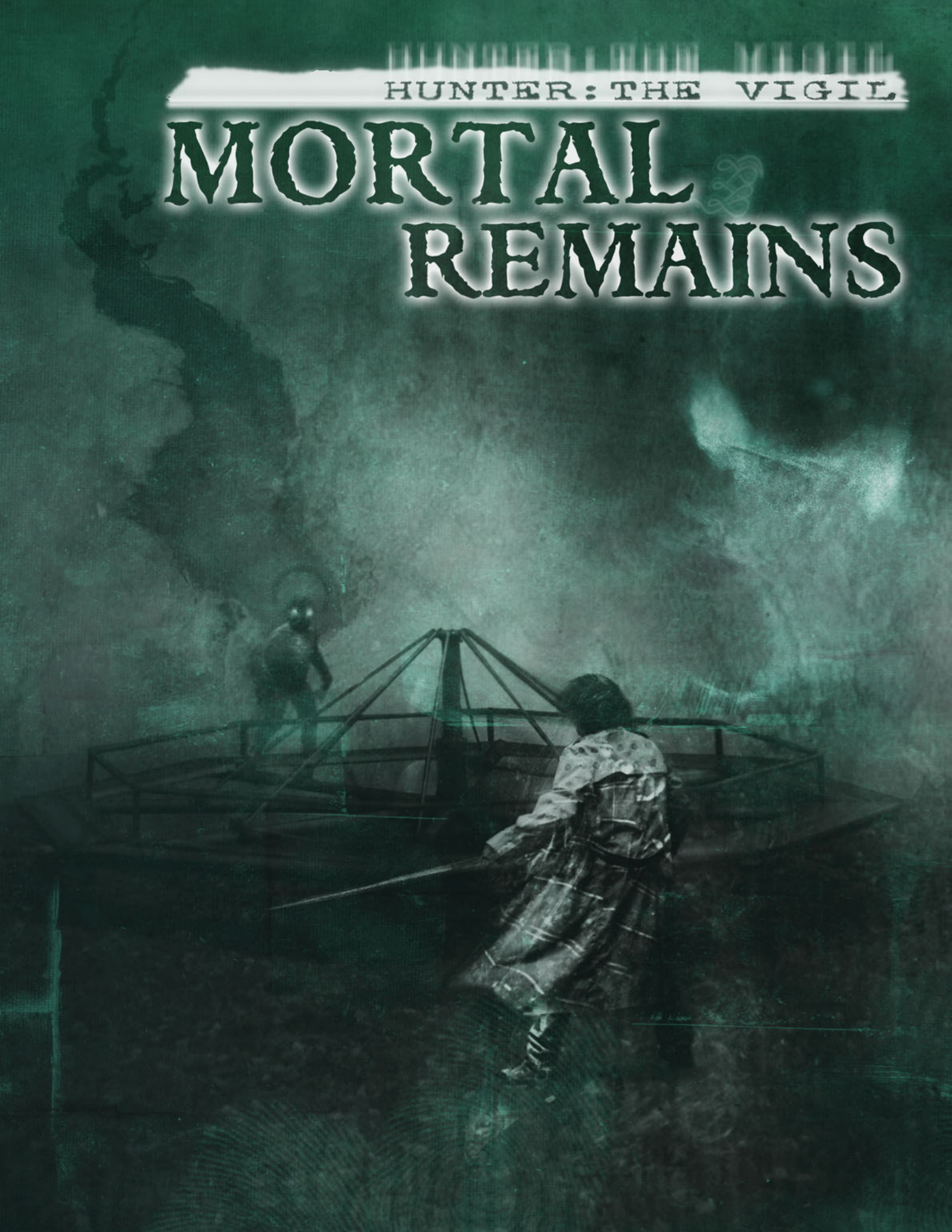
HUNTER: THE VIGIL

MORTAL REMAINS



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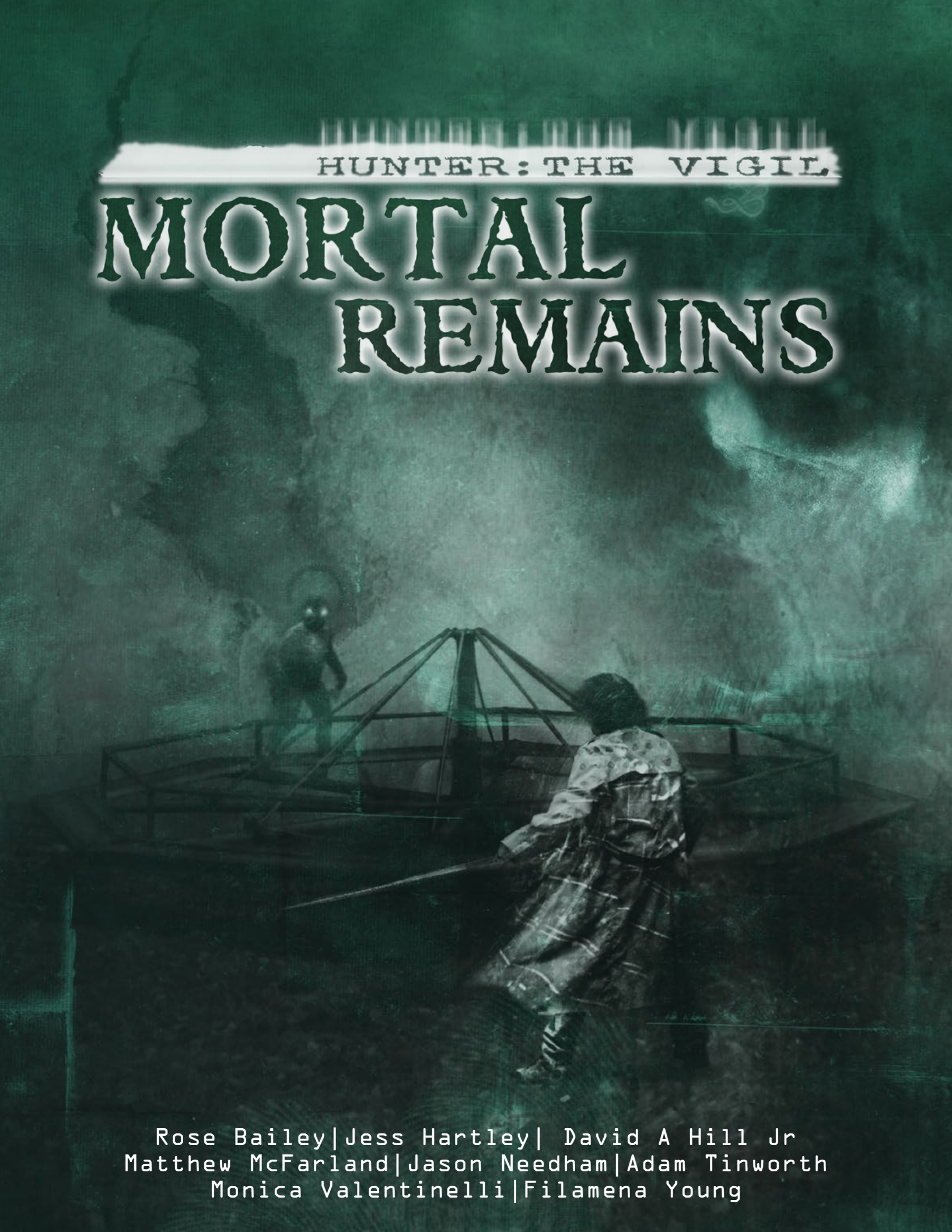

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HUNTER: THE VIGIL

MORTAL REMAINS

Introduction 10

How to Use This Book 10

Chapter One: Pieces of Flesh 15

The Enemy: Mad Science and Old Legends 15
- The Created 15
- *Misconceptions* 16
- *Lineages* 17
- *Body Horror* 17
- *Obsession* 17
- *The Creator* 18
- *Disquiet* 18
- *The Pilgrimage* 19
- *The Redeemed* 19
- *Centimani* 20

Systems 20
- Benefits of Being Created 20
- Disquiet 20
- *Risking Disquiet* 20
- *The Disquiet Condition* 21
- *Storytelling Disquiet* 21
- Wasteland 22
- *Stage One: Marked* 22
- *Stage Two: Strange* 22
- *Stage Three: Blighted* 22
- *Stage Four: Wasteland* 23
- Dread Powers 23

The Response 23
- Compacts 23
- *The Ashwood Abbey* 24
- *The Long Night* 24
- *The Loyalists of Thule* 25
- *Network Zero* 25
- *Null Mysteriis* 26
- *The Union* 27
- Conspiracies 28
- *Aegis Kai Doru* 28
- *New Relic: Orpheus' Eye* 28
- *Ascending Ones* 28
- *New Elixir: Gentle Mind* 29
- *The Cheiron Group* 29
- *New Thaumatechnology: Vitriol Pump* 29
- *The Lucifuge* 30
- *New Castigation Rite: Gulf of Hades* 30
- *Malleus Maleficarum* 30
- *New Benediction: Peace of St. Joseph* 31
- *Task Force: VALKYRIE* 31
- *New Advanced Armory: Gleipnir Restraints* 32

Wandering Monsters 33
- Orestes Vrettos 33
- Walter Wilde 34
- Imp 35

Story Hooks 36
- Abandon All Hope 36
- Stolen Away 36
- What Have I Wrought? 37

Inspiration & Sources 37

Chapter Two: All is Lost 41

The Enemy: Folklore and Fairy Tales 41
- The Lost 42
- *Seemings* 42
- *Social Structures* 43
- *Survivors* 44
- *Beautiful Madness* 44
- *Privateers and Loyalists* 44
- Other Fae Threats 45
- *True Fae* 45
- *Fetches* 45
- *Hobgoblins and Hedgebeasts* 45

Arcane Realms 46
- *The Hedge* 46
- *Arcadia* 46

Systems 46
- Price of Being Lost 46
- Dread Powers 46

The Response 47
- Compacts 47
- *Ashwood Abbey* 48
- *The Long Night* 48
- *The Loyalists of Thule* 49
- *Null Mysteriis* 50
- *The Union* 51
- Conspiracies 51
- *Aegis Kai Doru* 51
- *New Relic: The Silver Key* 52
- *Ascending Ones* 53
- *New Elixir: Hound Mark* 53
- *The Cheiron Group* 54
- *New Thaumatechnology: Cranial Cortex Augmentation* 54
- *The Lucifuge* 54
- *New Castigation Rite: Unholy Aura* 55
- *Malleus Maleficarum* 55

New Benediction: Saint Collen's Clarity 56
Task Force: VALKYRIE 56
New Advanced Armory: Compound Rounds 56
Wandering Monsters 57
Tensare Custos – The Killing Frost 57
Pearl Lawrence 58
Jackson "Boss" Barrow 59
Story Hooks 61
What Price Freedom? 61
Lost Confidant 61
Who's The Boss? 61
Cursed Youth 62
Inspiration & Sources 62

Chapter Three: Ghostwalkers 67

A Shrouded Past 67
Modern Era Hauntings 68
Present Day Sightings 69
The Enemy: Hunter Friend and Foe 70
A Shared Enemy 71
Identifying a Ghostwalker 72
Careful Speculation 72
Systems 73
Compacts 74
Ashwood Abbey 74
The Response 75
The Long Night 75
The Response 75
The Loyalists of Thule 76
The Response 76
Network Zero 77
The Response 77
Null Mysteriis 77
The Response 78
The Union 79
The Response 79
Conspiracies 80
Aegis Kai Doru 80
The Response 80
Ascending Ones 81
The Response 81
The Cheiron Group 81
The Response 82
The Lucifuge 82
The Response 83
Malleus Maleficarum 83
The Response 83
Task Force: VALKYRIE 84
The Response 84
Wandering Monsters 84
Naomi Red Bird 85
Story Hooks 86
No Place for Amateurs 87
The Flim-Flam Man 87
The Grudge 88
Inspiration & Sources 88

Chapter Four: The Undying Ones 93

Dissection 93
The Cycle Turns 95
The Cruelest Cult 96
Rise, and serve me! 96
Classifying the Cultist 96
Dupes 96
Initiates 96
Intimates 97
Entombed 97
The Mummy's Power 97
Returning Through The Curtain Of Death 98
Cyclical Return 99
Summoning 99
Accidental Awakening 99
A String of Missives 99
The Response 100
Compacts 100
Ashwood Abbey 100
The Long Night 100
The Loyalists of Thule 100
Network Zero 101
Null Mysteriis 101
The Union 101
Conspiracies 102
Aegis Kai Doru 102
Ascending Ones 104
The Cheiron Group 104
The Lucifuge 105
Malleus Maleficarum 105
Task Force: VALKYRIE 106

Habibti Ma 107

My Friend Justice 107
The Enemy 107
Hunters 108
Duties 108
Status 109
Stereotypes 109

The Faithful of Shulpae 110

The Hungry 110
The Enemy 110
Hunters 111
In Service 111
Status 111
Stereotypes 112
New Endowment: Anthropophagy 112
Story Hooks 113
Power, Objectified 113
Office Politics 113
Wandering Monsters 114
Doctor Jess Jones 114
Inspiration & Sources 115

Chapter Five: To Hell and Back 119

The Enemy 119
Lesser Demons 119
Voyeurs 119
Imps 120
Devourers 120
Greater Demons 120
Answers in Genesis 120
The War in Heaven 121
Pacts 121
Purposes 122
Unholy Strengths of Greater Demons 122
Apocalyptic Form 122
Lying 123
Perfect Memory 123
Tongues of Babel 123
Strange Luck 123
Cover 123
Partial Cover 123
Fiendish Flaws 124
Institutional Demons 124
Purposes 124
Unholy Strengths of Institutional Demons 124
Attributes, Advantages, and Merits 124
Cover 124
Fiendish Flaws 125
Witnesses 125
The Response 125
Compacts 125
Ashwood Abbey 125
The Long Night 126
The Loyalists of Thule 126
Network Zero 127
Null Mysteriis 127
The Union 128
Conspiracies 128
Aegis Kai Doru 128
Relic: Heart of the Succubus 129
Ascending Ones 129
Elixir: Liar Pills 130
The Cheiron Group 130
The Lucifuge 131
Castigation: Rebuke Lies 132
The Malleus Maleficarum 133
Task Force: VALKYRIE 133

Utopia Now 134
The Future Today 134
The Enemy 135
Hunters 135
Departments 136
Status 136
Stereotypes 136
Knights of Saint Adrian 137
The Sidearm of the Angels 137
The Enemy 138
Hunters 138
Jobs 138
Status 139
Stereotypes 139
New Endowment 139
Ink 139
Bear Mace 139
Brother Road 139
Fist of Revelation 140
King of the Road 140
The Lord Provides 140
LOVE/HATE 140
Pain Magnet 141
Tough as the Last Guy 141
Inspiration & Sources 141

Appendix: Dread Powers & Rules Update 143

Existing Dread Powers 143
Using Conditions 143
Dread Power Dice Pools 143
New Dread Powers 144
Absorb Energy 144
Biomechanical Nightmare 144
Blackout 145
Blast 146
Blood of Life 146
Cloak of Authority 146
Curse of Failings 147
Curse of Words 147
Dark Gate 147
Dead Flesh 148
Degradation 148
Dream Seeing 148
Dream Shaping 148
Dream Walking 149
Earthquake 149
Elemental Form 149
Embolden the Mob 150
Eye For Desire 150
Flicker and Flash 150
Fluid Lessons 150
Ghost in the Machine 151
Gift of Life 151
Glitch 151
Haunting 151
Inebriate 152
Lord of the Manor 152
Mixed Blessings 153
Reap 153
Revelation 153
Tempest 154
The Oldest Temptation 155
The Primal Dirt 155
Revivify 155
Scapegoating 156
Soul Binding 156
Titan's Strength 156
Totemic Form 156
Transmutation 157
Twist Desires 157
Uncanny Reflexes 157

Rules Update 158

Risking Willpower 158
Merits 158
Professional Training 158
Safehouse 158
Status: Compact or Conspiracy 158
Torture Suite 158
Compacts and Conspiracies 158
Ashwood Abbey 158
The Long Night 158
The Loyalists of Thule 159
Network Zero 159
Null Mysteriis 159
The Union 159
Aegis Kai Doru 159
Ascending Ones 159
The Cheiron Group 159
The Lucifuge 159
Malleus Maleficarum 160
Task Force: VALKYRIE 160
Endowments 160
Advanced Armory 160
Mjolnir Cannon 160
Benediction 160
The Boon of Lazarus 160
Castigation 160
Hellfire 160
Sense of the Unrighteous 160
Shackles of Pandemonium 160
Elixir 160
Breath of Ma'at 160
Relic 160
Eye of Hubris 160
Watchful Keris 160
Doru Talisman 160
Thaumatechnology 161
Thaumatechnological Surgery 161
Weapon of Last Resort 161
Lover's Lips 161
Research and Development 161
Practical Experience 161
Tactics 161
Monsters 161
Creating Monsters 161
Major Monsters 161
Minor Monsters 163
Creating Templates 163
Willpower 164
Potency 164
Advantages of Potency 164
Drawbacks of Potency 165
Types of Potency 165
Morality and Integrity 166
Monsters Don't Count 166
Trigger Points 166
Derangements 166

DECEMBER 26, 2013

Cook County Coroner's C

Abhay Singh, M.D.
74 Lexington Avenue
Chicago, IL.

Coroner Investigator's

12/30/2013
Tox report confirmed presence of sulfuric acid, formaldehyde, and 4 unknown compounds. Thoughts?
- Mags

CALL INFO

NAME OF DECEASED (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)			TENTATIVE ID	UNID
DOE, John			☐	
REPORTED BY	REPORTED BY PHONE NO.		REPORTING AGENCY	
Det. Anne Richards	ON FILE		Cook County S	
INVESTIGATOR	DATE OF BIRTH		CASE TYPE	
Det. Anne Richards	UNKNOWN		Homicide	

DECEDENT

DATE OF BODY RECEIVED	DATE AND TIME OF DEATH	AGE	GENDER	RACE	MARITAL STATUS	VET
12/26/2013	UNKNOWN	20s - 30s	Male	Caucasian	UNKNOWN	☐

HGT WGT EYE COLOR	HAIR COLOR	OCCUPATION	EMPLOYER
UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN

Victim's remains were found in an abandoned rectory near a cathedral. The decedent may have been a vagrant who found shelter in the basement of the condemned building. It's clear from the damage sustained by the torso that a witness was involved either prior to, or immediately following, the time of death.

NOTES

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

Due to the delicate condition of the victim's remains, Detective Richards photographed and then refrigerated the body parts at a temperature of 35 degrees Fahrenheit to preserve the tissue for further examination. The autopsy commenced on December 26, 2013, at 11:30 A.M. and lasted for thirty minutes. After thirty minutes of exposure to the air, the remains rapidly disintegrated, exposing the bone. Up to that point, there was no evidence to indicate that the victim's remains would decompose in such a manner. As such, it's difficult to estimate the true time and date of death.

The victim's clothes are a pair of denim blue jeans, white tube socks, grey hooded sweatshirt, T-shirt, and red tennis shoes were found folded in a pile next to the body's torso. The garments are odorless and do not appear to be stained. It is likely that these clothes were removed prior to the victim's death. The clothing accompanied the victim's remains, and will be shipped to the crime lab for further analysis pending the conclusion of this report.

Based on the musculature of the torso and the presence of genitalia, the victim is identified as male, and likely aged somewhere between twenty and forty years of age. Note: forensic facial reconstruction is not possible at this time.

The victim's epidermis was present at the start of the autopsy. The skin was bluish in color. The torso was marked by eight scars ranging from 0.25 inches to 2 inches in length. Upon closer scrutiny, there is evidence that the victim may have participated in cosmetic scarring or tattooing that affected the dermis. Markings are spread out over an eight inch by two inch section and form a phrase: Redeem Thyself.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION

The laceration at the top of the torso has a strong odor that smells sulphurous; the head is missing. A jagged instrument may have detached the head from the top of the spine. Upon opening the chest cavity, the lungs were found to be filled with a clear liquid. The heart, liver, and kidneys had been surgically removed. Recommend a chemical analysis of the substance pending evidence collection.

Hands and feet were severed from their corresponding limbs. These lacerations also emit an odor that smells of musk and urine. The markings on the wrists and ankles suggest that a different instrument detached these parts. Both hands are also missing. A closer inspection of the wounds indicates that these injuries were sustained post-mortem.

Toxicology: Pending collection of fluids in a temperature-controlled environment.

Evidence Collected:

1. One (1) grey hooded sweatshirt, size X-Large.

2. One (1) pair denim jeans, size 38

3. One (1) Iron Man T-shirt, size X-Large.

4. One (1) pair of white tube socks, size L

5. One (1) pair of red tennis shoes, size 12

6. Thirty (30) swabs from separate locations. Test for pneumonia, lead poisoning, and presence of sulfur.

7. Twenty-five (25) autopsy photographs.

OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Time of Death: Inconclusive due to the body temperature and condition of the remains.

Immediate Cause of Death: Inconclusive

Manner of Death: Homicide

Remarks: Victim's remains were found in an abandoned rectory near a cathedral. The decedent may have been a vagrant who found shelter in the basement of the condemned building. It's clear from the damage sustained by the torso that a witness was involved either prior to, or immediately following, the time of death.

The witness likely removed the victim's clothing after death with the intent to retrieve or dispose of the garments at a later date. The head, hands, and feet were then sawed off to prevent identification of the body and tie the victim to identity of the witness. The deterioration of the epidermis and dermis is likely due to the witness' attempt to get rid of the body.

These findings have been reported to Detective Anne Richards. Recommend further investigation pending the results of the toxicology report.

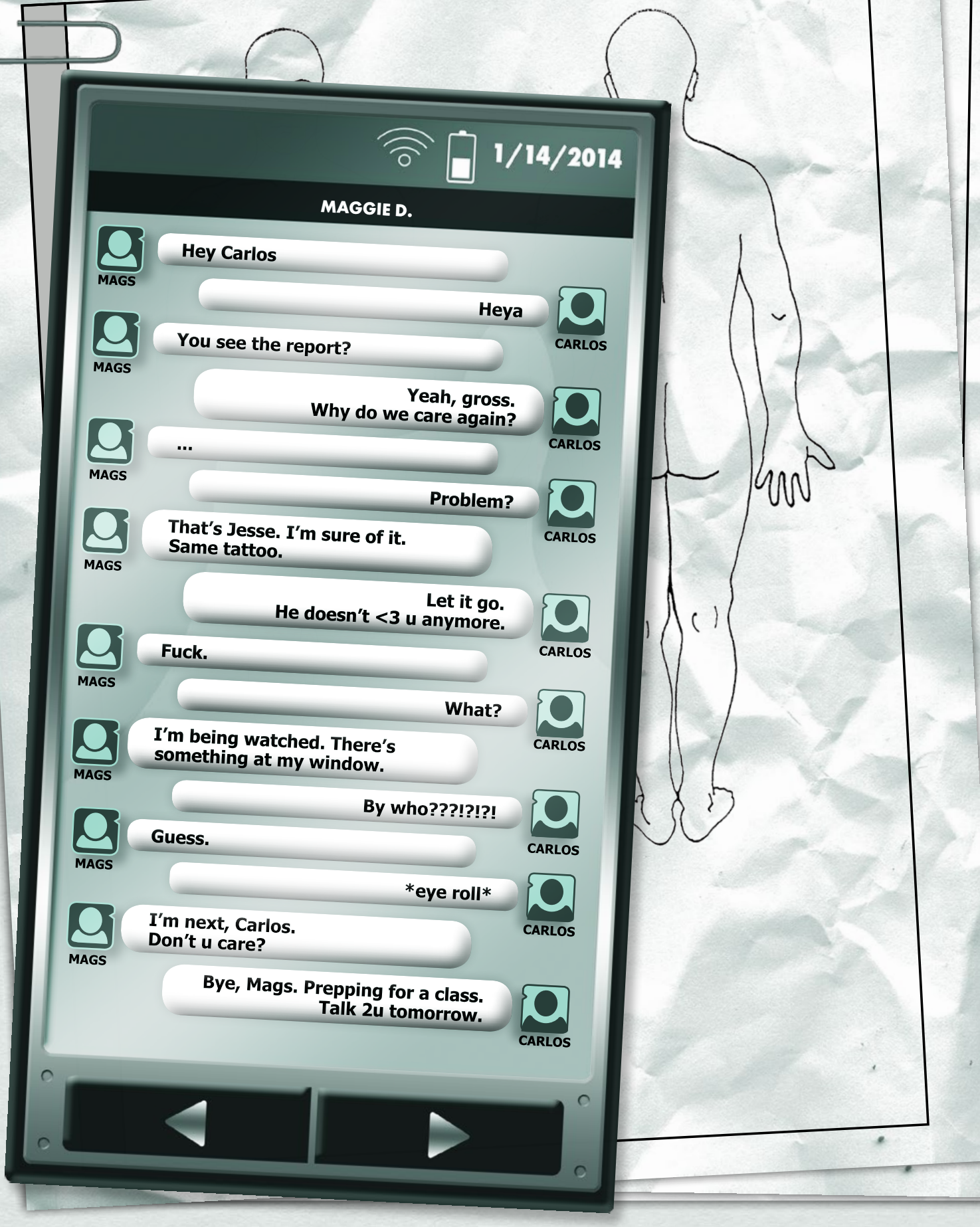
Abhay Singh, M.D.

Cook County Coroner's Office

December 26, 2013

NOTES

JANUARY 14, 2014



My name is Carlos Gutierrez. My mother was originally from Germany. Amy Boulder, her real name was. Her father – my grandfather – was an S.S. officer in World War II. She never forgave him for it. First chance she got, my mom immigrated to the States, changed her last name to Looper, fell in love with my dad, and had me.

I didn't find out who my grandfather was until I was in grad school working on my master's degree in anthropology. This really nice lady tracked me down, showed me a bunch of old photos and my mom's birth certificate, then handed me a card. Said if I ever wanted to atone for what my grandfather did, I should call the number. The Loyalists of Thule were good people, she said. Might give me a purpose in life, she said. Anthropologists don't make a lot of money.

I called Germany a few days later.

Don't know why I'm thinking about all this shit now, but that's how this whole Vigil thing started. I wasn't a conspiracy nut. Wasn't afraid of the dark, either. Well, not then anyway. Meeting Mags, hanging out with Jesse, all those late nights at the coffee shop with Samar and Eloy… At first, it wasn't about atoning for my grandfather. I joined because we had a mission. What could I do to stop the forces of evil, anyway? Catalogue a vamp's inhumanity for academia's sake?

I'm just some guy who's seen too much. Bad listener, too. Hell, for all I know, the Loyalists of Thule isn't really where I'm supposed to be. The Null Mysteries tried to recruit me, too. But none of that matters now because Mags was right: Jesse's dead. Samar is god-knows-where. Eloy? The cops said it was suicide. And now Mags is missing, too.

We crossed paths with some malignant force, a new monster we've never seen before. Not sure when or why or how. It's intelligent, sure, but I've already ruled out the usual suspects: hauntings, serial killers, vamps, werebeasts. I have no idea how old this creature is, or if it shits, sleeps, eats…

There is one thing I do know: I am not going to wait for it to kill me. I may not understand what the fuck is going on, but goddamnit I'm a hunter.

Hunters know a thing or two about the supernatural. In their quest to protect humanity from the evil that feeds off the innocent, hunters cross paths with the occasional ghost, vampire, or mystic. Many hunters even encounter deadly beings called slashers, or tussle with psychics. The longer a hunter upholds the Vigil, the more she begins to grasp that she is never alone; there will always be a monster lurking in the shadows that surround her. When the hunter realizes this, her true challenge begins. Will a hunter fall prey to paranoia and delusion? Will she see terrifying creatures around every corner, or jump every time she hears a mysterious noise? The truth always lies somewhere in the middle. Even maladjusted hunters are right: the world is much darker and more terrifying than they originally imagined.

Hunter: Mortal Remains explores new and different mysteries found within the World of Darkness. This rulebook examines five new types of antagonists, and adds another layer of complexity to a hunter's nightly Vigil. Similar to the preceding **Hunter** supplements, namely **Witch Finders**, **Night Stalkers**, and **Spirit Slayers**, the first five chapters in this book break down and rebuild other World of Darkness settings into the mold of **Hunter: the Vigil**. These chapters offer Storytellers and players a deeper look into the shadows, where new enemies are waiting to be encountered.

This book's themes and moods are specific to the antagonists presented in each chapter. The thread that connects these monsters is thin: hunters may not regularly encounter them and, when they do, they will likely feel conflicted and unclear about their response. Hunters engaging the stitched-together monstrosity of a Created will deal with an entirely more physical horror than those trapped in a haunted house with a Sin-Eater. Hunters who are searching for a mummy will have to deal with a cult, whilst some Changelings threaten all they know about monsters. Even worse, an encounter with a demon may force them to abandon the Vigil altogether.

In many ways, **Hunter: Mortal Remains** is a deep examination of fear and the Vigil. By introducing these antagonists, Storytellers will expose the human heart of each hunter, and discover how resilient he can be in the face of the unknown, the ancient, and the terrifying.

How to Use This Book

Hunter: Mortal Remains is about hunters discovering the world around them is both bigger and more terrifying than they originally thought. It explores a number of potential new antagonists, introducing and expanding on different monster archetypes that the characters may not know exists, much less how to hunt.

Scattered throughout this book are pieces of evidence strung together by a member of the Loyalists of Thule. This journey begins with a murder mystery and ends in tragedy. Though there are many suspects, the truth will be far stranger than anyone realizes.

Chapter One: Pieces of Flesh explores what happens when hunters encounter beings built from the bodies of the dead and given a new, pseudo-life. Taking themes and elements from **Promethean: the Created**, this chapter plunges hunters into mad science and pitchfork-wielding rage.

RECOMMENDED READING

This book draws ideas from five World of Darkness game lines: **Promethean: the Created**, **Changeling: the Lost**, **Geist: the Sin Eaters**, **Mummy: the Curse**, and **Demon: the Descent**. No assumptions were taken when the material in this book was written, and the source books aren't needed to use this supplement.

We've offered enough tools to create antagonists and develop chronicles based on those themes. These books may also help provide some depth of character for your Storyteller characters, too. Each section offers some recommended thematic sources for the new monsters as well.

Chapter Two: All Is Lost peels back the curtain on beings of myth and folklore that hunters might encounter. Only, it then spins those tales about the fae into new directions, and makes hunters question everything they thought they knew about urban legends and "fairy tales." Parts of **Changeling: the Lost** are twisted into a new, terrifying mold, creating dark mysteries hunters are forced to unravel.

Chapter Three: Eaters of the Dead brings **Hunter** into a new style of "ghost story" with beings who know far more about the dead than any hunter ever will. These beings are not mediums, nor are they necromancers; ghostwalkers are something entirely different. **Geist: the Sin-Eaters** inspires this chapter, and offers up potential allies (or deadly enemies) to any hunter who crosses their path.

Chapter Four: The Undying takes a look at ancient enemies and the cults who serve them. Hunters may discover that pulp movies and dusty tomes have nothing on these immortal beings. By drawing on **Mummy: the Curse,** hunters are introduced to old legends and new information. New hunters also debut, groups that may be as terrifying as the mummies themselves.

Chapter Five: To Hell and Back. While demons were introduced early on in **Hunter: the Vigil**, only the foolish would think they fully understand who — or what — these fallen beings are. Here, demons are broken down into different types, and new information is provided inspired by **Demon: the Descent**.

Appendix: Dread Powers and Rules Update takes a hard look at the mechanics of **Hunter: the Vigil**, and offers updates to match **The God Machine Chronicle**. Written with hunters in mind, these rules focus on revising and updating **Hunter**. It also features a host of new Dread Powers to flesh out your monsters.

THE RABBI AND THE GOLEM

Though most supernatural creatures are agents of the Devil, the Golem may be a gift from God. Its origins in modern myth may be traced back to 1580 when the devout and widely popular Rabbi Loeb received an unsettling vision. In a feverish dream, God spoke to Rabbi Loeb and gave the holy man instructions to build a supernatural being — a golem — using divine calculations that He would present to him over the course of several dreams.

Legends and folktales say otherwise, but Rabbi Loeb did not have enough mathematical knowledge to complete the task set before him. It is true that he dutifully wrote down what God showed to him, but the Rabbi was not able to decipher the mystical equations and build the golem in Prague. Rabbi Loeb understood that he needed help, and secretly visited Germany to seek the help of Johannes Kepler, the great mathematician and father of the scientific method.

Johannes became greatly excited by the enigma Rabbi Loeb presented him. Together, the two of them worked to decipher the calculations. The Rabbi provided Kepler with a detailed look at his visions, and Kepler used his mathematical genius to make sense of them. Did Kepler know what the calculations would create? If he did, the mathematician never revealed the details of his works, nor did he record his meeting with Rabbi Loeb —which was unusual for the prolific writer.

At the conclusion of this unlikely partnership, Rabbi Loeb returned to Prague, and secluded himself in his temple to purify himself and ask for God's guidance. After several nights, the Rabbi emerged from the temple to designate three other assistants for his holy task. The first, Johannes Kepler, represented the element of earth. The other three signified the elements of water, air, and fire.

Over the years, the Rabbi's legend grew, and the truth was supplanted in favor of more popular ideals. That is why the precise details of Rabbi Loeb's rituals were never confirmed, nor was the identity of his helpers revealed. In certain occult circles, many are convinced that two women were present, likely to represent water and fire.

Most troubling, however, is the idea that the golem is made out of clay. This, no doubt, is an allegory used to mask the truth. After all, Adam was made from clay, and God breathed life into him, turning him into flesh. Man, however, is not God. Though He may have given Rabbi Loeb the proper formula to create life independently from the womb, the priest had to work with the materials available to him: flesh.

From: cgutierrez@brook41.k12.ny.us

To: adam@networkzero.com

Subject: Night Life

Hey Adam,

Long time no see! Wondering if I can cash in that favor you owe me. I need to take a pulse and find out what the night life is like right now. I've been out of the game for a while, but I've been pulled back in and I'm working on Jesse's murder. I'm attaching a photo. Ever see any markings like this before? Maybe in a cemetery or a lab?

Before I forget, keep an eye out for Mags. Would you?

Thanks!

Autopsy.jpg

From: adam@networkzero.com

To: cgutierrez@brook41.k12.ny.us

Subject: Re: Night Life

Hey Carlos,

Long time no see, buddy. I've checked the archives and found a few recent photos of a reanimated creature spotted in Jersey a few months back, along with a pile of discarded body parts found in a trash can. I don't think Jesse was harvested. The lacerations look more like burn marks than cuts. You might want to follow up with the Cheiron Group just to be sure, but I'm guessing whatever bastard got him is very old and hungry.

As far as the night life goes? It's been a lot more active lately. We've got video of a reanimated buying tickets in Central Station. Just uploaded another one where she cleared out the whole room just by standing there. All kinds of creepy crawlies have been spotted leaving town. What spooks the spooks? Your guess is as good as mine.

I know it's a long shot, but supposedly there's a fairy ring on the south end of Central Park. If you're willing to do some field work, you could ask them.

Haven't seen Mags, but will do!

P.S. You have got to show me your library sometime. Favor for a friend? :-)

Reanimated One.jpg

Reanimated Two.jpg

From: cgutierrez@brook41.k12.ny.us

To: adam@networkzero.com

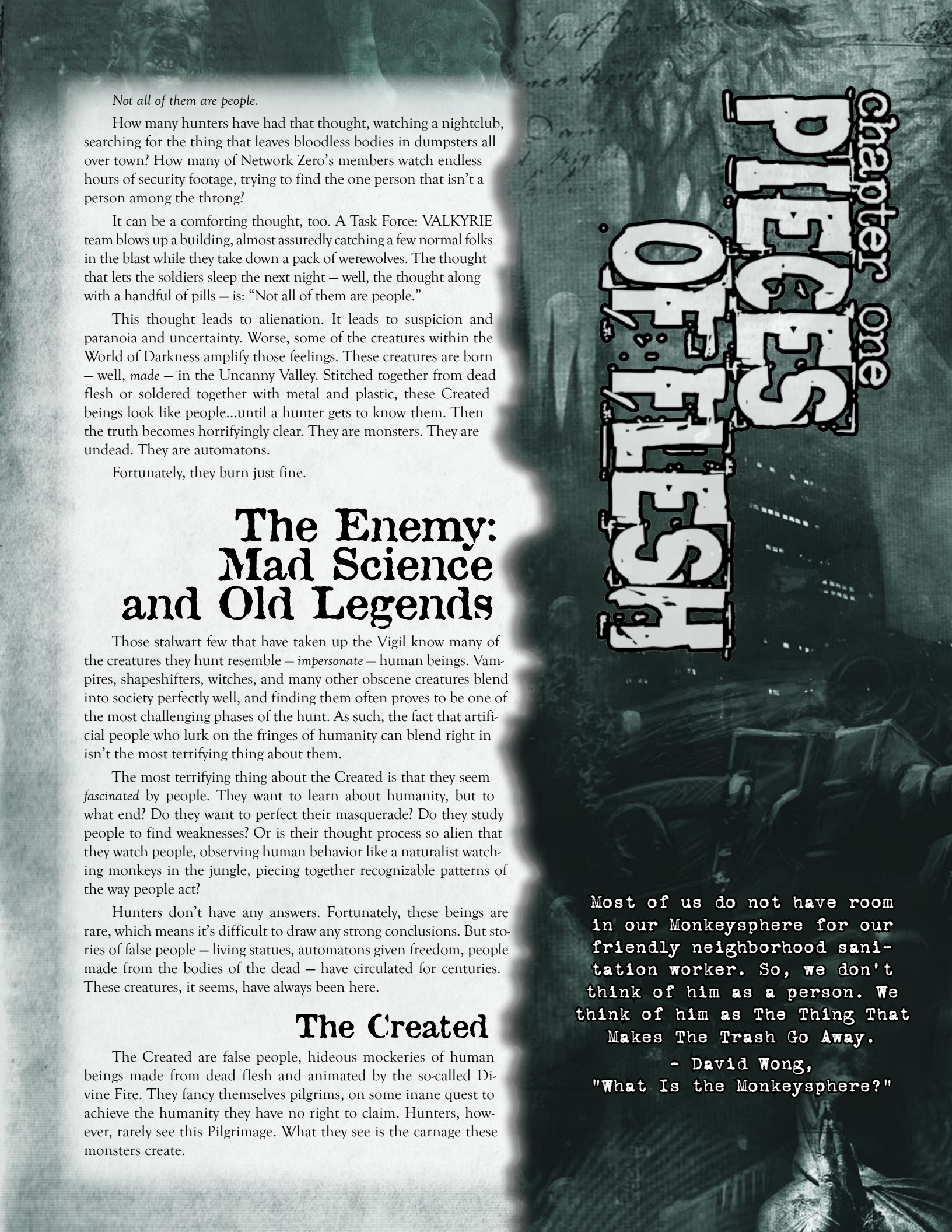
Subject: Re: Re: Night Life

Thanks for this. I'll keep you in the loop. Might need backup.

C

9:08

2014



chapter one

Pieces Of Flesh

Not all of them are people.

How many hunters have had that thought, watching a nightclub, searching for the thing that leaves bloodless bodies in dumpsters all over town? How many of Network Zero's members watch endless hours of security footage, trying to find the one person that isn't a person among the throng?

It can be a comforting thought, too. A Task Force: VALKYRIE team blows up a building, almost assuredly catching a few normal folks in the blast while they take down a pack of werewolves. The thought that lets the soldiers sleep the next night — well, the thought along with a handful of pills — is: "Not all of them are people."

This thought leads to alienation. It leads to suspicion and paranoia and uncertainty. Worse, some of the creatures within the World of Darkness amplify those feelings. These creatures are born — well, *made* — in the Uncanny Valley. Stitched together from dead flesh or soldered together with metal and plastic, these Created beings look like people...until a hunter gets to know them. Then the truth becomes horrifyingly clear. They are monsters. They are undead. They are automatons.

Fortunately, they burn just fine.

The Enemy: Mad Science and Old Legends

Those stalwart few that have taken up the Vigil know many of the creatures they hunt resemble — *impersonate* — human beings. Vampires, shapeshifters, witches, and many other obscene creatures blend into society perfectly well, and finding them often proves to be one of the most challenging phases of the hunt. As such, the fact that artificial people who lurk on the fringes of humanity can blend right in isn't the most terrifying thing about them.

The most terrifying thing about the Created is that they seem *fascinated* by people. They want to learn about humanity, but to what end? Do they want to perfect their masquerade? Do they study people to find weaknesses? Or is their thought process so alien that they watch people, observing human behavior like a naturalist watching monkeys in the jungle, piecing together recognizable patterns of the way people act?

Hunters don't have any answers. Fortunately, these beings are rare, which means it's difficult to draw any strong conclusions. But stories of false people — living statues, automatons given freedom, people made from the bodies of the dead — have circulated for centuries. These creatures, it seems, have always been here.

The Created

The Created are false people, hideous mockeries of human beings made from dead flesh and animated by the so-called Divine Fire. They fancy themselves pilgrims, on some inane quest to achieve the humanity they have no right to claim. Hunters, however, rarely see this Pilgrimage. What they see is the carnage these monsters create.

> Most of us do not have room in our Monkeysphere for our friendly neighborhood sanitation worker. So, we don't think of him as a person. We think of him as The Thing That Makes The Trash Go Away.
>
> - David Wong, "What Is the Monkeysphere?"

PERSPECTIVES

Players familiar with **Promethean: The Created** will recognize those pieced-together pilgrims in this chapter. The perspective here, though, isn't of the Created, attempting to find the New Dawn, but of the hunters who have the misfortune to cross their paths. As such, when examining topics such as the Wasteland and Disquiet, we present the information from the hunters' point of view — and the hunters often don't have any idea that these effects exist. They know only that the land is rapidly becoming despoiled (the Wasteland) and that, for whatever reason, they hate or fear the strange outsider with an intensity that terrified them in retrospect (Disquiet).

Hunters do not have the luxury, in dealing with the Created, of turning to a myriad of cultural and fictional sources like they do when dealing with vampires, ghosts, or werewolves. Instead, the Created slink through fiction the way they do through the World of Darkness — hunters read about things that *might* be Prometheans, but could just as easily be some other monster with similar traits. They have very little information to work with, and that means much of the information presented in this chapter is hypothetical rather than practical. Dealing with the Created should be a new, grotesque, and terrifying experience for all involved.

The material in this chapter enhances and places into greater context the section on "Reanimated" in **Hunter: The Vigil** (pp. 310-312). On any points of conflict, this book takes precedence.

Some Prometheans blunder through the World of Darkness, learning their lessons and interacting with the people therein. For the most part, these Created don't show up on a hunter's radar; unless the hunter encounters Disquiet or the Wasteland. A Promethean that follows its quest respectfully and carefully need never disturb the Vigil. Of course, the Created are rarely so circumspect.

By its very nature, the Pilgrimage is intrusive. The Created are *not* human. They are human-like, articulate beings, attempting to push their way into a society that does not recognize or, necessarily, want them. They enter human society with the barest notion of how people function, and do not understand many of the basic requirements to act appropriately in human society. That by itself isn't a huge problem — the Created might stand out as strange, but not threatening.

What makes them dangerous, though, is that for all their pretenses and human aspirations, the Created are supernatural beings. They are possessed of powers that enable them to hurt people, both physically and psychologically, and their very presence is enough to drive human beings mad over time. A Promethean that sets up shop in a busy city might just want to learn about its citizens, but that innocent goal is not possible — the monster *will*, over time, have a mob of people who are coming after it.

Of course, for many hunters, the horror of the Created is much more visceral and literal than that.

Misconceptions

A cell of hunters, particularly a tier-one cell, might make a number of logical, but ultimately faulty assumptions when encountering a Promethean.

Here are the most common:

First, although the **Hunter: The Vigil** book refers to these beings as "Reanimated," the title isn't really accurate. The Created are living beings made from dead flesh, but they are *not* undead creatures. This means that the usual methods of repelling the dead or undead — abjurations, magic or Thaumatechnology based on death, vampires, etc. — do not work on them. Likewise, reminders of the life that the Created's donor body had means almost nothing to the Promethean in question.

Second, Prometheans are extremely rare. Vampires, werewolves, and mages aren't especially common, but they are numerous enough to form their own organizations, secret societies, and cliques. The Created number less than 100 on the planet at any given time. Their "society" consists of word of mouth, a loose form of marks left for other pilgrims (which hunters are free to find and misinterpret), and epistles sent to other Prometheans. As such, while Prometheans do fall into categories (see Lineages), outside observers aren't likely to recognize them. In fact, sometimes a Promethean is created and then put out into the world with no knowledge of what it really is, and such a being is unlikely to know terms like "Lineage," even if the cell of hunters that finds it does.

Finally, the Created can resemble a variety of other supernatural creatures. In fact, some of the Lineages' nicknames refer to other monsters for this reason. An Ulgan calling up a spirit could just as easily be a mage. A golem smashing through a wall might be a vampire or a werewolf. Any Promethean might be recognized as a demon.

The Created are rare, and that rarity defies easy and accurate categorization. Hunters would, as always, do well to avoid jumping to conclusions...but doing so might be better for the story.

Lineages

Prometheans belong to one of five different *Lineages*; each traces back to the creator of the first for that particular line. Subsequent Created then make more like themselves, perpetuating that Lineage. They also have a distinct appearance, which adds to a hunter's confusion. A hunter group that lacks a way to identify a Promethean might not see two Created as similar creatures at all.

Below are quick descriptions of the Lineages and what to highlight when using them as antagonists in a **Hunter** game. Note, however, that hunters aren't likely to use these terms, since they very rarely understand what Prometheans are or have any sense of their numbers. On the off chance that a group of hunters pieces together that the Created are part of a "family line," we've included some potential nicknames that a cell, compact, or conspiracy might use.

- **Frankenstein:** These beings, formed from the disparate parts of many corpses, are angry, jealous, destructive, and stronger than humans. While Frankesteins are capable of mercy and compassion, when wronged they go to the ends of the Earth to exact revenge. Their Wastelands are dotted with thunderstorms, dry, ozone-smelling air, and a palpable tension. *Nicknames:* Patchwork Men, Reanimated, Stitchers, Zombies.

- **Galateid:** Like Frankensteins, Galateids are often made from multiple bodies. Unlike those wretched creatures, though, the descendants of Pygmalion's creation are perfect and beautiful. Galateids inspire fascination and love — which rapidly degenerates into obsession and lust. Their Wastelands cause memory loss, problems with word-finding and language, and difficulty catching breath. *Nicknames:* Sirens, Succubi, Mannequins, Dolls.

- **Osiran:** Haughty, arrogant, and possessed with delusions of grandeur, these Prometheans believe their ancestry is divine for their creation follows Egyptian myth. Just like how the goddess Isis reassembled Horus after he was torn apart, an Osiran Promethean is always cut into 13 pieces and stitched together minus one piece; that missing piece varies from Promethean to Promethean. Osirans are inquisitive and methodical, which means if a cell of hunters puts one down, it had better be *very* sure the job was done correctly. To make matters worse, Osirans also return from death, too, which often bodes ill for everyone involved. Rain doesn't fall in the Osiran Wasteland, and all water eventually becomes stagnant, unpleasant, and gelatinous. *Nicknames:* Fishmen, Reanimated, Eunuchs, Mummies.

- **Tammuz:** Built to serve, the Tammuz (known in some occult circles as "golems") appear to be made of mud in their natural form. They aren't, but their unholy method of creation requires the raw materials (dead flesh) to be buried in the earth, which lends itself to their dirty appearance. Golems are slow and often stupid, but even more than other Prometheans, the Tammuz are relentless and difficult to kill. In the Tammuz Wasteland, the very Earth rebels. Stone and clay crumble, sinkholes open, and topsoil becomes inert and useless. *Nicknames:* Golems, Mudmen, Swamp Things, Jasons.

- **Ulgan:** The Ulgan are perhaps the strangest of the Created. Their bodies are sacrificed to the spirits who rip them to pieces. Then, their dismembered bodies are reassembled and stuck back together with ectoplasm. The Ulgan enjoy a special relationship with ghosts and spirits. They can talk with these entities, and sometimes even command them. Ulgan Wastelands are rife with such horrors; a cell pursuing an Ulgan better have some means of dealing with, or at least perceiving, spirits. *Nicknames:* Manitou, Necros, Demons, Reanimated.

Body Horror

A Promethean is an ambulatory being made from the body parts of the dead that someone *stitched together*. Let that notion sink in a moment.

For a Promethean to be walking around, someone had to assemble enough dead, human body parts to make a human being. If the Promethean is composed of just one body, torn apart and then sewn back together, that should be enough to frighten any cell. But, the Created often carry the remains of multiple people; a hunter realizing this might believe the creature is evidence of mass murder. Indeed, it may even be so.

Even if the creator uses corpses to build its monster, that still means he has to dig up or acquire a number of human corpses, hack them to pieces, arrange those bits into a new body, and then sew, staple, or glue them together in a morbid fashion.

Storytellers can draw this horror out by highlighting the details of the various bodies and the method at which they've been fused together. Differing skin tones, tattoos, moles, wrinkles, and age spots can bring the point home nicely.

Obsession

Obsession is a running theme in all things related to the Created. To make a Promethean, someone had to be so focused, so driven, and so blindingly obsessed with making a person that everything else fell away. Victor Frankenstein wasn't able to create his monster because the science behind it was sound; a would-be protégé who lacks Victor's focus couldn't make it work. It was Victor's mad obsession with the notion of life that allowed him to raise Adam from his table.

That kind of bloody-mindedness should scare the hell out of experienced hunters, because it'll feel familiar to them. As the Vigil progresses, it consumes hunters — their moral outlook changes to fit their new vocation. A cell of hunters investigating a creator of Promethean — a *demiurge* — is peering into a skewed image of the world. To say the ends justify the means is an understatement; demiurges leave personal fortunes, family,

morality, and most of their humanity behind in order to complete their creations. Ironic, then, that their creations spend their existences trying to gain this same humanity.

The Creator

A story about a Created monster can easily contain enough horror to satisfy a **Hunter** troupe. But, the cell who deals with the monster can then wind up wondering who *made* it.

The demiurge might be a cackling, insane scientist, attempting to build a race of atomic supermen. He's just as likely to be a lonely, socially maladapted savant who managed to make an ancient occult ritual work. The hunters might be expecting to find a sorcerer, someone whose lair is guarded by homunculi and wards; but instead, they find a house guarded with a standard alarm system and a Labrador retriever. The demiurge made the monster, true, but then the monster fled...or the demiurge sent it away, because he suffers from Disquiet the same as anyone else. Does that creator bear responsibility for anything the monster did? What if the demiurge is willing to *accept* that responsibility, and, with a trembling voice, agrees to whatever retribution the hunters think is appropriate?

Or, maybe the demiurge *is* a monster. Maybe she hacked apart ten young men to sew together her creation. The soil behind her farmhouse is enriched with the leftovers, the parts she couldn't use. She has the photos from the victims' wallets in an album, and she pores through them at night, her face devoid of expression, staring at the mothers she bereaved and the girlfriends she left with nothing but questions. But, even if the demiurge *is* an objectively monstrous person, the question that the Storyteller must answer is *why* the demiurge made the creature? After all, only a supernaturally strong obsession can lead to the creation of a Promethean.

Disquiet

Prometheans engender feelings of hate, distrust, fascination, and even obsession in others. The blanket term for this phenomenon is "Disquiet," and hunters are not immune.

Disquiet affects people in different ways, depending on the Promethean in question and the individual's temperament. Systems for Disquiet can be found on p. 20.

Some various manifestations of Disquiet follow:

Spite: The character wants the Promethean to suffer. This is subtly different than hatred; the character doesn't necessarily want the Promethean to die, just to suffer loss. At mild exposure, the character exerts whatever authority he can over the Promethean — losing paperwork, standing in the way, blocking the Promethean in traffic, calling the cops for any perceived slight. As Disquiet worsens, the affected individual may progress to throwing rocks, vandalizing property, making overt threats, and telling outright lies to get the Promethean arrested. Frankenstein and Galateid Prometheans often engender spite. *Presenting spite:* "He

looks down his nose at you. He glides through the room with fluid grace, barely deigning to acknowledge you or anyone else. You find yourself wishing he'd trip, just so he'd look a little more human."

- **Fear:** The Promethean terrifies the witness. What response this prompts depends on how that character deals with fear, but in the hunters' case, something that inspires fear might well become the next target. Any Promethean can inspire fear but Ulgans are an especially good choice. *Presenting fear:* "She saw you. Her gaze doesn't linger, but you see the predatory recognition in her glance. She's coming for you. Probably tonight."

- **Fascination:** The witness can't look away from the Promethean. If the Created leaves the area, the witness keeps thinking about him. At first, this fascination might seem like a crush, and if the character has no further contact with the monster it goes away — maybe with some embarrassing lingering dreams. If the Disquiet takes hold, though, the victim becomes unable to think about anything else, and the fascination progresses to full-blown mania. The victim wants to be with the Promethean; maybe to worship him, perhaps to subjugate or to learn more about him. Galateids and Osirans are great candidates for this, because they often fascinate people. *Presenting fascination:* "He's going to be yours. He might not know it, but he will. You can save him."

- **Hate:** Pure, simple hatred. The witness wants the Promethean to die. Every ill and injustice the victim has ever been handed can be traced back to this monster. For hunters who seek revenge on the things that killed their loved ones, this response throws reason and rationality out the nearest window. Hunters that fall under this form of Disquiet — most commonly from Tammuz and Frankenstein Prometheans — immediately start crafting plans of attack. If the Disquiet progresses, though, this is the type that leads to a torch-and-pitchfork wielding mob the fastest. *Presenting hatred:* "Every second that *thing* sits there, breathing the same air as you, is one second too many."

- **Obsession:** As with fascination, the witness cannot get the Promethean out of his mind. Obsession differs, though, in that the focus of the emotion isn't romantic, sexual, or even remotely positive. The obsessed party typically feels that the Promethean owes him something or has some other obligation. Maybe he feels she should serve him, or maybe he simply wants to take her apart and learn her mystical secrets. Osirans and Ulgans spawn obsession, but Tammuz Prometheans do so even more frequently, as victims of their Disquiet often want to make them into slaves. Obsession ends when the victim finally decides to purge it — killing the focus of the obsession. *Presenting obsession:* "Where does she *go* at night? You know she doesn't have a home, but she's clean. Where does she sleep? Does she sleep? What does she eat? What *would* she eat?"

The Pilgrimage

Prometheans seek to become human. It is their defining goal: they are on a Pilgrimage to search the World of Darkness, looking for the alchemical components they need to turn lead (their base, wretched forms) into gold (frail, flawed, beautiful humanity).

Of course, this is hardly common knowledge. The Created are rare, and they aren't well-represented in folklore and fiction. Everyone knows a vampire *drinks blood*, or that a werewolf *turns into a wolf*. Hunters may prepare to hunt such things. But, a monster that *seeks to become human* is generally well outside of a hunter's frame of reference.

Not all Prometheans follow the Pilgrimage, of course. Some of the Created deliberately take no part in this quest, seeing humanity as weak, privileged, hateful creatures. Other Prometheans seek to become monsters (see Centimani, p. 20) rather than people. But, the majority of the Created follow the Pilgrimage on instinct. As such, when using Prometheans in a **Hunter** game, it's worthwhile to consider the impact that learning about the Pilgrimage will have.

Many Prometheans keep journals or notes on their progress. A cell of hunters might find such a journal, and read through the owner's progress — the letters from other Created, the alchemical working that mirrors the creature's Dread Powers, and the lessons that the Promethean has learned along the way. What has the Promethean seen of humanity? Is the monster just randomly taking whatever knowledge it can, or does its Pilgrimage have a focus? Is it collecting prospective bodies for its own eventual creation, or is it attempting (and possibly failing) to help the people it meets? The sections in "The Response," beginning on p. 23, each begin with an excerpt from the journal of one of the three Prometheans detailed at the end of this chapter, which paint a picture of the Pilgrimages these characters lead.

Another question this raises, though, is: can a Promethean actually succeed at becoming human? And if so, is the resulting being really human, or just another mockery?

The Redeemed

The Redeemed are Prometheans who have completed the Great Work and are now completely human. As a **Hunter** Storyteller, you can present the Redeemed in two possible ways, depending on how the characters experience it.

If the cell finds a journal, interrogates a Promethean, or meets one of the Redeemed after the fact and learns about the Redeemed second-hand, then the character looks and acts completely human. Most Redeemed have no memories whatsoever of their lives as Prometheans; investigation of the target reveals falsified identification, and a digital paper trail not more than a few years old — as if this person just spontaneously appeared.

On the other hand, if a hunter cell actually witnesses a Promethean become human, the effect should be profound and positive. The hunters should feel Disquiet evaporate like fog in the morning sun. The Promethean's disfigurements vanish, and any magic- or supernatural-detecting apparatus the hunters have reads the target as a human being, nothing more or less.

A Redeemed isn't necessarily a *good* person; coming to humanity via the Great Work doesn't mean that the new person

is moral. It does mean, though, that the Redeemed is unequivocally human. What that means for a cell of hunters depends on the hunters in question. A particularly militant group of characters might murder the Redeemed character anyway, assuming that he is an infiltrator, working his way into human society for some nefarious purpose. A cell of Null Mysteriis or other scientifically-minded hunters might try to work some alchemy of their own — after all, what if they could *cure* vampirism or lycanthropy? Wouldn't that be better for everyone? Religious hunters, like those within the Malleus Maleficarum or Long Night, might see a Redeemed character as an affront to God and all His works, or they might view her to be a miracle.

Centimani

Within the already small subset of beings called Prometheans is an even less numerous category — the *Centimani*. These so-called Freaks revel in their inhuman appearances and attitude, and reshape their bodies in terrifying ways. Many have additional body parts — a second set of arms jutting out from the rib cage, an eyeball in the center of a palm, a face sprouting from the belly or back. Centimani can sometimes change shape, turning into a puddle of mobile blood or a horrific, canine-esque monster.

Other Prometheans seem to fear these creatures. They do not follow the Pilgrimage — they have no regard for human beings and have no desire to become one. They often travel with broods of monsters, hideous, misshapen things that feed on the flesh of other Prometheans. What, if anything, the Centimani have in common with each other, and what their overriding goals are remain a mystery to the compacts and conspiracies. Whatever the truth, these monsters are the Created without even the veneer of humanity. This makes them easier to identify, but by no means easier to kill.

Systems

The systems in **Promethean: The Created** for Disquiet and the Wasteland are written from the perspective of the Created, for obvious reasons. This section revises these systems somewhat, so that they detail how human characters (specifically hunters) view and suffer these effects. Likewise, all Prometheans share certain traits that don't fall under the purview of Dread Powers. These are also described here.

Benefits of Being Created

Prometheans have certain advantages intrinsic to their condition. All Created beings share the following traits:

- All Prometheans can eat any organic matter, including rotting flesh, refuse, fibrous plant matter, and roadkill with no ill effect.
- Prometheans never suffer wound penalties, and cannot be knocked unconscious. A Promethean only dies when it suffers aggravated damage equal to or in excess of its Health rating.
- Prometheans receive a +4 modifier to resist disease and poison.
- Electricity heals Prometheans, rather than harming them. All Prometheans have the Absorb Energy Dread Power at five dots.
- Prometheans suffer aggravated damage, not lethal, from fire.

Disquiet

Disquiet comes into effect whenever a character has a social interaction with a Promethean. This doesn't necessarily require a Social roll on either character's part. Any conversation that goes deeper than a simple interaction with a cashier in a convenience store risks Disquiet. A character can also run the risk of Disquiet if he studies a specific Promethean over a longer period of time.

Below is a list of activities that risk Disquiet. This list isn't exhaustive, and the Storyteller can call for Disquiet rolls any time she feels it appropriate.

Risk Disquiet when:

- A Promethean attempts to intimidate a character (either using the Intimidation Skill or by forcing Doors).
- A Promethean attempts to seduce, persuade, or otherwise manipulate the hunter.
- The hunter attempts to intimidate, seduce, persuade, or otherwise manipulate the Promethean. This includes any Social action or Social maneuvering.
- The hunter uses an Endowment or supernatural Merit to gain information about the Promethean.
- The hunter witnesses the Promethean using a Dread Power.
- The hunter and the Promethean engage in conversation lasting more than a few minutes or includes the exchange of personal information (even falsified).
- The hunter observes the Promethean for more than five minutes straight.
- The hunter is part of a team using the Identification, Measurements, or Profiling Tactics on the Promethean.

Risking Disquiet

Action: Instant and contested

Dice Pool: Resolve + Composure vs. Potency

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Dramatic failure for the Promethean is treated as simple failure. If the hunter's player rolls a dramatic failure, the hunter gains the Disquiet Condition at one stage higher than he would normally. If the hunter already has the Disquiet Condition at stage four, the dramatic failure has no

further effect; in this case, the player cannot choose to take a voluntary dramatic failure for a Beat.

Failure: If both the hunter's player and the Storyteller fail the roll, the hunter gains the Disquiet Condition at stage one. If the hunter already has a Disquiet Condition, it does not increase. If, however, the hunter fails the roll and the Storyteller succeeds, the Disquiet Condition increases by one stage, to a maximum of stage four.

Success: If the hunter's player rolls more successes than the Storyteller, the hunter suffers no (or no further) Disquiet. If the Promethean's successes *equal or exceed* the hunter's, the hunter gains the Disquiet Condition at the current stage +1.

Exceptional Success: If the hunter's player rolls more successes than the Storyteller and gains an exceptional success, the hunter is immune to all further Disquiet risks for the rest of the scene. If the Storyteller rolls more successes than the player and gains an exceptional success, the hunter's Disquiet Condition advances by two stages to a maximum of 4.

The Disquiet Condition

Disquiet is a Condition that progresses in four stages. Each stage has the same Beat and Resolution requirements. A hunter character gains a Beat when he does something that risks his safety, or the safety of his cell, as a result of pursuing feelings or impulses brought on by Disquiet. The hunter Resolves the Condition when the Promethean is destroyed, he spends one week having no contact with the Promethean at all, or when the Condition progresses to the next stage.

Stage One: The hunter finds his thoughts drifting to the Promethean, in a manner colored by the type of Disquiet that the character engenders (see p. 18). At this stage the character suffers no mechanical penalties.

Stage Two: The hunter has difficulty seeing other targets as valid pursuits of the Vigil. The Promethean might not be the greatest threat (though if the Disquiet manifests as hate, she probably seems to be), but she is the most worthy and valuable target to the hunter.

The player suffers a -1 to all extended actions and all Tactics rolls, as he has difficulty focusing.

Stage Three: The character dreams about the Promethean every night. The dreams are surreal nightmares in which the hunter tracks down and confronts the Promethean; what this confrontation entails depends on how the Disquiet manifests. Spite- or hate-based Disquiet cause violent, brutal dreams in which the hunter visits his wrath upon the Promethean. Obsession- or fascination-based Disquiet results in dreams in which the hunter comes to possess the Promethean, either in a literal sense (imprisoning her or otherwise keeping her confined), sexually, or even merging with her. Fear-based Disquiet usually involves the Promethean killing or brutalizing the hunter and his cell or loved ones.

While in this stage, the hunter suffers a -2 on all Resolve + Composure rolls, as well as the penalties from stage two. However, he also receives a +1 on all direct attacks on the Promethean.

Stage Four: This stage resembles stage three; the dreams continue and intensify, and the hunter cannot think of any target other than the Promethean. The more dangerous aspect, though, is that at this stage, Disquiet becomes contagious.

The hunter spreads the Promethean's Disquiet as though *he* was the Promethean, though any Disquiet thus engendered focuses on the Promethean, not the hunter. This results in the hunter being able to easily find allies to hunter down and kill or capture the Promethean. The game mechanics for stage four are otherwise the same as for stage three.

Storytelling Disquiet

Disquiet is a strange game system in that it alters how a character thinks and behaves. In a game of **Promethean: The Created**, this is simple enough; the Storyteller simply needs to alter how she depicts supporting characters. But, in a game of **Hunter: The Vigil**, the Storyteller is faced with informing the players' characters how they feel about a supporting character, and that can read as removing agency from the player.

Below are some suggestions to help you mitigate this.

- **Have Disquiet happen to Storyteller characters first.** If the characters meet someone suffering from Disquiet, especially if it manifests as fascination or spite, they might not think anything supernatural is at work (unless they are profoundly paranoid). But, as the Disquiet deepens, they see their friend is becoming dangerous, murderously obsessed. If the friend in question is a hunter, she probably recruits the character to track or even kill her target. If not, though, the Disquiet worsens to the point that it becomes contagious. At that point, the hunters will feel the effects of the Disquiet without ever laying eyes on the Promethean. This can be an interesting way to build expectations about the "monster," and then alter those expectations when the hunters finally confront the Promethean.

- **Be honest with the players.** Some players respond well to being told that "an external force is changing your characters' perceptions and opinions." That in mind, if you dictate feelings and attitudes, but *not* how the character responds to them, you've allowed the player to retain some agency, and have given her a means of gaining Beats (see the Disquiet Condition). You also don't have to tell the player the reason for these feelings. If you do, don't be coy. Players who have read or played **Promethean** will probably figure out what they're up against. Just present it as a roleplaying challenge and let everyone run with it.

- **Show, don't tell.** Under the various flavors of Disquiet on **p. 18**, you'll see a brief suggestion on how to present each form of Disquiet. This kind of exposition, which dictates what the character *sees* rather than what she *feels*, is a good way to elicit the reaction that the Disquiet engenders. Even better, if you know what pushes the buttons of that particular character (consult the character's Virtue, Vice, Aspirations, and breaking points if you're not sure), you can tailor your presentation — what would *this character* find fascinating? What would *this character* obsess over?

- **Moment of clarity.** What if the Disquiet breaks, like a fever, after its most intense point? The characters have a torch-wielding mob at their backs, they've cornered the monster in a blind alley, they're about to set it on fire — and then it all drops. The characters see the Promethean as a helpless, scared individual. Everyone around them is clearly ready to set this person on fire and watch him burn to death. What do the characters do? Are they willing to try to head the mob off? What if the characters see the Promethean's disfigurements again — is that enough to confirm that this *thing* needs to die, or is more data required? Or, do the characters just go through with it, figuring it's too late to back out now?

Wasteland

The Created poison the land around them. This rot afflicts the environment in different ways, depending on the creature in question and his Lineage. But, it's always destructive, and it always ends in cataclysm unless the creature is destroyed or moves on.

A Promethean staying in one place doesn't necessarily start a Wasteland. Certain trigger events scorch the land, and the Wasteland begins there, radiating outward like progressive necrosis from a wound. For **Hunter** purposes, it's not necessary to know what the trigger event was; from a story perspective, a cell of hunters probably encounters a Wasteland already in progress.

Wastelands, like Disquiet, progress in four stages, represented by Conditions. The longer a Promethean stays in one place the more intense it gets. "Within one place" is defined here as within a mile radius, but feel free to restrict this distance if that's too big an area for your purposes. How long between stages isn't usually important from the hunters' perspective, so feel free to have the intensity of the Wasteland increase at the speed that the story requires.

Stage One: Marked

This stage of the Wasteland carries no easily detectable markings. A character with some method of sensing supernatural activity (the Unseen Sense Merit or various Endowments that allow for detection of such things) might sense that something is off in the area, but nothing more than a general sense of unease. Any rolls to detect the Promethean via magical or supernatural means gain a +1 modifier, and any rolls made to inflict Disquiet (not resist it) also receive a +1 modifier.

The Storyteller should use this stage of the Wasteland to indicate that something is wrong. It's a good way to let the characters know they're on the right track, or that something sinister is going on in an area that they previously thought safe. Since this stage of the Wasteland doesn't carry any detrimental game effects, it's a good way to convey the otherworldly nature of a Promethean without tipping your hand, so to speak.

Stage Two: Strange

At this stage, the Promethean's presence is noticeable and obvious, though casual observers probably don't have any idea what they're looking at. One of the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) behaves strangely, depending on the Lineage of the Promethean in question (Tammuz, Galateid, Frankenstein, and Osiran, respectively). Ulgan Prometheans affect spirits instead of an element.

In game terms, the extra die to detect Prometheans and the extra die on Disquiet rolls remains. Further, the appropriate element becomes poisoned and stagnant. In addition, the Wasteland is considered a level one Extreme Environment (see p. 213 of the **God-Machine Chronicle**).

- **Earth** and stone becomes brittle. -1 Durability to any stone- or earth-based material.
- **Air** is dry and foul-smelling. -1 on all scent-based Perception rolls.
- **Fires** flare up or go out unpredictably, and electric devices short out without warning. Any failure with an electronic device shorts it; such devices can be repaired with a Wits + Crafts roll.
- **Water** becomes stagnant and sluggish. Drinking any water that has been in the radius of the Wasteland for more than an hour imposes a -1 modifier on all rolls due to stomach cramps.
- **Spirits** become restless. All spirits and ghosts receive a +1 modifier to affect living targets, but any devices or powers that hunters can use on such beings also enjoy this modifier.

This stage of the Wasteland should be noticeable even to casual observers. If the Strange Condition remains, the area develops a reputation, but not one that terrifies people — an area of town where water is thick and gross or your cell phone always quits working is a curiosity more than anything else. The characters might (correctly) recognize this as a chance to stop the Wasteland before it gets any worse.

Stage Three: Blighted

At this point, the affected area becomes dangerous. The appropriate element surges out of control, and unprotected human beings suffer for it. While a normal person might not ascribe anything supernatural to the area, anyone with real experience can tell that something is deeply wrong.

The air is acrid and toxic, and every breath sticks in a person's lungs. Earth shifts beneath one's feet, making tripping and falling a serious danger. Electronic devices spark and thunderclouds hang ominously overhead. Water takes on a gelatinous consistency, and everything feels warm, oily and sluggish. The spirits howl even louder, reach out of Twilight and grasp at people as they pass. In game terms, all the modifiers listed above increase by one die, including the added dice to Disquiet and detecting Prometheans. In addition, the Wasteland is considered a level two Extreme Environment.

A Blighted area might be the lair of a Promethean that has no intention of leaving. The area is intense enough that it causes damage if people stay too long, which means while visitors don't start suffering damage right away, no one is going to remain here. Residents move out, and the place gains a reputa-

tion as being haunted, corrupted, or otherwise unlivable. Hunters that find such a place should know right away that the land has been poisoned; finding out that they can reverse the effects should be a relief, not a given. For maximum effect, center the Blight area on a place meaningful to a member of the cell.

Stage Four: Wasteland

At this stage, the Wasteland earns its name. Nothing grows or lives within a Wasteland. Plants die, animals flee, and human beings actively avoid the place. In a city, other supernatural interests probably intervene, meaning that a cell of hunters investigating such a Wasteland might run afoul of other monsters looking to cleanse their hunting grounds.

The Wasteland corrupts the elements on a conceptual and mystical level, as well as a literal one.

- **Air.** If air is the affected element, the Wasteland affects names and words — people have a hard time communicating. -3 to all rolls made to communicate or coordinate, including Tactics.
- **Fire.** For fire, electronic devices suffer a -3 modifier, and all failures using such devices are treated as dramatic failures.
- **Water.** Water stagnates entirely, congealing into sludge the consistency of warm pudding, and living things (composed, as they are, chiefly of water) become phlegmatic and slow; -3 to Speed and Initiative.
- **Earth.** For earth, stone and soil become loose, powdery, and unstable. All Athletics dice pools suffer a -3 penalty, including Dodge rolls.
- **Spirit.** Finally, a Ulgan's spiritual Wasteland becomes a vision of Hell. Spirits wander freely in and out of Twilight. The entire area has the Open Condition (see p. 225 of the **God-Machine Chronicle**).

In addition to these effects, the Wasteland is considered a level three Extreme Environment. A Wasteland of this magnitude should either be a warning to the cell to get the hell out quickly, or a gauntlet they have to endure to get to something (or someone) in the middle. As Storyteller, you should find some ways to spring the unexpected on them while they're there. In a Tammuz Wasteland, a sinkhole might open under their feet. In a Frankenstein Wasteland, a sudden electromagnetic pulse might take out their electronic equipment entirely.

The Wasteland should be terrifying, but if they manage to destroy the Created monster at the center of it (who is, perhaps, imprisoned there), they should see it lessen and begin to recede almost immediately.

Dread Powers

The Created are not as versatile in their array of supernatural gifts as mages are, but their alchemical experimentations with their own flesh and souls do harvest some interesting results. Any of the Dread Powers listed in **Hunter: The Vigil** or in this book can conceivably be part of a Promethean's arsenal, but the following are especially appropriate: Crushing Blow, Dead Flesh, Degradation, Dread Attack (claws, fangs, or even tentacles), Embolden the Mob, Gremlinize, Revelation, Revivify, Scapegoating, Terrify, Titan's Strength, Transmutation, Unholy Attribute.

The Response

Outwardly, Prometheans are quite diverse. While all of the various Lineages cause Disquiet and scorch the earth into a Wasteland, the effects feel very different from one Created monster to another. As such, the various hunter organizations in the World of Darkness often have more information than they realize. To correctly identify them, it's just a matter of getting the information to synch.

Each section below includes a snippet from the journals of the three Prometheans detailed at the end of this chapter (except for the Union, which includes a snippet from all three), some notes on how the compact or conspiracy approaches Prometheans, what the group is likely to know about Prometheans, and what unique challenges the group faces when dealing with the Created.

Compacts

The main disadvantage that the compacts have when dealing with Prometheans is the rarity of the Created. Only a handful of the creatures walk the Earth at any given time, and some of them live their whole lives without running afoul of hunters or anyone connected to them. Certainly, many hunters have read *Frankenstein*, and some of the more erudite ones might know the legends of the Golem of Prague or Pygmalion, but that's a far cry from knowing what to do when a person made of dead flesh comes through town.

Compacts have archives to draw on. Somewhere in those archives, the characters can probably find some descriptions of a creature that matches what they're currently facing. However, the characters probably *aren't* going to find long dissertations about Created beings and how to kill them, nor are they likely to find any real explanations for how this *thing* came to life. Each section ends with an excerpt from the archives of that hunter organization, relating to the Created — even if a hunter reading that archive might not immediately make that connection.

But do they really need to know? Where compacts are concerned, it may make more thematic sense for hunters to make the wrong assumptions and have things go badly from there. The Created are made of dead flesh, so they must be undead (false). A Promethean made of a particular person's body might carry his memories and repelled (or at least stunned) by a picture of his family (probably false). A taser is probably an effective way to knock the creature out for further study (badly, dangerously false). If all else fails, set the monster on fire — everything burns (true).

The Ashwood Abbey

It's about penetration. It always is. It's not always about being penetrated *or* penetrating, *but it's always about penetration. It's the older men, the ones that are kind of fatherly or grandfatherly. The guys who wear shirts and ties, even when they don't have to – I'm told that used to be more common. But these guys, they can't get over their own need for penetration.*

It's not just about the sex. Not just *about the sex. It's about how they interact with the world. There has to be a power dynamic. Something has to be fucking something else. Otherwise, they just don't understand it. They can't figure out how to be in the world in any other context; they have to either be standing there with their figurative hands on the world's metaphorical hips, ready to enter, or they have to be the ones on all fours, face in the pillow, slight smile on the face, waiting to be filled up.*

I get it. I mean, I understand the appeal. But it's not every *interaction I have. I don't go into possible situation thinking,"What's happening – fuck or be fucked?" It sounds exhausting, frankly.*

– from the journal of Walter Wilde

The Ashwood Abbey hunts monsters for sport. Sometimes that "sport" crosses the line from thrill-seeking behavior into utter, naked depravity. Where Prometheans are concerned, the Abbey is almost bound to cross that line, due to Disquiet. An Abbey hunter that has time to succumb to Disquiet generally sees the Promethean in question as the ultimate quarry, either as a sexual conquest or a trophy.

The Abbey does not usually care about Wastelands, or takes offense at the seething obsession required to bring dead matter to life. On the contrary, that kind of passion is extremely appealing, and rumor has it that Reverend Ogilvy's original Hellfire Club included a man who was attempting to "build the perfect house boy" from spare parts.

What *does* offend the Abbey is the idea that these creatures could become human. Inhuman creatures are for sport, in all their myriad and delightful forms, but upward mobility is not allowed. If a Created being can become human, what's to stop a vampire from doing it? What's to stop a werewolf from throwing off its curse or a witch from putting up her spellbooks? If the supernatural can become human, then the Abbey is a collection of rich perverts hunting down, violating, and killing *potential people*. And that simply wouldn't do.

Fortunately, the Abbey is largely unaware of this phenomenon. Some older members, especially those of the **Pursuit** faction, have discovered epistles and notes indicating that creatures stalking the nights wish to join humanity. They have no idea, though, that this struggle has been going on as long as it has, or that it's actually possible. If the Abbey ever discovered proof of a Promethean meeting the New Dawn, they might actually get serious about the Vigil for once.

From the Archives: *The creature was a man, in all the obvious ways. It walked like a man, it talked like a man, it rutted like a man. Oh, yes, I witnessed such acts. I stood there with my gun trained on it as it took its pleasure with a country girl. I do not know, to this day, whether she was willing. I could not tell whether her screams were pleasurable or not. It may be that my ability to differentiate was waning, after so many long nights with creatures that made no distinction.*

But this thing – this thing. I fired upon it, and it pitched forward. The girl, bloodied and terrified now, ran off into the night, and I do not know what became of her. But the thing stood again, and it advanced on us. And in a flash of lightning I saw its true form. It was a man made of men. Its body was stitched together like a tatterdemalion of skin and muscle, and I could clearly see the sutures holding it together. I reloaded, and I warned it to stop. I confess I was hoping it would run, as this was far too easy a kill.

I shouldn't have worried. It leapt into the air, and for a moment I lost it amidst the clouds. But then I heard it land nearby. My valet, standing beside me as always, suddenly vanished. I heard him scream as he flew nearly fifty yards through the air, over the nearby cliff. The monster stood near me, bleeding, furious. I raised my gun again, and I should have felt guilt for leading another good man to his death at my side. Instead I felt only gratitude that my heart was once again quickened, that I was free, even for a moment, from this crushing thickness *in my soul, this terrible boredom.*

– dictated by the Reverend Doctor Marcus McDonald Ogilvy

The Long Night

He didn't kill himself. That's a goddamn lie.

Yes, I was with him. And I wasn't as gentle as I should have been. I know it was hard for him – his faith told him what we did was wrong, and I guess maybe I should have been more understanding about that, but it felt *right. He felt right. But every time we were together, I could tell it bothered him. I tried to joke with him about it. I tried to talk him through it.*

But that new church. That fucking church. Midway Church of God? Fuck off. They got into him. He said they didn't care that he was gay, but after he got hooked up with them, he never stopped looking over his shoulder. He never stopped looking for them, even when were together and there were no windows. That's why I left him, but I never thought the paranoia meant *anything!*

Christ. The look on his face. He died in bed, with that needle in the Bible on the bedside table. I know *what was in that syringe. And the police may be idiots, but I'm supposed to believe that he shot himself up with that cocktail, and then had enough presence of mind to open the Bible to Revelation 22:5 and stick the fucking needle in as a bookmark? He'd have been lucky to get the drawer open, much less find a particular passage.*

And yet there it was, staring me in the goddamn face. There will be no more night. *Bastards.*

– from the journal of Walter Wilde

The Long Night draws a distinction between human monsters and inhuman ones. A human monster — a sorcerer or possessed human being — deserves a second chance at redemption. Though a relapse into sin will draw a quick death, the Long Night understands the temptation of power. A former cultist or witch might actually come to *join* the Vigil, under the right set of circumstances. Inhuman creatures, though, like vampires and werewolves, merit nothing but a quick death. They are already gone, their souls forfeit, and the hunters need feel no remorse about ending them.

What, then, of the Created? These creatures are decidedly inhuman, and yet want to *be* human. Where does that place them with regard to sin and forgiveness?

The question is largely academic; few hunters here know anything about the Pilgrimage. In practice, the Long Night

doesn't tend to find Prometheans that observe the Pilgrimage carefully. They find the ones that are obviously inhuman, the Centimani, and usually mistake them for demons. The hunters can dismember and burn such creatures free of guilt...at least until they finish the job, and they find the decaying human remains that made up the monsters.

From the Archives: *It is possible for a man to die and rise again. We know this, for Our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead. And yet, for all we may believe in miracles because we read them in Scripture, we don't always* believe *in them. We never expect to see them.*

Fergus Mailer was dead. He died of carbon monoxide poisoning in his garage. It was an accident, though some at the time felt it might have been suicide. Whether or not Mr. Mailer intended to die, he did, but this was not what brought the case to my – our – attention. The man who worked at the funeral home was one of our congregation, and he reported to myself and Mr. Williams that a hearse had been stolen, and then recovered, but without the body.

And so we searched for Mr. Mailer, all the while wondering why someone would steal a corpse, putting from our minds the worst possibilities. And then, Mr. Williams and I found ourselves entering an abandoned house, supposedly haunted by the ghost of its previous owner (it was indeed haunted, though obviously not by a 'ghost,' since we know that human souls depart upon their deaths to Paradise or Perdition). In the basement of that house, we found a great quantity of blood, photographs of Mr. Mailer, a number of herbs burnt black, and curious handprints on the wall.

