**Secret societies drink blood, worship crab gods**

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Few institutions are more unique to, and more inseparable from the Yale experience than our secret societies. Though they are the source of much gossip and speculation on news programs and conspiracy Web sites across the country, to us, the societies are a familiar part of campus life. We encounter their scattered meeting places as we hurry between equally pointless discussion sections, their windowless tomb facades silently charging the air around them with an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue.

Towards the middle of April, we see the chosen few being herded around by black-cloaked figures, performing a series of bizarre and humiliating tasks before finally being allowed into the rarefied (if somewhat musty) air of the society tomb. How I wish I were among them!

It pains me to see the conflicted attitudes that many of my colleagues hold towards Yale’s secret societies. They love to talk about what they perceive to be the silly mythology surrounding the societies, and giggle through screenings of The Skulls. They tell me that while they’re wary of the rampant elitism of the society system, they would surely join if they got into one of the really good ones. Not one of them seems to be particularly excited at the prospect of masturbating in a coffin while reciting their sexual histories to a chorus of shrieking seniors in grotesque animal masks.

I’m not like those people. I don’t delude myself about the secret society experience.

Rather, I take it for what it is: a great way to meet interesting new people, participate in some neat Satanic rituals, and engage in a nefarious global conspiracy of unspeakable proportions.

Of course, there is a good deal of misinformation about what secret societies actually do. I’ve often heard that societies are relatively tame organizations whose members spend much of their time giving “biographies,” a dressed-up term for sitting around and telling each other their life stories — but this is obviously a myth made up to placate outsiders. If it were true, then secret society membership would be so unbearably tedious that the current seniors would do best to stop bringing in new recruits out of mercy.

That I am able to see through this sham is a testament to my potential as a secret society member. Yes, my sparse array of life experiences and meaningful connections would make me something of a “project,” but I have several talents that will prove invaluable to any malignant, ritualistic cabal bent on world domination. I’ve been told that I wear flowing black cloaks incredibly well, and I have a good, loud voice for shouting obscenities and profaning various deities.

I also have a strong predisposition towards nepotism; phrases like “Old Boys’ Club,” and “backroom deal,” thrill me in ways that I cannot fully explain. I’m looking forward to pledging my undying allegiance to whatever god, conspiracy, or supernatural force that my prospective secret society specifies. I know that each society has its favorite, be it the Bavarian Illuminati, Satan, Eulogia, the Freemasons or a giant anthropomorphic crab-god. I’m not picky. So long as it’s evil, it’s fine by me.

Just as workplaces value enthusiasm in their new college recruits, so too should secret societies select those who show the right mindset for their undertakings. For instance, I imagine that many people would be squeamish about the “branding” process, in which each neophyte has the symbol of their society burned into their skin with a hot iron. But I look at the big picture. I know that if I undergo this painful procedure, then a year down the road, it will be my turn to inflict it on others — a prospect that brings me no small amount of pleasure.

On the topic of rituals, I know that each society has a well-established set of them, but after so many years, they could use some freshening up. Fortunately for that society which is wise enough to tap me, I would be glad to apply my not-inconsiderable ingenuity to devise exciting new ceremonies.

In fact, I’ve thought of a few already. It might be fun, for example, if we all stripped naked and bathed in the blood of a freshly slaughtered pig while shouting the preamble to the United States Constitution backwards. Alternately, we could strap goats’ horns to our heads and prance around whispering elaborate blasphemies in each other’s ears while the head of the proceedings, wearing a lifelike Mother Theresa mask, reads aloud the most profane passages of the Satanic Verses. I have another idea, which involves a cat of nine tails, avocados, saran wrap and an assortment of major holy texts, but my editor tells me that it is far too obscene to print.

Did I mention that I’m a columnist for the Yale Daily News? Please let me into your secret society.

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