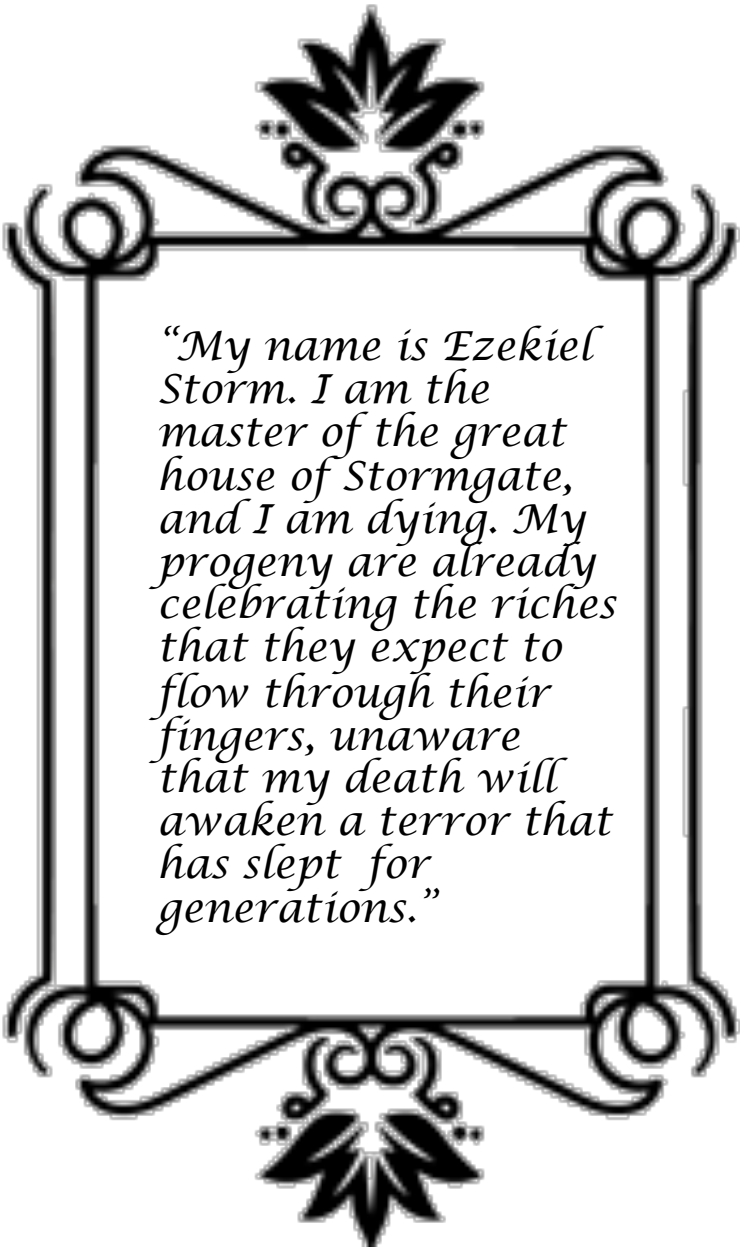




“My name is Ezekiel Storm. I am the master of the great house of Stormgate, and I am dying. My progeny are already celebrating the riches that they expect to flow through their fingers, unaware that my death will awaken a terror that has slept for generations.”

DARKE AND STORMY NIGHTS

**A Gothic soap opera for DramaSystem
by Scott Bennie**



Dramasystem



Pelgrane Press

DARKE AND STORMY NIGHTS



Nutshell

As a winter storm batters the great manor of Stormgate, two wealthy dynastic American families seek to control the fortunes of the coastal town of Storm Cove...unaware that a great supernatural evil is about to awaken.

One-Shot Session

- This is the first episode of the soap opera *Darke and Stormy Nights*, which mixes melodrama with supernatural horror: a story arc might include ghosts, lycanthropy, evil cults, forbidden science, and the undead.
- Ezekiel Storm, the family's patriarch, has died. Players decide whether the Storm's ancestral manor house and fortune are still in legal limbo, or whether a player character inherited them.

The Three Families

- **The Storms** are the descendants of Storm Cove's founders and still its most influential family. **Its members have Old Testament names** such as Cain, David, Ezra, Joshua, Micah, Deborah, Esther, Sheba, and Rebecca.
- **The Darkes** are the Storms' perpetual rivals, an aristocratic family currently down on its luck. **Its members have New Testament names** such as James, Luke, Matthew, Peter, Titus, Magdalene, Priscilla, and Tabitha.
- **The Nights** are the respectable modern descendants of Ulysses Night, an infamous pirate. **Members of the Night family are named for Greek heroes**, such as Achilles, Jason, Perseus, Helena, Persephone, and Cassandra.

Other characters in the show have modern names.

The Curse

The Curse is the main source of plot complications in *Darke and Stormy Nights*. It is a magnet that draws dangerous people and supernatural evil to Storm Cove.