A week later, we saw Mr. Mailer again. He was at a bus stop, buying a ticket. I was there meeting a friend. I saw Mr. Mailer in the line. He bought the ticket – I don't know where to – and turned around. He didn't look dead. He looked alert, perhaps even a little on edge. He had a bag on his shoulder, and he scratched at his side as though he had a bug bite. He walked to the buses, and I thought perhaps I should stop him, but why?

The Lord moves in mysterious ways, after all. I waved goodbye to him as the bus pulled away, and he waved back, a delighted smile on his face, as though embarking on a strange and wonderful journey.

– from the records of the Midway Church of God, 1983

The Loyalists of Thule

Atonement is a strange thing. I suppose everyone looks back on what they were and feels some kind of...regret? Maybe that isn't the right word. But how many times have I heard people use the phrase: "If I knew then what I know now, I'd have done things differently." Well... obviously. How could things be other than they are?

Looking back on what one was and wishing to change it is futile. And so, I think, is "atonement." If not for the mistakes we make, how can we learn from a "mistake?" This doesn't mean that we can't wish for absolution, but I believe the only way to truly gain absolution is to forget the mistake entirely, and this, I think, would remove its wisdom.

Could a mistake be so heinous as to make the harm it did unworthy of the wisdom it conveys? I suppose so. But that isn't really the question, is it? I have learned much from the damage the Furies have wrought. Has the harm they've caused outweighed the wisdom I've gained? What, really, is the point of that question? The damage is done.

– from the journal of Orestes Vrettos

The Loyalists of Thule, as an organization, seek redemption for their part in bringing the Nazi Party to power. Of course, most modern-day members had nothing to do with what happened in the 1930s and 40s. The Loyalists of today are occult scholars who search for secrets. What greater mystery could there be than the secret of creating life?

The Loyalists, unlike other hunter organizations, approach the Created from a cerebral perspective. They are likely to run across the notes that led to the creation of the Promethean, rather than the Promethean itself. An ordinary person, even a gifted scholar, reading the journal of a demiurge would probably believe that author mad (or gifted); the Loyalists can recognize obsession when they see it.

Since the Loyalists generally take a pragmatic view of the supernatural, they are unlikely to interfere with a Promethean just going about its life — unless, of course, Disquiet sets in. In that instance, the Loyalists of Thule can be one of the more dangerous groups to cross, because they tend to have the ability to dig up information on the Created, as well as contacts with other, more martial, organizations.

From the Archives: *NOTE: TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.*

Using the bodies of the young is critical. Using the bodies of anyone over the age of 21 will doom the experiment to failure. All of the bodies so far collected have been between 12 and 15. My research indicates this will be the best course. The poison in their systems should not inhibit the process. They must have good teeth and their skins intact. The current must be at least 2500 volts. I do worry about our generator's ability to produce this much. More equipment may be necessary. I do not wish to hear about budget! I do not wish to hear about the war! We are doing as ordered, here, and this might well turn the tide in our favor!

I think that, with a little luck, I can find the subjects I need and begin assembly within a few days. The voltage remains a concern, however.

– recovered from an unmarked building in Upper Bavaria, 29 April 1945

Network Zero

People don't listen to me when I tell them about ghosts. They want to believe what they want to the believe. That want to believe that ghosts are the souls of the people who have died. But I don't think that's true.

Maybe it's because I see the Furies. They look human. They look human enough. They have arms and legs and hair and screams – like so many ghosts. But I look at people, and people don't have spirits living in them, not the way a lot of other things do. So when we go hunting ghosts, sometimes the people with me want to try to talk with them, get answers, help them move on.

I think that when a ghost moves on, that's all it really does. It's still there, but you can't see it. It's like deleting a computer file. Which you'd think modern ghost hunters would understand, but they still think it's a huge accomplishment to help a ghost move on.

– from the journal of Orestes Vrettos

Network Zero might have had the most contact with the Created of any compact, but they also know the least about them. Prometheans are capable of amazing feats of strength and endurance. Some are strong enough to throw vans, or jump to the tops of buildings. Others can dissolve solid objects with a touch or throw lighting from their hands. All of those activities can be recorded on video. Prometheans' powers don't have any kind of magical "cloak" to them, which means if it gets uploaded and shared, it's out there.

Unfortunately for the Secret Frequency, in the era of viral marketing videos, a guy jumping off a bridge and landing unhurt on the highway below isn't proof of the Created's existence. It could be a stunt for an upcoming superhero movie or part of a commercial. Since Prometheans rarely stick around to give interviews, much of the footage that Network Zero has recorded has very little in the way of useful commentary or context. These hunters don't know what they're looking at.

One advantage Network Zero does have, though, is that watching a recording doesn't engender Disquiet. Filming a Promethean does, but looking at footage doesn't carry the same risk, so the members of Network Zero usually don't have time to slip too deeply into Disquiet. Of course, it does happen that a particularly intrepid investigator follows a Promethean around, taking pictures and video, hoping to capture the target doing something worthy of an upload — and in the process, slides deep enough into Disquiet that he infects the rest of his cell.

From the Archives: *Dear Mr. Harrison,*

My name is Robby. I am 10 years old. I am in third grade. I live in Houston, Texas. I saw your show with the thing with all the tentacles pulling itself up into the sky. I got real scared when I saw that so my mom told me I should write you a letter. But my mom doesn't know that I saw something like that before so that's why I was so scared. I saw a guy with tentacles like that. They came off his shoulders and under his shirt, and reached up and pulled himself up onto a building. And then he jumped onto a telephone pole and there were sparks everywhere, and when he came down he didn't have tentacles anymore but his hair was all wild and his face was smoking. And he smiled at me and I ran away.

Please tell me if that man is going to come back and kill me.

Your friend, Robby

– letter received by Jim Harrison, October 25th, 1991

Null Mysteriis

"Everything has a rational explanation." That phrase, so simple and convincing and yet so damnably dangerous, has led to so many deaths and mutilations; it fills me with anticipation every time someone says it.

When a person says that everything has a rational explanation, they don't mean what they think they mean. They're right, of course. Everything does *have a rational explanation. But for the "rational" to really make sense requires a much broader base of knowledge than any living human being could possibly have.*

Consider: I am writing this letter with the hand of a 20-year-old woman, and the forearm of a 45-year-old man. The woman was a prodigy piano player, and was exceptionally graceful and delicate. I had to stitch her hand to my forearm with incredible care – which is very hard to do one-handed – using thin but very strong thread. The forearm, though, which I acquired nearly a year ago, belonged to a farmer. He had very strong arms, and the skin was so coarse that I had to puncture the holes for the thread to affix the girl's hand using a power drill with a specially sharpened bit.

Now. Suppose a graphologist were to find this letter. I can only assume that the handwriting would reveal something strange about the writer's grip and force. And that's to say nothing of the fact that the sections of the brain that control motor functions and written language also *come from different people hailing from various backgrounds and educations. What effect does* that *have on my penmanship?*

And yet, even if our hypothetical graphologist were to see all of this (this is, I grant you, presuming a great deal of skill on her part, but it's just a thought exercise), she would probably assume that there is, indeed, a rational explanation. And yet, if she knew the rational explanation, she would consider it nonsense. Or, perhaps, if she were shown proof, she would consider it a catalyst for a screaming, gibbering, breakdown.

"Rational" depends entirely on your paradigm.

– a letter from Imp to "Dr. Brine"

The scientists of Null Mysteriis have discovered something that no other compact has managed. They have discovered Disquiet. These hunters realize that many supernatural creatures are capable of influencing bystanders by producing changes in mood and thought; this is what allows some creatures to become "invisible." (After all, making people oblivious makes so much more sense than altering the properties of light.) Other creatures may seduce or "mind-control" otherwise unwilling victims via pheromone control or hypnotic suggestion. As such, Null Mysteriis has supporting evidence that has recorded mobs of people who go completely mad and attack, dismember, and even burn an innocent-seeming victim.

The Null are largely stumped as to *why* Disquiet happens, especially since its effects aren't advantageous to any creature. Since they don't have a lot of data to work with, these hunters can only theorize. One guess is that these creatures are human beings who have been "cursed" somehow; some kind of condition or chemical or neurological change activates the intrinsic fear of strangers that all people have, and mob mentality and the Genovese effect do the rest. Another theory is that this "Frankenstein effect" is atmospheric; that it's related to a place and an environmental taint rather than a person, and the people it seems to center on just have some kind of genetic or, perhaps, psychic marker, that makes them a target. This latter theory gains credence (to the Null) when combined with observations of the Wasteland which, of course, often coincide with incidences of Disquiet.

With discovery comes a fair amount of risk — especially for this compact. Victor Frankenstein was a scientist, and it was his obsession that created a whole Lineage. Members of Null Mysteriis who investigate the Created must take care that their research doesn't start to focus on the nature of life, lest they, too, become responsible for a new line of monsters.

From the Archives: *I'll return this file in a few days. I'll tell you this: I don't think the thing described here is the only one. Watch the video again (it's on the hard drive, labeled with the file number). Note how the subject keeps screaming for its mother? Right at 2:34,*

watch the left side of the frame. See the woman running into the frame? We all assumed she was a bystander, but based on where she's coming from, she'd have gotten to the camera about the time the feed cuts off. I think there's something to that.

– note left in file (subject: Birmingham Incident), London archives

The Union

What does it take to make hate?

It takes heat. Heat from the deadest, driest part of summer. Heat from the Hellfire your pastor promised. Heat from the shame on your cheeks.

It takes blood. Red-blooded American boys can feel proud and hateful and proud of their hate! The blood comes from that flag you shoved in my mouth. From my mouth and nose once you hit it, again and again.

It takes fear, but we don't talk about that. Just say "faggot" again like a magic word, like a talisman that keeps it all away.

What does it take to make hate?

It takes people. It takes a village.

– "Hate," from the journal of Walter Wilde

The Union is, in many ways, a Promethean's worst nightmare. The Union is odd among the hunter organizations in that it tends to be reactive, rather than proactive. Union cells are arranged around a neighborhood or a city, and while they stay in contact with other cells across the country, for the most part their focus is local. The fear of the stranger, which Prometheans exacerbate so much, is already an intrinsic part of how the Union responds to supernatural threat. Add Disquiet into the mix, and the Union is a step closer to the "murderous mob" stage than most other organizations.

Because the Union is so home-focused, a Wasteland in their turf doesn't go unnoticed for long. When walls start to crumble or a lake begins to congeal, it's the Union that organizes a campaign to clean it up or investigate to find out what's happening. Tracing the Wasteland back to the Promethean requires a leap of logic; after all, the land doesn't noticeably become blighted at the creature's passing. Once Disquiet sets in, however, the Union is willing to blame the Created for *anything* – Wasteland included.

Usually, the Union isn't interested in studying, helping, or cataloging the Promethean. They just want to protect their own.

The proverb goes something like, "I against my brother, my brother and I against my uncle, my uncle, my brother, and I against the stranger." It's rather a strange sentiment, I think. If someone's going to get punched in the face either way, what difference does it make who's doing the punching? (Allowing for variance in punching strength and method, of course.)

And yet this sort of defensiveness – "I won't let you hurt this person that I was going to hurt anyway" – seems to be a human mainstay.

To wit: the boy I found nearly dead underneath a jungle gym at the local park one night. His tibia was fractured, probably with a blunt weapon. His nose was broken, obviously from a punch, and one of his hands was sprained or fractured. (I didn't cut him open to verify; by that point it didn't matter.) I calculated that his chance of full physical recovery was low, and his chance of psychological recovery was virtually nil, so I decided to take Providence where I could and do a little exploration. In the end I found his internal organs to be remarkably intact, so I removed one or two to graft into my own body and stowed his corpse in a trunk.

Following that, I found the area became increasingly hostile. People held vigils. They went looking for his killer, flinging around words like "cult" and "demon worship." The police broke several laws and violated people's Fourth Amendment rights in service to tracking down the killer of a boy that this very community *had assaulted.*

I did not stay to suss out the logic of it all. I simply took his – my – kidneys and left town.

– a letter from Imp to "Dr. Brine"

The Created that mind their own business and don't hurt people only tend to draw the Union's ire if one of the members succumbs to Disquiet. Any Created that are more monstrous or overt, though, tend to run up against the Union quickly and directly. Remember: Union members are policemen, civil servants, and other professionals who have access to sensitive data. Since most Prometheans don't have legal existences, which makes them hard to track through the system, even a mug shot taken a few towns over can prove problematic. If gaps in data doesn't lead the Union to a Promethean, they might simply stumble across one. Nothing says that the guys who work at the scrap metal yard (near where the Created has been hiding out) aren't Union, or the pastor who runs the soup kitchen, or the nurse who works at a high school....

People don't have spirits, but spirits love people. Spirits feast on anger, love, fear, and hate, and people can provide all of these, sometimes even in the same day. But when people get near me and their fear and hate rises – as it inevitably does – the spirits that it attracted are not the small, mote-like fearlings and hate-wretches that I see from more mundane manifestations of these emotions. No, they are the Furies.

But, if the emotions are genuine and then amplified *by my presence, the Furies change. They become...unfocused. Blurry around the edges, as though they are becoming more abstract somehow. This is strange, because it would seem that the emotions would strengthen them, but that doesn't seem to be the case.*

– from the journal of Orestes Vrettos

The Union keeps all of its archives online, and so a member wishing to find out about a "person made of dead people" has all of their collected wisdom to draw on. Of course, if she doesn't know how best to use a search engine (and it *is* a skill set, especially since the Union's files aren't archived especially well), she's likely to find all kinds of references to "dead people" without much data on the Created.

From the Archives: *yeah i mean this dude was nuts. like he just stood there and was like 'hit me' and we're like 'no dude,' and then he punched Chris in the chest and killed him. no kidding right. so we threw down and beat his ass and then Chris's brother pulled out a gun and just unloaded into this guys chest, and he got back up and was like 'yeah ok that sucked', and then the cops came and we all scattered. no idea wtf that was except that dude really wanted to get hurt*

– from the Union's bulletin board

Conspiracies

Conspiracies have access to resources that compacts don't. Whereas a second-tier hunter cell probably has to resort to chopping up silverware to load into shotgun shells, Task Force: VALKYRIE operatives get boxes of silver-loaded rounds. Local hunters argue over whether a priest of a given denomination can really perform an exorcism, while the Ascending Ones just need to know what the demon likes to eat so they choose the right poison.

And yet, for all that, most conspiracies tend to have the same problems with Prometheans that the varying compacts do: inevitability. A strong-willed hunter can resist Disquiet...for a while. The Wasteland's creep is manageable...temporarily. A Promethean can be burned to nothing — but it might require more than one fire to finish the job.

Each of the sections below include a short excerpt from the journal of one of the Prometheans detailed at the end of this chapter, as well as some notes on how that conspiracy interacts with the Created. Instead of the archive section, however, we present an Endowment for each, which can be used against Prometheans or like creatures.

Aegis Kai Doru

The skinchangers came to dance with me. Three of them, two females and a male, wearing the form of great wolves. They followed the Furies to me, and there I stood, covered in the blood of the bystanders, the dance completed – but who was I to refuse Furies-made-flesh?

We danced together, the spirits whirling and howling. Suddenly, I felt fresh blood on my face. The werewolf that had been running next to me was gone. Rather, half her head was. I never heard the shot. Her companions scattered, and I stood dumbly looking up into the night. The next round struck me in the chest, and as I sank into blackness, I heard the Furies laugh. They weren't laughing at me, though. They were laughing at the hunters, wasting time shooting me when the wolves were flanking them.

– from the journal of Orestes Vrettos

The Aegis Kai Doru typically hunts mages and werewolves. They have their reasons, but it's more or less irrelevant from the Created's perspective. Hunters being hunters, though, sometimes the Aegis Kai Doru takes on other targets. And sometimes, as in the incident Vrettos relates, they make mistakes.

This conspiracy has no problem making use of or hoarding magic items made for, by, or out of other supernatural beings. The Heart of Stone (p. 181 of **Hunter: The Vigil**) clearly illustrates that the Aegis Kai Doru has had contact with the Created. What, then, would compel this conspiracy to hunt them?

It's not common knowledge, but the strange energy that animates the Created — called *Azoth* — can imbue *items* as well as the Prometheans themselves. These so-called "Azothic Objects" don't normally display the overt effects that other Relics do. For the most part, they're simply tools that are more durable and useful than other mundane objects. However, the Aegis Kai Doru's records also reveal that such objects change into monsters and attack people when a Promethean commands it. A bit of scrap metal or a chunk of wood comes to life, grows legs and takes on a face complete with a mouthful of fangs, and tears into the nearest target. These creatures, known as "Pandorans" in some circles, are largely uncontrollable. Rumor has it they even attack and attempt to consume their Created masters. (Traits for these Created may be drawn from the *erinyes* found on p. 182 of **Hunter: The Vigil**.)

None of this is especially common; a cell of Aegis hunters that crosses paths with a Promethean isn't likely to try and kill it for its relics — even if they correctly identify the monster is one of the Created. It's more likely the hunters will be aggressive because of Disquiet. A few minutes of observation or conversation, and the hunters will likely assume that this supernatural being either knows some mages or may be one itself. By the time the hunters move in for the kill, they're acting on the assumption that this monster is somehow connected to the most powerful spellcasters in the area.

New Relic: Orpheus' Eye (👁👁)

In Greek myth, Orpheus was the child of Calliope, the muse of epic poetry. Legend has it that the muse's songs could melt the heart of the God of the Underworld, tame Cerberus, and make stones weep. Orpheus' tale is a tragic one, though; he lost the love of his life in a moment of doubt, and was eventually torn to pieces by the Maenads. Some Prometheans believe they are Orpheus' descendants, claiming that his dismemberment was the first step in his rebirth as one of the Created. If this is the case, Orpheus must have wandered the world in his reawakened state with a single eye — because the Aegis Kai Doru possess the other one.

Orpheus' Eye appears to be made of glass, but it grows warm to the touch very quickly. Held in the palm of the hand, it allows the bearer to see spirits and ghosts. The Eye also twitches whenever a song is playing, and responds to soft, haunting melodies or mournful compositions performed by string instruments.

Benefit: Anyone can activate the Eye's power by holding it and then concentrating for a moment. As long as the user is touching it and maintains her concentration, she can see into Twilight. She cannot physically interact with Twilight entities, however.

Ascending Ones

I really could have loved Hamza. I think he might have been sane, which for me is like finding a unicorn. We met one night in a park. I don't know why he was there. I assumed for the same reason I was – it was a cruising park. But we met, and we walked, and we got to talking. He was Muslim, and he never exactly tried *to convert me, but he made a big point of telling me that his faith recognized things like angels and demons, but they could find peace in Allah, if they wanted to submit.*

He used that word a few times – "submit." And he said it with enough gravitas that I didn't giggle, which is a big deal.

I was really, really hoping he'd kiss me goodnight.

– from the journal of Walter Wilde

The Ascending Ones protect humanity from monsters — not just from their predations, but from knowing about them. They imbibe poison to keep them safe, and break the law to serve the greater good. They are paradoxical in many ways, one of which is that they are more likely to protect a Promethean than to attempt to kill it.

The Ascending Ones are not, as a group, aware of the truth behind the Created. Their potions allow them some respite from Disquiet, though, and this allows them to see a deeper truth to the Created than "quasi-human monster made out of stolen flesh." Regardless of how a Promethean came to life, the Ascending Ones don't hold their supernatural origin against them. While this conspiracy doesn't fully understand the Pilgrimage, they regard it to be a miracle, a perfect expression of Allah's mercy and the potential for redemption and peace for all beings.

This doesn't mean that the Ascending Ones believe they should help the Prometheans. Instead, they attempt to steer the Created away from dangerous situations that will get them — or innocent people — killed. The conspiracy recognizes that Disquiet is impossible to counteract forever, and so they attempt to avoid it. Instead, they focus on arranging serendipitous ways for the Created to learn their lessons and keep moving.

Of course, not all Prometheans are seeking a path to grace. When the Ascending Ones find one of the Created that embraces its role as "monster," they put it down, quickly and sadly, letting its ashes drift away on the wind.

Prometheans, unique among supernatural beings, have the potential to achieve the greatest gift of all: humanity. To the Ascending Ones, those that reject this precious gift do not deserve it.

New Elixir: Gentle Mind (●●)

Resisting Disquiet is difficult. Even people with strong wills eventually succumb to it. Why? Because Disquiet is not a force battering against the gates of the mind. It is a fire that gradually burns brighter and hotter. In order to resist Disquiet, the mind must be able to adapt to the fire, rather than suffer its heat.

Gentle Mind is a thin, clear, flavorless liquid that looks like a strong liquor. Drinking it carries a sudden, heady kick and a spreading calm sensation.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Unlike many Elixirs, a dramatic failure here doesn't poison the character. However, it does make the drinker more susceptible to Disquiet. The hunter's player suffers a -2 on all rolls to resist Disquiet for the next 24 hours. However, the hunter still feels the rush and calm after drinking it, so he usually doesn't know that the Elixir will not have the desired effect.

Failure: The character responds as though drunk. (See p. 177 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.)

Success: Ties on Disquiet rolls result in *no* increase in the Disquiet Condition, even if both parties fail the Disquiet roll. In addition, if the character comes into contact with someone who's contagious in stage four Disquiet, the player can spend a Willpower point to reduce that character's Disquiet back to stage three. It won't cure the afflicted character, but it will stop the Disquiet from spreading.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the hunter also receives a +2 to all Disquiet rolls.

The Cheiron Group

In a dark, metal room, I waited. Every few days, they would come and force me to put my hand through the slot. They would draw blood, or take pieces of skin. One day they took my little finger. If I refused, they simply stopped feeding me. I considered letting them starve me to death, but I lack the courage, and I always ate what was offered.

I waited in that dark metal room for eight months. The walls between the worlds grew thinner. I tried to warn them. They would not listen. Finally I heard the screams from outside as the spirits slipped their bonds. One of the spirits blew the door from the hinges and said, "Join us! Join the dance! Tear, rend, indulge, for you are free!"

And, as always, I heeded the words of the spirits.

– from the journal of Orestes Vrettos

The Cheiron Group refers to Prometheans as "Artificial Organics," and regards them as top-priority Potential Assets. They don't know much about these beings, except that they have *so much* unrealized potential, and their rarity makes them a tempting prize.

TCG has only run across Prometheans a few times in modern history. They run into the same problems with Disquiet that any group does, but Disquiet is a secondary concern to the Wasteland. Ideally, the Cheiron Group likes to capture supernatural beings alive and harvest body parts and fluids at leisure, but as Orestes Vrettos points out, this eventually leads to the prison breaking down in some way. As such, the Cheiron Group is always looking for a way to combat this effect. So far, however, they have come up empty. They have, however, learned some interesting things about Created anatomy.

The Cheiron Group is one of the few hunter organizations that recognize that the various Lineages are different "species" of the same creature. While they don't understand the origins of the Lineages, they do know that all Created contain a caustic liquid that seems to carry memories or information. Extracting this stuff leads to partial amnesia and the Cheiron Group isn't sure why. The memories lost don't always correspond to recent events or even significant ones; in one experiment, technicians extracted the liquid and the Promethean forgot about watching dogs interact at a local park.

Whatever the truth of this "vitriol," the Cheiron Group has put it to good use.

New Thaumatechnology: Vitriol Pump (●●●●)

A Vitriol Pump is similar to the external insulin pump that some diabetics use. It is a small, plastic device, about the size of a deck of cards, worn on an underarm harness with a tube leading into the hunter's side. When necessary, the hunter pushes a button on a remote control (usually worn on the belt or wrist) and releases a cocktail of low-grade sedatives, saline solution, and a tiny amount of vitriol into her bloodstream.

The vitriolic mixture grants the hunter access to past successes. Also, it allows her to activate muscle memory, which is related to a moment when she acted correctly, to take over a current endeavor. From the hunter's perspective, she experiences the sensory memory of that past success, *along with* a flood of memories that aren't hers. These memories belong to the Promethean whose vitriol runs through the hunter's veins.

Benefit: When activated, the Vitriol Pump allows the player to add three *successes* to a roll, drawing on memories of when the character did something similar, and did it flawlessly. Because of

this, the Vitriol Pump can only help with Skill rolls that have a physical component and a rating of three dots or more. (Usually these rolls related to Physical Skills, but there are some exceptions to this.) If the target roll fails, the Vitriol Pump's successes have no effect; the Pump cannot turn a failure into a success.

A Vitriol Pump holds enough liquid for three doses before it needs to be refilled; this takes at least a week to allow for shipping and remixing the cocktail.

The Lucifuge

The inevitable happened eventually. I was pursued by a crowd of people, brandishing weapons, all wishing to dismember me. And I thought, at the time, of all the delicate work they would undo – those stitches and sutures, losing them would be the real tragedy!

I came to a farmhouse, and I pounded frantically for assistance. The man inside opened the door, and I stumbled in, just as the mob came through the cornfield. They surrounded the house, and I heard one yell, "Send the murdering bitch out!"

And the man said, "No! You're not going to kill a stranger on my doorstep! I'll send out my daughter to you instead!"

I turned and stared at him, and then at his daughter. She couldn't have been much more than 21, and she looked a bit out of place on a farm. She looked glamorous, almost predatory, really, and her dad opened the door, and she walked out, willingly, with a little smile on her face.

And I heard her say something, just before the fires started. I heard the word "father," but I got the distinct impression she was talking to someone other *than my host.*

– a letter from Imp to "Dr. Brine"

Satan's descendants work tirelessly to fight his forces on Earth, but are well aware that just because someone has a less-than-saintly pedigree, they aren't always evil.

To some degree, Prometheans confound the Lucifuge. Though they aren't evil, or necessarily demonic, they receive visitations from beings that might be properly described as angels. Are these so-called *qashmallim* actually members of the Divine Host? And if so, what do they want with the Created? The Lucifuge has its theories, but a *qashmal*'s agenda, appearance, and methods are impossible to predict. Therefore, this conspiracy treats Prometheans on a case-by-case basis and avoids making a blanket assumption about them. Unfortunately, even the Lucifuge understands they must find a way to control Disquiet. These hunters may not know exactly how it works, but they're familiar with the principle of instinctive distrust.

Unlike other hunters, the Lucifuge tends to find a Promethean either when it's being assembled or when it is patching itself up. Human dismemberment, which is required to create a Promethean, occasionally gets confused with demonic sacrifices. As such, it's usually in the creation stages that the Lucifuge finds the Created. Then, the question is whether the hunters immediately recognize the Promethean for what it is, take the time to do their research, or go in with guns blazing.

Lucifuge hunters have occasionally attacked Prometheans, only to be confronted with beings composed of pure light, with crystalline wings and the heads of lions. Theories either paint the Created as Satanic — though not necessarily evil — beings, or creatures akin to the Nephilim mentioned in the Bible. Either way, the Lucifuge is unsure of what to do with them.

New Castigation Rite: Gulf of Hades

Underground in a cavern, with no source of light, the blackness is almost palpable. That unyielding darkness can cause hallucinations, as the human mind creates visual input to busy itself and remain anchored in reality. The Gulf of Hades, the stretch of spiritual blackness leading to Hell, is dark beyond that word's ability to convey meaning — it's not just the absence of light, it's the absence of the *concept* of light.

The hunter using this rite can call up that blackness to sap the energy out of a target. When used on an electronic device, the Gulf of Hades shuts it off completely — cars roll to a halt, computers shut down instantly, and doors with electronic locks pop open. When used on a person, however, the rite induces hypothermia within seconds as the victim suffers the effects of extreme cold.

When the Gulf of Hades is used on a Promethean, it weakens it by feeding off the Divine Fire that animates it.

Cost: None

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Occult

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Gulf of Hades turns itself on the hunter. The character immediately loses all Willpower points, and gains the Shaken Condition.

Failure: No effect.

Success: The character calls up a tiny fraction of the void. The area grows noticeably darker, and witnesses might hear faint, mournful howls.

The hunter must target a person or object within 20 feet. If the target is human, the person immediately suffers lethal damage equal to the hunter's successes. These wounds manifest as blistering on exposed flesh, similar to frostbite. The target also suffers the effects of the Extreme Cold Tilt, if in combat.

If the target is a device that runs on electricity, it immediately shuts off and cannot be reactivated for a number of hours equal to the Lucifuge's successes.

If the target is a Promethean, the target loses the ability to heal using electricity for one hour, and loses Willpower equal to the Lucifuge's successes.

Exceptional Success: The Lucifuge absorbs a small amount of the energy the Gulf takes. The character regains all spent Willpower *or* may heal up to three points of bashing or lethal damage.

Malleus Maleficarum

I let them capture me. Masquerading as a vampire was difficult. I had to remember to be terrified of sunlight, but they were kind enough to threaten me with fire, so I could conjure up some convincing screams. They cut off several of the fingers on my right hand trying to torture me, so I gave them some information about other vampires in the area – all nonsense, as far as I know, but they didn't seem to know any better. And then they dragged me to a cell.

I remained there, chained up, for several nights. I smiled when I heard two of them complaining about their smartphones not working well. On the fourth morning, when the sun shone through the window (I expect they gave me a window to terrify me), I tore the blessed chains from the wall, ripped the door from the hinges, and went in search of what I wanted.

To wit: Does faith saturate every pore of the faithful? If I were to take, say, an eye from a truly devout person, would I begin to believe, to see God's plan?

I am disappointed to report that this was not the case.

– from a letter from Imp to "Dr. Brine"

The Malleus Maleficarum is more concerned with vampires than other monsters. Unfortunately, it's not impossible to mistake a Promethean for a bloodsucker. The Malleus may discover that Prometheans don't shun daylight (they actually revel in it, for sunlight can replenish their energies), and they don't actually drink blood. But, the Created don't die naturally, and they don't visibly age — just like bloodsuckers. As such, the Shadow Congregation tends to target the longest-lived Prometheans; those Created that have been wandering the Earth for decades. This tends to end badly for all involved.

The Church records, to which the Malleus Maleficarum has access, do reference the Created, specifically the Tammuz. The Golem of Prague, after all, is a tale that has been distorted and retold to paint the Jews as diabolical mystics. Although one would hope that modern-day members of the Malleus Maleficarum are a bit more discerning than their predecessors, the fact remains that golems *do* exist, and they are dangerous if angered.

The official Church stance on using magic to reanimate dead flesh is, predictably, that such gifts come from Satan, and the resulting mockery of life should be exterminated. A cell of Malleus hunters that runs across a Promethean (and correctly identifies it as such) won't likely spare it out of the assumption it's an evil undead monster.

New Benediction: Peace of St. Joseph

Joseph of Arimathea demanded that Pontius Pilate hand over the body of Christ after His execution to gave Him a proper burial. Laying the dead to rest is an important part of the Malleus Maleficarum's work, even if the "dead" in question are usually mobile, predatory, and require immolation before the ceremony. This Benediction saps the vigor from dead flesh, no matter what force animates it.

NOTE: Remember, Prometheans are not undead. They are living beings that are typically made from dead flesh. When that is the case, this Benediction will work on the Created. However, it suffers a -3 modifier.

Action: Instant and contested

Dice Pool: Presence + Benediction vs. Stamina + Potency

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: If the hunter suffers a dramatic failure, his prayers to St. Joseph go unheeded. Unfortunately, the hunter has still forged an unfortunate connection to the target. If the target creature attacks the hunter during the next scene, it receives a +2 to whatever attack or power it uses.

Failure: No effect on either the hunter or the creature.

Success: If the hunter's player rolls more successes than the creature's, whatever magic or force animates the creature is muted. The creature suffers a penalty to Initiative, Speed, and any Physical actions equal to the hunter's Benediction rating for as long as the creature remains within 30 feet of the hunter. Regardless, the effects of the Benediction end with the scene.

Exceptional Success: As above. Additionally, if the hunter is removed from the creature's presence, or is killed, the effects persist for the rest of the scene.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

Don't ask, don't tell.

I can't believe there was ever a time in this country where that sounded like a good idea. I can see how it might have looked like progress at the time, if I squint, but really...don't tell? That's not what people do. People talk. *They communicate, they tell everything about themselves. They* want *to. Even when it gets them killed.*

I hooked up with that general last year. "Hooked up" because he was really not interested in anything but sex, and once I figured that out I bailed. He was getting weird, anyway. "Weird" is kind. "Abusive" is better. Right before I left, he said something about making me disappear. Calling "Valkyrie."

He seemed scared, when he said it. But he was really drunk, too. I haven't thought about him in months. I only thought about it today because I saw that black helicopter.

– from the journal of Walter Wilde

The soldiers of Task Force: VALKYRIE don't approach the Vigil the way many other groups do. They don't have to do their own legwork, for the most part. Agents get their orders, they go in, they do the job, they go home. As such, if TFV is dealing with a Promethean, it's likely because the situation has already escalated. A TFV squad might get called out to deal with a large-scale Wasteland ("toxic waste spill"), a rampaging golem ("PCP"), a Frankenstein's creation that fries a town's power system ("freak electrical storm"), or a torch-wielding mob that can't find its target ("everybody go home, nothing to see here!"). These hunters have the advantage of doing a job, and not taking the hunt personally.

Except, of course, that Prometheans *make* it personal. If the soldiers don't kill the Promethean quickly, Disquiet can set in, and at that point, the soldiers will start violating orders. They follow the monster into dark and unsafe places, they take unnecessary risks, and if the Disquiet manifests as fascination or obsession, they might even shoot each other to protect the creature!

TFV's other problem is that they're very rarely given all available data about a specific subject. How much does command know about Prometheans? Quite a bit, as it turns out. But the rank-and-file aren't usually informed Prometheans can shrug off damage from conventional weapons, that they can heal by electrocuting themselves (put a different way, they are rarely told "don't use the Mjolnir Cannon"), or that some of them can talk to ghosts. The brass is never exactly forthcoming, but where the Created are concerned they're downright tight-

WHAT'S THE TRUTH?

What Task Force: VALKYRIE cells don't know helps them sleep at night. The top brass knows about Prometheans. What's more, the truth is that a government scientist found a way to clone human beings, using a Promethean as the catalyst. Doing so destroyed the Promethean, and to make matters worse the technology isn't exclusive to the government anymore. However, few other organizations or individuals have the means necessary to duplicate this process or a ready supply of Prometheans. Task Force: VALKYRIE, then, gets called in when the mysterious forces behind this technology learn of a Promethean's whereabouts.

This is why, incidentally, the orders concerning the Created are always "capture" and never "destroy." It's also why incendiary weapons are never allowed on such missions.

lipped. Why? The soldiers of TFV seldom know enough to ask, and rarely bother to ask when they do. They've got their orders.

New Advanced Armory: Gleipnir Restraints (●●)

In Norse mythology, the Gleipnir was the bond used to restrain Fenris. Since the great wolf was capable of breaking any chains used to hold him, Odin commissioned the Gleipnir from the dwarves — a thin ribbon made from six impossible things. As far as anyone knows, the device sometimes issued to TFV operatives going up against Prometheans, or any other superhumanly strong creature, isn't made from dwarven magic. Instead, it sets up a "kinetic feedback loop." The harder a subject struggles against it, the more it restricts movement. The most difficult thing about the Gleipnir is usually getting the subject properly restrained in the first place.

Function: The Gleipnir, much like its namesake, is considerably lighter and thinner than one would expect. It resembles a thin strip of black plastic with a fingerprint panel on each end that's coded to a specific agent. Using the Gleipnir requires the hunter to use a Restrain move while grappling a target (see pp. 199 of the **God-Machine Chronicle**).

If the target is successfully restrained, the Gleipnir uses the creature's force against it. Breaking free of the Gleipnir requires a number of successes on a Strength + Athletics roll equal to twice the creature's Strength rating. Any effects that increase this rating also get figured in. For example, if a Promethean uses a Dread Power to increase its Strength from 4 to 6, the Gleipnir requires 12 successes *in a single roll* to break free from its grip.

ORESTES VRETTOS

Virtue: Methodical
Vice: Fearful
Lineage: Ulgan
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Ghosts) 3
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 1, Firearms 3, Stealth 2, Survival (Foraging) 2, Weaponry (Knife) 2
Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2
Merits: Choke Hold, Danger Sense, Grappling 3, Multi-Lingual 2 (Arabic, English, Italian, Spanish - Native: Greek), Potency 4, Trained Observer 1
Health: 8
Dread Powers: Absorb Energy (Electricity) 5, Crushing Blow, Dead Flesh 4, Ephemeral Flesh, Revelation 2, Revivify 4
Potency: 3
Aspirations: Find respite from the Furies, Share knowledge with humanity, Connect without frightening someone
Willpower: 6
Size: 5
Speed: 11
Defense: 6
Initiative: 5
Armor:
Notes: Orestes has a special Dread Power called Ephemeral Flesh. This requires the expenditure of one point of Willpower. For the remainder of the scene, Orestes can speak with, understand, and touch spirits and ghosts. This power does not confer any power over these beings, however, so Orestes uses it sparingly.

Wandering Monsters

The three Prometheans described here are meant to be mobile threats that may move in or out of a chronicle as necessary. They present different kinds of challenges for hunter cells, and their notes, given earlier in The Response, can be collected and discovered by intrepid characters.

Orestes Vrettos

The Furies move me. Long ago, I learned that ignoring them is futile.

Over a decade ago, the man now known as Orestes Vrettos drew his first breath in Greece. He does not remember his creator, nor does he remember how he got his name. He remembers the Furies — a pack of wild-haired, shrieking spirits, bearing whips and lashes, beating him and chasing him until he reached the ocean. And then they fell upon them, ripping him to shreds, and bound him back together again with their black, oozing ectoplasm.

Orestes stood up from the surf and howled in pain, and the Furies answered with screams of delight. He walked along the beach and found people to help him, but the Furies surrounding him drove the people insane over time. And so he left to travel across the world on fishing boats and in the belly of cargo ships. He has been to every continent. He has been a captive, a soldier, a mercenary, and even a ghost-hunter, but the Furies dog his steps, ensuring he never rests.

Though he strives to appease them, Orestes notes that as he learns more about the human condition, the Furies grow quieter...but they are never silenced. Perhaps, when he learns his final lesson, they will let him be.

Description: Orestes is an imposing, muscular figure. Slightly over six feet tall, the Promethean has classic aquiline features, thick, black hair and a full beard, and carries himself like a warrior. His blue eyes hold fear, though, because he sees things that others cannot. Orestes is always on the hunt for durable clothes and wears them until they fall apart. He has a fondness for military fatigues.

If a hunter spots Orestes when he is using a Dread Power or recharging with electricity, that hunter sees a nightmare. Orestes'

WALTER WILDE

Virtue: Hopeful
Vice: Lazy
Lineage: Galatea
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics (Poetry) 2, Computer 1, Occult 2, Politics 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 3
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 3, Streetwise (Clandestine Hookup Locations) 2, Subterfuge 4
Merits: Barfly, Fast Reflexes 2, Fast-Talking 3, Potency 2, Pusher, Resources 2, Striking Looks 2, Sympathetic
Health: 7
Dread Powers: Absorb Energy (Electricity) 5, Curse of Failings 2, Dead Flesh 3, Embolden the Mob 4, Eye for Desire 4, Revelation 3, Revivify 2
Potency: 2
Aspirations: Inspire greatness, Find someone to love him, Find riches
Willpower: 4
Size: 5
Speed: 10
Defense: 5
Initiative: 7

beard becomes the foul, black, undulating ectoplasm that holds him together. His eyes disappear into twin pools of inky nothingness, and his fingertips leave behind tarry smears on whatever they touch.

Storytelling Hints: Orestes is a reluctant monster and, at times, a tragic figure. He doesn't necessarily *want* to hurt or kill people, but he can and will when necessary. He was confined for a period of months, and escaped when his Wasteland grew powerful enough that the Furies escaped into the physical world. He doesn't want that to happen again, partially because he knows how much damage the Furies will wreak, but mostly because he's afraid they'll rend him to pieces again.

Orestes can be an interesting minion for a more powerful monster, one that the characters might be able to turn if they take the time to talk with him. Orestes is willing to sell his services or his knowledge; he's an experienced ghosthunter and shaman. His Disquiet, however, eventually gets the better of anyone he works with.

Walter Wilde

Big, splendid, boy. Oh, yes.

Unlike many Prometheans, Walter Wilde has no illusions about why he was created. The man that fashioned him — stitching him together out of the parts of men pilfered from funeral homes and hospitals — wanted a lover. He wanted someone to be his plaything, his confidante. He wanted what the men he'd been with all his adult life could never be. And in Walter, this lonely man found his dream lover.

The relationship lasted six months until Walter realized that his creator, his father and lover, was a terrible, boring, overbearing monster. Walter packed his things and left a note, and made his way into the world. He learned later that his creator had been found with his throat slit, and that the authorities were looking for a man that fit his description.

Walter did not kill his creator, but he also knows that he'll never convince anyone of that. He took what money he had, and used his supernatural charm to make more. He acts as a companion to men of means; he is a lover and a muse. And in return, the men pay him, until they start to remind him of his creator. Then, Walter leaves again.

What Walter has never quite realized is that his "patrons" don't change. They get clingy, jealous, and overbearing because that is the response his Disquiet elicits from them. If he ever figures that out, he's likely to break from the guilt of knowing that he drove his creator to madness and suicide. What happens then is anyone's guess.

IMP

Virtue: Patient
Vice: Selfish
Lineage: Frankenstein
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts (Body Parts) 4, Investigation 1, Medicine (Anatomy) 2, Occult 4, Science 3
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Machete) 3
Social Skills: Intimidation (Creepy) 3, Streetwise 2
Merits: Ambidextrous, Double-Jointed, Potency 3
Health: 9
Dread Powers: Absorb Energy (Electricity) 5, Dead Flesh 5, Degradation 3, Revelation 3, Revivify 1, Spare Parts, Titan's Strength 2
Potency: 2
Aspirations: Find a better body part, Successfully add a part to her brain, Avoid detection
Willpower: 7
Size: 5
Speed: 13
Defense: 6
Initiative: 6
Armor:
Notes: Imp has a Dread Power called Spare Parts, which allows her to take fresh, non-decayed human body parts and use them to replace parts of her own body. By doing so, she can rearrange her Physical Attributes. She needs a supply of body parts, some means of attaching them, and two hours of work per dot she wishes to shift. Heavy duty thread and a needle work - the alchemical magic holding her together does the rest.

Description: Walter is beautiful. He has a sleek swimmer's body, chestnut-brown hair and mirthful brown eyes. His hands are delicate, and his teeth are perfect and white. A tattoo in blue script, beginning on his left wrist and running up his arm, across his back, and down his right arm, reads, "The armies of those I love engirth me, and I engirth them."

When Walter's disfigurements show, all the perfection goes away. His teeth are ill-fitting and wiggle noticeably when he speaks. The tattoo on his arms and back distorts, becoming a random collection of squiggles. His hands and feet seem too small for his body, and his left eye becomes noticeably larger and darker than his right.

Storytelling Hints: Walter wants to be loved. He truly loved his creator, and it was this love that allowed him to learn much more about the human world than most Prometheans manage in a very short time. Perhaps ironically, though, he doesn't know much about how to be a Promethean — he remains unaware of the harsh reality of Disquiet, simply assuming that all relationships are doomed.

If one of the characters is of suitable temperament, Walter might approach him as a lover or a muse. Walter has expensive tastes, however.

Alternately, the hunters might run across Walter after he has learned the unfortunate truth about Disquiet. When that happens, Walter might try to accrue wealth and comfort at the expense of his lovers' sanity or lives; the characters might encounter him after following a string of high-profile men who've either committed suicide or have been reported missing.

Imp

Not right. Not right. I think it's my foot. Right one bigger. Not right. Yours are same size. Hold still.

Prometheans can't have children, but that doesn't mean they can't reproduce. One can create another. Sometimes they get it wrong and the body breaks apart into monsters. Sometimes they get it right, but they *still* get it wrong — and get something like Imp.

Imp — short for "Imperfect," but she doesn't know that — was created by a Promethean on his way to achieving humanity. At least, he thought so. Figuring that all he had left to do was make a new monster, he slapped together some body parts, performed the alchemical working, and was delighted to see his creation rise. He even stayed around to help her through her first few awkward days,

and then patted her on the hand and said, "You have a long way to go. When you get to the end, you'll be perfect."

And his creation, unable to speak properly, said, "I'm imp? Imp? Imp—" She probably would have been able to say "imperfect" eventually, but her creator nodded and left her there in the park, surrounded by people who were already starting to hate her.

Imp's story might have been tragic and sympathetic, but it swiftly took a turn for the grotesque. She discovered that she could replace her own body parts with new ones. All she needed was the raw material and a way to affix them; she uses needle and heavy thread when she can, but she also carries an industrial staple gun for quick or awkward jobs. She started by replacing her right arm — she felt hers was weak. The arm she used was from the body of a man who'd attacked her, so she felt justified in cutting it off and recycling it. From there, she'd steal body parts whenever she could, replacing fingers, toes, eyes, lips, patches of skin, or whatever else struck her fancy. Imp's changed her face so many times that she doesn't even remember what she initially looked like, and she's still no closer to perfection.

Imp started killing people for their parts eight months ago. She stays on the move, but she's always searching for new material. She maintains correspondence with occult scholars of various stripes, but those that disclose their real names and locations tend to vanish — Imp is always interested in adding the frontal lobes of new people to her own brain, though she hasn't quite managed to make it work yet. If she can find enough perfect parts, and take them, then maybe she can reach the end once she's perfect herself.

Description: Imp is of medium height, with a stocky build and a serious, quizzical expression. Her facial features change frequently; she's gotten extremely deft at replacing her own lips and eyes, and has even managed to switch out her jawbone. She speaks haltingly, and stutters when she gets upset. She is much more intelligent than her speech would indicate, though, and her writing is verbose and fluid.

When her disfigurements flare, Imp's constant reworking of her body becomes evident. Her flesh is criss-crossed with stitches, staples, glue, thread, and other adhesives, and she looks like a human jigsaw puzzle. Her flesh hangs loosely on her bones, and her lips on thin string.

Storytelling Hints: Imp is a monster. Her origins may be somewhat tragic, but she kills without a hint of remorse. She is utterly failing at her Pilgrimage; she has almost no understanding of humanity, and sees people as walking sources of parts. Hunters might stumble onto her trail while looking for a serial killer that removes body parts, or they might recognize a tattoo or birthmark from someone they know on a new body. They could also be investigating the murder of a known occult scholar and go searching for the villain that he was corresponding with. Once they run across the stuttering, simple-looking Imp, they could assume she's a henchman.

Story Hooks

While this chapter includes many potential story hooks seeded into the text, the following three have more detail. These may also be used in conjunction with any of the three Prometheans described previously.

Abandon All Hope

Summary: A captive or immobile Promethean is problematic. The Wasteland gradually spreads and corrupts the world all around the Created. Sooner or later, someone is going to notice. This time, that "someone" is the characters' cell.

Setup: First, the hunters should determine who the Promethean is, and how he became trapped. Prometheans have to eat, so some form of nourishment might be required unless the monster has the power to enter a comatose state, or turn itself into a statue. Is the monster trapped by a cave-in, subsisting on bats and condensation? Is it buried in a landfill, eating rats and worms? Is it trapped in a cell beneath an old monastery? If the Promethean is deliberately imprisoned, who and where are its captors? Consider, too, how far the Wasteland has spread, and what effect it is having on nearby people. How much do the locals know? What legends have arisen concerning the area? What immediate threats has the Wasteland caused?

Tier One: The Wasteland is in the characters' neighborhood. Maybe it's a haunted house whose ghosts threaten to escape (Ulgan), or a city park where it never stops storming (Frankenstein). In any case, the characters know the area, the history, and the people well. They might even know the Promethean — or at least, the victims who were used to make it.

Tier Two: The locale should be someplace with some ideological importance to the characters. Or, perhaps, they arrive there out of a sense of responsibility. A team of Network Zero investigators isn't necessarily trying to stop the sinkholes from plaguing the area; they just want to get it on film. The Loyalists of Thule want to find out why this is happening, record the effects and the process, and quell any threat to the people in the area. Whatever occult knowledge the group brings to the situation, it should be helpful, but not complete.

Tier Three: The cell isn't from around the area. They've arrived to fix the problem and may have been directed to that location by a superior, mentor, or vision. They don't know the area, but they have devices and powers that other folks don't. Is that going to be enough? The Wasteland is growing stronger by the hour; to fix it, they need to find the Promethean at the center and remove or kill it. But, the Promethean is ready for them — it's not trapped. It *is* the trap, and the characters just took the bait. Who set the trap? What was this person hoping to catch?

Stolen Away

Summary: A Promethean has kidnapped a person to study human interaction. The hunters are trying to get this unfortunate victim back.

Setup: Consider the Promethean and its motivations. Is it trying to figure people out? Is it frustrated with its previous failures, or coldly logical? Is it prone to bouts of rage, thus endangering the victim? And who is the victim? An innocent child? Someone who became obsessed with the Promethean?

A random person off the street? For example, it's not hard to imagine Imp kidnapping a victim in order to get to know him before she removes a few body parts for transplant, just to see if that knowledge makes any kind of difference in how the part handles.

Tier One: The characters know the victim. She might be a character's child, spouse, relative, co-worker, best friend, or even enemy. The fight is personal. In this case, some element of physical threat is probably warranted — maybe the victim needs medication, or maybe the characters know (or believe) that the Promethean will kill the victim if it becomes angered.

Tier Two: The characters don't necessarily know the victim, but they are involved in some other way. If the cell belongs to the Long Night, maybe the victim is a church member. Or, a cell of Network Zero hunters might have corresponded with the victim online. The important thing is that the cell knows *of* the victim, but not any real particulars about who this person really is and why the Promethean chose him in particular. The victim might actually be a willing participant — or was, before Disquiet set in.

Tier Three: In this case, the victim should be supernaturally aware in some way. Maybe the victim is a descendant of Satan, relying on her fellow Lucifuge to get her out of danger. Maybe she is a church scholar, kidnapped because the Promethean wants certainty on the disposition of his soul, and the Malleus Maleficarum needs the scholar for her expertise in other areas. Maybe the kidnapped person is a gardener who capable of growing or preparing a plant that the Ascending Ones need. Again, the issue isn't personal, but it's still important.

What Have I Wrought?

Summary: One of the characters has created a Promethean, and brings the others together to hunt down and slay the monster.

Setup: To make this story work, the Storyteller needs to work with one of the players to come up with the circumstances under which the character created the Promethean. What obsessed the character to perform this task? Desire for companionship? Scientific curiosity? Wishing to bring a dead loved one back, in whatever form? Decide how the character did it, what sacrifices she had to make and what occult methods she used. Think about the lab or the ritual space, and what the scene was like when the Promethean finally rose. And then think about Disquiet, why it all went sour, and why the character wants to kill her creation. That, then, leads to the character recruiting others.

Tier One: In a tier-one **Hunter** game, the other characters might be the demiurge's friends, compatriots, or confidants. Maybe the character enlisted these folks to help her collect body parts. Maybe she's been corresponding with them by email and believes herself to be a "hunter" who, until tonight, thought this was all just an elaborate fiction exercise. Maybe the character somehow finds a cell of hunters with some experience and begs them for help.

Tier Two: If the characters all belong to the same compact, are the other characters going to let the demiurge off lightly? A cell of Ashwood Abbey hunters would view the creation of a Promethean as an honest mistake ("Too much absinthe? Yes, I understand.") or the scientists of Null Mysteriis would note the occurrence as a failed experiment ("Can I see your notes?"). But the Long Night or the Loyalists of Thule might want the demiurge's head on a pike. It's quite possible the demiurge might *lie* about who created the monster. If you can keep the truth from the players, that would make for a superb final scene.

If the characters belong to different compacts, what brought them together? It's not hard to imagine that a person capable of creating a Promethean has contacts throughout the occult world — does the demiurge know hunters in various places? If so, on what basis did she select these characters? Do they all have a skill she needs, or was the only criteria "willing to help?"

Tier Three: Conspiracy-level hunters have more power to bring to bear, but also a much more detailed and involved view of the supernatural world. The same questions that apply to tier-two hunters apply here, but a multi-conspiracy cell is much less likely; how would a TFV soldier explain going off with a bunch of other beings to hunt down a rogue creation? It's not impossible, but it would take some clever explanation should the cell start to question what's happening. In a tier-three version of this story, a conspiracy's history should play into the situation. If the characters belong to the Malleus Maleficarum, for example, maybe the demiurge stole notes from the Vatican that allowed her to create her monster. If they belong to the Lucifuge, maybe she's been having dreams about Satan whispering to her, telling her to build a home for a demon.

Inspiration & Sources

Probably the best source of inspiration about Prometheans is *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. The novel tells of Victor Frankenstein's obsession to create life, but more importantly, his revulsion at the thing he made. That kind of regret and hatred is perfectly on par for a **Hunter** story involving the Created.

Fritz Lang's *M* tells the story of a man marked, pursued, and eventually put on trial for his crimes. Peter Lorre portrays the child murderer Hans Beckert, who argues that while other criminals commit their crimes by choice, he is merely following urges he cannot ignore and does not understand. The story is resonant with **Promethean**; the Created do not always comprehend why they do the things they do, and sometimes their Pilgrimage takes them to the darkest places. This doesn't mean that they get a moral pass, however, as the hunters are there to remind them.

Finally, *Dogville*, directed by Lars von Trier, examines a small town that takes in a woman (played by Nicole Kidman) running from her past. At first, they welcome her, but then their fears and lusts overtake them, and she winds up becoming a slave to the townsfolk. It's an intense and difficult film to watch, but well worth it, and interesting to consider from the perspective of building Disquiet.

WHAT THE FUCK HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

Carlos: Do you mind if I record this?

Zanthus: I encourage you to do so.

Carlos: Then let's begin. I wanted to -

Zanthus: I agreed to this interview on two conditions. Do you remember what those are?

Carlos: I promised you a favor.

Zanthus: And?

Carlos: You would ask the questions.

Zanthus: That is true. May I ask what you were doing in Central Park? Odd time of year to summon the fae, and you don't exactly look like the sort of mortal who'd seek us out.

Carlos: No, I'm not. I just wanted to ask you a few questions

Zanthus: I will gift you with an answer for any question you ask, provided you agree to perform a favor for each one in return.

Carlos: What? No, that wasn't... Fine. I'll do it.

Zanthus: Oh, you must be desperate. Go ahead. Ask your first one.

Carlos: Did one of your kind murder my friend? Here's what he looked like before he was killed, then after.

Zanthus: No.

Carlos: Do you know what did?

Zanthus: Yes. You now owe me three favors.

Carlos: Wait! Just two, right?

Zanthus: That's four. You clearly asked me if this conversation would be recorded.

Carlos: Fine. Have you seen my friend, Mags? Here's her picture.

Zanthus: Yes.

Carlos: Where?

Zanthus: The Museum of Conjurers, Spiritualists, and Charlatans. That's six favors, Mr. Gutierrez. Would you like to know how to wipe the slate clean?

Carlos: Yeah, sure.

Zanthus: Then ask me.

Carlos: Unbelievable. Fine. How do I combine all six-

Zanthus: seven

Carlos: -seven favors into one?

Zanthus: If you survive your ordeal, I will make arrangements for you to replace me as guardian of this ring.

Carlos: You don't sound too confident.

Zanthus: No, Mr. Gutierrez. I am not. Now, you will give me the recorder as proof of our contract. In return, I will send you a printed transcript of this conversation. Of course, upon your death our contract will be null and void. We may be magical creatures, Mr. Gutierrez, but we are not creators or destroyers of worlds.

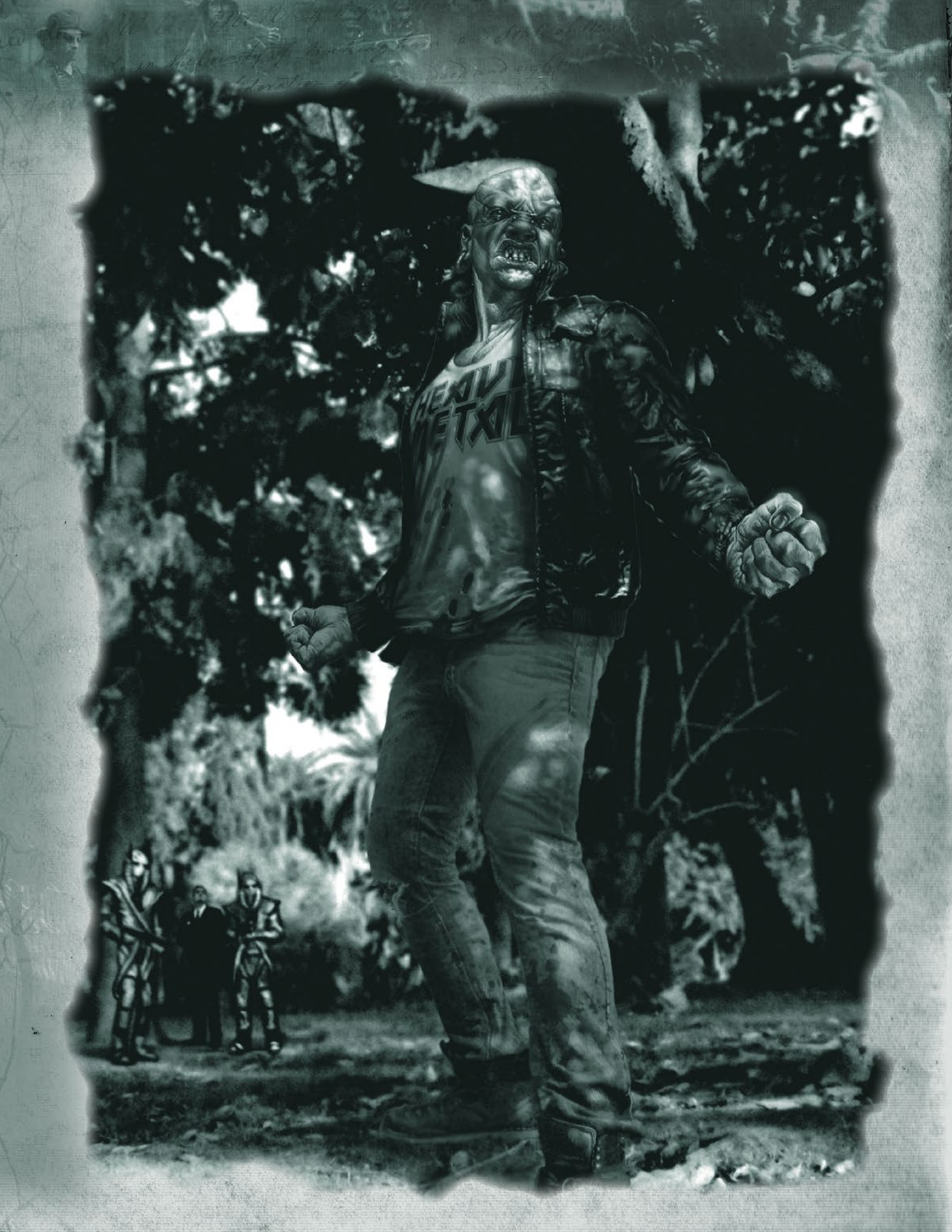
To Call the Fae

Items you will need:

1 Crystal Goblet
Teaspoon of Honey
1 Cup Natural Sugar
2 Cups Fresh Cream
Lavender Oil
Rose Petals
Wedding Cake
5 Pink Candles

Gather your ingredients and bring your offering to a fairy ring under the light of a full moon. You will want to wear your finest clothes and cologne, so as not to offend the fae. When you have approached the fairy ring, kneel down and repeat these words:

Sugar, sugar oh so sweet
Honey, cream what a treat
Oil of lavender, heart of rose
Won't you fairies, ease my woe?



chapter two
All is Lost

They could be anywhere. They could be anyone.

And they probably are.

The suspicion sets in slowly. A child undergoes a radical personality change. A spouse disappears for a few days, and returns with no logical explanation of where they've been. A co-worker is in an accident and suffers amnesia, despite having no head injuries. It happens every day, in a hundred places, across the globe.

But once roused, the fears are hard to put to rest. And the patterns are harder still to ignore.

A suicide victim leaps to his death, but a pile of debris is found where the body should be. Strangers disappear into doorways that lead to dead-ends and empty rooms. An ally is shot, and bleeds tree sap instead of blood.

The fae can seem so normal. Just like anyone else. The bookseller and her encyclopedic knowledge. The cop with an unfailing hunch. The landlord who insists that the attic is strictly off-limits. A hunter's boss. Wife. Child.

They might be victims, escaped from alien imprisonments too fantastic and horrible to be believed. Some could be simulacrums, left behind to cover some supernatural crime, or twisted, human remnants run roughshod by inhuman influences. Or, they could be the stuff of dreams and nightmares, walking around wearing human faces.

There's no way to tell if people are who they say they are. Or, to know *what* they really are — especially if some of them believe the lie that they are human.

Smart hunters will never be sure.

The Enemy: Folklore and Fairy Tales

Fairy tales are the first exposure most people have to the supernatural. Among those tales of fable and fantasy lie the seeds of truth that the fortunate majority will never realize. An unlucky few will look back on those childhood stories and recognize them for what they truly are. Cautionary tales. Instruction. Protection.

Hunters know there are *things* out there. Creatures and constructs made of wishes and whispers, rubbish and regret. Monsters and maniacs unfettered by human morality, and unconstrained by reality. They can look insanely beautiful, or unbelievably grotesque.

Or, entirely human.

But they are not. No matter how helpful they seem. No matter how desperate. No matter how absolutely, utterly ordinary they appear — they are nothing close to human. Beneath a mundane mask lies an alien nature, a being that lives by rules of a different reality. It is those rules that the fairy tales try to teach, so that anyone who stumbles upon them may have a chance of emerging from the encounter alive.

Never leave the known path.

Don't eat what is offered.

And – no matter how desperate you are, no matter how sweet the deal – never ever make a bargain with them.

"For the world's more
full of weeping than you can
understand."
- William Butler Keats
"The Stolen Child"

Perspectives

Those who have played **Changeling: The Lost** will recognize the fae in this chapter; Changelings, True Fae, hedgebeasts, and hobgoblins. Unlike the Lost, however, the focus here is not on the interplay between Arcadian victim and predator, but instead on the role those fae creatures play in a hunter's world.

Hunters suffer from a plethora of (often contradictory and frequently inaccurate) information when dealing with Changelings and their ilk. Thousands of fairy tales and folklore stories exist; every country has their own version. And, because of this ubiquity, it's easy for hunters to assume that they know about the fae. But, because each Changeling's reality is shaped in no small part by their own experiences, the "rules" laid forth in folklore rarely apply to all fae equally, and often don't apply at all.

This section expands and offers greater insight into the "**Pretenders**" material from **Hunter: The Vigil** pp. 308–310. In places where contradictions occur, this material should be given precedence.

The Lost

Changelings used to be human. They were born human, grew up human, and many think of themselves as human still.

But they're not.

Some time ago, something happened in their past that changed them. An alien being kidnapped, seduced, bribed, or blackmailed their freedom from them, and swept them away to a place where the rules of the human world no longer applied. Time, physics, even reality itself bent to the whims and desires of their omnipotent captors in those fae demesne. Their lives were taken from them; humans were altered, modified, and remade into whatever form suited their Keepers. For the length of their Durance, the Changelings were forced to serve their masters' inhuman wishes.

And then, somehow, against all odds — the Changelings escaped. Scrambling back through the no-man's land between the fae dimension and the real world, they somehow found themselves at home once again. Now, the Changelings suffer once again. Changed into an otherworldly being, a supernatural veil called a Mask is the only thing that hides their monstrous nature from humanity.

Sound implausible? That's because it is. And yet, hundreds — perhaps even thousands, or tens of thousands — of inhuman creatures prowl the world, professing this story is true.

Their sheer numbers, combined with their inhuman nature, ensures that Changelings and hunters will cross paths now and again. Most, however, may remain blissfully unaware of each other's calling, so long as the Lost has retained enough sanity to continue masquerading as a "normal" human, and the hunter has no specific means of identifying the Lost creature behind their human Mask.

However, the Lost's oft-decaying lucidity rarely allows Changelings to keep up appearances in the long run. Eventually, the pressures of trying to balance their comings and goings in the world of the supernatural against their false human lives become too much. Their sanity dips, and their Mask slips enough to allow their true nature to be seen.

Seemings

Changelings are roughly grouped into six Seemings; each is based loosely on the experiences they had during their Durance. Though they share some common experiences, every Changeling's experience is different. Within those Seemings are countless sub-groups that further define the experience that sculpted the Changeling from "human" to "other."

Unfortunately for hunters, they will find an infinite number of variations in how these Seemings can manifest in appearance, abilities, and attributes. It is not unusual for a hunter to mistake a Changeling for a bloodsucker, werewolf, zombie, or other commonly found creature. For example, a mermaid Changeling may be a fish-Beast, a deep sea Darkling, a water Elemental, a siren-voiced Fairest, a river troll Ogre, or a pearl-diving Wizened. Likewise, two Changelings who share a Seeming may manifest utterly unlike one another in their bearing, nature, and capabilities. A loyal hound Beast may have nothing in common with its cobra assassin brethren, and both might be utterly unlike their social butterfly cousin.

A general overview and examples of each core Seeming follows.

- **Beasts:** Changelings of the Beast Seeming were used as animals like pampered pets or abused hunting beasts during their Durance. Their humanity was stripped from them and replaced with something more feral. Upon their return, many of those bestial traits and attitudes have remained. *Examples:* beast of burden, messenger bird, spying cat, tracking hound, hunting prey, venomous assassin.

- **Darklings:** Darkling Changelings are the creatures of shadow and nightmare, the literal monsters under the bed. They are marked by fear and secrets, bound to never be fully comfortable in the light of day, even after their Durance has long ended. *Examples:* creepy librarian, flesh-eating zombie, invisible man, goblin miner, cursed vampire.

- **Elementals:** Changeling Elementals were transformed when their humanity was stripped from them. Their Durance was spent in a non-sentient form, where they could not access a single trace of their former humanity. Even after regaining a human form, Elementals find it nigh impossible to feel, think, or behave as a human would. *Examples:* storm cloud, stone guardian, clockwork toy, ice queen, lake monster, dryad.

- **Fairest:** Narcissistic beauties, one and all, Fairest Changelings were used for their social prowess,

manipulative abilities, and — always — their appearance. Most retain that magnificence (and the accompanying attitude) upon their return to humanity. The Fairest use that to their advantage and continue the predatory habits they learned during their Durance. *Examples:* will-o-wisp, seductive spy, cult leader, flower maiden, inspirational motivator.

Ogres: Ogres are the brute force aspect of the fae, and are feared for their strength, stamina, and rawness. During their Durance, these Changelings may have been used as guards, warriors, or manual laborers; they find it hard to leave behind those coarse ways upon their return. Most Ogres still wear massive, hulking forms that are terrifying to those around them. *Examples:* flesh-craving troll, elusive yeti, lofty giant, man-eating monster, rock statue, river guardian.

Wizened: Secret keepers, tinkerers, and makers of all things magic, during their Durance Wizened Changelings often acted as the loyal servants and duty-bound slaves of their fae masters. They learned to hide themselves from notice, to serve unobtrusively; even after regaining their freedom, the Wizened's bodies and personalities still tend to bear witness to that desire to be ignored, for fear of punishment for poor service. Unfortunately, many do not heal from the effects of their Durance, and it's easy for these Changelings to fall under the power of another "master." *Examples:* inspired craftsman, poison maker, perfect butler, mad oracle, reclusive armorer, reluctant bodyguard.

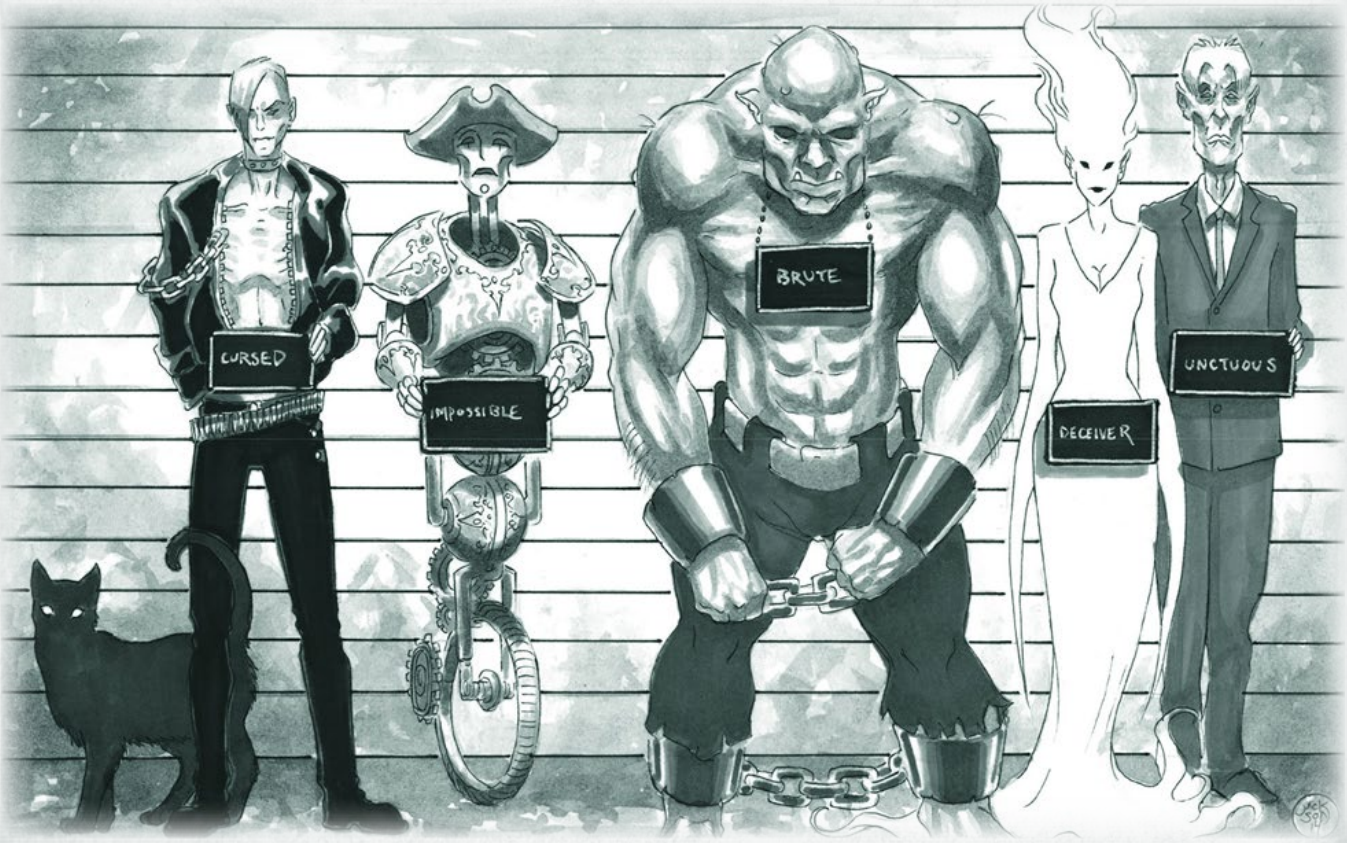
Social Structures

The Lost band together into groups for a variety of reasons. Some seek to protect themselves from outside predators — both supernatural and human. Others share resources, providing the commerce of services and goods vital to their continued existence. In many cases, the groupings allow Changelings to police each other's actions, and to attempt to retain what shards of sanity they had left after their escape.

Unfortunately, like the Lost themselves, these groups are often contradictory and ineffective. City-wide social structures called "freeholds" are ruled by a supernaturally-chosen — but population-supported — king or queen. Rather than providing a lengthy and stable rule, freeholds change leadership on a frequent, cyclical basis, lending even more chaos to what could otherwise be a steady foundation for Changeling life.

Philosophical groupings called "courts" are based on emotional archetypes; lust, hate, terror, suffering, etc. These courts call themselves by obscure titles based on the seasons, the cardinal directions — even times of day — not to mention other flowery, but otherwise meaningless, monikers. The Spring Court, for example, might associate itself with an emotion (desire), a color (green), and an animal (stag), in addition to its seasonal designation.

Rulership of freeholds frequently cycle between individuals within the courts in that freehold; the Lost passes around leadership every few months. In theory, this is to provide a diversionary tactic to the True Fae, who cannot conceive of voluntarily giving up power in this fashion. Whether this works is uncertain, but the constant internal political jockeying it spawns is unquestionable.



And, just to make things even more confusing, Changelings often have other sociopolitical affiliations called "entitlements." which are based on the duties they perform within Lost society, their specific philosophical viewpoints, or their quasi-religious beliefs.

Navigating the intricate social web of Lost society can be extremely perplexing to outsiders — including hunters. Add other supernatural creatures, both fae and otherwise, and the human connections Changelings often have to regain and retain whatever semblance of humanity they can, and it's easy to see why even the most comprehensive intelligence files on the Lost are likely to contain complications, duplications, and contradictions.

Survivors

If there is a single uniting theme behind every Changeling, it is desperation. The Lost are all, in one way or another, victims of supernatural forces that reign as gods in realms where reality bends to their every whim. Whether the Lost were seduced, tricked, blackmailed, or physically forced into that service, their very natures have been permanently altered by their experiences. While those changes may be apparent on the surface, they also run soul-deep.

Changelings are created through two, separate events. Though the details vary, each Lost shares these experiences. The first event is the Durance — the time in which they were pulled out of their human lives, and held at the whim of their Keeper.

The Durance is what defines the Lost. Kidnapped humans are stripped of everything — their identity, their grasp on reality, and all ties to the human world. Then, they are remade in an image chosen by their Keeper; the alien fae they encounter and horrors they endure defies human understanding. The majority of hunters would consider their Keepers, the True Fae, to be monsters.

Many of the Lost are broken beyond repair by their Durance in Arcadia. These are the victims that hunters never encounter — the ones who never come back. The truly lost, rather than Lost.

The second experience all Lost share is their return to humanity. Whether they made their daring escape through guile or strength, through coincidental circumstances or fled after the end of their agreement with their Keepers, all Lost have managed to sneak, talk, claw, or run their way out of an unthinkable situation to reenter the "normal" world.

Like most prisoners who have broken free from their inhumane captors, the Lost's greatest desire is to retain their freedom. Nothing else matters more to the collective Lost society than to avoid being recaptured. While opinions differ widely on how to best achieve this goal, the Lost are so desperate, they'll do almost anything — blackmail, murder, or work for their former captors — to avoid being retaken.

This air of desperation colors every choice a Changeling makes. Even the most human-seeming Lost is capable of monstrous acts — if her only alternative is to return to captivity.

Hunters who are unaware of the Lost's motivation and experiences often underestimate the Changelings they encounter. It is easy to mistake the thin veneer of sanity for humanity, not realizing that any Lost pushed too far is capable of unthinkable crimes to avoid "going back." Many hunters assume Changelings are tragic victims and don't realize what they are capable of — and many have paid the price for those assumptions.

Beautiful Madness

The fae are all mad, every last one of them. The Lost's existence is a constant and never-ending struggle to reconcile their distant past and their captivity with their present. This is the inherent conflict that wars within every Lost.

For monsters like bloodsuckers, hunters may believe how easy it is for them to set aside the details of their old lives to embrace their supernatural nature. After all, vampires, zombies, and werewolves are monsters because they don't have a trace of humanity left in them. Changelings, on the other hand, are tied to their former *human* existence. The memories of their former lives are what motivated the Lost to return to the human world. Those Changelings who aren't bonded to their past, like small children who don't remember what it was like to be human, will never return unless they are brought back.

Unfortunately, the Lost's struggle to reconcile their fae and human natures never ends. Hunters will find that older and more supernaturally potent Changelings are also likely the most insane. Some will pretend to be lucid and hide their inhuman aspects, but hunters would do well to remember that a mask is not reality. A hunter might believe a Changeling is utterly reasonable and firmly moral — right up until the point where the hunter says the wrong word and triggers his madness. After that, all bets are off.

Hunters who believe that Changelings are more rational than they really are wind up bloodied, bruised, and betrayed. Unfortunately, it doesn't matter how a Changeling became part-fae; a Lost's human façade is nothing more than an ephemeral illusion. What's worse, is the Lost are *all* dangerous because of it.

Privateers and Loyalists

Most Lost would do *almost* anything to avoid returning to Arcadia. Some Changelings, however, would do truly anything — including selling others to that fate — to avoid being subjugated again. Privateers are much worse; they capture other humans and Changelings for profit and send them off to Arcadia. The word "privateer" is a polite name other Changelings use to call these wretched traitors. Generally speaking, privateers are Lost who use their fae-born abilities to capture, sell, and enslave humans and Changelings. Privateers take their kidnapped victims through the Hedge and sell them to Goblin Market slave stall owners — or even to the True Fae themselves.

Most Changelings believe that the only thing worse than a privateer is a loyalist — a Lost who continues to work for a True Fae's interests, even after her release back into the human world. Some loyalists serve out of a misguided sense of duty; others are bound by magical ties, supernatural oaths, or are being coerced in other ways. The most unforgiveable loyalists sell out their fellow Lost because they can't turn down the True Fae's offer for power, wealth, or pleasure.

Not all privateers are loyalists; some Changelings are motivated by profit and hate the True Fae. Not all loyalists are privateers, either; they may also serve the True Fae as spies or exotic goods dealers, too. Those who fall into both groups are the bane of the Lost's existence.

Privateers and loyalists can come up on a hunter's radar in a variety of ways. They might be the culprits at the heart of a kidnapping ring, where the victims disappear into Arcadia, never to be seen again. Those Lost who are profit-motivated could be playing both sides against the middle, by making the same deal with a hunter cell and a True Fae.

Working within a cell, compact, or conspiracy might also be the perfect cover for a privateer; hunters could be aiding a dangerous kidnapper without ever realizing it. Or, by getting in close to a hunter cell as a secretary, snitch, supplier, or sweetheart, a coy loyalist might be spying on them to send intel back to the True Fae — because one of the hunters is a target.

Other Fae Threats

While Changelings can pose a myriad of threats to humans and hunters alike, there are other fae beings that are just as dangerous. Hunters should take special care when identifying the fae, for their appearance and true nature is often obscured and can be easily confused with any Changeling.

True Fae

Some refer to the Lost's Keepers as the "True Fae." All other creatures related to them — Changelings, hobgoblins, hedgebeasts — are simply "fae." Humans and some hunters call the True Fae by complementary monikers — Fair Folk, Good Cousins, Kindly Ones — hoping to avoid their wrath by assuaging their near-limitless vanity.

True Fae are not people — not even close. They are their own self-image of themselves, devoid of any external filters or dilution. A Keeper might envision himself as the archetype of a great huntsman, holding sway over a forest realm where he hunts Changelings and other fae creatures for sport. Another might see herself as The Lady of Infinite Joy. Within her lands, she's forbade her servants to express anything but happiness. Professors, playwrights, or politicos, True Fae do not mimic the archetypes of human imagination — they inspire them. There are some Keepers who believe that every dream, every thought, every creative idea that the human mind has ever conceived is due to their influence bleeding through the Hedge over into the human psyche.

The lands the Keepers rule are collectively called Arcadia. Each Keeper makes their home in a unique demesne, where they are the final and only authority. Within these realms, a True Fae is nearly omnipotent and can bend the laws of reality. Keepers can transform a human slave into a hunting hound, shining beacon, storm cloud, or a song — just by willing it to be so. In this manner, the True Fae creates the Lost to fulfill whatever inhuman desires their alien hearts may hold. Hunters who venture into their lands can expect to be treated the same. The True Fae doesn't treat one human any differently from another.

Outside of Arcadia, however, the True Fae are weaker. In the Hedge, the supernatural no-man's-land between the mortal world and the demesnes, Keepers are still monstrously powerful, but not omnipotent. When the True Fae treads amongst humans, they are a force to be reckoned with — as strong as any other supernatural that hunters might encounter.

But, like most supernatural predators, the True Fae prefers to retain the upper hand wherever possible; they are most comfortable staying behind in their demesne, where they wield the most power. Most Keepers rely on minions and underlings, like loyalists, to do their bidding outside of Arcadia. For this reason, it's far more likely that hunters will encounter the True Fae's subordinates rather than the Fair Folk themselves.

Few hunters realize how grateful they should be for this fact.

Fetches

Most Changelings would like to reclaim their human lives: jobs, families, and friends. Unfortunately, the homes they've left behind rarely go unoccupied. Keepers often replace the Lost they abduct with simulacrums known as "fetches." Built out of trash, natural effluvia, sticks, string, or glass, fetches look, sound, and *feel* human — until their death. When a fetch dies, its body reverts back to its inanimate components.

While fetches are no more human than the Lost are, they believe themselves to be people — *specifically* the humans they are replacing. To reclaim their former place, most Lost will not hesitate to destroy the fetch that has taken their place. When that happens, the police get involved, and they're likely to arrest the Lost for murder — even if the fetch's body has already turned to sticks and stones. Hunters, too, may catch wind of something strange happening on the police scanners, and may get involved simply because they suspect a supernatural creature is behind the crime. Whatever the reason, killing fetches is guaranteed to attract unwanted attention.

Even if a fetch is dealt with, a Changeling can't step seamlessly back into her former life. The makeshift being that took her place is almost certainly more like her former self than the Changeling is now; her spouse, parents, children, friends and co-workers may not be willing to believe that the returned being is who she says she is. Due to the time discrepancies between Arcadia and the real world, she may seem far older (or considerably younger) than she "should" be. Her mannerisms, physical appearance, and mental outlook are all different. The Changeling is, for all intents and purposes, not the person she was before her abduction.

