

Pests

Series Bible

The Girl - Lucy (bringer of light)

Early 20s, pretty. Sort of wants to be goth, but her heart isn't really in it. Only manages to look slightly punkish, in a girl-next-door kind of way.

When we meet her, she's supporting herself in a boring nine to five as a telephone operator in an old skyscraper in the heart of the city. She lives in a dumpy little apartment. She keeps it clean, but it's still about the size of a shoebox and rundown. She takes public transportation and walks a lot.

She smokes, but not heavily. Only when she's bored. She tends to get in trouble when she's bored.

Throughout the series she maintains her sense of humor - no matter how weird things get. Her first impulse is always to point and laugh, right up until something tries to kill her. Then she gets serious.

She's smart, but she's never really been challenged. Community college didn't do much for her. Immediate family is dead - distant relatives are really distant. She doesn't know much about her family history, just that her relatives all seem a bit odd.

The Old Man - Shoki (the demon queller)

He looks old, but moves like a young man. He stands up straight, shaves, but never really seems to get past the grungy, homeless, slightly crazy look. Almost always wears a scruffy, faded traveling hat and trench coat. Tends to blend in with the tattered city.

He's seen it all - more than once. Unafraid of modern techniques (carries a gun and cell phone, for instance) but appreciates the ancient methods. His pockets suspiciously hold more than they ought to and tend to be full of strange

things. He has a huge key ring with a dizzying number of variously shaped keys that frequently come in handy.

He also has a huge library in his house, but rarely has to consult it. Lucy gets more use out of it than he does.

He knows more about her than he lets on. Has actually sought her out in order to recruit her.

Their Employers

Property management bosses all over the city know who to call in case of weird pest problems. Shoki is in every rolodex, but nobody likes to talk about what he does.

Every skyscraper manager, every big apartment building complex, even the property managers for the city government and police use his services. He works for anyone with a problem and never asks questions (usually he knows more about what's going on than the employers do anyway).

He works for mob bosses, corporate lawyers, streets and sanitation - everybody.

The Pests

Mythical creatures from all over the world and every culture are just a natural part of the urban wildlife - just like rats, roaches, pigeons and the occasional coyote.

They range from little termite-like problems all the way up to dragons living in the sewer. Mostly they keep a low profile. Only the lower-class workers who go to the basements, the attics, the dusty storage rooms see any indication of them.

They're almost all from mythical sources and might seem funny on the surface - until they demonstrate how dangerous they can be.

Solutions to the pest problems are sometimes straightforward, but not usually.

Common Pests:

Pixies: Essentially little, people-shaped termites. They build nests either like hornets or burrow into the wood of walls and floors. Often use their wings to try to escape.

Dryads and Nyads: Tree and water spirits that sometimes get out of control or lost in the city. Can take the shape of beautiful women - but strangle or drown their victims.

Oni: Usually invisible, though some powerful ones can take the form of animals or people. They can cause disease or famine, steal souls and possess innocent people.

Lares: Plentiful little household gods (shaped like people) - if not properly appeased they can behave more like rats or mice - stealing their requisite offerings from the household.

Leshii: Formerly guardian forest spirits, sometimes now inhabit city parks. Usually looks like a homeless man - but very tall or very little. Sometimes gets people lost, kidnaps children and generally causes trouble for anyone who come too close.

Mimi: Live in the cracks of rocks (for instance, stone buildings and the cracks in sidewalks) and are generally harmless - unless taken by surprise. They can cause disease or other mischief.

Author Bio

Wendy Despain has written and edited in the various worlds of magazines, newspapers, television and online. She's recently gone freelance after seven years with a major media company. She's generally knee-deep in science fiction and fantasy in all forms.