotropic drugs, hypnotherapy and suggestion to make your clients better, as well as getting what you want—or most of the time, just running down the clock while the client is droning on about themselves. After a year of fruitless efforts, you have decided to use Dr. Steiner's procedure on your most recalcitrant subject. They are rich asshole who has clearly made a mess out of their life, but refuses to tell you anything useful. For the last year or so, they have been paying your considerable hourly rate to basically sulk in your office once every two weeks.

You have prepared the procedure, laid out the cards and carefully used the eyedropper bottle to add the psychoactive drug to the green tea. Two drops for you, five drops for the client. It is fairly simple. You will show Dr. Steiner's modified Rorschach blots, one at a time, and the client will enter into a lucid dream-like state, "chemical hypnosis", as Dr. Steiner put it. They will re-live their memories, possibly changing and re-interpreting according to their subconscious desires. You ask questions and make observations. In this hypnotic state, the client is open to inquiry and highly suggestible. Your questioning also breaks down the barrier between the patient's dreaming mind and yours, allowing you to eventually observe and even intervene in their dream-memory. When followed all the way to completion, the procedure can be highly effective for manipulative ends.

You know this first-hand, after years in therapy and training with Dr. Steiner before he passed. Mercifully, you don't remember much of what he used the procedure to do to you.

**Occupation.** Psychologist, only somewhat disgraced from the mainstream of the profession. Self-employed therapist of the rich and troubled.

**Dark secret.** Victim as well as responsible for psychological occult experiments.

**Disadvantages.** **Repressed Memories** (redacted). Choose **Phobia** or **Mental Compulsion**.

**Advantages.** Artifact (Dr. Steiner's Rorschach deck). Choose two out of **Intuitive**, **Observant** or **Implanted Messages**.

**Attributes.** Assign +2, +1 and +0 to the passive Fortitude, Reflexes and Willpower. Assign +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, -1, and -2 to the other attributes.

**Relations.** Describe and rate (neutral, meaningful and vital) one relation to a non-player character and to your client.

### **Questions**

- Your client has been in therapy for over a year, without making any progress. They refuse to open up, and you are making no headway. Why are they still with you? Is there anything else in it for you than the money?
- Why have you decided on using Dr Steiner's procedure on the client this evening? Are you really out to help them, do you want something from them, or is it just a power trip?
- What do you feel when you look at the Rorschach blots in Dr. Steiner's deck?

# Beginning

Ask follow-up questions based on the answers to the above questions. If you need to go through the answers to the questions when both players are listening, be careful to not reveal the sequence and that it ends with The Shrink.

*It's Thursday, October 6, 2022, quarter past seven in the evening.*

*It's an office on Östermalm, Stockholm, one of these old houses where you can only get an apartment if you've inherited it from an old relative, or if you know someone. It's on the second floor, outside is the esplanade, a row of trees, and beyond it the water.*

*You've just sat down and both taken a sip of the green tea that starts every session.*

Here are two questions to start the session off:

*[Psychologist], what is your office like?*

Establish what the environment is like, and why.

*[Serial Killer], are you sitting comfortably?*

**A memory of Dr. Steiner.** When the cards are about to come out, the Psychologist may remember Dr. Steiner talking about them, showing them, and pointing out the subtle asymmetries that have been introduced to the classical Rorschach blots, and how these are absolutely crucial. You may describe Dr. Steiner's office, and that he had a portrait painting of himself. Who does that?

The Psychologist knows that Dr. Steiner came to Sweden as a 19 year old, and that he was perfectly capable of speaking without that thick German accent. However, he still used it in therapy and in public speaking, because of the perceived authority he felt it gave him.

**The Procedure.** Mechanically, roll the Artifact advantage without offering any options when the procedure begins. If there are complications, let the Procedure affect the Psychologist's mind more heavily, and let the Serial Killer understand more about what is being done to them. Once the Procedure starts working, give the Psychologist a +1 bonus to moves to Read a Person and Influence Other against the Serial Killer. On a failure, don't give any bonuses, and let the Psychologist suffer intrusive memories immediately.



Ask the Psychologist what card they begin with, if they just draw one randomly or show them in a particular order. Whatever they chose, confirm that this is just the way Dr. Steiner instructed that the deck should be used.

## Card scenes

Play these scenes when cards are drawn. Not all scenes need to be played, and not in this particular order. In the beginning, it's just a memory or vision that the Serial Killer is having, and they choose what they tell the Psychologist. After a while, the Psychologist shares the visions. Later, let the Serial Killer and finally also the Psychologist be drawn into the vision and be able to act.

Let the Psychologist start the procedure, showing the cards. If needed, prompt the Serial Killer by describing the look of the card and asking what they see. For the first cards, free association is enough. For later cards, the Serial Killer should remember—first just remember, then re-live, with modifications—murders and other events with each card. The player may do this unprompted, and if so, make note of what they say and how scenes need to be adapted. If not, prompt them by narrating part of the scene.