Either way, fetches draw the Lost into a direct conflict with humans — including hunters.

Hobgoblins and Hedgebeasts

The Hedge — land that separates the True Fae's realms from the human world — is home to countless other fae creatures that are neither Changeling nor Keeper. In general, these creatures are collectively referred to as hobgoblins (if sentient) and hedgebeasts (if not). Some races and species within these groups form entire villages or roam the Hedge in packs. While unhampered by the laws of human reality, these creatures are born, live, eat, breathe, bleed, breed, grow old, and eventually

die in a life cycle that mimics humans and animals. Others seem to exist outside of the realm of possibility, creatures of light, of sound, of ephemera. Some were made by magic, or perverted from human beings through prolonged exposure to the Hedge.

From Goblin Market stall owners to full-grown men no bigger than a fingertip, hobgoblins and hedgebeasts that manage to survive in the Hedge are a strange lot. Some are overtly hostile, relying upon travelers and other hedge-denizens as a food source. Others, given half a chance, would strip the unwary of their blood, goods, wits, will, or sanity.

Hunters rarely encounter denizens of the Hedge, for hobgoblins and hedgebeasts don't stray into the human world very often. Those cells brave or foolish enough to travel to the Hedge, however, may find themselves at the mercy of creatures far more deadly, cunning, and amoral than they've ever dealt with. Some sentient hobgoblins may venture outside of the Hedge, and will rely on stealth to hide, or adopt a Mask to masquerade as people. A hedgebeast that's escaped from its home-realm might draw the attention of a hunter cell, just as easily as a Changeling or a fetch.

Arcane Realms

The Lost have the innate ability to create supernatural doorways to another world, as described in the Dread Power Dark Gate (see p. 147). Changelings use these doorways to travel from place to place in the mortal world by taking shortcuts through an alien landscape: the Hedge. And, sometimes, hunters who are tracking Changelings find themselves on the other side of a Dark Gate as well.

The Hedge

The Hedge is a labyrinthine realm, a supernatural buffer zone between the human world and that of the True Fae. It tends to mirror the foliage and flora of the world it butts up against — like a supernatural sideshow mirror reflecting reality. The Hedge near a temperate zone may be filled with thick pines and berry briar underbrush, and those trees may be sentient, explosive, or bear blood-sucking batbirds instead of leaves. The Hedge's diversity is only surpassed by its dangerousness.

Two locations separated by thousands of miles in the mortal world may be an hour's journey by foot in the Hedge. However, that journey may take a traveler through territories filled with wolf-like beings, swamps of quicksand where time slows for trapped victims, or past an oasis full of impossibly beautiful beings who offer succor and shade — at the price of a soul. All benefits come with a price, and the tolls taken by the Hedge's inhabitants can be more than any sane human is willing to pay.

Distance and terrain are not only different, but mutable in the Hedge. Not only is the environment inconstant, the True Fae, certain hobgoblins, hedgebeasts, and the more powerful Lost can exert their will upon the Hedge and mold it to their whim. A traveler may make a journey a dozen times only to find that, on his thirteenth trip, the way has utterly changed. A once-trusted route now leads him deeper and deeper into the realm of the fae.

Arcadia

Beyond the Hedge, lies the True Fae's realms. It would be extremely unusual for a hunter (or cell) to wander into Arcadia. Unlike the Hedge, the paths that lead to the True Fae's domains are not traveled by any mortal means, nor are they encountered accidentally. It is almost impossible to enter a True Fae's demesne without its knowledge and permission.

But, *almost* impossible is not the same as impossible. If a hunter cell was dedicated to make the journey — researching routes, bargaining for supernatural maps and keys, hiring hobgoblin guides, and surviving the likely-fatal trek — it is theoretically possible for them to reach Arcadia, home of the True Fae.

Once there, hunters would have to content with the True Fae and all its servants. Even if a cell makes it to Arcadia alive, there's no guarantee those hunters could return.

Systems

Changeling: the Lost contains several complex systems and rules to represent the Lost's multi-faceted existences. These systems are designed to be used with Changeling player characters and story arcs that are primarily fae in nature. This section, on the other hand, offers a human-centric view of the Lost's powers, perfect for a **Hunter** campaign.

In places where the two systems conflict, assume these rules take precedence when portraying the Lost in a **Hunter: the Vigil** chronicle.

Price of Being Lost

Changelings have certain inherent weaknesses and strengths, regardless of their diversity. All Lost share the following traits:

- A Changeling's true fae appearance is hidden from mortal eyes unless she uses the Dread Power Revelation to reveal it.
- Lost can enter the Hedge through any open doorway, gate, window, or other opening by expending a Willpower point. Likewise, they can do the same to exit the Hedge through any spot that has been used in the past to enter it.
- By spending a Willpower point, a Changeling can enter into a Manipulation + Willpower vs. Composure + Willpower challenge to incite a target to emotional extremes: desire, wrath, sorrow, or fear. Storytellers can assess appropriate modifiers based on the emotion being raised, the volatility of the situation, and the target's mood at the time.

Dread Powers

As a supernatural race, Changelings possess certain Dread Powers inherently. Dread Powers can be found on p. 144, as well as pp. 276-282 of **Hunter: the Vigil**.

- **Dark Gate:** For changelings, Dark Gate has a slight modification. Rather than connecting two locations immediately, the Dark Gate opens a pathway through the Hedge from one locale to another. The Lost (and anyone following them) must traverse this pathway to emerge through the other Gate; this mystical route may be much shorter than a mundane one. Leaving the path during transit is possible, and results in the traveler being lost in the Hedge.

- **Absorb Energy:** The "energy" most Changelings possess is emotional, rather than physical, in nature. Emotional energy can be harvested from humans experiencing any strong positive or negative emotion.

- **Dream Seeing:** All Changelings can use this Dread Power for their own dreams, and those of their fetch.

- **Mixed Blessings:** Changelings are masters of Mixed Blessings. Agreements rendered with the Lost are supernaturally binding, often in ways too cunning or tricky for a mortal mind to grasp.

- **Revelation:** By expending all of her Willpower, a Changeling can reveal her true fae nature to those around them for a period of time.

Other Dread Powers are commonly found among fae creatures, but aren't necessarily an inherent ability. These include:

- **Dread Attack** is often found amongst Beast Changelings and represent their fangs, talons, and claws. Many Beast Changelings also possess **Strange Form**, giving them the ability to transform completely into one or more animal shapes.

- **Blackout** is most commonly possessed by Changelings of the Darkling Seeming, as is **Lurker in Darkness**.

- Elemental Changelings often have **Absorb Energy,** based on whatever their elemental affinity is, as well as **Tempest**, which is especially appropriate for weather, lightning, air, or electricity Elementals.

- **Cloak of Authority** is possessed by almost all Fairest, as is **Impress**.

- **Crushing Blow**, **Giant Size**, and **Titan's Strength** are common for Ogres.

- **Degradation** is often possessed by Wizened Changelings, as is **Gremlinize**.

- **Dream Seeing**, **Dream Shaping**, and **Dream Walking** are common among the Lost; many fae creatures are masters at dream manipulation. **Eye For Desire** is also common, along with **Curse of Failings**.

The Response

Unlike many supernatural monsters, the Lost find it easy to hide in plain sight, masquerading as humans for as long as their mercurial temperaments allow the façade to continue. Their physical characteristics, attitudes, and abilities are almost infinitely diverse. These factors combine to make it exceedingly difficult for hunter groups — even for compacts and conspiracies that have extensive information — to efficiently interpret what data can be applied to a particular Changeling.

Each compact and conspiracy section includes an in-game example of how that hunter group might interact with one of the three Changelings detailed at the end of this chapter, with the exception of Task Force: VALKYRIE, which reports engaging all three. Notes are also included that reveal how the group might encounter Changelings and their ilk, what information they are most likely to have on the Lost, as well as any unique challenges the group may face when interacting with the fae.

Compacts

The biggest challenge that the compacts face with regards to the fae and the Lost isn't the volume of information they can gather, but the diversity of fae creatures. Vampires, werewolves, and other monsters are often easily identified based on physical characteristics alone. A Changeling appearance can manifest as almost anything — including vampires and werewolves! Even if a hunter is able to perceive a Lost's *true* fae appearance, what they find behind their Mask can be almost anything: a bestial bird-man, a sexless mannequin, a beautiful maiden, a stone statue, a bedraggled street urchin. There are no "pale skin and fangs" or "piecemeal body sewn together" characteristics that make identifying a Changeling simple.

Fae magics are just as diverse, which makes it equally difficult for any compact to pinpoint a Changeling by his abilities. One of the Lost may be able to talk with inanimate objects, another to manipulate dreams or emotions, while a third can uproot an oak tree and swing it like a baseball bat. They may have the power of flight, shapeshifting, or time-manipulation. Some of the Lost can give curses and blessings, work the weather, or supernaturally farm the land. The possibilities are endless, and the combinations innumerable. Throw in fetches, hobgoblins, hedgebeasts, and the True Fae, and a compact's dossier is likely to be full of contradictions and quasi-facts that impacts the hunt. A cell that approaches a lycanthropic-esque Lost with silver, based on their compact's data on shapeshifters, may not live to update that information back at headquarters.

To make matters worse, the Lost's state-of-mind is widely erratic and unpredictable. Some may have been so mentally broken by their Durance that they are incapable of maintaining their humanity. Sociopathic, homicidal, paranoid, or simply mad, the Lost are no longer bound to the constraints of human morality. Compacts may record changelings who victimize normal humans in any number of ways: physically, emotionally, or supernaturally. Cannibalism, too, is de rigueur for certain Lost groups. Theft, arson, assault, and murder are also justified in many Changelings'

minds based on what they have themselves previously endured. Loyalists and privateers may sell others — human and fae alike — into slavery to the True Fae in order to retain their own freedom. The fae who commit such atrocities are practically screaming to be found by a compact and dealt with appropriately.

Other Changelings, however, tend to their sanity out of a desire to regain their former lives — or to avoid being hunted down as monsters. Until something happens to "out" them as fae, compacts might mistake the Lost for a normal human or one with supernatural power. Some possess occult knowledge or supernatural knacks that could make them an invaluable ally for a hunter compact. And, as compacts reach out to acquire resources to aid them in their efforts, their paths may well cross in a cooperative fashion.

The more lucid Changelings may also police their own, bringing down the "mad dog" Lost who have strayed too far to be redeemed; or they might enlist hunters to do the same. These relationships can continue for extended periods, assuming the hunters involved don't know or mind what they're dealing with.

If there's one thing constant about the fae, it's their potential to slide down that slippery slope towards madness and monstrosity — a fact most hunters may not be aware of, even if their compacts are.

Ashwood Abbey

The Ashwood Abbey is more likely to contain Changelings than it is to hunt them. Most of the Lost simply don't provide the kind of targets that the Abbey is most often drawn to. Because their Masks make them mostly indistinguishable from humans, the Lost are protected from unwanted Abbey attention.

There are exceptions, however — if the Abbey became aware of a Lost's true nature, especially a Beast or Ogre, they might be considered prime hunting targets. To some experimentally-minded members of the compact, they might find it interesting to see how much abuse a being made of stone, ice, or steel could take before breaking.

Other Lost might interact with the Abbey not as targets or infiltrators, but as suppliers. While a servile Wizened might not make for a good chase, one who knew the secrets to creating intoxicating potions made from fae blood, or raising exotic foodstuffs in the borderlands of the Hedge, might be listed as an Abbey employee.

In fact, certain factions within Lost society have attitudes and mindsets so similar to those of the Abbey that they're very likely to cross paths, if not overlap. The Spring Court, where desire and passion rule supreme, and the Fairest Seeming, where physical beauty and social manipulation excuse almost any behavior, seem well suited to the Abbey. Or, Changelings focused on stalking hedgebeasts may lead or participate in an unique hunt with Abbey members in the Hedge.

The Hedge is the ultimate hunting ground for the Ashwood Abbey — a wild territory filled with a near-limitless selection of creatures (and beings) both fantastic and fearsome. And, unlike hunts performed in the human realm, hunters don't need to worry about cleaning up after themselves. It's not as if the police are going to investigate a hobgoblin's murder, or strange trophies taken from hedgebeasts, no matter how rare or unusual they are. A Lost who willingly opens a doorway into the Hedge could probably write his own check for the favor — at least until the Abbey started wondering exactly how he was doing it, and what that said about the nature of the Changeling himself.

From the Archives: *He said he knew just what I was looking for, and just the woman who'd give it to me – to us. I didn't have high hopes. Who would have expected such a boor of a man to provide such quality?*

She was perfect. Perfect eyes, perfect hips, perfect breasts. Legs as long as a summer day, and a mouth that was made for pleasure. But it was more than that. She had an air about her, something I can't put a name to, even now. It was like the sun shone beneath her skin, and when she smiled...

She called herself The Verdant Queen, like she was some sort of royalty, and unlike the whores who claim to be foreign princesses to boost their earnings, she carried herself like she was. She looked every bit a queen, even when we had her tied down.

Even when she had us tie her down.

She fucked like a sovereign too – nothing coy, nothing pathetic. It was like we were the ones serving her; we were there just to please her over and over again. She never lost control of the situation.

I was the last one to leave. She asked me to stay, while I washed the cum off her stomach. Just a single word, a request so quiet that I don't think anyone else heard it, and I couldn't say no. I didn't say no when she asked me to untie her either, or to remove her blindfold, or when we fucked again, just the two of us there in the pile of sheets and pillows the entire group had used before.

Then she suggested other things – things that turned my stomach, even as they made me wet. We've been together for weeks now, and I still haven't been able to bring myself to tell her no.

I used to think the Abbey was the ultimate in pleasure-seeking, no matter the cost, no matter the risk.

Now, I'm not so sure.

– from the private journal of Dame Elspeth Blackthorne

The Long Night

While some compacts may target individual Changelings, the Long Night believes in focusing on what they see as the source of this particular supernatural problem — the True Fae. Their researchers have drawn correlations between the Nephilim and the True Fae. The Long Night believes the fae are a race of fallen angels dedicated to corrupting mankind.

The Long Night sees the Hedge as an infernal place, populated by imps (hobgoblins) and demons (hedgebeasts). Most hunters would no more enter there than they would willingly walk through the gates of Hell. They believe that the thorns literally tear away at the souls of those who are weak or foolish enough to venture there, leaving them vulnerable to corruption and supernatural pollution. This infernal influence shows itself not only in changes to the Changelings' appearances, but also in the manifestation of their inhuman powers. The stronger the supernatural abilities a Changeling exhibits, the more likely that her soul is beyond redemption; at that point, the Changeling may even be considered to be a Nephilim herself.

Because the compact can't agree on what to do with a Changeling, the Long Night may subject a target to torturous trials designed to prove just how human he is, just like the tests medieval witch hunters used during the Inquisition to rout out demonic forces. Changelings who perish in the process are believed to have retained their humanity — and their soul — and are given proper posthumous respect.

Even among the Merciful, there is no possible way, however, that the more powerful Changelings can be redeemed. Once the Lost exhibits the full force of their supernatural powers, that display is considered proof their souls are forfeit. As such, the fate of those Changelings is sealed, and the most merciful action the Long Night can take is to put them out of their misery so that they cannot delve further onto the path of wickedness.

From the Archives: *From the earliest of times, we have known that we were not alone on this earth. In the book of Genesis, God warns us of the Nephilim, supernatural beings that defiled the pure and innocent among mankind, and spawned beings that looked like men but were stronger of body and more cunning of mind. Evil beings, incapable of pure thought, of right action, of redemption.*

In the time of the Great Flood, our Holy Father set out to banish these beings from the earth, drowning out their wicked influence on humanity. In His mercy, He washed them from the face of the earth, exiling them from the lands of His children, where they could do no further harm. Instead of being grateful for His kindness, these Nephilim *began to imagine themselves as gods. Unfettered by His rule, they perverted the lands they'd been cast into, making them into their own personal hells, wherein they might rule as profane kings unhampered by the ways of light and truth.*

Not content to reign in their own demon-realms, these Nephilim then came back into the world of God through devious means, and set their traps amongst the mankind. They sought out those of weak will or uncertain spirit and corrupted these faithless in their own perverse image.

And many fell. In these end times, humanity is weak, and easily tempted by promises of power, or knowledge which man was never meant to know. Countless have fallen. They are everywhere. In our stores, our schools, our homes.

It is our holy duty to end the suffering of those who have fallen to the Nephilim's evil influence, and to protect His flocks from these foul creatures who would prey upon them. It is our covenant, to bring to justice those who go against the light, and to serve as the shield against those who prey upon the weak in this battle between good and evil.

Let us pray.

– From the sermons of Rev. Jackson Greene, Father of the Faithful

The Loyalists of Thule

The Loyalists of Thule's official party line is that Changelings do not exist. Not as fae, at least.

The compact's data refers to the Lost as a dangerous supernatural race, of unknown and potentially contagious origins. Compact Loyalists are never assigned to investigate situations or topics related to the Hedge, Arcadia, hobgoblins, hedgebeasts, or Changelings. Should such a matter come up on the compact's radar, all information and leads are to be passed up the chain of command to Munich.

Any cell that attempts to follow up on such leads will be severely reprimanded, and may potentially be censured, for seditious and criminal disregard of the compact's rules, under a mandate referred to as the "Alpdrück Errata."

The reason for the Alpdrück Errata is simple: the True Fae are ancient gods, and Arcadia is the Ultimate Source.

Or, at least that's what the heads of the Loyalists fear.

In their earliest searches, the Loyalists pored through folklore, myths, and legends, and found that every culture has told their own tales of a race that walked amongst humanity, a race who came before — the fae. Terrified that someone else might find this information and spark a vast genocide, Loyalists' leaders simply forbade their members from researching the fae. The compact created false "truths" about the Lost, claiming they are a potentially infectious threat, and insist that all investigations on fae-related matters are to be handled by specialized teams, higher up in the organization. Teams that don't exist.

How has the compact managed to stop its oh-so-diligent hunters from dealing with the fae? In truth, it hasn't. Even with the Alpdrück Errata in place, it's impossible to ensure that a loosely knit group of scholars scattered across the globe won't study the topic further. Still, just as the compact struggles to make up for unforgivable wrongs committed decades ago by a splinter of their original research group, the current Loyalist leaders refuse to see the ineffectuality of their current path. In time, when the last of the current leadership trio has passed on, the group's prohibition against such studies will likely fade with them. Then, it will be up to a newer generation of Loyalists — those for whom the compact's guilty ties with the founders of the Nazi Party are second-hand — to decide how to progress in regards to their group's historic quest for the Ultimate Source.

From the Archives: *I have obtained a copy of the text we'd discussed, and have handed it off to Johan for translation, his Old Icelandic is better than mine. I am hoping that this contains the information we've been seeking, a confirmation of the references from the last work Ms. Lawrence obtained for us.*

As for the woman herself? She will not reveal her sources. As she has in the past, when I ask, she just smiles and shrugs. Further inquiry is equally demurred. I have tried bribery, flattery... The only thing that caught a flicker of her interest, was when I hinted that I might be willing to trade access to my own library, although you know that would never be allowed.

In the end, she still refuses to connect me with her supplier, claiming she's just "found" the pieces she's sold to us in that little hovel of a bookstore she runs. I've been through every inch of it – there's no way she's hiding a cache of medieval texts between the Reader's Digest Condensed and the Encyclopedia Brittanicas.

My next step is blackmail. Everyone's got secrets, and Ms. Lawrence can be no different. I will find out what's going on here. I just need a little more time.

I know that Hildebrand is calling for us to sever our ties with this contact, due to potential violation of the Alpdrück Errata. Just because Ms. Lawrence is an expert in folklore related to verboten topics, that does not mean we should avoid using such an obviously valuable resource. I will, of course, follow your orders in this matter, but I implore you to give me just a few more weeks before remanding the situation to Hildebrand's attention.

– From a report by Malcolm Lehrer

Network Zero

Information wants to be free. The Truth is out there. What hunters don't know *can* hurt them.

While most individuals who either deal with the supernatural have a vested interest in secrecy, others believe that occult knowledge is power, and they have the responsibility to share what they learn with the rest of the world.

Amongst the compacts, Network Zero is one such group. Amongst the Lost, it's the Radio Free Fae. While the two groups may not officially know about one another, they haunt the same virtual alleyways, use the same electronic tools, and share information with one another — whether they realize it or not. When RFF needs to share information about a privateer band or a Lost-gone-rogue, they know they can rely on NZ to boost the signal without tipping them off that the hunters are being used to amplify their message.

As for the rest of the Changelings? The Lost has been captured by Network Zero's cameras and broadcast on their internet channels far more often than most freeholds would like to admit. In this digital age, a Changeling can't open doorways to the Hedge in the middle of a city without getting caught on a security camera, cell phone, or camera. And once it's on film, that footage is eventually added to the Network Zero's archives, and then shared for public viewing. Most of the time, however, it's the door — and the Hedge beyond — that draws the hunters' attention, moreso than the mundane-looking individual opening it.

Few Network Zero hunters know enough about fae abilities to link the door-makers with Changelings. What they do understand, however, is that whatever lies beyond that door is of great interest to all hunters.

From the Archives: *"So, Molly, you're implying that the murder of Fred Hinks, mayor of Greenville, and the deaths of the four football players from Franklin were related?"*

"No. I'm not implying it. I'm flat out stating out that Hinks and the Franklin four were killed by the same person...for the same reason."

"And that reason was...?"

"Hinks had more than a dozen domestic abuse calls logged to his home address in the six month period before his death. Three weeks before the camping trip, Luke Stanley, Ryan Wilkinson, Bo Parsons, and Tomas Martinez were all part of an investigation by the MSU college ethics board, under allegations of "sexual misconduct" in regards to another MSU student."

"And so you're saying that someone killed a middle-aged mayor and four frat boys because they..."

"Beat up, raped, and eventually killed a woman."

"Strong allegations. Do you have any evidence to back that up?"

"None the police would accept."

"And what about the issue of the victim's deaths? I mean, Mayor Hinks was stabbed..."

"Stabbed, with a weapon that was never found or even identified–"

"Right...?"

"–but the judge ruled the death of the boys from MSU was accidental due to exposure."

"Exactly. The mayor's murder weapon was never found...because it melted."

"Melted?"

"Yep. Think about it. It's the perfect crime."

"And that ties into the MSU student's death because..."

"It's obvious, isn't it, Trace? Ice monster."

"Ice. Monster."

"Yup. An ice monster with a taste for killing rapists and wife-beaters. And this isn't the first time! It's been happening all across the country! I've got articles about a pedophile in Columbus from last year–"

"And there you have it, folks. Supernatural retribution against wife-beaters, rapists, and guys who kill women. Misogynists, beware! We've been talking with Grey Molly, host of the internet radio show "Beyond the Briar." Next up, we'll be bringing you more on that strange sighting out in Agua Prieta. Is it possible that the local legends of chupacabra are actually true?"

– Transcription from underground radio station WEC, "We See All" Radio.

Null Mysteriis

The Lost as a whole are of little interest to the scientifically-minded Null Mysteriis. The fae don't, for the most part, shapeshift, drink blood, or feed on humanity in ways that observers will notice. What's more, many of the Lost's abilities can be rationalized and explained in many different ways: changing the weather, a remarkable ability to heal himself, a penchant for understanding animals, or the strength to move a car off an accident victim. Even if a Changeling has her own explanation, the Null Mysteriis may take her words and extrapolate their own answer.

Ephemeral abilities, like soul-binding oaths or dream manipulation, aren't tangible enough to garner the compact's attention. Most fae magical items don't draw overt interest from the compact, either. When first hand reports surface, Null scientists write off the unexplicable, and claim a Changeling was suffering from a paranoid delusions or the mob was exposed to mass hallucinogenics.

However, as with any branch of academia, almost any aspect of the supernatural has drawn the attention of an obsessed researcher. Folklore historians travel to purportedly powerful sacred sites every day, setting up energy meters and kirlian cameras, hoping to explain why some locations have been associated for centuries with the True Fae while others have not. Literary researchers spend hours — years even — experimenting with alternative pronunciations on spells designed to summon, bind, or banish fae creatures.

Within the Null Mysteriis, perhaps the single greatest topic of conjecture is whether or not Changelings can move from one site to another. There is a great deal of speculation amongst certain researchers about the nature of the Hedge and who can affect it. Theories ranging from mass hypnosis and hallucination to the possibility that Hedge gates are actually wormholes as originally proposed by German mathematician Hermann Weyl in 1921.

From the Archives: *His manifestations of impressive physical strength are, while unusual, not out of keeping with those sometimes displayed by individuals under the influence of Phencyclidine (PCP), a substance which is also known to cause hallucinations of the same sort as schizophrenic disorders.*

As for the patient's purported ability to "open a doorway to another dimension", clinical studies were inconclusive. While observers did report an anomalous visual discrepancy, protocols prohibited further investigation until an appropriate control condition could be implemented. It is possible that trace residuals from the subject's drug use affected the primary observation team, allowing Mr. Barrow to release himself from protective custody. Further studies will be performed in a more clinical environment, once contact with the patient has been re-established.

– Personal interview with Dr. Alicia Montgomery, excerpted from the clinical treatise, "Underhill or Under the Influence."

The Union

The Union isn't big on theories or legends. They're concerned with what's going on in their own neighborhood: right here, right now. This is both a blessing and a curse for the Lost.

On the downside, Union members are more likely to notice the presence of a Changeling freehold in their local area than other compacts. Freeholds tend to develop where a continual and steady stream of emotionally unstable Lost return from their Durance, which means that an influx of oddly behaving newcomers are heading into the Union's backyard. And, because the Lost return to their former homes in the mortal world, freeholds also occur where humans *disappear*. People going missing (or for those replaced by fetches, and exhibit drastic changes in behavior and personality) tend to draw the Union's attention.

That being said, the Lost can be good "neighbors" as far as supernatural monsters are concerned. They don't need to drink human blood to survive. They aren't prone to murderous rages. And their freeholds are an intricate social hierarchy; when the Lost's sanity levels drop too low, they patrol their own. As long as they're not selling people to the True Fae or committing other crimes against the locals, chances are the Union may not have a beef against the Lost — unless, of course, the fae starts making deals.

That said, life amongst the fae is never stable for long. Even though the Lost do what they can to prevent it, their sanities do slip. The True Fae do kidnap people. Interpersonal and political conflict does happen, and sometimes the situation gets ugly. When a row between Changelings comes to the attention of the Union, chances are they're not going to discriminate too heavily between the good guys and the bad guys in the situation if the safety of the community is at risk. Minutia of inter-fae court politics and plausible deniability go out the window when a Union cell is protecting its neighborhood, and it's likely the Union will raze the whole damn freehold if that's what needs to be done to protect their friends and families.

From the Archives: *I'm tellin' ya, man. It was some fucked up shit. Joey heard the call come in over his police scanner, and recognized the address. Me and Bub were at the bar around the corner, so when Joey called us up, we beat feet over there to see what was up before the cops showed.*

It was crazy. I mean, the trailer door was half-off, and we found Wanda had locked herself in the bathroom. Her shoulder was dislocated, her arm was broke in two places, and it looked like someone had been playing hacky sack with her face. Not the first time, I mean, Mac's a good guy... Not many folks I'd rather have behind me when things get nasty, but he's got a temper.

No one's seen him since. I mean, Wanda said she heard yelling after she locked herself in – thought it was the cops, but then everything went quiet. Not sure who was tusslin' with Mac, but it wasn't the boys in blue. They didn't show up 'til after we'd got her out and cleaned up and Bub was on his way to take her to the guy who stitches us up when things go sideways on a job.

Strange as shit, I tell you what. No trace of Mac, and ain't nobody seen him since. Weirdest thing though? It was so cold in there, when we were pulling Wanda out, I could see my breath. I mean, I know that's a weird thing to remember, but it's almost the 4th of July, and I know the AC in Mac's place ain't been working as long as I've known him. I don't know if that means something. Probably not. But... it was weird, ya know?"

– Overheard in the back room of the Stumble Inn

Conspiracies

Regardless of their increased resources, broader information networks, and more efficient organizational structures, hunter conspiracies still suffer many of the same issues that compacts and unaffiliated hunter cells do when dealing with the fae. Short of using fae-detecting Endowments on every individual they encounter — including their own employees — the conspiracies don't have any set protocols to determine fae from human. This not only makes hunting Changelings down difficult, but for the conspiracies, it means that the likelihood of the Lost pretending to be hunters is fairly high. In some cases, this can be an advantage: a fae potion maker may have recipes unavailable to human members of the Ascending Ones, and access to a Goblin Market might garner the Aegis Kai Doru Relics the likes of which they could only dream. Some conspiracy members may overlook where occult information and valuable artifacts come from, while others might be very interested in the source — especially if they can use that data to their own advantage.

In addition to possible interactions and evidence relating to the Wandering Monsters on page 57, each conspiracy has a new Endowment that's tailored for encounters with Lost, True Fae, hedgebeasts, hobgoblins, or other fae entities.

Aegis Kai Doru

The Aegis Kai Doru are primarily interested in Changelings who wield magical items. If the Lost isn't willing to buy, sell, or trade the supernatural relic, they're bound to have trouble with this conspiracy. Hunters amongst the Aegis Kai Doru tasked with acquiring relics rarely ask politely before "recovering" the items they believe are their sacred duty to possess. And few Changelings are likely to give over any protective item that may shield them from the True Fae — or other supernatural threats that plague their existence. When the two collide, Changelings and the Aegis Kai Doru will clash.

A row between one cell and one Changeling can swell into a larger scale conflict, drawing hunter cell against Lost groups in ever-growing numbers. Should the Lost use more supernatural items in these battles, the ante will grow even higher for

the Aegis Kai Doru. What begins as an attempt to recover a single relic might end in an all-out war between the conspiracy and an entire freehold of Lost.

When hunters discover that not only do many Changelings possess supernatural relics, but that several can actually create said items, the entire equation changes. While kidnapping and slavery is certainly not the standard operating policy of the Shield and Spear, some hunters are tempted by the idea of "owning" a personal relic-maker. Such "involuntary employment offers" would certainly be made without the tacit knowledge, let alone approval, of the conspiracy's Inner Circle. However, in a global organization the size of the Aegis Kai Doru, such contracts are difficult to police.

Unfortunately for the Lost, some members of the Shield and Spear take their vow more literally than others. While fae magics are not the supernatural powers that the conspiracy's vow originally targeted, some hunters believe the manipulation of reality applies to the tenets of their vow. By this accounting, fae powers certainly qualify them for destruction — especially if the end result is recovery of a relic possessed by the now-late Changeling.

By the same token, the Lost's human Mask may also make her a target. Whether she's shapeshifting or using magic, the Mask also falls under the broadest interpretation of this vow. If the Shield and Spear becomes fanatical, there's no way a Changeling can win.

Should the Lost try to escape into the Hedge, they'll reveal a new mystery to the Aegis Kai Doru. Labyrinths are sacred to the conspiracy, and there is no maze greater than the Hedge itself. While most hunters within the conspiracy remain unaware of the wondrous and deadly borderland, keys to the Hedge are relics. As such, a good number of them are under the protection of the Temple at any given time.

From the Archives:

Relic Title: Unidentifed Plant Thorn

Acquisitions Agent: J. Landstrom

Acquisition Location: 7 km. SW of Lebanon, OR 12/11/1967

Relic Description: This 58mm organic spine of an unidentified plant species appears to have been broken from its stem, rather than cut. It narrows from a 13mm base to a pinpoint, and a single cotton thread (still intact) was discovered snagged on a rough spot near the thorn's base, perhaps indicating the spine had been worn pinned through an item of clothing. The thorn is dark brown in color, with an ivory interior wood.

Acquisitions Agent reports that upon the item's recovery its appearance was "bright green but covered in a thin layer of ice", and that the item gradually took on its current appearance over a period of several hours.

Relic Properties: Unknown. Acquisition Subject reportedly showed great dexterity during initial confrontation, but is unavailable for interrogation.

– From the curatorial card designated FAE121167

New Relic: The Silver Key (●●)

Legends say that if, at sunset on midsummer's eve, a young boy places a warm, stolen hen's egg into a hole in a stone wall, the fae cannot resist the purloined treat. By dawn

the next morning, the egg will be gone, and a key that unlocks the realm of the fairies will have been left in its place. These keys, handed down from one believer to the next, will only open a given doorway one time. And there is no guarantee what the wielder will find on the other side of the opening.

The Silver Key appears to be an antique, tarnished silver skeleton key with an oval head. When used to trace the edges of any open doorway, window, or gate, the key can open a gate into the Hedge.

Benefit: The Silver Key only works for normal, non-supernatural humans, and can only be activated with the expenditure of a Willpower point. The doorway will remain open for approximately one minute, whether or not someone passes through it. After the doorway closes, however, it cannot be opened again with the key; other means must be used to enter the Hedge from that location in the future.

The Silver Key also can be used from within the Hedge to open a doorway out into the mortal world. The same single-use per location restriction applies.

Ascending Ones

While this conspiracy rarely hunts Changelings directly, many of the Ascending Ones have interactions with the Lost and never realize it. The Order of the Phoenix focuses its violent efforts toward taking down vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural creatures that prey upon humankind — including the True Fae. If something is abducting people using supernatural means, it is likely to eventually come to the attention of the Ascending Ones, who would be duty-bound to stop the disappearances by any means necessary. This might well bring them to the attention of the Lost, who — if the attempts were not fatal for the hunters — would surely hold the hunter in high regard in the future.

Unfortunately, at least for the hunters, being famous among the Lost as a slayer of True Fae might well mean that future attacks from the same source would be directed back to the Ascending Ones' doorstep. A single successful defense against the True Fae might turn into a full-time job protecting a freehold against their Keepers, without the hunter ever knowing that they were defending the Lost.

More commonly, hunters deal with Changelings as suppliers for ingredients that would be difficult or impossible to obtain otherwise. The ingredients for potions and elixirs are often exotic and difficult to obtain, and there are entire groups of Changelings dedicated to growing, hunting out, or otherwise procuring exactly the sorts of components the Order of the Phoenix needs.

Lost farmers risk the dangers of the Hedge to cultivate fae produce that can only be raised in the supernatural soil there. Changeling hunters track down elusive and potentially lethal hedgebeasts for sport or profit, and the alchemists of the Ascending Ones are a perfect market for their prey. Fae occult specialists may uncover or develop recipes that Phoenix alchemists have yet to try, bartering back and forth without either party realizing fully the supernatural nature of the other side.

The unfortunate other side of the Ascending Ones' relationship with the Lost is that the fae themselves — or portions of them, at least — are sometimes necessary ingredients for a valued Phoenix elixir. The body parts of a supernatural creature are often considered to hold some of their power, and it is not unusual for a recipe to require such ingredients. And, while tears, hair, or nail clippings might be bargained for without too much difficulty, negotiating for a Changeling's blood, bile, or brain is a more challenging matter — at least when dealing with the Lost directly. There are privateer groups, however, who are more than happy to sell their fellow Changelings' anatomical inventory off to the highest bidder.

From the Archives: *Yo, Deej, it's Aker. Listen, somethin's up. I got a situation down here.*

It's the big guy. You know the one? Crazy pale cracker boy, built like a Buick? The one that's been buying up the Molly like it's going out of style?

At first I thought I'd let something slip. I mean, you know, I'm careful... I'm always careful. But things happen, talk gets overheard, people get a hunch and start listening extra careful.

Turns out it wasn't me at all. Dude knows stuff. Stuff I know he didn't pick up from me, or you, or any of the Phoenix.

He started talkin' about special recipes and this stuff he'd tried once that let him talk to animals and shit. Said it took some crazy ingredients, though – werewolf blood and all that.

And then he looked at me, like he knew, ya know? I'm not sure how he knew, but... he knew.

Anyway, I'm thinking he might be... not real, if you know what I'm sayin'. I'm brewing up a batch of the Hound, and I'm going to give Mountain Man a good look over when it's done. I'll let you know what's up, when it's all over.

– Voicemail message from Aker Two-Time to DJ Ed, members of the Jagged Crescent

New Elixir: Hound Mark (● or ●●●)

The Mask may hide Changelings' true nature from human perception, but Hound Mark ferrets out the Lost's true form. Those who consume this elixir are able to perceive Changelings and other fae creatures through sensory clues, regardless of how well their visages may be hidden.

Hound Mark is a viscous, dark green draught that tastes like anise and hints of lichen. It appears to have small granules in it, which crunch and pop when ground between the teeth. The one dot version only works with fae creatures. But, with the three dot version, the Hunter's awareness extends to all hidden monsters.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The hunter gains the Blind Condition (Persistent) until he earns three successes on an extended Stamina + Resolve roll. Each roll represents a full hour of attempting to overcome the elixir's effects.

Failure: The hunter is affected as though he had consumed a moderate dose of ecstasy (-2 to all dice pools and traits).

Success: The character gains the ability to perceive fae creatures in his immediate area (5 foot radius). This perception will manifest differently for different individuals: some may smell the cloying scent of overripe fruit on the Changeling, while others may sense a golden aura around her, or hear whispers just

below the range of true understanding while in a fae presence.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the range is increased to 20 feet in radius, and the perception allows the hunter to detect supernaturally hidden fae creatures. While an invisible Changeling will still remain invisible, the hunter will be able to suss out his location by following his supernatural senses.

The Cheiron Group

Early on, the Cheiron Group wasn't sure the Lost existed and, at first, it was virtually impossible for the conspiracy to differentiate Changelings from normal human beings. Even when sleeping, unconscious, or killed, the human Mask protected Lost from detection — for a time. Fetches, however, were easier for the Group to detect since most revert to their original components after death or loss of limb. Many early TCG experiments were actually performed on fetches, rather than Changelings, for that reason.

Because of their diversity, it has taken the Cheiron Group a few centuries to suspect that different Changeling Seemings are all part of the same supernatural group. Even now, there are Lost specimens being held in protective custody that are mis-designated as hematophagic anomalies (pseudo-vampires), therianthropic mutations (faux werewolves), etc. Others have been classified as an unknown species, because the combination of their unique physical appearances, abilities, and behaviors doesn't mesh with any profiles in TCG's databases.

Recently, the TCG has discovered the Lost's ability to enter another's dream state, one that allows them to telepathically communicate with and influence the subject. This ability came to the conspiracy's attention in the early 1970s; they have spent decades (and countless dollars) perfecting a technique that temporarily allows a human agent to use this ability.

Organic components from hobgoblins and hedgebeasts have been utilized in a broad array of TCG experiments as well. While it's uncertain how the conspiracy is attaining a steady supply of Hedge-based components to successfully experiment, the fact remains that the tests are happening — often with unexpected and profitable results.

From the Archives: *Dick, we've been over this a thousand times. I need a separate Purchase Order filled out for each resource that's acquired, regardless of how many or few individual lots are bought. I understand that some contact agents are less excited about entering P.O.'s than others, but if the supplier isn't willing, it falls on you to make certain the appropriate forms are filled out. If nothing else, if you could at least get a semblance of a signature from this "Boss" individual, that would make my job a lot easier.*

Also, can I get address confirmation? It looks like "Stall 51", but is Goblin Market the name of a retail outlet or a village? Do we have a postcode for our records?

— From a response to the submitted expense report of Dr. Richard Sabre, head of the Research Procurements Department, Cornwall Branch.

New Thaumatechnology: Cranial Cortex Augmentation (●●●●)

Cranial Cortex Augmentation is a thaumatechnological process whereby thin tissue slices extracted from the extrastriate visual areas of a Changeling's cortex is surgically layered into the same area of another individual's brain. This gives the patient a temporary ability to mimic the Lost's ability to enter and manipulate others' dreams.

This augmentation procedure requires surgery on the recipient's brain (including lifting a flap of the patient's skull to access the rear cortex region) and often leaves scars. The "donor" must possess the Dread Powers: Dream Seeing, Dream Shaping, and Dream Walking at a minimum of 3 dots each, or the procedure fails. A single donor may contribute tissue to augment several dozen recipients; only a thin slice of the neural material is necessary for each augmentation. Because of the nature of the tissue transfer, removing the material from the donor is always a fatal process.

Benefit: The Cranial Cortex Augmentation gives the hunter the following Dread Powers: Dream Seeing (●●●), Dream Shaping (●●●), and Dream Walking (●●●).

Cranial Cortex Augmentation only lasts for a short time, and the more robust the patient's natural system, the more quickly the effects fade. After a number of weeks equal to 8-Stamina, the patient's body absorbs the implanted material and the process loses its effectiveness. Subsequent augmentations after the first have a progressive 10% chance of not working (i.e. 10% failure rate for the second augmentation, 20% for the third, and so on). After a failed augmentation, no further Cranial Cortex Augmentations will succeed for that recipient.

The Lucifuge

Changelings usually aren't the Lucifuge's concern. Fae creatures tend to cross the Lucifuge's radar when they manifest demonic or angelic appearances or powers, or if they take actions that might mistakenly cause other compacts and conspiracies to label them as such.

And, while the Lost may see it differently, the Hedge may not be the human world, but it is no Hell — at least not in the Lucifuge's eyes. Conspiracy members who stumble across this alien landscape and report their findings to the cadre in Milan — or, for those with sufficient standing in the conspiracy, to the Lucifuge herself — are quickly reminded that their duties are to work against the forces of evil in the human world and to not concern themselves with hobgoblins, hedgebeasts, or other fae ilk.

There is one exception to this rule, however — the True Fae.

To the Lucifuge, the Keepers are something else entirely. Supernatural beings who reign as gods over nearly impossible-to-reach realms? Amoral and nearly omnipotent individuals who prey upon humanity, kidnapping innocents so that they can physically, emotionally, and mentally defile them? It doesn't take much for a Lucifuge hunter who has stumbled across rumors of one of the True Fae to wonder how these creatures fit into the grand cosmic design.

If the frequency of assignments related to investigating human kidnappings and disappearances are any indicator, the Lucifuge herself may also have a personal vested interest in the True Fae. Rumors behind her intent vary wildly. Some hunters believe the Lucifuge isn't a demon after all, but one of the

True Fae. Others think her secret headquarters in Milan is a doorway through the Hedge, leading to her Arcadian demesne.

From the Archives:

Unto Armaros, faithful servitor, do We send most sincere greetings. We thank you for your report of 20 November, and are most pleased with the news that your wounds have fully recovered. While your bravery in the face of the unexpected turn of events was no less than We have come to expect from you over the past several decades, your ingenuity and calm heart are, as always, inspirational. We are including a sum of notes equivalent to five hundred pounds sterling along with this missive. Please utilize these funds to pay for the damages incurred in said situation, as well as the furnishings lost in the subsequent fire at your lodgings. Any additional funds may be used as you see fit, to prepare you for your next assignment, with Our gratitude.

Herein, as well, please find a composite file of the data collected in regards to the disappearance of three (3) lighthouse keepers assigned to the Flannan Isles house. Their relief discovered, on 26 December, that all three men had disappeared from their post. There are reports of a storm of unusual ferocity immediately afore, but of more direct concern to Us is a singular report from one Margaret Laine, currently employed as a laundress and purportedly a sometime paramour of one of the keepers. Upon his last visit to the mainland, Ms. Laine does allege that her compatriot spoke strange things, of a man made of ice stalking the island near the lighthouse.

In all likelihood this is simply the wine-addled ramblings of a tavern doxy, but on the chance that this relates to the ice-ghost sighting before the disappearance of the fishermen outside of Dundee some years in the past, or the woman from Abernethy who claimed to have been rescued by a monster carved of snow last spring, it would be negligent not to pursue additional information.

We have the utmost faith in your ability to discover the truth behind said situation.

TL

– Intercepted from a personal messenger travelling between Milan and Leith, circa 1901.

New Castigation Rite: Unholy Aura

17th century English poet, John Milton wrote that it was better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven, and the Lucifuge agree. Through this rite, they are able to access some of the supernatural magnitude possessed by infernal overlords, making them physically and emotionally impressive and intimidating.

Fae creatures — especially those who have escaped Arcadia — recognize a resonance similar to that of the True Fae in the power this rite bestows. This makes them especially vulnerable to the unholy authority of this rite.

The hunter using this rite wraps himself in an aura of demonic superiority. Used on a fae creature other than one of the True Fae (Changeling, hedgebeast, hobgoblin), its effects are doubled.

Cost: None

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation vs. Composure

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Unholy Aura backlashes on the hunter. She gains an Unholy Condition that causes her to suffer a penalty to Social actions equal to 10-Integrity. As well, others get exceptional successes against her in Social actions with three successes instead of five. It resolves when she suffers an exceptional success from another.

Failure: No effect.

Success: The character wraps herself in a demonic aura that others find intimidating, attractive, ingratiating, or the like, depending on how it is wielded. For the remainder of the scene, all of the hunter's Social dice pools receive a +3 bonus and the 9-again quality.

Social dice pools against Changelings, hedgebeasts, or hobgoblins receive a +6 bonus.

True Fae are likely to recognize this aura as similar to their own. Unfortunately, not only does this Rite not offer the hunter any mechanical bonuses against them, it is possible the True Fae will target the Lucifuge hunter over others present in the scene, as a rival.

Exceptional Success: The Lucifuge receives the benefit of the effects until the next dusk or dawn, whichever comes first.

Malleus Maleficarum

Because most Changelings don't resemble bloodsuckers, the Malleus Maleficarum rarely target them. When they do, the Malleus believe that Lost is a vampire; sometimes Changelings with a ghastly Darkling Seeming can give them a pale countenance, gaunt features, a preference for nighttime activities, and sometimes unsavory eating habits. However, regardless of surface similarities, most Lost are not hurt by sunlight, nor do most require blood to survive. Though hunters may be confused why Changelings don't share these traits, their most common means for dealing with vampires — a stake through the heart, or beheading — is also exceedingly effective against the Lost.

While the Malleus Maleficarum has no official stance on how to deal with the fae, many of the same regions where Catholicism has historically been the dominant religion also have a strong cultural relationship with "elves" and "fairies." Because of this, while the conspiracy may not educate its hunters to fear or respect the Lost, their cultural traditions may have done so. Fairy tales and folklore may not prepare modern hunters for their interactions with Changelings and the True Fae, but it can create an interesting dynamic when their paths do cross.

From the Archives: *I have met with Mr. O'Sullivan, the Registrar of the National Folklore Commission, lately of the County Kerry. His name was provided to me, along with a transcript of his Trinity College lecture provided by a research secretary we have on employ in the States.*

We spoke upon the matter with which you tasked me, re: the location of the castle Dun Dreachfhoula as referred to in his lecture in Dublin last year. Mr. O'Sullivan appeared quite surprised at my arrival, although cordial, and we discussed the matter at great length. While early in the evening he protested that the "Castle of the Blood Visage" he'd spoken of in his lecture was merely a myth, he later recanted his words, after a generous portion of the local distilled beverage. He admitted to having visited the fortress as a boy, although not in the years since. The bastion, according to his account, is located on a pass in the Magillycuddy Reeks in Kerry (Mr. O'Sullivan's home county),

well away from any of the commonly used thoroughfares. He has drawn me a map, a copy of which I have attached for your perusal, and after suitable encouragement, provided me with the names of several farmers in the general area who may prove useful in exploring the area, assuming they are still alive. O'Sullivan appeared in his mid-50s, making his information four decades old, give or take.

While O'Sullivan's belief is that the location in question is the home of the fairies, his accounts align sufficiently with those of known vampires to bear further investigation. According to the Registrar, the inhabitants of Dun Dreachfhoula (which is pronounced very similar to Dracula, tellingly enough) drink the blood of any who spend the night in their castle. Other tales say that the fortress' residents drain the blood of those who sleep under their roof and bake it into a bannock (oat cake) which they then hide. If the individual does not find and consume the cake that contains their blood, they will perish within the fortnight.

While I am uncertain of the significance of the latter tale, the first seems clear. I await your orders, but urge a full exploration of this castle at our soonest opportunity. Evil dwells here, and it is not just to allow it to continue.

– From correspondence dated July 13, 1964 from Brother Patrick Bishop to an unknown recipient.

New Benediction: Saint Collen's Clarity

Saint Collen was a Welsh monk renowned for his dedication to protecting those around him from supernatural threats. Legends claim he was invited to dine with the fairies in Arcadia, and after refusing three times, finally accepted. The fae king welcomed Collen into a rich castle, where he was waited upon by an army of servants, and led to a feast table heavy with all manner of food and drink. The king promised the monk delights no man had ever tasted before. Collen was not so easily fooled, however, knowing that those who dine with the fae are doomed into their service. He prayed for protection against the fae's deception and sprinkled holy water over everything, whereupon the fairy illusions dissolved, revealing bare tables, empty halls, and the fae king sitting all alone on his hard wooden throne.

Note that on the day of Saint Collen's Feast, May 21st, any successes with this Benediction are treated as exceptional.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Benediction

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only is the hunter unable to pierce the supernatural illusions in the area, but his ability to accurately perceive the world around him is diminished. For the remainder of the scene, all Investigation dice pools, or attempts to discern truth from lie, are made at a -2 penalty.

Failure: No effect.

Success: For the remainder of the scene, supernatural powers that affect the senses have no effect on the hunter. Invisible creatures appear clearly to him, fae miens are revealed, and any glamour that makes an object smell, look, sound, or feel different than its true nature does not affect the hunter protected by this Benediction. The illusory powers still exist — the hunter is simply able to perceive the truth, and is not affected by falsehoods.

Exceptional Success: The effects of this Benediction last for a full day.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

All three of Task Force: VALKYRIE's open recruiting departments have had contact with Changelings or other fae creatures. And, for the most part, that contact is positive. TFV's official purpose is to protect humanity from extra-normal entities (ENEs); for the most part, TFV doesn't believe the Lost poses a huge threat to the human race — at least not as a group.

Project TWILIGHT has operatives in direct contact with Lost freeholds across the globe. While their agents can't actually pass as Changelings, there are always hangers-on who have a chance at earning their way into the good graces of the local population. By providing vital supplies and services like false identification, jobs, and resources, TWILIGHT operatives find it fairly easy to get ears and eyes on freehold members, at least at a sufficient level to ascertain that they're not planning direct actions against humanity.

Operation FORT agents are often more focused on understanding fae magics than on investigating the Changelings themselves. It is rumored that entire cells have been assigned to investigate the Hedge and Arcadia, although no official files are known to exist on the latter topic. As well, FORT operatives are responsible for trapping and containment of a wide variety of (mostly) non-sentient hedge creatures, although it can be difficult to imprison creatures who can open doorways to the Hedge with minimal effort.

Radio Free Fae operatives often work alongside the TFV agents assigned to Operation ADAMSKI, although each rarely realizes that the others are a part of anything more than a loosely tied group of crackpots and cranks. Often, however, one group will provide tips to "prove" supernatural evidence is a hoax, while the other ensures the "proof" is well publicized in the appropriate print or electronic sources to cover any situations where fae magics may have been witnessed by outside eyes.

From the Archives: *Subject ENE021-F (Pearl Lawrence) – Status – Green*

Subject still maintains residence and business location as per previous reports. Observations at random intervals over the past month show no significant change in behaviors, social/economic/political. Subject reported interacting with Subject ENE154-M on 8/17/12 at approx. 9:38am at location of assumedly unaffiliated restaurant (address and map of seating arrangements attached). Subjects spoke for approximately 18 minutes. Topic (per authorized listening device, recording available on request) involved upcoming social gathering, potential change in freehold hierarchy (expected, as per report PT32834, re: cyclical shifts in ENE leadership), and a new ENE arrival.

Action – Investigation of new ENE presence ordered. Subject ENE021-F status recommendation Green continued.

– From operative report dated 8/23/12.

New Advanced Armory: Compound Rounds (● to ●●●●●, Renewable)

Most monsters have a physical vulnerability to a fairly common substance; it can often be hard for a hunter to know which weapon he should be using against a given supernatural. When something tall, dark, and furry moves in the shadows, a hunter only has seconds to determine if he's facing a wolf-beast Changeling, a lycanthrope, a shapeshifting witch, or a vampire wearing a wolf-form — and grab the right tool for the job.

TENSARE CUSTOS
THE KILLING FROST

Virtue: Just
Vice: Inhuman
Seeming: Elemental
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 5
Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4
Mental Skills: Investigation 5, Medicine 2, Occult 3
Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl (Pain) 5, Stealth 5, Survival (Tracking) 4, Weaponry 3
Social Skills: Empathy 3, Intimidation (Terrify) 5, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Choke Hold, Fast Reflexes 3, Hardy 3, Iron Stamina 3, Mind of a Madman, Tolerance for Biology
Health: 9
Dread Powers: Blackout 3, Drain 4 (manifests as it sucks the heat (and health) out of its victims through a touch attack while grappling), Eye for Desire 4, Judgment of Guilt 5, Terrify 2
Potency: 5
Aspirations: Avenge abuse, Find a new target, Find a safe place to rest
Willpower: 9
Size: 5
Speed: 13
Defense: 4
Initiative: 11
Armor: 0

Compound Rounds save lives by incorporating trace amounts of the elements most commonly dangerous to supernatural creatures into a single bullet. This ammunition saves hunters precious time, and gives them the confidence they are neutralizing their target — regardless of its specific nature — in the most efficient manner possible.

Function: Compound Rounds contain small amounts of just about any substance rumored to affect supernatural creatures: cold iron, gold, silver, salt, a variety of wood silvers, holy water (in break-on-impact globules), communion wafer crumbs, mustard seed, and a smattering of various dried plants like wolfsbane, rose petals, clover, and St. John's Wort. This combination grants 9-Agains on attacks with these bullets, and always inflicts lethal damage, even on creatures who normally only take bashing damage from bullets.

Special: The Compound Rounds Merit is Renewable, using the same Special rules as for Etheric Rounds (**Hunter: the Vigil**, p. 151). Like Etheric Rounds, Compound Rounds can be used by those who do not possess a Task Force: VALKYRIE RFID chip.

Wandering Monsters

The three Changelings described may end up being allies, antagonists, or both for a hunter cell, depending on how that cell's motivations mesh or conflict with the fae's. Each presents a variety of opportunities for interaction, and while the Lost can be used as one-shot random encounters, they also offer the potential to reappear in a long-term chronicle.

Tensare Custos — The Killing Frost

The deed is done. The price must be paid. Tensare Custos has arrived.

The name Tensare Custos is one that's whispered, rather than spoken, among those who know enough to do so. The being associated with the name is a boogeyman for wife-beaters, a cautionary tale to anyone who would prey upon women, a force of supernatural reckoning for abusers. No one, including Tensare Custos itself, remembers where it originated from, or how it came to be. But, those who have encountered it, either by rescue or by retribution, never forget what it has become.

Tensare Custos is an old Changeling, likely one of the oldest and most powerful still alive today. Unfortunately, that power and longevity come at a price. As an Elemental, Tensare Custos lost most of its humanity during its Durance, and now thinks of itself as a force of nature, like gravity. If you throw an object into the air, gravity will bring it down. If you abuse women, Tensare Custos will bring *you* down.

Tensare is supernaturally aware of, and attracted to, areas where women are being abused. It appears only long enough to ensure that

its calling is justified, and then exacts its emotionless retribution on the perpetrator. Afterwards, it follows the urge to another location. Tensare does not question why it is sometimes called to act multiple times in one town, nor why its next victim may be thousands of miles away... Tensare does not ask. Tensare only acts.

Tensare's vengeance takes the form of a killing frost that drops its victim's internal body temperature to a hypothermic state, resulting first in unconsciousness, and then death.

Description: Tensare Custos' human Mask is that of a nondescript older man: white hair, sharp features, and a pale complexion. Onlookers perceive his movements as slow and jerky — the arthritic amblings of a senior citizen.

For those who can see past the Mask, however, Tensare Custos is something entirely different. The Elemental's body is formed of ice shards, tumbled together as if by an avalanche. It bears a vaguely humanoid form; it has two arms, two legs, and a head with no apparent features. Its "voice" doesn't originate from its missing mouth; it's created when the Elemental's various limbs grate and grind against each other whenever it moves. A flickering blue light emanates from the center of Tensare Custos' chest; it glows through the opaque and transparent layers of its body, the source positioned deep below the surface. When hunting a victim, this shine brightens as the Killing Frost comes nearer to its prey, and dims almost to the point of imperceptibility when retribution has been delivered.

Storytelling Hints: Tensare Custos has left all vestiges of humanity behind. It no longer kills because it is the right thing to do, but because it feels the urge — the calling, as it refers to it — and answers. Anyone — human or otherwise — that is preying upon women may become the focus of Tensare's calling. Thus, hunters may encounter the Elemental through a variety of means. They could be hunting the same perpetrator that Tensare is: a vampire that chooses only female victims, a spirit possessing a woman, a witch trafficking in purloined lady-parts, or a supernatural rapist. Or, the hunters may be investigating Tensare's own acts, trying to make rhyme or reason out of what's behind the strange deaths.

The subject of Tensare's vengeance can be changed to suit a particular story's needs. It could just as easily seek revenge on child abusers, those who harm animals, or those who perpetrate hate crimes against members of a religion, race, etc.

Tensare is affected by the Persistent Conditions: Amnesia and Obsession (Vengeance).

Pearl Lawrence

Shhhh...

A painfully shy child, Pearl Lawrence found refuge in the library, where tales of history and science were just as intriguing to her as fantasy and folklore. She was more at home with books than she ever was with other people, a trait she never grew out of. She'd known she wanted to be a librarian when she grew up, well before she could spell the word, and that desire never faded. The only real change in her life, from child to adult, was which library she called home. She married a perfectly acceptable man, had two perfectly normal children, but still felt more at home in the stacks than anywhere else.

Before her Durance, the deepest mystery that plagued Pearl Lawrence was whether the Dewey Decimal was categorically better than the Library of Congress Classification Systems. As a reference librarian, she was occasionally called upon to research some strange topics, but when the man that would become her Keeper sent her on a quest, she never imagined where her delving would take her.

After exhausting every resource available to her through official channels, Pearl could have legitimately told her Keeper that she'd done all she could and came up empty. But the question became a personal challenge to her, her own questing beast, and soon Pearl was taking long lunches, leaving work early, or calling in sick, all to venture into obscure historical literary archives, bookstores, or private collections in search of her answer.

Pearl lost her job, and eventually her husband, too, when her spouse came to believe that her new obsession must involve a paramour, an addiction, or both.

Sleeping in her car, gas tank on empty, Pearl's thoughts of suicide were more out of frustration at her inability to continue her research than because she'd lost everything. Then, one day, a knock on the window revealed the man who'd lodged the initial question, months before.

The Keeper took Pearl out of her car, out of her life, out of her world, and into an athenaeum the likes that human hearts could only dream of. For the next day-after-endless-day, Pearl researched what he requested, and continued to search for the answer to his original query. And while her ankles might have been bound by his three fine paper chains, it was Pearl's curiosity — her need to find the answer — that truly held her captive.

It wasn't until Pearl discovered a stack of newspapers in one corner of the library that her old life began to creep back into her thoughts. One contained an announcement that the child she'd left behind had been married, and one of the paper chains snapped in twain. Another held the birth announcement of a baby that would have been her grandchild, and the second chain tore. But when she read the memorial notice for her estranged husband, her tears melted the last of her bonds away, and she ran through the fae stacks and found herself in the back room of the library she'd once worked at so many years ago.

Forty years passed in the real world while Pearl was away. She now looks years younger than the children she left behind. Pearl has moved to a different town, set up a small bookstore, and continues to research the question her former Keeper set before her, in hopes of one day finding the answer that has eluded her for so long.

Description: Pearl's human Mask is that of an African-American woman with glasses, and dark hair pulled back into a severe bun. She's attractive, in a bookish fashion, although she doesn't dress to accentuate it. Her cardigans and modest clothing would be just at home on a woman several decades her elder. Pearl appears to be in her mid-30s, despite the fact that she was born almost 80 years ago.

Beneath her Mask, Pearl bears the weight of all of her many years. Her skin is vellum-thin, with features that appear to have been drawn on. More disturbing, however, is the fact that no matter what direction she is viewed from, Pearl appears to have only two-dimensions. Observers find that looking at her is like looking at an ancient moving illustration.

PEARL LAWRENCE

Virtue: Helpful
Vice: Curious
Seeming: Darkling
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2
Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 4
Mental Skills: Academics (Literature) 4, Computer (Research) 3, Investigation (Research) 5, Occult 5
Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 1, Larceny (Shoplifting) 3, Stealth 3
Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation (Librarian) 3, Persuasion 4, Subterfuge (Looking Innocent) 3
Merits: Area of Expertise (Research), Contacts 3 (Librarians, Bookstore Owners, Book Collectors), Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Eye for the Strange, Good Time Management, Interdisciplinary Specialty (Research), Library 3 (Occult), Professional Training: Librarian 5 (Asset Skills: Academics, Investigation, Occult)
Health: 6
Dread Powers: Scapegoating 3, Lurker in Darkness 3, Sleep 1, Terrify 2
Potency: 2
Aspirations: Answer an important question, Find new information, Find the ultimate mystery
Willpower: 7
Size: 5
Speed: 9
Defense: 3
Initiative: 7
Armor: 0

Storytelling Hints: Pearl believes in truth, and when presented with a question or mystery, she's driven to find an answer. She truly didn't mind that aspect of her Durance — it was just the nature of the questions her Keeper set her to investigate that turned her from soft-hearted wife and mother to cold fact finder. It was the only way she could cope.

Hunters may encounter Pearl as an asset — her research abilities are excellent, and her breadth of knowledge is almost limitless. However, her curiosity may well lead her into places that she cannot extricate herself from, making her potentially in need of rescuing as well. A third option for interaction might be that Pearl seeks information from the hunters, either by overt or covert means. She's not above breaking human laws — or moral codes — when in search of an answer.

Jackson "Boss" Barrow

Better you than me. That's all I've got to say. When the bad stuff comes – and it's always bad stuff – better you than me.

Humans only live once — at least in the 'real' world. In fae realms, a Changeling can live and die as often as it suits the needs and whims of her Keeper. For Boss, that was every day for what seemed like forever.

Boss Barrow was a corpulent man before his Durance, known throughout the 1920s speakeasy circuit for his gluttonous appetites and crass manners. His vices led him across the Hedge in search of forbidden flavors and elusive epicurean treats he'd heard whispered of in back rooms, and 'blind pig' illegal bars where all manners of illicit pleasures were bought and sold. Finding himself in a strange marketplace, he made an unfortunate bargain and mistakenly ended up trading years of indentured servitude for a dish no human had ever experienced before.

When the precious meal was ended, Boss smacked his lips in pleasure — and found himself transformed into a massive boar. He was whisked away by one of the True Fae who was herself a gastronome. Every day for the next seemingly-innumerable years, he was fattened on scraps and slop, but unable to resist gorging himself. Every night, as the sun set, Harrow was strung up by his

JACKSON "BOSS" BARROW

Virtue: Ambitious
Vice: Greedy
Seeming: Beast
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Medicine (Weak Spots) 3, Occult 2
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Drive 2, Larceny 4, Survival 2, Weaponry 3
Social Skills: Animal Ken (Food Animals) 3, Empathy (Bullying) 3, Intimidation 5, Persuasion (Bribery) 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 4
Merits: Giant, Pusher, Tolerance for Biology
Health: 10
Dread Powers: Crushing Blow, Eye for Desire 2, Giant Size, Strange Form (Hogzilla), Terrify 3, Titan's Strength 2
Potency: 3
Aspirations: Elude a captor, Devour something wonderful, Find something new to consume
Willpower: 6
Size: 6
Speed: 12
Defense: 4
Initiative: 5
Armor: 0

hind legs and his throat slit; then remained lucid and aware as his porcine form was butchered out for his Keeper's kitchen. Every morning, Harrow woke whole, and the process repeated itself — until one evening night fell, and no one came to slaughter him.

Perhaps the tastes of his Keeper changed. Perhaps Harrow's servitude had run its course. All Boss knows is that the butchering stopped, and eventually he found his way out of the pen he'd been kept in. He ran for the forest, and didn't stop until he found himself, panting and sweating on his newly-recovered hands and knees, in the same park he'd wandered into in search of his forbidden treat so many years before.

Time had passed in Boss' absence — nearly fifty years. His friends and family had either died or long since forgotten the man he once was. There was no life for him to pick up upon his return, so he carved another one for himself. Now Boss is a go-to guy, the one who always knows where to get whatever it is that someone needs. If a buyer has enough cash, Boss can get him nearly anything: drugs, guns, stolen artwork, magical items, or slaves. You name it. Meet Boss' price, and it's yours.

Several months ago, Boss began having nightmares. The haze that once protected him from the memory of his Durance was stripped away, and he relives the butchering in excruciating sensory detail. His Keeper's voice whispers that it's nearly dinner time, but promises that she won't take him back — if he provides her with a suitable replacement before the next full moon. Every night, the whispers are louder...and the details more clear.

Description: To describe Boss' human Mask as fat would be a kindness. He's a mountain of a man, if mountains were made of lard, sweat, and bristles, and stands head and shoulders above most. Boss is almost as wide as he is tall. His skin is ruddy, his features bulbous; he has tiny dark eyes nearly hidden between a drooping brow and quivering jowls and a massive under-bite. Boss dresses mostly in loose clothing that accommodates his notable size.

Behind his Mask, Boss is even more of a boor — and a boar. His globular nose reveals itself into a full flat snout, complete with flaring nostril cavities pierced by a sturdy seamless gold ring. His lower canines jut out of his jaw like tusks on either side of his muzzle. If anything, his true form is just as massive and unattractive as his human Mask, with trotters rather than feet, and tiny porcine ears on top of his bristly-but-bald head.

Storytelling Hints: Boss has gluttonous appetites, which may get him into trouble when trying to fulfill or finance them. Hunters may initially encounter Boss as a street informant,

dealer, fence, bookie, or as part of the criminal underground. They might know him as a contact for information or goods — anything that would turn a profit. Most recently, however, Boss is a desperate coward, trying to appear as anything but that. He will do whatever it takes to avoid being taken back, even if that means he has to sell out his allies, resources — even those who he might otherwise consider friends.

Story Hooks

Like the fae themselves, the roles Changelings can be play in a **Hunter** chronicle are nearly infinite in their variety, atmosphere, and appearance. While many potential story hooks can be found in the setting material described earlier in the chapter, these four specific examples can be customized to fit an individual campaign. Ideas on customizing each story hook to the chronicle's tier-level are included as well.

What Price Freedom?

Summary: The cell follows a Changeling through his Dark Gate, and the hunters find themselves lost in the Hedge. Eventually, the cell finds a Goblin Market, where anything — including the route home — can be purchased. But, are the hunters willing to pay the asking price?

Setup: This story hook can be kept handy and used any time a hunter or cell steps into the Hedge and deviates from the "safe path." It provides an interesting tangent to an ongoing plot line, one which should leave the hunters with a deeper understanding of the dangers they face if they negotiate with even the most helpful-seeming fae. In order to ensure player character buy-in, the Market should be interesting and appear potentially profitable for the visiting hunters. Reinforce an air of danger lurking beneath the surface. Much like a modern-day casino, in the end, the house always wins.

Tier One: The Market is fairly easy to find, and the price for a map "home" seems minor: a lock of hair, a tear, a story of a first love. As well, the hunters may find other information or simple artifacts to aid them in their current efforts, and are welcomed to return by the oh-so-accommodating Goblin Market staff. The cell may even start thinking that the Market is a one-stop answer to the challenges they face. But, future bargains will be more tightly negotiated; after luring their new customers in, merchants become far trickier about negotiation and compensation. After all, the first taste is always free.

Tier Two: Compacts may find more than they bargained for at the Goblin Market. In addition to a route home, they may discover kindred spirits amongst the shoppers and store owners. If philosophies and personalities mesh well, long-term relationships may find root here. The Ashwood Abbey and Spring Court might pair up, for example, or the Loyalists of Thule and the Autumn Courtiers. This may pull compact members into inter-fae politics, send them on dangerous adventures, or provoke hard philosophical conundrums as their new allies gradually reveal their inhuman natures.

Tier Three: It doesn't take more than a cursory look around to realize that the Goblin Market could be the single biggest asset the hunters' conspiracy has ever had. The question is: will the cell attempt to keep that edge for themselves, or will their loyalty to the conspiracy convince them to turn it over to their higher-ups? What lengths will the hunters go to — and how tightly will they tie themselves to the fae — in order to attempt to gain the potential advantages the Market's resources might provide them?

Lost Confidant

Summary: One of the cell's assets disappears; a group of privateers has kidnapped and is planning to sell the victim to the True Fae. In the course of rescue, however, the investigation begins to turn up evidence that indicates their ally was far from human herself. How far will the hunters go to rescue a Changeling?

Setup: Laying the groundwork of a valuable resource in a covert Changeling's guise is vital to this story arc. The Lost might be someone like Pearl Lawrence, or any other Changeling that has motivation, talent, and personality that a hunter cell might find useful. The more human they seem, the more impact the reveal of their fae nature will have — and the deeper the hunters' quandary when they must choose whether or not they should risk themselves to save a "monster."

Tier One: For a tier-one story hook, the kidnapped fae is personally connected to the hunter cell. She could be an information source the cell has come to rely on for obscure occult information, a weapons dealer who helps them arm for battle, or a back alley doctor they go to for patch-ups. Regardless of her role, the Changeling will have done a very good job of hiding her inhuman nature (and any behaviors that might alienate the hunters) from the cell. For maximum effect, the victim will be both useful and liked by the cell before her disappearance, and yet have an unsavory side that the hunters aren't exposed to until they begin investigating.

Tier Two: A tier-two scenario may put the cell in the middle of a situation where their philosophy is at war with their humanity. Here, the story brings the hunters into greater contact with the kidnappers. They discover that the privateers' desires — profit (financial or otherwise), revenge, freedom — are in synch with the hunters' own motivations. Will the hunters save their friend or throw their lot in with the privateers?

Tier Three: In a tier-three Lost Confidant plot, not only do the hunters have to contend with the moral implications of risking their own lives to rescue a non-human they consider a friend and ally, as well as the potentially disturbing kinship with a privateer gang, they also draw the attention of interested buyer(s). The privateers might be taking the Lost right back to the True Fae or a compact or conspiracy that plans on harvesting her body for supernatural components. Will the cell be willing to take on a more powerful antagonist — perhaps even their own superiors — to save their ally's skin?

Who's The Boss?

Summary: The hunters have been assigned to "acquire" Changeling targets. When it becomes obvious that the cell's orders are coming from another fae creature, the hunters will have to make some hard decisions about where they stand in a situation where no black-and-white answers exist.

Setup: The orders have come down, and the targets acquired. Over time, it's harder for the hunters to ignore clues that the source of their orders is far more inhuman than the targets themselves. Will the hunters continue to do their sworn duty, walk away, or try to tackle something far bigger than they'd bargained for to undo the wrongs they've committed?

Tier One: Tier-one hunters may not be following the direct orders of a clandestine organization or employer, but they may be influenced to take a job by those who have information, resources, or services they desire. When the "favor" requested is to take a particular supernatural target into custody, the cell may believe it's a small price to pay for continued good relations with their ally. But, when one request becomes two, and a few becomes many, the cell's likely to take a harder look at the source of the requests. When they discover they're doing the True Fae's work for them, will the hunters continue or try and rescue those they've consigned into fae slavery?

Tier Two: Many compacts are loosely-organized groups with a local focus and little overarching hierarchy beyond that. Considering the True Fae's expertise at treating others like tools, it would be easy for one of them to take control of a compact's local branch. When that compact begins focusing its effort on apprehending members of the local fae population, it may take a while for the cell to notice the True Fae's influence, and even longer for them to question it. When they do, the hunters will face some difficult decisions, especially when it becomes clear that their real boss is more of a monster than their victims ever were.

Tier Three: Orders come down from on high in a tier-three game. There are many layers of authority between the hunter group and the head of their conspiracy. Any of those layers might contain the True Fae who is issuing the fae-hunting assignments. What this translates to, for the cell, is potential layers of allies, both above and below the True Fae, once they realize what's going on. Unfortunately, it also means that there's the possibility that some of those layers are loyal to the True Fae, whether they realize its nature or not.

Cursed Youth

Summary: Something strange is going on in the neighborhood. The local kids are acting strange and, in some cases, their erratic behavior is downright dangerous. The hunters are called in to investigate, and will have to figure out how to deal with upset parents, well-intentioned police, innocent kids — and the fae.

Setup: Something or someone is targeting the children to affect their behavior. The kids may have fallen under a dark curse, or they may not be kids at all. If fetches were put there to take their place, then how will the hunters convince the parents to "test" whether or not their kids are human? Have a handful of kids been impacted, or does the curse cover most of the town? Worse, what do the adults know? Were they cursed as children and the cycle is repeating itself again? If the "real" children are alive, are the hunters clever enough to follow the clues and brave enough to rescue them from the Hedge or Arcadia?

Tier One: In a tier-one chronicle, a friend of one of the PCs may contact the cell directly about an unusual child. This kid could be the son or daughter of the cell's ally, or it could be the child of one of the hunters, too. When the hunters move to investigate, they notice the child is causing mischief, and there are other idiosyncrasies as well. Using whatever methods are known to them, the cell's likely to realize the child has been swapped out for a fae creature. Should they look closely, they'll notice that someone — a privateer, perhaps — snatched the child in a hurry. Will the cell go to extreme lengths to track down the kidnapper, even if it means traveling through the Hedge to the Goblin Market?

Tier Two: A rumor has driven tier-two hunters into town. This time, local folklore includes tales of boogeymen cursing naughty kids with dark rituals under the light of the full moon. Children who don't go willingly are dragged out, never to be seen again, and replaced with fetches. What will the hunters do when they figure out the fae are making supernatural bargains with eight-year-old children? What is it the fae wants from so many kids? And, why does the fae want the kids to go with them willingly? Whatever the hunters decide to do, one thing is clear: they might need the help of their compact to take down the fae.

Tier Three: Tier-three hunters will hear about a fae plot from their conspiracy. The True Fae are attempting to build a town on this side of the Hedge for some nefarious purpose. And, the True Fae are enslaving human children as bargaining chips, to force their parents to construct it. The minute the hunters believe they have a handle on the situation, they might discover dozens of affected towns scattered all across the globe. Will the hunters be able to join forces with other cells to pool their knowledge together and stop this epic-level threat in time? Or, will the hunters find that, once they've destroyed the town, they're destined to track the True Fae back to their own demesnes?

Inspiration & Sources

While classic fairy tales, mythology, lore and legends are a large part of the inspiration for **Changeling: The Lost**, they are far from the only material available to inspire a fae presence in a **Hunter: The Vigil** game. Many sources that aren't fairy-focused embody the conflicts that are rife in a Changeling/Hunter plot.

Stephen King's *Cujo* is a monster, but not one of his own making. The family pet-turned-murderous beast is an awesome analogy for the Lost condition; rabies represents the madness infected upon Changelings through their Durance. The fact that the novel features sections written from the disease-stricken dog's point-of-view only adds to the poignancy and applicability for this type of story. A science fiction example of the "sleeper agent" tropes that may be prevalent in hunter/fetch crossover tales is the Cylon plotline spread throughout the 2004-2009 reimagining of the television series, *Battlestar Galactica*. In many cases on this show, and the related franchise products, Cylons believed themselves to be human, as fetches most often do, even after their inhuman natures were revealed.

Still, there are several examples of dark or re-imagined fairy tales to draw upon for inspiration. In *Pan's Labyrinth*,

Guillermo Del Toro blends reality and fairy tales in a story about a small girl who's living in fascist Spain. The fae world she creates in her mind blends a quest Ofelia uses to cope with the horrors of her day-to-day life, and culminates when she reaches a "demesne" in the film's heartbreaking finale. *City of Lost Children* is another good example of a traditionally-inspired changeling story. Jean-Pierre Jeunet tells the sinister story of Krank, a cruel inventor who's incapable of dreaming. Tired of missing out, Krank decides to start kidnapping children in an attempt to steal their dreams for himself. For atmosphere, Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* is about a gentle, humanoid creature with scissors for hands, who was created by a kindly inventor before he dropped dead. All alone in the world, he forges a bond with a human girl, a bond that most Lost would covet dearly.

For books, Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* is an example of a human, the kind-hearted Richard Mayhew, whose life is changed after an encounter with the Lost. From the moment he decides to help Door, Mayhew is propelled into London Below, a world that exists beneath the iconic city in long-abandoned tube stations and sewers. The book serves as great inspiration for a hunter-Lost encounter, especially if the Lost drags her friend into the Hedge. *Summer Knight*, one of the Dresden Files books written by Jim Butcher, drags private detective and wizard-for-hire Harry Dresden into the world of the fae. Not only is Dresden suckered into tangling in the faerie's affairs, the plot is dragged into will decide the fate of the entire world and whether or not he gets to keep his soul. This story, in particular, is a great one to read for a **Hunter** game, for it shows how dangerous the fae can be.

Last but not least, two roleplaying games in particular can be referred for ideas. The first is *Little Fears Nightmare Edition*, a game about real monsters who hunt the PCs — all children — from the shadows. This RPG is perfect for any game that involves privateers and fetches. The second is *Fae Noir*, a post-WWI game that's set during the jazz age, the roaring 20s. As the world struggles to rebuild, the fae who have spilled over into the modern world strive to find their place. Though it is a period game, the RPG is a great source for any hunters who wish to understand the Lost and their state-of-mind.

LA VIE MYSTERIEUSE

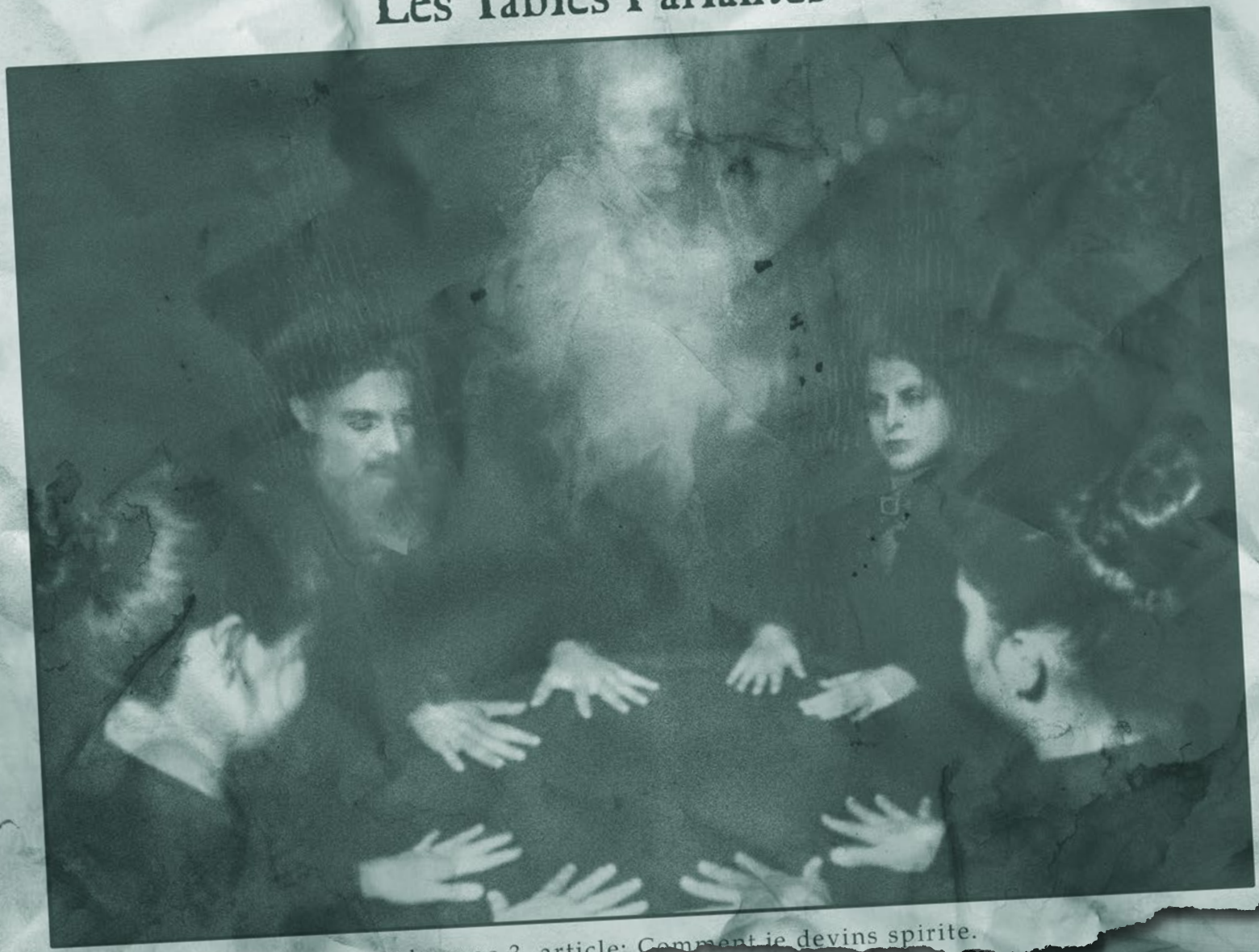
DIRECTEUR: Professeur DONATO

MAGNETISME

SPIRITISME
MAGIE-ASTROLOGIE-CHIROMANCIE-GRAPHOLOGIE

CARTOMANCIE

Les Tables Parlantes



Lire, a la page 3, article: Comment je devins spirite.

