

IN NOMINE

INFERNAL PLAYER'S GUIDE



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In Nomine was written by Derek Percy based on an original game
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ISBN 1-55634-344-2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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SOLITAIRE

A knock on the door at 2 a.m. didn't bother Nicole. After all, she never slept. But still, it was never a good thing and today was no different. It was her old friend, Tariel. Tariel was the oldest angel Nicole knew, if you didn't count her Archangel, Gabriel. Tariel had actually lived through the original Fall. Nicole had always assumed that this had given him a certain strength of will that was untouchable.

Tariel stood on the porch, staring at Nicole. Neither said a word. Nicole stepped aside to let Tariel in, but he just stood there, silent and vacant. Then he put his hands to his face and began to weep in quiet little sobs, his shoulders shaking.

Nicole walked toward him, opening her arms.

"Don't touch me!" Tariel shouted, jerking away. "Don't touch me, I'm not what you think."

"I think you're my friend," said Nicole.

Tariel looked up at her with dark red eyes. He'd been crying for hours. "I've Fallen," he said. "And I don't seem to be able to care about anything any more. I just don't care."

Slowly, tightly, they embraced. Nicole squeezed her eyes shut until the pressure turned her senses into white light and her heart pounded for release.

Not again, she thought.

She did the only thing she could do to help her friend. She called the demon.

Nicole and her servant sat across from each other in the dirty booth. Her servant drank his coffee and ignored the grunge waitress who kept coming by and harassing him to order something. The waitresses knew better than to bother Nicole, but since they were the only customers in the place, they had the employees' undivided attention.

"Servants," the angel Nicole said aloud, staring at the table. With her shoulders slumped, her blonde hair fell in long waves, obscuring her face.

The door opened, and Nicole snapped out of her fugue. The new arrivals looked like degenerate prom dates – a smiling idiot, shirtless, in a rented tux, and a profoundly depressed woman in a draping white formal gown. It looked like they'd been wearing the same clothes for about a week, what with all the tears and scrapes and bruises. The waitress approached them with menus and a bored sneer.

"My kind of place," said Marcus, the demon. He recognized Nicole's servant, and flashed him a thumbs-up, chuckling. The woman with him hung back a few paces but followed him over to the booth.

"Outside," Nicole said, standing up. The demon's servant slid into the space Nicole left in the booth, staring with thinly veiled disdain at the human across the table.

"No problem," said Marcus, backing away quickly to give her room to make her exit first. The last time they were that close, she'd planted a blessed bullet in his chest. Well, it wasn't actually *his* chest, but that was another story.

"You kids play nice," Marcus called to the two humans. The demon's servant pulled a deck of cards out of the many folds of her draping white dress and began to set up the table for a game of solitaire.

"Don't talk to her," Nicole told her servant.

"He won't," the woman said, fwapping her first card down against the gold-specked Formica. "Talking to me would just piss him off."

