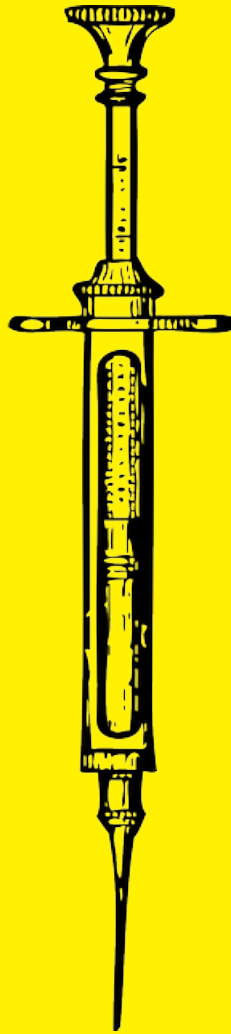


# Adrenochrome



by Åsa Roos

An action adventure for Aberrant

The adventure is a part of the 20,000 characters project



Read more about the creative commons license at <http://creativecommons.org>

# Adrenochrome

# Aberrant

*The man smiled to the person dressed in a hoodie. "This will take you on a trip you'll never forget. It's good shit. You'll feel like a Nova."*

*Money changed hands, as did a small glass phial with a milky fluid in it. "Kid, remember. One drop, max two, otherwise it'll be too much. You can't be sure your system can handle it."*  
*"Right." The guy in the hoodie was sneering. "As if I haven't done 'chrome before."*

*The newspaper headlines the day after were black and massive. '10 dead in club massacre. Police suspect drug related crime'. There was a picture on the front page. It was the hoodie guy. The headlines above the image read 'Murderer!'.*

---

## Caveat lector!

You'll have to do some work with this adventure as a GM. It's more of a story seed than a finished adventure, so take some time to read through the adventure and add to it where you feel it's needed.

## The Mood

Paranoia and suspicion is the order of the day. The characters themselves can become victims of the drug cartel operating in the area.

The drug can make anyone taking it both murderous and wild. Anyone overdosing can display nova-like abilities. Keep the characters on their toes. This is an action filled and quick adventure.

## Synopsis

The characters become part of the events just as a new, spectacular crime catches the attention of the tri-state area. A young man has massacred ten people in a night club while under the influence of soma.

The police has had enough and want help from an organization that can handle this kind of crime and this kind of criminals. While the characters investigate the cartel three things happened - yet another nova is killed and two new massacres directly related to the drug happens. In part this is to give the characters new clues if they lose sight of the target, but it's also to keep up the pace.

The characters follow the clues of soma addicts they talk to and physical evidence found at the crime scenes to a pharmacist who calls himself Doctor Dream when he's in his Nova form. Apart from his soma factory, Doctor Dream has a nova factory as well. This factory is a large, modified storm shelter, where he and another Nova, Tint, trigger baselines to become Novas.

With the help of soma and home made DNA therapy, Doctor Dream can create new Novas, but the results are often grotesque.

At the start of the adventure there are three such Novas in the laboratory of Doctor Dream. The end of the adventure is a confrontation between Doctor Dream, Tint and the characters. What happens is up to the players.

## Memo

**From:** *Agt. Kyle Landers, DEA*

**To:** *Michael Padgett, Northeast Regional Director, DEA*

**Date:** *April 8, 2006*

**Re:** *Tri-Cities Operation*

*The Tri-Cities drug ring has finally been broken up, though no conclusive ties to the C-Z were discovered. I just turned evidence over to the District Attorney today. In all, 26 arrests were made, but the group's leader, a suspected nova, eluded capture. I guess we need our own nova to get him.*

*One thing you need to be aware of, though. The Tri-Cities ring was peddling a new drug, along with the old favorites. The dealers call it "soma". They claim it is an extract from a nova's M-R node. The lab boys analyzed it, and it is some kind of super-adrenochrome. This shit is scary. Imagine crack, but about 10,000 times more powerful. It kills most people that use it, unless it extremely diluted. Even worse, it's rumored that soma is the only thing that can give a nova a sustained high. Their metabolism makes everything else seem like aspirin.*

*If this shit ever gets out, it could be a real mess. Luckily, you have to kill a nova to get it, and that can't be easy. We should keep our eyes open anyway.*

*(p. 16, Aberrant)*

---

## What's happened?

Adrenochrome or soma is spreading like wildfire through the club scene in the Tri-Cities area. A local cartel that was disbanded has re-established itself in the area. Their speciality is soma.