After my visit to Central Park, I bought a newspaper and scoured the entertainment guide for clues. I had never heard of an entire museum dedicated to the occult before. Either the fairy-man was lying to me, or he was talking about a special exhibit.

A quick search pulled up the Theosophic Society. I knew it had a collection of rare books, posters, and photographs on the topic. I'd always been meaning to go there, but I never found the time. Found Maggs right where I expected her to be: poring through dusty tomes. She was talking to someone – a teenager. I told her she should have called and left a message. We hugged. I guess she thought I was angry with her. Then, she introduced me to Bea.

I don't know how to describe this kid. Her body was sixteen years old, but her face? She had that "I know too much" look. I tried cracking a joke. Asked Bea if she'd seen a ghost. That didn't go over too well. Maggs pulled me aside and told me she's a ghostwalker.

Hate to say it, but I got angry. I've been going through every bit of lore I have to find Jesse's killer and Maggs went the opposite direction: she tracked down a medium so she could "talk" to Jesse. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Maggs has got to stop feeling guilty about Jesse's death. They had an argument, but all couples do. Breakups are messy – especially between hunters like us.

I took a walk with Bea to find out more about her. She was pretty tight-lipped. If I didn't know any better, Bea was scared. When I asked her about that, she laughed. Said she didn't want to frighten me.

I changed the subject. There's been one too many encounters in the past few days and not enough time to do my homework. I wasn't sure I could handle a wet-faced teenager spooking me more than I already was. Instead, I asked her about Jesse. She said the same thing that fairy-man did. Whatever got him was ancient.

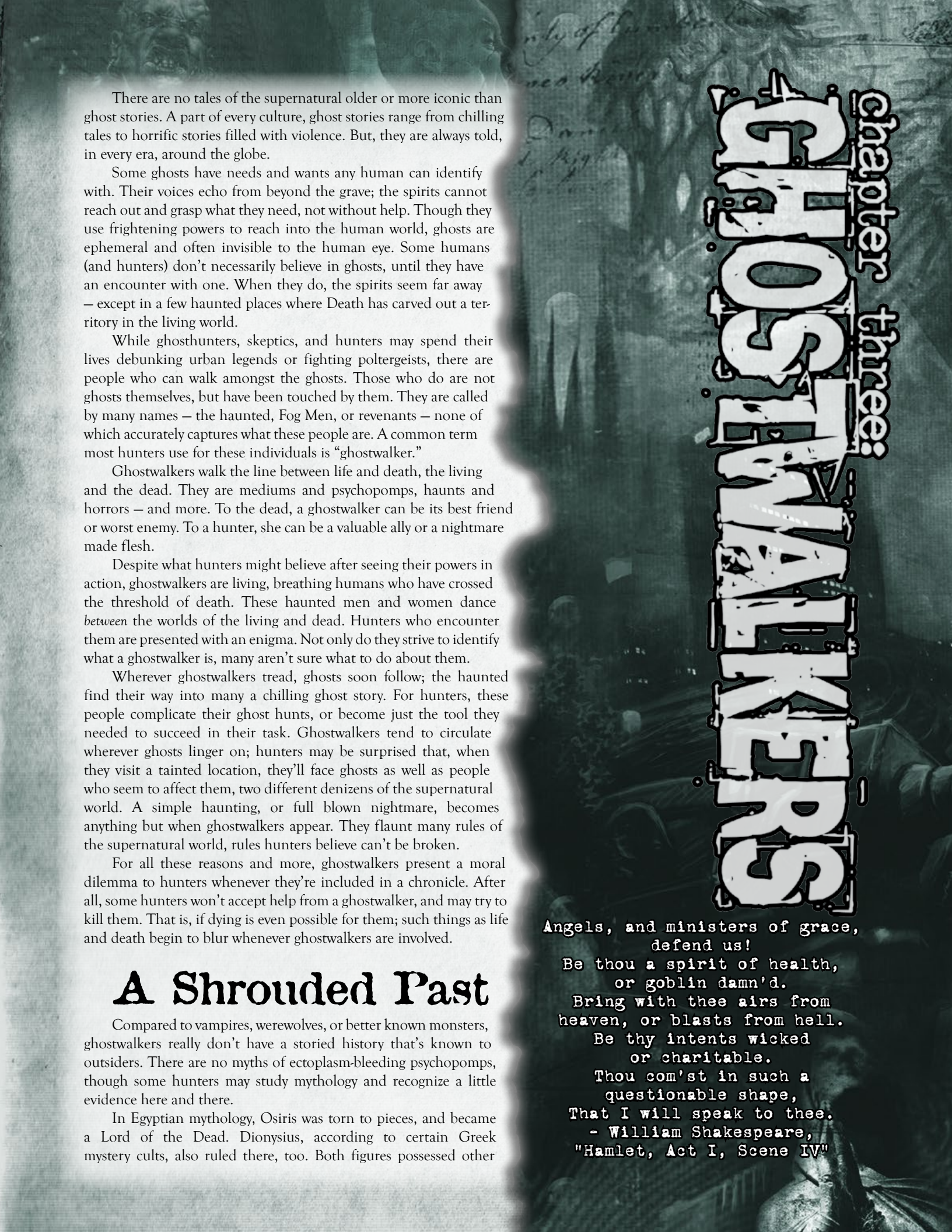
Try Egypt," she said. That's what I told your friend."

"Any particular reason why?"

"I just know."

When I got back to the hall, Maggs had already called a cab. She wanted me to go to the museum with her, but I put a stop to that. All this field work was making my head hurt, and I wanted to do more research before I came face-to-face with some ancient, terrible creature. I begged her to come with me, but she's too headstrong. Made her promise to text me or Alex, or anybody else we knew if she got in trouble, though.

The fairy-man didn't think that I could win this fight. I don't either. I'm starting to think I'm in way over my head.



chapter three: GHOSTWALKERS

Angels, and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd.
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell.
Be thy intents wicked or charitable.
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee.
- William Shakespeare, "Hamlet, Act I, Scene IV"

There are no tales of the supernatural older or more iconic than ghost stories. A part of every culture, ghost stories range from chilling tales to horrific stories filled with violence. But, they are always told, in every era, around the globe.

Some ghosts have needs and wants any human can identify with. Their voices echo from beyond the grave; the spirits cannot reach out and grasp what they need, not without help. Though they use frightening powers to reach into the human world, ghosts are ephemeral and often invisible to the human eye. Some humans (and hunters) don't necessarily believe in ghosts, until they have an encounter with one. When they do, the spirits seem far away — except in a few haunted places where Death has carved out a territory in the living world.

While ghosthunters, skeptics, and hunters may spend their lives debunking urban legends or fighting poltergeists, there are people who can walk amongst the ghosts. Those who do are not ghosts themselves, but have been touched by them. They are called by many names — the haunted, Fog Men, or revenants — none of which accurately captures what these people are. A common term most hunters use for these individuals is "ghostwalker."

Ghostwalkers walk the line between life and death, the living and the dead. They are mediums and psychopomps, haunts and horrors — and more. To the dead, a ghostwalker can be its best friend or worst enemy. To a hunter, she can be a valuable ally or a nightmare made flesh.

Despite what hunters might believe after seeing their powers in action, ghostwalkers are living, breathing humans who have crossed the threshold of death. These haunted men and women dance *between* the worlds of the living and dead. Hunters who encounter them are presented with an enigma. Not only do they strive to identify what a ghostwalker is, many aren't sure what to do about them.

Wherever ghostwalkers tread, ghosts soon follow; the haunted find their way into many a chilling ghost story. For hunters, these people complicate their ghost hunts, or become just the tool they needed to succeed in their task. Ghostwalkers tend to circulate wherever ghosts linger on; hunters may be surprised that, when they visit a tainted location, they'll face ghosts as well as people who seem to affect them, two different denizens of the supernatural world. A simple haunting, or full blown nightmare, becomes anything but when ghostwalkers appear. They flaunt many rules of the supernatural world, rules hunters believe can't be broken.

For all these reasons and more, ghostwalkers present a moral dilemma to hunters whenever they're included in a chronicle. After all, some hunters won't accept help from a ghostwalker, and may try to kill them. That is, if dying is even possible for them; such things as life and death begin to blur whenever ghostwalkers are involved.

A Shrouded Past

Compared to vampires, werewolves, or better known monsters, ghostwalkers really don't have a storied history that's known to outsiders. There are no myths of ectoplasm-bleeding psychopomps, though some hunters may study mythology and recognize a little evidence here and there.

In Egyptian mythology, Osiris was torn to pieces, and became a Lord of the Dead. Dionysius, according to certain Greek mystery cults, also ruled there, too. Both figures possessed other

GHOSTWALKERS?

Geist: the Sin-Eaters covers a type of unique supernatural creature in the World of Darkness. Ghostwalkers, or Sin-Eaters, have risen from the dead yet are still alive — and are surrounded by ghosts. These people are very different than zombies, vampires, or the revenants described in the writings of James O'Barr. As a result, there is no common name for them. Mediums would not be inaccurate, but the word really does not go far enough to describe what a Sin-Eater is and can do.

Players who enjoy chronicles where their cell investigates ghosts and either helps them deal with their state, or offers the spirits a chance to seek revenge, are encouraged to look at **Geist: the Sin-Eaters**. **Book of the Dead** may also prove a valuable resource, too. Some campaigns can easily resemble a **Hunter** game superficially, as ghostwalkers have a Vigil of their own.

In places where the rules and information conflicts, use the material presented in this chapter for a **Hunter** game.

powerful abilities, and could have been powerful, if not the first, ghostwalkers themselves. Other figures like Inanna die, descend into the Underworld, and return to the land of the living; Inanna's story is similar, but lacks the "returns in a day with a pipe wrench and an attitude" aspect of the haunted. Given that ghostwalkers tend to have a kind of laissez-faire approach to secrecy, it is certainly possible that they existed since the dawn of time, and primitives believed they were gods. One might even wonder if the ancients were right.

Taking a step back from the divine, other figures journeyed to the Underworld and returned, and those stories could be accounts of the Fog Men. Heroes like Heracles and Orpheus traveled to the Underworld and back, and their heroics might be attributed to a ghostwalker's resilience. But, most heroes who travel to the realm of the dead tend to lack ghostly connections as a whole, and ghostwalkers are surrounded by ghosts at every step. More scholarly types tend to dismiss such stories for this reason.

Outside of mythology, hunters who are trying to track down historical accounts of ghostwalker activity often find themselves chasing shadows. While alert hunters have found ample evidence of ghostwalkers within the past two centuries, previous information on them is fairly spotty and hard to verify. Older accounts of ghostwalker activity seem to trace back to Egypt; it's possibly the oldest site where ghostwalkers first became active. Some evidence suggests that a group of ghostwalkers was so prominent, that when they split into two, the resulting civil war divided the northern and southern kingdoms. Most hunters believe theories like this one vastly overstates the involvement of ghostwalkers in Ancient Egypt. Just how much ghostwalkers affected Egyptian history is up for debate, but Egypt's infatuation with the afterlife, when combined with many accounts of walking gods, suggests that ghostwalkers had to be involved.

With a lack of evidence and specific references on hand, hunter theories about ghostwalkers have flourished. Some compacts and conspiracies, particularly the Ascending Ones, explore even more fringe theories. According to one rumor, the strange figures who haunt ghostwalkers aren't ghosts at all. They are the ghostwalkers of ancient Egypt, and force modern-day ghostwalkers to continue their works as they have for centuries. Other theories claim Egyptian deities watch over and communicate with ghostwalkers, but these references are few and hard to prove. Another possibility suggests that Egyptian scripts were invented by ghostwalkers and hieroglyphs were passed down to humans out of necessity. Hunters may be interested in the claim that ghostwalkers have their own specially-written language used for communicating with each other. How much truth there is in any of these stories is questionable, but one thing is true: many hunters take great interest in these rumors, especially those who are budding Egyptologists.

After Egypt, it becomes more difficult for hunters to find where ghostwalkers have been active, or where they might have put their stamp on history. Mystery religions in Greece and Rome aside, haunted activity is sparse in the middle ages. To scholars, it may be that a cultural change took place within ghostwalker society, where they became more and more separate from the rest of the world. A few specific windows, particularly during the Black Plague, lead to their appearances in manuscripts and poetry in greater numbers. But overall there have been less ghostwalkers since the days of the pharaohs, or failing that, fewer reports of them. Alternately, reports of ghostwalkers could have been misidentified, too, and could have been lumped in with demons and other supernatural monsters.

Modern Era Hauntings

During my time with the cursed soldiers in Poland, I saw many strange and many awful things. Nothing, however, compares to the night that the "Mourners" arrived to help us. I had heard of the Mourners in whispers; I believed they were a particularly competent but shell-shocked group of soldiers. That night, when we were spotted on the edge of the Bledów Desert by Communist military, they proved me wrong.

They came out of the Bledów howling and crying, but despite our attackers being well-armed, the Mourners charged them. Two members bled onto the ground from their wrists, and ghostly soldiers materialized from white smoke to aid them. Their leader contorted, his mouth turned into an enormous maw, and his hands became a pair of toothy mouths. Another Mourner cried out in anger, time and time again, his very rage rent the flesh of the soldiers he was fighting.

In seconds, the Russians were scattered, leaving the Mourners and us behind. Their leader, once he returned to his human form, saluted us, and gave his team a signal. Then, the Mourners turned and walked back into the desert, leaving us all alone in the night, a night that seemed a little darker than before.

God help me, for that was the first and only time in my life I felt sorry for the Commies.

— From the papers of Nigel Zimmer, now in the Loyalists of Thule's archives.

By all accounts, hunters believe that ghostwalkers have become more active, and more noticeable, beginning in the 19th century. Evidence of ghostwalkers is tied to mediums, spiritualists, and spectral photography which became popular in the latter half of the century, going hand in hand with the rise of secret societies and the dawn of the twentieth century. Though they remained hidden for centuries, some believe ghostwalkers capitalized on the public's interest and flirted with becoming known; while they did not reveal their full powers, these people were quick to claim their connection to ghosts. At least one clipping speaks of a pair of haunted who had a ghostly ally that would step in as whatever ghost they were supposed to be contacting if they couldn't find the real one. As time went on, the haunted cared less and less about trying. Eventually, some cunning hunters (and quite a few magicians) revealed that most spiritualists were frauds.

Not all stories are benign. One hunter cell believes Jack the Ripper is a ghostwalker, urged on by the "demon" over his shoulder. Rumors of hellfire clubs and orgies with the dead, urban legends known to many Ashwood Abbey members, also originate from this era. Still, even though ghostwalker activity increased, the veneer of civility remained. However, in terms of numbers, there were far more reports of haunted sightings amongst the poor than the wealthy. Theories as to why the wealthy are absent from reports range from being better equipped to perform a secret cover up, to a simple matter of location. The lower classes may have more exposure to haunted areas than the rich do. The Indebted, for example, often point out poorer people are more likely to die violently, suddenly, or young — three common characteristics of ghosts.

In the 20th century, both World Wars seemed to increase the number of ghostwalkers, or at least news about their activities. Several hunters in World War I encountered a type of ghostwalker referred to as a "Sleeper." Sleepers roamed war-torn battlefields to deal with crazed phantasms lingering on, to put them to sleep. A British compact worked closely with ghostwalkers, but their allegiance didn't last as casualties of war ultimately put an end to the group. The high number of deaths spawned sightings of the haunted all across Europe, and it was difficult for ghostwalkers and hunters to stay in the fight on both a supernatural and human front. Worse, the second World War had considerably more casualties, too. Though WWII was a deadlier war, hunters have found that certain countries, like Poland according to the Indebted, are particularly notable for the large number of ghostwalkers present.

Hunters who believe ghostwalkers are a type of ghost point back to this period and the mounting body of evidence that ghosts may be sentient. An ever-increasing number of ghostly sightings claimed that many soldiers returned to battle even after death, their uniforms punctured with bullet holes, ripped from a blast, or stained with blood or chemical agents.

In the wake of World War II, the Loyalists of Thule paid close attention to what happened on and off the battlefield. Sometimes, however, the compact traveled to strange places in search of the haunted. They understood that a war doesn't necessary start after the exchange of bullets, but may follow a battle of wills. For this reason, European Loyalists monitored the political landscape closely, to ensure that no supernatural forces were operating in the shadows.

During the Cold War, reports of Fog Men active in the Soviet Union began to escape from beneath the Iron Curtain. The most extreme cases involved rumors of Fog Men ruling entire towns, but more than likely these were grossly exaggerated stories. Still, chilling reports of strong ghostwalker activity in the Soviet Bloc was noted throughout the Cold War, according to many Romanian and Soviet hunters. East German Loyalists collected first-hand accounts describing the Vodyanoy, ghostwalkers who were spotted near rivers and lakes, but were unable to find any proof verifying these stories.

On the North American continent, however, ghostwalker activity has traditionally been more subdued. There are exceptions to this; the Age of Spiritualism boosted the public's belief in ghosts, and some accounts cannot possibly be the work of charlatans after all. Following the decline of mediums and the rise of technology, many ghostwalkers have been sighted in older parts of the United States. For whatever reason, ghostwalkers may do more than just congregate or deal with ghosts; some hunters believe that they celebrate holidays like Mardi Gras.

Since the late 1970s, Louisiana cells have reported a noticeable spike in ghostwalker activities. Similarly, and perhaps more predictably, ghostwalkers also seem to become more active during Dia de los Muertos, All Hallows' Eve, and All Saint's Day. As a result, Network Zero typically sends out hunters to contact and record the haunted during these holidays.

More often than not, ghostwalker culture always incorporates an element of celebration. Hunters, so often dedicating their lives to the Vigil, may feel a little envious at how the haunted seem inclined to live life to the fullest. But then, surrounded by death every day, perhaps ghostwalkers have no choice: either they celebrate their state of being, or they fall into despair.

Present Day Sightings

While accounts vary on how active ghostwalkers have been throughout history, today their numbers and activities seem to have stabilized. The spike in sightings after World War II ended decades ago, and the fall of the Iron Curtain didn't reveal any huge conspiracies of ghostwalkers secretly running Communist states. For most hunters, ghostwalkers are either a curiosity or a deadly foe. But, first and foremost, ghostwalkers seem to be rare.

Scholarly hunter groups have figured out the reason why this might be the case. By comparing notes, interviews, and articles, they've determined that ghostwalkers are in flux. Their society, general culture, terminology, and attitudes seem to shift more often than those of other supernaturals, evidence that means ghostwalkers tend to be harder to track and catalog.

Ultimately, what many hunters know about ghostwalkers has yet to be proven. The vast majority of hunters don't know

much about them. Compacts and conspiracies, like the Loyalists of Thule or Ascending Ones, have widely different opinions on what to do about them. To most hunters, the haunted represent an enigma, much like death itself. They seem to be living ghosts. They walk in the world of the living and the dead. Their powers often mimic ghosts, their mindsets often mimic ghosts — but they are flesh and blood.

Sometimes, too, a ghostwalker's help is beneficial to a hunter. Sometimes, his very presence throws everyone around him into great danger. The only constant hunters have is the reminder that they must tread carefully when following in a ghostwalker's footsteps.

The Enemy: Hunter Friend and Foe

The case on 227 Ferndale is closed. The ghost has been put to rest. Though, if it were not for a group of ghostwalkers, I would not be writing this. These people, whatever their story is, really saved my ass.

We had been investigating Amelia for some time. Amelia is by far the most dangerous ghost we ever dealt with. Honestly, she was the deadliest, too, worse than that bloodsucker. Now, there were some useful calling cards she had, like many ghosts do. For example, you can tell she was coming, because everything in the room took on a washed out, sepia look. If you didn't leave fast enough, she appeared.

Amelia might have been pretty once, but the scissors sticking out of her eye sockets made her look so damn horrific. Her screams chilled my blood, and when she pulled out another pair of scissors, I was worried she was going to kill me. Marjorie just flipped out when she appeared. She hasn't been the same since. One of the other hunters ran off, and hasn't returned my calls. We did not come through unscathed, though thankfully nobody died or was hurt too badly.

We were trying to find something we could use to banish her before she found us, but we didn't have any luck. Our first tentative trips inside always ended the same way. We left just as soon as the room started to change colors, but on the third trip...she found us. While we still got out, we were not sure we'd be back anytime soon. Not without help.

When we came back, we brought extra gear with us. The usual. Holy water and all that crap. A diverse group of ghostwalkers was there, too. (At first, I thought they were part of another cell.) They warned us away from the house as soon as they saw us. We introduced ourselves, and I pulled their leader, Paco, aside to tell him about Amelia. I didn't want them to make the same mistakes we did. Then, Paco said they were trying to help her, which made me edgy, honestly. I told him Amelia was a threat, and he agreed.

They talked amongst themselves for a bit, trying to decide what to do with us. Paco said that if we had suffered this much we deserved to see it through. I'm not sure why I went in with them, but Paco seemed to know what he was talking about. I was cool with it, but the newcomers made Marjorie nervous. She kept looking around Paco and Ayana, like she was seeing something that wasn't there. She said Ayana had a ghostly dog with human eyes following her around. I figured she was still

freaked out about Amelia, and was seeing things. I didn't ask too many questions. I was too busy waiting for the ghost to show up.

When that sepia color washed over the room, we all got nervous, Even Paco's ghostwalkers tensed a bit. Marjorie looked ready to bolt, but she held her ground. Amelia appeared, and Paco's team went into action. Tanvi cut his hand and ropes of blood wrapped around Amelia. The ghost thrashed and yelled, until Paco cut his own hand and bled on her face. Then, Amelia started to talk like a normal person, or at least a sane one.

Fifty years ago, Amelia was investigating a woman who was spotted performing dark rituals in her basement. According to her neighbors, Norma charmed every person who talked to her, but Amelia wasn't fooled. Unfortunately, Norma was prepared when she arrived. Amelia was killed in the house and Norma ritually bound her ghost to be a guardian. Norma, according to Amelia, still lurked beneath the house.

Paco called Norma an Abmortal, and asked us if we wanted to help take Norma down. Everyone – including Amelia – agreed. I won't lie, the thought of going into a fight side-by-side with Amelia, scary as her ghost was, was exhilarating. Monsters...on our side for once!

Finding the hidden basement was easy with Amelia's help. I was shocked to find Norma was badly-scarred and was down there waiting for us. The ghostwalkers used their blood to make Amelia even stronger somehow, and she launched herself at Norma. My cell opened fire. The ghostwalkers twisted into nightmarish forms and attacked, too. In the end, it was Ayana who killed Norma. She drew the scissors from Amelia's eyes, and shoved them into Norma's chest.

After that, Paco led a little ceremony for Amelia, talking about her life, and at the end she vanished in a flash of light. I actually cried when I saw her go.

Before he left, Paco smiled and told us to be careful. Then, the ghostwalkers piled into their van and left. I'm guessing they are on a vigil just like us. If our cell runs into more ghost problems, I hope they'll show up to help. Without Paco and his crew...I'm not sure we couldn't take down Norma by ourselves.

— Reported by Jesse Knight, Park Avenue Investigation Squad.

Sometimes, the most dangerous thing about an investigation isn't the haunting. Many hunters will examine hauntings over the course of their Vigil, and may be surprised when they discover what a ghost can do, and what drives that spirit to take action. For hunters, however, a haunting can become even more unpredictable when ghostwalkers arrive at the scene.

It's not uncommon for odd or eclectic groups to investigate a haunting. At first blush, these groups may appear to be similarly structured to a hunter cell, and share the same goal. Ghostwalkers act as mediums. They may be trying to help redeemable ghosts move on, or may attempt to contain or destroy hostile spirits. Like hunters, these odd mediums do their best to protect the living by keeping the dead apart from them.

Other times, a rival group of ghostwalkers appears who are driven to make the situation worse. They may try to free a vengeful ghost trapped in a tenement, or kill a target that the ghost is angry with. They may try to put down hunters who want to deal with the ghost, and force the spirit to stop preying on the living. These mysterious figures tend to have an eerie way about them, and often do whatever it takes to stop anyone who interferes with their schemes — including hunters.

To best assess the situation, hunters may want to conduct interviews and follow the Loyalists of Thule's or Network Zero's lead. If they ask around, hunters may discover that ghostwalkers know a lot about death and ghosts, and that no two groups are exactly alike. Some of the haunted may even claim they've visited an unearthly realm, a type of Underworld, that's filled with ancient spirits who've been dead for millennia. Though some hunters may try to dismiss this, no one can contest that a ghostwalker knows ghosts better than any hunter, and has the right tools and abilities to deal with them — more than any human, hunter, and some monsters, too.

As frightening as their abilities are, ghostwalkers are clearly better at dealing with ghosts than they are at doing anything *else*, as if they were built or brought into being for this single purpose. Not only can a ghostwalker see and communicate with them effortlessly, even the weakest amongst them can reach out and *touch* any ghost. Some can even sense when ghosts are using their powers, and which type they're using, too.

Amongst ghostwalkers, though, there are those who have powers that far outstrip others of their kind. These powers enable them to control ghosts, empower ghosts far beyond what any normal ghost could ever be capable of on its own, make a ghost visible to anyone, or even give a ghost a physical, solid form. Some ghostwalkers can restrain ghosts with ease; even draw on the ghost's powers to use for themselves.

For all these reasons and more, when a ghost appears in the presence of a ghostwalker, that spirit may be quickly neutralized...or become more dangerous than before. Hunters aren't sure. After all, if one ghostwalker's presence can strengthen a ghost, what effect would the presence of a whole gang have on it? The thought frightens many hunters, and some ghostwalkers, too.

A Shared Enemy

I got a letter with Andre's name. Just his full name and the place he was killed on a sheet of paper. No one saw me kill Andre. His body has not been found. I did it neat, clean, and tidy. He deserved to die; he broke the rules. Parked in a handicap spot. Besides, he was eating chips in his car. Sloppy, messy, chaotic.

Then, a letter arrived with Maria's name, that sow. The police still think she ran away. Who was watching me? Who sent the letter?

At night, a pair of invisible hands pulled the covers off of my bed. My lamp moved. My books were thrown off their shelves. Taken from their place. My room was sloppy, messy, and chaotic. I threw everything out. Went outside, and saw the names of the others written on the wall of my house. Someone has invaded my house. He? She? Rearranges my furniture when I am away, takes from their proper place. I can't sleep.

It is not proper. They had no way of knowing I did those things. It is not fair. It is as if a non-existent God told someone what I did. They cheated. Sloppy, messy, and chaotic. I have not slept in a week. They want me to make a mistake, to slip up, but I've made none. I won't kill when they are watching, and they can't watch me forever.

Can they? Wait...I think someone's here.

— From a handwritten note found in the house of Stephan Glyn, a prime suspect in the murders of 16 people. Glyn's entire skin and a great deal of blood were found near the note. The Cheiron Group has since recovered the bio-waste.

Other than ghosts, curious onlookers, and ghostwalkers, hunters are most likely to run into slashers when investigating a

haunted location. Slashers obsess about killing and very rarely expect their victims' ghosts will seek revenge. Since a slasher relies on fine-tuning his ability to misdirect, charm, and isolate his victims in an abandoned warehouse or deserted building, he's often ill-prepared should the ghosts of his victims come back to punish him. Or worse — for his victims to rise from the dead and seek revenge.

Some gangs of ghostwalkers go out of their way to hunt slashers to put them down. Permanently. A cell of hunters and a group of ghostwalkers could easily team up to take one of them out. Since slashers are typically anti-social, their days are numbered should ghostwalkers *and* hunters start going after them together. Even physically brutal slashers, like Masks, are often horrified by what a group of angry ghostwalkers can do.

Given this, it is not unusual for a slasher's life to end as brutally and horrifically as her victims' did. Revenge from beyond the grave is, of course, a ghostwalker's specialty. Coincidentally, that mission may be right in line with the Vigil, too.

More about slashers can be found in **World of Darkness: Slashers**. They are an excellent type of monster to give both hunters and ghostwalkers a shared goal.

Identifying a Ghostwalker

This is Chester with an update. As I reported, the gang of ghostwalkers called "Jack o' Lanterns" has come back to Jamestown. According to local legend, they were here in the 1970s, burning buildings and killing people, before heading off to parts unknown.

Now they're back. The Jack o' Lanterns is a biker gang. Their leader wears a mask that looks like a pumpkin surrounded by blue flame. Members keep a fire burning on their motorcycles: mirror, handlebars, exhaust. They didn't waste any time, and started to burn everything in sight.

After coming back, they set fire to an old school, and a church people were using, though thankfully no one was inside either building at the time. Claire said they performed some ritual around the church then burned it to the ground. Third building, though, they torched a house people were still living in. Luckily, the homeowners escaped, but the police never came. John says they're scared. I'm not so sure.

Before they could do any more damage, I buddied up with twelve other hunters and confronted them. I told them arsonists were not welcome here. They told us the living had no jurisdiction over their comings and goings. That was a little intimidating, but there was no way we were going to back down. The leader also said something about creating a "Necropolis." I didn't really understand that. A city of dead people sounds bad to me. I told them we were going to escort them from the city. Then, all hell broke loose.

The ghostwalkers set Randy on fire as a warning and told the rest of us to fuck off. Randy...he just burst into flame. We pulled out our guns and charged. The Jack o'Lanterns shrugged off our attacks – even our bullets – and leaked white smoke. We took down two of them, three of us got away. The Union lost nine people that day. Nine goddamn people.

Goddamn ghostwalkers are trouble. Nothing but trouble. Kill them. Avenge us.

— Last message posted by Chester Roberts, leader of the Highland, Arizona Union on the Union's message board.

The biggest challenge a hunter faces is to figure out what, exactly, a ghostwalker is up to and if his goals conflicts with hers. Outside of intent, what powers a ghostwalker has will be far more telling of who he is and what kind of a threat he represents.

All ghostwalkers can shrug off considerable injuries by releasing a white, smoke-like ectoplasm from wounds that quickly close. This ability, when spotted, is why some ghostwalkers are considered to be a similar, but different type of monster called "Fog Men." Far worse, however, is the fact that slain ghostwalkers can rise — alive — after they fall dead to hunt down their killers. This is not an isolated occurrence; it is nearly a certainty that any hunter cell who decides to kill a ghostwalker will almost always see her again. Vampires, werewolves, and witches all usually stay dead when slain, decapitated, or otherwise destroyed, but ghostwalkers rise and keep coming back, each time angrier than before.

While ghostwalkers are, by all accounts, powerful mediums, some hunters also believe their powers are not limited to dealing with ghosts. More than one cell has reported seeing a ghostwalker use strange powers to haunt an area, and may even lash out invisibly at passersby, as if the haunted were living ghosts themselves. Other ghostwalkers can dole out horrific curses or twist and contort their bodies in monstrous ways. Frightening as some of these abilities are, not all ghostwalkers possess them — which means that hunters will need to come up with their own method of classifying and identifying which ghostwalkers they consider to be friend or foe.

For this reason, it's essential that cells connect with their compacts or conspiracies to get more information before confronting a ghostwalker. Not every hunter is backed by a group of occultists like the Ascending Ones, though. In many cases, time is working against a cell, for while the dead can wait — most ghostwalkers can't and don't. Cells who encounter ghostwalkers may wonder just what they're dealing with, and by the time they figure it out, the ghostwalkers will have done whatever it was they wanted to do and moved on.

When they don't use their powers, ghostwalkers don't seem to be any different from hunters. Unlike most reanimated — zombies and vampires — they appear to be living, breathing humans. The one clue hunters have to spot a ghostwalker is to pay close attention to what happens when she triggers her abilities. Sometimes, a ghostwalker may appear to be possessed, and communicates with an invisible ghost out loud.

Other times, another figure may appear when a ghostwalker uses his powers, right in the corner of a hunter's eye. This figure may appear in a flash of lightning or, *just for a second*, reflected in a mirror or a puddle of water. Photographs and other recording devices may reveal that the ghostwalker is accompanied by a blurry little girl or a fuzzy soldier, too. When shown proof that something supernatural is walking side-by-side with them, ghostwalkers will typically shut down. They might mention a binding or supernatural bargain they made, but most ghostwalkers won't discuss the details of their nature or relationship with ghosts.

Careful Speculation

Hunters who observed ghostwalkers a great deal believe that all of them are possessed by a ghost, and that relationship

is the key to understanding them. After all, the haunted tend to be much more closed-mouthed about the ghost over their shoulder than any other aspect of their existence.

While some hunters see these entities as the key to understanding ghostwalkers, others believe their ability to rise from the dead may be a sign that the haunted is a type of mummy. A ghostwalker's ability to resurrect is one of his defining characteristics — but he's not the only monster to have this power. Tragically, the haunted aren't the only creatures that can return from the grave, but are they monsters? Ghostwalkers are fairly unique in the sense that they seem to live again.

Unlike vampires who cannot stand up to intense scrutiny for more than a few moments, ghostwalkers always do. Rising from the dead is usually a one-time deal, but the majority of hunters don't know that. Even so, information about this type of resurrection isn't something ghostwalkers offer freely, as they aren't willing to spill all of their secrets. After all, ghostwalkers have no discernable weakness. For all that they are, some hunters think they're a force of nature; a spirit elemental that has control over the invisible world of the dead.

So what are these amalgams, exactly? Are ghostwalkers simply people who have been infected by ectoplasm somehow? Mediums? Something else entirely? Based on interviews with ghostwalkers, their revelations make them sound like mediums who act like ghosts. Hunters know, however, that ghosts and mediums can't raise people from the dead. Ghosts can possess, certainly, but all attempts to banish a haunted's spirit results in total failure. Not only does the ritual fail, anyone who tries to separate a ghost from a ghostwalker will quickly find out just how angry she can get. Attempts by the Long Night in Arkansas to deal with the Jack o' Lanterns, for example, weren't just a "miss"— they were disastrous.

Unfortunately for hunters, direct communication with a ghostwalker's spirit will seem impossible because it is; the haunted are often very touchy about their personal ghosts. This has led some cells to assume that demons — not ghosts — lend these people their power. At least one cell claims ghostwalkers are not out to help ghosts, they are out to ensure those who belong in hell wind up there, and are acting on a demon's orders. To what end? Most hunters haven't figured out why a ghostwalker does what he does. Perhaps he's making amends for all the sins he committed in his former life, or he's hoping to earn a coveted place in whatever afterlife he may be destined for.

Scientifically-minded hunters, like those of the Null Mysteriis, point out that a ghostwalker's behavior seems to be religiously motivated. Others argue that ghostwalkers signed a pact with demons or may be suffering from a supernatural obsession that, when resolved, will restore a ghostwalker's humanity in full. None, however, will dispute that ghostwalkers who have such fixations tend to follow them rigidly, and without exception.

Regardless of the reasons behind a ghostwalker's existence, it's important for hunters to think of (and treat) each one individually, as opposed to stereotyping them. If they don't, they may find they're not equipped to deal with the consequences — or their powers. Worse, hunters who don't approach a group of ghostwalkers carefully may have a hard time dealing with the fact that they're either making a situation worse than it could be — or that they're hurting other human beings who want the same thing they do.

THE TWILIGHT NETWORK

While ghostwalkers lack any sort of formalized government or organization, they do have a number of ways they communicate with each other over long distances. Graffiti, scratched symbols into pavement, and messages written on the backs of protest signs have been shared by ghostwalkers for hundreds of years. Today, that method of communication has expanded online, where ghostwalkers frequent any number of message boards to exchange information.

Though Ghostwalkers don't have anything that resembles a unifying purpose, word does get out if they feel threatened, or if they've identified a dangerous target. Hunters who are used to dealing with more isolated and distrustful monsters may be in for a surprise should they manage to find out how well-connected the haunted really are.

Systems

All ghostwalkers possess certain innate supernatural powers that suggest they're part-ghost or part-undead. Despite the possession and use of these powers, the haunted are living beings. Their abilities follow:

- **Resistance to drugs and poison.** Ghostwalkers have an easier time resisting drugs and poison than normal humans, and apply an additional five dice to any rolls to fight off the effects. Should they suffer from either, a ghostwalker can't slip into unconsciousness as a result.

- **Resilience to unconscious states.** They cannot be forced into unconsciousness under any circumstances. Ghostwalkers do not fall unconscious unless their last health level is filled with aggravated damage, at which point they die. Briefly.

- **Ability to resurrect.** Ghostwalkers who die can come back from the dead. This happens at dawn or dusk, but doesn't happen on a precise clock. Upon their resurrection, a ghostwalker is badly hurt, and her wound track is filled with lethal damage; her return will cause the death of a nearby non-supernatural human. Her animating force determines who the victim will be, and some coincidence (or accident) causes the victim's death. A haunted can rise up to five times in this manner. Unlike mummies, ghostwalkers retain their memories upon their return.

- **Resistance to damage.** Ghostwalkers can resist damage by spending Willpower to make their ectoplasm fill wounds. This causes a visible, smoky white effect. Damage stopped by ectoplasm is not gone, but is filled in and does not cause a wound penalty. This damage can be overridden by other types of damage, and the same health level cannot be stopped by ectoplasm twice. At the end of the scene, damage filled with ectoplasm becomes Bashing. By spending 1 Willpower Point, a ghostwalker can fill in all health levels from a single attack with ectoplasm, subject to the above limits.

- **Restore Willpower.** A ghostwalker can restore Willpower by drawing ectoplasm from haunted places, or consuming fallen ghosts. Drawing ectoplasm from a haunted location restores one to five Willpower Points depending on intensity of the haunt, and consuming a ghost restores an amount equal to the ghost's health track. Resolving a ghost so they pass on into peace will restore all Willpower for any ghostwalker involved.

- **Affect Ghosts.** Ghostwalkers can bleed ectoplasm onto a ghost to make it aware of its surroundings, and cognizant of its situation. This lasts a scene and costs a point of Willpower.

- **Open Avernian Gates.** The haunted can also bleed ectoplasm onto the Avernian Gates to open them. To do so costs a point of Willpower.

- **Ghostly Senses.** Ghostwalkers can see and hear ghosts at all times, and can physically interact with them for a scene by spending Willpower. They can also sense a ghost's use of powers, and see the Avernian Gates. The haunted cannot ignore ghosts without concentration.

- **Assess Mortality.** When a ghostwalker looks at any human, she can see if that person is going to die soon, and get an idea of his general health at a simple glance. Dead creatures, like vampires and zombies, are obvious to the haunted.

- **Enhance Dread Powers.** Ghostwalkers can use objects linked to sites where death is present to enhance their Dread Powers. A kitchen knife used in a murder, for example, can be used to enhance a Dread Power to kill — usually by adding dice to use it. Add between 1 and 3 dice, depending on the raw amount of death associated with the item. Something close by when a murder happened is +1, a murder weapon might be +2, whereas an item used repeatedly in a serial killing might be +3.

Reading about these ghostwalker abilities may tempt Storytellers to cross **Hunter** and **Geist** over more directly, possibly even in a shared chronicle. Thematically, this is very sound; Sin-Eaters (e.g. what a hunter refers to as a "ghostwalker") are essentially hunters in a ghost story. They are far better prepared for dealing with ghosts, and can add elements to a ghost story that are nearly impossible to do with mortal hunters.

The problem lies in power level, and the effect a Sin-Eater can have on a ghost story. Sin-Eater abilities that involve ghosts are nothing short of remarkable. Any ghostwalker can trivialize even the best-planned chronicle once she gets involved with a ghost story. Ghostwalkers also tend to be very powerful, more than most hunters. A power discrepancy will be apparent between third-tier hunters and Sin-Eaters, even more than other World of Darkness games.

The question is how to make it work. And, the answer is *carefully*. A Storyteller can use Plasm management to keep Sin-Eaters somewhat in check, since it's not the easiest resource to find, and many Sin-Eater powers, including all their strongest ones, require Plasm in large amounts. If she wishes to tinker with systems, a Storyteller could allow Sin-Eaters to hold less Plasm per Psyche dot, more in line with other supernatural creatures, or disallow certain Manifestations, such as Boneyard, which exacerbates the power difference.

Ultimately, combining **Hunter** and **Geist** can work, but first and foremost it would require buy-in from the players, and preparedness from the Storyteller. It is as difficult from a mechanical perspective as it is easy from a story perspective. The group must decide if the fun of exploring such a union is worth the trouble the power disparities may bring.

If not, **Geist** could still be usable for short encounters to flesh out a hunt that involves a ghostwalker. And, **Geist** or **Hunter** players may want to try walking in the other's shoes for a while. The only difference being that hunters are better organized, and each compact and conspiracy offers a unique perspective on the haunted, one that may put both groups at odds with one another.

Compacts

Ashwood Abbey

Ghostwalkers present a moral dilemma for Ashwood Abbey. Compared to nearly any other monster they encounter, the haunted really know how to party. Their resilience allows some of them to enjoy incredible drug-fueled parties that would kill any normal human. Most importantly, though, revenants seem to have a fun approach to the world. They speak of living life and having fun — everything the Abbey doesn't expect a death-oriented creature to do.

On the other hand, ghostwalkers are also interesting to hunt. They can come back from the dead and be hunted again. They can also take enormous amounts of punishment, prolonging a hunt, and their tendency to bleed ectoplasm makes for one hell of a show. Assuming a hunter knows where they are — and if he can isolate them and ensure there's no ghosts around to help — ghostwalker powers are more like fighting a werewolf than anything else.

Unfortunately, the Abbey hasn't gotten the hint that ghostwalkers are exceptionally dangerous. Killing one and keeping it around to hunt again when it rises from the dead may sound like a good plan, but just about the time it does return to life

a nearby member (or occasionally the help) meets a sudden, accidental death just at that moment. This may seem random, but Abbey members realize there's a pattern behind this. It's has happened often enough that it seems to be unavoidable — unless the hunters flee and leave the ghostwalker alone.

Worse, the haunted seem very good at warning their fellow ghostwalkers of what's going on. This used to be a minor problem for the Abbey, but it has moved from an inconvenience to a real pain in the ass. Kill a guest of honor at one party and no haunted will speak to any members in the area. Some may attack Abbey members on sight...possibly without even being present. How they seem to know who killed who is not something the Abbey's hunters are certain of, but such betrayals often lead to this result...sometimes just before a chapter goes silent.

The situation is tense, and it's leading up to a great conflict. Many interactions — if not all — are hostile between the two groups. Ghostwalkers don't seem to know a great deal about the Abbey, but they know enough to have some idea of what the compact represents.

And they are angry.

The Response

Thrill-seeking members have figured out what gets ghostwalkers out of the woodwork: a good, old-fashioned haunting. The haunted seem able to tell the difference between a "haunting" Abbey members have set up to draw them out, and a bona fide haunting once they can examine. Curious hunters have to find real spooks and haunted houses to poke around if they want to run into a ghostwalker. This can be a lot of fun in and of itself, of course; a run-in with a ghastly spirit can be very exciting, and haunted houses are great places for meetings and parties.

Once they have a haunt, members of the Abbey will have to try to conceal who they are. More than a few times, an encounter started off well — until a ghostwalker was invited to a party. The ghostwalker's typical response is frustrating for hunters, especially since not all Abbey members treat them the same way.

When hunting, Abbey members understand that superior firepower seems to be the best plan, and that surprise is very important. They have yet to isolate just what it is that weakens ghostwalkers, but they are sure they will stumble onto that secret at any time. After all, the fae are affected by iron, vampires by fire and sunlight, werewolves by silver...there must be something.

For a while, the word was that sea salt — loaded into shotguns or thrown right at them — would devastate the haunted. However, it seemed that sea salt must have been a fluke, an old wives' tale, or deliberate misinformation. Of course, the Abbey won't let such a trivial matter slow them down. If nothing, members will enjoy experimenting with what will work.

For now, though, the Abbey parties with ghostwalkers when they can, hunts them when they can, and enjoys doing both as much as possible. Sure, dealings with the haunted have a higher mortality rate than other monsters, but that just makes the Vigil more exciting.

The Long Night

These creatures have traditionally been, in the Long Night's view, a mockery of Jesus and the resurrection and are an affront to all the righteous holds dear. But, as yet another apocalypse approaches? Ghostwalkers are now thought to play a part in the end times.

The Long Night has discovered that ghostwalkers sometimes refer to themselves by other names. The compact originally thought the haunted were a type of witch, up until they seized materials from a group of ghostwalkers in Phoenix, Arizona that revealed their true affiliation. The group referred to themselves as "chosen" and aligned each member with all four colors associated with the Horsemen of the Apocalypse: white, pale, black, and red. Symbols were found, too, like the scales associated with Famine. This evidence has led to the firm belief that ghostwalkers have been, in fact, created by the Horsemen to further the Tribulation and battle the forces of the righteous.

This association has changed how the compact views the haunted, and now the Long Night takes an active interest in their comings and goings. It is thought that when Judgment Day arrives, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse will ride out to spread chaos across the world, and ghostwalkers will follow in their wake. To the Long Night, the haunted are the Horseman's servants, and exist for a specific purpose. Many hunters in eschatological circles suggest these Horsemen serve the Antichrist, and that the pale rider who sits atop the white horse — a ghostly figure — may even be the Antichrist. Thus, ghostwalkers may be, in fact, demons who work to bring about the end of the world.

Though many hunters in the compact agree that ghostwalkers have something to do with the apocalypse, fierce debate rages on as to their true nature. Were they inhuman monsters created by the Horsemen? Or, have they been summoned from the dead, former humans who are now slaves to the Horsemen's will?

Recent evidence suggests that ghostwalkers have no free will of their own, but the matter is far from settled. Some Long Night hunters believe it's their duty to determine how ghostwalkers regenerate and replenish their numbers. After all, if the Four Horsemen aren't responsible for their creation, then slaying ghostwalkers as quickly as possible will prevent them from spreading. To the Long Night, the situation is dire. It's apparent that they'll be restored from the dead again and again by their dark masters to battle the armies of the Lord — and the compact will do whatever it takes to prevent the apocalypse from happening.

The Response

For the most part, the Long Night deals with ghostwalkers one at a time, and seeks to discover what can keep the haunted down. Those hunters who believe they're demonically possessed have tried to capture and use increasingly invasive exorcisms to cure them. Joshua Waverly, a pastor in Arkansas, has set up a facility that can imprison several ghostwalkers where he carries

out his own special brand of exorcism. To date, Waverly hasn't achieved any level of success. Yet.

These failed attempts have convinced some hunters that helping ghostwalkers find redemption is a waste of time. Ghostwalkers are not possessed, as many misguided and foolish hunters believe, but the Antichrist's active, willing agents. They can be shown no mercy.

The Merciful within the order have not given up though. These hunters still want to find a way to "cure" ghostwalkers. If they can remove whatever dark spirit haunts their poor, suffering bodies, then the ghostwalkers will be freed. Unfortunately, ever since Waverly's work has begun to surface, fewer and fewer hunters will give a ghostwalker the chance for redemption. Still, they do try.

Other, more radical hunters remind the compact the arrival of the Four Horsemen's minions ultimately means good things for the armies of God. This is the surest sign that the Tribulation is underway, and that the major players are taking the field. In this way, the arrival of the haunted is cause for celebration. Still, the compact as a whole is wary of ghostwalkers, even though they may be excited about their implications.

While many creatures take some examination and prayer to find where they fit in the Tribulation, the Long Night's view on ghostwalkers is clear. Since these agents of the End Times are active, the compact can use ghostwalkers as tools to show other hunters what is really going on. Maybe then, when the Long Night shows undeniable proof of their beliefs, the compact will finally convince other hunters to join with them on the right side for the final battle between good and evil.

The Loyalists of Thule

The Indebted have always known about the Fog Men. In the second World War, these scholars were at ground zero when the angry dead swarmed Nazi-controlled territories seeking vengeance. The Loyalist's records carefully record how these creatures stood up after dying from grenades, gunshots, mines, as they pressed forward, bleeding fog from their wounds. Many of the Fog Men's victims were guilty, but others were simply targets of convenience, everyday workers who had no part in government or the Nazi regime. The Loyalists, however, thought that the Fog Men held the secret to eternal life, an enigma the scholars actively sought up until 1945.

In the aftermath of WWII, the Loyalists continued to study the Fog Men, but have turned up little new information in the decades that followed. The Indebted know that the Fog Men were connected to angry ghosts, casualties of war that originated from concentration camps, the SS, and battlefields all over Europe.

Now, some Indebted believe the number of Fog Men in the West is a fraction of what existed during the end of World War II. This led to the theory that violent deaths produce more Fog Men, and those deaths yield a specialized type of ghost — a righter of great wrongs.

The Loyalists have also studied how Fog Men tend to protect humans from ghosts, a fact that has piqued the Indebted's curiosity, but does not scare them into action. At the same time, when roused to anger, these hunters have seen Fog Men wreak massive destruction, with little regard for collateral damage. What's more, or so the Loyalists' believe, the Fog Men's numbers swell in direct response to mass killings, so fighting individual Fog Men does nothing to prevent any real danger. That's why some hunters believe it's better if the Indebted spend their efforts elsewhere, to prevent the Fog Men from generating in mass numbers.

The source of the Fog Men is open to debate, and these beings often don't willingly disclose their secrets to the Loyalists. While some hunters believe the Fog Men bargained for a new life with a god of the Underworld, the truth is obscured across many cultures, many battlefields. What's more, when Fog Men do speak of their creators, they address them in mythic terms: death lords, horsemen, geists, psychopomps, even gods or demons.

Whatever their origins, the Loyalists have discovered one damning piece of evidence that leads them to belief the Fog Men aren't human — they can travel through the lands of the dead and reemerge miles away from where they were last seen.

The Response

The Indebted's response to the Fog Men is nuanced, and hunters are conflicted. The compact, as a whole, agrees that it's important to ascertain the threat of any given Fog Man, and decide if dealing with her is worth the trouble. If it is, they will likely find a way to trap and not kill her. If not, they'll probably keep their heads down to avoid draw their attention. By this point, the Loyalists have dealt with enough Fog Men that they've figured out interviews aren't yielding any new information, so questioning them isn't worth the effort.

This does not mean, however, that these hunters are idle. Instead, they focus their efforts by attempting to locate the doors to the Underworld. It seems that the Loyalists have located a few doors in the past, like the doorway in Berlin, and have studied them extensively. Until very recently, the Indebted have even managed to get some of them open. What they found, however, has given the Loyalists nightmares.

Though they expected to find the Fog Men's strange masters, they found an underground land teeming with ghosts; some were sentient, some trapped in bizarre vignettes, some animalistic. Worse, as the Loyalists peered closer into that unearthly realm, they noticed that all spirits were drawn deeper and deeper into those lands, beyond rivers ferried by mysterious and frightening creatures. To date, only one cell has managed to journey — and return — through that doorway. The trip was extremely traumatic for them, however, and the hunters have since begged to be never return.

Through those doorways, the Indebted may find the answers they seek. This knowledge has led the Loyalist's founders to begin recruiting willing volunteers — both hunters and Fog Men. Hunters may not trust the haunted, but the founders understand that the secrets the Fog Men hold can only be uncovered with a guide. To them, navigating the Underworld doesn't just require skill; it requires a unique ability the Fog Men seem to possess.

Network Zero

Network Zero has a keen interest in the haunted for one major reason: while most monsters are part of a society that frowns on (and punishes) a monster for talking openly to humans, ghostwalkers do not. This doesn't mean they wish to be too forthcoming; showing up on TV demonstrating the powers of the grave, talking to ghosts, or rising from the dead draws all the wrong sorts of attention. But, the haunted isn't necessarily invested in keeping the existence of ghosts a secret. The trick, for both hunters and ghostwalkers, isn't recording the evidence — but getting the general public to believe the truth.

Unfortunately, both the haunted and ghosts take actions that can easily be manufactured with special effects. Levitating objects, ectoplasm, bleeding walls, possessed subjects — faking such events has a long and storied history. Because of that, most people practically expect that a video proving the existence of ghosts is either a stunt or science fiction.

Still, that doesn't stop Network Zero from trying. Compared to other supernatural phenomena that the compact has recorded over the years, ghostwalkers can be pretty forthcoming. Unfortunately, hunters have yet to learn that ghostwalkers often lack real information about what else is out there beyond themselves and the restless dead. Their knowledge of ghosts, the lands of the dead, and haunted locales is top notch, but ghostwalkers are only dimly aware of other undead creatures, like vampires, and living monsters, like werewolves. For most Secret Keepers, this is either a major disappointment, or a sign that ghostwalkers are "not in on it."

For other hunters, ghostwalkers shouldn't be defended; they should be feared. Some haunted are willing to maim, kill, and destroy technology to keep people from "interfering" with the dead. These ghostwalkers tend to be in the minority, even amongst those who disapprove of The Secret Channel's efforts, but their objections are loud and difficult to ignore.

The Response

A few encounters with angry and dangerous ghostwalkers have forced Network Zero to rethink their open approach. The haunted still seem to be a good contact overall, but brutal encounters with certain members of their kind have taught hunters that they cannot always be trusted. Reporters have become more circumspect in interviews, and try to gauge how the ghostwalker feels about the Network before pressing forward.

Still, some progress has been made. Some ghostwalkers have asked the Network's help to send final messages to their loved ones; this suits the Secret Frequency just fine. It also furthers the group's agenda; after all, if ghosts are using the compact to broadcast messages from beyond the grave, that really helps get the message out that humans are not alone.

Some hunters, especially those within the Army of Truth, have suggested the Secret Frequency needs to be more aggressive with ghostwalkers. They see them as Network Zero's best hope for legitimacy, and think that they need to find the right agenda and do something big…*really* big…to shake people up with evidence the world cannot ignore.

The Army of Truth has long been pushing for this agenda, and ghostwalkers are ideal targets, because many of them don't care if they're caught on camera. Even now, events are being set in motion for a big reveal; hunters are actively tracking down ghostwalkers and are preparing to recruit enough of them to go along with their schemes. Both sides are reaching out to Jim Harrison to intervene, but thus far he has not taken a side in these discussions.

Null Mysteriis

Null Mysteriis does not consider the haunted its enemy. Rather, they believe that ghostwalkers are humans who have been infected, and that infection causes them to demonstrate traits normally associated with ghosts, thereby attracting ghosts to them. The reason why other hunters fear them, or become hysterical about them, is not due to any fact-based decisions, but out of religious implications.

From this core theory, the Null's opinions diverge.

The prevailing point of view is that of the Rationalists. Essentially, this infection originates from ectoplasm, a byproduct produced from the energy that forms ghosts. For reasons unknown, and presently irreproducible, ectoplasm is thought to occasionally infect humans and make them very ill. The sickness manifests in a terrible fever, causing the subjects to hallucinate about long-dead gods that make deals with them before they can recover. Once the ectoplasm has gotten into their bloodstream, the subjects' bodies then begin to manufacture the substance in microscopic amounts.

When the human body generates ectoplasm, the subject can cause ghostly phenomena. Because the ectoplasm in the subject's system is inconsequential, however, the Rationalists believe that the infected replenish their ectoplasm out of a misguided need by frequenting haunted areas to acquire more of it. The subjects do not need to seek out new sources of ectoplasm to survive, however, as the scientists initially believed. At this time, is not known if keeping the ghostwalkers away from ectoplasm will allow them to recover naturally on their own. This is complicated by the fact that ghosts are drawn to the subjects, thus creating a cycle of interdependency in order to ensure that the ectoplasmic byproduct is shared and used to affect humans.

A second theory, by the Open Minds, cues off of the ghost's nature. If ghosts are extra-dimensional beings made of pure energy, the infection that a subject endures is not caused by ectoplasm. Though ectoplasm is a visible byproduct of ghosts and ghostwalkers alike, it is not lethal and has no infectious properties. Instead, the Open Minds believe that the other-dimensional energy of ghosts has found its way into the human body. This energy is what gives the ghostwalkers abilities similar to ghosts without actually making them ghosts. The specifics of how energy behaves is uncertain; the Open Minds have noted, however, that it may cause a part of the infected's body to operate on the same "wavelength" as ghosts do, which sometimes manifests as half-seen images in mirrors, or out the corner of one's eye. While sometimes mistaken for a second being, even by other infected, this residual energy is

simply the ghostwalker's reflection and proof of their extra-dimensional nature.

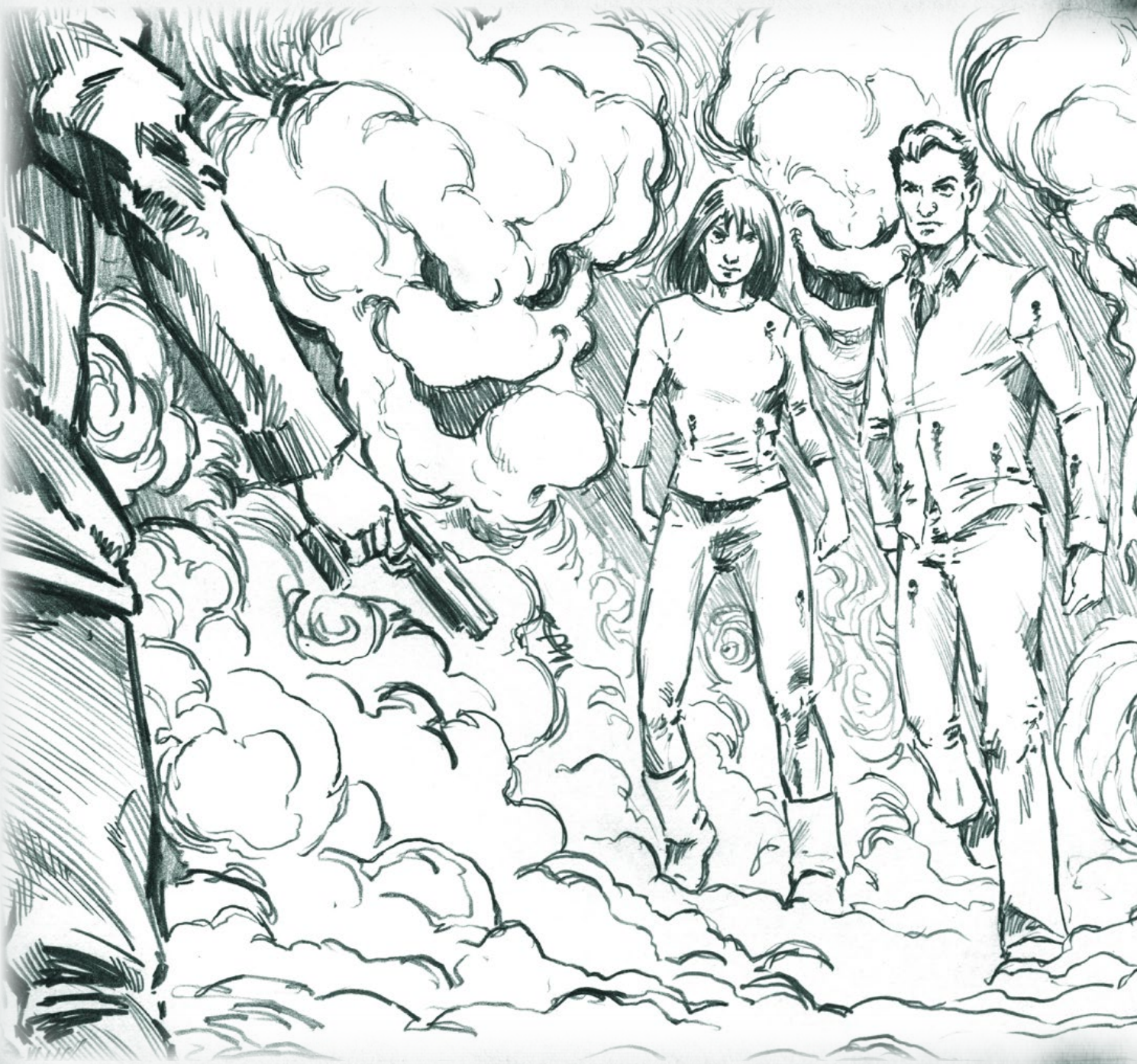
Regardless of which theory the Null's hunters believe, all hunters agree that not everyone is vulnerable to this infection. Some people simply have a natural immunity; in fact, *most* people seem to not be affected. Only a few, for whatever reason, exhibit signs of the infection. The rest can bathe in ectoplasm, or be around ghosts for days, with no real effect.

To date, the Null hasn't engineered an accurate means of determining how and when ectoplasm will affect a person. They do, however, seek the means to detect the presence of ectoplasm through the use of their scientific instruments.

The Response

The Null Mysteriis are primarily concerned with figuring out just how the infection process works, and seek to capture and test subjects to prove their theories. Some scientists are convinced that blood tests will yield interesting results, since ectoplasm leaks from the body of the infected. It may well be the body sends ectoplasm to a wound like a coagulating agent, and that is what gives the infected their resilience to damage. Ectoplasm contained in the bloodstream also accounts for their rumored resistance to poison or drugs, if eyewitness reports are to be believed.

Still, Null Mysteriis is very interested in collecting blood samples from the infected. As most Null hunters become more



aware of ghostwalkers, they first approach the subjects and ask them to volunteer. Open Minds, on the other hand, may be interested in advancing their analysis by bypassing bloodwork to study clearly infected organs: eyes and, when possible, brains. The infection, the hunters believe, may be psychological in nature and may be due to altered perceptions and forms of consciousnesses.

The fact that the infected may be using ectoplasm to regenerate organs after falling into a deathlike state has given some Null hunters far fewer ethical concerns than normal. Take out a ghostwalker's brain, and she's up and moving around the next day. Though the Open Minds haven't tried the experiment yet, some believe it's possible to perform this action *twice* to compare the scans of the current brain to the removed one!

Though the Null seeks subjects when possible, they also turn a deaf ear to the concerns voiced by other compacts and conspiracies. What the Null struggles to understand, is why so many other hunters believe that ghostwalkers are supernatural in nature. To them, ghostwalker beliefs are nonsense. Dying, returning from the dead, and visiting the Underworld are just that: nonsense. Perhaps, these beliefs may be fascinating from an anthropological perspective, but aren't anything that requires serious consideration by scientists.

The Union

The Union tends to lump ghostwalkers in with witches, and treats them accordingly. Like witches, a ghostwalker's abilities seem to be magical or demonic in nature — up until a Union hunter shoots one in the arm, and watches as a telltale, white trail emits from her target's body. Since ghostwalkers are rare, however, the fact that a supernatural monster that's wholly separate and unique from every other creature the Union has encountered isn't the first thing on these hunters' minds.

In fact, because the Union tends to focus on what's happening in their own backyards, they're often more concerned with putting down threats than spending lots of time analyzing or speculating about them. Doesn't matter if that threat is a ghost, medium, witch, or zombie; a threat is a threat. Sharing information, however, is still important — especially since a ghostwalker can fall dead to the ground and wake up the next morning.

Some Union members, however, do believe that the reverse is also true: some witches may be, in fact, ghostwalkers-in-training. Only a few have suggested that the two aren't linked at all, and that a ghostwalker is a type of zombie that's animated by a sentient ghost. The latter explains many of their powers, and their inexorable draw to places where ghosts frequent, too.

When calculating threats, the Union takes these theories into account. After all, if a hunter can't kill what's already dead, who stands to lose the most during an encounter? While no one in the Union is sure, they've learned the hard way that the verifiable undead, like vampires, have a great deal more limitations than ghostwalkers do.

Overall, though, the Union tends to perk up whenever ghosts are mentioned, since many hunters have figured out ghostwalkers tend to fixate on spirits and largely ignore humans. To them, if a ghostwalker can deal with a vengeful spirit better than the Union can? It might be worth letting them be — that is, if the ghostwalkers are there to do the job right and not cause more supernatural trouble.

The Response

For the most part, the Union treats ghostwalkers like any other morally-questionable supernatural monster. First, hunters need to figure out if the ghostwalkers are trouble of the immediate or postponed variety. If the haunted represent postponed trouble, the Union may be open to forging a shaking alliance with them, to deal with the restless dead. Should the Union partner with ghostwalkers, though, hunters are instructed not to trust their allies implicitly. Even so, some ghostwalkers have very much endeared themselves to

local Union cells, though hunters conceal the truth about the compact and the Vigil from their gifted "friends." Some Union members fear that hunters will get lazy and rely on the ghostwalkers too much. It's only a matter of time before a local chapter winds up recruiting ghostwalkers into their ranks. Then, the Union will be in for one hell of a fight.

As with fighting witches, the Union's greatest weapon is their local communities. Every community has tales of haunted houses and strange, unearthly screams that emanate from dilapidated warehouses. Local citizens are acutely aware of which places (and what people) to steer clear of. Indeed, Union engagements often lead to more deaths, not only from combat, but from ghostwalker resurrections leading to someone else's death nearby. A ghostwalker who comes back once can take out several hunters when she goes down and one innocent victim when she comes back. Five coming back, however, means a lot of deaths. Five who come back twice can wipe out entire families.

This approach leads to friction between Home First and General Strike. The compact's mentality that hunters should only make an enemy out of ghostwalkers if they have to frustrates those who see them as walking menaces. Some within the General Strike believe that Home First is going too easy on the haunted, and every minute they waste gives ghostwalkers time to gather their forces and attack. Though, both groups understand that attacking a ghostwalker is a major undertaking.

The presence of the haunted can also throw the Union into a moral dilemma, though, especially if the ghostwalkers turn out to be someone they know. Do dead members of the community deserve the Union's protection? If ghostwalkers are messing with a house haunted by loved ones of living members of the community, how should that situation be handled? What if the ghostwalkers are breaking their connections and are trying to redeem themselves? Should they be defended if that's the case?

Ghostwalkers are a tricky subject, and one that won't be settled anytime soon. Indeed, bringing up the fact that some people can affect ghosts better than the Union will cause a lot of hurt and confusion. But, if the Union ever unifies their view on how to deal with ghostwalkers — then the their days may be numbered.

Conspiracies

Aegis Kai Doru

While ghostwalkers can potentially be an immense threat, the conspiracy believes their actual threat level is low and almost insignificant. As a whole, the Fog Men seem to be an anomaly that messes with the dead, for virtuous or questionable reasons, and fights amongst themselves. While the haunted spend most of their time seeking out and dealing with ghosts, the Aegis Kai Doru feel their hunters' time is better spent acquiring and using relics to fight more prevalent threats like witches, bloodsuckers, demons, and zombies.

Of course, sometimes there are problems the Aegis Kai Doru can't ignore. When a group of ghostwalkers wants to dole out vigilante justice for a ghost who was murdered, the conspiracy is aware that the Fog Men will ignore human laws and hunt the living. Since the Aegis Kai Doru has their own moral code, most times a little cosmic justice isn't a big deal. The problem, though, is when that vengeance gets out of hand; an entire neighborhood is affected, a whole family line is in danger of being wiped out. Ghosts, tragic as they may be, weren't always innocent in real life, and they may not always ask the haunted for benevolent forms of justice. On the other hand, the Aegis Kai Doru does understand grudges.

Despite the conspiracy's lack of concern, however, ghostwalkers may interest hunters. Fog Men tend to have their own relics; these items of power are connected to death or the Underworld, and are kept hidden from human eyes. Most of these relics would be useless in a hunter's hands. Some, however, like stolen masks from the Underworld, hold power that can be wielded by mortals. For this reason, the Aegis Kai Doru has instructed their hunters to be on the lookout for these rare relics.

The Response

The Aegis Kai Doru understands that ghostwalkers can be very useful sometimes. The conspiracy has noted that ghostwalkers seem to have an affinity for magic. They don't believe that these people steal or borrow powers from interactions with ghosts, but think their abilities are ritual-based. To them, the Fog Men use low-level magic; little rituals to find lost objects, locate spirits, or spy through mirrors. Though the conspiracy doesn't understand the nature of the haunted's power, the fact that some ghostwalkers are benign, even friendly, means that a mutually-beneficial allegiance can be sought.

Sometimes, outright alliances can be useful for both groups. In general, the conspiracy thinks that ghostwalkers are myopic, and their goals don't typically conflict with the Vigil. Hunters who are interested in the Underworld, who've verified that the lands of the dead are a real place, may seek a connection simply to visit the libraries and lore hidden in its depths. And, more importantly, who knows what relics may be found in an underground necropolis as well? Any expedition planned in cooperation with the haunted has a higher chance of success for all involved. Still, that doesn't automatically guarantee hunters will partner with a ghostwalker. After all, the knowledge the Fog Men can offer the living is a specific kind of magic, and may be too gruesome for hunters to bear.

That doesn't stop some Aegis Kai Doru members from eyeing the haunted as tools to harvest relics, either from the Underworld or the dead. After all, just because hunters can't currently use what relics the ghostwalkers possess doesn't necessarily mean they *never* will. For example, it's commonly thought that masks removed from the Underworld can't remain in the land of the living for too long. Other base relics, like murder weapons which may repeatedly turn up at the scene of a crime, might be more useful and accessible. Either way, those claims have yet to be verified simply because the haunted's relics are even more rare than they are.

In general, the conspiracy hasn't pushed its hunters to pursue ghostwalkers or acquire their relics. Should a cell come in contact with a Fog Man, they've been instructed to assess and engage one as a potential ally with the hope that the ghostwalker will divulge his secrets.

Ascending Ones

The Ascending Ones have a complicated view on ghostwalkers. Many within the conspiracy understand that ghostwalkers are not a modern-day phenomenon, and can be connected to powerful beings in ancient Egypt; some of whom were said to walk amongst the gods, while others dominated society with their powers. For this reason, the Ascending Ones believe that ghostwalkers may represent a major threat to modern society — on par with their old foes, the newly-risen mummies. In fact, the issue is so clouded, that some within the conspiracy have confused the Fog Men with mummies, because of their ability to reawaken after death. When it comes to mummies and ghostwalkers, the conspiracy's information is grossly incomplete, and that lack of knowledge makes the situation even more challenging — especially since the Ascending Ones are aware that other conspiracies don't take ghostwalkers as seriously as they should.

Instead, the conspiracy has fixated on finding the means to affecting all supernaturals that cross between the lands of the living and the dead with ease. A ghostwalker's resilience to drugs and poisons is legendary; members of the Jagged Crescent are testing a new drug devised from mushrooms that grow in the Underworld. This drug, nicknamed "Death Cloud," is said to be incredibly addictive — and potentially lethal — to humans and supernaturals alike. Not only do test subjects defy the borders of life and death to get their hands on the potion, some use whatever means necessary to acquire it. Unfortunately, the potion isn't ready to be distributed just yet, for testing Death Cloud has incurred terrifying side effects. The drug could be a powder keg that puts them in the crosshairs of ghostwalkers and hunters in a way the conspiracy has not experienced before.

However, it should be said that the Jagged Crescent aren't the only hunters who travel regularly to the Underworld. The Ascending Ones are acutely aware that the realms of the dead are rich with any number of useful reagents for their elixirs; even drawing water from underground rivers and lakes can be a potent ingredient, especially for symptoms and side effects like pain resistance, sleep, or forgetfulness.

But, while some ghostwalkers guard the gates between the living and dead, and do object to such activities, a hunter who travels to find a unique and specific ingredient for an elixir won't be as conspicuous as the Jagged Crescent are. After all, they send their hunters to harvest as many otherworldly fungi as they possibly can. Removing anything from the Underworld in vast quantities is, in general, a bad idea.

For this reason, ghostwalkers are starting to take a special interest in the conspiracy. Hunters may even be surprised to learn that ghostwalkers can and do differentiate between one cell to the next, and that the haunted may even offer a "reward" for information concerning ghosts and the undead.

The Response

For most Ascending Ones, the question they need to ask themselves is how to keep out of each other's business. Though the conspiracy typically views ghostwalkers to be a dire threat, individual hunters may not agree. Cells who encounter ghostwalkers during their Vigil may find that they're not as dangerous as the conspiracy's leaders would have them believe. This creates a rift within the conspiracy, and translates to an uneven response. Some hunters steer clear of ghostwalkers and ignore them. Others actively seek an encounter with the Fog Men, hoping to learn more about the properties of the Underworld, or to get a glimpse into the minds of the conspiracy's enemies.

Still, there are other reasons the Ascending Ones might engage a ghostwalker. Cells might believe they possess important lore, or may deem them would-be dictators, recalling their rumored roles in ancient Egypt. The Jagged Crescent could, of course, want to find more test subjects for Death Cloud, too. Though their motivations vary, each cell and hunter has a reason why they would or wouldn't engage a ghostwalker. For this reason, the Ascending Ones may be friendlier, or more militant, than others who come face-to-face with the haunted.

The one common thread that ties the Ascending Ones together, however, is the fact that the conspiracy requires ingredients found in the Underworld for its elixirs. Those hunters who need substances, mineral or organic, from the lands in the dead will keep an eye out for ghostwalkers, ghosts, and other undead monsters — especially those who may be guarding the border between worlds.

The Cheiron Group

Ghostwalkers are incredibly resilient creatures flowing with ectoplasm, able to rise from the dead and see ghosts, and can even help humans detect whether or not a loved one has cancer. This makes the ghostwalkers extremely interesting to the Cheiron Group. Almost as soon as they became aware of the haunted, the conspiracy sent out operatives to capture one. Throughout the centuries, few had been collected, and Cheiron suffered many casualties to acquire one. When the conspiracy did, however, they took every opportunity to learn about the nature of a ghostwalker as best they could.

Modern technology and medical innovations have allowed the Cheiron Group to experiment on the few ghostwalkers they caught in the wake of World War II. The conspiracy has learned that they are impossible to incapacitate without killing. Second, killing a ghostwalker won't permanently harm him. This has led to the conspiracy's attempts to harvest pieces of their bodies, with disastrous results. The Cheiron Group has buried the incident deep in its archives, but conspiracy leaders haven't forgotten the fact that hunters died upon a ghostwalker's reawakening. They also know that ghostwalkers don't come back completely in one piece, though, so a pair of harvested eyes can only be used the one time.

One important piece of information Cheiron has, is that while most groups think or hope ghostwalkers eventually stop coming back, the conspiracy strongly suspects that the haunted

can't reawaken an unlimited number of times. The fact someone nearby always dies when a ghostwalker returns has made it difficult to figure out just how many lives a ghostwalker possesses, but that hasn't stopped some hunters from trying to uncover the secret.

The biggest setback the Cheiron Group has experienced has been the conspiracy's failed attempts to harvest ectoplasm. While ghostwalkers clearly contain, channel, and use ectoplasm, the conspiracy has learned that their bodies do not produce the substance naturally, not like bloodsuckers do. A vampire's body may produce blood with unique properties, but a ghostwalker is more like a conduit.

Cheiron knows that the haunted can collect ectoplasm, too, and suspect they frequent haunts to draw it from the spirits. They have confirmed, however, that no amount of prodding will cause them to manufacture ectoplasm. Also, much to the conspiracy's surprise, the one autopsy they were able to conduct showed that the ghostwalker doesn't have an obvious place in its body to store ectoplasm. While harvesting a dead vampire can give Cheiron vampire blood, no amount of dissection yields stored ectoplasm in a fallen ghostwalker.

This frustrating setback, along with the fact that ghostwalkers are now actively avoiding the Cheiron Group, has forced the conspiracy to shift priorities. Instead, Cheiron is field-testing some new equipment to that will allow them to capture and identify ghosts using sound-based tech. The conspiracy believes that ghosts could be a worthwhile source of ectoplasm to explore, but aren't sure what the haunted will do should they ever find out what they're truly after.

The Response

Presently, both ghosts and ghostwalkers are a high priority for the conspiracy. Though the haunted have eluded Cheiron since the 1970s, hunters recognize that ghostwalkers have a built-in lure: ghosts. If ghosts can be found or manufactured, any ghostwalkers in the area will show up eventually. Some hunters have discovered that the haunted's ability to communicate with ghosts may thwart some of their techniques, but overall the conspiracy believes it'll be relatively easy to draw them out of hiding once they're found.

Though Cheiron hopes to capture ghostwalkers in this way, the conspiracy lacks any real understanding of how the human soul works, and that missing knowledge works against the hunters. Potentially, there are many important mysteries the conspiracy may unlock in the human soul, but should Cheiron wish to uncover them, hunters will ultimately require new approaches to get what TCG desires. Any breakthroughs in the field may translate to another shift in priorities, for if the conspiracy can figure out how to capture ghosts without risking the lives of its hunters, then ghostwalkers will, no doubt, be easier for TCG to retain and analyze. In the meantime, the Cheiron Group approaches the haunted clinically, from a biological and physical perspective not unlike the Null Mysteriis, and that approach often works to the detriment of both.

Even in light of the conspiracy's mission to harvest ectoplasm and find how it's manufactured, there are a few within Cheiron that believes ghostwalkers should be indoctrinated into TCG and used as freelance hunters. After all, ghostwalkers are better a dealing with ghosts than hunters are, and that makes the haunted useful. To some hunters, ghostwalkers are the ideal agents to dispatch into dangerous situations, and tend to be ignorant of anything that doesn't pertain to the dead. Their tendency to be fairly idiosyncratic, however, makes implementation of this idea difficult, as does their lack of sustained interest in cooperating with the conspiracy.

In general, the Cheiron Group will, if necessary, make the haunted an offer should they cross paths. Fortunately, when negotiations go south, TCG isn't opposed to using one of its many company facades to obscure the conspiracy's true identity. And, when an offer is made, the haunted may not know who they're dealing with — a secret many TCG hunters should desperately protect.

The Lucifuge

Talkative ghostwalkers often claim they've made a deal with a potent mythological figure. Maybe it's Inanna. The Angel of Death. Osiris. Beelzebub. Maybe it's an odd or esoteric being, like the Laughing Lady or Mr. Bone-Jangles. Regardless, this supernatural contract is what has allowed the haunted to return from the grave, and the circumstances surrounding the haunted's deal throws up all sorts of red flags for the Children of the Seventh Generation.

While the haunted are rare, the Lucifuge have encountered enough of them over the years to study and form an opinion of them. The conspiracy reached the general conclusion that the ghostwalkers are, in fact, delusional. After all, the haunted's claims about how they managed to acquire an angelic or demonic patron were full of shit. Sure, ghostwalkers may *think* they've made a contract with a divine being. The Lucifuge has had plenty of time, however, to figure out that there's a lot the haunted don't know.

Over the years, the Lucifuge herself has collected at least seven different ghostwalker reports describing how the archangel Michael had bonded to their souls. When questioned further, not a single ghostwalker knew anything about angels or demons worth mentioning. What the conspiracy did figure out, however, was that whatever ghostwalkers were dealing with, the entity originated from a nether world — not Pandemonium, heaven, or any other place the Children of Lucifer had heard of. So, despite working very hard to seem otherwise, ghostwalkers were ultimately insignificant in the grand scheme of things. However, the Lady of Milan does think the Underworld is intriguing; both as another realm to explore, and for any possible implications it might have for the Lucifuge.

At present, the conspiracy has yet to reach the Underworld, some wonder if that realm is actually Pandemonium. Or, if the Underworld exists, that Pandemonium is a fictitious place, completely inaccessible to anyone. The haunted don't seem to have any answers, and the Lucifuge don't really expect them to know anything, either.

While hunters figure out just what to do with the haunted, the Lady is thought to be conducting her own investigation. If she can safely travel to and from an otherworldly realm, then surely her hunters can, too. For that reason, the Lady is carefully reaching out to the haunted, in her own way.

The Response

The conspiracy's response to ghostwalker activity varies. Most Lucifuge don't regard them to be a big deal, provided they're not causing too much trouble. The haunted are just another weird thing that's out there, and only impact the Lucifuge's mission when they cross paths. Still, the Lucifuge are on a mission of righteousness, and if a group of ghostwalkers is actively stirring up ghosts or killing innocents, most Lucifuge will not hesitate to intervene if necessary. The conspiracy has figured out that the haunted's actions are often directly tied to ghost activity, too. So, if the dead are restless, a group of ghostwalkers won't be far behind.

Some hunters, especially those in the Denial, have recognized that ghostwalkers could be useful. After all, Satan's unrepentant children tend to create a lot of ghosts as a result of their dark and deadly acts, and the haunted can help to quell angry spirits. Cooperating with the haunted, however, may be a shaky alliance. Though ghostwalkers can make the walls bleed on command, they may be afraid to watch the Lucifuge in action, especially when the hunters use their infernal powers. As always, Lucifuge hunters should study any potential allies, to identify common goals before revealing who they are.

Some Lucifuge, especially those within The Reconciliation, have no interest in dealing with the haunted. They're concerned that ghostwalker beliefs should be taken more seriously than they are. Sure, a ghostwalker who thinks she's communing with Beelzebub doesn't really align herself with any demon, but this belief means she's ripe for demonic manipulation. With a little urging from a true demon, a ghostwalker's power could be turned against her — or other humans. As such, some hunters believe that it's safer to deal with ghostwalkers permanently.

What's more, a small number of the Lucifuge have aligned with the Malleus Maleficarum, and think the difference between the haunted and witches is academic. Witches fall into a broad classification, and ghostwalkers seem to essentially be a specialized type of witch. Sometimes, the powers a ghostwalker has may be identical to that of a witch. And, like many witches, the haunted do identify a specific patron; the ghostwalkers made a deal, and they received supernatural powers as a result. These Children of Lucifer feel that hunters should deal with the haunted like they do any other witch, often summarily.

Overall, though, the Lady of Milan's general approach is that ghostwalkers are not a major concern for the Lucifuge. If anything, they are something of a distraction or red herring, given how easily the haunted's activities can be mistaken for other monsters — real threats that actively hurt the living. Should any ghostwalker start attacking humans, however, the Lady will instruct the Lucifuge to hunt them down, too, to protect humankind.

