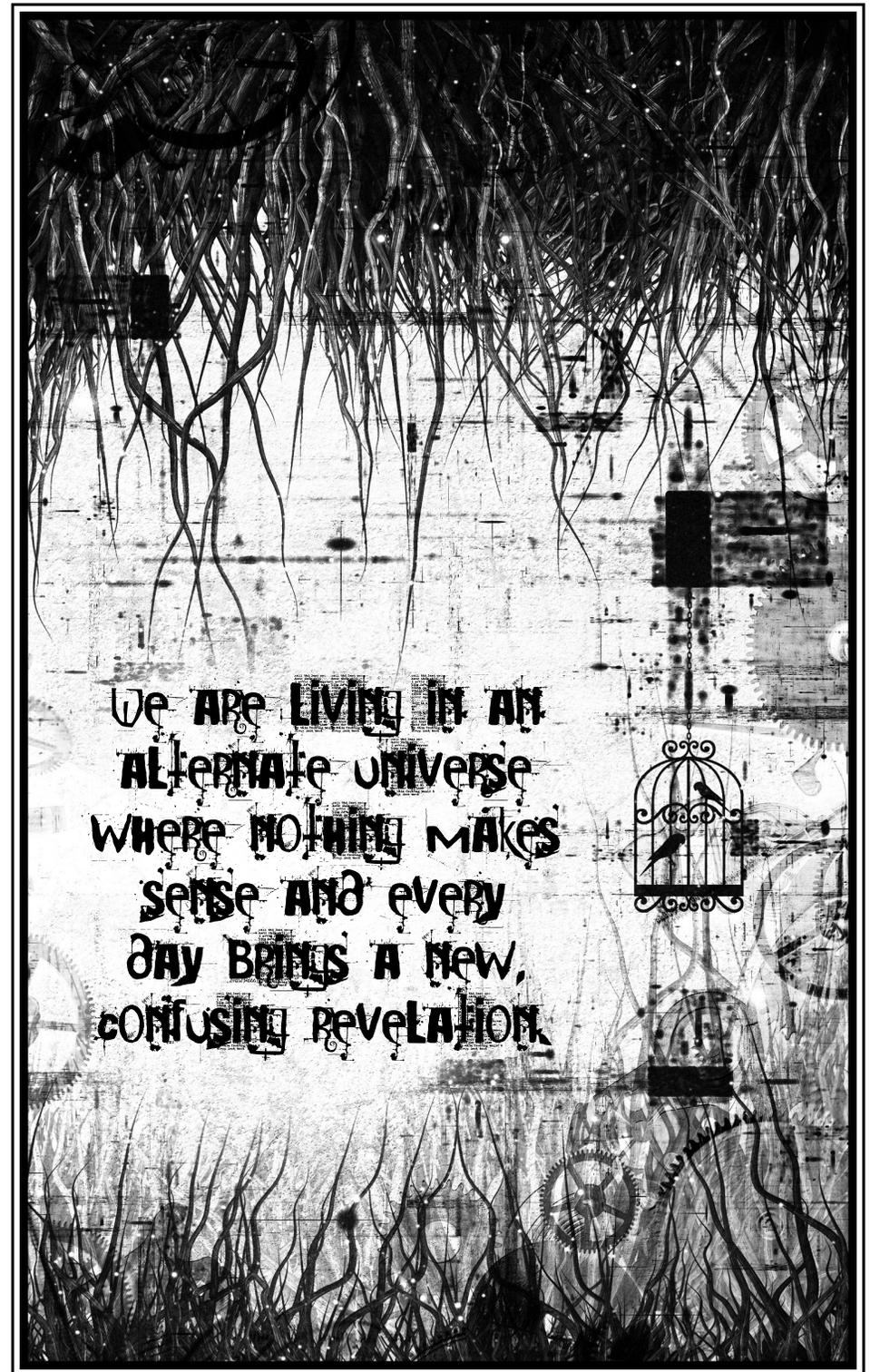


All this time, I have been trying to separate myself from the masks I show others,” she said to no one in particular, because though she had already abandoned the Mask of the Mad Genius some habits are really hard to break. “I knew all along that these masks also affect how I see myself, but now I see that even the idea of an identity is itself a mask. The narrative of who I am cakes on my face and hides me as well as any masquerade ball prop.”