Take note of what the player comes up with and adapt the scenes to that, and to the answers to the questions.

1. **The Boy or Girl in the woods.** A black card that looks like a butterfly or moth.

This child symbolises the Serial Killer themselves. Ask about their childhood. Did they play in the woods?

2. **The Boy or the Girl after killing them, posing them in their bed.** A black and red pattern that can be interpreted as humans, animals, blood.

It's a terrace-house in a suburb. It's all dark. Parents are asleep downstairs. This child symbolises the Serial Killer's child. Ask about the child's favourite toys. They are found in the room.

After playing scenes with children, drop this quote:

*As the poet Stig Dagerman wrote in "To kill a child", the one who has killed a child knows that silence is their enemy, and for the rest of their life, they have to fight it by screaming.*

3. **The Doctor, crying as they set her on fire.** Another black and red pattern. Two humans facing each other, or one face with black tears.

The Doctor, Sara Löfgren, treated the Serial Killer's partner, successfully, for cancer. They are found on a hospital parking lot, late at night, as the Serial Killer is dousing her with gasoline in her car, preparing to set fire to her. The doctor is pleading and begging, asking why.

4. **The Woman.** A black pattern often read as animal skin. The fur coat worn by the Woman when she was killed. The Woman symbolises either the Serial Killer themselves or their partner.

When the Serial Killer arrives, the woman is already dead in the living room of her apartment. As they step out of the elevator, they see themselves coming down the corridor, towards the elevator. Their face is grey, their eyes fixated in front of them. The face of the Woman has been mutilated. In the mess, they can see their lover, or themselves.

5. **The first meeting with the Grey-Faced Man.** A black pattern that looks like a bat, butterfly or moth.

The Serial Killer was about to leave the office in the evening, going home to an empty home. And there he was, shuffling in, immediately commanding attention, and with a strong body odour. Describe the old, worn, pale man but include some features that remind of the Serial Killer themselves.

6. **The Man.** A black card, animal skin or rug. The card most often associated with sexual thoughts.

The Man in the dream fights back, causing real wounds on the Serial Killer's body.

7. **Afterwards.** Humans facing each other, in gray. Associated with femininity.

The Serial Killer sees their own life ruined, parallels with their partner and family. Ask about their home. Fill it with objects from crime scenes, stains, murder weapons. Paint the picture of a lair of an unhinged murderer, so tainted with physical evidence that it can never be made clean.

**8. The Psychologist.** The first multicoloured card with pink, yellow, green and blue. Maybe two animals climbing on the sides. Associated with relief after the dark and challenging cards.

Here, it is time to bring in the Psychologist's memories. If the Psychologist has succeeded on both their Artifact and Repressed Memories rolls, use innocuous memories of Steiner and the Deck. If they have failed, use the phobia or compulsion scene, or the green tea scene.

**9. The Priest and the Psychologist.** A green, orange and red card. Human is the most common response, about the red part. Could be seahorses.

It's a small parish church, with medieval paintings on the ceiling. The Serial Killer recognises the church and the priest from their wedding. The Serial Killer is in the sacristy, with their hands in the Priest's guts, torturing them. The priest is calling their name, asking why.

The Psychologist is on the altar, tied up and being affected by invisible forces, and has the opportunity to release them by either cutting the ropes, or killing them.

**10. The last card,** complex and multicoloured. Crabs, lobsters, spiders, rabbit head, caterpillars, worms, snakes, flowers and a gray structure on top. When this card is used, it is time to See Through The Illusion, and into Metropolis.

Ask if the curtains on the windows are open or not, to see whether they see the burned out and broken skyscrapers instead of the trees, water and esplanade.

**The end of the cards.** There are ten cards in a standard Rorschach deck. Dr. Steiner's deck is not standard, though, so it may have more cards if needed. Once the scenes and therefore cards start to run out, you may let the character see through the Illusion and intro Metropolis.

You may also quote the sequence in full, making sure to include The Shrink at the end: The Man, the Doctor, the Boy, the Girl, the Woman, the Priest, the Shrink. At this point, after hearing about the murders, the Psychologist should know what this means.

# Psychologist's memories

These scenes are for use as the Psychologist's Repressed Memories or as side-effects of using Dr. Steiner's deck. The Repressed Memories should be triggered if Dr. Steiner comes up and occasionally if the Psychologist looks at the later cards in the deck.

**Phobia or Compulsion scene.** This memory takes the Psychologist back to when Dr. Steiner used the Procedure on them, acting out his power on them.

*You're in the dark, but you are not alone. You can move your limbs, but you feel nothing solid. Are you standing up, laying down? Are you falling, or floating? You can touch yourself, that's the only tangible object around.*

*You hear Dr. Steiner's voice, not with the accent that he uses for public speaking and therapy. His actual voice.*

*"Let's play a little game. I have something for you today. It's not very nice, I must confess. But it will amuse me, and that's what matters here, isn't it, [Psychologist]?"*

He introduces the object, or activity, that the Psychologist will later be phobic against or obsessed by.