The police suspect that the leader of the cartel, a Nova themselves, is finding Novas that have just erupted and don't know how to defend themselves against their attacker. A row of dead bodies have been found in the area, and their condition when found supports the hypothesis that they've recently erupted. All of them have head trauma, and all are missing their Mandarin-Rashoud node.

At the same time drug use is increasing and with the increased use of drugs comes an increased level of violence. Many who have OD'ed on soma have become violent and in addition very cruel. It doesn't seem to be enough that they get high, they also become destructive.

The latest violence was perpetrated by a young woman named April Bennett. With soma in her system, she went berserk on the brothel where she worked as a booking agent and financial officer. She killed one person and assaulted four "guests" visiting the brothel before being overpowered by the owner of the place.

## The introduction to the adventure

The characters can be introduced to the adventure in a multitude of ways:

- They can become targets for the cartel due to the fact that they are Novas, or have a friend who is being targeted by the organization.
- They can get a mission from Project Utopia to get to the bottom of the drug dealer's organization. They're also asked to find out what the process of making the drug looks like.

# Adrenochrome

# Aberrant

- The characters can have a friend (baseline or Nova) who has become addicted to the drug and is close to killing themselves with the use of the drug. The friend asks for help to detox and to get rid of the drug dealers.

The adventure is written from the perspective that the characters have been given their mission from Project Utopia to stop the drug dealers. There are other starting points - as I've outlined - but I'll not be giving all the details for those.

## The meeting with Landers

Kyle Landers is the DEA agent who stopped the soma cartel the last time. Landers together with Michael Padgett are the agents working as contacts for the characters in the DEA. They'll give the characters access to evidence, autopsies and other materials.

Landers will meet the characters in his office, appropriately star struck in the presence of so many Novas. Landers can relay the following information:

- All three cities, Kennewick, Pasco and Richland, seem to have a similar problem with the drug. This has led Landers to believe that the raided building in Kennewick only was a depot and not as previously thought, the factory.
- The Nova thought responsible for the cartel got away at the last raid.
- The club scene in Kennewick, Pasco and Richland has become wilder and more violent since soma made an entrance.
- Landers can also tell the players about the brothel incident (April Bennett is currently in custody) and the club massacre (Will Morris who was responsible for the massacre is dead).
- Three dead, unregistered Novas have been found in the Tri-City area. All are missing their M-R node.

Landers can also tell the players about Jack Didley's night club, that seem to be the hub for at least Kennewick's drug dealing. There have been multiple raids, but any powder or pills seized at the raids have turned out to be over the counter or homeopathic drugs.

If the characters want, they can talk to April Bennett who went berserk on the brothel. The young man, Will Morris, was shot to death by the police after the massacre. Morris' body hasn't been autopsied yet.

## Henderson's Drugs and Pharmacy

The drugstore delivering to the brothel is called Henderson's Drugs and Pharmacy and is owned by one Bernard Henderson. Josie Winters works as a shop assistant and pharmacist in the store.

When the characters visit the first time, Josie's unprepared for their arrival and the characters have a better opportunity to surprise her, so that she'll involuntarily say more than she wants to. This is what Josie can tell them:

- The brothel has a standing order with the drug store. This is primarily over the counter drugs, lube and condoms.
- Josie doesn't know about April's flip out except what she read in the papers.
- If the characters mention soma, she denies knowing what it is. Adrenochrome (which is the chemical name) she knows - she is after all a pharmacist. She claims only to know the medical properties of the drug.

If the characters mention that April is showing signs of being a Nova, Josie looks surprised, but doesn't comment (Josie thought it was impossible for a baseline to become a Nova from soma without the DNA therapy).

Josie Winters is the Nova Tint, and knows everything about how April was drugged, since it was Josie who drugged her. April has been asking questions about Josie and her work (April thought she was being nice) and Josie saw it as spying on her.