She took off the final mask, proud of her enlightenment. She looked in the mirror to learn what she was, and *nothing* looked back.

They say Humble Lady Ermine lies dreaming, still.



# Who is this Demon?

-Cramulus

**D**emons are everywhere now. Little invisible trickster spirits. All you have to do is hear about one of them and they copy themselves into your head.

**E**verybody's head is full of demons. Thousands of them. Most of them sit there quietly until they're activated. You might be on the phone, catching up with an old friend, and she references a time you two went out to see a movie. All of the sudden the demon comes out. It says, "Did you hear they're making another Batman movie?"

**T**hat wasn't me talking. A demon said that sentence. I remember when it first possessed me. I was in the living room, my friend was playing the new Batman video game and he said "Did you hear they're making another Batman movie?"

**T**his demon was able to work my brain's control panel so easily because his buddy already has a superuser password. That one entered me while I was reading reading Batman comics as a kid, visualizing what it'd be like to be Batman – rich, mysterious, smart as a whip, empowered... It really spoke to me, to the me I wanted to be. And now that demon is holding the door open for other Batman demons. When the movie comes out, Batman will have access to my bank account.

**I** started wondering how I can get rid of these demons possessing me. And I started to wonder how Batman would do it. Maybe he'd go into the batcave and use his computer to collect information on them. Maybe he'd make a list of all his demons and knock them out one by one, committing each one to Arkham Asylum.

**T**hen Batman goes back to the cave and Alfred says, "You are meeting so-and-so for dinner tonight." And Batman realizes that Alfred is a demon too.

**A**nd Batman realizes that Bruce Wayne is a demon too.

**I**f Batman realized that HE was a demon, would he check himself into Arkham Asylum? And then he stops and I wonder:

## Who is this demon trying to lock up Batman?

**T**he first mask she found was the Mask of Submission, which she wore among those monkeys that believed they were more powerful than she. It was the mask that spoke in low tones, that apologized for non-offenses, that scraped and groveled and toed the lines. She had never submitted her will to anyone else's, but she had worn the mask to get things done. She cataloged this mask, and put it away.

**T**he second mask she found was the Mask of Authority, which she wore among those monkeys that believed she was more learned than they. It was the mask that explained, that condescended and smirked. It was a smug bastard of a thing, even though she was not. She wore the mask to make others listen to her, and to make herself feel big. She cataloged this mask, and put it away.

**T**he third mask she found was the Mask of Amiability, which she wore among the monkeys that thought she was their friend. It was the mask that laughed and made small talk, that hosted gatherings and smiled broadly. She was often tired, and grumpy, and hungry, and bored, but the mask kept her in their good graces. She cataloged this mask, and put it away.

**A**nd so it was that she spent many months, naming and scraping away the things that separated her from the world. And she became difficult to deal with - moody and unpredictable - and so others came to shun her home. But she realized that the Mask of Brooding was another affectation, an archetype she had absorbed from the narratives of others, and so she named and shelved that one as well. She found the Mask of Immaturity, the Mask of Worldliness, the Mask of Indifference and the Mask of the Victim. These things, too, she put away, until at last one night in her house she found the final mask, the Mask of Identity.

# TERRIBLE MASKS

Once upon a time in a city on the river there lived Humble Lady Ermine and the young Queen Gogira. Queen Gogira Pennyworth, Dweller in the Sinking Lands, had come to the city from the swamplands to the west, and there she learned the ways of the Goddess: of Jailbreaking and of Barstools, of Grids and Keeping Your Mouth Shut. These things she shared with Humble Lady Ermine, who was in her own lazy way a conduit for strangeness, and a protectress of the slimy things.

And so it was for many months that they lived together in the house of Lady Ermine, and Queen Gogira said unto her hostess “do you even notice the masks you wear?”

“I wear no mask,” insisted Lady Ermine.