**Green tea scene.** In this memory, the Psychologist has been entrusted with preparing the tea that is used for the Procedure. At this stage, they are trusted to do so without supervision. It takes place in Dr. Steiner's office. Ask about the similarities or differences with to the Psychologist's office.

*You're in Dr. Steiner's office. It's not too dissimilar to yours. The portrait is here, the same that you now have. Who puts up a painting of themselves?*

*You've been tasked with preparing the green tea. The eye dropper is there. Two drops for him, five drops for you.*

*You could just reverse it, give you the power for once. Or you could just add a lethal dose.*

The Psychologist knows that ten drops is a lethal dose.

If they choose to poison Steiner, play out a short scene with Dr. Steiner's widow, talking about his sad and sudden passing, where she gives the Psychologist the Rorschach deck.

## Other events that may happen

**Seeing the procedure explained.** The Serial Killer finds themselves watching the Psychologist and their mentor as the mentor explains the Rorschach blot test, and the use of the drug to enter patient's dreams. He describes it as a type of chemical hypnosis, demonstrates by putting a drop from an eye dropper into a mug of green tea.

**Dr. Steiner returns.** If the Psychologist takes initiative to use the deck in a new way, they may end up (alone or together with the Serial Killer, depending on whether they are participating), back in Dr. Steiner's office. If the Serial Killer is there, the Grey-Faced Man is also there, acting as Steiner's patient. Steiner acts condescending, responding to the Psychologist with questions.

**Taking a large dose of the drops.** If any of the characters get more than five drops but less than ten, which is the lethal dose, let them roll to Endure Injury with harm -2. Then let them have another vision. After the visions, those who took the drops wake up in a trashed apartment, furniture broken, and with puke on the floor and on themselves.

For a lethal dose, let them Endure Injury with -3 repeatedly.

**If the Psychologist does not initiate the procedure.** Let the Serial Killer sense that something is off with the tea, that the subtle aromas of green tea are mixed with something medicinal that lingers on their tongue, and that they feel dizzy and dazed if they get up.

**Moving in the apartment.** If the characters move around in the apartment, let the Psychologist take the lead on what it is like and what objects are there. Add elements that remind of Dr. Steiner and the procedure if necessary.

# The End

As promised, the scenario should end when either of the characters leave the room, or at least when they leave the building.

**Attacking immediately.** Nothing is stopping the Serial Killer attacks the Psychologist immediately. The Psychologist will likely be injured, and knocked out. In the fight, let the green tea be spilled and the Rorschach blot cards be scattered on the floor. There is something in the scent of the tea, a slightly metallic, medicinal note. The Serial Killer falls barely conscious, and has a memory of one of the cards. The Psychologist falls into a reverie about the tea and Dr. Steiner.

**Relationship to the Psychologist.** If the Serial Killer has a high relationship to the Psychologist, either from the start or after forming an obsession, this will be one situation where a roll is necessary to harm a relation. See the KDL core book p. 135.

**Killing the Psychologist.** Probably the most natural option for the Serial Killer is to complete the sequence, murdering the Psychologist. The Psychologist cannot put up much of a fight, and is likely unarmed.

However, whether the Serial Killer is successful or not, that will not stop the Grey-Faced Man. Let the Serial Killer see the alucinade, maybe in a mirror on the way out, standing behind them.

*Now you see the striking similarity between that pale, emaciated face and yours. Just add a few decades, a few dozen pointlessly cruel murders ... You realise that this is far from over.*

**Running into Metropolis.** The Serial Killer might attempt but fail, because the Psychologist successfully fights back, or because they are interrupted. They may run. If they are severely injured or unstable, they run into Metropolis.

**Letting the Psychologist go.** It is physically very easy for the Serial Killer to let the Psychologist go. Just leave the room without killing them. Of course, given the threat of the Grey-Faced Man, that is easier said than done. However, the Serial Killer is free to step out into the surrounding Elysium.

*And you just know, that you have to run. Run, as far as you can, for as long as you can.*

**Excising the Grey-Faced Man.** With the Psychologist's help, the alucinade's grip on the Serial Killer can be loosened. For this to work, both need to be at the stage where the Illusion is fraying, the procedure needs to have proceeded uninterrupted, and the Serial Killer needs to have decided to break the Sequence by not killing the Psychologist. Only then will the Grey-Faced man appear in a modified memory elicited from a card.

If the players need prompting, the Psychologist may see that the Grey-Faced Man looks like the serial killer.

The Grey-Faced Man will rant and threaten the Serial Killer, and if they refuse to finish the sequence, he will give up the game. He will admit that there never was any curse.

*You idiot. It was all you. And you will keep doing it ... keep destroying everything.*

The psychologist may then help to change the memory, allow the killer to let go. Ask for another Artifact roll to successfully to this. The creature is will not be destroyed, but the Serial Killer will be given some temporary respite, and may have a better chance when the alucinade comes back later.