Josie also knows everything about Doctor Dream, i.e. her boss Bernard Henderson, since Doctor Dream was the one triggering her to become a Nova through letting her overdose on soma, right after the first raid by Landers. Josie is the only "manufactured" Nova to become stable, probably because she was already carrying the Nova traits.

A Nova with some form of mind reading or empathic skills can catch some of the above information, but only at a first, unprepared visit. At the second visit, both Josie and Bernard are prepared. They've also found out that the characters are Novas.

The drugstore has no external connection to the cartel, but witnesses can attest that there are some shady dealings on a run down yard with a house set for demolition a few blocks away.

## Jack Didley's Night Club - Kennewick

Jack Didley's Night Club is a comedy club which became known when the Nova comedian Tom Rogers a.k.a. Big Smile erupted there. It's now one of the hottest night clubs in the entire Washington area, and many of the guests are Novas.

Doctor Dream has more or less threatened his way in on the club, which means that there are other things on the menu, besides the obvious. The bartenders sell soma, cocaine and amphetamines, sometimes ecstasy.

Didley himself is afraid of coming forward. Besides, he's making a ton of money letting his club be a sales location for the drug.

During an evening at Didley's, the characters will note the dealing and the clients buying soma. Most people seem to be able to handle the drug, despite getting a bit over energetic. Many of the clients are Novas.

Soma is ordered by asking for a drink with an edge. New clients have to be obvious, while returning clients seem to have a standard drink and a standard phrase they employ. No real secrecy is apparent, it's pretty much out in the open. Despite this, every raid at Didley's has resulted in nothing more than the confiscation of dextrose and other non-restricted substances. There seems to be someone tipping the club off.

## The soma factory

The drug dealers who sell soma all return to a farm right outside of Pasco every night. The farm is Doctor Dream's childhood home that he now owns under the name Trev Janssen. A bit of research will disclose the connection between Bernard Henderson and the farm.

# Adrenochrome

On the farm there are two buildings. A soma factory and a "Nova factory". In the soma factory, people are working to extract soma, or super adrenochrome from the Mandarin-Rashoud nodes Doctor Dream has harvested from his Nova victims. It's a very delicate procedure and this is where Doctor Dream's Nova powers enter the equation.

The other building is a concrete reinforced bunker, a storm shelter where Henderson holds his three manufactured Novas prisoner until he can harvest their M-R nodes. The Novas held prisoner here are drugged with adrenocilin and have due to their twisted eruptions lost all signs of humanity. Project Utopia is very interested, both by the soma production and the three "artificial" Novas.

## Pasco

In a little restaurant, Hernandez's Taco Bar, a 45-year old mother starts tearing up the interior. The quests and her own family without warning.

The woman is known by the police and has been arrested several times for possession of illegal drugs. When the massacre occurs she is on a supervised meeting with two of her three children, Matthew and Sarah. The childcare officer is killed and both Matthew and Sarah end up in intensive care after their mother's attack. Another two people are seriously hurt and one of them dies in hospital.

The woman going berserk is Monica Reeves, and during autopsy it is revealed that she has the same changes in her brain as Will Morris does. Reeves' pusher can be traced to a bench behind the railway station, but when the police bust him, all they find in the pockets of the drug dealer is money and over the counter medication. The pusher is released later the same day.

## Richland

Around halfway into the adventure another Nova is found dead. This time it is a woman named Pauline Cox. She's found with her face down and skull cracked in a puddle on an abandoned lot in Richland. Cox had connections to the brothel where April Bennett worked and worked there herself. Cox quit a few weeks ago, bragging that she'd found a better gig.

Cox has a receipt from Henderson's Drugs and Pharmacy in her pocket, and she has been seen with Henderson multiple times. Use Cox to establish a connection between Henderson and the dead Novas. All can in some way be connected to the pharmacy or the Kennewick night club.

## Kennewick

The most spectacular violent event happens on a demolition lot in Kennewick towards the end of the adventure (and if the players need help solving the mystery). One of the addicts overdose on soma and is completely transformed. After having more or less torn three unfortunates to pieces and tried sucking their brains out, the influence of taint is clearly visible.