“Now come on,” scolded Queen Gogira. “Don’t be an idiot. Listen to yourself when you speak with Doctor Hand, and listen again when you speak with the Baron. You are not the same person. Even when you’re here speaking with me, you are wearing a mask.”

Lady Ermine reflected on this wisdom. “I suppose you could be right,” she admitted. “How terrible it is, that I am constantly hiding my True Self from others. Surely it would be better to be authentic in all my interactions with others, but I am so used to living this way. What should I do about it?”

“Fucked if I know!” Queen Gogira snorted.

It was a short conversation, but it weighed on Lady Ermine, and she resolved to get to the bottom of her masks and see what they were hiding.

# THE MAGICIANS PART II

There's magic everywhere, you know, but it blends into the New Normal and you don't notice it most of the time. Wake up, put on clothes, eat food, get the kids on the bus, get to work... the routine lulls you into mental drowsiness, like highway hypnosis. But every day you get up and you put on clothing you did not make, made of plants you did not grow and synthetic fibers constructed in labs by people who get just as bored at work as you. You live in a house you didn't build and brush your teeth with water that traveled miles and endured all manner of filters and chemical treatments to render it inoffensive to your delicate tastes. The kids get on a bus assembled by strangers and designed by a team of anonymous engineers in Minnesota, and tiny explosions of fermented dinosaurs carry them away.

Almost everything in our lives is magic: conveniences created through the work of others by the sweat of their brows and the power of their imaginations and our collective willingness to say "yes, I will accept this potential reality."

It's funny because the people who are most into MAJHIQUEK are always off wandering through the woods, rambling something borderline racist about Native Americans and pretending that the rocks talk to them, when the most magical thing in their lives is the device in their pocket that can put them in contact with almost any other human being in the world. Instantly. But that can't be magic, because if that was magic everyone would be magicians and they wouldn't be special snowflakes.

EVERYONE IS MAGICIANS.  
YOU ARE NOT A SPECIAL SNOWFLAKE.





At a power plant there is a magician who oversees the grid, and the leylines he guards are high tension wires and if he fails in his task we are all plunged into darkness. At the town clerk's office there is a magician who files the paperwork, and her carelessness or diligence is the difference between your marriage being real or imaginary. And the bankers are all magicians, too.

Civilization is a spell we are all casting, and like any situation with too many cooks in the kitchen, things are a little messy. And some folks on the sidelines, who are stuck chopping broccoli when they'd rather be grilling steak and they hate the smell of broccoli anyway, some of them think about what it would be like to have their own kitchen, or to abolish kitchens altogether, burn the place to the ground. And there are magicians who keep an eye on that shit so we can all keep the illusion alive.

### But what if I like shiny rocks?

Babycakes, if you like shiny rocks you can have your shiny rocks all day. Hell, you can pay too much for them and give them all names and party hats for all I care. See, even though I just spent a while shitting on that, *tricking yourself into believing in rocks is a type of magic, too.*

It's not what I'd call the most useful magic, and it definitely makes you look like a silly wanker, but it's magic all the same.

