

Roadshrine America

[Unknown Armies]

You've seen the shrines on the highways, right? Sometimes it's a bunch of flags on the overpass, or cups stuck in the chain link fence there that spell out a message. And sometimes it's a forlorn-looking cross and flowers against a tree or some other landmark. You see them, you drive past, you maybe wonder a little about why people do that sort of thing. Well, the answer of course is: "Some people are passionate/obsessed" (depending on whether you agree with the sentiment being expressed, or not). And that original passion and/or obsession has nothing much to do with anything that the occult underground does. Oh, there are plenty of patriotic or bereaved occultists out there. No question about that: but when a roadside shrine is put up, it's generally magically inert.

But once that shrine has been *abandoned* by the original creator, well, that's a different story entirely. When you put energy into something, then effectively stop pumping that energy, you produce an imbalance. Imbalances are unstable; the universe prefers that all equations get solved, in time. While most abandoned shrines simply

dissipate whatever potential power that they might have had, a few get found by chargers and checkers in time to stay in business, occultly speaking.

The rules are pretty simple: maintain the shrine. That means going out every couple of weeks, pick things up, replace a cup in the fence, get new flags when the first ones fall apart, keep it all neat. In exchange, the caretaker enjoys a mild but noticeable increase in luck (in game terms, the caretaker gets a free flip-flop on *any* roll, once per game week). The nice part about this is that there are no occult side effects at all. Maintain the shrine, get the luck: don't maintain it, the luck goes away. No worries otherwise.

Well, no occult worries. In the real world caretakers have to deal with everything from cops wondering why you're maintaining an illegal (yet usually tolerated) shrine to the original creators showing up, usually with guilt in tow, and demanding to know what's going on. And, of course, there's the actual physical work to consider. Still, even then at least there's still fresh air involved.

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