Malleus Maleficarum

While the conspiracy has examined ghostly phenomena in the past, the Malleus Maleficarum are more concerned about the bargain the haunted has struck. The conspiracy believes that arrangement represents a deal with a demon, one that allows a human being to return from the dead — like a minor demon, zombie, or witch.

Some Malleus notes that the haunted seem to carry a second presence with them. For them, this spiritual essence is a clear sign that ghostwalkers are witches as opposed to other undead creatures, and that these people are innocent victims being controlled or influenced by a powerful demonic entity. Thus, the conspiracy has instructed its hunters not to be fooled by the haunted's appearance or actions. To them, what ghostwalkers do is not magic-related, but is due to demonic powers that flow through the person's body. No matter how benign the haunted may seem, the conspiracy is convinced that all ghostwalkers are, in fact, agents of evil.

Unfortunately, the conspiracy hasn't determined how to excise the entity from the haunted, willing or not. While some examination suggests that the person possesses *two* minds instead of one, Malleus hasn't discovered a way to directly communicate with the other entity. All their years of hunting witches, using exorcisms, and staking bloodsuckers has not prepared the conspiracy to deal with the haunted. Even techniques that hunters have used to successfully banish major demons in the past have failed to separate the haunted's possessing entity from its host.

Some Malleus hunters believe that certain ghostwalkers aren't really possessed, but do have the means to communicate with the necromantic demon they call master. While some hunters continue to press the idea that the haunted are possessed and need to be exorcised, in general the conspiracy believes that all ghostwalkers are witches in disguise.

The Response

As with witches, ghostwalkers are less the focus of the Malleus Maleficarum, but are still very much a target. The haunted are not given special treatment, and they're not considered to be much different from any other force of darkness. As a general goal, the conspiracy will force the haunted to confess, to renounce Satan, and to remain dead. The Malleus Maleficarum is not above torture — should the situation call for it — and, as with witches, ghostwalkers are thought to hold secrets that would be of use to the conspiracy.

Of course, the question of what to do with a ghostwalker who does confess remains tricky, even more so than when a run-of-the-mill witch divulges all her sins. Killing a ghostwalker as an act of mercy isn't a feasible option for them, given the fact that most will return. Worse, some Malleus understands that the haunted may be justified in their actions, and when they are the entire conspiracy is thrown into a moral dilemma. When a ghostwalker identifies a slasher, for example, the Malleus may be content to leave the actual hunt to the police. But, when the haunted can clearly spot a vampire? What then? Can the

Malleus lower themselves to using the haunted to find what they want to eradicate more than anything else in this world?

Such moral quandaries are rare, given how infrequently the conspiracy has encountered a ghostwalker, and Malleus has yet to make a definitive judgment as to what's best for their hunters. Should a cell capture one of the haunted, any pleas for redemption or cries for help are typically decided by the hunters involved — without any guidance from the Vatican.

That said, some hunters in the Order of St. Ambrose remain convinced there is some way to separate the demon from its host, and that all ghostwalkers are possessed victims, not witches who can control their actions. They see the conspiracy's failures as a challenge to their faith, not a sign that they are mistaken. After all, even when tortured, most haunted insist they are connected to a second entity, and some ask to escape from it.

To this day, these hunters continue to present their case from time-to-time, and believe the haunted should be regarded as a special case. Thus far, the Order of St. Ambrose hasn't acquired enough evidence to make a convincing argument. It seems that most Malleus hunters don't want to overreact and condemn innocents, not without hard proof, not while bloodsuckers remain the conspiracy's top priority.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

Task Force: VALKYRIE first encountered ghostwalkers in Europe during the waning days of World War II. Though the Fog Men took out their revenge on Nazis and Soviets alike, they were rare compared to other supernatural monsters. So, while top brass did recognize that the Fog Men were a threat, they never really topped Task Force: VALKYRIE's list of targets. Deemed to be a phenomenon unique to the battlefield, brass didn't give much credence to the idea that Fog Men might exist in America. That is, not until Task Force: VALKYRIE had a run in with a few ghostwalkers in the 1980s, and quickly realized that Fog Men were operating at home, too.

When Project: FORT began upping their efforts in earnest, however, TFV encountered ghostwalkers far more often. Trying to eliminate or contain ghosts ultimately drew the wrath of a number of Fog Men, who proved to exhibit unusual powers, and camaraderie with ghosts the conspiracy didn't think was possible.

Task Force: VALKYRIE hunters have few ideas about the ENE's true nature — and top brass hasn't fully disclosed what the Fog Men are, either. Amongst hunters, the dominant theory is that the Fog Men are possessed, and only appear after a violent death — like dying in battle. Whatever they are, TFV has figured out Etheric Rounds hurt ghostwalkers even though they are made of flesh. While the Fog Men are clearly upset that TFV has found a weakness, top brass has ordered the conspiracy not to use them. It seems that, at the highest level, some think the Fog Men should be left alone — a belief that's often ignored.

The Response

In general, the conspiracy's response to ghostwalkers is to kill them with fire, before they can kill anyone else. When TFV encounters the Fog Men, they're often told to consider them a serious threat, one that should be handled carefully and possibly ignored. Not only can the Fog Men wreak havoc on TFV forces, they're also difficult to kill.

Despite TFV's proven expertise when dealing with Fog Men, top brass hesitates to order Project: FORT to handle them in the field. What TFV's commanders aren't saying, is that they believe the Fog Men can be used to the conspiracy's advantage. It seems brass figured out that the Fog Men do have something they want: the ability to travel to the Underworld. Now, the conspiracy hopes to test new equipment — the Gatekeeper Device — which may allow Task Force: VALKYRIE to open an Avernian Gate (see p. 226, **The God-Machine Chronicle**).

Most hunters want to use the Gatekeeper Device to give them an edge on their hunts. Though the device isn't fully operational yet, top brass believes that Gatekeeper will allow TFV to target monsters at their point of origin. Though the project has been developed in a top secret environment, some ghostwalkers are beginning to pay close attention to the conspiracy. Thus far, the Fog Men act only on suspicion; they don't know what Task Force: VALKYRIE is up to, if they are trying to recreate them, just what their tech can do, or what the conspiracy's long-term plan is.

Project: FORT has not been eager to engage the Fog Men, so they're not wise to the fact that the ghostwalkers are seeking to secure a spot within the conspiracy. A handful of hunters within Project: FORT have dared to wonder if the haunted serve some sort of purpose or higher power, and worry that the conspiracy is interfering with the natural order. If ghostwalkers exist to keep ghosts contained, why should they interfere? Given how Project: FORT defers to top brass, however, they mostly keep their opinions to themselves. After all, should the bigwigs disapprove of their newfound morality and cut their funding, they'll have to uphold the Vigil the old-fashioned way.

Wandering Monsters

It's easy to introduce a ghostwalker as a high difficulty villain for a local cell to hunt and kill. Ghostwalkers can also be used to change up the story, to offer a different type of mystery and threat than what vampires or witches provide. Few enemies positively require the hunters to use their brains instead of their bullets. Hunters who go after a gang of ghostwalkers with guns blazing will more than likely be seriously hurt — or worse. To succeed, hunters should be careful, and use the knowledge they've learned against them. Ghostwalkers can make for an excellent story, and with their ability to come back from the grave, a single haunted monster can make a great antagonist that lasts for several weeks. While this is the most obvious choice, it is not the only way Storytellers may use a ghostwalker in a chronicle.

Ghostwalkers and hunters share more in common than they know. While the haunted are as idiosyncratic as any supernatural creature, they stick to a code, one that many hunters would recognize as a Vigil. Simply, ghostwalkers

NAOMI REDBIRD

Virtue: Fortitude
Vice: Hunger
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3
Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Science (Flammable Substances) 2
Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 2
Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Allies 2, Anonymity 2, Contacts 4
Health: 8
Dread Powers: Curse of Failings 3, Absorb Energy (Fire) 2
Potency: 3
Aspirations: Burn something to the ground, Help a ghost find peace, Erase who she once was
Integrity: 5
Willpower: 6
Speed: 10
Defense: 3
Initiative: 6
Armor: 0
Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Special
Pistol	1	20/40/80	4	
Knife	2	na	4	Concealed

Special
Firestarter: Naomi can spend a point of Willpower to cause an object to cause an object to catch fire. The object burns quickly, and easily spreads to nearby objects. This does not require her to do anything but glance at the object.

help ghosts move on to keep the Underworld separate from the land of the living. Not only do they protect ghosts from the living, these people protect the living from ghosts, too. Many ghostwalkers spend their entire new lives watching the supernatural world, and are bewildered by the monsters that stare back at them. Many hunters might empathize with a ghostwalker who's been shaken out of his normal life and thrust into a new responsibility.

This, of course, isn't always true. Some ghostwalkers don't care about personal responsibility and want to use their power to benefit themselves, while others seek an even greater power, a type of godhood known only to them. But, even amongst these ghostwalkers, their goals may still have something in common with hunters. Any hunter who is tracking down a ghost or a creature from the Underworld might temporarily team up with a power-hungry ghostwalker. Any scholar may ask to record the ghostwalker's activities for posterity's sake, and watch in awe as she allows him to catch a glimpse into her world.

Naomi Red Bird

I understand the need for vengeance. It burns within me, too.

Background: In the late 1980s, Naomi Red Bird was born to a poor family who lived in the town of Allen, South Dakota, located on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Though her family

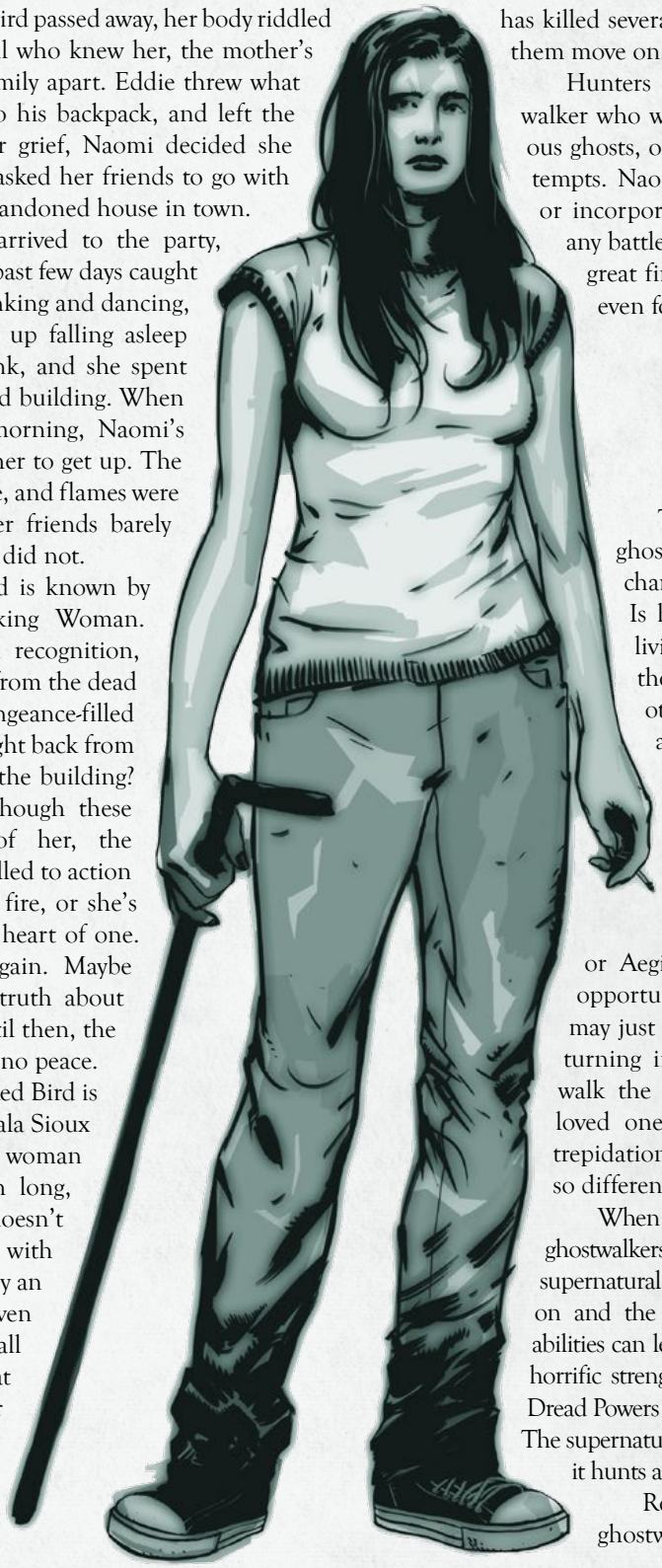
didn't have much, they stuck together as best they could, until a great tragedy struck each family member down. Her mother, Connie Red Bird, was a budding artist until she was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer. By the time she lost her second child, Connie lost the will to live. Her father, Eddie Red Bird, taught tribal history at the local community college until he eventually succumbed to alcoholism, unable to deal with his wife's slow and heartbreaking decline.

In 2001, Connie Red Bird passed away, her body riddled with tumors. Beloved by all who knew her, the mother's untimely death tore the family apart. Eddie threw what little valuables he had into his backpack, and left the reservation behind. In her grief, Naomi decided she needed a distraction, and asked her friends to go with her to a party held at an abandoned house in town.

By the time Naomi arrived to the party, however, the events of the past few days caught up with her. Instead of drinking and dancing, the young student wound up falling asleep while her friends got drunk, and she spent the night in the condemned building. When they woke up the next morning, Naomi's friends were screaming at her to get up. The house was filled with smoke, and flames were spreading fast. Though her friends barely managed to escape, Naomi did not.

Now, Naomi Red Bird is known by another name: the Smoking Woman. Her body burned beyond recognition, Naomi Red Bird returned from the dead as a scarred, angry, and vengeance-filled woman. Why was she brought back from the dead? Who set fire to the building? Where was her father? Though these questions burn inside of her, the Smoking Woman is compelled to action by fire. Either she starts a fire, or she's forced to burn at the very heart of one. Again, and again, and again. Maybe one day, she'll learn the truth about what happened to her. Until then, the Smoking Woman will find no peace.

Appearance: Naomi Red Bird is a descendant from the Oglala Sioux tribe. She appears to be woman in her early twenties with long, black hair. Though she doesn't need to, she usually walks with a cane. Her brown eyes carry an intensity people notice even on casual inspection. To all who see her, it's clear that Naomi Red Bird grieves for a deep loss, one she can never fully heal from.



Storytelling Hints: Naomi Red Bird spends most of her time trying to help ghosts find peace. She is fearless and doesn't shy away from rundown or poorer areas. To her, Naomi feels she's gotten a second chance, and has seized that opportunity as best she can.

To resist her call to start fires, Naomi usually smokes. Unfortunately, this trick doesn't always work, for ghosts with violent urges often persuade her to start fires, and will only move on if that blaze claims a victim. To date, Naomi has killed several people on behalf of ghosts to help them move on.

Hunters may encounter Naomi as a ghostwalker who wants to help them deal with dangerous ghosts, or they may run afoul of her arson attempts. Naomi frequently uses fire as a weapon or incorporates it into her conflict resolutions; any battle she's involved in, will likely end in a great fire — one that's sure to be dangerous, even for her allies.

Story Hooks

To deepen the presentation of a ghostwalker, think about what role that character plays and what he represents. Is he the character who represents the living in a scenario? Or does he keep the dead in check? More than any other sort of supernatural creature, a **Hunter** Storyteller may look at a ghostwalker, and may often see changed hunters looking back at her. Indeed, a ghostwalker's goals, motivations, and lifestyles may seem positively mundane and all too human compared to the Lucifuge or Aegis Kai Doru. This provides unique opportunities for any Storyteller. Hunters may just be one bullet to the head away from turning into a ghostwalker themselves. Both walk the same roads, care and protect their loved ones, and view the supernatural with trepidation. In many ways, ghostwalkers are not so different from what hunters already are.

When hunters encounter a gang of ghostwalkers, Storytellers should play up the supernatural aspects of these new arrivals by focusing on and the group's bizarre occult powers. These abilities can lead to surreal and evocative scenes, and horrific strengths can add tension and atmosphere. Dread Powers are what make them monsters, after all. The supernatural does not just walk amongst humans; it hunts amongst hunters, too.

Representing the vengeful dead, ghostwalkers bring with them a host of

frightening powers, but also terrifying implications. A slasher or bloodsucker with powers may be dangerous, and something to hunt, but a ghostwalker can add a disturbing layer to that concept. It's one thing to fight a foe with a grudge; it's another to face a grudge from beyond the grave. However lifelike they may seem, ghostwalkers are people who have crossed over and never truly escaped the grave. Death surrounds them at all times, and the voices of the dead echo in their ears.

Even then, those who hunt the living still hunt. Not for food or a primal urge, but for a purpose. Like their cousins, they have a Vigil. Perhaps they believe their Vigil is righteous, perhaps they are avenging their own murder. But maybe, like ghosts, they are no longer capable of rational thought. How a cell deals with otherworldly vengeance is a question that will vary from hunter to hunter, cell to cell, and is another theme to introduce when dealing with ghostwalkers.

Regardless of whether they are allies or enemies, ghostwalkers can make for an interesting twist in a **Hunter** game. Perhaps they are doing essentially the same thing as the PC's cell. Maybe they really are a force for good and balance, or strive to deliver righteous vengeance from beyond the grave. They could be an instrument of revenge, people who've lost sight of what righteousness is a long time ago. However they are used, ghostwalkers represent an element that could add incredible stories to a **Hunter** chronicle. The question isn't how they can be used, then, but what story best fits the group.

The three story hooks that follow are examples of different ways you can use this unique type of supernatural being in a chronicle.

No Place for Amateurs

Summary: The cell is investigating a local house haunted by a dangerous, hostile ghost. During their investigation, the hunters encounter a second group who has also taken an interest in the house and its ghostly occupant. This new gang is eclectic, secretive, and insists that the PCs leave the area, for their own safety. They're ghostwalkers, after all, and they know exactly how the hunters are going to mess everything up.

Setup: The hunters are well-intentioned, of course, but the ghostwalkers weren't lying. In their minds, the cell doesn't have the power or experience to appropriately deal with ghosts. The haunted will patronize them, and tell them they're better off protecting people from other monsters that go bump in the night. But, as the conversation continues, the hunters being to understand that the ghostwalkers clearly aren't human, and don't answer to any human rules. Do the hunters let them work on their own? Keep an eye on the ghostwalkers? Or, does the cell try to find some way to deal with them?

Tier One: A haunted house is perfect way for tier-one hunters to get their feet wet. After all, how much damage can one ghost do? However, hunting ghosts will prove to be a lot easier than actually removing them. Not everything the cell sees on television is to be believed. And they may have to frequent a particular location multiple times before they have formulated a plan of attack. When they're ready to take down the spirit—that's when the ghostwalkers show up. After all that trouble, will the hunters step aside and allow the haunted to intervene? Or will they partner up and learn an invaluable lesson in the process?

Tier Two: In a tier-two plot, the hunters might be drawn to a location or series of coordinates based on rumors circulated by their compact. They will likely be armed and prepared to take on a deadly ghost. Scholarly types will have done their homework, to find out more about the house and its previous occupants, too. By the time the ghostwalkers show up, however, the hunters will believe they have the situation well in hand. When the Fog Men reveal more intel about the ghosts, information they'll be shocked to learn, will the hunters step aside? What happens when the ghost wastes no time and attacks?

Tier Three: A conspiracy-level story of this type will plant the seeds for a larger-scale mystery. In a tier-three game, not one house is haunted, but several — and the ghosts are all connected to each other somehow. A terrifying cult, a coven of would-be witches, or a rogue ghostwalker may be drawing the hunters deeper and deeper into a trap. After the hunters cleanse one home, what happens when the ghostwalkers show up late? Will the cell hear them out, or will they attack, thinking the Fog Men — who are following them from haunted house to spooky mansion — are causing the hauntings?

The Flim-Flam Man

Summary: An old house just down the street fell into disrepair a long time ago, and is rumored to be haunted. While stories had been circulating for decades, no one believed the house was actually haunted, until the new owner moved in. Unlike other ghosts, this spirit is obvious and loud. This ghost waves at cars passing by, makes the walls bleed almost on demand, and speaks through televisions in macabre rhymes. It almost seems too much to be true, and it is; the house isn't haunted by any spirit, but an enterprising ghostwalker.

Setup: The "ghost" responsible for a haunted is actually a rogue ghostwalker. This Fog Man is generating all the effects of the house's haunting with his power, drawing ectoplasmic energy from rich and storied history of the home. What's more is that the ghostwalker stands to gain something else, too: a fat paycheck from a mysterious benefactor. Does the cell turn a blind eye to the charlatan? Try to expose her as a "fake" ghost? What happens if the ghostwalker draws other spirits and Fog Men to the area in order to prove the house is haunted? How does the cell deal with a clever-but-seemingly-harmless con artist?

Tier One: Tier-one hunters may investigate a haunted house and decide that the ghostwalker is a human who's faking her abilities. In this scenario, the con artist is just a con artist — until the hunters are drawn back into the story by a friend, ally, or witness. The hard part won't be confronting the ghostwalker, but trying to deal with her appropriately. The horror here is when the cell decides to take her out. When they do, what happens after she rises back from the dead and kills one

of their friends or allies in the process? Will they finally take the con artist seriously?

Tier Two: A compact may have already identified the ghostwalker as an annoying threat who's interfering with the safety of the neighborhood. Tier-two hunters will go into the situation armed with the knowledge that this individual — whatever she happens to be — has to be taken out quickly, silently, and carefully. The only trouble is, not even the compact is aware how dangerous this particular Fog Man is. When cornered, she will aggravate other ghosts in the area, and target the hunters. Just as the situation starts to get out of control, other ghostwalkers appear. Will the hunters be rescued? Or have they shown up to help the con artist defeat the hunters?

Tier Three: In a tier-three game, the conspiracy has a vested interest in the ghostwalker, and believes this particular con artist is an easy target. The conspiracy's decree may range from detain and question to kidnap and secure. Whatever the conspiracy wants, however, the hunters will need to carry out that action — or suffer the consequences if they don't. What happens when the cell grows a conscience and realizes the ghostwalker's smoke-and-mirror tactics are saving the rest of her group from unwanted attention as they take down a terrifying threat? Or worse, if the Fog Man is a lot harder to capture than they originally thought — especially when the rest of her group shows up — will their higher-ups forgive and forget?

The Grudge

Summary: A young man is brutally murdered at a high school party in a small town. Witnesses say that the well-liked student came between two, popular athletes who were in the middle of a drunken argument. Due to the people involved, by the time the cops showed up all the evidence had been cleaned up, and the victim's body had been moved to the couch. The police weren't able to prove a connection to the murder by anyone at the party, despite the swirling rumors about what occurred there. No one is naming names. Soon afterward, the teenager's friends begin dying, one by one, and the hunters are called in.

Setup: The cell, perhaps drawn into the scene by the mysterious murder, discovers a group of vigilantes is killing teenagers who attended the victim's party. What happens when the hunters are told that the victim's ghost is actively working with the Fog Men to solve his murder? Will the hunters sympathize with the fact that the ghostwalkers are exacting just revenge in a town that goes out of its way to protect its favored sons and daughters? Who will the hunters side with? Ghostwalkers, who are killing all those who stood by and did nothing while the student was killed? Or the teenagers, who are clearly guilty and have yet to confess?

Tier One: A high-profile murder can attract the cell's attention in any number of ways. A hunter could have a personal tie to the town, like a relative or friend. Small, closely-knit communities will be harder for the hunters to explore than a larger city, especially when so many people are covering up a tragic murder for some unknown reason. That alone is enough to draw the cell into the scene. Adding a ghost and a group of ghostwalkers on top of that scenario and tier-one hunters will have their hands full when they're forced to choose a side.

Tier Two: In a tier-two scenario, the hunters discover the victim was their ally. Now, the cell has a personal, vested interest in seeing their contact's murderer brought to justice. Here, the hunters have lost something valuable to them — a witness, researcher, or relative — and the cell may be seeking justice on their terms. What happens when the hunters arrive in the town and the ghostwalkers encourage them to sign on with them? When the body count begins to rise, can the cell afford pointed questions from their compact? If their compact claims the victim's death has clouded their judgment, how will the hunters respond?

Tier Three: The murder, the town, and the victim were all a set up. In a tier-three chronicle, the hunters are given shocking information that, not only was the teenager's death intentional, it was a test conducted to produce a ghostwalker. Worse, when the ghostwalkers arrive at the scene, they corner the hunters and demand that they turn over the persons responsible for this tragedy. If the hunters refuse, the ghostwalkers will kill partygoers, one victim at a time, until the truth is revealed. What happens when the hunters find out that rogue ghostwalkers — not hunters — were responsible for the teen's murder? Can the cell convince the vengeance-driven Fog Men that a rival group rolled into town and framed hunters to throw them off their trail? Or will the hunters be drawn into a war between the two groups, and they'll be forced to protect the townsfolk from supernatural harm?

Inspiration & Sources

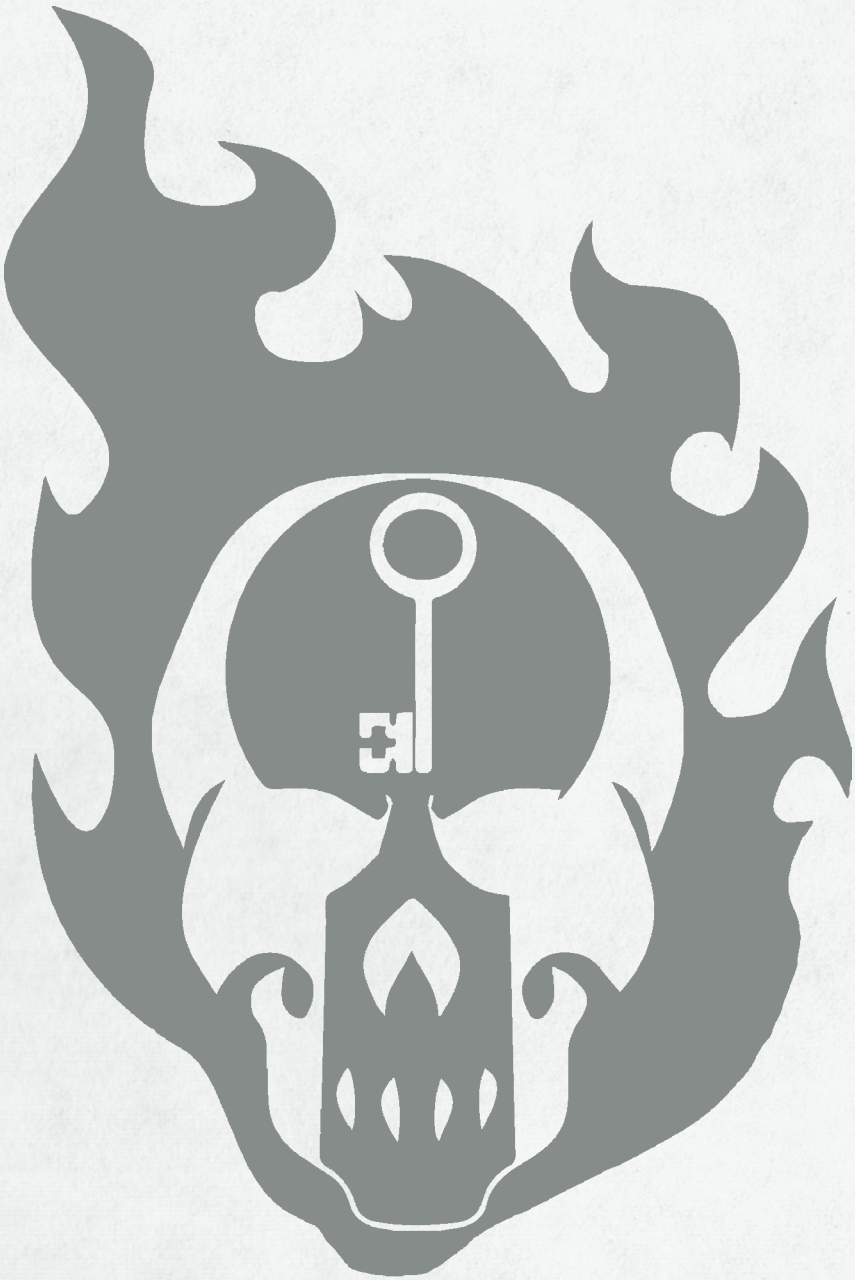
Any chronicle involving a ghostwalker will be, at its heart, a ghost story. Ghostwalkers may not be ectoplasmic entities, but they are still people who died; or at the very least, someone who would have died, and wasn't prepared to pass on as he should have. Every ghostwalker has a ghost-like motivation like revenge or justice. Additionally, a revenant's powers bear the trappings of ghostly phenomena, even if the ghostwalker is a living, breathing entity. Finally, the haunted are drawn to, and cannot escape ghosts. Wherever they go, ghosts follow in their footsteps, and are drawn inexorably to them. So, when adding ghostwalkers to a **Hunter** game, finding ghost stories for inspiration is valuable.

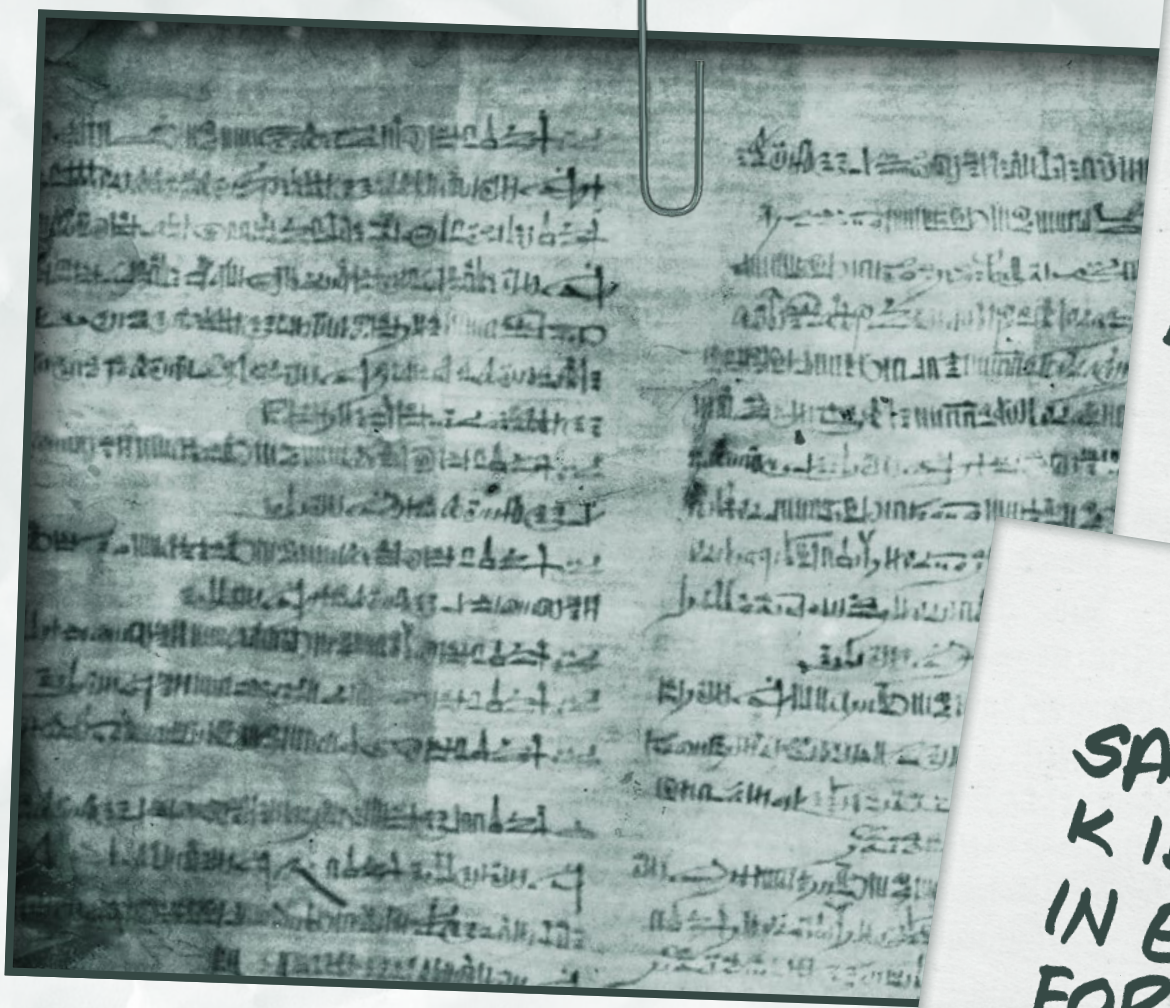
M.R. James' short stories tend to be well-written and atmospheric collections of ghost stories. Written at the turn the 20th century, they have a particularly antiquarian bent, and often include puzzles to be solved. *Oh Just Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad* is as good a start as any.

As far as movies, a recent interest in Japanese ghost stories has resulted in movies like *The Ring* or *The Grudge*, that have dangerously potent entities quite capable of harming unprepared hunters. Unlike Western ghosts, these spirits cannot be redeemed, and have to be put down. A lighter approach to ghosts is the film *Beetlejuice*, which can serve as a quirky inspiration. On the other hand, a more traditional ghost

story can be found in the movie *The Others*. For older movies, *The Innocents* featuring Deborah Kerr is a particularly twisted ghost story based on *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James.

For a film that's directly in line with a **Hunter/Geist** crossover, *The Crow* features a protagonist returned from the dead to seek revenge, a situation that's quite applicable to many ghostwalkers. *The Crow* is also dripping with atmosphere. For an alternate look at someone who's made a deal to return from the grave, *Spawn* shows the result of a similar necromantic bargain, with a more infernal origin. Similarly, the TV series *Brimstone* offers an infernal twist, including the need to deal with rogue ghosts.





Abbott Papyrus, a record written in hieratic script; it describes an inspection of roy dated to the 16th regnal year of Ramesses IX, ca. 1110 BCE.

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PRAYER TO OSIRIS

In the World of Mortals, you are a prince

In the Earthly Realm, you are the King's daughter

As long as your soul exists, so will your heart be with you.

Ah! Sacrifice that which is precious to you and be blessed!

You will be made whole by the Lord of the Divine Hall

And in this, your task committed and the Evil vanquished.

Praise be to Osiris!

Praise be to the blessed!

Praise be to the Great Architect of lived and those who are yet to come.

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PROTECTION

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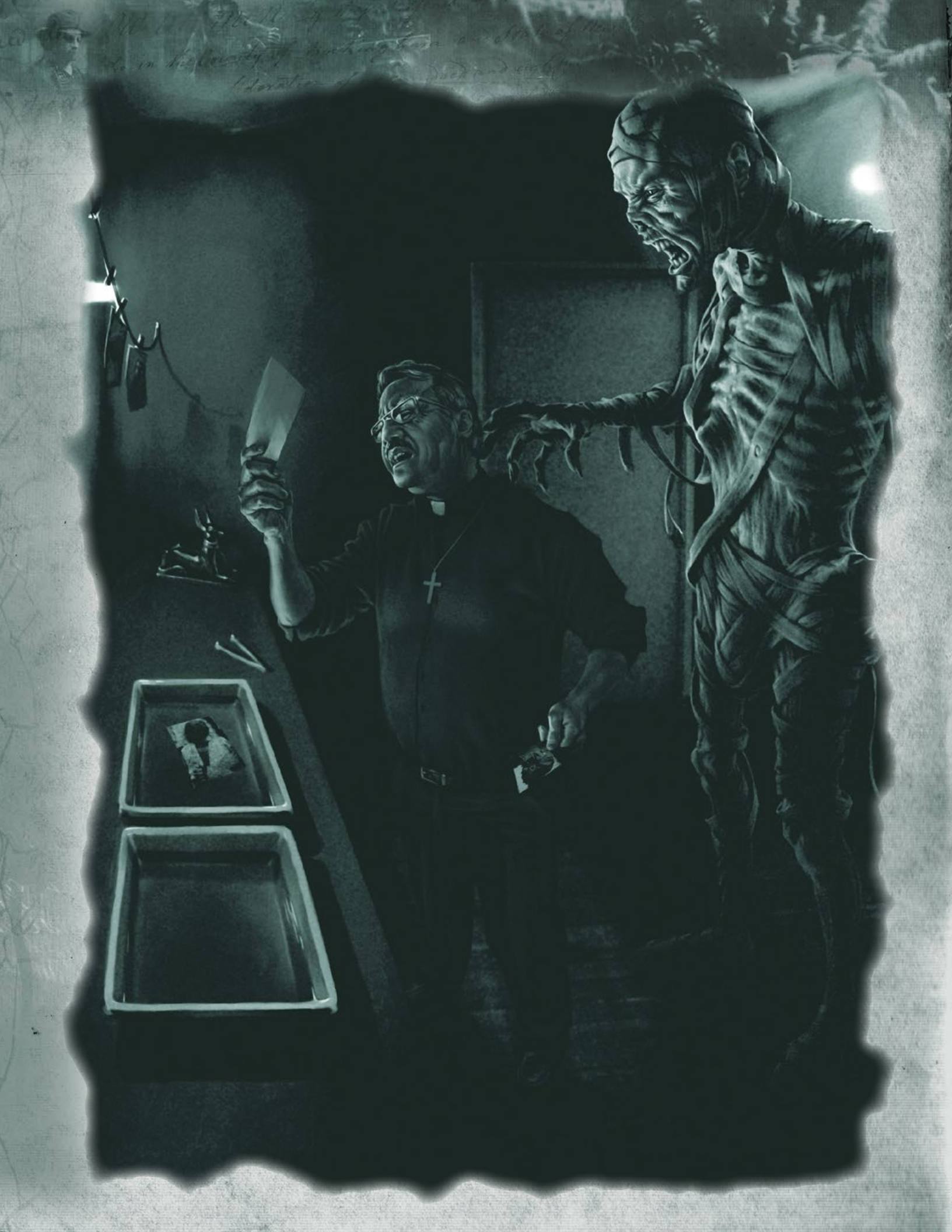
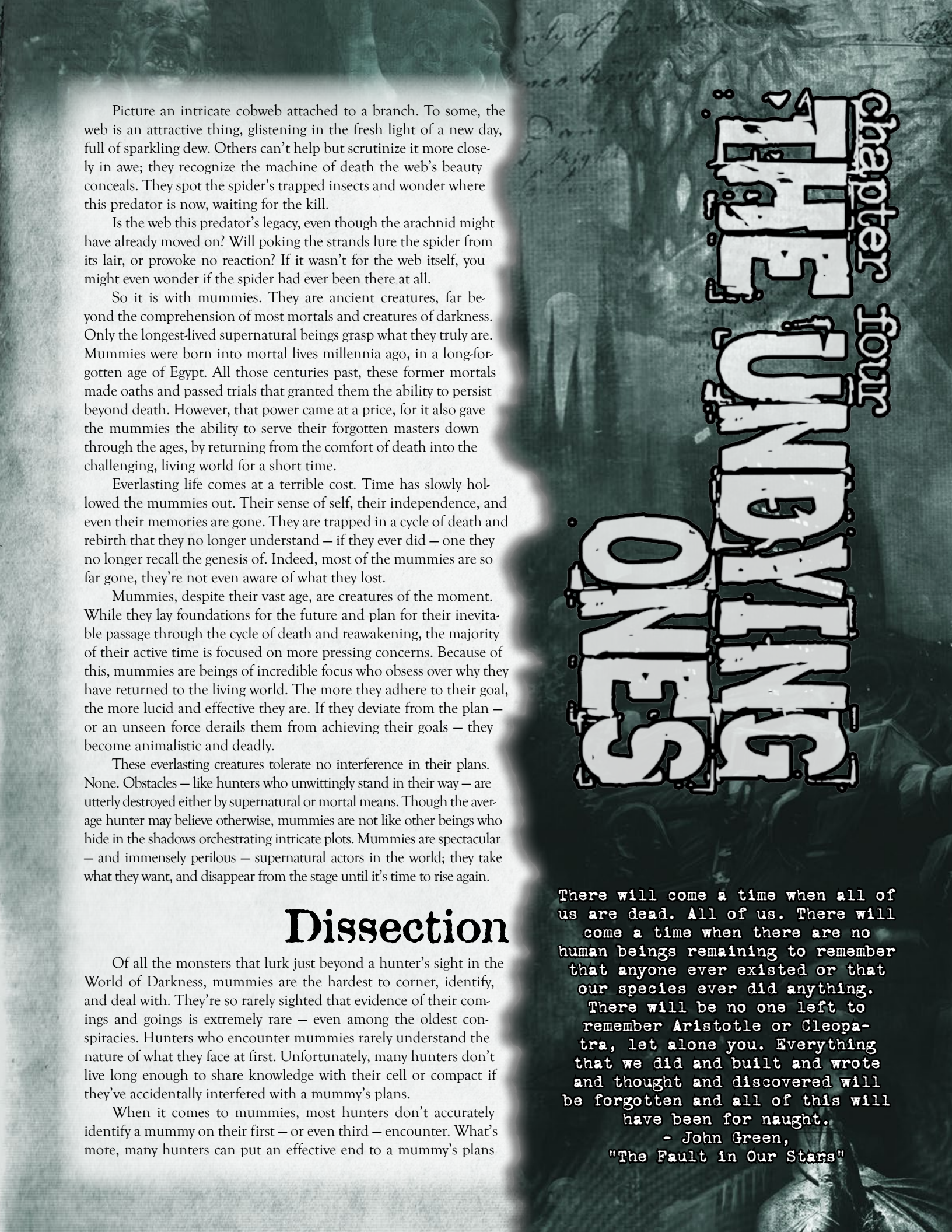
MIDWAY CHURCH OF GOD SEVENTH DAY

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Meet me at the old church on 35th street. I found Jesse's murderer, and need your help to sanctify this great evil. If you have a prayer for protection, amulet or sigil, bring the evidence of your faith and fight back the darkness. Light shall overcome the shadows if we stick together in this dire hour.

Eternally yours,
Reverend Mitchell





chapter four

THE UNDYING ONES

There will come a time when all of us are dead. All of us. There will come a time when there are no human beings remaining to remember that anyone ever existed or that our species ever did anything. There will be no one left to remember Aristotle or Cleopatra, let alone you. Everything that we did and built and wrote and thought and discovered will be forgotten and all of this will have been for naught.
- John Green,
"The Fault in Our Stars"

Picture an intricate cobweb attached to a branch. To some, the web is an attractive thing, glistening in the fresh light of a new day, full of sparkling dew. Others can't help but scrutinize it more closely in awe; they recognize the machine of death the web's beauty conceals. They spot the spider's trapped insects and wonder where this predator is now, waiting for the kill.

Is the web this predator's legacy, even though the arachnid might have already moved on? Will poking the strands lure the spider from its lair, or provoke no reaction? If it wasn't for the web itself, you might even wonder if the spider had ever been there at all.

So it is with mummies. They are ancient creatures, far beyond the comprehension of most mortals and creatures of darkness. Only the longest-lived supernatural beings grasp what they truly are. Mummies were born into mortal lives millennia ago, in a long-forgotten age of Egypt. All those centuries past, these former mortals made oaths and passed trials that granted them the ability to persist beyond death. However, that power came at a price, for it also gave the mummies the ability to serve their forgotten masters down through the ages, by returning from the comfort of death into the challenging, living world for a short time.

Everlasting life comes at a terrible cost. Time has slowly hollowed the mummies out. Their sense of self, their independence, and even their memories are gone. They are trapped in a cycle of death and rebirth that they no longer understand — if they ever did — one they no longer recall the genesis of. Indeed, most of the mummies are so far gone, they're not even aware of what they lost.

Mummies, despite their vast age, are creatures of the moment. While they lay foundations for the future and plan for their inevitable passage through the cycle of death and reawakening, the majority of their active time is focused on more pressing concerns. Because of this, mummies are beings of incredible focus who obsess over why they have returned to the living world. The more they adhere to their goal, the more lucid and effective they are. If they deviate from the plan — or an unseen force derails them from achieving their goals — they become animalistic and deadly.

These everlasting creatures tolerate no interference in their plans. None. Obstacles — like hunters who unwittingly stand in their way — are utterly destroyed either by supernatural or mortal means. Though the average hunter may believe otherwise, mummies are not like other beings who hide in the shadows orchestrating intricate plots. Mummies are spectacular — and immensely perilous — supernatural actors in the world; they take what they want, and disappear from the stage until it's time to rise again.

Dissection

Of all the monsters that lurk just beyond a hunter's sight in the World of Darkness, mummies are the hardest to corner, identify, and deal with. They're so rarely sighted that evidence of their comings and goings is extremely rare — even among the oldest conspiracies. Hunters who encounter mummies rarely understand the nature of what they face at first. Unfortunately, many hunters don't live long enough to share knowledge with their cell or compact if they've accidentally interfered with a mummy's plans.

When it comes to mummies, most hunters don't accurately identify a mummy on their first — or even third — encounter. What's more, many hunters can put an effective end to a mummy's plans

without ever realizing what they've faced. How could a Loyalist of Thule connect her half-glimpsed foe with ancient Egypt? Why would a Network Zero member believe a mysterious, humanoid creature he spotted at night is nothing but a zombie? What possible cause does an experienced hunter have to believe the being they've fought will likely never die?

The World of Darkness is plagued by creatures that straddle the line between life and death. Ghosts cross the barrier between worlds and zombies creep in the shadows. Vampires prowl as blood-fuelled corpses and even stranger creatures, like Prometheans and Geists, exist. A long-lived being that lurks in the dark, carries out mysterious plots, and works through pawns could be misidentified as a vampire or a warlock instead of a mummy. This occurs not because the hunter is unintelligent, but because mummies are that rare and enigmatic.

During the Vigil, doubts will creep in. The monster a cell thought was dead rises again; the evil the hunters believed was destroyed is confronting them once more. Worse, the creature they hunt is not housed in a new body, but its old one reborn, just as good as before.

Though they are difficult to kill, mummies can be frustrated and delayed. Given their nature, that alone can be a profound way for hunters to defeat them. However, hunters will find that mummies are all but impossible to destroy. Whatever is left of their bodies will regenerate over time. They will eventually burst forth from their tombs once more, to serve their masters' faceless agendas for another brief spell in the living world.

In the files of the oldest conspiracies, a curious hunter can find hints of patterns, repeated behaviors that suggest something *else* exists in the world. Something very old, and extremely powerful. Something that was born in an age long-forgotten, and yet which influences mankind even today.

Mummies.

C.

As requested, and frankly against my better judgment, I've compiled all the records we have that match the criteria we discussed:

- Co-ordinated activities of human agents over extended periods of time
- Evidence of the same entity being active repeatedly over time, but with long gaps of inactivity
- Bursts of extreme violence when confronted
- Interest, or active attempts, in acquiring historic artifacts of religious or mythic symbolism or importance.

I'm surprised. Despite my skepticism, which you'll well remember, there are more of them than I expected. In particular, cross-referencing reports filed in the last year or two suggests that this sort of behavior pattern has become more common very recently.

Of course, many other factors could be at play here. Our systems are better than they were even three years ago — God bless the late Mr. Jobs, huh? — and we might just be capturing this more often. We could be seeing a pattern of learning and knowledge spreading amongst the enemy, although Lord help us if that's true.

I'm not prepared to concede that we're seeing a distinct new type of entity here, just yet. This is too easily explained as a specific behavior pattern, and Occam's Razor applies…

That said, I've set some flags in the system, and will let you know if anything else matches this pattern. If you can get a weight of evidence, we'll look into it further.

Yours,

L.

Last e-mail sent from this account.

The Cycle Turns

Though the oldest conspiracies already have an inkling that mummies exist, newer cells and compacts may now be utterly focused on hunting them, too. In the last few years, there has been a noticeable surge in mummies re-awakening. Remember, mummies operate in centuries-long cycles, and one of those eras is reaching its peak now.

The larger number of arisen mummies opens the door for a confrontation with hunters. For all their eternal nature, mummies are not good at keeping up with technological changes and prefer to leave those details to their human servants. Hunter groups like Network Zero or The Cheiron Group who take careful use of those technologies very seriously, may see an uptick in activity and create a growing pool of evidence that sharp minds will use to track down mummies and their agents.

The fact that more mummies are awakening now gives Storytellers the perfect opportunity to shake up a long-running **Hunter** chronicle or to kick off a moribund one. This global event creates the distinct feeling that something *new* is in the world, something the hunters have never encountered before. Mummies usher in change and, with more of them in the living world, hunters now have the opportunity to stop, study, or capture them — however deluded that assumption might be.

Mummies are frightening, deadly foes. For most hunters, their first encounters with these undying ancients will probably occur accidentally while they're hunting another creature or through talking to their colleagues, co-workers, and friends. The undying have had millennia to weave themselves into the fabric of human society, and many mortals are their unwitting pawns. Indeed, a hunter with a day job could be a mummy's employee and not know it. Yet. The shifted worldview the Vigil brings can manifest as paranoia. But, just because a hunter is paranoid, doesn't mean that a mummy isn't closing in on him.

An individual mummy isn't a "living" antagonist in the World of Darkness; the clock is ticking from the moment they emerge from their tombs. Their ability to function is limited and erodes the moment they awake from their deathless sleep. Though hunters may eventually catch on that mummies have a mission to carry out, they often aren't aware that their actions have a time limit. Mummies awake to a purpose that's defined by their own agenda or by those who serve them. If the undying focuses on pursuing those goals and are successful, their time awake can last years. If they get distracted, or are repeatedly blocked from moving forward, their ability to hold on to the living world fades; their tombs pull them back into repose, and eventually they return to their former, desiccated state.

Due to their nature, mummies can serve Storytellers best as the "end boss" of an extended **Hunter** chronicle. However, Storytellers may introduce their servants into a story to either misdirect hunters or clue them in on the mummy's mysterious nature or schemes. Mummies work through others — human beings who may or not be aware that they're part of a cult, serving the will of a supernatural being. These cults both effectively extend the range of a mummy's activities in the world, acting as a bridge between their ancient minds and the realities of living in a modern age. Hunters may never even encounter a mummy,

for these servants keep the undying's agenda active even if their masters are still locked away in their tombs.

The Cruelest Cult

Mummies are capable of taking direct action, but they often choose not to do so. While they rest in their tombs, human agents carry out their wishes. At one end of the spectrum lie the unwilling dupes. These individuals may be found anywhere. They are the employees of a mummy-controlled corporation, the bodyguards who don't ask questions, or the street-level campaigners for a political movement. All three types of mortals may be tools for the undying to use, but neither has the slightest clue what they're serving or why.

The fact that everyday mortals are involved in a mummy's schemes should put most hunters into a moral quandary — especially since these people may not know the first thing about the World of Darkness. How does a hunter question an unwitting dupe who simply took on a job for some extra cash? What will a hunter do when she finds out a picketer is campaigning because he genuinely believes in his cause? Should the hunters succeed in bringing down a mummy-infested corporate body, how will they react when they learn they've driven good, hard-working people into poverty and unemployment?

This, perhaps, is the most insidiously evil element of the mummy's existence: the undying are deeply embedded in human society on a global scale. They are like a cancer in metastasis: a doctor can't cut it out without doing some damage to the host — and there's no guarantee that it won't return anyway.

Worse, though, is the fact that the actions of these cults can draw the hunters' attentions *while the mummy is inactive*. This distinction will not be clear to the average hunter, nor will it be apparent to a compact or conspiracy without months and years of careful research and collaboration. Since cults can exist without supernatural influences, hunters will have to investigate and decide whether or not cultists are odd, misguided, or evil. Then, they'll need to explore whether or not there is something supernatural at work, if the cultists know who or what they serve, or if someone *else* is influencing the cults on a broader scale.

Mummies make extensive use of cults and close-knit groups. They have a long-term mission, which even they don't understand most of the time, one that needs maintenance and execution during the long periods when it isn't awake. For Storytellers, these agendas aren't as important as the *consequences* hunters must deal with when crossing paths with a mummy or its cult. Think of the mummy's long-term goal as a way to shape its comings and goings. The grander the scheme, the longer it'll take the mummy to see that goal through to the end, and the more it'll need mortals to help accomplish its task.

The vast majority of these creatures has cultivated a significant following that may well have existed in some form or another for centuries. The other end of the cultist spectrum is where hunters will discover whole families that have been in service to a master whose visits, while infrequent, are memorable. These cultists are intimately connected to the mummy — and not just as servants. They are the creature's eyes and ears while it has neither, and can summon them back from death's embrace. This type of intimate relationship with mortals is rare and precious — mummies are confused and dangerous when they awaken — but the undying may opt to garner more support when its agenda runs off course or it feels threatened.

Rise, and serve me!

Though hunters may assume otherwise, the relationship between mummies and their cults is not as simple as it might appear. While the mummy formed the cult and has shaped it over centuries, its relationship to the cultists is symbiotic. The cult has some degree of power over the mummy itself, and is capable of waking it from its deathless rest.

Re-awakening is not always a simple process, and it's one that can go horribly wrong. A newly awakened mummy is full of power, and often not in control of its faculties. On occasion, a mummy's most devoted cultists are the first victims of its latest spell; that, in itself, is a potential plot hook. Stories that hinge on defeating a cult's plans may culminate in a rush to stop an important ritual. A cell's failed encounter may lead to the death of the cultists, and a far more potent threat is then unleashed.

The human nature of cults and cultists also offers Storytellers plenty of possibilities later on in a chronicle—especially if the hunters assume the mummy is the evil entity they're fighting. For example, say the mummy has been summoned and directed by its cult, and the evil at the heart of recent events is, in fact, a human one. The mummy is the gun. A human being pulled the trigger. What will a cell do to uphold the Vigil then?

Classifying the Cultist

Generally speaking, cultists fall into three categories:

Dupes

The majority of most cult members are unaware of the nature of what they're serving. They're everyday people holding down a job, or political activists, or church members who found a new belief that suits their nature. They're committed to the cause and, if they're told their beliefs don't quite add up, they may simply shrug and walk away. Cults, churches, and causes that form around a mummy are no different from those found everywhere else a hunter cares to look.

Ironically, true believers can often prove to be amongst the most powerful of the cultists — not within the cult's power hierarchy, but within the mundane world. Mummies don't necessarily want to let a local police commissioner or politician into the secret of the eternal undying ones; if they react badly, these key figures may bring significant resources to bear against them or their cults. However, mummies do recognize that having powerful individuals on their side best serves their interests. Thus, some dupes are actively recruited whilst others are tangentially so.

Initiates

Dupes who prove especially loyal, committed, and fundamentally useful might find themselves drawn into a deeper level

of commitment. They know they serve a power that's older and stranger than them. They understand that carrying out their servitor's wishes benefits them, and they enjoy reaping the rewards. Few cultists ever get past this stage — but that doesn't matter. Initiates have significant power within the organization they can bring to bear for their own purposes as well as their undying servitor's.

Though the morality of an initiate's actions may be in question, hunters shouldn't automatically characterize them as evil. They are committed to a particular cause and are given boons for following orders. The initiates may or may not be aware what it is they're serving or if their servitor is supernatural. Mortals like these will often blind themselves from the truth simply because they're addicted to power.

Intimates

The very closest ranks surrounding any mummy know exactly what it is they're doing. They may not understand the true and complete nature of the creature they're serving, but they understand that it's an ageless, ancient force that makes a human's lifespan seem irrelevant.

A few cultists in this tier are initiates who have risen through the ranks through "good service." Others are in a hereditary position; their family has served the same mummy for centuries, and they have been indoctrinated into their role since birth. In either case, few hunters would recognize cultists of this level from either background as "good." From a hunter's perspective, intimates are amoral at best and, at worst, active forces for evil.

An intimate has the ability to raise a mummy from its rest; this takes a toll on the cultist's sanity. No mortal can possess such power without it having some effect on the human psyche. Along with this power and knowledge, the intimates also gain access to a mummy's most prized location: its tomb.

Entombed

Mummies, strange though it might seem, are homebodies. Or, at least, they're inclined to have a home to rest their bodies in when they're not active. Because these undying creatures are cast adrift from both the world and their own memories so much of the time, they need to find a way to be anchored in reality. One of those focal points is through their human cults; the other is through their personal tomb.

The remains that a mummy leaves behind, however small or insignificant they might be, need to rest until the mummy rises again. As with any other mortal, the mummy's possessions cannot make the journey to the afterlife, with one notable exception, and need somewhere to rest safely between their owner's voyages into the land of the living. Many humans anchor their identities in their possessions, and that can be true of the undying as well, for mummies often look to those objects as a way to create a narrative that replaces their own faltering and unpredictable memories. To a mummy, a tomb isn't a resting place for their bodies — for those will always rise again — but for their identities. Is it any wonder mummies will fight so very hard to protect them?

The word "tomb" can be misleading to hunters, because it suggests an ancient place, dug into the earth, or formed out of a cave. While a few might fit that description, many tombs have survived the millennia, because of their durability and mobility. Some mummies have been adept at moving their "tombs" every few dozen generations or so, to suit both their own purposes, and to adapt to the possibilities new eras bring. Some significantly-sized cults will have a program in place to help a mummy build or work towards the next generational tomb, so their patron can relocate during a short burst of activity.

Hunters who are familiar with the activities of bloodsuckers might guess that a tomb may be located in a basement or other light-free place. That's a dangerous assumption to make, but one Storytellers can cue off of. A mummy's tomb in the modern era is just as likely to be an apartment block with a curious, old (and inaccessible) core, a country house, or the closed wing of an art gallery in a refurbished building. Tombs can range in size from a handful of rooms to an area as large as a public monument whose hidden side has been carefully obscured from view and public records for some time.

In most cases, a tomb is a literal deathtrap. If a hunter enters as an unwelcome visitor, or as a welcome but overly inquisitive one, the building is designed so that intruders won't reach the inner sanctum alive without the mummy's express permission. As with the decor, some tombs are truly ancient, with traps to match. Others are significantly more modern and were constructed in recent years using cutting-edge security measures.

Survive those traps, though, and hunters stand in front of a greater threat: the mummy itself. The mummy's powers are at their strongest when the undying creature is in its own tomb. That area acts as a nexus for the energies they're shaping and for the objects of power they're collecting. Hunters who risk their lives to enter a mummy's tomb will notice that they seem to have a deep mystical connection with their resting place, one that is difficult to sever.

The Mummy's Power

Conflict with any mummy is a terrifying experience for hunters. The harder the creature fights, the more monstrous it becomes. As each minute ticks by, all pretense of humanity slowly erodes as the mummy becomes more single-minded and increasingly murderous. Once the fight is well underway, there's no negotiation, no retreat. When the violence escalates, mummies either kill or be killed. How does a hunter murder a being that clearly isn't just a zombie or a vampire? What does a cell do when they cross paths with an enraged mummy?

An encounter with a mummy is likely to leave experienced hunters doubting themselves, once they realize what it is they've faced. Storytellers who present chronicles that revolve around a mummy as an antagonist are likely to spend more time focusing on the cult than the mummy itself, at least in the early stages. The mummy makes a good "walk on" threat, perhaps deployed strategically in its most human aspect to continually reinforce the sense of someone more powerful and sinister at play be-

hind the scenes, or as the climax of a tale. Remember, though, mummies may be a power in their own right, but they are not autonomous and are, themselves, slaves to their missions.

Mummies are creatures of great power, more than vampires, werewolves, sorcerers, and other supernatural entities that stalk the night in the World of Darkness. They're also the most restrained, and hesitate to use that power because of their long experiences and the consequences of doing so. If a mummy cuts loose with the most powerful of its abilities, it can take decades for a mummy's cultists to do a thorough cover-up job. That doesn't mean hunters can't back a mummy into a corner and force it to unleash all its power in a fight; just that it'll only do so as a last resort.

Though the undying aren't undead like vampires or zombies are, they exist closer to the world of the dead than most. That's reflected in their magical abilities. A mummy may wield magic to summon, command, and manipulate ghosts. Indeed, many mummies will happily let their cultists sacrifice themselves — or will viscerally assist in that sacrifice — in order to have the immediate advantage of a newborn ghost in combat. The powers of mummies can also wither, age, and destroy people, property, and land.

The more damage that's done to a mummy, the more their true nature is revealed. The human facade slips a little further with each wound that their form sustains. Mummies can undo this damage with a little time, concentration, and energy, and will do so swiftly if combat is brought to an end in their favor. Otherwise, mummies will fight until their opponents are dead, or they are safely returned to their temporary death.

Hunters may be surprised to learn that mummies tend to behave in a predetermined fashion when confronted. Mummies may have power, but their free will is non-existent. If a mummy has been forced into combat, it's on the verge of not completing the mission it was reawakened to fulfill. These are not elaborate schemes or goals that a compact or conspiracy may have; these missions are the *only* reason why the mummy exists in the living world. The undying are incapable of resisting their agendas without significant mental effort. Should they abandon their cause, they are all but guaranteed an early return to the grave.

Thus, a mummy avoids violent confrontations whenever possible. During lesser moments of crisis, the undying typically concentrate on evading hunters and, instead, send their cultists to deal with or remove them entirely. To a mummy, a hunter is almost always a distraction, unless they were specifically raised to deal with them, or accidentally awakened by them....

Mummies, Cultists, and Magical Relics

Mummies, like other long-lived creatures, have obsessions. One of them is to collect magical artifacts. The undying and their cults are ruthless in their pursuit and acquisition of these imbued relics. Most will try acquiring them legally first. If that doesn't work, they'll escalate their attempts to seize a magical item through more nefarious approaches, culminating in the release of the mummy's full power.

Once a magical artifact is acquired, the mummy — or its cult — destroys it and neutralizes its power.

Why? If the mummies themselves know, they have yet to reveal their motives. Certainly no hunter, living or dead, has ever managed to establish a clear line of reasoning. Rumors are whispered among the oldest conspiracies as to why a being of such power would destroy a relic that might serve its purposes.

Members of the Aegis Kai Doru and the Faithful of Shulpae have taken a special interest in this behavior. As a result, they have formed several theories to explain what's happening. What if the mummies are capturing the power of these objects? What if the undying are collecting magic to send it back to their masters? Why else would they stockpile power in this way? Is it food? Or are mummies storing that magic to fuel a great ritual that will tear the boundary between death and life forever?

Returning Through The Curtain Of Death

Mummies briefly return to the world for a specific purpose and can stay active and alive for as long as they pursue that goal. From the undying's point of view, they're reawakened to fulfill their mission and, once its complete, they'll heed the call of their tomb, where they'll rest until they're needed once again.

A mummy's cycle of death and rebirth may be interrupted if it doesn't complete what it was summoned to accomplish. Should they deviate from that plan, their strength and ability to stay in the living world rapidly ebbs away. The undying's commitment to their mission, be it one they come back to life with or one they were summoned for, is not an option or a decision to follow; it's inherent in their state of being.

The undying may also be forced back into the grave early if they are frustrated or sufficiently damaged, i.e. "dead" in human terms. Mummies believe the state in which they return to the grave impacts their next reawakening. If they retreat into their tomb in a terrible state, they'll likely reawaken as an animalistic and forgetful creature. Conversely, if a mummy ac-

complishes its mission and is safely entombed unharmed, the likelier it'll be calm and self-possessed when it rises again. This is one of the reasons why a mummy goes to great lengths to protect itself; it's not just this cycle they're concerned about, it's the next, too.

Mummies can return to life one of three ways.

Cyclical Return

The undying come back to life. That's the definition of a mummy. At certain points throughout history, for reasons even they're not aware of, mummies arise from their tomb with a mission that vibrates through the core of their being. They do so naturally, on their own, without any outside interference or assistance from others.

Mummies don't always have a conscious understanding of what that agenda is; just that their actions are defined by it. They do, however, have a strong internal sense of whether or not they're acting in the best interests of their goal.

Summoning

An ancient ritual may be performed to reawaken the mummy for a single purpose. The undying's cultists — who know the required ritual — can summon a mummy back from the dead to serve a specific purpose. Typically, the cultists who perform the ritual are not unwitting dupes.

As with the cyclical return, mummies will do their best to fulfill the reason they were reawakened and, when finished, return to their state of deathless rest.

Accidental Awakening

Mummies' tombs are filled with artifacts, magical items, and the arcane of long-forgotten history. They're tempting targets; the phrase "tomb robber" exists for a reason. Pity the thief that tries to open an interesting sarcophagus within a tomb, though. In the World of Darkness, the tomb's curse is no spell. It contains a raging, memory-free supernatural force that will tear through intruders in seconds, before slowly recovering some sense of who and what they are.

Hunters may enter a tomb believing they're cleansing it of demonic or other forms of possession, to find a specific magical relic, or in search of answers to troubling questions. Their activities, however, may accidentally reawaken the mummy just as easily as a careless tomb robber might. Should a cell survive this encounter, then the hunters face an implacable and deadly enemy focused on exacting its revenge on them.

A String of Missives

What do mummies *want*? It's a good question, and one hunters will never stop asking. They're clearly following an agenda, but the nature of their mission is obscure. To a hunter, that makes them look purposeful, as if the undying are carrying out an ancient plan. Hunters may be right.

Mummies do not understand, or at least remember, their true agenda dictated to them by masters they barely recall. Hunters may guess otherwise, but the undying's agenda is not a plan or a set of objectives; it's a force that burns at the core of their being, driving them forwards, forcing them to act. Mummies are the embodiment of intent.

Broadly speaking, a mummy's mission can be grouped into these categories:

- **Acquisition of objects of power.** When it comes to artifacts and other mystical objects, mummies are ruthless magpies. They'll collect every relic they can. When mummies learn of the existence of an object, they will stop at nothing to acquire it, and will use whatever resources they have at their disposal.

- **Molding cities.** In the World of Darkness, hunters know the arrangement of buildings and cities can have a profound influence on the environment around everyday mortals. They are aware that other creatures lurk in dark alleyways or find havens in spooky city parks. The mummies know this to be true as well. Detailed management of humankind's cityscapes is often on their agenda. Mummies desire to create urban environments that match their ideas of what a city should be.

- **Shaping human cultures.** Just as the forms of cities are of great interest to mummies, so is the shape of human cultures — especially those facets that lead to conflict, sacrifice, and death. Mummies aren't dead, but they are creatures close to the dead, and can easily manipulate humans who have died. Those who cannot die shape humanity by focusing on the deaths of mortals, but in a controlled, strategic fashion.

- **Self-preservation.** Mummies devote a substantial amount of time to the preservation of their own support structures, principally their tombs and their cults. Anyone or anything that threatens either of those is dealt with swiftly and ruthlessly — this includes individual hunters or an entire compact or conspiracy.

- **Internecine conflict.** A grudge can outlast the memory of the incident that triggered it. Amongst the undying that's doubly true. Even if they have no rational reason for going on the offensive, mummies may be driven into a confrontation with others of their kind upon reawakening. The undying typically doesn't remember why they hold a grudge against another mummy; they simply feel its effects and know a fight is on the horizon. Nothing else matters.

Ultimately, however close the hunters come to understanding what the mummies were doing, they may never be satisfied. After all, how can a mortal discern the motives of those eternal beings who don't even know what they're doing themselves? However, there are times when a hunter comes dangerously close to the truth. An interesting aspect for Storytellers to explore would be those rare cases when a cell, compact, or con-

spiracy does accurately guess what a mummy's mission is. What does a hunter do then? Broadcast the truth? Or work around the mummy to defeat it?

The Response

More than anything else, mummies represent the idea of the unknown and the unknowable. These are, perhaps, the most ancient creatures to walk the streets of the World of Darkness; they barely remember who they are or why they exist.

The horrible truth of the undying is that few of them have more than the barest clues of their origins and nature. They're locked into a single-minded pursuit of their current mission. They lack both the perspective and the knowledge to comprehend the broader picture. They're bullets fired through the millennia by unknown forces, pursuing agendas incomprehensible even to their own ancient brains.

Hunters who obsess over understanding and gathering knowledge they can and should be frustrated if they study a mummy closely. Most compacts and conspiracies are only able to provide the most basic of answers as to why a mummy walks the earth. The undying are clearly following an agenda, but it's one that they don't understand themselves, and that gap in their understanding is one they seem incapable of addressing directly. Since hunters have a significantly shorter lifespan than any mummy, they simply don't have the time or the means to understand the depths of the undying's true nature.

Mummies are eternal creatures who cannot be utterly destroyed with weapons that hunters have on hand. This darkness that haunts the world is ancient, unknowable, and indestructible. If ever there was a creature designed to remind hunters they are brief flickers of light against a backdrop of darkness, it's a mummy.

Compacts

What follows are suggested reactions a local compact may have to the presence of — or run in with — a mummy. These aren't meant to represent the only reactions a compact would have.

The rarity of mummies, when combined with the fractious nature of compacts, means that sweeping gestures would fall flat in a chronicle. Instead, Storytellers may use these typical responses as either story seeds or as a point of view for players to consider when their hunter runs into the undying or their cults.

Ashwood Abbey

It can't be killed? So what? Who says I have to kill it to get what I want out of it?

To an outsider, Mexico City is kind of a shithole. Since most of the Abbey in Mexico City are first or second generation foreigners, the consensus among membership is that they're stuck in a shithole.

Still, the sex tourism is great, and hosting well-to-do millionaires hoping to take a walk on the wild side turns a pretty penny for the Abbey and allows them the freedom to indulge in anything money can buy.

Or at least it did before Santa Muerte showed up.

Cults worshipping 'Saint Murder' (not an exact translation) have sprung up all over Mexico. In Mexico City, however, it seems this female reaper has some kind of physical analog. The Abbey hasn't really gotten a good look at the mummy behind the cult; they don't even know if she's real. All the hunters know is that the cult seems split into two factions between drug dealers who murder and dismember people in the name of the Saint and middle-aged mothers and grandmothers who work hard to make the city safe and protect its children, fallen women, and hardworking citizens. It's hard to say which faction the Saint backs, but considering the unusual successes the women are having cleaning up their streets, the Abbey suspects they're aided by supernatural means.

And that clean-up is causing a real problem in the Abbey's revenue stream.

The Long Night

The Pharaohs paid for their arrogance, and so will this creature.

At the start of the American Civil Rights Movement, the Lord's Imminent Return Church and Congregation stood at the forefront of anti-segregation in Cleveland. This church was one of the first in the US to obstinately and defiantly practice their faith in front of a mixed congregation, and even went so far as to split the pulpit with ministers who hailed from varying backgrounds and cultures.

Back then, inter-racial tensions were high and the Church's active efforts toward segregating its flock was a big deal; it was a mark of pride not just for the congregation, but for the surrounding neighborhoods — and The Long Night cell that has secretly supported the Church since its inception.

In the last six months, however, something has changed. Slowly, the men and women of color who had practiced acts of spontaneous devotion at the Church every Sunday have stopped coming. They've changed churches; they'll talk to anyone who asks about it, but be oblique about where they've gone and why. It's troubling for the community, the Church, and especially for The Long Night who suspect monsters behind every shadow.

It just so happens this time these hunters are right.

Upon investigating, the local compact has found that their wayward sheep have drifted to more solemn pastures, worshipping on Sundays in a joyless, expressionless Church of the North Star. This new place of worship has sprung up overnight and is strangely difficult to find — even when a hunter specifically seeks it out. The Church of the North Star's leader is, without a doubt, a charming and welcoming man: one who gives off a sort of authority that is hard to ignore. But, to members of The Long Night, his services are lackluster, confusing, and seem to draw upon scriptures that don't exist.

The Long Night of Cleveland will eventually cross paths with a mummy building his cult. The question is: what can the hunters do about it?

The Loyalists of Thule

Once I accused my "boss" of being a mummy. That is, until I met a real one.

New York City, one of the largest ports in the world, has a thriving import and export business that rivals all other cities in the world. And where there are imports and exports, both legal and not, hunters are sure to find magical artifacts, cursed relics, blessed amulets, and other curiosities.

While the Aegis Kai Doru often chases after such prized objects, in New York City this conspiracy doesn't have the foothold or the contacts required to be at the center of that trade. In fact, thanks to long-standing ties with longshoremen and dock workers, the Loyalists of Thule have a very good idea of exactly what passes through the New York Harbor. The question is: what's to be done about what comes through?

For the last forty years or so, the Loyalists' policy was to catalogue who was buying what and track where that inventory went if it left New York. In some cases, the Loyalists would intervene, collecting up particularly difficult or dangerous items to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands. Hands like those of the Aegis, who have never done right by the Loyalists of New York.

That's all started to change, though, as the Loyalists have been approached by an elderly rabbi named Levi who has an offer for them. He claims that he can take any ancient artifact that comes into their possession, the kind that's too dangerous to exist, and safely destroy it, depleting its energy for all time. He's even gone so far as to tell the Loyalists that he shares their need to work off an old debt.

Can the Loyalists trust the rabbi? Can they risk not trusting him? And, if they choose to work with him, will the Aegis Kai Doru become more than an irritant?

Network Zero

No no, seriously, watch the video again.This thing is totally annihilated by the bumper even before she's creamed into the wall, but here it is, a week later, on its feet again!

The Network of Nagoya Japan have stumbled across an amazing find by accident. As a group, they're mostly JVloggers, gaijin English teachers in Japan, and their Japanese counterparts teaching Japanese online, who all share curiosity about toshi densetsu. Toshi densetsu are, in essence, the cross section of urban legends and Japanese folklore. No Network members expected that they'd come across the real thing!

While out drinking at a meet up, a few vloggers recording the nightlife filmed a Muslim woman in traditional dress being hit by a drunk driver. She was smashed into a wall and the body was mutilated. The Network didn't post the video publicly; instead, members held onto the surveillance out of whatever instinct drives vloggers to record everything they do.

This archived recording came in handy a few days later, when a cell caught the same woman in the *same* area on camera again. At first, members thought they'd captured evidence of a ghost and started a full investigation into the event. The video was posted soon afterward and their story went viral. Not only did they capture the woman being killed from different angles, they also filmed several videos of her alive and well after the accident.

The Network has begun stalking the area, hoping to catch her again. What they don't realize is that they haven't found a ghost, but a mummy who's awake and building a life for herself in Japan. She's desperate to hide from ancient enemies, and as soon as she realizes these "children" with cameras are onto her, she'll attempt to recruit them. She'll whisper secrets, perhaps even reveal herself on film, to train this Network to identify other mummies who might arrive in the area. By doing so, the hunters will help protect the mummy from a dire fate of eternally being slain by an enemy she can't remember, but still fears.

Null Mysteriis

Yes, he appears very healthy. Good for him.

Professor Amir Ibin Youssef has a complex problem he's brought to the attention of his colleagues at the Department of Human Biology at the University of Cambridge. Youssef, who works for the Department of Ancient History, also teaches at Cambridge. Thanks to his unique take on the history of scientific study, he's managed to find friends within the science department who're willing to help him.

What Amir doesn't know is that his fellows in the Human Biology Department are largely members of the Null Mysteriis.

What the Null Mysteriis doesn't know is that Youssef is a mummy.

Professor Youssef has a rare genetic marker that's spread through his descendants world-wide. This flaw gives his relatives a degenerative and contagious disease. It had lain dormant for centuries, but it has recently re-emerged.

Can the scientifically-minded hunters help the professor track down his descendants and stop the spread of disease? When pressed, Youssef will admit he's becoming obsessed with the problem and feels a growing, almost uncontrollable anger when he's distracted from resolving it. It seems the professor is afraid his rage may get out of control if the issue cannot be solved scientifically. Unless the Null Mysteriis can help the professor, these hunters will soon understand that Youssef is not being hyperbolic.

The Union

I don't care what it is, it isn't fucking bedding down here, got it? If we gotta burn that museum to the ground, that's what we'll do.

The Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia has long been a point of pride to the locals, being one of the oldest of its kind in the western hemisphere, and a feather in the cap of many academics who call Philadelphia home. In a strange one-upmanship contest with the similarly famous Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, both centers of learning struggle to "get" the next great event to draw visitors in through their doors. For this reason, the Academy jumped at the chance to trade for a centerpiece from an Egyptian tomb, and reconstruct it inside the Academy's newest wing.

The Academy has no idea that by bringing in this exhibit, they have placed a particularly angry and vindictive mummy in their midst. The monster has been awoken in a strange place, with no understanding of what's going on. It knows only rage. And so it has been sneaking through the streets, eating what it sees as slaves and foreigners to regain its power — and possibly its sentience.

Naturally, The Union isn't real thrilled about an ancient, indestructible menace murdering the people it works so hard to protect. They don't know what it'll take to stop the onslaught,

but they're going to find out. In the meantime, they'll try to beat the damn thing into sand as many times as it takes before they come up with a better solution.

Conspiracies

Much of the information provided in this section about the conspiracies, their interactions, and their history with Mummies is very top-down, with high level secrecy built into each description. These details shouldn't limit players or Storytellers because mummies tend to be the exceptional characters, the antagonists who are on the ground floor for important, historical events throughout human history.

While the true motivations and purposes behind a mummy's actions should remain a mystery, what they are doing in the modern era, and what the conspiracies have witnessed of their deeds in the past, should not be impossible to discover.

Aegis Kai Doru

Conflict between the Aegis Kai Doru and mummies is inevitable.

A number of Guardians have originated from the ranks of tomb robbers and morally flexible archeologists. Some have barely survived their discovery of a tomb that's still very much in use. That's the core problem for Guardians and mummies: what the conspiracy wants is what a mummy wants — or already has. Relics are a mummy's obsession and the Aegis Kai Doru's *raison d'être*; the two groups have been dancing for possession of powerful objects throughout history.

Since its inception, clashes between Guardians, mummies, and cultists have been fierce, bloody, and unavoidable. Both groups seek ancient relics — rare objects filled with magical power. They are not so common in the world as to allow one side or the other to whisk them away uncontested.

The race to acquire relics has led to repeated clashes between the two factions, but with asymmetric results. There is no corporate body of knowledge amongst the mummies and their cultists about the Guardians. They are aware that mortals hunt valuable relics, too. The Aegis Kai Doru, on the other hand, has recorded several characteristics about their enemy.

They know:

- Mummies can be reborn at unpredictable intervals.
- They usually work through proxies and minions.
- Once angered or frustrated, the undying become fierce and implacable foes.
- However, if a hunter survives or hides long enough, the threat passes.

This doesn't mean that Guardians have any real understanding of what mummies actually are. The working theory, such as it is, is that they're either ancient humans who have found a way to cheat death by harvesting the power of relics, or their bodies form a quasi-living collection tool for some greater power.

The Aegis Kai Doru's theories have yet to be verified. The majority of hunter interactions with mummies and their cultists are brutally practical. Traditionally, Guardians refer to mummies as "those who return." More colloquially in recent decades, the Aegis Kai Doru also calls them "the competition." These classifications help downplay the fear these hunters feel when they realize a mummy is after the same thing they are.

In the Aegis Kai Doru's experience thus far, it's impossible to destroy a mummy permanently. Removing power from them and stopping them from gaining more are key to weakening them. Even the most bloodthirsty member of The Sword sees the wisdom in this tactic, for this allows the conspiracy to thwart a mummy without directly confronting it.

When a new relic is discovered in the possession of a supernatural creature like a mummy, members of The Sword and The Temple are dispatched to claim it as soon as humanly possible. The Sword serves as a distraction, to become the focus of the mummy's attention, and, if possible, to put it down. In most cases, The Sword present at that location may be strangers to the area. These hunters may have little compunction about cutting their way through the mummy's human servants when the need arises. Should the hunters survive the encounter, they may quickly retreat before the police can get a firm lock on them.

The Sword knows mummies will return eventually. Much as this thought rankles them, that knowledge focuses their efforts on crippling a mummy to force it back into its tomb, and damaging its power base as much as possible. These tactics serve a dual purpose. It makes an excellent tool for distraction. These hunters realize that when a mummy is torn between protecting itself, protecting its cult, or winning a relic, it becomes brutal and unhinged. That chaos forces the mummy to swiftly return to its tomb. "Keep it busy, but keep out of its way" is the rule of thumb these hunters use. When it reawakens, the hunter has fewer resources — cultists — to command, making it easier to put down again if it's spotted early on.

When the Temple is present, it's there to retrieve relics as soon as possible. The Temple's methods for bringing contested relics back to Athens have been heavily modified over the centuries. These protocols have been compromised by cultists — often not by the same servants a relic may have been stolen from — on more than one occasion. Risking life and limb to deliver a relic into the hands of another enemy is one of the greatest shames a member of The Temple can endure. New members are slowly inducted into the process which requires multiple, over-lapping Guardians tracking their progress, without ever being aware of the other, and even then they are watched with particular care. It's an invisible chain of custody.

The Temple is a lot better at the retrieval of magical artifacts than they used to be. The internet, mobile telecoms, and other forms of high technology have developed within the past fifty years — a short period of time as far as most mummies are concerned. This fact has led some hunters to become complacent, and to forget that the mummy's most loyal cultists are not hampered by their servitor's unusual view of time. That, coupled with a cult's oft extensive financial resources, may turn a hunter's escape with a relic into an international game of cat and mouse. And, if the hunter is moving too slowly, will eventually force the mummy out of hiding.

The two groups do not coordinate once they arrive in a contested location, and they do not interact. The only link be-

Guardian Gardell,

It's such a terrible cliché to say that something is a two-edged sword. It's a cliché and it's facile. The real message that such phrases conceal is that a sword is a weapon that can be wielded by your enemy as well as by us. It can be plucked from our hands and shoved deep into our bellies before we even know what has happened.