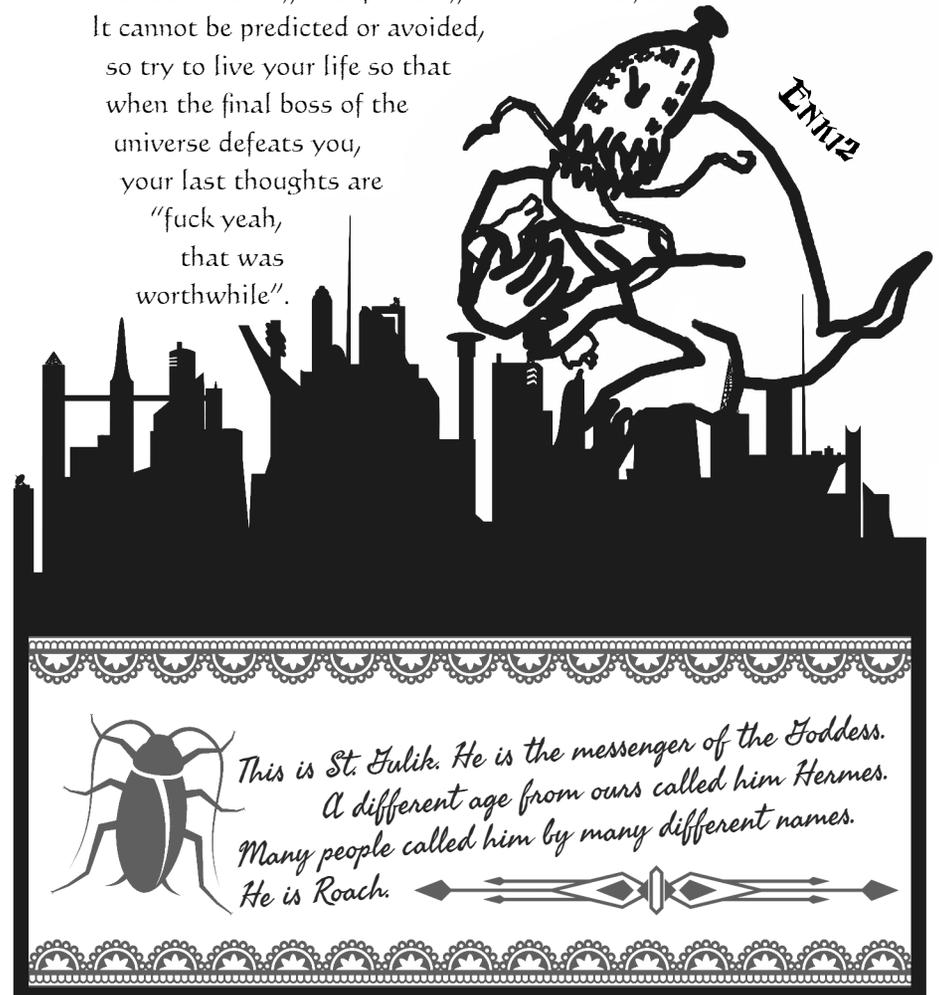
Those rocks aren't talking back to you, that's the 100% Really Real Reality, the kind that stays put when you stop believing in it. Your brain knows this (unless you've got some serious damage going on) and your ability to tell your brain **FUCK OFF THIS IS WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW** is a vital skill for any Magician. The actor's brain knows he isn't Lincoln, but he can tell it to **FUCK OFF** and be Lincoln for a while. The politician knows that global warming is real, but she can tell her brain to **FUCK OFF** so she can make some motherfucking money, and in the end we're all fucked anyway so what's the harm in getting rich along the way? And the lobbyist is telling herself the same lies, too.

# ETHONIC CHRONOS

The Greeks had a very Lovecraftian view of time, as personified by Chronos. A monstrous inevitability, time has not only eaten the past, but will eat the future, and everything it ate was in some sense its descendant. Hungry and ineffable, this personification of entropy is much more frightening than Maxwell's Demon (who personified negentropy).

Remember: one day, unexpectedly, time will eat you.

It cannot be predicted or avoided,  
so try to live your life so that  
when the final boss of the  
universe defeats you,  
your last thoughts are  
"fuck yeah,  
that was  
worthwhile".



# Once Upon a Prickle Prickle

-Cram

Bung Fu the Fool stood buck naked before the monk Nopants. Eventually, Nopants looked up over his morning newspaper. Surprised to see a peen at eye level before him, he spit coffee everywhere.

"Somehow," said the monk, who himself was naked from the waist down, "I was not prepared for that."

"Good morning Wise Master Nopants!" said Bung Fu cheerfully. "I did what you advised: I Let Go of everything so I could learn to swim on my own."

"That's bullshit," said Nopants, pointing at Bung-Fu with a spoon. "You're just parading around naked because you think it'll somehow enlighten you."

"But master, that's what you do!" cried Bung Fu, embarrassed.

"No," said Nopants. "I do it for me. You're doing like me. You haven't let go of anything. You just grabbed my shrapnel and made it your own."

