

## WAREHOUSE 23

### The True Eye, by John Aegard

*David Lester allowed himself a brief moment of optimism. It had been at least 20 hours since he'd been kidnapped off the San Francisco wharfs by Sing Tam's agents. Brady and Collins knew where he'd been going, and the Tong couldn't have gotten very far with him. Any moment now, they'd come busting through the door -*

*The door cracked open, admitting a whiff of sunlit opium smoke. Three of Sing's men sauntered in. Two stayed at the door; the other crouched at Lester's side, whispering in his ear.*

*"You still will not tell us what has been done with our traitorous swine of a brother?"*

*"I told you, he's doing a canary act in a United States Marshal's office." The Chinese man sighed softly. "I don't even know why you're bothering with me right now. The FBI's gonna be all over this pier before sunset. I'd be busy hauling ass back to China if I were you."*

*His tormentor smiled politely, produced a wet sponge. Lester tasted blood and sweat as his face was mopped clean. "That is unfortunate, officer."*

*The door was flung open again, and another man appeared in the room. He stormed across the creaky warehouse floor, seized Lester's face in his hand and stared straight into the cop's eyes. The new man had a queer gaze; his left eye was an alien purple, nested in a socket of white scar tissue that stood out in sharp relief to his amber flesh. Lester tried to blink, tried to look away from the inhuman thing - and was terrified when he found that he couldn't.*

*"Let us discuss the small matter of my nephew's relationship with your department, Mr. Lester."*

*The gaze of that horrible eye lanced straight through Lester's mind, shredding his carefully trained resolve in moments. The cop whimpered and found himself answering all of Sing Tam's questions . . .*



It's unclear where and how the True Eye came into existence. Some say that this Eye was enchanted by one of Adam Weishaupt's disciples to serve the Primus Illuminatus. Others say that it dates back much further than that, coming from the remains of an ancient demonologist or mentalist. Still others, citing its clearly inhuman appearance, believe that its origins are extraterrestrial or even

extraplanar. While the origins of the True Eye may be debated, its powers are not - The Eye grants its user the power to know and compel the truth.

The Eye appears as a healthy, human-sized, purple-black eye with a horizontally slitted pupil. Sustained by some extraordinary life force, it will stay moist and slightly warm to the touch in any environment up to hard vacuum. The Eye is not invulnerable, though; a single point of any kind of impact or fire damage will destroy it.

To obtain the Eye's benefits, the user must be prepared to sacrifice one of his natural eyes. The empty socket must be excavated thoroughly and the Eye fixed securely in place. This is a more-or-less routine procedure after TL5. Prior to TL5, the GM should assign a chance of infection, bearing in mind the advice in [\*GURPS Basic Set\*](#), p. 134.

The surgeon need not bind any nerves, blood vessels or muscles to the Eye - the artifact's magic will knit everything in place within three weeks. At the end of that time the user will be able to see dimly through it. Full benefits of the Eye will be developed gradually after this initial healing period; they should be fully manifested after another month. The Eye may always be removed, and a conventional flesh or cyber eye substituted in its place, without risk beyond that of the operation.

Since the Eye will always be "off" in comparison to its natural counterpart, it will subtract one level from the user's Attractiveness. The Eye also will halve either the severity of its user's Bad Vision or the bonus of its user's Acute Vision.

The Eye will knit itself to a machine as long as the appropriate connections are available and the machine's controlling hardware possesses sentience. Once the requisite healing time has passed, the Eye will act exactly as a conventional sensor, with the additional benefits outlined below. Output from a device attached to the Eye will include illusions and astral phenomena if the controlling intelligence so desires. This includes output from someone using any appropriate image-capturing cyberware.

After the user has grown accustomed to the Eye, it will grant him the following extraordinary benefits:

- The Empathy advantage, as described on p. B20.
- A further +2 to his Detect Lies skill, on top of the +4 granted by Empathy, for a net +6.
- The ability to torture the subject of an interrogation merely by fixing his gaze on the subject's, granting a +6 to his Interrogation skill as per the rules on p. B66. Being subject to this kind of torture would certainly call for a Fright Check; the negative modifier for the check is at the GM's discretion.
- Astral Vision, as per the spell on p. 61 of [\*GURPS Grimoire\*](#), but with no time to cast or energy cost.
- See Secrets, as per the spell in [\*GURPS Magic\*](#), p. 48, but with no time to cast or energy cost.
- The ability to detect illusions without effort. The sensing effects of the Eye will work through clairvoyance, but not through any other remote-sensing methods such as photography, video or holography.

At the GM's discretion, the Eye may also provide some additional, random

insights to its user. These insights will chiefly be related to the campaign's *raison d'être* - for instance, in an Illuminated campaign, the Eye will give glimpses into the tangled webs of the Conspiracy. In a *Kult* campaign, the unfortunate user may receive a peek into Metropolis. And woe be to the Eye-possessing investigator of the Cthulhu Mythos! The GM is encouraged to have fun with this property of the Eye - these brief flashes of understanding may be used to provide critical information to the players or to provide color for the setting.

### Adventure Seeds

The Eye makes a fine McGuffin. Any knowledgeable, unscrupulous group of people will be able to think up a dozen good uses for it, and another dozen good reasons why only they should be allowed to possess it. This kind of adventure is time-tested and will work in almost any genre. The adventure doesn't even have to be dedicated to finding the Eye itself - it could be about finding a countermeasure to the Eye's magic, or perhaps even finding the source of the Eye.

- A young teenager has received the Eye from his cultist parents. The kid slips away; the parents are unable to find him, and the adventurers are called in to find him discreetly before anyone else twigs to the fact that he's missing. Of course, when the child is found, he'll be telling the most interesting stories about what he's seen, stories that should pique any adventurer's or investigator's imagination . . .
- PC netrunners may seize some video or holo footage from the Net that shows interesting astral activity. Naturally, they'll be keen to find the source, especially if the activity concerns them or a loved one.
- PC cops or PIs may be following strange leads in an otherwise unsolved case, when a witness comes forward offering some startling, but unprovable evidence.
- The Eye will also provide some prime opportunities for roleplaying characters who are in a position to make use of it. Will they be willing to mutilate themselves to gain its benefits? Is scientific or mystical knowledge worth the physical and mental anguish that comes with using the Eye? Adventures can easily be based around such questions.

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