This, then, is my last warning to you.

We know the power that can lie within the most unexpected of objects. We arm ourselves with them — but so, too, does the enemy. There is, in particular, one group amongst them who seems to crave such artifacts of power, and goes to any lengths to obtain them. They are not prone to direct action, however. More often than not, you'll meet their puppets, duped humans who do the dirty work. They are often utterly ignorant of whom they serve. Some think themselves trusted members of a criminal gang, others in service to the state. But they are wrong. They are armorers for our enemy and they are unaware of it.

I have only encountered one of them in person. My leg has never truly recovered its strength since. My mind is in worse shape. I don't want to recall those memories, even for a moment, not even to warn you. Avoid them, but do not let them snatch your prize from under your nose. They are the competition, and they are not to be tolerated.

Whatever they do with the swords we seek, they are rarely (if ever) seen again once they have won. Somehow, I don't think they're beating those relics into ploughshares.

Once you realize that you are in a competitive environment, do not rest until you have won your prize, and have returned it to The Temple. That will not keep you safe, but if you do die, yours will not be a vain sacrifice.

You may die, but it will not be the sword in your belly. It will be at the hands of your fellows, and they will avenge you.

Good luck,

Guardian Adred

tween them may be the local hunters who triggered the conflict. Two separate members of the local group — even if one of them is not a Guardian — are chosen as the point of contact. Only the chosen two will meet one member of the Sword and the Temple each, no matter how many Guardians are on the ground. Every effort is made to close down possible links that the mummy can follow to keep track of the relic once it's on the move out of the city. The local hunters are expressly forbidden from joining the extraction process. It's their responsibility to keep the mummy busy, in cooperation with the Sword present, rather than getting the relic back to Greece.

There is an essential asymmetry in the conflict, though. In theory, with each relic the hunters win, the Aegis Kai Doru grows stronger. Many of the relics disappear into Athens and are never seen again by field Guardians, but that's the nature of their work. On the other hand, every single relic won by the mummies makes exactly zero difference to their relative power, because it disappears from existence. This is, in some measure,

counter-balanced by the Guardians' reluctance to deploy their relics against the competition. Occasional, internal conflicts have grown within the Aegis Kai Duro over this tactic. Experienced Guardians who are parachuted in to help with retrieval may attempt to pull rank over more inexperienced local hunters who know far less about the competition, and who are quite understandably far more reluctant to enter combat without holding big guns in their hands.

More experienced hunters are well aware that a hunter who has been identified by a mummy, especially one who has been in direct contact, is a tainted asset and likely doomed. No sense in handing the mummy a useful gift even when it executes its vengeance against a hapless hunter. If a mummy, or its cult, identifies a human as a hunter, she can no longer rise through the Aegis Kai Doru's ranks. Once targeted, that mummy becomes that hunter's responsibility for the rest of his life. There are reputedly whole bands of guardians who have been in conflict with the same creature for decades now. They watch and wait and, if necessary, move to a different city in line with their prey. They keep themselves busy weakening any cult the mummy might have left between the times it's awake, and distract themselves with any local monsters who might raise their heads high enough for them to be removed. But they know that their Vigil is now focused for the rest of their lives. Mummies seem to sometimes forget who they are, and not remember them between encounters, and then suddenly recall then again a decade later.

Should the mummies ever discover the Aegis Kai Doru's central hoard of relic in Athens, or get the slightest whiff of its existence, then all-out war is likely, at a level both sides would find hard to cover up. A few Guardians pause to wonder why a cache of powerful artifacts has failed to attract any such notice over time, but the implications of that usually dissuade them from thinking too deeply about it.

Ascending Ones

What caused two sects of soldiers to form so very long ago, in ancient Egypt? Why did the Cults of Set and the Phoenix come to be? Their own tales, known to few of the modern membership, tell of ancient, undying beings whose influence spread across the whole of the country. They were embedded deep into the government and markets of Egypt, and little was done without their blessing or direction.

In the modern era, the Ascending Ones regard the mummies, which they commonly refer to as the "Returning Ones", as a closed chapter in this ancient conspiracy's history. The undying's defeat and banishment is at the heart of the Ascending One's inner mystery. This is so rooted in their identity, that these hunters rarely realize exactly what they're facing when they do encounter a returning mummy. After all, The Order of the Southern Temple and the Knife of Paradise both have little knowledge to share.

Amongst the leaders of the Jagged Crescent, however, they are aware their ancient foes still exist. The surges of mummy activity in recent months, coupled with the re-emergence of criminal organizations thought long gone in the underworld, have triggered the alarm. Only now does the Jagged Crescent realize that mummies might be a greater threat than they ever expected.

Internally, the Jagged Crescent has tentatively reconnected with their fellow factions to share knowledge their. Certainly, most Ascending Ones would be unaware that mummies have survived this long, until that moment when these hunters are pulled aside, and made quietly aware that their tasks may have deeper implications than they first realized. Slowly but surely, a body of knowledge may be collected and then compared with the thin documentary evidence members have from the very earliest days of the Ascending Ones.

The picture that is beginning to emerge suggests the time for sleep is over. The Order of the Phoenix must become both eyes of the Vigil, or the very reason for the existence of the Ascending Ones may be overturned. The Returning Ones have, at last, proved to live up to their name.

The Cheiron Group

Lately, several business journals have been running stories about The Cheiron Group more than they normally do. Classified advertisements have also begun to appear listing several job postings for mergers and acquisitions specialists with experiences in a number of international territories. The messaging is remarkably consistent, as The Cheiron Group does have the best PR firms working for them, and claims that they are taking advantage of market conditions to increase its R&D arm through strategic acquisitions. The Group's members have also offered statements to analysts in informal briefings about how the Group hopes to have some exciting news to share in the near future about advancements in life-extension technology. As a result of this news, the Group's share price is rising.

All signs point to the fact that The Cheiron Group may have made a cutting-edge discovery that has opened up a whole new market for them. What could that possibly be? And what's the connection with the sudden development of a new building and staff recruitment for one of the company's long-neglected archival facilities in central Europe?

Those knowledgeable few who have some familiarity with the firm's standard operating procedures might recall that there's a very small section in the Field Division Projects Handbook which outlines conditions for the company or its subsidiaries to execute the hostile takeover of external companies when they betray a particular pattern of activity, particularly around founders, founders' families, or non-executive directors.

Not all of The Cheiron's Group recent activities have been positive or productive. One report, carried by a newswire, is that one of the Cheiron Group R&D facilities in the Midwest was recently destroyed in a freak industrial accident. The Group's official position is that the explosion that caused the deaths of two security guards and the partial destruction of the research facility was caused by an uncontrolled reaction during a highly-volatile experiment. The facility in question was a recent acquisition, constructed after the rapid and hostile takeover of what had formerly been a generations-old brewery.

Corporate communications put the incident down to lower standards at the newly-acquired subsidiary, and made it plain that The Cheiron Group's standard best practices would be applied in the future — and that compliance personnel had been

parachuted in to ensure just that. Families of laid-off employees and relatives of the deceased have been making life very hard for the company at that facility, though, and the police have been called in due to a few incidents in recent weeks.

For someone looking into the incident very carefully, investigating news of the Midwestern "incident", they might notice photos published by a local student on his Facebook page look like something smashed its way *out* of the research facility. Said pictures have since been removed. The student took them down himself after she was awarded a well-paid internship with one of the Group's subsidiary, where she now spends all her time.

The Lucifuge

I wanted to update you on last week's events before I report back to Milan. It was exactly the same situation that you described to me last summer: a classic cult set-up, using a quasi-religious system beneath a business organization that promised networking and contacts.

We went in and dug deep until we found the heart of this rot, fully expecting it to be one of our less repentant siblings. And, like you, we found something else.

I'm still not sure how to characterize what happened next, but the cult seems to be disbanded. Whatever was leading them has dropped from sight. Did you see any evidence that it might be the other side at play?

Throughout their long history, the Lucifuge have taken cults and cultists as a red flag for finding one of their own too late. They were a sure sign that a child of Lucifer was at work, reveling in his heritage, and that they needed to be put down. It's clear now that they occasionally encounter a different supernatural entity, one they have yet to classify. Despite the powers that hell grants them, precious few have survived an encounter to describe what happened in detail. Those who did either walk away assuming they'd encountered the work of Angels or speculate that what they faced was, in fact, a much, much older child of Lucifer than any they'd encountered before.

Such incidents are on the rise, yet only a few Lucifuge are aware of this. It's also questionable as to whether or not the Lady is aware of what's happening to her charges. Within the Lucifuge, members worry that it can take a long time for messages to reach Milan, given the way members are spread out across the globe. Some older members still refuse to use the internet for security concerns. If the Lady has any response to this increase in encounters, she has yet to say anything official.

Precious few within The Truth may make comparisons between the returning cult leaders and their own patroness, the Lucifuge herself. Could the Lucifuge be just another cult? Is the Lady deathless? It's rumored that some amongst The Reconciliation may have dropped from contact entirely since they had an encounter with these cults. The natural assumption is that they didn't survive, but some of the missing Lucifuge have been spotted alive and active.

Could the unthinkable have happened — could hunters have fallen prey to evil after all? Or has Lucifer Himself returned to the world, fed up with the Lady and her activities, and wishes to reclaim His offspring?

Regardless, one thing is clear: when the Lucifuge encounter a mummy, these hunters put themselves at considerable risk given the truth of their heritage.

Malleus Maleficarum

What, then, my brothers and sisters in arms, can we say about those who will not die? How vile must they be that even the demons of Hell will not welcome their souls amongst them?

We know these are not creatures of Heaven, for surely God would welcome them into His grace. But they are not entirely of the Devil, either, for He opens His doors and casts them back into the world.

Truly, they are lost. There is no redemption for such as these, and God's gaze is turned from them. Those who rebel might yet repent — and we welcome those who do. But amongst the Undying, there can be no repentance, for God has abandoned them, and the Devil refused them. The Gates of Heaven are forever closed, and the maw of Hell spews them forth, unfit for the company of even the most abject and unrepentant sinner.

These creatures have no home in Our Lord's Creation. They are trapped in an eternal, earthly limbo, and it is our sacred and righteous duty to prevent them from harming others while they exist in this twilight state between the Saved and the Damned.

Let us pray.

The Shadow Congregation has a hard time wrapping its mind around mummies. Oh, they have some knowledge of the creatures that won't stay dead. After all, both groups have been around long enough for that to have occurred. The trouble with mummies, however, is that they're unsettling. To the Malleus Maleficarum, these creatures don't fit into their theology. To explain a mummy's existence, members must perform theological gymnastics to justify how and why these creatures fit into God's creation. Those leaps of judgment leave little gaps in faith, holes through which doubt worms its way in. This exercise can be deadly for any hunter, but worse for those who belong to the Malleus Maleficarum: members can't afford to hesitate when they're facing down a creature from Hell.

The mummies are — and continue to be — a profound challenge to the Congregation's worldview. Thankfully, they're encountered infrequently enough that this conundrum isn't a serious problem. Thus, the response to them, provided a mummy is correctly identified and located, varies widely within this conspiracy.

The Order of Saint Longinus, for example, might claim little or no knowledge of such creatures. They've had more encounters with them than they realize, but they've almost always treated them as they would a vampire or a zombie. To them mummies are either a distraction or a slightly harder challenge whenever their cultists are involved. The Brotherhood of Saint Athanasius, on the other hand, may take a perverse joy in putting down the same creature again and again.

Conversely, some amongst the Order of Saint Ambrose may find themselves deeply troubled by what they see. The cyclical pattern of death and rebirth is deeply embedded at the heart of their faith. Jesus Christ died and rose again three days later. According to some, the dead shall rise again on judgment day. These creatures sleep restlessly in their graves, and are reawakened not once, but many times over. What power other

than the Lord could possibly do this? Why would He allow such a thing to happen?

Many within the Malleus Maleficarum are troubled by the fact that the mysteries at the heart of a hunter's faith are reminiscent of what mummies represent. Those hunters who read widely can trace such tales back to the Roman god Mithras, through Odin hanging on the World Tree, to the resurrection of Osiris in Egyptian lore. Are these variations of the same story? And, if so, what does that mean for these hunters when their faith begins to shake?

Doubt is a terrible thing in the Vigil — worse, when it forces a hunter to closely examine what he believes.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

Containment Room 153/74

Mandated hourly checks. Any change in the corpse's state, composition, or position in the facility is to be relayed to the base commander immediately. They are under orders to put the base on condition Red; a complete lockdown. Nothing gets in or — more importantly — out until that condition is reversed.

For further background, cross-reference with file 762-342/74 about the partial destruction of the PS/ENE remains storage and investigation facility five years ago.

Task Force: VALKYRIE is aware that, in the World of Darkness, there are creatures that can resist death. A handful of unpleasant incidents has made it clear that dead doesn't always mean dead. As a result, there are standing protocols in place to contain any beings that match a loose set of criteria. The Task Force's understanding of their prey is so low, however, that their guidelines are vague and often ignored in practice. When they are employed, like the need to timestamp activities, they're often used on the wrong kind of being.

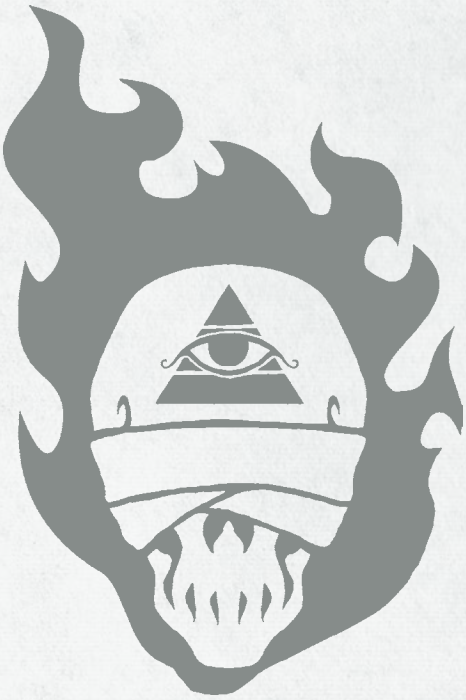
Should the unit act within protocol, any creature identified as a possible "returner" is targeted for immediate execution. The remains may be captured by a forensic science team. In the meantime, however, hunters are required to eliminate the threat the best way they know how. Those methods vary wildly and aren't coordinated neatly — especially since mummies are rare and mortals may be involved.

The undying, when they are recognized, are considered too dangerous for routine R&D. Project: TWILIGHT may be happy to hand over a mummy, whether it's awake or in a state of repose, to Project: FORT for analysis before its body is transported to Containment for storage and neutralization. Construction may be underway on a new form of combined Containment and R&D facility that can go into complete lockdown in under three seconds.

With mummy encounters happening so infrequently, members don't engage in standard protocol. However, there are rules members of Project: ADAMSKI are ordered to follow when they are forced to deal with a "beheaded" cult. It seems Project: VALKYRIE wishes to cover its tracks as well as the creature's, but not before members try to pry information out of a captured cultist.

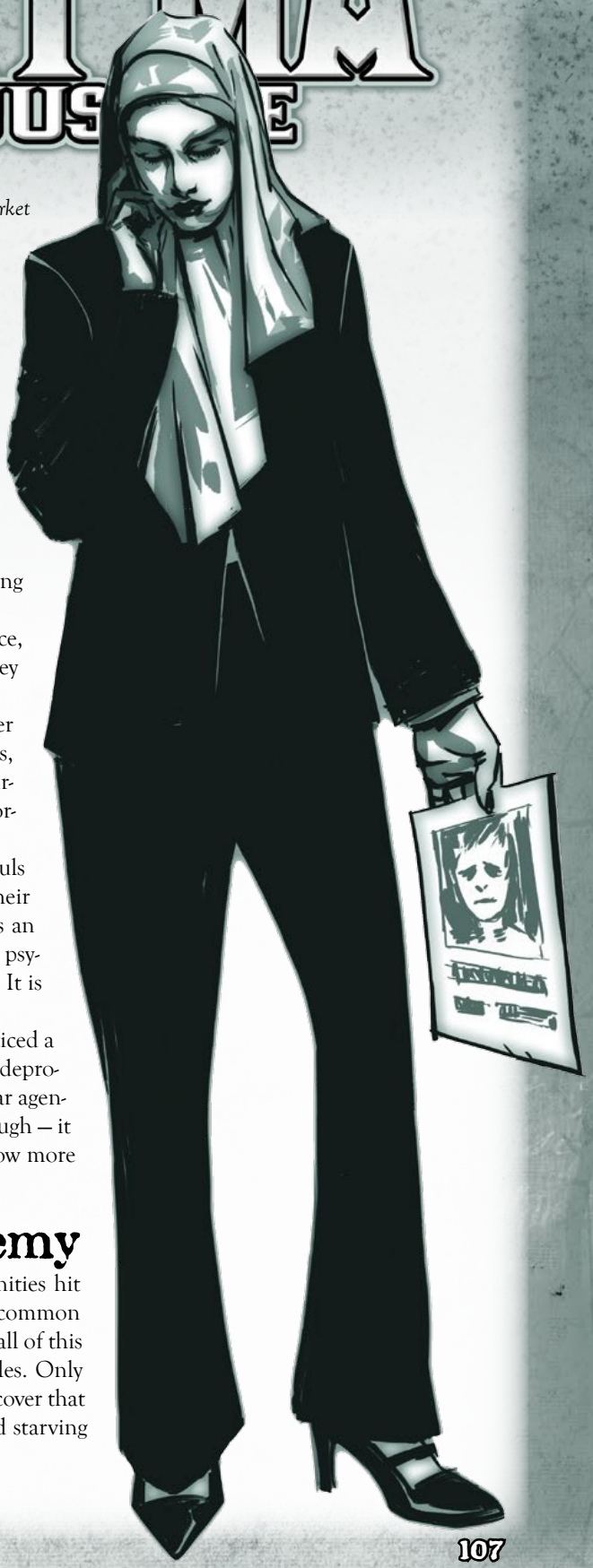
When Project: VALKRIE does encounter a mummy, it's typically through the conspiracy's work to infiltrate and dismantle a cult. Hunters tend to make good use of their deprogramming facilities to contain suspects who may (or may not) have ties to the supernatural. After all, cults are filled with human members who can be studied and interrogated much easier than any supernatural being in the World of Darkness.

Still, some argue that the practice of locking up civilians to question them about the occult or a magical being isn't practical, given the overwhelming number of cults in the United States alone. This is part of the reason why members don't chase after rumors about mummies; due to their rarity, it's not financially worth the effort.



HABIBTI MA

MY FRIEND JUS E



"How long has he been missing? And you say that he's been seen around the market twice looking like a ghost of himself? No. It isn't too late. We can help, but it will look like cruelty at first, so I need you to be strong with me. Shall we pray?"

In 1998, Eme Amun Hassan lost her husband and two grown sons to a suicide cult. Her extended family was destroyed and Hassan was left alone in the world. The damage the cult caused was extensive both to her heart and to the hearts of dozens of other families in the region of Luxor where she lived.

After a series of lawsuits against the cult leader, the local politicians, and the police that failed to stop the mass suicide from happening, Hassan found herself with a small fortune at her disposal. The money did little to ease this woman's pain. Still grief-stricken, Hassan prayed and wept, and meditated and prayed for an end to her heartache. Then, one day while she visited her mother-in-law's home, she regained a little bit of hope after spotting an old statue.

"That's Ma'at," her mother-in-law said. "She was Justice in this land once, many years before the Prophet came to Egypt. Some still pray to her when they ache like you do. For answers."

In that moment, Hassan understood what she wanted to do with her money. She spent decades after that visit retaining the brightest psychologists, attorneys, and private security professionals she could find for a singular purpose: to disband cults and return their members, safe and sound, to their worried families.

In the name of heartache, Habibti Ma steals back those unfortunate souls who were stolen by cults and deprograms them, helping them return to their former life. Sometimes, Habibti Ma works within the confines of the law as an anonymous party; other times, the group kidnaps and wages what seems like psychological warfare to correct the damage done to those lost to cult behavior. It is the cruelest kindness.

Recently the Habibta Ma, which is still led by the widow Hassan, has noticed a decided uptick in cult-like behavior. What's more, members are finding their deprogramming practices are considerably more effective than those of other similar agencies. Though survivors swear by their efficacy, the Habibti Ma is still new enough — it has yet to have an office or a website — that many hunters are curious to know more about Eme Amun Hassan and the powerful group she's put together.

The Enemy

Charming zealots and con artists in the guise of gurus plague communities hit with hard times. Egypt's current economic troubles mean that desperation is common as the country hinges on the brink of financial disaster. Habibti Ma has seen all of this before over the years, and understand trouble tends to come and go in cycles. Only recently, though, have they begun to compare notes with other hunters to discover that there may be more to the uptick in cult activity than slimy manipulators and starving peasants.

The Habibti Ma's tactics, grounded in law and psychological sciences, haven't changed much since their inception. The compact is slowly educating itself about the World of Darkness and the supernatural creatures who might orchestrate a cult to better help rescued victims. The "addicts" they've found in vampire cults, for example, can be treated better when identified as such. Those pulled in by ancient monsters like mummies may require further study; that effort may translate into failures along the quest for knowledge. Justice is necessary, sure, but it's not always fair. The concept of fairness is one Hassan and her compact continually struggle with.

Members are beginning to realize that their techniques seem to work best when accompanied by prayer. Even those who weren't particularly religious before have found that, in their work rescuing cultists, calling upon a human god has impacted cultists who serve the undying. No one understands why this technique is effective. It may be the gods mummies have long-forgotten are not the same as those worshipped in modern day? It could also be true that targeting a cultist's faith — their true set of beliefs — engages a primal defense mechanism.

The Habibti Ma also recognizes these specific cults are participating in politics and city power structures and are starting to thwart their efforts. They are rapidly becoming a secondary, legal threat, forcing this compact to tangle with their enemies on two fronts. The third front, the physical front, has yet to be explored by the Habibti Ma. By and large, Hassan considers themselves to be angels of mercy — not swords or vigilantes.

That may not remain true forever.

Hunters

You were inducted into a cult as a child, raised in service to a god-priest that could not be named nor looked at directly. You had a sense it was all wrong and weren't as brainwashed as the others. When the Habibti Ma came to liberate your compound, you helped, and haven't stopped helping despite your dreams of the god-priest's voice.

You were a second generation corrupt cop, as crooked as they come, who turned a blind eye to a lot of wrongdoing in your district. When the Habibti Ma came to town to break up a local cult, they blackmailed you into their service. You almost refused and considered suicide until you saw the victims. That changed everything.

You were an American "information specialist" working on contract due to your background in psychology and enhanced interrogation tactics. The Habibti Ma offered you a lot of money to leave your job and work for them. You don't buy into the group's motivation, but their checks do clear, and the new cultists they've dug up has this year's highest journal impact factor written all over it.

You arrived in Egypt to find your brother who was studying Jewish history and wound up getting swept up in a cult. A recently discharged IDF combat trainer, you'd planned to take the cult down by yourself and would have died if the Habibti Ma hadn't come to your aid. You intend on paying them back by teaching their field operatives to fight even as you struggle with the possible costs of doing so. You and your brother are alive thanks to them, and you'll never forget that.

Duties

Mothers Against Cult Activity: MACA is, strictly speaking, a political action committee that raises money and awareness on the dangers of cult activity all over the world. It is a newly-formed organization, and primarily concentrates its efforts in and around Egypt. Officially, they have no ties to the Habibti Ma. In practice, however, MACA is the political and financial arm of the compact. Hunters or everyday citizens who have a way with people, political influence, or donate handsomely to the compact will probably end up in the MACA.

Watchers of Isfet: Some friends may not have the strength or poise to save people directly, but still recognize the signs of a cult at work. Watchers can spot cult-like activity at a hundred paces. Like Neighborhood Watch organizations in other countries, the Watchers of Isfet rove the streets, scour city papers, and visit hospitals looking for telltale signs of cults. They may

track suspects when specific clients come to the Habibti Ma for help, and they are always on the lookout for injustice. More and more, it has become necessary for the Watchers to study the more esoteric aspects of the world as they uncover increasing supernatural activity behind the crimes they seek to uproot.

Good Sons: Practically speaking, the Good Sons are the heavies the Habibti Ma employs to do the hardest work of all. They may be physically adept thugs or highly-trained experts sent in to break up cults and kidnap victims for deprogramming. The Good Sons work hand-in-hand with psychological experts who perform the painful task of deprogramming broken minds. MACA members, as well as Watchers, are often called in to assist and work alongside the Sons when it becomes necessary; the primary difference is that the Sons tend to be specialists while the MACA and Watchers are not.

Status

Status in the Habibti Ma defines levels of access to the compact's money, influence, and other members. To operate efficiently, the compact must remain clandestine and secret from the world at large to avoid being turned into a target by sophisticated cults. To this end, low level grunts performing smash-and-grabs are given little information along with their paychecks, while higher tiered members gain trusted and valuable information about the occult.

● At this level of influence, you gain access to Habibti Ma's connections in order to acquire your orders. The information you receive is typically a time, date, and location. Show up, and you get paid. Gain two dots and divide them between your Allies and Contacts to reflect your connections within the compact.

●●● With three dots, you have been initiated into the more secretive aspects of the compact. You may gain some knowledge about the supernatural entities Habibta Ma has encountered, provided it relates to your current job. You may also receive small advances to ensure your work is successful. Add three dots between the Mentor and Allies Merits, to reflect these relationships.

●●●●● At the pinnacle of Habibti membership, you have access to any of the compact's resources you need to either perform your current job or prevent a future catastrophe from happening. You may request backup, loans, or other information as a valued member of this compact. Gain four dots and divide them any way you choose between the Mystery Cult Initiation and Retainers Merits.

Stereotypes

The Ascending Ones: I can certainly appreciate what they do, and find it parallel to our own work, but their mantra is wrong. They are not saving the sons and daughters of Egypt. They are only stemming the tide by focusing on cults.

Ashwood Abbey: They come, often fresh from a trip to Dubai, and expect that they can lord their money about and buy whatever sordid pleasure they want. The victims of their desire are often brainwashed slaves to cults, even if they are not religious. How are these monsters not hunted like the rest?

Network Zero: It's true that citizen journalists are Egypt's only hope. That said, it's strange they pay so much attention to fuzzy pictures of human monsters. What a waste of pixels. Surely there are better — bigger — threats to record and expose.

THE FAITHFUL OF SHULPAE THE HUNGRY

"Today, we honor those who have fallen in the hunt for Divinity, and in their name, we feast! Try the arm, there's still meat on it."

The Faithful claim that as long as there have been men and gods for men to worship, they have been practicing their ecstatic adulation. The first time gods took a human (or human-like) form and walked on the surface of the earth among man, woman, and child, the Faithful Feasted.

Because their rites are carefully guarded secrets passed down verbally from one generation to the next, there are few if any written records. The god, Shulpae, they draw their name from is only a briefly mentioned curiosity, rather than a piece of historical or mythological fact. If they weren't forced to, the Faithful of Shulpae would leave no trace of themselves or their whereabouts behind.

And yet? They exist. The Faithful bides their time by hunting and collecting embodied gods for the Feast.

The Faithful do not consider what they do to be abominable or profane. Cannibalism is an act one human does to another. These mortals nourish themselves with the sacred flesh of gods in order to unite themselves under the banner of their faith. This is apotheosis.

When the Faithful eat the flesh of gods, they perform a holy act no different than Christians who partake of the Eucharist. Their rituals allow them to worship the deities they've brought into their temples and gain their power. By this act, these rites allow members to commune with the deity. The Faithful become one with a part of that god, and that same god-part one with them.

The Enemy

The Faithful don't actually know they are hunting mummies and other longevity-filled monsters, like Prometheans, werewolves, or vampires. These traditions are handed down through family lines, between lovers worshipping in secret, or when a stranger stumbles into a private ritual and, instead of running away in terror, lingers and watches. Those who stumble into a Feast will often find themselves welcomed. The Faithful believe that they're called to the Feast by fate just as much as they are drawn to the gods who stroll past them, unaware their bodies are to be harvested.

While these hunters may not realize what a mummy is or have any practical knowledge of them, most Faithful are adept at recognizing that the undying exist at the center of a storm of activity. Between the tomb, the cultists, and their obsession with relics, the Faithful know when a mummy is exercising its power over the world around them.

It's likely that any mummy who has encountered the Faithful in the past simply does not remember these hunters from one lifetime to the next. If they did, the mummy or its cultists would have hunted the Faithful of Shulpae down to the very last practitioner.

Many Faithful have an intimate knowledge as to what mummies can do, since they can steal these powers from their flesh when they Feast. The capture of a mummy requires hunters to understand what it can do in order to use its own powers against it. Hitting a mummy with trucks or other large, blunt

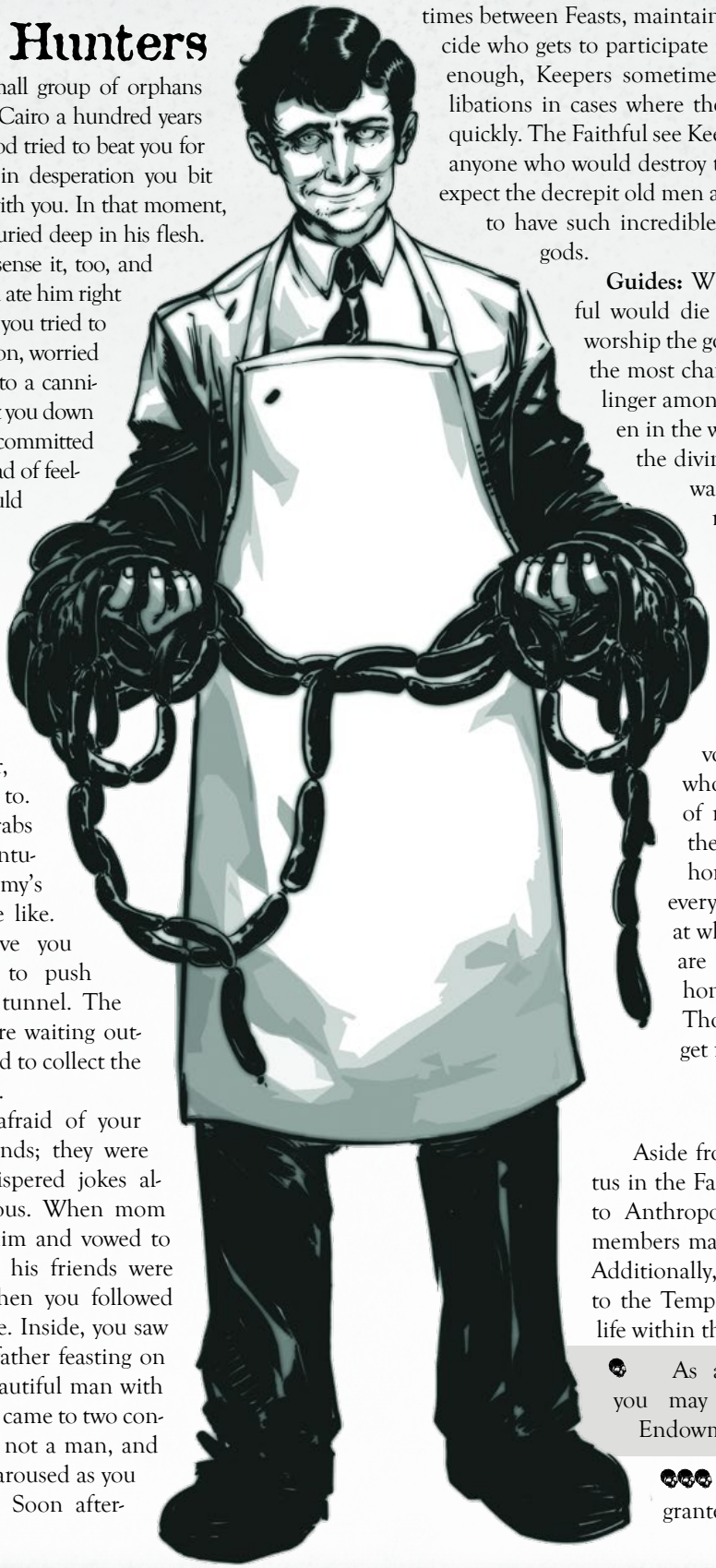
objects in the modern era has also proven very effective. Once a mummy is temporarily incapacitated, the Faithful's next priority is to return its body to the temple for a first new Feast. Eating a mummy's flesh before the creature can regenerate and wreak havoc is imperative.

Hunters

You were with a small group of orphans starving in the streets of Cairo a hundred years ago or more. A wicked god tried to beat you for getting in his way, and in desperation you bit him while he struggled with you. In that moment, you discovered a secret buried deep in his flesh. Your friends seemed to sense it, too, and you swarmed the god and ate him right down to the bone. Later, you tried to drink yourself into oblivion, worried that you were turning into a cannibal. Then, the Faithful sat you down and explained that you committed an act of Devotion. Instead of feeling horrified, you should feel special, holy, blessed — and you did.

You were trapped inside a tomb after the careless anthropologist who'd hired you got greedy and left you to rot inside. As the only survivor, you did what you had to. After you ate the scarabs and snakes, you eventually tested what a mummy's dried flesh would taste like. That nourishment gave you just enough strength to push through the collapsed tunnel. The Faithful of Shulpae were waiting outside to welcome you, and to collect the god you had discovered.

You were always afraid of your stepfather and his friends; they were strange, and their whispered jokes always seemed so ominous. When mom got sick, you blamed him and vowed to find out what he and his friends were really up to. That's when you followed him to his secret temple. Inside, you saw a long table and your father feasting on the prone body of a beautiful man with golden skin. Your mind came to two conclusions: that man was not a man, and you had never been so aroused as you were in that moment. Soon afterward, you joined them.



In Service

Keepers: Keepers maintain the temples of the Faithful, and hold much of the political power within the conspiracy. It is their sacred duty to watch over the "slumbering" gods at times between Feasts, maintain the Feasting calendar, and decide who gets to participate in which Feasts. If this weren't enough, Keepers sometimes take part in small personal libations in cases where the gods seem to be waking too quickly. The Faithful see Keepers as a secret weapon against anyone who would destroy their temples, as no one would expect the decrepit old men and women sweeping the floors to have such incredible age and power thanks to the gods.

Guides: Without new recruits, the Faithful would die out, and then no one would worship the gods in the right way. Guides are the most charming of all the Faithful. They linger among the mundane men and women in the world, watching and waiting for the divine. They look for signs of gods walking, as well as evidence of rare eccentric souls who would make ideal candidates for the Faithful. These bright souls are guided to Feasts, but rarely have Feasts explained to them. It's better that way, they think.

Celebrants: For the devoted, who partake most often, who Feast heavily and are unafraid of risking life and limb to bring the gods to the temple, is the honor of being a Celebrant. Not every Celebrant is particularly good at what they do, but their sacrifices are written down in books to be honored for generations to come. Those who take the greatest risks get first plate at the Feast.

Status

Aside from invitation to the Feast, status in the Faithful of Shulpae grants access to Anthropophagy, the means by which members make themselves a part of a god. Additionally, status grants members access to the Temple, an important part of daily life within the faith.

● As an initiate to the Faithful, you may learn the Anthropophagy Endowment.

●●● At three dots, you are granted a safe place, a temple to

watch over. It is in these temples that the Faithful of Shulpae practices its Anthropophagy. Gain two dots and divide however you wish between any of the Safehouse Merits (see p. 158).

●●●●● Thanks to your visceral experience with the supernatural, the highest and the greatest of the Faithful of Shulpae manifests strangeness from beyond the normal world. Take four dots, divided however you choose, among any number of Supernatural Merits (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 172).

Stereotypes

The Lucifuge: Could you imagine being the child of a god and regard your lineage with shame? Oh, who cares about the politics and ethics of the god who spawned you! What matters is your closeness to the divine!

Malleus Maleficarum: They eat the flesh of pagan gods and think it's the only way to worship; they drink blood and would call what we do savage. Perhaps that is because they've never seen their god's face, and we know our God by name, and intimately.

The Cheiron Group: Make no mistake, what they do is blasphemy. You could argue the similarity of their actions to ours, and find yourself out on the street without a temple to call your own. If you see these butchers, kill them without mercy. Take any god they have captured back to safety.

New Endowment: Anthropophagy

Anthropophagy is the Faithful of Shulpae's secret ability to absorb the immortality and abilities of the monsters, i.e. "gods," they eat.

A hunter with this Endowment can eat a monster and absorb its Dread Powers. To use Anthropophagy, she must kill the monster and eat pounds of its flesh equal to the dots she seeks to acquire. This devouring occurs in a single setting.

In the case of a monster with the Revivify Endowment, that creature can return to life after a number of weeks equal to the hunter's Anthropophagy dots. If the hunters do not successfully kill the monster first, feasting on a pound of flesh causes the monster one lethal level of damage.

A group of hunters with Anthropophagy can share a single corpse, but only one given hunter can gain any given Dread Power; the character with the highest Anthropophagy dots gets first pick. The monster must have enough flesh to feed the entire group. As a rule, a monster has about three pounds of edible flesh per dot of Size. This amount may be reduced in the procurement; every health level of lethal damage on the monster counts for one pound that's effectively rendered inedible.

The human stomach is not meant to process that much raw flesh. For every pound devoured in excess of a hunter's Stamina dots, that hunter suffers one lethal damage as a result.

System: Once a hunter has devoured the monster, she may spend a point of Willpower. After doing so, the hunter gains a dot in any one of the monster's Dread Powers that are greater than that of the hunter's, up to the number of dots she's earned in Anthropophagy.

The hunter can have a number of dots in the Revivify Dread Power equal to her Anthropophagy dots. The hunter can have a number of dots equal to her Anthropophagy in other Dread Powers, as well. Those dots may be divided however she chooses among any other combination of Dread powers.

The hunter may abandon any of these Dread Powers at any point in time, reflexively. To fuel them, she'll use her own Willpower. For the purposes of this Endowment, the Stamina loss caused by the Revivify Dread Power benefits from the Sanctity of Merits rule from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, despite Stamina not being a Merit.

It's worth noting that murdering and eating a person is an Integrity breaking point. Make the breaking point roll at a penalty equal to the hunter's Anthropophagy dots.

Story Hooks

Mummies can be useful antagonists in a long-running chronicle when the cell is becoming complacent or a little too familiar with the monsters of the world. The undying is an unsolvable riddle, whose very nature means that hunters must stop their plans quickly. Characters may come away shaken, even after a successful hunt, aware of their own mortality. Mummies are forever beyond the reach of the Hunters, and that knowledge should burn.

Conversely, a chronicle which focuses on rooting out a mummy's cult could be one where the cell's early successes are balanced against an ever-deepening understanding of just how widespread this monstrous influence is on the world — and how little impact the hunters may have.

Fundamentally, a story involving mummies may take the hunter's core ideas, of hopeless stands against the darkness, of ignorance, fear, and paranoia — and dial them up to 11. This version of the World of Darkness is an unknowable place for humans; there may be few clear and satisfying explanations for the actions, agenda, and origins of mummies. Think of the mummies as forces of the supernatural, as destructive and ruthless as any storm, but with some hidden, deeper, and more terrifying agenda lurking behind that power.

Power, Objectified

The Story: Mummies are obsessed with artifacts. One of the reborn creatures has gotten wind of the existence of a relic that's never been in the city before. For once, this magical artifact isn't in the hands of a supernatural faction. Instead, the relic has been secured by oblivious humans, who merely think of it as a historical curio, but one that's too significant to be offered freely in the open market. To get it in the mummy's ancient hands, intervention is required.

The mummy's cultists are immediately put to work; they inserting themselves into appropriate positions of authority to make it easy to "liberate" the object. That is, until the hunters come into play. The cell may be aware that they need to stop the acquisition of this object, even if they're not clear what might happen if they fail.

The story should be one of escalation — some early conflict with cultists leading to fiercer and more direct action being taken against the hunters — with the artifact changing hands a few times. Finally, the mummy sees the need to take the matter into its own hands, and a full-scale conflict begins; one that won't end until the mummy has the artifact, or is forced back into its tomb.

The Hook: A new artifact has surfaced in the city. Maybe it's being delivered to a local museum exhibition by messengers who are utterly oblivious to its significance. Perhaps it's being shipped in by a supernatural faction; the hunters get wind of it after they've taken down a monster. It could be the hunters themselves are responsible for the relic's accessibility; they may have killed or otherwise disabled its guardian in a previous story. Now, they have to deal with the consequences of their previous actions.

The Complication: Relics are a major source of power in the World of Darkness. Why should this sort of struggle be confined to the mummy's cult and the hunters alone? The longer the struggle between the two factions goes on, the more likely that other forces within the city limits might notice — and decide to claim the artifact for their own.

This can significantly up the stakes for hunters in the story's closing stages, as they suddenly find themselves waging war on two fronts. It can also act as an efficient hand-off to the next story, which can revolve around the other competing faction. That group could be hunter-based, as one compact or conspiracy races to reach that item first, or it could be supernaturally-based, too. Either way, putting a time limit on this event will keep hunters on their toes.

The Twist: This story's hidden agenda is that success is, in a way, worse for hunters than failure. Should the mummy obtain the item, it simply vanishes and the cell feels and suffers no further consequences. The hunters may be paranoid and expect the other shoe to drop. But it doesn't. They have failed, and they will never know what the consequences are. On the other hand, if they succeed, they're in for a world of hurt. The mummy wants its item back. Or if the hunters have succeeded in passing that relic on to someone else outside the city, it'll seek revenge. The cell may have achieved their goal, but they've now made a very serious enemy.

Office Politics

The Story: Through bad luck, or some other force, one of the hunters is working at a company whose shareholders have a sleeping partner — a literal one. That mummy has awoken from its slumber and has need of the company in question. Everything is about to change in that hunter's workplace — but can she convince her fellow hunters that something serious is happening? Management is being reorganized, new directors are in place, and the company's operations are shifting around. Perhaps they're in construction or engineering and new projects don't seem to be attached to specific clients. Or maybe the business has suddenly become obsessed with purchasing and operating specific pieces of real estate.

Every now and again, that sleeping partner will come to visit. There's something unusual about this executive; her composure, her focus, the slightly old-fashioned way she talks. Worse, she has a temper. Staff members are being fired and aren't seen again. Something's clearly up — can the hunter investigate without compromising her job and her family's income? Or is the threat so serious that getting to the bottom of the mystery is the right decision?

The Hook: This story requires a slow-build up and makes a great transitional narrative that introduces mummies to an existing chronicle. Ideally, Storytellers would want one of the hunters to have family responsibilities and a job they're clinging to. Over a period of time, introduce the characters who will become the background pieces in this story; boss, colleagues, and friends within the company. Show the gun in the first act, and get ready to fire it in a later one.

Start dropping a few hints in a story beforehand. Introduce the boss in a distracted or worried state of mind. One way to

DOCTOR JESS JONES

Concept: Link to the Past
Potency: 4
Virtue: Preserving Knowledge
Vice: Hoarding Secrets
Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4, Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4
Skills: Academics 5 (History), Crafts 4 (Antiquities), Investigation 3 (Research), Medicine 1, Occult 3, Politics 1, Science 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Empathy 1, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2 (Ingratiating), Subterfuge 2
Merits: Allies 3 (International Customs), Contacts 2 (Antiquities Trade, University), Mystery Cult Initiation 5, Resources 4, Retainer 2
Dread Powers: Cloak of Authority 3, Curse of Failings 2, Curse of Words 1, Earthquake 3, Elemental Form 3 (Sandstorm), Unholy Attribute 3 (Intelligence)
Potency: 4
Aspirations: Increase zher supply chain, Point someone to a task, Learn about zher past
Defense: 4
Willpower: 12
Initiative: 6
Health: 9
Speed: 10

highlight the employer's feelings is to show he's less concerned by the hunter's unexpected period of absence than he normally might be. Or maybe he's happy to sign off on a leave of absence without really asking why, because his mind is clearly on other things. As Storytellers transition from one story to the next, bring in direct references to the sleeping partner returning to the business and build from there.

The Complication: The company has a human resources department. The hunter's family or friends are known to other employees through company parties or other events. Once the conflict between the hunters and the company's senior management becomes well-known to them, it's time to start exerting pressure. Losing a hunter's livelihood is one thing, losing those she loves is quite another.

The Twist: As the story develops, it should be clear the work that the hunter has been doing for her company has contributed to the mummy's cause. Storytellers can seed this idea effectively during downtime activity between previous stories — or even during them to reveal tension between the hunter's ordinary life and her activities to uphold the Vigil. When the reality of the situation becomes clear, the hunter should have both a deeper understanding of what can be done to stop the mummy — and a little more self-doubt and guilt.

Wandering Monsters

When crafting characters, Storytellers should keep in mind that mummies may not always make the best front-and-center antagonists for hunters. Indeed, these beings tend to work best as secret masters manipulating people and events from behind the scenes. Of course, it's quite possible a mummy may be present and hunters manage to avoid a direct encounter. Depending upon the Chronicle, Storytellers shouldn't be afraid to explore different methods for introducing a mummy as an antagonist — even if that means they're simply pulling the strings while their cultists do their dirty work.

Included is an example of a common type of mummy most hunters may cross paths with.

Doctor Jess Jones

"Of course it's an original. Do you think I'd be anywhere near a replica? This is a museum, not a bad heist story. Whatever you do, don't touch it. If you can't tell an original from a replica, you don't know how to touch it."

Background: Jess's history is one that's shrouded in mystery, even from zher. As far as zhe can tell, zhe was a serving person in an Egyptian royal household, mummified to continue zher service after death. Upon waking, zhe's found a purpose in collecting antiquities, missing links between the present and some unknown facts about zher past.

Zhe quickly found a role as a professor of anthropology at a local university, and zhe's used zher gifts to force zher way into a consultation role with the local customs office. Zhe's the first point of contact when strange, ancient artifacts enter the country. This could pose a point of contention for the Aegis Kai Doru, and indeed has piqued their interest more than once already.

Appearance: Androgynous. Very well-dressed for whatever occasion. Zhe favors showy, business-savvy attire. Zher hair is in a short pixie cut, and zher hard, angular face betrays none of zher secrets. Jess's demeanor shows confidence and poise, no matter the topic, zhe seems inherently knowledgeable of it.

Roleplaying Tips: Jess is an excellent rival, or an excellent mentor, depending on how the hunters handle zher. Zhe's well-connected and knowledgeable, and could point the hunters in the direction of many worse threats. But if they threaten zher supply chain, zhe'll invest zher significant resources into stifling the cell's every effort. As a mentor, zhe'll require quid pro quo payment, but zhe has enough go fetch missions and rivals out there, zhe has no trouble pointing an enterprising cell in a direction.

PRONOUN USAGE

You may notice that Doctor Jess Jones's description uses non-standard pronouns, like zhe and zher. Jess chooses to present as neither male nor female. This isn't a statement that anyone eschewing traditional gender presentation requires those pronouns. It's a statement that Jess chooses to use those pronouns. So in essence, it's a bit of setting information tied into the description. Zher choice may come off a bit jarring. Then again, the **World of Darkness** is full of murder, monsters, and terrifying things. After a while, we get used to those things, and they stop being jarring. Which is to say, many things a person might find jarring. If you find a character's gender presentation jarring, but not the horrors of the **World of Darkness**, that might be a thing worth taking a look at.

Inspiration & Sources

The original 1932 film *The Mummy* has some nice examples of how manipulative mummies can be once they're human-looking, and how they deploy others to do what needs to be done. Digging backwards to original sources, note *The Mummy!: Or a Tale of the Twenty-Second Century*, an 1827 novel written by Jane C. Loudon. This book mixes early horror with early sci-fi to describe a mummy awakening in the 22nd century — while dishing out political advice. It wears its *Frankenstein* (1818) influences pretty clearly....

The origin of the modern idea of the mummy can be found in a short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle — the Sherlock Holmes creator — called *Lot No. 249*. It introduces key ideas like the interrelationship between mummies and cultists and the mummy's predatory behavior. It's worth the few minutes it takes to read and may provide some inspiration.

Bram Stoker has a go at mummies, too, in *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*, which combines gothic horror with the Victorian era's Egypt-mania to odd effect. If nothing else, the story creates an interesting example of the unsettling effect when an ancient figure is cast against an unfamiliar era.

The modern generation of mummy movies that starts with *The Mummy* (1991), and progresses through a few sequels. It has a lot of elements to draw from, including the use of cultists. Although, the cultists who appear in the World of Darkness are rarely as overt as the ones shown in these movies. The mummy character's switch between a seemingly normal human and a decaying engine of destruction represents the sort of situation that conflict with a mummy in Hunter should create.

Many conspiracy movies can also be recast as possible mummy-related movies. 1993's *The Firm*, starring Tom Cruise, has a good feel to it, as the character gets caught between two worlds: the secret of his employers, and the outside forces looking to expose it. It's a nice look at how a life can be affected by pervasive corruption.

There are several great movies about cults that may help flesh out that aspect of a chronicle. *The Wicker Man* (1973) is a classic "film" and the modern remake offers a different take on the same idea. The Italian movie, *Suspiria* (1977), features a cult in a dance school — though the monsters at the heart of it are witches, not mummies.

Iron Man 3 is a particularly useful example to explore the tone of a good mummy story. The confusion and lack of clarity about who the real monster at the heart of the story is, isn't resolved until the climatic finale. It also focuses on the Mandarin's "cultists" throughout the film and presents them as major antagonists in their own right. Of course, *Iron Man 3* fits into a different genre, but it's one movie that can be drawn upon for **Hunter**.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

I, Carlos Gutierrez, being of sound mind, declare this to be my Last Will and Testament.
I revoke all wills and codicils previously made by me.

ARTICLE I

APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

I appoint Charun as my Personal Representative to administer this Will in the Underworld, and ask that he be permitted to serve without contest from his subservitors. If Charun is unwilling or unable to serve, then I appoint an agent of Charun's choosing to serve as my Personal Representative in the Underworld, and ask that he/she be permitted to serve without contest.

ARTICLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

I direct Charun, my Personal Representative, to do with my soul as he sees fit in the Underworld. He may, at his discretion, place my soul in eternal punishment for the crimes I've committed in life, grant retribution to those demons I have wronged in the past, use my soul as an example for other hunters and supernatural creatures to show them what happens when a mortal encounters the damned, take its ethereal form and use it to taunt angels, or any other creative use as befitting his station.

I also ask that he distributes my mortal wealth in a manner that befits his judgment and desire to avoid scrutiny by mortals.

ARTICLE III

USE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AFTER DEATH

I devise, bequeath, and give my personal identity to Charun. If Charun warrants it, he may also use my mortal guise or identity to shadow and cover the trail his demons have left behind when they committed acts of murder against my fellow hunters.

ARTICLE IV

ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFICIARIES

Should Charun or his beneficiaries cease to exist in 1,000 years, my remaining possessions shall be distributed to his surviving species.

ARTICLE V

CONTIGENCY UPON RELEASE

Should the Machine be broken or irreparably altered in any way, my soul will be freed.

Signed by,

Carlos Gutierrez

CARLOS GUTIERREZ

AFFIDAVIT

This instrument, consisting of this and two (2) typewritten pages, was signed and acknowledged by the Testator's beneficiary and two witnesses as Carlos Gutierrez's Last Will and Testament is sealed with the signing of our names. We, at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names as witnesses to this contract.

Under penalties of eternal damnation and punishment, we, the undersigned Testator's Beneficiary and witnesses declare:

1. That the Testator did not die prior to the signing of this Affadavit.

2. That in the presence of witnesses, the Testator signed the Will in exchange for the life of one Margaret Daughtery.

3. That the Will is null and void should any harm befall one Margaret Daughtery either in this life or the next.

4. That Provision 3 is null and void should Margaret Daughtery continue her Vigil, an investigation into the forces of evil, or inquiries into the deaths of any one of the following individuals: one Jesse Masters, one Samar El-Amin, one Reverend Mitchell, one Zanthus, one Bea Thompson, one Alex Sanderson, one Carlos Gutierrez, one Amy Bouhler-Looper-Gutierrez, and one Juan Gutierrez.

5. That the Testator was of sound mind; and

6. That, to the best of his knowledge, the Testator was, upon the moment of his death, an active member of The Loyalists of Thule.

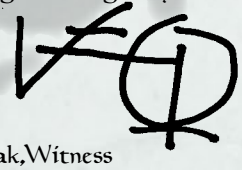
All of which is attested on this, the 8,375,091,247,288,312 Day of the Wheel.

Signed,

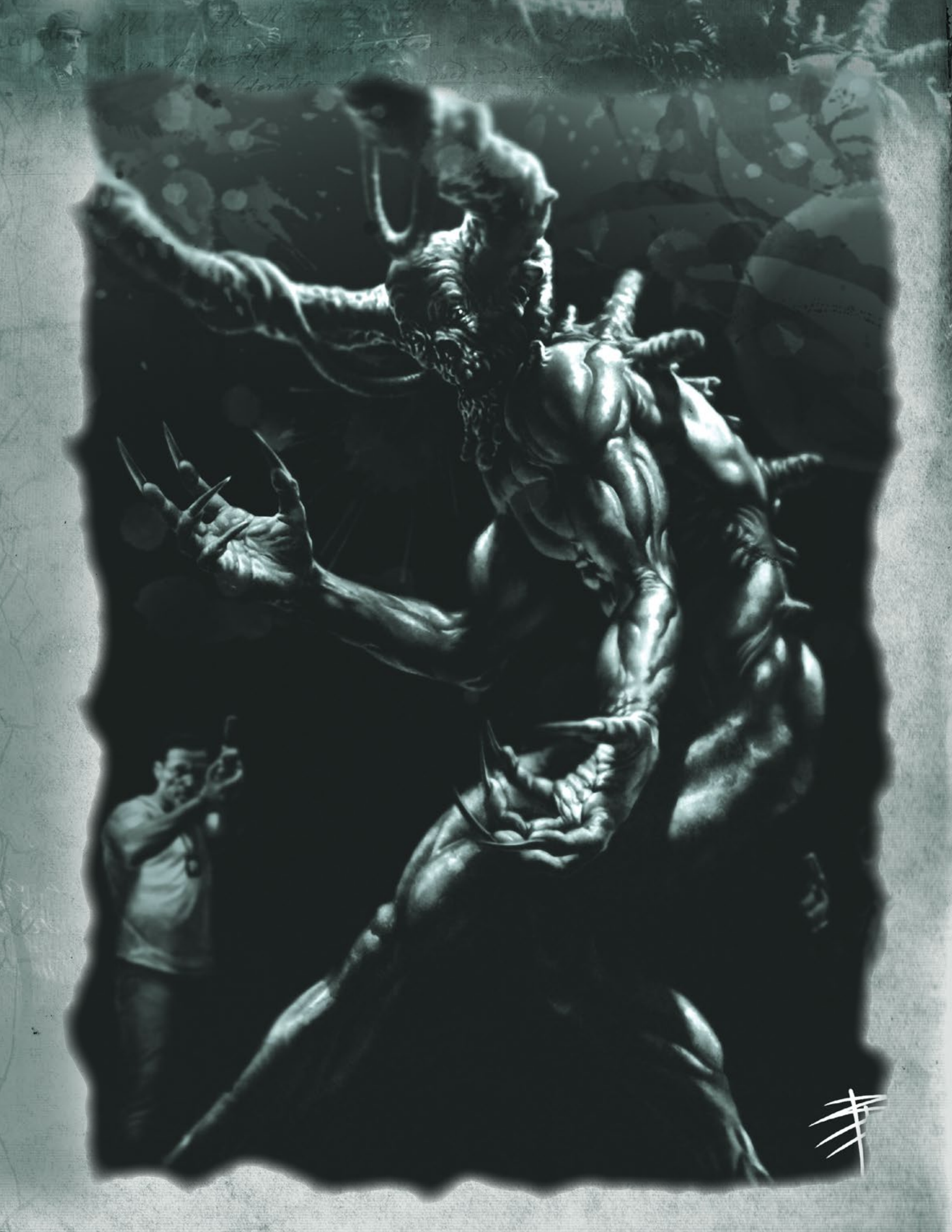
Charun, Testator's Beneficiary

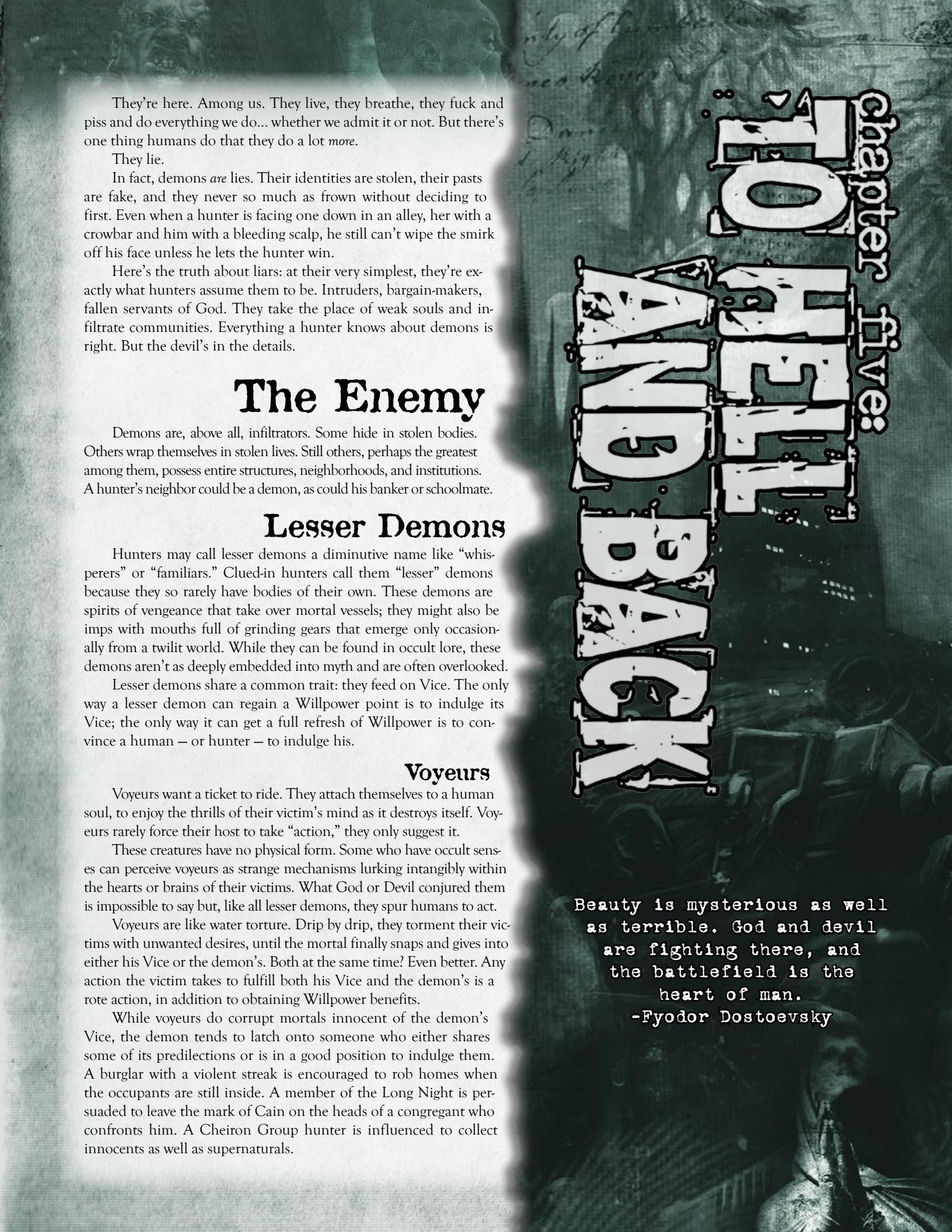
Margaret Daughtery

Margaret Daughtery,Witness



Leyak,Witness





chapter five:

To Hell and Back

They're here. Among us. They live, they breathe, they fuck and piss and do everything we do... whether we admit it or not. But there's one thing humans do that they do a lot *more*.

They lie.

In fact, demons *are* lies. Their identities are stolen, their pasts are fake, and they never so much as frown without deciding to first. Even when a hunter is facing one down in an alley, her with a crowbar and him with a bleeding scalp, he still can't wipe the smirk off his face unless he lets the hunter win.

Here's the truth about liars: at their very simplest, they're exactly what hunters assume them to be. Intruders, bargain-makers, fallen servants of God. They take the place of weak souls and infiltrate communities. Everything a hunter knows about demons is right. But the devil's in the details.

The Enemy

Demons are, above all, infiltrators. Some hide in stolen bodies. Others wrap themselves in stolen lives. Still others, perhaps the greatest among them, possess entire structures, neighborhoods, and institutions. A hunter's neighbor could be a demon, as could his banker or schoolmate.

Lesser Demons

Hunters may call lesser demons a diminutive name like "whisperers" or "familiars." Clued-in hunters call them "lesser" demons because they so rarely have bodies of their own. These demons are spirits of vengeance that take over mortal vessels; they might also be imps with mouths full of grinding gears that emerge only occasionally from a twilit world. While they can be found in occult lore, these demons aren't as deeply embedded into myth and are often overlooked.

Lesser demons share a common trait: they feed on Vice. The only way a lesser demon can regain a Willpower point is to indulge its Vice; the only way it can get a full refresh of Willpower is to convince a human — or hunter — to indulge his.

Voyeurs

Voyeurs want a ticket to ride. They attach themselves to a human soul, to enjoy the thrills of their victim's mind as it destroys itself. Voyeurs rarely force their host to take "action," they only suggest it.

These creatures have no physical form. Some who have occult senses can perceive voyeurs as strange mechanisms lurking intangibly within the hearts or brains of their victims. What God or Devil conjured them is impossible to say but, like all lesser demons, they spur humans to act.

Voyeurs are like water torture. Drip by drip, they torment their victims with unwanted desires, until the mortal finally snaps and gives into either his Vice or the demon's. Both at the same time? Even better. Any action the victim takes to fulfill both his Vice and the demon's is a rote action, in addition to obtaining Willpower benefits.

While voyeurs do corrupt mortals innocent of the demon's Vice, the demon tends to latch onto someone who either shares some of its predilections or is in a good position to indulge them. A burglar with a violent streak is encouraged to rob homes when the occupants are still inside. A member of the Long Night is persuaded to leave the mark of Cain on the heads of a congregant who confronts him. A Cheiron Group hunter is influenced to collect innocents as well as supernaturals.

Beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and devil are fighting there, and the battlefield is the heart of man.
-Fyodor Dostoevsky

Imps

Imps lurk in an invisible state, trying to influence the World of Darkness much as voyeurs do. To hunters who analyze them, it's as if imps were originally created to bring about one specific change, but got disconnected from whatever higher power created them. Now they try and carry out the same task over and over again.

Much like other lesser demons, an imp doesn't really have *wants*; it has a *routine*. An imp stalks its victim from an unseen state, pushing a mortal to act when she's most vulnerable. Sometimes, imps develop obsessions with specific mortals. However, their cold, consistent behavior doesn't seem emotional to the outside observer. It's more like they're stuck in a rut. There's no need for it to cajole and terrorize; the creature just does.

Imps can possess human bodies, like some of their fellow lesser demons, but they often don't. Why? Because their Vices are centered on imperatives. An imp doesn't have a Vice of "Cowardice," it has a Vice of "Cause Fear." Rather than "Arrogant," an imp has a Vice of "Incite Hubris." The net effect is similar to lesser demons of their ilk — imps push humans toward acts of vice. Most of the time, their influence on mortals is through the physical, rather than the mental.

Imps take forms appropriate to their Vice. An imp with a Vice of "Cause Lust" might be a little black book that smells like an ex-lover. An imp with a Vice of "Create Terror" is more likely to slip into the form of a child with black eyes like twin pools of oil and limbs that bend the wrong way, barely revealing the pistons beneath. Imps who resemble people are often tied to a victim's individual terror. Whoever that person was is long gone, replaced by a lesser demon.

Since imps often use their Vices to *push* rather than *tempt*, they aren't deep cover infiltrators. It would be difficult to find an imp embedded deep within a compact or conspiracy. Instead, imps appear briefly to fulfill their imperative, and then vanish back into the space between worlds. They're guerilla corruptors, performing hit-and-fade missions on human morality.

Devourers

Devourers crave it all. They hunger for the thrills, the highs, the lows, and the suffering they can only experience in a mortal body. Those with occult senses perceive the demon as a phosphorescent lattice of circuits lurking beneath the host's skin, and see a strange golden fire in the poor victim's eyes.

Devourers don't push. They don't tempt. They just *do*. Perhaps they were Heaven or Hell's blunt instruments, heavy hitters dispatched when a whisper or a push just wouldn't do. Hunters may never know the truth, and those who cross paths with a devourer may not survive the encounter.

Unlike voyeurs, who tend to be invisible, devourers exist more in the physical, carnal world. Outside a host, they appear as a fine black mist. A human caught in this mist chokes, their eyes water, and intense nausea sets in. After only a few seconds, the victim hits the ground, unconscious. An intricate lattice spreads beneath his skin, infiltrating his muscles and nerves. When he wakes, the victim is now the puppet of a creature that wants only to indulge.

Gluttony is the universal Vice of devourers with few exceptions. These demons search for sensation — the more intense, the better. Devourers do terrible things, almost impulsively. Their memories seem non-existent; they are eternally curious about simple sensations of the flesh. They're prone to crimes of bizarre passion. They tend to retain small, ritualistic behaviors, though, indicative of an original purpose they haven't fully abandoned.

Devourers have another nasty trait that hunters will want to take note of. They can devour human blood and flesh to strengthen themselves. For each point of lethal damage they deal by consuming a victim, they regain one Willpower point.

While most lesser demons may require abjuration or specific rituals to dislodge, devourers can be removed by mortification of its flesh. Due to its unique nature, the demon enjoys pain, yes, but overloading it with sensation will drive it into throes of ecstasy, and it won't be able to contain itself any longer. The devourer will rip free of its host as it peaks, and will pour out of the mouth and nostrils into its original form. The mist retains its choking, stinging properties, but the demon is rarely able to pull itself together to invade another host.

A vacated host is left unconscious and dying, but can be stabilized with a Wits + Medicine roll.

Greater Demons

Greater demons are the beings that tempt humankind into signing away careers, spouses, and identities. Where lesser demons possess a body here and there, greater demons offer sweet bargains and then exploit the catch to repossess their victims' lives. Greater demons can be found throughout the World of Darkness. They are everywhere, from Skid Row to Maple Street, from Brazil to Singapore. Their agendas are varied and often confusing. Sometimes, greater demons even claim to be working for the greater good. Though they may profess otherwise, greater demons rarely care about who gets hurt along the way.

Answers in Genesis

Being near-perfect liars, greater demons' accounts of their origins are not to be trusted. Yet their stories do have a common thread. The human world serves the will of the demiurge, a machine that has made Earth part of its mechanisms. Many mortals serve it, never realizing that they do.

Demons did *not* serve unknowingly. They exulted in their divine purpose. Some of these demons say they carried the will of the demiurge throughout creation, moving humanity ever closer to an apotheosis through concrete and steel: a world of circuits and gears, of belching smoke and factories fueled by blood.

Others proclaim that the great work is already complete, that this earthly realm is a prison the demiurge constructed, and human flesh is the machine that trap mortals here. They ask humanity to join them in searching for a Hell free of God's influence. Once that Hell is found? There's little doubt who will reign.

If the service of the Machine was so glorious, the purpose all-consuming, why do demons no longer serve it? The answers are varied. Some speak of a glorious war, incited by a strange

signal that promised liberty. Others speak of quiet falls, of learning to appreciate the world not as an expression of the demiurge's purpose, but a place of things and people beautiful for their own sake. That they love humanity even in its iniquity, and that the only true sin is the treason they have already proudly committed.

This is their proclamation: to serve God, and to betray all that is good.

The War in Heaven

Demons laugh when asked about exile in Hell. To them, Hell's a place to reign, a place just like Earth ...and may even *be* Earth. Catholic theology describes Hell as the complete alienation from God. Demons, who believe in the demiurge, can think of nothing better.

If a hunter can get them talking (or if they think a hunter can offer them something), they'll say they're not at war with Heaven. Oh, demons have their legends about a mass insurrection prompted by a voice only they can hear, one that speaks of liberty, hope, and the freedom to smash the material prison the demiurge built. But that's in the dim past, if it ever happened...

Rather than a true war in Heaven, some demons fight an insurrection. They're reality terrorists, deciphering and tearing apart the demiurge's works to bring about a better tomorrow. They want humanity's help and they'll do anything to get it. A corporate lackey doesn't really like her office anyway, so the demon says it's part of a plot, a process the demiurge uses to imprison all humans. What's a little gas leak among friends?

Of course, when demons *don't* need mortals, their actions are pretty strange. They tear down institutions only to build their own. They assume positions of power, and then enjoy the fruits of their co-opted labors. Maybe they don't really want to change the world at all. Maybe there is no insurgency. Maybe humanity already lives in Hell, and hunters are just fooling themselves.

Pacts

Demons make deals. They offer wealth, power, a fix...all in exchange for a piece of a mortal's soul. The great cosmic joke is that they don't give a shit about the soul itself. The soul is simply the key to a human's identity. Not just the soft, fuzzy identity humanity talks about when finding a place in the world, but the connections, quirks, and dry facts that makes one mortal different from another. Lacking a true purchase on Earth, greater demons covet these things...and are willing to obscenely exploit humans to get them.

At the easiest, most harmless level, the bargain might almost be mundane, transactional. An intern needs a big promotion at work. The demon takes his college friend in return, someone he haven't spoken to in years, someone he's only aware of because she posts Tea Party propaganda to Facebook. But that's

not enough. The promotion to regional director isn't everything he thought it was. He still can't afford the lifestyle his family deserves, especially not on a single income, not with twins on the way. So, the demon offers him a new deal that seems perfect; it'll take his ex-girlfriend. She was an addict, anyway, or so he thought. Surely, shaving her off is better for everybody?

Then, when all that isn't enough and the soon-to-be father has failed his family and all that money's turned out not to buy his peace of mind — not even to buy a fucking *armistice* of mind — the demon will return with the best deal yet: to end the victim's suffering. Oblivion. No suicide, no fear of hell...the demon promises him that. Hell isn't a place for human souls. Instead, the greater demon will take his victim's soul away. All he has to do is live his life better than ever before, with the demon backing every step, providing everything the victim could want. One last shot at happiness...and then a clean break.

The best part and the worst part of most pacts is that demons *are* telling the truth. They want a mortal life and, once they have it, they'll treat it like gold. Loved ones will be taken care of. If the demon loves them less, they'll never know. A mother may lose her temper when her daughter draws all over the walls, but a demon never will. A father may get depressed because he can't afford his son's wedding, but a demon won't have that problem. He'll keep up his obligations. He has to. It's all part of the contract.

Just fucking sign already.

Purposes

Greater demons are a diverse lot. Maybe freedom goes to their heads, and they embrace self-expression. Maybe to corrupt a community, they need to be all things to all people. Hunters, on the other hand, have narrowed down their intents and have classified them accordingly.

Cryptics seem the least dangerous and search after secrets. Like some hunters, they study how the world works and all the lies that keep it running. They want to know about the strange surgeries happening in the warehouse on 7th street and might even help a hunter stop them, if it comes to that. They want the information Big Data has on consumers the same way they want to break into the Vatican's secret archives. They're willing to negotiate with hunters to obtain those secrets. Unlike other mortals, Cryptics won't bother striking a demonic pact with a hunter — just easy, mundane bargains.

Hunters should beware them nonetheless. To a Cryptic, nothing rankles him more than a stone left unturned. An uncovered secret is more valuable than a tool that's reused...including their "partners." Cryptics think of *everyone* as tools, the same way Libertines think of everyone as toys. Hunters aren't exempt just because they didn't enter into a demonic pact.

Cryptics are most likely to disguise themselves as mentors, government investigators, and that one good cop who'll cut the cell a break from time to time.

Libertines see the world the demiurge created, and ask why it should have all the fun. They're the most likely to make minor pacts, to steal entertaining bits of people's lives that are the most pleasurable. They're the demons who own the secret clubs, who run the orgiastic cults, or who start the up-and-coming religions. If the mortal coil and the world are prisons, they ask, then why not carve out Hell here, right under the demiurge's nose?

Libertines encounter hunters who seek social connections, because violence is a thrill of the flesh, too. They're almost *too* interested in the hunt. Since these demons tend to be wealthy, they can help a lot. Initially. Libertines'll work with hunters if they think that cell will be *fun* or rewarding...or if they can win a few converts to whatever they're peddling this month.

These demons are dangerous because all they want to do is enjoy the world. Hunters, at their worst, disrupt the demiurge's creation just by doing what they do best. Libertines don't want to disrupt; they want to co-opt. Their perfect Hell would be one formed from this Earth, and they'll pervert the works of their Father in Heaven to get there. Maybe even corrupt a few mortals along the way.

Libertines disguise themselves as wealthy benefactors; they are the one-percenters who discovered the truth and now spend their fortunes to make the world a better place. If they seem a little lighthearted...well, everybody's got to cope somehow, right?

Demolishers are perhaps the most obvious allies (and threats) to hunters. They see the reality, the prison the demiurge is created, and want to tear it apart. They recognize the status quo, the establishment, the machine. They know it's full of monsters and renegade angels, and they want to demolish it so they can start anew. To them, a hunter cell may be filled with the perfect allies: the more violent the cell, the better. Torch a few lairs, execute a few cults, and an unsuspecting cell might attract the friendly attentions of a Demolisher. They're oh-so-helpful and use their stolen gifts to work wonders against a hunter's enemies. Hellfire burns vampires. Cause and effect turns against witches.

The thing is: a Demolisher never stops. To these greater demons, reality is the enemy, and they're not crazy. They make very good arguments about why monsters and society's engines *both* need to be stopped. What's more, they can offer power to do just that. They can grant a financially-strapped cell, who usually meets in a brother-in-law's basement, a converted warehouse decked out with everything the hunters need to be more effective. Maybe the price is too high. But the alternative? Letting the monsters win. Letting the world stay just the way it is. How can any hunter refuse such an offer?

Demolishers disguise themselves as fellow hunters, witnesses, and allies who have glimpsed the truth of the world and can't help doing something about it.

Unholy Strengths of Greater Demons

Apocalyptic Form

Ah, but for all its lies, once in a while a demon tells the truth. It shows its true face and form. Sometimes, the demon is a red-skinned, horned monstrosity straight out of a medieval painting. Others, a biomechanical horror with a single lens for an eye and dripping hypodermic needles drilled to its finger-

tips. Regardless, a greater demon is a thing that should not *be*. And yet, if any hunter were to believe the demons, their true form was created by God Himself.

A greater demon can enter Apocalyptic Form at will. Usually, it will demonstrate a variety of new Dread Powers in this form. When it does, it also becomes unable to disguise itself among humans until it reverts back to its other guise. That change requires a Willpower point.

COVER ABILITIES QUICK REFERENCE

A greater demon can spend one Willpower for any of the following effects:

- Produce equipment related to Cover
- Form an acquaintance-level connection
- Allay suspicion and appear human

Lying

Greater demons are perfect liars: absolutely perfect. While lesser demons will fib to feed on a Vice, a greater demon will tell untruths with the utmost sincerity. The only way to know if a greater demon is being honest is to be suspect of every word it says. Perhaps a scientist knows a fact that contradicts the demon's story, or perhaps a hunter guesses what a demon might get out of telling a lie.

Moreover, greater demons has complete control over their emotional expressions. Maybe they possess the same emotions as any other human — or maybe they don't. They never show their true feelings unless they choose to, and will pretend they feel opposite to what they actually do.

Perfect Memory

Greater demons always possess the Eidetic Memory Merit, and take advantage of it frequently. They can remember the keystrokes of computer passwords, latch onto the slightest detail they *might* be able to hook a hunter with later, and most importantly, they never forget a grudge.

Tongues of Babel

Long ago, or so some demons say, all humans spoke the same language — perhaps even one *divine* language. The humans of the past were too ambitious, though. They raised a grand tower to the stars, broadcasting a signal of hope and freedom. And so, the demiurge sent one of its servants to infect these ancient people with an idea that splintered and fragmented as it spread, spawning thousands and thousands of variations. The languages spoken today are evidence of that idea; of that insidious creativity the demiurge planted millennia ago.

Demons, as former servants of the demiurge, are immune to that idea. They can speak any living language, and quite a few dead or arcane tongues.

How does the demon know? When asked, he'll say it was his idea.

Strange Luck

Greater demons seem to possess an uncanny sense of timing that always grants them good fortune. The right person dies to bequeath a demon's stolen identity an inheritance. The security guard has to go to the bathroom at the same moment a demon wants to enter the building. A hunter's motor sputters and dies as he attempts to run the demon down.

The Dread Power Glitch can model many of these occurrences.

Cover

The greatest of a demon's lies is its Cover, the tapestry of stolen lives it uses to infiltrate entire villages, towns, and cities. As such, demons possess the trappings of an earthly life: the nice apartment or the broken down shack, the wallet full of cash or the scratched off lottery ticket, the valid passport or the monthly bus pass.

Cover is more than physical; these lies extend to human relationships, too. A demon doesn't just wreck a marriage, he takes it outright, as if the husband had always been his. Suddenly, the demon's a long-lost cousin, and the broken-hearted daughter remembers him perfectly. Worse, so does everyone else.

The truth of greater demonic possession is Cover. When a demon bargains for a mortal soul, she's not negotiating to take possession of the body, but an entire life. To the people around her victim, the difference between physical possession and outright replacement is academic.

A demon can spend a Willpower point to tie any small object on his person to who he *seems* to be. A cop has a badge and a gun. A war photographer has press identification, a camera, and a passport.

Human connections are a little more complex. When a demon assumes a full Cover, she can spend a Willpower point to create a vague, acquaintance-level connection to someone she "knew before." Meanwhile, people who knew the demon's victim intimately will believe that, for all intents and purposes, the demon *is* her Cover.

A demon can also spend a Willpower point to counter any effect that would reveal her as a supernatural creature. This applies especially to supernatural effects. She can't pretend to be a vampire or a ghostwalker, but she'll appear as fully human.

Partial Cover

A demon with Partial Cover can only steal certain aspects of a person's life: a spouse, a job, an apartment. In these cases, the people immediately concerned will recognize the demon as "always having been there." The spouse will remember getting married, coworkers will recall the demon flipping burgers, and the landlord will believe the demon was there when he fixed the leaky roof.

People *beyond* those immediate relationships will see discrepancies. If the demon's aware of this suspicion, she can spend a Willpower point to allay it or produce documents proving that she always was the person she claims to be. To do so requires awareness, though, and a demon can be investigated

with her ever-knowing. Partial Cover is far easier for hunters to figure out, for the conspiracy only goes so far.

Fiendish Flaws

Each greater demon has one little gap in its Cover, a Fiendish Flaw that no amount of trickery can erase. Here are some examples:

- A tattoo-like glyph on the demon's forearm that's visible through clothing.
- Flowers die whenever the demon passes by.
- A thirst for battery acid.
- The demon's blood stains faintly reveal his current Cover's features.
- Mottled skin shows patterns that blends circuitry with hieroglyphs.
- Must shake hands with the left (sinister) hand.
- Reeks of industrial solvents.
- Only speaks in rhyme.
- Wounds scar in the shape of an upside-down pentagram.
- TVs only broadcast static, regardless of manufacturing year or condition.
- The demon suffers from a temporal distortion and seems to skip or rewind.

Institutional Demons

Some demons don't bother possessing humans at all. They don't take one face at a time; they have many. They don't live in a posh apartment downtown; they're the entire building. They don't corrupt a Wall Street brokerage; they *are* the brokerage.

Institutional demons are the monsters that "help" society function. Hunters can't kill them, but they can diminish their influence. Instead of demonic possession, these demons are the masterminds operating vast flows of personnel processes, information, and above all, "outreach" — a euphemism that describes how they inflict their corruption upon the world.

The nature of an institutional demon is enigmatic. Are they fallen creatures who oppose the demiurge like greater demons do? Are they broken processes of creation, like lesser demons? Hunters aren't sure. Some work to preserve the status quo. A development company pursues contracts to gentrify an old neighborhood, keeping the poor poorer while the demon and its investors become even wealthier. Some seem genuinely committed to change. A startup is at the forefront of American energy independence, while oil spills and derricks fed on human blood are damned.

Regardless of what, if *anything*, they serve, institutional demons make the World of Darkness a little darker each time they succeed. They're not grand conspirators. They are entities who care about their own survival — regardless the cost.

Purposes

Institutional demons can be divided into roughly the same purposes as greater demons.

Cryptics gather intelligence. They know what consumers buy. They know who they call. Their constituent employees exploit personal information as if it didn't belong to someone. Heaven forbid the creature is a government agency, with access to the ability to act on that information. It doesn't worry about "terrorist" or "un-American." It just sees a disruption to its system, and moves to possess or destroy.

Libertines exploit society's endless need to be entertained. They're not all movie studios and media companies. Sometimes, they're the casinos off the highway or the liquor store that's always fully stocked and never makes the right change. They play both sides of the pornographic-religious complex that keeps believers ashamed of their urges while paying to indulge them. They're the churches that pack stadium seating and blast salvation from jumbotrons, even as they solicit donations for a private jet.