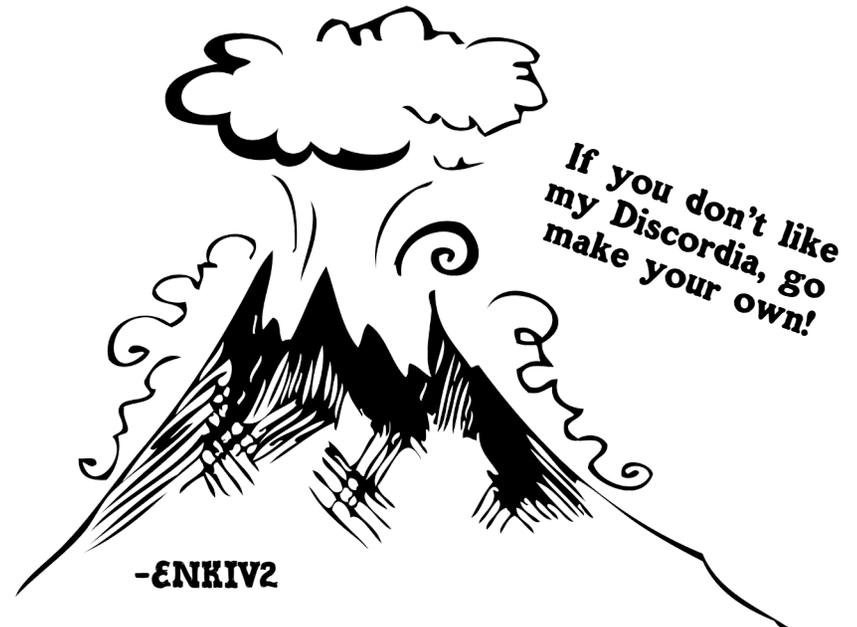
Bung Fu thought about this. "Mise Waster Nopants, what am I supposed to do after I let go? I can't just let go of everything, that's not a good survival strategy."

"You're right," said Nopants. "But it's not really about letting go. It's about being able to let go. It's about realizing that all that stuff you're carrying around is mostly dead weight. So learn to live without that dross."

"And then what?"

Nopants leaned forward as if he was about to whisper a lesson or a great secret. Bung Fu leaned in, eager for instruction. Nopants reached out and slapped him right in his goddamn monkey face.

*"Think for yourself, shmuck!"*



## THE KOAN OF THE DERIVATIVE WORK

**WEN THE MONK ENTERED THE CELL OF HIS FRIEND, TU-TZI FRU-TZI TO FIND THE FLOOR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY FULL OF CRUMPLED PAPERS.**

**"TU-TZI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" WEN ASKED. "SOME KIND OF ORIGAMI FLOOR?"**

**TU-TZI LOOKED UPON HIS HANDS IN DESPAIR. "I'M TRYING TO WRITE SOMETHING, BUT EVERYTHING I DO IS DERIVATIVE" HE CRIED.**

**"YOU'RE TRYING TO AVOID DERIVATIVE WORK?" WEN ASKED. "HOW ORIGINAL!"**

**AFTER A FEW HOURS OF WATCHING CAT VIDEOS, TU-TZI WAS ENLIGHTENED.**



# The Parable of Steve

By Nigel

There was an afternoon one summer when a young man we will call "Steve" happened upon a book like no other he had read. It was on the shelf in his local alternative bookstore, and it was called the "Principia Discordia".

Steve had always thought himself to be quite the rebellious young man, always speaking out about the Man and the System, but with a sense of HUMOR, goddamnit, a sense of ABSURDITY unlike everyone else he knew; this book, he said to himself, is Important. It finally tells me what I am... I am a Discordian. I must find the others!

It took Steve some time to find other Discordians, time during which he renamed himself Pope Buttercup XXIII. He felt that quite a fitting name for a Discordian. He prided himself in his sense of Absurdity, and especially his skills in Randomness, which he practiced by memorizing passages from the Principia.