He howls so loud that the windows in cars and apartments explode for a radius of close to a kilometer around him, and he seems to be oscillating be-

# Aberrant

# Adrenochrome

# Aberrant

tween several shapes at the same time. The addict's name is Boo Kent and is a well known face with both police and the judicial system. Before Boo dies from internal injuries, he tells the characters that Henderson is the guilty party and that Henderson used to be an addict.

## The connection to Comparelli-Zukhov

There is a massive crime syndicate spending their time and efforts primarily on drug dealing, illegal gambling and smuggling. Comparelli-Zukhov, or C-Z, has contacted Henderson and made a deal with him. C-Z supplies Henderson with dealers and have also promised to supply the slightly insane chemist with real Novas, since adrenochrome from Novas create a much higher purity rate than from the manipulated Novas.

It's up to the storyteller to involve C-Z for as much or as little as they want. C-Z can act as a backup for Henderson, add additional levels of corruption or be used as an increase in difficulty, especially if the storyteller wants a more action focused adventure.

## The Climax

Hopefully the players realise that Bernard Henderson and Josie Winters are Novas and that they're the ones behind both the drug and the killing of Novas. An appropriate final battle is preferably conducted on Henderson's farm.

There are a bunch of ways to create an interesting battle between them:

- Tint could betray Doctor Dream - she's tired of not getting the attention she feels she deserves
- C-Z goons could invade when the characters raid the farm - the adventure ends in a shoot out
- The artificial Novas are released - mayhem ensues and there's a super battle

## The End

If the characters manage to disrupt the drug dealing involving Novas, Project Utopia will immediately seize all the equipment used and in addition Doctor Dream and Tint if they're still alive. The investigation is classified immediately and there are rumours that Tint and Doctor Dream have been transported to Bahrain.



# Adrenochrome

# Aberrant

## Non-Player Characters

### April Bennett

April Bennett is a woman in her mid-twenties. Despite having spent time in prison, she's very neat. Her nails are manicured, her hair is properly dressed. There are no outward signs of addiction or withdrawal. April is stunningly beautiful.

According to Landers, Bennett is also the only one to survive an outbreak of aggression after having taken soma, Bennett can disclose the following:

- She doesn't normally use drugs (confirmed as far as possible by the lab report).
- She thinks she was drugged by a client (police is still investigating by checking security footage).
- She has a vague memory of drinking a glass of water and then becoming aware she was in one of the rooms in the brothel with bloodied clothes and hands.
- Ever since the incident, she's felt "strange", as if she can read minds now and then.
- She doesn't know who drugged her, but she can tell the characters that a woman by the name of Josie Winters was in the room, talking to her, right before the incident. Josie was delivering a shipment from Henderson's drugstore, as she normally does on Fridays (Josie is Tint, but April doesn't know this).

A full health examination of April determines that she's lost weight. She says herself that she's hungry all the time.

An MRI scan shows that April is a rudimentary Nova. Her M-R node is still relatively small, but she's already very charismatic.

### Jack Didley

Jack Didley's real name is Omar Ardeshir. He's an impressively tall man, hefty and muscular, and he has a massive potbelly. A black rug of thick hair covers the top of his head. His sensitive face is framed by a well maintained beard, meticulously groomed. When the characters question him, this is what they can find out:

- He says the night club opened 10 years ago and made it big when they could book comedians like Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien.
- Tom Rogers, a.k.a. Big Smile, erupted in the club - literally. He became a Nova during an evening that threatened to go down in history as a massive flop.
- Jack was threatened to allow the dealing of drugs in his club, but he's making a lot of money out of it. He's terrified of Doctor Dream who as far as he knows he's only negotiating with through middle men.
- Deliveries to the club happen once every other week (it's Doctor Dream delivering, but Jack doesn't know this).
- The whole of Kennewick's soma addicted clientele come to Didley's but they normally behave. (Jack doesn't know that soma is distributed on a couple of abandoned lots in the slums of the city.)

## Will Moore

During the adventure, the autopsy of Moore will be completed. If the characters collaborate with the authorities they'll also find out that Moore had a developed M-R node, but from what they could tell it was abnormal. The body has been sent to Project Utopia for further testing and evaluation.

Witnesses who saw Moore during the evening can lead the characters to Jack Didley's nigh club in Kennewick, which is in all likelihood where Moore bought the drugs.