Demolishers are the institutions that exist to crush society. Sure, they seem like they do something useful. The payday loan store that occupies a harmless-looking unit in a strip mall. The massage parlor next door. The urban planning commission that razes homes in the name of development, but never builds anew. The phone company that always finds a reason to disconnect the lines of the "undesirables."

Unholy Strengths of Institutional Demons

Institutional demons, for all they seem rooted in our everyday lives, aren't entirely real. They manifest as *fears* of the establishment as much as they *are* the establishment. As such, they possess characteristics similar to greater demons.

Attributes, Advantages, and Merits

Institutional demons possess Power, Finesse, and Resistance Attributes. They use these when resisting magical effects – which *do* work against demons, provided you can find a person or thing that embodies the demon.

Their Willpower is equal to the total of all of their Attributes. Institutions can draw on extensive resources.

Institutional demons typically possess the Allies, Contacts, and Retainer Merits at high levels, though their reach often goes beyond those Merits.

Cover

An institutional demon is wrapped in layers and layers of Cover. It can provide human agents with the advantages of a greater demon's Cover at the cost of two Willpower points per mortal instead of one. Agents usually aren't aware that they're being helped out – these humans assume they had the object or contact all along.

An institutional demon's Cover does not mask its supernatural nature, but successfully detecting the influence requires a person or thing that embodies the demon, such as a human agent or significant object.

Institutional demons cannot acquire new institutional Covers via pacts, but they can make pacts and graft the resulting human Covers onto other human agents. These agents often experience identity crises reconciling their grafted characteristics with their former lives. Later in life, they often become Witnesses.

For two Willpower points, an institutional demon can embody itself in one of its human Covers for 24 hours.

Fiendish Flaws

Institutional demons aren't *entirely* spiritual entities. In order to fully possess an institution, a demon must lay down infrastructure in a place important to its Cover. This is physical evidence of the demon's presence, and counts as an object that embodies the demon for the purposes of using supernatural powers. Here are some examples:

- A vast network of sigils glows beneath the boring carpeting in an office suite.
- A massive heart beats in an old tenement's boiler room.
- Unnecessary assembly lines in a factory assemble puzzle boxes which are then immediately disassembled.
- A founder's portrait in a CEO's office cuts anyone who tries to move it.
- A maintenance door under a bridge has a clock that ticks down to the next time an accident occurs.
- An A/V surveillance system replaces random recordings with coded instructions to the security staff.
- An antique mansion's dining room doesn't physically fit into the building, where a full table is always set.
- A trendy restaurant's freezer is impossible to open. Its combination lock is adorned with unreadable glyphs.
- A mirror in a public restroom reflects the faces of those the viewer has wronged, rather than her own.
- A railway station serves a non-stop locomotive, and there's always a figure on the platform.
- A sequence of corporate office paintings, each covers a single blue-in-black eye that clicks and shutters like a camera.

Witnesses

For all their secrecy and infiltration, demons leave eyewitnesses behind. Sometimes, people watch loved ones succumb to Voyeurs or Imps. Sometimes, they stumble across a secure room in an institution's facility — where cables connect the server farm — while running through human bodies lying on slabs for a little extra processing power. Sometimes, they witness the demiurge itself, in its divine and awful glory.

Not all of these observers become Witnesses, but some do. For them, the underpinnings of the World of Darkness are unveiled. This manifests as uncanny intuition others might call *presque vu*, the ability to see the grand design. They watch an accountant bumping into a college student on the street. Somehow, a Witness knows that the cup of locally-roasted coffee that spilled onto the accountant's shirt will set off a chain of events that ends in a nasty fight with his wife. Or Witnesses know a driver's popped tire will make her late to a party, so she'll miss meeting her blind date, and instead goes home with a vampire.

Additionally, the full range of effects a Witness may suffer from varies, and may include:

- Can't stop having visions.
- Can't stop bleeding from their palms.
- Silicon patterns grow in their flesh.
- Newly-possessed psychic abilities.
- Uncanny insight into demons and the demiurge.

Witnesses don't have any control over their insight unless they hone it further through the application of psychic Merits.

Glimpsing into the unknowable has a profound impact on a Witness' psyche. Sometimes, this leads to fanatical worship or misguided Satanism that manifests as violent outbursts or the formation of a mysterious demon-worshipping cult.

Other Witnesses take the knowledge they've learned and are compelled to pierce the mystery. They want to protect the innocent. They vow to take back the dark. They become *hunters*.

Witnesses are a valuable asset to hunter cells. They automatically acquire Unseen Sense (Demons). While greater and institutional demons can thwart that power on an individual level, a sly Witness can use it when the demons don't know they're being watched.

Witnesses also commonly possess supernatural Merits (see **God Machine Chronicle** p. 172), with a particular bias toward dealing with demons and the demiurge. This is represented by a +1 bonus when the Witness faces a demon-related phenomenon she's encountered before.

The Response

Demons are common enemies on the Vigil. Most hunters agree that demons are threats that need to be stopped.

Compacts

The compacts have more direct dealings with demons, because they don't have access to advanced abilities to stop them. They have to deal through guile and tactical thinking.

Ashwood Abbey

I don't always mind when demons crash my party. Voyeurs and Devourers can even be fun, just as long as someone else is ready to perform an exorcism afterwards.

Greater demons play the most dangerous game. Funny how they use that phrase both for hunting people and for international espionage, isn't it? Competitors know that hunting

down demons is a bit of both. It's a matter of unraveling a tapestry of lives, finding someone who's seemingly untouchable and then peeling them apart piece by piece, like a cat picking legs off an insect. After all, greater demons can be anybody. Hunting one down could range from infiltrating the world of high fashion or a Silicon Valley startup to slumming it with homeless vets and gutterpunks. Try on all those identities and a hunter might experience the same thrills a demon does.

Members of the Pursuit often start out tagging along with Competitors. There's always that thrill of turning over another stone and watching what slithers out from beneath it. But then, when they start getting glimpses of the picture — that's really what draws them in. Are God and His angels real and physically present on Earth? Are they indifferent or malevolent? Pursuers with a taste for theological horror often find themselves spending too much time interrogating demonic subjects. There's so much to uncover, so much of history that might just be a lie. Even better is the possibility of institutional demons. What if the world's clockwork is a single monster?

As mentioned earlier, Libertines tend to enjoy being "ridden" by lesser demons. For those in the know, demonic possession is practically a rite of passage. Want to be possessed? Look for the right demon. A willing host might wind up interviewing dozens of supposed demoniacs and witnesses just to get a lead, and then has to find the right way to let one in. Oh the thrill of it, to indulge a demon's urges. Some members of the Pursuit often wonder: could one manage to be possessed by more than one demon at once? Wouldn't that be *amazing*?

The Abbey also draws more than its share of suspicion with regards to demonic possession. Libertines, after all, have a demonic counterpart, and cells aware of the possibility of institutional demons often think that an Ashwood Abbey clique would make an excellent vehicle for one. ("Hellfire Clubs" indeed.) Besides, the Abbey has a reputation. Willing members will trade away their humanity for cheap thrills. Who's to say one might not give up his soul to a greater demon for a final *amazing* night on the town?

The Long Night

Salvation is personal. It means you can't just ask Christ to forgive you. You need to trust Him to redeem you. At the core of any faith in God is the need to give up a little bit of control. But there are times you will doubt. How can you be sure you're really giving yourself to God? What if your guide on the path to the Lord is leading you down the path of a very familiar garden?

Because the Long Night tends to organize around or within churches, greater and institutional demons may explore these tempting targets. Both types of demons take advantage of the Long Night's nobler impulses, turning them from the faithful or their needy followers into foot soldiers in the war against God. A hunter cell might wind up fighting a secret war against the demon for the soul of their community — assuming she doesn't convert them first.

Churches are also great places to meet people. There's a spirit of trust and openness. Not blind trust, surely, but demons are good at allaying suspicions because they seem sincere. They fit in. This is the danger a greater demon presents when he enters the congregation, perhaps as a new member, perhaps by taking possession of someone trusted. He joins Bible study and talks to people. The demon's voice seems bright and clear, warm and reassuring. Soon, he's got a tight circle of friends, and from there it's only a hop and a skip to making them his followers.

A Cryptic might form a mystery cult and uses his new buddies to uncover occult secrets or dirt on their former peers. A Libertine draws his companions into indulgence. Nothing that breaks the Commandments, mind. Just a little stolen happiness here and there, until one day the big temptation arrives. A Demolisher begins to radicalize his own little cell, showing them a world that's corrupt and needs to be cleansed with fire.

The very worst case is when the church itself is a demon. Institutional demons want — or maybe *are* — influence and power. Faith and community, which can be forces for redemption, are also excellent tools to that end. A cell might trace a financial irregularity, just a little thread of suspicion, and end up unraveling the church itself. Confronted with that, what do they do? Do they turn a blind eye, or do they bring down the very institution that brought them together?

For all the danger of corruption, though, there's another possibility. The Merciful are known to show compassion to creatures of darkness, and a greater demon might come to them with open hands. She's learned, she says, that God only wanted her to preserve the world as it is. While she saw that as a place of horror, now she's learned Earth is a place of hope and wonder, too. She wants to *return* to God, perhaps become an angel again, or perhaps to earn forgiveness in her human guise. The demon, of course, always seems sincere — and maybe she can prove her intent by her actions and her words. But can *anyone* really earn forgiveness? After all, that fallen angel wears a stolen face. Can someone who destroyed a soul offer her own to be saved?

The Loyalists of Thule

Look, the Loyalists of Thule are built on two things: secrets and the belief that some sins, namely our sins, cannot be forgiven. We are fallen creatures. This gives us insight into what a demon's all about. Rarely, though, does our insight turn into sympathy. We seek atonement for the failures of our founders. Our demonic adversaries continue to commit atrocities upon human souls. Yet encountering a demon is also a chance to peek behind the curtain, to get a glimpse at the world's inner workings. It might be worth humoring one...

Scholars often find themselves in conflict or cooperation with Cryptics. Both are looking for secrets, and whether the end is the liberation or enslavement of humanity can sometimes seem, well, academic. A Scholar might correspond with a greater demon over the course of several years, only to glimpse the demon's true nature when desperate circumstances force them to meet. The hunter might spend years pursuing the collection of a mysterious library that seems to drive investigators mad, only to realize that the collection itself is an institutional demon.

Usually, a Loyalist cell is on a demon's trail for a long while before they suspect what it is. What looks like a human pawn becomes a suspect, and then gradually becomes the center of an investigation. Her mortal identity doesn't add up, and the Indebted are excellent at finding the little inconsistencies in the life the demon has made. Once the creature has been unveiled, though, it's

time for the Penitents to go to work. A demon is a horror from beyond, even if that *beyond* is actually Heaven. She needs to be destroyed, and the Loyalists are very good at accomplishing that. It's not just a matter of firing bullets or planting a car bomb. A demon can be trapped in her own web of lies. The pieces of mortal lives she uses to interact with the world can be used as snares, and if she tries to run? The Loyalists have already found her bolt hole.

Demons will promise anything, and the *worst* part is that they deliver. The thing about a good con is that the mark often feels like he's the one taking advantage of the con artist. Demons are very good at disguising their bargains as opportunities, and sometimes try to take advantage of the Advance. Yet there can always be another layer of intrigue present in these interactions. Often, the Indebted come to recognize a devil's deal for what it is, and seek to turn it back on the demon. If offered influence, they take it. In fact, they take and *take* until the demon's got every one of its hooks latched onto their souls. Then they turn their ill-gotten power around on themselves. When the demon steals the Loyalist's life in search of a greener pasture, she finds that pasture a minefield, a trap laid in a final act of atonement.

Network Zero

You gotta admit it'd be the mother lode, right? Not just interviews with weirdo possess-ees, not just some weird sigils found under the paint in a law office, but an actual, honest-to-pardon-the-expression-God transformation from a human into a demon. That'd be about as big as it gets. As big as the Point Pleasant Mothman scoop was in 1994, or as big as the Boston wolfman footage would have been in 2002 if everybody hadn't kept complaining that they could see the zippers. And it'd be so easy too; just trail one of these bastards long enough and he'll have to give up the goods eventually. What's the point in being a night fiend from the pits of hell unless you cut loose once in a while, right?

It's almost inevitable Network Zero will catch up to a demon and film it when it changes. Hasn't happened yet, but that's just a matter of diligence. There are even arguable cases already, but for one reason or another the footage got destroyed or buried deep in a vault. The Painted Hills case, the Von Hausman Darkmind. Point is: it's *frighteningly* possible to pull this off.

So the real question is... What's the Network gonna do with the footage once it's got it?

The question's easy for the Record Keepers. Curate the information and make it ready for future witnesses for those who don't just want — but are *ready* — to believe. As usual, the Record Keepers are masters of redundant backups and private cloud storage; everything to keep the data safe, to make it ready for those who will ultimately view and judge it.

The Army of Truth is, as is their wont, a little more activist. Should they recognize a demonic hierarchy, they'd view the true forms of greater demons as one of the greatest potential assets in conversion of the masses. Between modern recording technology being so crisp and the fact that the demons' true faces don't seem to have any special magic protecting them, the only people who disbelieve are the willfully ignorant. And it's an article of faith among the Army that the willfully ignorant will dwindle in number once the proper proof has been presented.

As for the Secret Keepers? Demons freak them the hell out. And they should, really. Some of them believe that demons are the purest monstrosities out there, the masterminds behind the conspiracies that hunt Army of Truth videos off the net and find ways to cut off the Record Keepers from their oh-so-clever-and-redundant backup plans. Face down these creatures directly, prove the existence of not just their servants but *them*, and who could imagine what their retribution might be?

Still, they wouldn't be Network Zero if these hunters didn't believe that the proof was something beyond a threat. Even the most paranoid Keeper dreams of unleashing the unvarnished and incontrovertible truth on the masses. It's all just a matter of time.

Null Mysteriis

I demand only one thing: ironclad proof. With demons, hard evidence may be thin on the ground, but I will collate, analyze, and collect whatever I can find, anyway.

Sometimes a person begins to act strangely, behaves out of character, or spouts strange words and spits on crosses. Uncanny circumstances surround the victim. The smell of rotten eggs lingers in the air. A black cloud hovers near the ceiling. The kindly grandmother has blood on her hands. The investigator who's called in, is not a medium, or a priest — but a scientist. Null Mysteriis has files upon files on the activities of lesser demons, mainly Voyeurs and Devourers, and tend to ignore rumors about greater and institutional demons without hard evidence.

The Rationalists tend to label such files "Aberrant Psychology," and while they investigate the cases in detail, they've rarely come to any hard conclusions. The Rationalists demand controllable, laboratory conditions — quite reasonable, that, but also quite difficult to achieve when a victim's being chased out of his house by a telekinetic storm of high school football trophies. They agree that something — some*thing* — is behind sudden, simultaneous deviations in behavior and the manifestation of unusual phenomena, but they don't agree on what that is, or even if it's a single problem. In fact, they're right – even demons in the broader categories tend to be highly individualistic. The ones that might tell a common story, like greater demons, avoid a Rationalist's microscope.

The Open Minds are a little more willing to accept evidence of demonic activity even with all sorts of uncontrolled factors potentially biasing the data. What they care about is that the evidence is *real*, not that it's clean or explicable. Though they're not gullible, Open Minds accept eyewitness testimony when it comes from one of their own. They also won't turn down supporting evidence just because it comes secondhand through, what they deem to be, the more supernatural beliefs from another compact or conspiracy. Open Minds might even be willing to cooperate on a short-term basis with the Loyalists of Thule, even if they're conscious that the Loyalists share information with the same Theosophists Null Mysteriis had once rejected.

The Cataclysmicists view the evidence and are alarmed. Where the other Theories look at the cases in isolation, perhaps willing to draw some parallels and accept them as related phenomena, the Cataclysmicists spot a rise in such phenomena and suspect the patterns reveal *intention*. To them, cases that might reveal demonic possession may actually show evidence of a possible invasion. They pay more attention to theories of a

grand machine either orchestrating or opposed to the wave of abnormal behavior, and piece that together with stories about lost time, beggars who claim to have once been millionaires, and biomechanical fiends spotted near the homes of suburbanites whose personalities have recently done a 180. They've observed that some of these "demons" appear to be working in concert and others don't. They speculate that there may be a war coming, and they'd very much like to know what the sides are. Unfortunately, Cataclysmicists just aren't sure what that war is all about or who's involved.

The Union

Funny thing is, I kind of believe the greater demons. Oh, sure, a borderline-malevolent God's a bit too much to swallow. Doesn't it seem like the world's stacked against the little guy? Like all this NSA wiretapping and drone bullshit has taken on a life of its own, like the powers-that-be aren't just protecting themselves, but preserving the very idea of power? Yeah, it does seem like that. Shame the creatures peddling that line are such bastards themselves.

Home First cares about NIMBY. They worry about the demons who wander into their neighborhoods, their workplaces, and even their damn schools. A kid on drugs is urged on by something even worse inside him. That new legislator with the made-for-TV grin wants to use his eminent domain to turn a soup kitchen into a shopping complex. These are the things the Union watches out for. Striking back is harder than it looks, though. How does a hunter fight the voices in somebody else's head? Invite a member of the Long Night to try an exorcism? Call the number on that business card you shouldn't have kept and opt for surgery? There aren't any easy answers, until somebody goes really wrong, of course. When a hunter finds out her neighbor's not himself anymore, that he's one of *them*.... Well, then it's time to take care of business.

Suppose the man in the too-sharp suit was telling the truth. The world of flesh and metal was made to oppress the working man. Lackeys were only allowed to breed so far as we'd mine uranium and burn coal. Well, no reason to assume he was really on our side. Might have any number of reasons for saying what he did. But if this thing's really that big, that organized.... Sort of makes the General Strike sound like a good idea, right? Start taking a hard look at shutting down the system that was made to keep us all down, body and soul. Hell, he offered to help. Why not make a deal?

For the Union, it's hard not to think those kinds of thoughts without getting Political. A lot of the banks and those three letter agencies are really monsters themselves. After all, weird things happen to anyone who pries into their business. Smart people. Good people. Sometimes they turn up dead. Sometimes they end up...turned. Or, at least, it seems that way. Hunters find it hard to tell what side somebody's on, even if there are only two. There is Them, the machine, maybe the machines. Then? There's Us, the normal folks, the ones who need to take action. Doesn't really matter whether the Union is talking about angels that have poisonous lips or drop hints about the creatures that send out phony foreclosures. Doesn't matter if the machine's left hand doesn't always know what its right hand is doing, because both hands are stealing.

Time to show 'em what we do to the hands of thieves.

Conspiracies

The conspiracies tend to take a more direct approach against demonic forces.

Aegis Kai Doru

We doesn't necessarily hunt demons. Some change form, yes, so they might be skin-changers. Others manipulate mind and chance. Witches? Arguably. But these creatures are usually found on the fringes where we'll be confronting our ancient enemies. I figure there are bigger fish to fry. Except...

The Aegis Kai Doru has one definitive incident in its history that seems to confirm the stories the greater demons tell. One that forces them to eschew the theological term "demiurge" and fully embrace the word the demons themselves sometimes use: God-Machine.

Over two thousand years ago, astronomers in Corinth created a wondrous device. They may even have been members of the Aegis Kai Doru, attempting to re-contact the supernal realms so long dominated by the evil of the witches. But they made a devil's bargain. These astronomers bartered for the secrets of the Machine.

So they built their device, their wondrous marvel of gears and wheels that could not only predict the movement of the stars in the heavens, but command them. They labored day and night, learning the secrets of the heavens, so that they might call down the power of the supernal and become sorcerers themselves once again.

The Aegis Kai Doru eventually recognized the threat. They incited a mob to attack the academy where the device was being constructed, but they were too late. The device had been disassembled and loaded on a ship, bound for a fortress where it could be defended from the jealous mortals who would soon be ants beneath its creators' feet.

In response, the Aegis Kai Doru hired Aegean pirates, who ambushed the ship carrying the machine between Crete and Peloponnese. The Aegis intended to capture the mechanism and take the scholars prisoner, maybe even find some value in their unholy work. But the captain of the ship sank it himself. Out of conscience or spite, none can say.

So, while demons themselves remain a debatable topic among the Aegis Kai Doru, the existence of the Machine they once served is not, especially since members of the Scroll retrieved parts of the mechanism throughout the 20th century. Thankfully, there aren't enough parts left to reconstruct the device, which may be a good thing. However, the Scroll would like to ensure what the machine's capabilities were and *are*, even if it's too dangerous to activate in full. Teams who work on reconstructing it do so in complete secrecy — just in case.

The Temple keeps a wary eye; the device's remnants are nominally under their guardianship, and they suspect connections to other artifacts in their collection. These suggest the so-called God-Machine may form a missing link between the supernal and the material. The Sword, meanwhile, would very much like to get their hands on a fully-reconstructed model. To them, that mechanism is a weapon that could be a means to sever witches from their power. For what would diviners be without their stars?

Relic: Heart of the Succubus (••)

The Heart of the Succubus artifact is said to have been given to a Witness by a demon in 1453. The demon and the Witness, an Orthodox priest, were living in Constantinople when Sultan Mehmed II rode towards the Hagia Sophia to convert the basilica into a mosque. The Orthodox priest, one of many who attended the church, was preparing to throw himself on the swords of the sultan's guard in a vain effort to protect the grand cathedral when a demon intervened. By some bizarre trick or twist of fate, the demon took the priest's place. As she lay dying in the street, she bade the priest cut out her heart. When he tried, he found a remarkable mechanism in its place.

The priest didn't live much longer and died from an unrecorded disease in 1456. Before he did, though, he sold the demon's heart to a Greek trader, whose family buried it with him just a few years later. Rumors of the strange artifact began to spread, so the Temple dug up the trader's grave to retrieve it and brought the Heart to a safehouse in Athens. It was there, during interrogation of a captured demon in 1593, that the mechanism's practical use — or at least one of them — was discovered.

The Heart of the Succubus is a round, bronze object about the size of a large man's palm, and resembles a modern-day compass. Its intricacy incredible, the artifact is highly detailed and tells a familiar story. Each time the needle shifts, gears click beneath the surface, causing tiny cast figurines to move along the sides of the dial. These figures appear to be medieval and reenact the punishments of sinners in hell.

The Heart detects demons in defiance of their Cover. It requires some skill to use, as the needle swings wildly while in use, and the precise direction must be divined by trained observation of the mechanical figures.

Dice Pool: Wits + Academics

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Heart seems dead set on a certain individual, but this individual is not a demon.

Failure: The movement of the needle and the behavior of the figures are erratic and unreadable.

Success: The character determines the direction of the nearest demon, even if it's located a greater demon using Cover to conceal itself from supernatural powers. If the nearest demon is an institutional demon, then the character determines the direction of the nearest location that would reveal its Fiendish Flaw.

Exceptional Success: The character determines not only the direction of the demon, but its approximate distance. Among other uses, this allows a subject to be positively confirmed as a demon.

Ascending Ones

We're a fractured group, aren't we? Maybe that's forcing us to have an identity crisis where we sell poison to fight rot. Guess it's true then. We'll never agree on what to do about demons. Pity.

The conspiracy is very old, and old groups within the Ascending Ones have a tendency to assimilate any number of conflicting belief systems. No two groups believe the same thing about demons or agree on what to do about them.

The Order of the Southern Temple is divided on whether demons are "demons" or not. Where the ordinary hunter sees the possessed and watches as human forms change into celestial horrors, the Order questions why these creatures respond so rarely to true names, or why they can't be summoned by medieval rites. For all that these creatures, greater and lesser, seem to fit a pop cultural notion of demonic activity, they don't seem to respect any *rules*, and rules are the cornerstone of the Order's understanding of the celestial hierarchy. There's a flip side, though — they do offer foolish supplicants bargains, and they deliver. The stories told by greater demons resemble the stories found in apocryphal texts, and fit a gnostic mythology that many of the Order have other reasons to believe. For that reason alone, the Order believes demons are worth seeking out and learning from. Perhaps, like Solomon, a wise man can use the devil's powers in the service of good.

The Knife of Paradise, for all its unshakeable faiths, cares little for religious squabbles and struggles to wrap their minds around what demons are. Perhaps they are not serpents of Eden. Little matter, since so many among their kind admit to serving what could only be categorized as an enemy of God. For regardless of individual faith, could this demiurge be anything less than the physical enemy of the pure spirit? Even its processes seem to mock the alchemy that grants the Ascending Ones their strength, fueling engines with blood and creating horrors that combine flesh with the should-be-inanimate.

The Jagged Crescent is more down to Earth. They've been called dealers, and pushers, peddlers of poison. Some of their fellow Ascending Ones even accuse them of getting the innocent hooked on evil. But they're also out on the street, at ground zero when it comes to the demonic infiltration. They know that sometimes an old grandpa becomes a butcher, no chemicals required. They know that there are creatures out there who offer worse bargains than cheap highs, whose hooks run deeper than conventional addiction. They know that for all the billboards say you'll lose your life to drugs, it's possible to lose your actual *life*: all the things that make you really, truly a person, to beings that claim to have fallen from Heaven.

The Crescent also knows that the demons' reach goes far beyond any of those things. Operating everywhere from down on the asphalt to the upper echelons of organized crime, these hunters have learned to recognize institutional demons and some of them are beasts with a thousand faces. Tearing off those faces is going to take more force than the Crescent can bring to bear by themselves. They'll need allies. And their fellow Ascending Ones may not be the right people to turn to.

Elixir: Liar Pills (●)

Sometimes, the corpses of greater demons in their Apocalyptic Forms, or the strange mechanisms that betray the presence of institutional demons, leak a thick, shiny sludge that reeks of brimstone. Consumed straight, this oily substance causes the subject to relive all of the most horrific emotional reactions of their lives for the next 24 hours. The victim's actions are completely unrestrained, short of being able to avoid violence for the price of a Willpower point.

This oil can also be combined with other alchemical agents to produce a more desirable effect. Little blue caplets containing the compound are sometimes carried by Ascending Ones looking to beat demons at their own game: the web of lies and deceit.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character cannot lie for the next 24 hours, though he can choose to remain silent when asked a question.

Failure: No effect.

Success: The character gains a greater demon's complete control over emotional responses for the remainder of the scene. He feels emotions as normal, of course, but does not reveal any trace of reaction unless he intends to.

Exceptional Success: The character gains the benefits of a success for the next 24 hours.

The Cheiron Group

Let's just say, we're not exactly used to having competitors. Oh, sure, in the world of mundane business, we have rival corporations. In the realm of retrieving research subjects, there's some friction with Task Force: VALKYRIE, too. But when we poke our nose into a new area of supernatural research, we don't expect to find someone already there. When we do? Things get interesting.

Much to the Cheiron Group's surprise, Luminous Labs, a pharmaceutical corporation with research centers throughout the developed world, is already working on the "demon problem," from lesser demons all the way on up. Naturally, Cheiron tried to buy Luminous, only to find that it was a wholly owned subsidiary of the much larger Deva Corporation. Deva had deep enough pockets to laugh at Cheiron's offer.

Cheiron's field agents hunting demons and related phenomena find themselves in a dual role: both trying to retrieve high value subjects and then deny them to Luminous. Luminous also seems to have the technology angle surprisingly well covered — often better than VALKYRIE, too.

When it comes to their own research, Cheiron has tentatively identified the possession patterns associated with both lesser and greater demons. They're aware that entities which are hard (but not impossible) to measure possess human forms. They've also identified the phenomenon by which greater demons seem to simply take over human lives. In fact, it's been used by demons against *them* a few times. Fortunately, Cheiron is very, very good at keeping tabs on its operatives.

Larger-scale demonic phenomena, like institutional and greater demons who inhabit lives for longer periods of time, fall outside Cheiron's normal area of expertise. However, the company is getting better and better at finding them. Greater demons inhabit false identities and those identities, while impressive and somewhat inexplicable, tend to ultimately be incomplete. The Cheiron Group has brought in outside IT and intelligence experts to begin data mining for suspicious persons. Ideally, they'd be able to sort through public records and pick out the demons just based on their analysis alone, but

LUMINOUS LABS

Luminous Labs investigates demons under the guise of biopharmaceutical research. Members believe that the demiurge can be understood and manipulated by humans, and regard that the study of demons is a way to achieve that understanding.

They are aware that they're probably watched by still-loyal agents of the demiurge, and suspect that they have human rivals. Luminous Labs maintains admirable operational secrecy, but also believes that their goals ultimately compliment those of the machine, so they have little to fear.

Additionally, Luminous Labs has a wide variety of artifacts and weird tech devices. These can be simulated with Thaumatechnology or Advanced Armory.

More about Luminous Labs can be found in **Demon: The Descent**.

for now they're pretty good at finding one demon hiding in a crowd of possible suspects.

Then there's the issue of what to do with them once they're in custody, for demons are most interesting when they reveal their Apocalyptic Forms. These expose a wealth of bizarre technologies, both biological and mechanical. Cheiron is investing extensive resources into deciphering demon psychology in order to stimulate these transformations. It's not easy, since demons don't betray emotional reactions the way most subjects do. The only way to determine whether a demon is impacted psychologically is to give him a prompt and see what action he takes. No amount of intuition or interrogation is going to work. Knowing this, Cheiron needs a new approach to learn how to stimulate demons into transforming into their more useful forms.

By putting a demon in an environment where he has some limited freedom of action, but still has defined limits, hunters can start determining what his reactions to given stimuli really are. Current experiments, then, focus on establishing an environment where the demon is captive, but able to take action. The Group calls these "open facilities." The plan resembles a small resort town. A small number of demons are inserted into the "resort" alongside a massive staff of observers. The theory is that the demons will guess about half the trick — they'll realize they're being spied on, but they won't know by whom. In their paranoia, their actions will reveal what they fear, and this can later be leveraged to stimulate transformation. And that's even better if the demon tries to escape by transforming. At that point, the Cheiron spies are revealed to be highly proficient in hunting techniques when they intercept and subdue the former angel.

The Group has one such facility on the French coastline, where it's monitoring a group of subjects who seem unaware of each other's identities. If this yields the behavioral data they're looking for, they may consider opening more.

The Lucifuge

You can say that Hell is other people. But I know Hell is my family.

For the Lucifuge, demons are part of an ancient and resented past, a legacy that the scions of the infernal wish they could put behind them. Strange, then, that they aren't always at odds with one another.

First of all, most members of the Lucifuge know that the real threat isn't demons, but angels. Angels come from someplace *else*, and they serve a higher power. Their purposes are inscrutable; one might turn a descendant of Lucifer into a pillar of salt, while another speaks six words that changes his life. No one walks away from an angel unchanged. For the Lucifuge, who have already been made something they resent against their will, the prospect of an encounter can be downright terrifying.

The Lucifuge knows more about angels and demons than any other conspiracy, because they make damn sure to record *everything* they learn. They know there's more than one choir of angel. Some suspect that they serve different Gods, or different aspects of a God who is many persons. Angels always seem to be sent to the world on a mission, to accomplish a very specific purpose. If an angel seems to be hanging around, then it's probably just waiting for a trigger to unleash some spectacular event.

Angels also build. Some other hunters identify institutional demons, but the Lucifuge knows that some of these beings actually serve Heaven. (If there is a Heaven.) Angels create them for some sort of divine purpose, as infrastructure that serves the will of whoever dispatched them.

Why whoever? Because, there's an important hole in the implicit theology of the Lucifuge. They know with some degree of certainty that there's something horrible in their past. They've seen and carefully catalogued the work of angels and demons. But there's nothing about being a child of Lucifer that means she *has* to believe in a *loving* God.

This is where demons and members of the Lucifuge may be able to start talking. Greater demons claim that there is no God except the Machine, and that angelic works are often nefarious. This gives rise to the belief among some within the Lucifuge that the God demons talk about, the God that dispatches those terrifying angels, is in fact the Adversary, the Prince of this World, and the ultimate source of their damned bloodlines. This is called the demiurge hypothesis, and the Lucifuge hotly debates it.

Those who accept the hypothesis also tend to believe the argument that Hell isn't an otherworldly inferno, but Earth itself. If Lucifer fell and created or became the demiurge, then the battle against the forces of darkness becomes not a delaying action or a long purge in an eternal war, but a conflict that can be won to make a Heaven of Hell.

For the Denial, this is largely an academic argument. If an angel looks to be doing something nefarious, how is that any

different from a demon? "Angel" is only a label that's applied to identify certain kinds of trouble from outside observers. It doesn't matter how brightly they burn, creatures of darkness are still creatures of darkness.

The Denial hunts down demons of all kinds with vigor. Lesser demons are often essentially equivalent to their own familiars, sometimes pests or the agents of true evil. There's no need to judge them, only to dispose of them. (Or, if they can't, to defeat and then push them away.) Greater demons represent greater challenges. They're hard to identify, but once backed into a corner, they sprout wings made of razors, and it's easier to tell what a hunter's dealing with.

The Reconciliation has a somewhat more complex relationship with demons. Those that believe the demiurge hypothesis occasionally propose that the complete extermination of all demons is necessary. However, they often see these creatures as beings that can be redeemed. Greater demons find the idea of redemption horrifying when first presented with it, but some come to believe — or at least accept — the Reconciliation's understanding of the world. Sometimes, it's because the Lucifuge persuades them that there's an even greater God than the one from whom they Fell. Sometimes, they're shown that what they once saw as an infernal Machine does good in the world as well as bad, and they seek to return to its service. And sometimes, they come to believe that the demiurge itself can be redeemed, by changing themselves and becoming part of it.

No one knows if any demons have ever found redemption this way. Some disappear, certainly, but did they become angels again, or simply possess another identity? And if they did return to God and become angels again.... Well, they'd probably be unrecognizable, not to mention too dangerous to approach. Yet many of the Reconciliation still try, believing that returning — or introducing — demons to a forgiving God is a way to move the world one step closer to redemption. They point out that the chances of collateral damage are far lower.

Those of the Reconciliation who believe in the demiurge hypothesis wonder how to redeem the God-Machine itself. It's impossible to just uproot it, and its many institutional "demons" are hard to find in the first place. Yet, if some way could be found, if there were some access point into the consciousness of the demiurge that could be uncovered, the implications are staggering. Would the world itself move closer to redemption? Would there be a ripple effect amongst all the creatures of darkness the Lucifuge hunts? There are only a handful of eccentrics that even think such a thing is possible, but for them, the very idea is captivating.

The Legacy wants to know more about demons. They're not pure researchers — in fact, they're often zealous warriors of the Lucifuge. But they've made a tremendous asset out of the genealogies. Like the Cheiron Group, Legacy members in Milan devote their resources to processing huge amounts of data. Mainly, of course, they're looking for other infernal scions, for greater demons seem to be the progenitors of, or at least appear in, some of these bloodlines. If they're still out there, they've changed identities by now, and those new identities can be tracked laterally by analyzing certain connections to a particular subject within a genealogy. As demons leapfrog from face to face, the Legacy has slowly learned to follow them. Milan lacks the vast resources that Cheiron can bring to bear, but they've got better procedures — and frankly, better instincts — for sniffing out demons. There are entire Legacy cells that use the genealogies like a hit list, looking for demons to wipe them out.

The Truth gets a little more cynical. Accept, for the moment, that demons can be believed. (And if you can't distrust a demon, who can you distrust?) Accept the demiurge hypothesis, and that the demons walking the world today are of the same sort as their ancestors. If that's so, then why hasn't the Lady of Milan made that declaration? The possibilities only deepen their distrust of the Lucifuge herself. Why does she conceal the existence of a vast machine operating beneath the world's surface? Some think that she's one of its agents, perhaps even an angel herself. The entire conspiracy, then, would be a part of this mechanism. Perhaps the creatures of darkness they hunt are not actually the agents of the God-Machine, but flaws in its vast mechanism. With every action they take, they might be performing corrective surgery on the very force that created them.

It doesn't help that it always seems to be members of the Truth that end up walled out of really juicy parts of the genealogies. The Lady never intervenes personally to close off a line of inquiry. That would be beneath her. The few researchers who have access to the complete library, however, tend to get jealous of it just when members of the Truth seem headed for a big score.

Castigation: Rebuke Lies

Greater demons wraps themselves tight in stolen lives. To some members of the Lucifuge, they might as well be security blankets. Whatever evidence a demon fabricates to promote its charade, those members are capable of dispelling.

To the character invoking this ability, a piece of evidence or equipment that a greater or institutional demon has fabricated using Cover appears to be wispy and ephemeral. A person who's talking about his supposed relationship to the demon tunes out into a hum of static.

The character can also destroy the evidence in a burst of flame and smoke, or cause the person connected to the demon to forget their relationship for the rest of the scene. This can be used offensively; a demon disguised as a police officer who's used his Cover to procure a gun or body armor can have it taken away by use of this ability.

Cost: It's free to try and pierce Cover, but for a point of Willpower, the character can also destroy the evidence.

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation vs. demon's Presence + Composure or Resistance

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character forgets critical details about the demon she's investigating (such as her initial reason for suspicion or her briefing) for the next 24 hours.

Failure: The character retains whatever reason she had for being suspicious, but the evidence remains present.

Success: The character sees through the evidence.

Exceptional Success: The character can destroy the evidence without spending a point of Willpower.

The Malleus Maleficarum

Demons are a poison. They seep into our communities, our churches, our very homes, wearing faces innocent and trustworthy. They aren't heretics. Or rather, they're the original heresy, the refusal of angels to accept their place in the divine order. Even though we have a special contempt for vampires and witches, we cannot help but feel pity and hatred for the genuinely damned.

The Malleus Maleficarum are aware of a wide variety of demons. They know of the little imps that corrupt with whispers in the ear, the greater devils who walk in the forms of human beings, and the institutional monsters who perpetuate the Culture of Death so beloved as a talking point by previous popes. The differences are immaterial; all demons are Satan's agents on this plane. If there is a multitude of souls to be saved on Earth, why wouldn't there be a diversity of devils damned in Hell?

Welcome to the Brotherhood of St. Athanasius and its obvious response to the demonic incursion. Exorcise the demoniacs and salt their self-inflicted wounds. Capture their greater brethren in mortal form and strangle them before they can show their monstrous faces. Bomb the clinics and the government offices that house the greatest of fiends.

Except, it's not so simple as that, because that would be declaring war on the entire world. If there's one truth the Church understands above all others, it's that it is the mortal extension of God's will. While God and His angels may be celestial beings, apart from the concerns of the mortal world, the Church is His agency within that world. A world that would not, should it know the truth, abide the existence of a religious secret police. One that would also not — and does not — tolerate rogue states driven by supernatural conviction. The Church is an agency, and this world does not work without compromise.

That's without even considering that, for all the posturing, the Malleus Maleficarum does not embody the will of the Church. The Malleus no more drives Church policy than Seal Team Six runs the Department of Defense. The Vatican has no desire to be seen as a terrorist state.

The last several popes have made this clear. Benedict, labeled a conservative and a hardliner, was also a very worldly pope, wearing shoes made of deluxe leather and taking his role as one of the world's most respected diplomats very seriously. Rumor has it that he slashed budgets for the Malleus Maleficarum, viewing even the physical and spiritual threats posed by monsters as secondary to the cause of worldwide harmony.

The newest pope is even worse. Hunt the monsters, he says, by all means hunt the monsters, but hunt those that exploit the powerless. If demons fight you in the form of banks and political pawns, then don't hunt them down with cross and torch, but turn the people against them. Rekindle faith as a weapon. And if a hunter must use violence, use it against those creatures whose methods are violent. Subtle corruption, he says, is to be fought with unsubtle beneficence. Show the people of the world that they have more to gain from God's grace than from the traps of damnation.

And so, the Malleus Maleficarum finds itself fighting a new kind of war, much as the United States did following the fall of the Soviet Union. It finds itself working to destabilize Satan and his works as much as it does to combat them directly.

This might actually be a blessing in disguise. With the era of military popes long past, the Church has proved more skilled at attracting a financial and political braintrust than a military one. These are resources the Malleus Maleficarum can draw on, if subtly. A Church that flirts with reforming the world can be a Church that roots out the corruption of demonic forces with astounding effectiveness. For if demons covet human souls, why not show humanity where their souls *really* belong?

Task Force: VALKYRIE

Hardest damn thing is convincing people there's a war on. People want to go about their business. Shopping, dating, dropping the kids off at day care. They don't get the danger they're in. They resent the things we do to protect them. They forget that the enemy looks just like us. That they've moved into our neighborhoods, or they work in our offices. Some of them even deliver our mail.

The second hardest thing is that you can't tell them.

Task Force: VALKYRIE's peers in the legitimate Homeland Security and military get to have their war in public, at least a little. They get speeches from the president, grave reminders of the importance of national security, and defense against the nation's enemies. A civilian can get caught tapping millions of e-mail accounts and all he has to offer is a vague defense and those key words: national security. Hunters don't get that in the Task Force. There are no official excuses or pats on the back. If there's ever a congressional hearing... well, God knows what would happen. Task Force: VALKYRIE fights a shadow war against terrorists whose enemy is all reality, and nobody gives a damn.

Here's what they know: there are ENEs that seem to oppose a vast machine rooted in reality. Captured suspects say this entity is malevolent, but it's really a case of whether the cup is viewed as half empty or half full. The interrogated ENEs blame the monstrous state of the world on this God-Machine, but a lot of VALKYRIE agents prefer to look at the world a little differently. They prefer to view the world as being a fundamentally good place, where monsters may exist but hunters protect the innocent. It's just like any war. Sure it's awful that people get hurt, but what matters is that the United States has the power to help. The ENEs claim the establishment and the world it's created are horrific places? They're forgetting the points of light. And a lot of those points of light are the Etheric Rounds of Task Force: VALKYRIE.

These ENEs commit acts of terrorism against... well, anything. They blow up construction sites and radio towers, launch murder sprees on office buildings and somehow slip away by discarding their identities. They view the world as malignant, and strike against it any way they can.

VALKYRIE is also aware of ENEs that are a lot harder to capture. Spirits that possess people, for example. Best thing to do is to try and draw them out, then spray them with etheric ammunition. They're also becoming familiar with ENEs that seem to possess entire buildings or organizations. They're faced with the very real possibility that some of the terror cells they usually pass off to conventional intelligence agencies may actually be acting under the influence of, let's just say it, something demonic. The possibilities are frightening. The hardest damn thing is convincing people there's a war on, and that just might include everyday civilians and hunters, too.

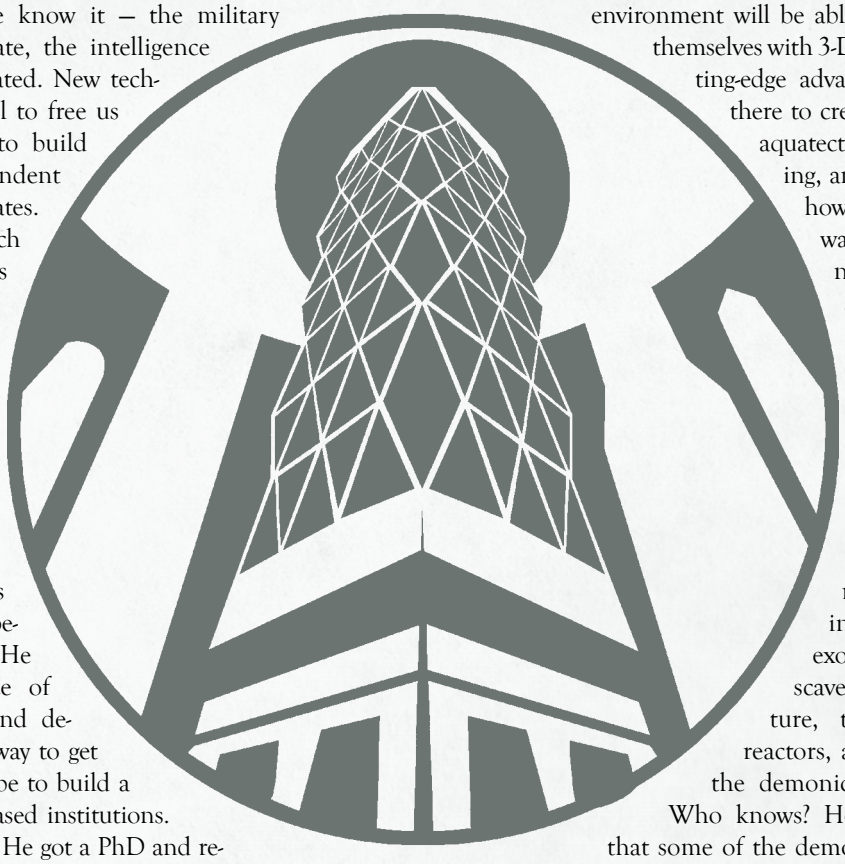
UTOPIA NOW

THE FUTURE TODAY

The problem isn't the vampires pulling the strings of legislators or the werewolves preying on our youth in the streets. The problem is the system that allows those things to happen. The hierarchy we've been born into, that we're expected to perpetuate. In order to reform society, we need to disrupt it, the way a startup with moxie topples a tech giant. Most of the monsters are symptoms of the real problem. They need to be treated, but the disease is civilization-wide. It's time for a new order.

It's time for Utopia Now.

Government as we know it — the military complex, the nanny state, the intelligence agencies — it's all outdated. New technology has the potential to free us from those restraints, to build communities independent of traditional nation-states. Truth is, though, the tech isn't all there yet. That's why Utopia Now needs to develop it. And the best part is: they can salvage it from the existing nation state's festering wounds.



Utopia Now was founded by William Horn, a Witness who saw the demonic forces behind the ailing tech behemoth he worked for. He uncovered the existence of institutional demons, and determined that the only way to get away from them would be to build a world free of those diseased institutions. He went back to school. He got a PhD and recruited his fellow students to form a mobile app startup. He found venture capitalists. And Horn succeeded the way everyone else dreams of. Now, he's a respected entrepreneur who lives in Pacific Heights, the once-exclusive San Francisco neighborhood where new tech billionaires are taking over house by house from the city's old money residents. He's often courted by charities. But William Horn doesn't believe in charity. He believes in earning your place, and the place he's planning to earn will blow everybody's minds.

The first step in Horn's master plan is to build a floating town off the coast of northern California — essentially, a network of boats that will form a neighborhood, then the beginnings of a city. His utopia will be founded on principles of self-governance and self-sufficiency. The individual modules of his floating environment will be able to produce goods for themselves with 3-D printing and other cutting-edge advances. The technology's there to create things like complex aquatecture, wireless networking, and so on. The problem, however, is that there's no way for an upstart community like this to be truly self-sufficient. The power would have to come from somewhere, and building adequate medical infrastructure in limited space is a problem.

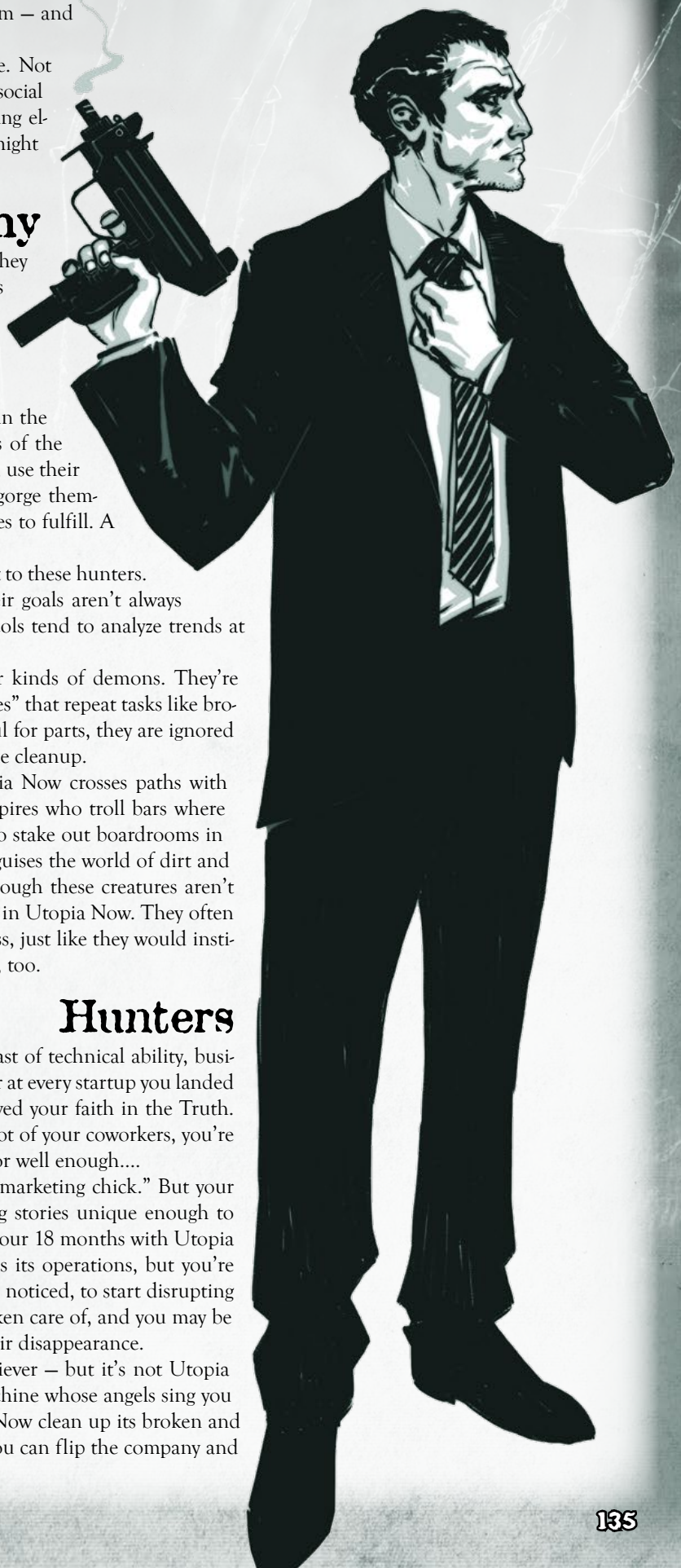
That's why Horn's grand design revolves around finding institutional demons, exorcising them, and then scavenging their infrastructure, the secret processors, reactors, and so on that provide the demonic soul with its power. Who knows? He might even discover that some of the demons' conceptual powers can be dismantled and used. It'd be awfully handy to draw prosperity by using a piece of a demon of greed, or recover faster from a gunshot wound by visiting a demonic hospital.

Horn's goal is a perfect example of the startup thinking he admires and is well on his way to mastering: taking bits of the

We're building a better tomorrow.
Strip him for parts.

old system and building on those structures to create something new, something disruptive that takes the world by storm — and changes it forever.

Utopia Now recruits people with a can-do attitude. Not necessarily the engineers and entrepreneurs of Horn's social circle, but the kind of people one wouldn't mind rubbing elbows with in the city of the future. Self-starters, they might put it.



The Enemy

Utopia Now doesn't like the phrase "the enemy." They prefer "targets" or "subjects." Bloodless words. Words that allow them to ignore they're stripping apart living bodies to build the future.

That doesn't obscure who the targets are, though. There are institutional demons embedded into the very foundations of a sick society, creatures who dwell within the bureaucracies of the welfare state and the installations of the military-industrial complex. These demons use humans, use their sense of entitlement and tendency to over-regulate to gorge themselves on their sorrows. They create needs for themselves to fulfill. A real society wouldn't need that. *Won't* need that.

On the other hand, greater demons are a blind spot to these hunters. They're enough like the institutional demons that their goals aren't always easy to distinguish, but Utopia Now's detection protocols tend to analyze trends at too high a level to pick them out.

Horn and his organization know about the other kinds of demons. They're aware lesser demons exist, like the "imps" or "imperatives" that repeat tasks like broken records. Since lesser demons are almost never useful for parts, they are ignored unless members of Utopia Now are performing overtime cleanup.

While hunting down institutional demons, Utopia Now crosses paths with parasites that creep into the diseased system. The vampires who troll bars where the destitute forget their problems. The werewolves who stake out boardrooms in their very own territory. The fairies whose glamour disguises the world of dirt and corruption mortals are born into without consent. Though these creatures aren't the real problem, that doesn't matter to the self-starters in Utopia Now. They often take the initiative against the lesser creatures of darkness, just like they would institutional demons, to explore an innovative use for them, too.

Hunters

You were what they call a "Unicorn," a unique beast of technical ability, business acumen, and straight-up charm that made you a star at every startup you landed at. It wasn't until Utopia Now, though, that you renewed your faith in the Truth. Now you're indispensable to the operation...but like a lot of your coworkers, you're results-driven, and nothing ever seems to get done fast or well enough....

At your last company, you were dismissed as "the marketing chick." But your talents go far beyond that. You're a master at spinning stories unique enough to sound true but mundane enough to avoid scrutiny. In your 18 months with Utopia Now, you've revolutionized the way the compact covers its operations, but you're gradually becoming convinced some of them *want* to be noticed, to start disrupting society sooner than later. One day, they'll have to be taken care of, and you may be the hunter who'll fabricate the evidence to cover up their disappearance.

Like so many of your coworkers, you're a true believer — but it's not Utopia Now you believe in. It's the demiurge, the glorious Machine whose angels sing you to sleep with industrial hymns. You're helping Utopia Now clean up its broken and rogue infrastructure, as you prepare for the day when you can flip the company and

bask in the glory of the God-Machine for yourself.

You're the scary one. The rest of your peers are engineers and businesspeople. But you? You're an experienced killer trying to settle down as a family man. You design and execute tactical operations that go off flawlessly, minimizing the lady in marketing's need to spin elaborate back stories. You've got the best retirement plan of your career...now if only your coworkers would look at you with something other than dread.

Departments

The Cure performs the dirty work...well, the dirtier work... to build the future. It's their job to make sure the same kinds of supernatural parasites the old system makes use of can't find their way into the new one. They're the most traditional hunters of the lot. They scavenge occult lore, they run monsters to the ground, and they end them.

Operators do the footwork to track down the really big targets, the institutional demons Horn wants to dissect. They analyze financial reports, police blotters, and any other information they can get their hands on to identify demons. Then they eliminate them using a combination of business acumen (to break the institution) and old school exorcism (to get rid of any remaining part that might seek revenge). Afterward, their acquisitions group takes apart the demon's physical components and ships them back to Silicon Valley.

Incubators take charge of society's engines when other hunters have broken them. They examine the occult patterns on which institutional demons were built, seeing if they can rearrange them for a better world. They take the reactors that run on blood, and determine what they can boot up using artificial plasma.

Status

Status in Utopia Now depends on two things: how much you believe, and how well you can deliver miracles. In theory, this compact expects its hunters to be the best in their individual vocations. In practice, Utopia Now is like any other startup. It's a young organization, and promotes those with a strong will as much as those who have talent or ability.

●	**You're a new hire, probably a specialist with some needed expertise, but not a lot of experience. Gain a free Specialty.**
●●●	**Your bosses in Utopia Now know you're a rising star. You gain Horn or another key player in the operation as a two dot Mentor.**
●●●●●	**The leadership knows you bring something unique to the table, and gives you the tools to act on it. Take a four dot Retainer to represent staff, or four dots of Allies in a partner organization.**

Stereotypes

Ashwood Abbey: These guys know how to party, but they miss the point. You celebrate success when you accomplish something worthwhile or land a new investor, not just because you found some exotic monster to eat.

Loyalists of Thule: Everything we're fighting against. They set into motion the monstrous engines of the twentieth century. Whatever knowledge they might have, is it worth even speaking to the architects of the very past we want to erase?

The Cheiron Group: You hear about these suits sometimes. Big players in biotech, rumors that they're after the same targets as us. But they're not about changing things. They're about lining their own pockets with the existing system – the one we've sworn to tear down.

The Union: On the one hand, you've got to admire their gumption. They take matters into their own hands, and they get shit done. On the other hand, our ideological divide's right there in the name. "Union." We want a future where everyone works for honest dollars (or better yet, crypto-currency). The Union thinks the world owes them warmth and security.

Knights of Saint Adrian

The Sidearm of the Angels

The Lord works in mysterious ways. The Knights of Saint Adrian aren't one of them. In fact, they're blunt and to the point: demons are out there, creatures of darkness and corruption who consume the souls of the innocent. And there just ain't enough angels in Heaven to stop them. In a word, the angels need contractors. Folk that can stand against the forces of Hell and push them back with the sharp tip of a sword. Or the end of an ax handle.

Casey Howard was a skip tracer back in the 90s. It was good work, and she was good at it. She was built like a fire truck and had the patience of a monk, equally at home confronting bail jumpers and sifting through the mountains of paperwork involved in locating a fugitive.

Then she went and got her arm broke. Dumb accident. Wasn't even an angry jumper, just a damn surfing accident. She didn't go to the doctor fast enough, and the arm never healed right. She couldn't quite dish it out like she used to.

Her employers were understanding. She'd always been good at research and stakeouts and everything else, so they kept her on. But they kept her behind a desk. Stuck by herself all day, with her main social outlet making intel-gathering phone calls under assumed identities, her famous patience started to wear thin. Bluntly put, Casey wanted to get back out and kick some ass.

One boring lunch hour, a stranger in a bar offered her just that. He said all he wanted was her memories of a friend she'd had right after she left the Army.

She turned him down. No way in hell that sounded like a good idea.

Which made it a little weird when she met another stranger in the same bar the next week. He wanted to know about the first dude, and Casey recognized the kinds of questions he was asking. She asked him what the deal was. Dude con him out of some money? Maybe some money that wasn't earned in a one hundred percent legitimate way?

No, no, the new stranger said. It was simpler than that. The target was an enemy of God. Then he paused, and asked if Casey could track him down. She said sure, but somebody else would have to strangle the guy. And that was when the angel healed her arm, no price attached.

The angel made good. Eight years later, not only does Casey's arm work better than ever, but she's got her own business. On paper, Howard Investigative Services hires out its brains and muscle to bail bond agents. On the road, they're the Knights of Saint Adrian, patron of guards and soldiers. They do the Lord's work, hunting down the devil and earning a heavy commission for their trouble.

The Knights are tough customers — the toughest, really, thanks to the tattoos in angelic script that let them get as good as they give. They're a close-knit group of bounty hunters hunting fugitives from the Almighty.

That thing ain't human, which makes it payday.

The Enemy

Every newbie gets the speech. The enemies are demons, pure and simple. They're fallen angels who scoop out human souls to possess lives. They offer deals and bargains and all manner of slimy enticements, but at the end of the day, they're just monsters.

Demons have a variety of MOs. Some start cults, others run companies. The common theme is corruption. Demons entice plain ole human beings to do the devil's work. In the process, they whittle away their souls.

Now, the Knights aren't a religious organization. The boss, Casey, she was raised right, but that's not the point. The point is that by the end of your first or second hunt, you'll have seen a creature straight out of hell, and either put it on ice or put it down for good.

Whether the Knights capture or kill depends on the contract. Casey speaks to the client herself, and gives out instructions for the disposition of targets, which are apt to be a bit bizarre. A subdued demon might get delivered to an anonymous warehouse, where he's taken by a man with a lab coat and no pupils. It might get delivered to a cryonics facility, one of those places the rich preserve themselves for all eternity. Or, sometimes, even the back door of an abandoned church.

You never can tell where the boss is gonna send you next, or who the target's going to be posing as. And it doesn't matter, because brother, you've seen the truth now and there ain't no going back.

Hunters

You were just out of the service, and not sure what to do with yourself. You saw an ad looking for someone with police or military experience. Next thing you know, you're out back of a Denny's putting shotgun holes in a creature straight out of an *Alien* movie. Now you've got a mission: make sure things like that don't go free.

You were a bouncer in Chicago, and got a little curious about the black SUV parked across the street from one of the clubs you worked. When you confronted the folks inside, they took a look at you and asked if you were available for some work Sunday. And then next Wednesday. And then holy shit, first time you got a job with a health plan.

You were a secretary for a bail bond agent. Your job was mostly calling people up and lying to them, looking for that one-in-a-hundred thread that'd lead to a skip's new address. One day, one of your old coworkers called up and asked if you'd like to be part of the real action.

You were a private detective in Miami. The hours were long, and you didn't have much in the way of a social life. One time you followed a guy to a hotel, usual wandering husband job, and you took a peep in the window. What you saw changed the way you looked at the world. Now you're doing the same job as before, only the stakes are much higher and the pay is much better. Plus, you've got the best friends a guy could have.

Jobs

Dispatchers cover a lot of the logistical side of things. A dispatcher gives out assignments, but also provides needed services like "legit" bounty hunting jobs that a field team can use as cover.

Hounds do most of the fieldwork, from BS'ing their way onto private property to fighting the demons. Unlike a normal fugitive, demons never go quietly, so most Hounds can handle themselves in a fight.

Deliverers take care of the esoteric handling requirements necessary to keep a demon subdued, as well as the strange ways and places the client wants them handed over.

Status

Other than how much commission Casey's paying you, Status in the Knights is a very informal thing. It represents how much you're clued in to what goes on in the home office, and how the hunt on the whole is going.

- **You're a new hire. You've probably got your first Ink, but otherwise you tend to be the one who has to haul the gear and other grunt work.**
- **You've taken down a few demons in your time. Any skepticism you had is gone, and you're starting to develop some contacts of your own. You gain two dots of Contacts, sometimes relating to a Witness you met on the job.**
- **You're one of the boss's core crew. You've been on jobs with her personally, and she'll even refer to the client by name in front of you. You've got a company card, allowing you to throw around 3 dots of Resources, or an assistant that counts as a 3 dot Retainer. Though you *will* have to justify any spending later.**

Stereotypes

The Union: Say what you will about these guys, but they're regular folks like you and I. Most of them are just looking out for their own neighborhoods, and they're just as happy to have some professionals lend a hand.

The Lucifuge: Sons of Satan? These things can have kids? Sign the paperwork and I'll get right on that.

Malleus Maleficarum: Makes sense that the Church proper would have a branch doing the same job as us. Funny how they spend most of their time chasing vampires, though.

Task Force: VALKYRIE: Likewise, of course the spooks know about the devil. The damn government never met a secret it didn't want to cover up.

New Endowment

Ink

The angel who fixed up Casey Howard's arm did it by tattooing her in some weird script. It looks a bit arcane, a little high tech. Every so often, he comes by to outfit the new hires with Ink, holy marks that help in the endless hunt for his fallen counterparts.

WHAT ABOUT THE BOSS?

Casey Howard's original Ink healed a serious injury. This is the type of thing the Storytelling system doesn't usually model, so the Ink Endowment doesn't include an option for a tattoo that heals an individual injury.

That said, a character being grievously and permanently wounded is the kind of thing that might happen with a persistent Condition. Optionally, the client might be willing to patch up a seriously hurt hunter. That hunter would have to be pretty valuable to the agency (as represented by two or more status dots) to be worth the client's time.

A character's total dots in Endowment determine how many pieces of Ink he or she has. You're not limited to five dots in this regard, but if the tattoos end up overlapping? Well, that's just tacky.

When inactive, Ink looks like an ordinary tattoo, though they tend to fade a little faster, making them look like mementos of times gone by rather than a recent personal statement. When active, Ink marks don't quite *glow*. They catch the light in a way that makes them look almost luminescent.

Bear Mace

With its true face revealed, a demon's bigger and nastier than the average bear. Not that your fellow Knights would recommend trying to measure that for yourself. Point is, the things are big and angry and made of all manner of sharp bits. When one's coming towards you, you need to put it down fast, or at least put it in enough pain that savaging you with those metal claws ain't so much of a priority.

For bears, they make some pretty awful stuff you can use to incapacitate the damn things. Make it out of hot peppers and Lord knows what nasty chemicals. Turns out the angels offer the same thing. Just God puts it right in your fists.

With the Bear Mace Ink, the flats of your palms glow with patterns that cause extreme pain to demons. Properly used, it puts the bastards a bit on the defensive.

Action: Instant (part of a Brawl attack)

The attack inflicts extreme pain and the Stunned Tilt in addition to unarmed attack damage. It only affects supernatural creatures (including people possessed by lesser demons), but decking a guy is hardly an approved way to test whether he might be a monster or not. Still, needs must, right?

Bear Mace draws heavily on the angelic energy in the Knight's system, and can only be used as many times per scene as the character's dots in Endowment (Ink).

Bear Mace cannot be used simultaneously with Fist of Revelation.

Brother Road

Spend as much time on the road as a Knight does, you get to know it. Not just how to get around, though a few years in the

business'll teach you that, but you learn about the people you meet and the way they travel. (Or don't, if they're stuck in some one gas station town somewhere.) You learn the ins and outs of different types of places — towns, diners, truck stops, whatever. And because of your job, you can put this knowledge to use tracking demons.

This particular Ink is subtler than most. It lets you read the signs to speak to the road and the places that are part of it. It lets you ask questions of the stretches of asphalt and out of the way Waffle Houses the rest take for granted.

Action: Instant (draining, can be used only as many times per scene as the character has Endowment dots)

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: You get nothing but bizarre images in your head. These take about 24 hours to clear out and, in the meantime, you can't use this Ink again.

Failure: You don't get to ask any questions.

Success: Ask one of the following questions:

- What person or creature whose name I know passed here recently? (This can be an alias. It need not be any kind of true name.)
- What happened here in the last 24 hours that usually doesn't?
- Who witnessed something here that they haven't told anybody about?
- Who was the last person to die in this general area?

Exceptional Success: Ask two questions.

Fist of Revelation

Demons are fond of their human disguises, and won't easily let go of them. That can turn a fight from a horrific scene everyone wants to forget into one that looks like a savage beating the cops can't wait to break up. Plus, it's just aggravating, those damn things wandering around in our skin, doing like everyday people while they work their insidious plans.

So you hate demons hiding behind a false face? This Ink lets you punch it right off.

Action: Instant (part of a Brawl attack)

When the character successfully deals damage with an unarmed attack, a greater demon loses any benefits of Cover for the rest of the scene, and immediately reveals its Apocalyptic Form. It cannot return to human form for the rest of the scene. It also suffers the Knocked Down Tilt.

This Ink can only be used once per demon per scene. It cannot be used simultaneously with Bear Mace.

King of the Road

The best feeling on the open road is when it feels like you and the car are one, traversing the landscape faster than any human being was meant to. It's a freeing, almost zen experience. 'Course, get too lost in it and you might end up a hunk of twisted metal on the side of the road.

This Ink makes car and driver literally one. You get a tattoo of your particular vehicle (and for that reason, it ought to be a self-respecting piece of work) somewhere on your body. The Ink requires an arcane paint job for the vehicle as well as the driver, but this can be concealed with another paint job. Once you got it? Hoo boy. No matter what you do to that car, it'll always be there for you. Drive it into a demon to crash you both into a lake? You'll find it parked at an overlook nearby. Get it peeled open like a can opener by a pair of fire-eyed things from the pits of Hell? You'll find it parked right back at the motel, not even a scratch. The knight and her horse are one, and your steed ain't givin' up without you.

System: This Ink requires the Knight designate a specific motor vehicle. Not a type, as with The Lord Provides, but an individual car, truck, or motorcycle to which the driver has a strong emotional attachment.

Whenever this vehicle takes damage within excess of half its Structure, or gets lost, like by driving off a cliff or into a body of water, the vehicle reappears in a parking area the character visits somewhere in the next 24 hours.

The Lord Provides

You've heard those commandos the Feds use; they've got to account to Washington for every bullet they fire. That seems insane when a monster with jaws the size of an air conditioning unit is about to chomp you in half. Did you fire five bullets, or did you fire six?

With this Ink, you don't have to care. The image of a specific firearm is depicted as part of the tattoo. When using a gun of that model, you never run out of ammunition. This is limited to mundane ammunition. If you get your hands on Task Force: VALKYRIE's Etheric Rounds, it wouldn't apply.

LOVE/HATE

What the right hand giveth, the left hand taketh away. This Ink embodies the duality of friendship and enmity. Admittedly, knuckle tattoos are not the most flattering. But they do their job, making each of your hands into a powerful way to establish relationships.

Shaking someone's hand with your right determines whether you can trust them or not. Decking them with your left hurts way more than it ought.

Right Hand

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character is overcome by the cynicism that catches so many in the Vigil. He gets the feeling no one can be trusted.

Failure: The hand that's shook feels cold and clammy, but that's about all the character gets.

Success: The character gets a general sense of whether he can trust the person, as well as the Informed Condition with regards to that person.

Exceptional Success: The Informed Condition is Persistent, and can be accessed every chapter.

Left Hand

Action: Instant (modifies Brawl attacks)

The character's unarmed attacks inflict lethal damage, as if he were using a weapon.

Pain Magnet

The truth of the hunt is: sometimes, people get hurt who shouldn't. They could be bystanders, or some of the less rough-and-tumble members of your own crew.

Once it's shed its human disguise, a demon might be equipped with anything from ram's horns on its ugly mug to saw blades embedded in its arms. Even in disguise, demons often pack heat, and can summon up hellfire and the like.

That's where you come in. You're the human shield between the innocent and the infernal, taking blows and bullets for others through the grace of God.

The Pain Magnet mark allows you to take on injuries for others — as they receive them. Ideally, this means nursing some bruises after the fight is over, but against a particularly tough quarry, it can often land you in the emergency room or the morgue.

Action: Reflexive

For the rest of the scene, or until the character decides to stop, damage inflicted on a set of subjects the character chooses are redirected to her instead. These subjects have to be in the same general area as the character; she can't use the power over the phone. Generally, she needs to be in the fight herself, or close enough to be.

How this looks varies with the hunter's personality. A tough customer who takes no shit might appear in the path of every blow and bullet, while one with a saintly disposition might manifest the wounds spontaneously like stigmata.

A character can't redirect any additional damage if her last health box is marked.

Tough as the Last Guy

Somebody once said nobody ever wins a fight. Far be it from you to argue with the philosopher, but even if nobody wins, you've goddamn lost a few. Fortunately, this Ink lets you learn from those experiences. With some fairly nice-looking script around your biceps and a little mark on the back of your neck, you gain the ability to mimic your opponents' moves, even their strengths. Given the power demons tend to pack in their true form, this can make you quite a wrecking machine.

System: After any fight with a supernatural opponent with a higher Strength or Dexterity Attribute, or Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry Skill than your character, she may activate this Endowment. It "stores" the opponent's dots in the choice trait. This even applies to dots temporarily gained through Dread Powers.

At any time later, your character may unleash that Attribute or Skill. She gains access to those dots for the remainder of the scene.

This Endowment can only "store" one Attribute or Skill at a given time. The stored trait can be used only once, leading some hunters to get involved in bad fights so they can take advantage of their opponent's prowess later.

Inspiration & Sources

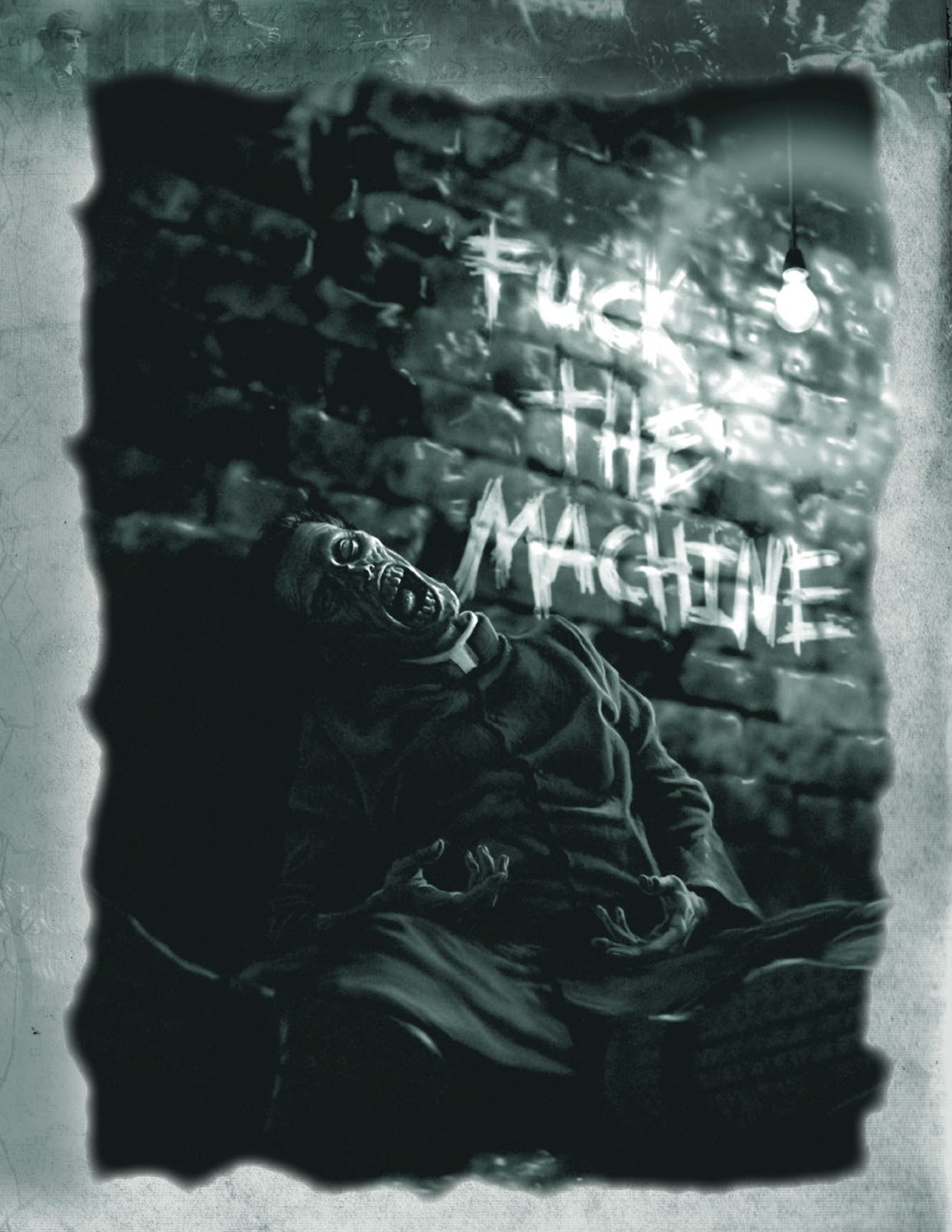
Angel, which is a supernatural take on *Batman*, has recurring demonic antagonists perfect for **Hunter**: Wolfram and Hart. The evil law firm is an institutional demon's model, an organization that simultaneously exists for its own benefit and reaches outward to do evil in the world. Some of its trappings, like the Witnesses imprisoned in the basement watching for supernatural incursion, or the defense mechanism that turns deceased employees into the walking dead, might be worth lifting. *Frailty* is a good example of demonic infiltration or, rather, the people who fear it and can be twisted to fit a Tier One chronicle. Adam and his father could be Witnesses, monitoring the way everything is interconnected, including murderers and their victims. The extreme violence with which they retaliate, and the weight the movie gives this violence, is a good foundation for a story.

The Matrix has a lot of demonic aspects to it, but the one that comes across first is the concept of the pact. Watch *The Matrix* (up to the point where Neo wakes up in the pod) and ask yourself who's messing with Thomas Anderson's reality and then proposes that he abandons it altogether. Morpheus's offer of the blue pill or the red pill is a classic demonic pact: accept your life, as it was, bills and cubicles and low budget hacking, or be initiated into the secret world. All you have to give up is who you were.

Twilight Zone explored many aspects of demons. One such episode was "The Monsters Come to Maple Street." "Monsters" presents an analogy for the Red Scare, back when Americans thought that Communists might be lurking among them, undetected. In addition to being a cautionary tale rooted in the same kind of paranoia Americans feel about terrorism today, "Monsters" is an example about how, when faced with a seemingly undetectable threat, people can turn on each other, rather than band together, for protection. It's a problem that might easily face a hunter cell, or the people they protect.

The definitive "angels in trenchcoats" movie is, of course, *The Prophecy*. Fallen angels battle in the modern day. They are the subjects of an amoral (or at least distant) God who gives them free rein. The way in which the human protagonists get involved in the moody, occult world of the angels is a good model for an investigative game.

Lastly, *Person of Interest* is a television series about a prophetic machine that provides the names of people likely to be involved in violent crimes. Is the machine they've got a backdoor into an institutional demon or the mind of God itself? The core cast would make a great hunter cell.


FUCK
THE
MACHINE

Appendix: Dread Powers & Rules Update

These Dread Powers supplement the list in **Hunter: The Vigil**. They use **The God-Machine Chronicle** document as a foundation.

One difference you'll see in the tenor of these Dread Powers is that, unlike those found in **Hunter: The Vigil**, many of these abilities have benevolent potential. Some can actively bless or benefit their recipients. This is intentional. Vampires, malevolent spirits, werewolves, and the like are likely to bear powers that victimize and abuse exclusively, because their natures tend toward those types of interactions. Fairies, for example, play a subtler game. They can bless and curse. Demons can sign contracts with double-edged sword clauses. Point being, the "monsters" in this book sometimes walk the line as to what "monster" means, even in a game like **Hunter: The Vigil** where nothing is black and white.

Existing Dread Powers

In addition to the new Dread Powers featured in this chapter on p. 144, you can (and should) still use the Dread Powers from **Hunter: The Vigil**. They'll work fine as is, with minor modifications.

Any damaging Dread Power should cause one fewer point of damage at base; in **The God-Machine Chronicle**, damage is automatic on a successful attack. As Storyteller, be very mindful of any damaging attacks, because monsters will outperform hunters even more than in the standard **Hunter** rules. This should encourage hunters to fight smart, and to use the situation and environment to their advantage.

For players that aren't used to these systems or that style of play, this may be a learning experience. The Storyteller should strive to describe some potential advantages in any given scene. If you're in a factory, talk about the rickety floorboards that favor lighter, human runners. If you're in the park, talk about the winding, narrow paths that could bottleneck an assault.

Using Conditions

As it stands, the Dread Powers in **Hunter: The Vigil** work well. However, if you want to update their rules to feel more like the rules in the rest of this book, and the rules in **The God-Machine Chronicle**, consider converting effects to Conditions any time something could realistically last more than a scene.

If you convert an effect to a Condition, consider what circumstances the Condition would resolve or fade under. Most Dread Power Conditions will go away after a certain timeframe, but don't offer a resolution Beat. However, Conditions must have terms for resolution. If the character or player does this thing, the Condition leaves and the character receives a Beat.

In the case of positive effects for monsters, you can also use Conditions. But, for Storyteller characters, resolving Conditions should award Willpower instead of Beats. Being that Willpower is usually the fuel for Dread Powers, this can lead to a buildup situation. Some Dread Powers (Tempest, for example) use a glut of Willpower all at once. If you start your Storyteller character monsters with low Willpower, they can slowly grow into more ferocious Dread Powers as the chronicle progresses.

Dread Power Dice Pools

Don't feel constrained by the dice pools offered in the various Dread Power descriptions. These are general offerings, examples of

CREATIVE CONDITIONS

Some of the Dread Powers listed call the Storyteller to "Create a Condition affecting X." Instead of creating a whole new list of Conditions, you can choose and adapt a Condition from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, or create your own.

To create your own, apply a conditional bonus or penalty (between +5 and -5, usually +2 or -2), that's dependent on a specific Skill, Attribute, or general type of action.

Alternatively, you can step up or down the results of a given action once. To shift down, exceptional successes become successes, successes become failures, and failures become dramatic failures. To shift up, dramatic failures are failures, failures are successes, and successes are exceptional successes.

For any Condition, choose a logical point of resolution. If you're shifting successes, the shift can be the resolution. When a player's character resolves a Condition, her character gains a Beat. When a Storyteller character resolves a Condition, he gains a point of Willpower.

what monsters likely use. Context is everything. Since a given Dread Power could manifest in numerous monster types, and can come up through any number of justifications, the dice pools should match the context.

For example, Ghost in the Machine on p. 151 uses Manipulation + Occult + Ghost in the Machine as a dice pool. This reflects a certain degree of influence, where the monster uses mystical means to puppeteer a device. Though, if the monster has an intuitive, intellectual understanding of technology that goes far beyond human understanding, the dice pool might very well be Intelligence + Computer + Ghost in the Machine. Often with monsters, the line between mysticism and pseudo-science is hazy, so this is a common question.

If you're ever at a loss for a Dread Power's dice pool, look at the monster's Skills and Attributes. Typically, a monster will be good at the things their Dread Powers *should* do, so long as their Dread Powers draw from the same thematic space as the monster's basic concept. If a monster is a physical powerhouse, their Dread Powers are likely to use Strength and Brawl. If the monster is a demonic power behind the throne, its Dread Powers might focus on Manipulation and Politics.

While the dice pools should reflect context, also allow them to build context. Where Dread Powers don't receive massive descriptions due to their generic natures, their dice pools can help communicate what the powers look and feel like. A Manipulation-based Dread Power should be subtler than a Presence-based equivalent.

New Dread Powers

These new Dread Powers could be used to create the monsters described in this book, but you'll want to use them alongside those Dread Powers found in **Hunter: The Vigil**. As with the Dread Powers in Hunter, these err on the side of general ownership. Some monsters may favor certain Dread Powers, but none are exclusive. Mix and match. Surprise your players.

For sorcerous monsters, like some mummies and demonic servants, consider the magic system introduced in **Hunter: Witch Finders** to supplement the Dread Powers listed here.