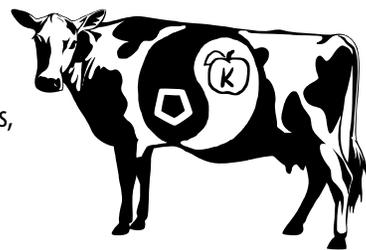
He learned on the Internet that the Discordian Society near him met monthly in a café downtown, and after his months of searching he determined the date and the time, and arranged to present himself to them. When he arrived, he found the place nearly deserted except for a group of ten or twelve people clustered in a back corner, arguing. They were of all descriptions, these people; no two seemed to have anything in common, even their styles of dress; they ranged from the glowering pierced goth chick at one corner, who was seated beside a neatly-groomed silver-haired man in a rather nice suit, to the plump middle-aged matron in a V-necked rayon sweater, to the lively trenchcoat geek thumping his opinion about something-or-other loudly in the middle of the table.

Steve said to himself, "These are my people?"

"What a motley crew... well, they're Discordians, I know how to show them I'm One Of Them."

He stepped up to the table.

**"ZIPINOD(fnord!" he said boldly, "I am Pope Buttercup XXIII! I am random, and say random(y) absurd things, because I am a discordian like you!"**



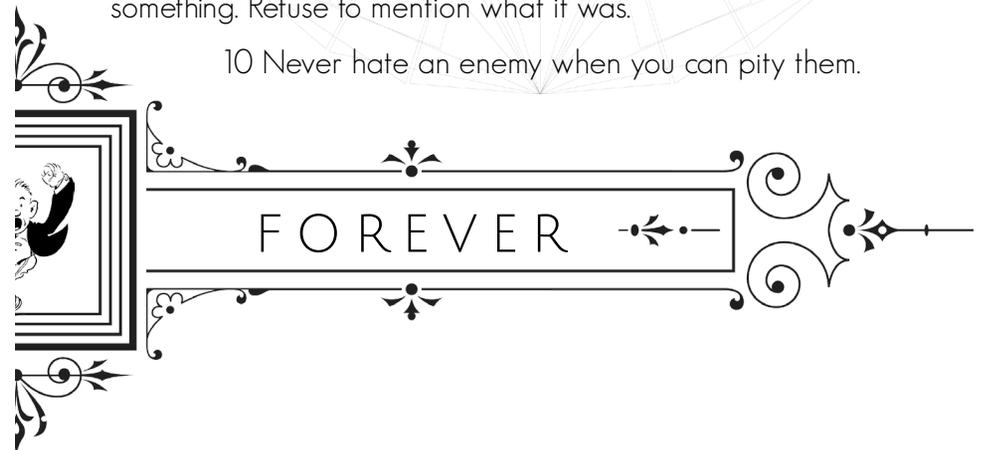
6 - Have a revelation! This should be about something central to the doctrine, eg Our Lady's name, the image of the Chao, who actually wrote the Principia, etc. Either gain an extra level of enlightenment on the subject (use circular logic so no one can disprove you), or realise that the doctrine was wrongly interpreted and the truth is totally different to that presented (in which case Goddess didn't think we were ready for the truth then but are now.)

7 - Find other culture's representations of Goddess. Occasionally pray to (Parvati, Freya, Innana, etc.), or simply make one up.

8 - Before each gathering (prayer meeting, corroboree, session, whatever) of your cable, PREPARE! THINK UP spontaneous things to say, illogical or paradoxical parables to ad lib, and bizarre off-the-cuff koans. FIND embarrassing and/or pedestrian books to leave around (and create obvious excuses for having them - researching the enemy is for the dull and should only be used after your last resort). ARRANGE with some-one to come in and slap you and say something that can have multiple implications and then storm out. CREATE a reason why the cute initiate who joined up last week has to spend the entire meeting naked. RESEARCH new groups to denounce, new obscure historical figures to praise, and new cultural taboos to ignore.

9 - Get everyone listening to whatever you're talking about and then pause as if you suddenly had a deep and fascinating insight into something. Refuse to mention what it was.