The Storms and the Darkes brought the Curse upon themselves in 1775, when Zephaniah Storm killed his best friend Silas Darke in a duel.

The Curse is actively malignant and sadistic: it toys with the Darkes and Storms without ever completely destroying them. It can be temporarily defeated, but never completely destroyed.

DARKE AND STORMY NIGHTS



Episode Themes:

- **Master of the House:** When the family's money and prestige are up for grabs, how far will you go?
- **Secrets and Lies:** What would you do to keep a horrible truth from coming to light?
- **Science and Superstition:** Can the supernatural world be tamed by science? What happens when we play God?
- **Leave the Past Buried:** Are there some secrets that are best left alone, or can history be used as a weapon against the Curse?
- **Faith vs. Fear:** How does religious faith endure in the face of unmistakable supernatural presences?
- **Haunted by the Past:** Will a historical tragedy repeat itself?
- **Family Feud:** The rivalry between the Darkes and the Storms heats to a boiling point.

Locations:

Storm Cove—a coastal town in the northeastern United States

Stormgate—a Gothic manor filled with ghosts, secrets, hidden rooms, abandoned wings, and the occasional skeleton. The manor is precious to the Storm family, and to its enemies both natural and supernatural. Scenes here commonly take place in:

- the great gallery
- the library
- the ballroom
- Ezekiel's study
- the family crypt

Darke Hall—the ill-tended ancestral home of the Darke family.

Night Island—Local legend says Ulysses Night buried a fortune in treasure here in the 1700s, before his ship was sunk by Captain Silas Darke.

Turning the Screws:

- Someone finds an old legal document or diary that reverses something important that we know about a character, relationship, or situation.
- A significant GM-controlled character dies or becomes comatose, leaving behind an ominous message.
- A stranger arrives with a more recent version of the will naming them as the heir to the family fortune and manor.
- A police detective arrives, investigating the possibility Ezekiel Storm was murdered. But he was already dying—why would someone kill him?
- Several characters receive letters from an anonymous blackmailer. What did they do? What does the blackmailer want?



DARKE AND STORMY NIGHTS

MY NAME IS:

I AM:

MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WANT:

INSIDE, I'M TORN BETWEEN TWO
CONFLICTING THINGS:

EARN DRAMA TOKENS WHEN:

- You grant another character's petition for an emotional concession
- Your own petition is refused

USE DRAMA TOKENS TO:

- Duck out of a scene
- Join a scene the caller doesn't want you in
- Force a concession (2 tokens)
- Cancel a Force (3 tokens)
- Contribute to a Force, if your character is present and helping

CHARACTER	RELATIONSHIP	WHAT I WANT FROM THEM	WHAT THEY WANT FROM ME	WHY I WITHHOLD IT

Quick Reference



Character Creation:

1. The GM describes the series setting and premise.
2. Players choose their character's role in the group and name them.
3. The GM determines precedence.
4. The first player in order proclaims their character's name and role.
5. Second player proclaims their character's name, role in the group, and relationship to first character. Players note relationships on relationship maps.
6. Third player proclaims their character's name, role in the group, and relationship to all other proclaimed characters.
7. According to precedence, remaining players repeat the above step.
8. In the established order of precedence, players proclaim their desires.
9. In the same order, players define their characters' dramatic poles.
10. The GM chooses a new precedence order.
11. The first player in new precedence
12. The player of the other character defines why they can't get it ("I will never love you because...").
13. Both players adjust the statement as needed.
14. Repeat steps 11-13 for each remaining player in order of precedence.
15. Keep repeating these steps until all characters are named as objects of **at least two** other characters' wants.
16. The GM chooses a new precedence order. The first player decides the episode theme and calls the first scene. The second player calls the second scene, and so on (including the GM) until the episode comes to a dramatic conclusion.

Drama Tokens:

- **Start with a central pile** for players to draw from. As the game goes on players exchange them with each other instead of taking from the pile.
- **Players earn tokens** by granting a player's emotional petition, or having your emotional petition refused.
- **Players use tokens** to duck out of a scene, rush a scene, force a concession (2 tokens), cancel a Force (3 tokens), or contribute to a Force.

Call a Scene:

- Say whether it's dramatic or procedural
- Say when it takes place
- Say where it takes place
- Say who's in the scene
- Describe the situation: why are the characters here, what are they doing?
- Describe the sights, sounds, smells, etc. (everyone in the scene can add details at any time)

Super-Quick Procedural Rules:

1. Ask the scene caller how they want the procedural scene to resolve.
2. Ask the other players in the scene if they want it to resolve differently.
3. If they do, all players in the scene can use their drama tokens to bid on the outcome they want. The player who bids the highest gives those tokens to the scene's caller and describes the outcome of the procedural scene.
4. If the caller bids the highest, their tokens go in the kitty.