## Josie Winters a.k.a. Tint

Josie Winters is a painfully thin, short woman. Everything on her seems to be contracted and pulled in tight.



Josie is a Nova and became a Nova thanks to Bernard Henderson's experiments. She found him one evening behind the drug store, basing in the head of a Nova. He thought he was alone, but Josie had forgotten her purse and went back into town to get it. Bernard had some soma on him and promptly poured it down Josie's throat. Josie couldn't put up much of a fight, so she swallowed the drug. However, she didn't die as Bernard had hoped. Instead she erupted into a Nova.

Josie sees Bernard as her rescuer. After all, he turned her into Tint. She's mentally unstable and display clear signs of taint. If she's stressed out, her skin changes color from skin tone to charcoal black. As Josie, she's shy and shrunken, but as Tint she's at least ten centimeters taller. Her skin turns black as night and shimmers, and she's confident and secure. Both Josie and Tint look upon Bernard as a saviour and would do anything to protect him.

### Strength ••

Brawl •

### Dexterity ••••

Drive •••

Legerdemain •

Stealth •

### Stamina ••

Endurance •••

Resistance •••

### Perception •••••

Awareness •

Investigation •

### Intelligence ••

Academics •

Bureaucracy •

Computer •••

Medicine •••••

Science ••

### Wits •••

Biz •

### Appearance ••

Style •

### Manipulation ••

### Charisma ••

Etiquette •

Dormancy ••••

Node •••

Willpower •••

Quantum •••••

Mega-Manipulation ••

Mega-Dexterity ••

Mega-Wits ••

Natural Empath •

Quickness ••

Bioluminescence •••

Quantum conversion ••

Bodymorph •••

Mirage ••

Poison •••

Shapeshift •••

# Adrenochrome

## Bernhard Henderson a.k.a Dr. Dream

Bernhard Henderson is a bald man in his late thirties. He's of average height and has a well groomed blond mustach, even features and a broad jaw. Normally.

Bernard Henderson's eruption was caused by his long term drug abuse. Henderson has, ever since he trained as a pharmacist, had an amphetamine addiction that nearly killed him. Instead of dying from his overdose, Henderson became a Nova. His addiction did not pass with the transformation. Instead he went through a horrible withdrawal. He tried everything, but couldn't get high. Out of desperation he started doing research on the naturally occurring drugs on the body of the Nova, and by coincidence he found super adrenochrome. He lured a newly erupted Nova to his farm and the rest is history.

Henderson sees Josie as a necessary evil and he has plans to get rid of her. He's also got contacts with a crime syndicate who is very interested in his ability to transform chemical compounds.

### **Strength •**

Might •

### **Dexterity ••**

Firearms •

Pilot •

Stealth ••

### **Stamina ••**

Endurance •••

Resistance •••

### **Perception •••**

Awareness ••

Investigation ••

### **Intelligence ••••**

Academics •

Computer ••

Medicine •••••

Science ••

### **Wits •••**

### **Appearance ••**

Intimidation •

### **Manipulation ••**

Interrogation •

Streetwise •

Subterfuge •

### **Charisma ••**

Contacts ••

Cipher •

Dormancy ••

Followers •

Node •

Willpower •••

Quantum •••••

Mega-Perception ••••

Analytic taste/ touch ••

Quantum Attunement •

Mega-Intelligence •

Eidetic Memory ••

Elemental Mastery ••••

Matter Chameleon •••

Molecular Manipulation ••

Molecular Alteration •••

Matter Creation •••••

# Aberrant



# Adrenochrome

*The man smiled to the person dressed in a hoodie. "This will take you on a trip you'll never forget. It's good shit. You'll feel like a Nova."*

*Money changed hands, as did a small glass phial with a milky fluid in it. "Kid, remember. One drop, max two, otherwise it'll be too much. You can't be sure your system can handle it."*

*"Right." The guy in the hoodie was sneering. "As if I haven't done 'chrome before."*

*The newspaper headlines the day after were black and massive. '10 dead in club massacre. Police suspect drug related crime'. There was a picture on the front page. It was the hoodie guy. The headlines above the image read 'Murderer!'.*



This adventure is part of the 20.000 characters project.  
Read more at <http://discordia.se>