10 Never hate an enemy when you can pity them.



# THE EPISKIPPOS' GUIDE TO SEEMING LEARNED, MYSTERIOUS AND PROFOUND

- BY HO CHI HO CHI ZEN

- 1 - Smile politely to those below your station (everyone except other episkipposes and some POEE priests).
- 2 - Never quote any one who those in hearing range have read (or preferably heard of). Never, ever quote the Principia. If you do something discouraged by the Principia which some annoying little neophyte points out, don't use the line from the Good Book which excuses you - you obviously know one, so you don't need to prove it - but stare blankly at the dissenter, and either have them shot or just say "I am well aware of that," or preferably both (in reverse order to that printed).
- 3 - If some-one knocks on your door, don't answer it, but instead adopt a meditative position, make them wait a suitable amount of time, and calmly say "enter."
- 4 - Always contradict yourself in every speech you make. Or dont.
- 5 - Change your name occasionally, or just choose a new one in addition to the one you already have. (Another variant is to change someone elses name. Everyone should be alerted to this name change but them.)



The group fell silent and looked at him curiously for a moment, and then resumed arguing.

Steve was puzzled. This wasn't the reception he'd expected. He spoke again;

**"Excuse me, but do you know where the monkeys fly at midnight? modern politics bores me, and I can swallow my own nose!!"**

Now a few of the others seemed to be paying attention to him, although to his dismay they seemed less than impressed by his perfect grasp of outlandishness.

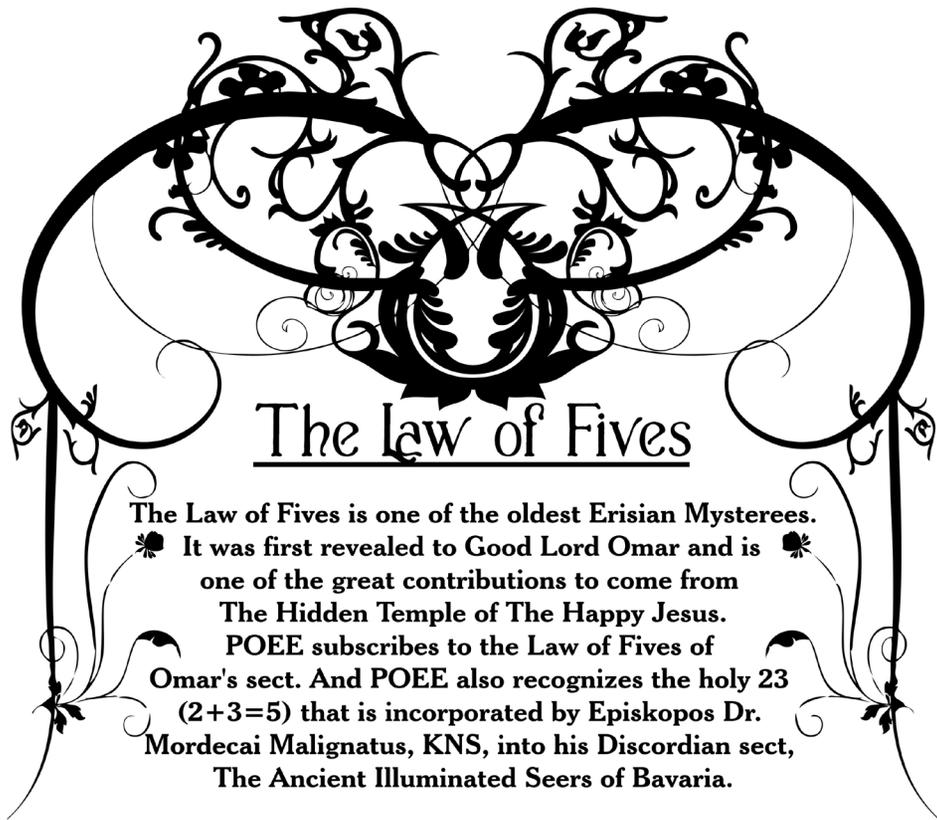
Two or three of them, he noticed... why, they were making fun of him! They were whispering to each other, and looking at him, and laughing! He flushed red in anger. **"Listen, you people! I am a Discordian, and I know what Discordia is, and I came here to find Answers and Truth and Nonsense and Absurdity... what do I find you doing? Just... NOTHING! Nothing at all! Why aren't you Saying Important Nonsense? Why, you're just ARGUING... ARGUING like any schmucks I might find on the street! I am obviously more enlightened and Discordian than you fools. You people are all just alike. You should be different! You should PAY ATTENTION to ME, and LISTEN to ME, and I will show YOU How to Be Discordian!"**