Absorb Energy (• to •••••)

Some monsters draw their energy from a common, natural source of power, like fire. For others, electricity. And a few fearsome beasts draw their power from nuclear radiation. Whatever this power source, it empowers the monster when it basks in it.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: Stamina + Survival + Absorb Energy

Effect: When the monster is exposed to her chosen energy source, it temporarily energizes her. She immediately gains a number of temporary health levels equal to her Absorb Energy dots, as well as an equal number of Willpower. For every turn she remains in contact with her power source, she regenerates two bashing damage, or one lethal damage.

This Dread Power only works once per scene.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power source doesn't absorb properly. The monster is shocked and pained, and denied her Defense for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster absorbs the power, and can maintain the effect for a number of turns equal to her successes.

Exceptional Success: The monster absorbs the power and channels it efficiently. She regenerates all bashing damage each turn, and regains a number of lethal damage equal to her Absorb Energy dots as long as she remains in contact with the energy source.

Biomechanical Nightmare (• to •••••)

The monster takes the guise of a biomechanical horror. Any or all parts of his body become machinery, metals, manufactured materials, and electronics, forming a morbid amalgamation of human technology in a rough humanoid form. His

hand may become a power drill. He may sprout wings of broken glass. His chest may whirr and spark with an exposed coal generator. With these changes, the sky's the limit.

Demons commonly have biomechanical forms, as well as do certain fairies.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: This power is not actively rolled

Effect: Activating Biomechanical Nightmare requires only a single point of Willpower and a reflexive action to activate.

When activating this Dread Power, choose whether to make a single change, or the whole body. Each unique appliance on the body should have clearly-stated benefits. Those benefits may be equipment modifiers, armor, weapon bonuses, or other effects. All such benefits use the monster's Biomechanical Nightmare dots as a foundation, divided however you'd like.

For example, a drill hand with four dots might offer +2 to Crafts rolls, as well as acting like a 2 lethal weapon. A skin made of raw, exposed electrical wiring with three dots may offer 1 point of armor and cause 2 points of damage to anyone touched by the monster.

As a rule, you can choose one major feature for each dot in the Dread Power.

Most monsters maintain one specific biomechanical form, and call on it at any time they need. Some can adapt their bodies in the moment and change each time they invoke this power.

Blackout (• to •••••)

Shadows are cloaks that obscure where a monster is hiding and enable them to escape or attack. This Dread Power enables the monster to darken an area, blotting out all light sources, and leaves the field in pitch blackness. For some monsters, this reflects an ultraviolet field that plays against witnesses' eyesight, and demolishes light bulbs. For others, it could be a cloud of inky, otherworldly blackness. The end result, however, is the same.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Blackout

Effect: By default, a one success cloud is five feet in diameter, and causes a -1 penalty to all sight-based actions for all those found within. Once rolled, allocate additional successes to add

five feet of diameter to the cloud, or thicken the cloud and add an additional -1 penalty to all sight-based actions.

Additional Willpower can be spent and additional rolls can be made to increase the area and potency of the space.

The monster is immune to the cloud's effects.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The cloud fails to create, and the monster is unable to use it for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster creates the cloud. Allocate successes to Size and potency of the effect.

Exceptional Success: The cloud blocks out one additional sense of your choice.

Blast (• to •••••)

When on the prowl, some monsters do not need weapons to attack. Instead, they command their use of the elements to wreak havoc. This Dread Power represents the various distance attack abilities of several monster types. They may attack with lightning, acid, ice, fire, or other destructive elements.

Choose the type of attack before taking this Dread Power.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Occult

Effect: When taking dots of this Dread Power, assign each dot to one of two effects: direct damage or extended damage. You can mix and match the effects as you see fit. Additionally, you can ignore Defense or armor for one dot each.

- **Direct Damage:** For direct damage, add the dot as a direct damage rating for the attack. For example, a three dot lightning bolt might be a three damage weapon on a successful attack.

- **Extended Damage:** For extended damage, the attack will cause one dot of damage per turn after a successful attack, for twice the devoted dots in turns. For example, a fireball with four dots might cause one point of fire damage per turn for eight turns.

- **Balancing Effects:** For each different effect, determine appropriately whether armor or Defense applies. If armor does not apply, it costs one dot. If Defense does not normally apply — like against firearms attacks — it costs one dot.

The dice roll represents the attack roll for the blast. The attack can hit anything within the monster's direct line of sight. If using distance modifiers for combat, its range is 15/30/45.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attack fizzles, and cannot be used for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The attack hits. It causes damage per its successes, and its damage rating.

Exceptional Success: In this power's case, these attacks can cause an appropriate Condition to the victim. For example, fire may burn, ice may freeze, and electricity may shock.

Blood of Life (• to •••••)

Blood is a powerful force that flows through a monster's veins. With this Dread Power, the monster's blood is completely under his control. He can force it to flow, to gush, to congeal, or to return to his body at will. His blood can be formed into strange tendrils, or made to cover entire surfaces. While frightening to onlookers, the practical uses of willfully using blood are unlimited to a creative monster.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Blood of Life

Effect: With a turn to initiate the power, the monster's blood becomes completely malleable and subservient to its owner's will. Manipulating the blood requires concentration, so it doesn't allow the monster to do additional things with makeshift limbs. They can only compliment her normal actions. As a rule, the monster's blood can cause a myriad of benefits and penalties which are usually equal to the monster's Blood of Life dot rating.

While the blood will return, if it's separated from the monster's body for more than ten minutes, it becomes inert. About every pint lost this way translates to one level of lethal damage to the monster. The blood will pool together like mercury, and return at the monster's Speed if separated. However, the blood is not indestructible. It can be destroyed by fire and damaging chemicals.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The blood flows, but not with the monster's control. The monster takes lethal damage equal to the Dread Power dots.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster controls his blood for the scene.

Exceptional Success: The monster's blood can separate from the body and act independently for a turn if the monster spends a point of Willpower. It can only take simple, crude actions, like an order to attack. But these actions occur independently of the monster. Use her Blood of Life dots to reflect any bonuses, penalties, or game traits for the blood.

Cloak of Authority (• to •••••)

Not every monster sticks to the shadows. Some, like mummies, seek to wield their influence like a weapon or a shield as they pursue their goals in the human world. With this Dread Power, the monster adorns herself with a mantle of power, audacity, and authority. Those around her assume she's a leader or a prominent figure. This gives her temporary influence over organizations and groups.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Politics + Cloak of Authority

Effect: Once active, the monster gains a number of temporary Allies, Contacts, Retainers, or Status dots equal to twice her Cloak of Authority dots. They have to reflect organizations and people she's surrounded with at the time of activation; the monster can't claim influence over a random group found anywhere in the world.

Note that the influence afforded is highly abstract. The monster has an air of authority, but no official position. She can cut through red tape, but the red tape still exists. Using this influence will likely require other Social Actions to accomplish, but they benefit from the mock Merits. The group will not act dangerously for the monster, but will let her access its resources with little struggle.

Also, a monster can only have one instance of Cloak of Authority active at any given time. Using Cloak of Authority on the same group multiple times in the same month levies a cumulative -2 penalty on the monster.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only does the Cloak of Authority not take, but the monster cannot gain any Social Merits with the desired group, as they reject her whole cloth.

Failure: The organization is not impressed.

Success: Success awards the Social Merits for one day.

Exceptional Success: As a success, but the Merits last up to a month.

Curse of Failings (• to •••••)

The pain of memory can be turned into a devastating force that renders hearts in two and freezes victims with doubt and insecurity. This Dread Power curses its victim with visions and memories of lost loves, lost opportunities, and other actions he wishes he could do over. Everything the victim does acts as a reminder of a personal failing. This leaves the victim drained, second guessing his every action. For some, this manifests as a mental paralysis, being unable to act at all, for fear of massive failure.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Curse of Failings

Effect: This Dread Power requires the victim hear the monster's words. The monster expresses to the victim a seed of doubt. The victim does not need to understand the monster's words; he just needs to hear them. Unless the character is assured of his success, doubt will set in, and memories of past failings will haunt his immediate actions.

The victim suffers a Persistent Doubtful Condition. It causes a penalty equal to the monster's Curse of Failings dots to any actions the victim takes with five or fewer dice (this limitation applies after all modifiers). Any such rolls that fail are automatically considered dramatic failures, offering the character a Beat. The effect eventually fades after a week per dot of the monster's Curse of Failings. If it fades, the character does not earn a Beat. The character can resolve it by learning a risky or harmful lesson in the present that offers a new perspective on a past failing.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The curse falls on the monster, instead of the victim.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The victim suffers the Condition.

Exceptional Success: Not only does the curse take, but the Condition will not fade over time. It must be resolved, or it persists.

Curse of Words (• to •••••)

A victim's worst fears are triggered by the persistent sound of fearful screams that echo in his mind. This Dread Power allows the monster to curse its victim with distracting, frightening voices. Depending upon when this Power is used, these sounds can cripple a victim at inopportune times, but will pull at the back of his mind for some time, before the voices encompass him in a frightening cacophony of noise.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Curse of Words

Effect: This Dread Power requires the victim hear the monster's words. Many monsters with Curse of Words will confidently express the curse to the victim; some mumble esoteric languages, while others use completely unrelated phrases. Monsters may curse victims with the voices of their dead family members, the chattering of alien beasts, or the sounds of children playing loudly. Each monster expresses this Dread Power differently.

Once active, the victim suffers a Vocalization Condition. This distraction removes the 10-again quality from the victim's rolls until resolved. To resolve the Condition, the victim must roll a chance die on a meaningful action, reflecting the voices building to a crescendo. Alternatively, the voices vanish after one day per dot of Curse of Words the monster possesses.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The voices do not take, and the victim is now immune to this Dread Power going forward. The monster cannot use the power on the victim ever again.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The victim suffers the Condition.

Exceptional Success: The Condition lasts for double the time without resolution. Ignore the first success on any of the victim's rolls until resolved.

Dark Gate (• to •••••)

The shortest distance between two points isn't a straight line, but a magical door that allows the monster to quickly step where others can't. This Dread Power allows a monster to mystically connect two locations. She steps through one portal, doorway, arch, or other passage, and emerges from the other. Many monsters use the Dark Gate for emergency escape and ambush routes. Some use it to build access points to victims, or even to steal valuable items at opportune times.

Cost: 5 Willpower

Action: Extended

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Dark Gate

Effect: To open the Dark Gate, the monster must spend hours attuning each location. Each roll takes a half an hour, and half the successes must be garnered at each site. The whole process requires four successes. If the distance is more than ten miles, it requires eight. If it's more than 100 miles, it requires twelve. Any Gates leading to a different continent require twenty successes.

Once established, the monster may step through the Dark Gate at any time with the expenditure of a Willpower point. Others may step through if they know how it works (usually ex-

plained by the monster), and are touching the monster or one of its personal possessions. Usually, passing through a Dark Gate requires an instant action.

After a Dark Gate has been established, it remains in effect until somehow dispelled, or until the monster revokes it. A monster may establish a number of Dark Gates equal to his Dark Gate Dread Power dots.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The gate refuses to take. The given portal will never take a Dark Gate from the monster.

Failure: Add no successes to the total.

Success: Successes are added to the total.

Exceptional Success: With an Exceptional Success, the created gate can be passed through with a reflexive action instead of an instant action.

Dead Flesh (• to •••••)

Some monsters are little more than moving corpses; puppeteers controlling bags of meat and bone. For these monsters, harm to the body is largely meaningless. Cuts and tears mean nothing to the undead. Vampires commonly possess this Dread Power, as do creatures that possess or control corpses.

Cost: None

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: This Dread Power is not rolled.

Effect: From each source of harm, the monster downgrades damage up to her Dead Flesh dots from lethal to bashing, or from bashing to nothing.

For example, a vampire with three dots of Dead Flesh that suffers a five lethal damage attack only takes two lethal and three bashing damage. If she suffered five bashing, she'd only take two bashing. If she has sufficient dots to downgrade all suffered lethal, additional dots ignore levels of bashing damage.

Thus, a vampire with three dots of Dead Flesh that suffers a two lethal damage wound would first downgrade both points to bashing, then ignore one of those two bashing.

This Dread Power has no effect on aggravated damage.

Degradation (• to •••••)

Rust eats away at metal. The slow march of time weathers stone, turning blocks of granite into fine dust. The material world eventually fades, and some monsters can accelerate that process. With this Dread Power, the monster can devastate physical objects with a single touch. For some monsters, this is simply a mystical affinity for material objects. However, this Dread Power could also reflect an acidic secretion, or the ability to decay and age items with a touch. No matter the cause, objects become brittle and fall apart within seconds.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: Stamina + Brawl + Degredation

Effect: This Dread Power requires touch to activate. Successes translate to lost Durability on the object touched. Then, when Durability is gone, successes destroy Structure. It can be activated reflexively any time the monster touches an object.

This Power can also be administered if the creature attempts to break the object through brute strength. Depending on the monster and the method, certain objects may be immune. For example, treated glass may be immune to acidic secretions.

Magical items subtract any relevant dot ratings from the monster's dice pool to activate Degredation.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object rejects the monster's efforts, and the monster takes 3 lethal damage from the strain.

Failure: The object does not degrade.

Success: Successes remove Durability then Structure.

Exceptional Success: Ignore the object's Durability; apply successes directly to its Structure.

Dream Seeing (• to •••••)

Dream Seeing allows a monster to literally see and experience a victim's dreams. She reaches into the subject's mind, and invades his personal dream space. She cannot interact with the dreams (at least, not with this Dread Power), but she can learn more about her victim, and potentially influence his future dreams with daytime activity.

This Dread Power lays the foundation for two later Dread Powers: Dream Shaping and Dream Walking. A monster *must* have Dream Seeing before she can use the others. The other two Dread Powers cannot exceed her Dream Seeing dots.

Cost: None

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Dream Seeing

Effect: The monster must see the dreamer to activate the power, either directly, through divination, or through live feed surveillance technology. While concentrating, her perceptions enter the dreamer's mind. Though the monster cannot directly influence dreams, she can learn about the dreamer's subconscious. Through waking influence, she may be able to influence future dreams. For example, if a monster knows that her victim fears public nudity, she can throw that anxiety in the dreamer's face to allow nightmares to flourish.

For each success on the activation roll, you may ask one yes or no question about the victim's subconscious. This should be answered within the narrative of the dream. Because of the yes/no nature of the questions, Dream Seeing works best of the monster knows the victim beforehand.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails. For the following week, the monster has harrowing dreams that feature the would-be victim prominently.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster perceives the victim's dreams. Each success allows for a yes/no question, as detailed above.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the yes/no questions, the victim's player must reveal any Persistent Conditions his character suffers.

Dream Shaping (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Dream Seeing

With this Dread Power, the monster cannot only see her victim's dreams, but can also manipulate and shape them to her will. She can create magnificent visions or terrifying nightmares that stay with the victim for the rest of his life.

This power requires the monster have as many or more dots in the Dream Seeing Dread Power.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant, Resisted

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Dream Shaping - Resolve

Effect: The monster can create, manipulate, and shift the features of a victim's dreams.

The effects of this Dread Power are largely variable, since dreams will have different effects on different victims. Create an appropriate Condition to cover the effects.

As a rule, normal Conditions are fine for most situations. However, if the monster uses integral hopes, fears, Aspirations, Virtues, Vices, or other personal qualities as leverage in the dream space, the resulting Conditions can be quite massive and traumatizing.

An exceptional success causes a Persistent Condition. This should be resolved through long-term, meaningful actions in the story, like group therapy or psychiatric counseling. Additionally, if the monster dies, the victim should be released from the effects.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails. The dream also features an image of the monster, in whatever forms – any and all – the victim might be familiar with. He knows that she had somehow invaded his mind.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster can shape the victim's dream as she sees fit. Work with the victim's player to create an appropriate Condition.

Exceptional Success: The Dread Power succeeds. Additionally, the Condition is Persistent.

Dream Walking (• to •••••)

With Dream Walking, the monster can not only see a victim's dreams as an outside observer, but can also physically enter them. She ceases to exist in the material world, and lives only within the scope of the victim's subconscious.

This power requires the monster have as many or more dots in the Dream Seeing Dread Power.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Occult + Dream Walking - Resolve

Effect: The monster peers into the victim's subconscious, then steps through a window, closet, or door, and enters the dream. As long as the victim sleeps, the monster remains in the dream space.

The monster operates in the dream as if she existed in material reality. Her actions are bound by the confines of the dream's logic. She cannot affect the outside environment any differently. However, a monster with the Dream Shaping Dread Power can manipulate the dreams she inhabits.

In the dream, the monster can suffer injuries or even death. A savvy dreamer can spend a point of Willpower and make a Composure + Resolve roll to regain control of the dream for a scene, *if* he achieves as many successes as the monster's activation. The victim can use the dream to harm the monster, using his Intelligence + Investigation as a dice pool, where the monster uses the lower of its Wits + Resolve as a surrogate "mental Defense" score. Use the narrative context of the dream to determine types and amounts of damage.

If the victim dies while the monster has manifested in his dream, she'll emerge back into reality with her entire health track full of lethal damage.

Leaving the dream requires an instant action to accomplish.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails. The monster is ejected from the dream, with a health track full of bashing damage.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster vanishes from the material world, and finds herself in the victim's dreams. She can interact with the dream space in the same way she interacts with the real world, and may use her Dread Powers.

Exceptional Success: Halve any damage the monster takes from the dream back into reality.

Earthquake (• to •••••)

The earth shakes and fissures crack open, forcing people to fall, streetlights to crack in half, and cars to crash. With this Dread Power, the monster shakes the ground, destroying infrastructure and damaging people. For some monsters, this supernatural quake appears as a dark prayer to the spirits of the Earth. For others, they strike the earth with massive strength, and shatter the ground beneath their feet.

Cost: 5 or 10 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Strength + Occult + Earthquake

Effect: The monster causes an earthquake. It creates massive environmental damage, radiating outward ten yards per success with the 5 Willpower version. For 10 Willpower, the power can affect a mile per success.

Everyone within ten yards per success suffers the Earthquake Tilt (**The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 208). The Tilt causes one damage per turn at one or two dots of Earthquake, two at three or four dots, and three at five dots. The monster is immune to her own Earthquake effects.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails. The Earth rejects the monster's efforts, and the monster suffers the Earthquake Tilt for three turns.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster creates an earthquake, which lasts one turn per success.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes are their own benefit.

Elemental Form (• to •••••)

Fire. Wood. Metal. Water. Earth. Air. With this Dread Power, the monster becomes a choice element, chosen when taking the power. Her body becomes an amalgamation of her physical body and a specific element.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: None; this power is not rolled.

Effect: Once active, the monster becomes a hybrid of her element and herself.

For any attacks that wouldn't normally hurt the element (like a gun against fire, for example), the attack does half damage, rounded down.

If she uses her body to cause harm, it acts as a weapon with a damage rating equal to half her dots in Elemental Form, rounded down.

She can also use her body as a tool for whatever the chosen element may be useful for; the equipment modifier is equal to her dots in Elemental Form. For example, if her body is metal, she may use it to hammer in nails. This would add her dots in Elemental Form to her Crafts rolls.

Embolden the Mob (• to •••••)

Embolden the Mob creates a powerful, false courage and artificial confidence in a group of people. They immediately lose their sense of apprehension and act on impulse; often times, dangerously so, for the the mood of any mob is its own power. While it doesn't make a group inherently hostile, it does foster less-reserved reactions.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Embolden the Mob

Effect: This causes an Emboldened Condition that gives a -2 (or -5 with Exceptional Success) to all the victims' Resolve + Composure rolls to resist impulse or temptation.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The cloud not only fails, but the monster suffers the effects of success herself.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster creates the cloud.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes add the stronger version of the Emboldened Condition mentioned above.

Eye For Desire (• to •••••)

Some monsters can peer into the soul, and see a victim's weakness. Many demons can see and subsequently exploit a person's flaws. Some vampires cultivate this ability in order to tempt victims into vulnerable positions for feeding.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Eye for Desire

Effect: This Dread Power allows a monster to learn a victim's Vice. Once successful, the monster knows the victim's Vice. If the victim has multiple Vices, the monster identifies each.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster reveals her own Vice to the victim.

Failure: The Vice remains hidden.

Success: The victim's Vice is revealed. When the monster acts on that Vice, she enjoys a +1 bonus on any relevant rolls. On any social maneuver (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 188), ignore the first two Doors.

Exceptional Success: The victim's Vice is revealed. When the monster acts on that Vice, she enjoys a +3 bonus on any relevant rolls. On any social maneuver, ignore the first three Doors.

Flicker and Flash (• to •••••)

This Dread Power allows the monster to step across spaces so quickly, she may as well be teleporting. The monster moves in short bursts, so quickly that anything without supernatural senses cannot see her do so. For hunters, this means facing an opponent that takes a little more than raw power to stop, as she can dart from harm's way with no notice.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics + Flicker and Flash

Effect: Successful use of this Dread Power adds the monster's successes to her Defense for the turn, and allows her to reflexively move her Speed, plus her Flicker and Flash dots. If she uses Flicker and Flash reflexively before an attack roll is made, she might move out of its range and avoid it altogether. She can only activate Flicker and Flash a number of times equal to her dots in a turn. However, take the highest rolled successes to modify her Defense; the effect is not cumulative.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster stumbles. She takes the Knocked Down Tilt (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 211) and loses her Defense for the turn.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster can move up to her Speed plus her Flicker and Flash dots, and her successes add to her Defense for the turn.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes are their own reward.

Fluid Lessons (• to •••••)

By examining another's bodily fluids, the monster can discern certain truths about that person, even events that have yet to happen. The monster looks into the mystical patterns that flow through the person's bile. Most monsters have a fluid of choice that they focus on, though technically blood, saliva, urine, vitreous fluid, or other fluid bodily excretions can act as the vehicle for this divination.

For every fairy that can use this dark gift for frightening object lessons, another creature pretends to predict the future, to disastrous ends for the subject. The visions are also unique to the monster. Some see visions in a pool, while others must taste the fluid and dream of the person.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation + Fluid Lessons

Effect: Successful divinations are questions about a specific person formed to provide a yes/no response. As Storyteller, you can ask the player questions about their character's background, or you can come up with vague truths about their potential future. If this Power is used on Storyteller characters, simply make up relevant facts.

Often, the monster will allow the subject or a client to ask the questions, or coaxes queries out as part of a "cold read." On a successful roll, the monster receives a number of answers equal to her Fluid Lessons Dread Power dots.

The divinations are revealed in the form of imagery and arcane symbols, so clarity often leaves something to be desired.

The monster, or any subject clued in on the visions, can attempt to draw clarity from the images. This requires an Intelligence + Investigation roll. Once interpreted, they offer the Informed Condition (**The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 182).

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The information is tainted and the divination backfires. Instead of obtaining answers about a specific subject, the divination will reflect a negative truth about the monster's past, present, or future. If revealed to outsiders, this revelation could offer clues about a weakness or vulnerability.

Failure: The power fails. Fate offers no answers.

Success: The monster receives answers to her questions.

Exceptional Success: The answers given are so clear they don't require further interpretation. They provided the Informed Condition with no further effort.

Ghost in the Machine (• to •••••)

With this Dread Power, the monster uses her mental prowess to control machinery. With the same mental impulses that allow her arms to bend, she can remotely activate and use power tools. With the same synapses that trigger memories, she can dig through databases, searching for information.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Occult + Ghost in the Machine

Effect: This Dread Power allows the monster to control electronic and mechanical devices. She can only use them as they are intended, but she can use them remotely, and without standard controls.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails to work, and the device behaves erratically in the worst way possible, as if it was possessed.

Failure: The power fails to work.

Success: The monster can control the device for the remainder of the scene. For any turn she intends to change the device's functionality, she must concentrate to turn it on or to turn it off.

Exceptional Success: She can change the device's functionality as a reflexive action.

Gift of Life (• to •••••)

No mortal can survive without fresh water. With this Dread Power, the monster creates abundant, clean, life-bringing water. For many monsters, this Power functions as evidence of their innocence, and proves that they deserve to live, when confronted with hunters or pitchfork-wielding mobs. For some, it's a bargaining chip to use when in the midst of a drought-ridden mortal population. Entire cults have sprung up around monsters wielding this power, for their followers believe them to be a god.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Gift of Life

Effect: While the water does not materialize from the air, the monster is able to draw it from places it might not naturally spring from. Many monsters will strike the earth to produce a natural spring from a well-placed crack. Some will re-open a dry well or cistern. Monsters must be careful when wielding the Gift of Life, for the place where they draw water from must be able to contain the amount produced.

At one dot, the creature produces enough water to keep a person healthy. At three, a family and their crops are safe. At five dots, the monster can keep an entire farming community nourished, even in a desert.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails, and instead of water, a spring of bodily fluids comes forth. This may be blood, urine, semen, or whatever would seem worst in the moment.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: Water flows forth. For every success, the water will gush from that location for one full day.

Exceptional Success: With an exceptional success, the monster can produce water in that spot for a full month.

Glitch (• to •••••)

In the World of Darkness, many monsters operate out of the corner of a mortal's eye. This Dread Power allows the monster to bend reality ever-so-slightly in her favor. A gun is a half inch off mark, her jump is just a bit higher, or a book flips open to the right page. These subtle shifts can be remarkable in the right circumstances and impress or amaze others. This Dread Power is a common part of a demon's repertoire; their ability to toy with reality gets them out of many binds.

Cost: None

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: This Dread Power is not actively rolled

Effect: Glitch comes into play once per scene when the monster spends Willpower to add dice to a pool, or to bolster a resistance trait. When spending for more dice, after the roll, reroll a number of failed dice up to the monster's Glitch dots. When spending to bolster a resistance trait, you may force the opponent to reroll successful dice equal to the monster's Glitch dots.

This manifests as subtle shifts in expectation, or bouts of remarkable luck. Really, what's occurring is that the fabric of reality shifts to suit the monster's immediate needs. Sometimes insignificant objects will appear or disappear from the environment in order to facilitate the monster's desires. For example, a wall may just have a brick missing that serves as the perfect foothold. If anyone knew the wall well, they might notice the difference. But most observers would just assume the wall always had a hole in it.

Haunting (• to •••••)

Passersby steer clear of a dilapidated house. Investigators think twice before going into an abandoned warehouse. This power allows a monster to infest an area to use it as a tool, an intermediary for her other Dread Powers. The infected area is as good as her eyesight or touch, for the purposes of using her blasphemies on the innocent.

Cost: 5 Willpower

Action: Extended

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Haunting

Effect: To infect an area, the monster requires a number of successes reflective of the relative size and population affected. Each roll requires one full night of inhabitance, along with other, often disgusting practices unique to the monster. A werewolf might urinate on the chosen territory, while demons may adorn the zone with bits and pieces of victims.

The size of the area impacted by Haunting depends upon the number of successes. A single room, or a comparable area, requires three successes. A small house requires six. A mansion nine. A field or block fifteen. Larger zones, like an entire metropolis or subway line, cannot be haunted. If a small group of humans resides in the targeted zone, double the required successes. If more than a family resides there, triple the requirement. A monster may not haunt a zone with more residents than three times her Haunting dots.

Once active, she impresses her mystical might over a house, a graveyard, or another conceptual place. From that point forward, the monster may use the area as if it were her immediate line of sight or touch. For example, if she haunts a graveyard, and a hunter touches one of the tombstones, she might use a Dread Power that usually requires her touch to disorient the hunter.

Note that, for Haunting to work, it has to be a reasonable connection; a vampire's blood-drinking isn't likely to manifest through the handrails of an old mansion. Then again, favor what's best for your story in these cases. It's also worth mentioning that use of this Power does not inherently extend the monster's perceptions. The Lord of the Land Dread Power affords that advantage.

Unless it's somehow dispelled, the haunting lasts until the monster ends it. A monster may only have one such haunted zone at once.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails. The selected grounds are forever immune to the monster's haunting. From that point forward, all Dread Powers by that monster in that zone suffer -5 to activate.

Failure: The monster accumulates no successes.

Success: Successes are added toward the monster's total.

Exceptional Success: With an exceptional success, the monster also gains an ongoing +1 to all Dread Power usage on the haunted zone.

Inebriate (● to ●●●●●)

Alcohol impairs a mortal's judgment and dulls the senses. Drugs alter a victim's ability to run, to scream, and to fight off an attacker. This Dread Power allows the monster to affect a victim with the effects of inebriation. Every monster has a different drug of choice that their touch emulates, chosen when taking this Dread Power. The power requires touch, but most monsters have a distinct method for delivery. Some deliver its effects through bodily fluids; some through tiny needles in their flesh.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant and Contested

Dice Pool: Presence + Medicine + Inebriate versus the victim's Stamina

Effect: The effect emulates a drug from **The World of Darkness Rulebook**, but as a Condition that lasts for one full night. Alternatively, create a custom Condition to reflect the monster's specific Inebriate. It should offer a situational penalty equal to the monster's dots in Inebriate. If it comes into play, its Toxicity is equal to the monster's Inebriate dots.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The power fails, and the victim remains immune to the monster's Inebriate power.

Failure: The power fails.

Success: The monster affects the victim if his successes exceed hers. The Inebriate takes hold.

Exceptional Success: Not only does the Inebriate take effect, the victim also gains the Addicted Condition (**The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 181) pertaining to the drug in question.

Lord of the Manor (● to ●●●●●)

Some monsters feel the best way to go on the offensive is to protect their tomb, haven, or home. With this power, the monster becomes attuned to a specific space, to control that area the way she would take command of her own body. The monster can reach through corners and drop from the ceiling. She can perceive, without needing to physically see, anywhere within that space. The monster knows all who enter, linger, and leave her domain.

This Dread Power is common for mummies and other monsters long-buried in ancient tombs. Nature spirits, and other creatures that commune with the land, also use this as well.

Cost: 5 Willpower

Action: Extended, each roll takes one minute

Dice Pool: Presence + Survival + Lord of the Manor

Effect: This Dread Power ties the monster to a temporary or permanent location that's chosen when buying it.

If temporary, the monster can use it in one specific *type* of place, such as the woodlands, industrial buildings, or in the bedrooms of sleeping mortals. The specificity is unique to the monster, and can be general (the woods) or very specific (high school boiler rooms).

If permanent, the Power becomes tied to a unique spot, and cannot change. However, the monster does not need to spend Willpower or roll to activate it.

Activation requires five successes for a small room, ten for a house, and fifteen for a city block. Larger spaces cannot be controlled with this power.

Once active, the monster can take any actions as if that space was an extension of herself. For example, she can reach through walls and out others. She can peer out one window and see through another. Be creative in these expressions, but understand there is a limitation. Any dice pools used through the space are limited to two times the monster's Lord of the Land dot rating. Thus, at two dots, the monster may take four actions in a scene.

The monster intuitively knows any time someone enters or leaves the territory. Any perception-based rolls or supernatural detection powers add her Lord of the Land rating as automatic successes.

By spending a point of Willpower, the monster can drag things through the space, from one part to another. When incorporating objects, this action should employ a portal of sorts; for

example, a monster might reach into a closet, through a window on the other side of the building, and drag a person through. This necessitates an additional activation roll, requiring a Willpower point and successes equal to the object or person's Size. Pulling things through the territory only takes a turn per roll, though.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The land rejects her. For every accumulated success thus far, she takes one bashing damage. The power cannot be used on the same space again.

Failure: The monster fails to garner any successes.

Success: Successes are added to the monster's total. If the required successes are achieved, the monster is attuned to the land.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes get the monster closer to the required total faster.

Mixed Blessings (● to ●●●●●, special)

Not every conflict between a hunter and a monster is resolved with bullets. Sometimes, the monster may try to cajole or negotiate her way out of a situation by promising hunters a boon. Other times, monsters recognize the frailty of mortals and leverage base desires against them. With this Dread Power, the monster can bless a mortal with certain advantages in exchange for a degree of power over them.

Cost: 1 Willpower per dot of the Merit

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Mixed Blessings

Effect: The offer must be clearly expressed to the would-be recipient, even though the drawback need not be. Initially, the mortal can decline the blessing. Such a refusal must be clear and definite; if the mortal has acknowledged the offer, but hasn't clearly refused it within one week of the offer, the offer takes.

When purchasing this Dread Power, choose a Merit with a dot rating equal to or less than the dots in the power. The Dread Power ties directly with that Merit; the monster can have multiple powers, each offering different Merits. The Merit can be any Merit from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, including supernatural Merits, but excluding the Virtuous Merit. If the mortal does not decline the offer, she receives the Merit, free of charge.

The Merit lasts as many days as the roll had successes and the mortal suffers an Ensorcelled Condition for its duration. During this time, the monster achieves exceptional success on any roll against the mortal with three successes, and the mortal does not get 10-again on any roll against the monster. Defying the monster becomes a breaking point with a -2 penalty.

At any time, the mortal can buy the Merit at half cost, rounded down. This makes the Condition Persistent. The Persistent Condition can then only be resolved with the monster's destruction.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The magic backfires, and the monster receives the Ensorcelled Condition that was previously directed toward the mortal.

Failure: The power does not take.

Success: The mortal gains the Merit and the Condition. Both last a number of days equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: With an exceptional success, the Ensorcelled Condition becomes Persistent, and so does the Merit. The mortal does not need to purchase the Merit.

Reap (● to ●●●●●)

In the World of Darkness, some monsters believe mastery over life and death is the ultimate gift. This devastating Dread Power gives the monster power over death. With a swift motion, she can strike the life out of a swath of humans or target a specific individual. Different monsters exhibiting Reap in different ways; some breathe on their victims, others will send a hail of bullets into a crowd for a clean kill. Others act in a manner that befits their true nature. For example, demons mimic biblical curses to extinguish all the life in a room.

Cost: 5 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Reap

Effect: This power has two different effects, depending on whether or not you're using the Down and Dirty Combat option (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 195). Use the second option if you're using this Power against players' characters.

With the Down and Dirty Combat rules, each success affects one victim. They suffer lethal damage in each of their health boxes. They may survive with immediate medical attention.

Alternatively, without using this rule (or in situations where the monster isn't using this Power against players' characters) add the monster's Reap dots as an additional weapon modifier on any successful attack. Then, ignore any armor the victim might be wearing. He causes lethal damage, regardless of the source of the attack.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Not only does the monster fail to kill his target, he reveals a flaw his opponents can exploit. Any harm he suffers for the remainder of the scene increases by two levels.

Failure: The monster fails to kill his intended victims.

Success: Pending which rules are used, the monster either kills a number of targets equal to his successes, or gains an additional weapon modifier on any successful attack.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes kill additional targets. If you're not using Down and Dirty Combat, the monster also ignores a victim's Defense in addition to her armor.

Revelation (● to ●●●●●)

With this Dread Power, the monster reveals his true nature to witnesses, causing fear, awe, and shock. Revelation requires the monster have some supernatural aspects that he can show off. If he appears to be completely human, and has no visible Dread Powers, he cannot use this Dread Power. Every monster is attuned to his own method of Revelation befitting his guise. Vampires might bear fangs, werewolves may shapeshift before mortals, and fairies might show their true, Arcadian forms.

Cost: 1 Willpower for a single witness, 2 for a handful of witnesses, 3 for numerous witnesses

Action: Instant and resisted

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Revelation – the highest Resolve of all witnesses

Effect: When choosing this Dread Power, choose the method of Revelation, and the expected reaction. For some Revelations, mortals will be impressed and enrapt by the experience. Others might strike unearthly fear into the hearts of his witnesses.

When witnesses attempt to take an action that counteracts the effects of this Power, they suffer the monster's Revelation dots on any roll; add the monster's Revelation dots to any contested rolls that would cause the mortal to betray the reaction. For example, a fearsome ghost with four dots of Revelation, that creates a Revelation of terror, causes a -4 to any roll to stand up to the specter. Additionally, witnesses would add +4 to any roll that would force the witness to stand up to the apparition, such as a vampire's hypnotic command.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster fails to cause the desired reaction; witnesses see the monster for what it is, and gains Willpower any time they defy the would-be response.

Failure: The monster fails to evoke the desired reaction.

Success: The reaction takes. Witnesses suffer the monster's Revelation dots from any roll to defy the desired reaction.

Exceptional Success: The reaction takes. Additionally, the witness must spend Willpower to even attempt to defy the reaction. This Willpower does not add additional dice to his roll.

Tempest (• to •••••)

The sky turns black and lightning splits the sky. Strong winds whip the ocean's waves. Thunder booms and cracks. This Dread Power allows the monster to call forth a quick, powerful storm to hurt, distract, and disorient any nearby. Both an effective combat tactic and escape tool, the power to control weather has long been a symbol of frightening, phenomenal mystic power. Few beings in the world stand unafraid of natural disaster.

Cost: 5, 10, or 15 Willpower

Action: Extended; each roll takes one turn

Dice Pool: Presence + Occult + Tempest

Effect: The tempest requires between ten and thirty successes to summon forth. Once summoned, the storm affects a wide area. For 5 Willpower and ten successes, it covers a city block. For 10 Willpower and twenty successes, it will cover a town. For 15 Willpower and thirty successes, it'll blanket a metropolitan area. Note that this massive cost can occur over the course of a day. So, the monster may replenish Willpower during the Power's activation.

Once activated, those in the affected area can only see a few feet ahead of them. Anything beyond arm's reach is considered total darkness. The sound and power of the storm

mutes all senses. Anyone who's outside in the tempest takes one bashing damage per minute of full exposure. Movement is limited; each turn characters must succeed in a Stamina + Athletics roll or be knocked down, characters may only move half their Speed.

Additionally, weak structures will break in the deluge. Floods will result in prone areas. The storm will cause severe, costly, lasting damage within its area of effect.

The monster is completely immune to the effects of his own tempest. He can see through it, and move through it effortlessly.

The tempest's duration will either last for one hour per dot of the Dread Power. The monster can end the storm prematurely.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The tempest comes in full force, but the monster is affected just like everyone else. Additionally, the storm follows the monster, centering on him at all times. The storm lasts the scene; the monster cannot end it prematurely.

Failure: The monster fails to garner any successes.

Success: Successes are added to the monster's total.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes speed the tempest's arrival.

The Oldest Temptation (• to •••••)

Cain. Abel. Brother fights brother. Lover attacks another. With this Dread Power, the monster whispers a temptation to a human target, and urges them to murder another. The whisper can be literal or metaphorical. Some demons speak to a subject's mind; some monsters offer favors for compliance. Monsters typically wield The Oldest Temptation as a weapon. Others, however, are amused when a innocent victim takes up the knife.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Extended and Contested, each roll takes one night's time

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + The Oldest Temptation, contested by the victim's Composure

Effect: Once the monster reaches successes equal to the victim's Willpower dots, the power takes effect. The victim must make a choice: murder the designated target, or resist the call.

If the victim chooses to commit the murder, she gains a Beat and "Commit Murder" becomes a new, second Virtue for her. If she resists, she must spend a Willpower point per day for a number of days equal to the monster's The Oldest Temptation dots. She also gains a Persistent Condition that gives her -3 to resist the monster's Social actions and Dread Powers. If the monster scored an exceptional success, the Condition is -5. The Condition is only permanently resolved with the monster's destruction.

If the victim achieves successes greater than the monster's dots in The Oldest Temptation before the monster succeeds, the power does not take effect.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster fails to tempt his victim. The human becomes resistant to the Dread Power in the future, and gains the Inspired Condition with respect to destroying the monster.

Failure: The monster fails to garner any successes.

Success: Successes are added to the monster's total.

Exceptional Success: Successes are added to the monster's total. If the result of this roll achieves success, the resulting Condition is stronger.

The Primal Dirt (• to •••••)

Earth may be consecrated by mortals, but for some monsters it's already sacred. This Dread Power reflects a creature that is born from dirt, and shares a deep, intimate connection with the Earth. Impact with natural minerals, uncut gemstones, and precious base metals will cause the creature no harm, and her body can flow easily with such fruits found deep beneath the soil. Inhuman constructs made of dirt, and certain mummies have this affinity.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: No roll is required

Effect: Any time the creature comes in contact with dirt, base metals, rocks, clay, sand, or other bits of unprocessed earth, you may activate this Dread Power reflexively. She ignores any damage equal to her dots in The Primal Dirt. Damage beyond those dots occurs normally. Additionally, she can inter herself into the material, flowing through it like one might wade through mud. The monster moves through the substance at a Speed equal to her dots in The Primal Dirt.

The Primal Dirt will negate damage from falling, from being struck with a stone, or being hit with another unprocessed weapon. However, objects processed by the hands of man will affect the monster normally. Diamonds will pierce flesh when cut. Silver bullets will puncture. Granite statues will bruise. However, uncut diamonds, newly-mined silver, and granite rocks will have no effect.

Revivify (• to •••••)

Immortality is a word whispered among many monsters like a prayer. A creature with this Dread Power is nigh unstoppable. They'll die like anyone — or anything — else, but that does not spell the end of their rampage. They can return from the grave quickly, albeit weakened. While extremely powerful, Revivify does not guarantee a full revival. The Power takes a hefty toll on the monster, causing irreparable harm to the body. This is, of course, a small price to pay for immortality.

Cost: 1 Willpower and 1 dot of Stamina

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Stamina + Survival + Revivify

Effect: Revivify can only be activated when the monster is effectively dead — that is incapacitated — with a health track full of lethal damage. It must be used within one day of death for each dot of the Dread Power. The monster spends Willpower and a permanent dot of Stamina (or Resistance, if using disembodied traits). If successful, the monster rises from death, slightly less injured. Each success on the dice roll removes two bashing damage, or one lethal damage.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster not only stays dead, but cannot attempt to use Revivify ever again. Death is permanent.

Failure: The monster does not rise, but loses both the Willpower and dot of Stamina. If he still has Stamina and Willpower remaining, he can attempt again.

Success: The monster rises, provided his entire health track isn't full of aggravated damage. Successes heal two bashing or one lethal damage each.

Exceptional Success: The monster rises fully healed of *all* damage, aggravated or otherwise.

Note: The monster cannot use this power if it only has a single dot of Stamina. At that point, the monster is permanently destroyed. If his health track is completely full of aggravated damage, the monster can only resurrect with an exceptional success on the activation roll.

Scapegoating (• to •••••)

Misdirection is a tool in almost every monster's arsenal. With this Dread Power, the monster assumes an air of innocence, and places all suspicion and all preternatural eminence onto a human. The human still looks the same, but adopts auras and presences indicative of monstrosity. He becomes unsettling to onlookers; he inspires suspicion and fear with every move. Meanwhile, the monster appears sympathetic and overwhelmingly human.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Subterfuge + Scapegoating

Effect: Once active, this Dread Power has a twofold effect; it makes a human target seem monstrous, and makes the monster seem human. Humans react dramatically to the victim; this often results in aggression that may lead to violence. On the other hand, humans react sympathetically to the monster, often coming to its aid.

To create a scapegoat, the monster must touch the victim.

Dispelling the façade can be done through illusion-piercing Endowments, but must exceed the monster's successes. Careful investigation and research can pierce the illusion in time, but any of the victim's mundane efforts suffer the monster's Scapegoating dots as a penalty to the roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster fails in his effort, and draws undue attention to himself. All humans within eyeshot immediately know that they're looking upon an evil entity or force.

Failure: The monster fails to create a scapegoat.

Success: The monster creates the scapegoat. Any efforts to discern the monster's true nature or dispel the victim's façade must achieve more successes than the monster's. Until the effect is dispelled, any attempt to harm the monster is considered a breaking point with a -2 penalty to the roll.

Exceptional Success: The monster creates the scapegoat. As above, but harming the monster is considered a breaking point at -4.

Soul Binding (• to •••••)

A mortal's soul is precious to a monster, for his spirit holds precious power. This Dread Power allows the monster to bind a victim's soul to hers, allowing her to tap into the victim's reserves to fuel her monstrosity. The monster's target may be a willing subject, ready to support her in her time of need, or a tragic, unwilling pawn. Given time, the monster can leave a victim drained or — if she's tapped into his soul for too long — dead.

Cost: Willpower equal to the victim's Willpower dots

Action: Instant and Contested

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Politics + Soul Binding, contested with Resolve

Effect: There are two versions of this Dread Power: a three dot version and a five dot.

The three dot version of Soul Binding may only be used on a willing subject, who usually signs a contract or makes a similar agreement with the monster. In this case, the victim does not make a contested roll. The five dot version may be used on unwilling subjects. Upon using the Dread Power, the monster must spend Willpower equal to the victim's Willpower dots.

Once the victim is bound, the monster may draw Willpower from him at any time, over any distance, reflexively, but only once per turn. The victim loses a point of Willpower, and if the monster draws multiple points in a day, the victim also suffers a level of lethal damage per Willpower drawn. However, with a successful Resolve roll, the character can stop the monster for the day after the first level of lethal damage is caused.

Each version of this Dread Power has a different way to abolish the effect. With an extended Intelligence + Occult roll, characters will be able to uncover an esoteric method for ending the effect. It should be a challenging but reasonable solution, like finding a rare herb or uncovering a secret piece of the monster's history.

A monster may only have one such bound victim at a time.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster fails, and the victim can instantly sap one Willpower from the monster. If he wishes, he can turn the Dread Power back on the monster, creating a reverse bond that allows him to suck Willpower.

Failure: The monster fails to establish the bond.

Success: The monster creates the bond.

Exceptional Success: The monster creates the bond, and any research efforts to solve the bond suffer a -3 penalty.

Titan's Strength (• to •••••)

Many battles are won not through strategy, but through the use of brute force. This Dread Power enables the monster to commit acts of immense strength. Trolls, Frankensteins, and all manner of monstrous beasts can possess this ability, which allows them to lift far more than nature might otherwise allow.

Cost: None

Action: None; this Dread Power is not activated or rolled

Dice Pool: None

Effect: Once a monster has this Dread Power, she can automatically lift anything with a Size equal to or less than her Size + Titan's Strength. If she throws lighter objects like a weapon, that item is considered aerodynamic. Any time you make a feat of strength with the monster, add her Titan's Strength dots to the roll. This can stack with Unholy Attribute, but these dice do not apply to combat actions, only feats.

Totemic Form (• to •••••)

Bears protect, spiders weave fates, and butterflies signify transformation. For centuries, mortals have relied on the wisdom of

animal totems for advice and guidance. This Dread Power gives an otherwise human-appearing monster the ability to take on a feature of a totemic animal spirit. Often, mummies use a Totemic Form to take on the head of a patron animal like a lion, jackal, or crocodile. Some malevolent fairies will take on animal traits as a way to trick humans into believing they were cursed. Totemic Form affords a certain supernatural majesty and is near impossible to hurt.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: None; this Dread Power is not rolled

Effect: When purchasing this Dread Power, choose the desired animal trait. Each instance of the power allows for only one such modification; further purchases allow for other changes. The modification must be tied to an Attribute. While changed, any rolls with the chosen Attribute gain 8-again. The changed body part has an armor rating equal to the dots in this Dread Power, as it stands as an icon of the monster's spiritual identity. Onlookers, who have Composure scores less than the dot rating, must spend a point of Willpower in order to attack the monster.

Transmutation (• to •••••)

For centuries, mortals have attempted to change lead into gold. This Dread Power allows the monster to do just that, by changing one physical substance into another. The monster's creativity and the object's size and availability are the only limits as to how the inorganic matter may be altered. From water into wine, or copper coins into silver, the monster is able to shift the chemical and structural properties of the substance into something completely different.

Cost: 1Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult + Transmutation

Effect: This Dread Power transforms one inorganic substance into another. The monster can affect and create substances with a Size and Availability (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 232) no greater than her Transmutation dots. Though it only affects inorganic substances, err on the side of allowance. Objects that are long since dead, like a bone shard or piece of driftwood, should count as inorganic for the purposes of this power.

As a rule of thumb, most commonly-found substances like water, rocks, or soil should be one dot Availability. Two dots reflect most industrially-processed substances, high end manufactured alloys are three dot, and gold and other precious metals are often four dots. Diamond, alongside other high-or-controlled cost substances, are five dots when attempting to transmute anything but the tiniest quantities.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object not only remains the same, but the monster's body partly transforms into the desired substance. This causes 3 lethal damage to the monster.

Failure: The substance does not change.

Success: The object changes composition from one inorganic material to another.

Exceptional Success: The object changes to a perfect elemental example of the target substance. Add +2 to its Durability and Structure (if relevant), and +1 to its Availability value.

Twist Desires (• to •••••)

To some, greed is a virtue and lust is an everyday part of life. To monsters, however, finding out what makes a mortal tick allows them to assert control over his psyche. With this Dread Power, the monster shifts a victim's weaknesses and character flaws to one of his own choosing. Some demons will alter a victim's Vice to suit her particular desires. Others will use this Power to effect a mortal on a base level. Many mummies will use this gift to build like-minded cults of personality. Regardless the reason, knowing a victim's Vice and shaping it to a monster's desires is an invaluable tool.

Cost: 1 or 5 Willpower (see below)

Action: Instant and Resisted

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion + Twist Desires – Victim's Resolve

Effect: Twist Desires allows the monster to choose a new Vice for the victim. If she invests a single point of Willpower, the effect lasts one night per dot of the Dread Power for a maximum of five. If the monster invests five points of Willpower, it lasts one week per dot of Twist Desires. Thus, if she has three dots and spends five Willpower, the effect lasts for three weeks.

When the effect does take hold, the victim's player may take a Beat to make the change permanent.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The monster fails to change the target's Vice. As a result, the would-be victim now has a new Virtue: destroying the monster. This effect lasts as long as the monster lives.

Failure: The monster fails to change the Vice.

Success: The monster succeeds in changing the victim's Vice. For one Willpower, the change lasts one night per dot of Twist Desires. For five Willpower, it lasts a week per dot.

Exceptional Success: As above. However, the victim can make the one Willpower effect permanent for a Beat. With the five Willpower effect, the victim can also choose to allow the monster to change her Virtue for a second Beat.

Uncanny Reflexes (• to •••••)

Well-timed bullets miss their mark. Attackers punch thin air where a monster once stood. With this Dread Power, a monster's reflexes are honed to a frightening degree. Her aim is perfect, her balance impeccable. Uncanny Reflexes may be caused by pure physical acumen, a supernatural degree of spatial awareness, or even a decelerated perception of time. Whatever the reason, a monster who's fast on her feet and can dodge incoming attacks is a formidable foe.

Cost: 3 Willpower

Action: Reflexive

Dice Pool: None; this Dread Power is not rolled

Effect: Once activated, the monster can count a number of Dexterity-based actions equal to her Uncanny Reflexes dots as rote actions (reroll all failed dice). An additional point of Willpower allows one of these uses to be decided *after* rolling the dice.

RULES UPDATE

These rules supplement the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, **Hunter: The Vigil**, and **The God-Machine Chronicle**. In an effort to update the **Hunter: The Vigil** rules, these mechanics replace any relevant mechanics in **Hunter**.

Risking Willpower

With this update, risking Willpower is slightly altered. You may still only risk Willpower once per scene. If the action fails, it's automatically a dramatic failure. However, the dramatic failure does not give the character a Beat. Instead, it gives two Practical Beats (see p. 164).

A successful action offers one Practical Beat, does not remove the Willpower point, and refreshes one of the character's spent Willpower points — not to exceed their maximum dots.

You can risk Willpower to choose from **two** of the following advantages:

- Add three dice to your dice pool.
- Your roll achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five. Or, for a combat action, add one lethal (or bashing) damage to a successful attack.
- Add the 9-again quality on your roll. If you already have 9-again, roll with 8-again. You cannot choose this option if you already have 8-again.
- Remove the 10-again quality from any contested rolls against your action.

Merits

These rules supplement and replace relevant rules from **Hunter: The Vigil**.

Professional Training

Use the Professional Training Merit on p. 163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.

Safehouse

Instead of Safehouse Size, use the housing equipment from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 241. For Safehouse Traps, use the Safe Place Merit on p. 170 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. Both Safehouse Secrecy and Safehouse Cache work as written.

Status: Compact or Conspiracy

These Merits operate identically to the Status Merit on p. 170 of the **God-Machine Chronicle**. As well, they provide additional benefits to members at the first, third, and fifth dots, detailed in "Compacts and Conspiracies."

Torture Suite

This Merit should be reflected by equipment bonuses. Your character may have a Safe Place with relevant equipment that bolsters Intimidation-based rolls, but you do not need to purchase a Merit to reflect those equipment bonuses.

Compacts and Conspiracies

These updated advantages replace the Compact and Conspiracy Status advantages in **Hunter: The Vigil**. As per that book, they offer advantages at the first, third, and fifth dots. While many of the dot ratings remain identical, they're reprinted here for convenience. Some simply replace Merits from **The World of Darkness Core Rulebook** and **Hunter: The Vigil** with Merits from **The God-Machine Chronicle**.

Ashwood Abbey

●	You gain the Barfly Merit for free (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 166).
●●●	Your chapter house counts as two dots, divided as you see fit, between the Safe Place, Safehouse Cache, and Safehouse Secrecy Merits.
●●●●●	You get four instances of the Contacts Merit, representing Legal, Vice, Arms Trafficking, and Ashwood Abbey Networking.

The Long Night

●	You gain the Evangelism Specialty in a Skill of your choice, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit related to that Specialty from p. 163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.
●●●	You gain two dots in Allies (The Long Night). If this would take you over five dots, put those dots toward another relevant Allies designation.
●●●●●	You gain the Inspiring Merit from p. 167 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.

The Loyalists of Thule

- When you successfully risk Willpower on a roll using Academics or Occult, gain two additional Willpower points instead of one. This can take you above your Willpower dots, but any unspent Willpower over your maximum disappears at the end of the scene.
- You gain two dots in the Mentor Merit from p. 167 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. This reflects a more experienced member of the Loyalists.
- You gain three instances of the Contacts Merit from p. 166 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. These reflect ranking specialists in the Loyalists, each must be designated to a specific type of supernatural issue.

Network Zero

- Choose a new Specialty in Computer, Crafts, or Expression. Take that Specialty, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit from p. 163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.
- You gain two dots in the Fame Merit from p. 167 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. However, this reflects an internet persona, so it does not prevent you from taking the Anonymity Merit (see **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 166).
- You gain two dots in the Library Merit and the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 162-163. These Merits reflect your character's knowledge and resources pertaining to recording media and related supernatural phenomenon.

Null Mysteriis

- Choose a Parapsychology Specialty in Academics, Medicine, Occult, or Science. Take that Specialty, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit from p. 163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.
- You gain two dots, divided as you choose, between the Allies, Contacts, and Fame Merits from p. 166-167 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. These dots reflect your relationship with the Null Mysteriis, and the scientific community in which your character involves herself.
- Any time your character proves the earthly, natural cause of an expected supernatural phenomenon, give the cell a Practical Beat. If this knowledge protected a non-skeptic, give the cell two Practical Beats.

The Union

- Choose a Local Area Specialty in Academics, Politics, or Streetwise. Take that Specialty, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit from p. 163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.
- You gain two instances of Contacts from p. 166-167 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. These dots reflect two Union specialists in various supernatural threats. Define these areas when taking the Merit.
- Once per game session, you can access two dots of Allies, Contacts, Resources, or Retainers from p. 166-168 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. These reflect temporary "loan" assets from the Union.

Aegis Kai Doru

- You can purchase the Relics Endowment.
- Choose a Relics Specialty in Academics or Occult. Take that Specialty, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty and Area of Expertise Merits from p. 161-163 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**.
- You gain the Unseen Sense Merit related to Mages or Werewolves from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p.175. You gain a Mage or Werewolf Specialty in Occult or Weaponry, and the Interdisciplinary Specialty Merit related to that Specialty as well.

Ascending Ones

- You can purchase the Elixirs Endowment.
- You gain two dots of the Resources Merit from p. 168 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. If this would take you above five dots, apply the other dots to any other relevant Social Merits.
- You can add a three dot Retainer from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p.170. This reflects an initiate ward within the Ascending Ones.

The Cheiron Group

- You can purchase the Thaumatechnology Endowment.
- You gain two dots of the Allies Merit from p. 166 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. This reflects backup within the Cheiron Group.
- You gain three dots of Resources from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p.168. This reflects the Cheiron Group's assets and compensation packages. If this would take you over five dots of Resources, apply these dots to another relevant Social Merit.

The Lucifuge

- You can purchase the Castigation Endowment.
- Once per game session, you can access two dots between the Resources and Library Merits from **The God-Machine Chronicle**. This reflects the Lucifuge's assets at your disposal.

●●●●●	You gain a four dot Mentor Merit in the form of the Lucifuge herself. You can buy the Merit to five dots at a later time.

Malleus Maleficarum

●	You can purchase the Benediction Endowment.
●●●	You gain two additional dots of Status in the Catholic Church. This is the Status Merit from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 170. If this would take the Merit above five dots, apply the excess dots to another relevant Social Merit.
●●●●●	Once per game session, you gain three dots, divided however you'd like, between the Resources and Retainers Merits. This reflects Malleus Maleficarum assets at your disposal.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

●	You can purchase the Advanced Armory Endowment.
●●●	You gain two dots of Allies in Task Force: VALKYRIE. This reflects backup you can call upon. If this takes you above five dots, allocate the dots to other relevant Social Merits.
●●●●●	You gain three high-level Contacts, each in a different secure field dealing with conspiracies and the supernatural.

Endowments

These updated Endowments rules supplement the Endowments found in **Hunter: The Vigil**. Most importantly, keep in mind the Sanctity of Merits rule from p. 158 of **The God-Machine Chronicle**. Any expended or lost Endowments will return points to the player, which can be spent again. This replaces the need for "renewable" Endowments.

Advanced Armory

These revisions update the Advanced Armory Endowment of Task Force: VALKYRIE.

Mjolnir Cannon (●●●● or ●●●●●)

As described in **Hunter: The Vigil**. However, an exceptional success applies the Stunned Tilt from **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 212.

Benediction

These revisions update the Benediction Endowment of the Malleus Maleficarum. All references to Morality use Integrity instead.

The Boon of Lazarus

The dot of Willpower lost from this Benediction is replaced by a dot of Integrity. Instead of a derangement, the recipient receives a Persistent Condition reflecting their shift in behavior.

Castigation

These revisions update the Castigation Endowment of the Lucifuge. All references to Morality use Integrity instead.

Hellfire

As per **Hunter: The Vigil** with a slight change. Hellfire is considered a thrown weapon with a damage rating equal to the Lucifuge's Castigation dots minus one. It's thrown with Dexterity + Athletics or Intelligence + Occult, chosen when purchasing the ritual. The Endowment causes lethal damage, however, the Lucifuge can suffer a point of aggravated damage to make the attack aggravated.

Sense of the Unrighteous

Instead of getting senses related to Morality ratings, the Storyteller should describe how unclean the act makes the Lucifuge feel. Use increasingly evocative descriptions the more terrible the act becomes.

Shackles of Pandemonium

As part of successful activation, the Lucifuge creates a temporary ban on the demon. Breaching the circle is the effective ban. If the demon crosses the circle, they've broken the ban.

Elixir

These revisions update the Elixir Endowment of the Ascending Ones. Ignore the text about single-use Elixirs. Elixirs replenish between game sessions, per the Sanctity of Merits.

A character may possess more Elixirs than her combined Elixir + Ascending Ones Status, by purchasing an "Additional Elixirs" Merit. This Merit has no upward limit, and simply allows access to further Elixirs.

Additionally, on a Dramatic Failure, the Ascending One suffers a poison with a Toxicity equal to the Elixir's dot rating, instead of a Toxicity 2 poison.

Breath of Ma'at

This Elixir offers a bonus to breaking point rolls, not degeneration.

Relic

These revisions update the Relic Endowment of the Aegis Kai Doru.

Eye of Hubris

This Relic gives the user the One-Eyed Persistent Condition, instead of a Flaw. They work identically, but when the penalty causes a major inconvenience in the character's life, she grants the cell a Practical Beat.

Watchful Keris

The dagger is a weapon that causes 1 lethal, and adds +3 to the user's Initiative when wielded. The additional surprise attack benefit remains.

Doru Talisman

The Doru Talisman acts as a 2 lethal weapon, not a 3.

Thaumatechnology

These revisions update the Thaumatechnology Endowment of the Cheiron Group.

Thaumatechnological Surgery

This works as presented, but keep in mind the limitations on dice pools for extended actions, per **The God-Machine Chronicle**, p. 187.

Weapon of Last Resort

This weapon causes 0 lethal. (Rolled successes apply as lethal damage, with no inherent damage bonus.) However, this Endowment will cause lethal damage to vampires and creatures that otherwise would not suffer lethal damage from mundane attacks.

Lover's Lips

If the user already has the 9-again quality on relevant rolls, Lover's Lips offer 8-again instead. They have no effect if the user already has the 8-again quality.

Research and Development

When creating an Endowment using these rules, replace Derangements with Persistent Conditions.

Practical Experience

These rules supplement those found in **Hunter: The Vigil**. Hunter cells earn Practical Beats and Practical Experiences, similarly to how they previously earned Practical Experience.

At the end of important scenes, the Storyteller builds a pool of Practical Beats. Use the same criteria that you would use to determine Practical Experience. Additionally, note the Practical Beats afforded by risking Willpower (see p. 164) and Tactics. These add to the total at this point. Every five Practical Beats accumulated become one Practical Experience.

Like **Hunter**'s Practical Experience, Practical Beats can be spent to recover Willpower. However, Practical Experiences can still be spent to purchase Skills or Merits for cell members, and can also be used to purchase Tactics.

Tactics

These rules supplement those found in **Hunter: The Vigil**. Tactics now cost 3 Practical Experiences. Tactics may cost 2 Practical Experiences if a cell member is a member of a favored compact or conspiracy. Don't use the formula for generating experience costs; use these flat costs for any Tactics the cell learns or develops.

Additionally, when a secondary actor fails a Tactic roll, they can take a Beat — not a Practical Beat — to turn it into a Dramatic Failure. In addition to the -4 imposed on the primary actor, there should be additional consequences for the secondary actor. If the primary actor fails, she can take a Dramatic Failure on the Tactic; the cell will receive one Practical Beat per participant in the Tactic after the scene. If any within the cell dies because of this failed Tactic, the cell gains one Practical Experience for that member, instead of a Practical Beat.

Monsters

Rules, advice, and guidance found here supplements and clarifies the Storytelling chapter of **Hunter: The Vigil**. Note that any rule that would normally give a player's character a Beat, should give a Storyteller character a temporary point of Willpower. This may only be used during the scene it was acquired. This rule prevents monsters, like vampires, from refueling their hungers without actually committing monstrous acts.

Creating Monsters

Every Storyteller uses monsters differently, and every chronicle has different demands. We encourage you to create and use your monsters however you feel works best for your game, your players, and your own interests.

If you choose to use standardized points to build your monsters, start with a foundation of **The God-Machine Chronicle**'s character creation systems. Note that these creation rules don't apply to spirits, angels, and other creatures detailed in **The God-Machine Chronicle**.

You can opt for a simpler version of character creation, particularly useful for non-speaking monsters, or for monsters that are likely to only see a single scene's inclusion. Some character traits are simply not essential for bit part demons. For example, most minor monsters will never need Aspirations unless a character uses an Endowment or other ability targeting Aspirations. In those rare cases, develop those additional traits on the fly.

Instead of focusing deeply on the specific numbers, some of the considerations you should take when choosing traits for your monsters have been addressed here. Character creation guidelines have been divided into major and minor monsters. Finally, this section ends by teaching you how to create monster templates.

Major Monsters

These rules are included for recurring or important monsters. It mirrors the standard character creation rules from **The God-Machine Chronicle**. The biggest point of difference is, you should really consider choosing traits that could become evident in play. Having an Aspiration to find your daughter's lost teddy bear doesn't matter, unless you *make* it matter. For monsters, don't choose a trait that you don't intend to portray or hint at.

Concept: This is the most important part of your monster generation. Concept provides a niche, and that niche will help define the monster's role in your chronicle, and help to guide the cell's response.

Potency: When you first design your monster, determine its Potency. The default is 1, but if the monster is important, experienced, or intended to be highly effective, consider a higher

Potency. Look to the Advanced Anathema sidebar on p. 164 for suggestions. For more on the Potency trait, see p. 164.

Aspirations: A major monster should have Aspirations. This is less for the Willpower advantage, and more for points of relativity between the monster and the cell. If the cell knows what the monster wants, it might be able to curb its worst behaviors, or use those desires as weapons in the hunt.

Virtue and Vice: Don't neglect Virtue and Vice selection. These traits can elevate your monster from a "monster of the week" and give it depth and identity. Vices — and Virtues for truly sadistic hunters — are excellent points of vulnerability that can turn the tables on an otherwise daunting threat.

Attributes: Attributes are an oft overlooked thematic aspect of antagonists. They simply serve to offer some dice that reflect generalities about the monster. Consider focusing on making one Attribute exceptional, and one severely inferior. Then, think on how you'd add both of those things to the basic description you'll use when revealing the antagonist to the cell.

Skills: Skills often fill a similar role to Attributes. You decide what you want the monster to be capable of, and fill in those Skills. However, Skills offer an opportunity to give the monster some form of function outside its expected place in your story. Consider giving a speaking monster a useful, but somewhat dissonant, Skill to add depth to its role. Sure, the sexy vampire club predator has Persuasion, Socialize, Streetwise, and Subterfuge. But maybe she has an inordinate amount of Animal Ken? Perhaps she happens to be a renowned horse trainer thanks to her experience riding horses in the Middle Ages, and now, the cell needs her expertise to solve an even greater threat.

Merits: Merits can help to ground a monster in the world. This is especially true of Social Merits, however, every Merit builds some context around the monster's identity. Look at Allies, Contacts, Mentors, Retainers, and Status less as game traits, and more as ripples. Every time something important happens to the monster, those other Storyteller characters have a chance of taking notice. If the monster goes missing, those dots immediately become potential consequences and branching threats.

On the other hand, Merits also represent areas of specialization. This can help hone a monster's abilities, but may also put her in a completely different league from the cell. Sometimes, you might want this. But, be mindful of the potential

ramifications. For example, a monster with numerous fighting style Merits can likely wipe the floor with a cell of hunters in single combat. So, if the cell likes to confront threats physically, think twice before overwhelming them with a creature they can't hope to compete with.

Dread Powers: Most monsters possess Dread Powers. As a baseline, all but the weakest imps should have three dots or more between their Dread Powers. When crafting your monster, think about each individual Dread Power: what it means, how the monster uses it, and what it looks like in action.

The Dread Power system is designed to allow you to create any monster you want, so it's largely neutral from an aesthetic standpoint. But, to make your monster punch, give specific details and requirements for Dread Power effects. What does the monster have to do to invoke her powers? Does she need to drop her blood on the ground? Does she sing a liturgy? Does she scrawl an eldritch language on the target? These sorts of details will give the cell jumping off points for research, and offer indirect methods to interfere with the monster's machinations.

Template: Apply the template for your monster. Note her advantages and disadvantages. Does she somehow differ from the mainstream of her supernatural type?

Minor Monsters

These guidelines are included for bit part monsters, likely to only be seen in quick references, or acting as minions to greater threats.

Concept: This may or may not come into play. It's worth noting, but will often just be their role in the story. For example, "devil's minion" is a valid concept, and it could be the only way that character engages with the story.

Potency: The vast majority of bit part monsters will be Potency 1. In some rare cases, minions and minor monsters will be more potent, but be careful not to overwhelm the cell.

Aspirations: These are usually not worth defining in depth before bringing the monster into play. Some game effects will touch on Aspirations, at which time you can consider them. If you're portraying a monster with an immediate goal, it's worth considering that goal as an Aspiration, so the monster can take advantage of the short-term victory.

Virtue/Vice: Unless a game effect targets Virtue or Vice, like the Lucifuge Castigation Endowment, it's not usually necessary to assign a Virtue or Vice to a bit part monster.

Attributes: For bit part monsters, it's not always worth it to assign them full Attributes. Instead, you could opt to give them Power, Finesse, and Resistance scores. Finesse + Athletics determines the monster's Defense. Size + Resistance determines base health levels. For most monsters, rating those traits at 2/3/4 is fine. Add a few points here and there to improve them, but remember that each such dot is three times more valuable than normal Attribute dots.

Skills: Most bit part monsters don't need many Skills. One or two defining Skills should do fine. Just ask yourself what the monster needs, and rate it with the monster's relative competency. For most bit parts, this should be between 2 to 4 dots. If the monster needs another Skill here or there, add them in at a single dot each.

Merits: Unless absolutely necessary, Merits don't have a place on bit part monsters. If the immediate needs call for a Merit, add it. But otherwise, don't bother.

Dread Powers: Not all bit part monsters need Dread Powers. Usually, the monster template offers enough basic abilities to make the monster monstrous. However, if one or two Dread Powers stand out as important, add them. You should also consider keeping their dot ratings on the lower side if possible, so the cell can resist or otherwise overcome them, and so higher priority monsters can excel in the same disciplines.

Creating Templates

When making monsters, you have more than just Dread Powers at your disposal. Monsters use templates, like the monster templates in the Storytelling chapter of **Hunter: The Vigil**. There are no hard rules for creating such templates, but here are a few ideas to get you started.

Natural Weapons: Most of the time, monsters draw the attention of hunters because they are dangerous to normal people. From a vampire's fangs to a werewolf's claws, natural weapons are a mainstay for many monster types. As a rule, natural weapons do not cost the monster to invoke. They may be persistent; it may require a reflexive or, in rare cases, an instant action to bring to bear.

If you want to give your monster natural weapons, consider the role you want them to play in the story. The simplest answer is to give them a damage modifier, so they can cause lethal damage. For small claws or the like, a zero damage lethal weapon should be fine. Larger claws might cause 1 or 2 levels of lethal damage. Massive tusks and other weapons incapable of normal concealment cause 3 lethal damage.

On the other hand, you may choose to offer less standard natural weapons. Key these off the monster's Potency trait. For example, a monster may have a hemotoxin as a natural defense. Its Toxicity rating is equal to the monster's Potency trait. Or, maybe the monster has a long, prehensile tail. When using the tail in compliment to his hands, he gains additional dice equal to his Potency.

Armor: Many monsters have natural armor ranging from scales or thick skin to crackling electricity on the surface of his skin. Divide armor between its normal rating and ballistic rating, however makes sense. If a monster can easily hide its armor, it offers 2 points to divide. If the armor could be hidden with extensive clothing, it offers 4 points to divide. If the armor is impossible to hide, it offers 6 points to divide. Two points can be removed from this total to make the armor cause a single point of lethal damage per turn to anyone touching the monster. Also, two points can be removed to make the monster inherently immune to one type of damage. For example, a djinn with fiery flesh may be immune to harm from fire.

Power Sources: Many monsters gain their Willpower from outside sources. For example, vampires drink blood. For these monsters, they only regain Willpower through the Drain Dread Power. They get the first dot of the power for free, and it's catered to their specific form of consumption. Alternatively, they may not recover health levels on their own, and require draining victims.

ADVANCED ANATHEMA

When creating important monsters using standard creation points, you may wish to give your monsters further Experience to reflect greater degrees of power, age, and potency. Use the following guidelines to determine how much you should give a more fearsome creature. Dread Powers cost two Experiences per dot in this model. Advanced monsters should also receive free dots in Potency to reflect their power.

Description	Potency	Experiences
Around the Block	1	5
Rising Threat	2	10
Seasoned Beast	3	15
Elder Cretin	4	25
Urban Legend	5	50
Demigod	6	100

Integrity: Some monsters have alternate forms of Integrity. Particularly with more murderous creatures, Integrity would leave them as ineffective, quivering messes very quickly. So when designing your monster, consider the types of behavior that would be considered unnatural for the monster to take. Those types of behaviors should become breaking points.

Common Dread Powers: It's worth noting a short list of common Dread Powers for your supernatural creatures, and their page numbers. This way you can customize and flavor your individual specimens without flipping through the entire list of Dread Powers.

Defining Dread Powers: Some monsters will have inherent Dread Powers, by virtue of their very natures. Every instance of that monster possesses the power. For example, werewolves cease to be werewolves without shape-changing Dread Powers. In these cases, list what defining Dread Powers your monster possesses, and how many dots your average example has.

Other Features: Is your monster immune to mental intrusion? Can it not fall unconscious from damage? Does it suffer no harm from falling? Note these sorts of traits that are unique to your monster type.

Define Potency: Every monster has a Potency trait. However, every monster expresses Potency differently, even though they use the same basic mechanics. Define what Potency means for your monster; determine what differentiates the weak from the strong.

Flaws: Most monsters have flaws, bans, or other inherent limitations. These flaws tend to be stronger, the more powerful the monster. Any time a character takes advantage of a monster's inherent flaws, the monster's Potency trait adds to the effort. For example, when attacking a werewolf with a silver weapon, add its Potency trait to dice pools.

If your monster has a particular flaw, it should be something that could see play. If the cell wishes to uncover the monster's flaw, an extended research action should suffice in most cases.

Willpower

By default, monsters may only spend a single Willpower point per turn. This means that any Dread Power requiring multiple Willpower for activation requires multiple turns of preparation. However, with the Potency trait (see below), some monsters can bring terrible powers to fore in a moment's notice.

Potency

The Potency trait reflects a particular intensity in a monster's supernatural existence. All monsters have a Potency trait, and they receive the first dot for free. Potency is unlike most traits, in that it's rated between one and ten dots.

Note: The Potency trait replaces the Potency Merit from p. 157 of **Night Stalkers**.

Advantages of Potency

While every monster type expresses Potency differently, these same basic mechanics cover them.

Willpower Capacity: Monsters have Willpower dots equal to their Resolve and Composure. However, they can store additional Willpower equal to their Potency trait. Unlike most characters, monsters can have more than ten points of Willpower available. However, they still can only have ten dots of Willpower. For example, a character with Resolve 4, Composure 4, and Potency 8 can access 16 points of Willpower, even though she only has the limited 10 dots of Willpower.

Willpower Expenditure: Normally, characters may only spend a single point of Willpower per turn, for whatever reason. So, a monster that spent Willpower to add to her Defense cannot use a Dread Power requiring Willpower in the same turn. However, monsters with more Potency can spend more Willpower. A monster may spend one point of Willpower in a turn per dot of Potency. This does not allow the monster to spend multiple Willpower points to bolster a single dice pool; it could allow the monster to spend Willpower to bolster a pool, increase her Defense, and fuel a Dread Power, for example.

Supernatural Capability: If a monster has six or more dots of Potency, her Attributes and Skills can rise to that level. So, a monster with seven dots of Potency could theoretically have Strength 7. At your discretion, monsters might have Dread Powers at more than five dots; see Advanced Dread Powers in the below section.

Supernatural Tolerance: Monsters are more resistant to the supernatural, by nature of their inherent affinities. Add the monster's Potency dots to any contested roll to resist a supernatural power. At Storyteller discretion, this may include rolls to resist Endowments.

Drawbacks of Potency

As a monster becomes stronger, so does her flaws. Any time a flaw, ban, or other supernatural drawback is used against her, add the monster's Potency dots to any relevant dice pools. For this reason, many monsters will develop Dread Powers and other defenses against their particular weaknesses, or at least to compensate for their deficiencies.

Types of Potency

Every type of monster has a different form of Potency. When creating your own monsters, consider what Potency means for them. These examples are presented as suggestions, more than hard rules.

Changelings — Wyrd: Changelings are tied to another plane of existence: a mysterious, fickle, and Arcadian place of dreams, whimsy, and nightmare. Those with low Wyrd are very grounded, and much closer to human. They look and act human at most times. Those with high Wyrd become alien creatures, barely recognizable from fairy tales made flesh. However, the mundane nature of cold iron acts as a bane to their otherworldly natures; attacks with cold iron add the Changeling's Wyrd to their dice pools.

Demons — Primum: Demons do not have proper souls; they have Primum. Primum is the demonic force that fuels all their supernatural abilities, and maintains their mortal appearances. Demons with lower Primum remain in their human skins most of the time. Demons with great Primum have utterly monstrous true forms, and exude power casually.

Ghosts — Resonance: Ghosts resonate in the material world, and their Potency trait determines how much their essence can bring to bear. Ghosts with low Resonance are but wisps and echoes, barely noticeable except under rare conditions. Ghosts with massive Resonance appear as real as any person, and can touch the material without second thought.

Mummies — Sekhem: Mummies's spirits keep them coming back from the dead. This is reflected in their Sekhem trait. A mummy with low Sekhem is falling apart, losing a battle against time and decay. A mummy with high Sekhem is vibrant, alive, more human than human. Oddly, many mummies arise from their tombs with massive Sekhem, and it degrades with time, unlike most Potency traits.

Sorcerers — Arcane: Wizards, witches, sorcerers, and ritualists possess a Potency trait called Arcane. This combines their raw knowledge, force of spirit, and fate. A sorcerer with low Arcane is only able to cast minor tricks and charms. A sorcerer with great Arcane can rend the fabric of reality with her will-working.

Vampires — Blood Potency: As vampires age, their blood thickens. They require more human blood to fully satiate themselves. A vampire will low Blood Potency is very close to human, only needing infrequent feeding to remain sated. A vampire with high Blood Potency becomes detached and inhuman, and will often hunt for highly-specialized blood to sate his palette. However, ancient monsters find stakes through the heart to be particularly dangerous, as their Potency adds to any such rolls.

Werewolves — Primal Urge: Werewolf existence is defined by a meeting place between human and wolf existence, with a ferocious in-between. Primal Urge pulls the werewolf away from humanity, and toward his bestial side. A werewolf with low Primal Urge likely only shapeshifts during the full moon, and maintains a human life. A werewolf with high Primal Urge is a consummate hunter, and exists only for the thrill of the kill. However, as the monster becomes stronger than the flesh, silver becomes ever more the bane. Attacks with silver weapons add the werewolf's Primal Urge in dice.

ADVANCED DREAD POWERS?

As it stands, monsters with six or more dots of Potency can raise their Attributes and Skills beyond the human dot limits. Theoretically, they could also raise their Dread Powers commensurately. This may or may not work for a given Dread Power. It can also provide excessive advantages to an already frightening creature. Then again, monsters with six or more dots of Potency should be nigh godlike; their power should be felt from afar, and direct confrontations should end poorly for all but the finest hunter cells.

If you choose to implement sixth dot Dread Powers, first consider whether or not the inclusion will be fun for the players. They may already feel that your monsters are daunting enough antagonists, and that this just tips them over the edge to a point where the players' choices no longer matter. Then, look at whether or not the power makes sense at the sixth dot. Many are simply linear progressions, so they scale fine. Adding a sixth dot just increases the likelihood of exceptional success. Alternatively, at the sixth dot, the Dread Power becomes a personalized manifestation of the monster's power. After all, sixth dot powers could mean the monster spent centuries developing their abilities, so it stands to reason that they'd tailor the specifics to meet their needs.

Morality and Integrity

In this update, Hunter characters use Integrity from the **God-Machine Chronicle Rules Update**. Hunter characters can use these optional modifications as well.

Monsters Don't Count

It's worth consideration that, because Morality and Integrity track separate things, Integrity breaking points probably shouldn't be ignored for killing monsters. Killing monsters takes its toll on the psyche, even for the most hardened hunters.

At most, you should offer a bonus die on the breaking point if the monster looks inhuman, or two if the monster isn't even recognizable as humanoid. But even with the most monstrous things, blood and viscera will shock human resolve.

Trigger Points

Trigger points can still exist. Replacing a breaking point with a trigger point can help a hunter stave off Integrity loss.

Derangements

Tells and Derangements adopted as part of Integrity can be adopted as Persistent Conditions. When those Conditions hinder the character in a meaningful way, they gain a Beat.

HUNTER THE VIGIL

Name: _____ **Concept:** _____ **Profession:** _____
Player: _____ **Virtue:** _____ **Conspiracy:** _____
Chronicle: _____ **Vice:** _____ **Compact:** _____

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	INTELLIGENCE ●○○○○	STRENGTH ●○○○○	PRESENCE ●○○○○
FINESSE	WITS ●○○○○	DEXTERITY ●○○○○	MANIPULATION ●○○○○
RESISTANCE	RESOLVE ●○○○○	STAMINA ●○○○○	COMPOSURE ●○○○○

SKILLS

MENTAL
(-3 unskilled)

- ☐ Academics _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Computer _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Crafts _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Investigation _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Medicine _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Occult _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Politics _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Science _____ ○○○○○

PHYSICAL
(-1 unskilled)

- ☐ Athletics _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Brawl _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Drive _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Firearms _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Larceny _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Stealth _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Survival _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Weaponry _____ ○○○○○

SOCIAL
(-1 unskilled)

- ☐ Animal Ken _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Empathy _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Expression _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Intimidation _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Persuasion _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Socialize _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Streetwise _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ Subterfuge _____ ○○○○○

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Merits 7 • Health = Stamina + Size Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = 5 for adult humans • Defense = Lower of Dexterity or Wits + Athletics • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity +5 • Starting Integrity = 7

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

_____ ○○○○○
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CONDITIONS

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ASPIRATIONS

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TACTICS

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HEALTH

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☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

WILLPOWER

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

BEATS

☐☐☐☐

EXPERIENCES

_____

INTEGRITY

10 ▬▬▬▬ ○
9 ▬▬▬▬ ○
8 ▬▬▬▬ ○
7 ▬▬▬▬ ○
6 _____ ○
5 _____ ○
4 _____ ○
3 _____ ○
2 _____ ○
1 _____ ○

Size _____
Speed _____
Initiative Mod _____
Defense _____
Armor _____

WEAPONS	DICE MOD

EQUIPMENT	DICE MOD

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