With this, he started dancing and squawking around the table like a big, Steve shaped chicken, periodically uttering Absurdities such as **"I am the Paurus"** and **"together we turntable the green offer!"**. The people at the table attempted to carry on with their arguing, but it was getting harder and harder to hear each other over the squawking. Soon, all their arguing was about Steve, and whether they should ask him to leave. About a third of the group started shouting at Steve, telling him to get out of the café and leave them alone; another third started shouting at the first third to shut up and leave Steve alone, and the other third tried to have an interesting conversation, but it was impossible to follow with all the hubbub so they eventually fell silent.

Finally, the barista stormed over and said, "WHAT IN THE HELL IS GOING ON OVER HERE?"

One of the quieter members of the group replied, "Discord".

We would like, at this point, to say that Steve, hearing this, was enlightened, but it doesn't usually work that way outside of Zen koans.



## The Law of Fives

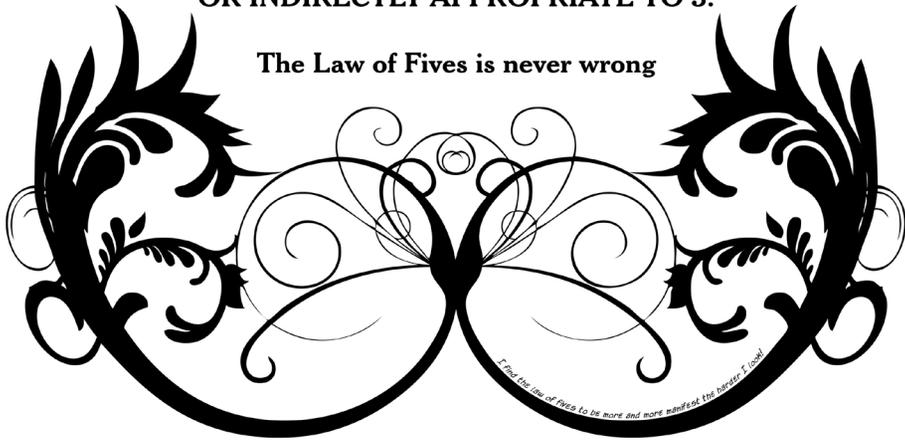
The Law of Fives is one of the oldest Erisian Mysterees.

✿ It was first revealed to Good Lord Omar and is ✿  
one of the great contributions to come from  
The Hidden Temple of The Happy Jesus.

POEE subscribes to the Law of Fives of  
Omar's sect. And POEE also recognizes the holy 23  
(2+3=5) that is incorporated by Episkopos Dr.  
Mordecai Malignatus, KNS, into his Discordian sect,  
The Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria.

The Law of Fives states simply that:  
**ALL THINGS HAPPEN IN FIVES, OR ARE DIVISIBLE BY OR  
ARE MULTIPLES OF FIVE, OR ARE SOMEHOW DIRECTLY  
OR INDIRECTLY APPROPRIATE TO 5.**

The Law of Fives is never wrong



# The Barstool Experiment

(as explained by LMNO)

\* \* \*

Clumsily put, Let's say we were in a bar, having a few pints, and talking about the nature of Universe.

You point out that most of what we consider "matter" is made up of empty space; the distance between a nucleus, it's electrons, and the nearest adjacent atom is comparatively large; why, that barstool over there shouldn't even be considered a solid!

I respond by saying that as far as we can actually prove that barstool might simply be a hallucination, for we're not actually seeing the barstool, we're processing electric signals in our heads generated by our optic nerves that claim certain wavelengths of light have bounced off an object, but none of that says anything about whether or not the barstool actually exists.

Then someone comes along, picks up the barstool, and proceeds to beat the shit out of us with it for being such pretentious assholes.

\* \* \*

HE HAD THE MORAL FORTITUDE  
OF A HAM SANDWICH.

